



**Komoszewski, J. Ed, M. James Sawyer, and Daniel B. Wallace.**

*Reinventing Jesus: How Modern Skeptics Miss the Real Jesus and Mislead Popular Culture*

Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel, 2006. Pp. 347. Paper. \$16.99. ISBN 9780825429828.

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Rightly Dividing the Word of Truth

New Jersey

Perhaps no topic is as ‘hot’ in the field of Biblical Studies as the Historical Jesus right now. In recent years we have seen a number of books espousing some pretty strange ideas of who Jesus of Nazareth really was (e.g. *The Jesus Dynasty* [Tabor]; *The Jesus Papers* [Baigent]; *Who Is Jesus?* [Crossan & Watts]). *Reinventing Jesus* takes many of these views and evaluates them in light of modern scholarship with an acute attention to detail and the care of three men who find Jesus’ question to Peter (i.e. ‘who do men say that I am?’) of the utmost importance. Pleasantly surprising also is the treatment of theological issues (i.e. the deity of Christ) that Historical Jesus scholars usually stray away from.

The writing style of the three authors is smooth and balanced and they compliment each other nicely — at times it is difficult to discern who has written which portion. The authors make no secret that this is a volume for motivated laymen and that designation certainly sticks. It’s too advanced for the novice or nominal church-goer but it’s certainly not a scholarly tome. *Reinventing Jesus* falls somewhere in the middle combining easy to read writing and detailed information concerning the person of Christ.

All too often the New Testament is treated by skeptics as a collection of books riddled with misinformation that came decades after Jesus lived. It is posited that because these accounts weren’t written within the first few years of their occurrence that they must be wrong in some way, shape, or form. The authors debunk this anachronistic belief by explaining the oral culture of the ancient world which segues into a treatment of the New Testament texts and their reliability. They then proceed to address the issue of the canon of Scripture and why the books that made it in fit the bill. After this foundation is laid they examine Jesus according to Scripture, extra-biblical sources, and in Church history.

The final section of the book was a pleasure to read as it addresses a claim that is often posited by skeptics but rarely addressed by believers, and that is the alleged Christian borrowing from pagan myths to create a ‘Jesus story’. Relying heavily on Ronald H.

Nash's *The Gospel and the Greeks* and Bruce Metzger's "Historical and Literary Studies: Pagan, Jewish, and Christian"<sup>1</sup> the authors thoroughly demonstrate that the NT did not borrow its presentation of Jesus from pagan sources and in fact there are times when the pagans can be said to have borrowed from the Christians!

*Reinventing Jesus* is as good as it gets for a laymen friendly apologetic of the historical (and theological) Jesus and I'd recommend it to any motivated layman, as well as those lazy lamens who need to get up and get reading!

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<sup>1</sup> Available online at [http://www.frontline-apologetics.com/religions\\_christianity.html](http://www.frontline-apologetics.com/religions_christianity.html)