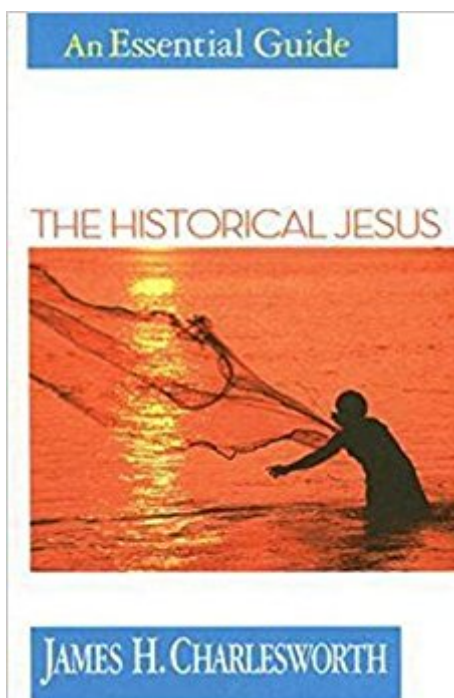


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The Historical Jesus: An Essential Guide (Essential Guides)



Synopsis

Recent years have seen an explosion of talk about the historical Jesus from scholarly settings as well as media outlets (including sensational TV documentaries and national magazines). How is the student of the Bible to assess these various claims about Jesus? And what difference does knowledge of his time and place make for Christian faith, theological thinking, and historical research? James Charlesworth presents the solid results of modern study into the life and times of Jesus, especially regarding the role of the Essenes, the significance of the Dead Sea Scrolls, the nature of messianic expectation, and much more. No one today is better equipped than James Charlesworth to lead students through the thickets of controversy that surround much of contemporary historical Jesus research. This Abingdon Essential Guide will fulfill the need for a brief, substantive, yet highly accessible introduction to this core area of New Testament studies. Drawing on the best in current scholarship, written with the need of students foremost in mind, addressed to learners in a number of contexts, this Essential Guide will be the first choice of those who wish to acquaint themselves or their students with the broad scope of issues, perspectives, and subject matters relating to modern quests for the historical Jesus. It will also be a preferred text for those who need or want to refresh their knowledge regarding the context within which Jesus lived in preparation for leading church discussion groups in studies of the Gospels.

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Customer Reviews

James H. Charlesworth is George L. Collord Professor of New Testament Language and Literature, Princeton Theological Seminary. Charlesworth is an international recognized expert in Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old and New Testaments, the Dead Sea Scrolls, Josephus, Jesus research, and the Gospel of John. As director of Princeton's Dead Sea Scrolls Project, Dr. Charlesworth has worked on the computer-enhanced photographing and translating of the Qumran scrolls in order to make available for the first time both an accurate text and an English translation of these documents. He is the author or editor of nearly 50 books on the New Testament and its history.

Most Christians will find it new and possibly uncomfortable to adopt a historical (and archaeological) perspective of Jesus. This book is readable by someone (or a church discussion group) who is seeking to learn; it is not a devotional or inspirational book. The presentation is an engaging survey of what is known about the Historical Jesus; history and archaeology and the full range of ancient texts are all gleaned for reliable information. This is not a book of apologetics, but Charlesworth probably has done more than any scholar to substantiate the historicity of the core historical facts about Jesus of Nazareth, and especially the historical elements of the Gospel of John. Since at least 1980, the burden of Charlesworth's world-class ministry of scholarship has been to locate Jesus within Judaism, which he labels Jesus Research. It contains a lot of interesting and relevant information, more fully appreciated by careful reading of what he has to say, and will wonderfully enhance any (serious) Bible student's comprehension of the canonical gospel accounts. At this pricing it is a terrific value.

I used this book for background research for a class I taught at my church on the quest for the historical Jesus. It is very well balanced between careful, scholarly arguments and accessible brevity. Charlesworth has chosen carefully the particular topics that probably are in fact the essentials. There is good background, not only on the history of the quest, but also on the kinds of questions that are essential and the ways of answering with academic and intellectual integrity. The book helped give me a sense of personal scholarship, a deeper appreciation for the professional scholars in the field, and a clearer view of Jesus and his world. I would recommend this for anyone who wants to know more about Jesus, his world, and how he fit in it than you'll find in a wiki entry or the first couple pages in your internet search, but who don't have the time or desire for Meier's 5-volume masterwork. That should be a lot of people.

I found this book useful in its own right as well as a background reference to other works discussing the Jesus of Nazareth and the Jesus Christ. It gave depth to more superficial surveys and grounding for more detailed references. I found myself returning to this book, as a tether, in order to both check and keep my orientation as I read alternative less objective and more opinionated approaches.

An excellent introduction to this whole area of study by an expert in the field who knows the source material well -- this would be the starting point for anyone interested in this area of study!!

Over the top too much info for the average reader. The print layout in this book is hard to read. The words run together and maybe increasing the font and many more pages might help..

It is small print but so worth travelling through. Well done and thought provoking.

Bought this book for a class, but it's a fabulous book and highly recommended. Very balanced look at how to objectively read the Gospels taking into account who the author was, who they were writing to, what truth they were attempting to proclaim, etc. when interpreting scripture.

Excellent history. Realistic assumptions. D

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