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Book Review: D. Flusser and R.S. Notley *THE SAGE FROM GALILEE*

The book *The Sage from Galilee: Rediscovering Jesus' Genius* was written by Steven Notley and David Flusser. Flusser is known for his enthusiasm in the exploration and lecturing of ancient history and the history of religion. Being described as a passionate man, his inclination for theatrics often came in aid to impress the audience and capture attention. As a Jew, Flusser argues that without Jewish religion there could be no messiah figure of Jesus today in the world culture, but he does not suggest that everything further coming from his origins is thanks to the Jews, thereby not wishing to tell a story from one point of view, stating that "I attribute my conservative approach to my training, which was neither that of a Jewish nor a Christian theologian, but that of a classicist" (Flusser & Notley location 130). More specifically, in his representation of Jesus, the dominant trait in the description is a concept of love, which is even more interesting, considering the fact that the whole purpose of this book was to write a story about Jesus that would be as close to the historical accuracy as it is possible. It is important to note that in their historical retrospective, Flusser and Notley are not oriented on the readers with

the experience of the topic, for any position regarding such controversial issues as the origins of Jesus, is supposed to have an agenda and bias against the others, which would stand in a way of consideration of information objectively.

In an understandable and open conversational style, the authors adopted historical and biblical facts and interpretations in the chronological work of the life and the role of Jesus Christ, while trying to cover with the mentioning of all of the important cross-cultural subjects, including his Jewish origins and proto-rabbinic role in early stories.

More specifically, the book literally is trying to cover all the angles. It begins with the research of the ancestry of Jesus, regarding the very origin of this name, finding roots in the Greek cultural legacies, suggesting that “Jesus is a common Greek form of the name Joshua” (Flusser & Notley location 223). Furthermore, chapter by chapter, they are reviving the basic concepts of the cult figure of Jesus, analyzing them in common and accessible manner from the objective perspective, including the religious concept of baptism, its importance, and connection with the history of Jesus, and dedicating a lot of time and effort in order to describe, explain, and reveal with utmost preciseness the evaluation and interpretation of the concept of love, namely the love of Jesus, love in general, and its influence on the development of the figure of Jesus both in Christianity and in Judaism.

All in all, David Flusser and Steven Notley provided a compelling yet magnetic work about the life of Jesus, his teachings, morality, and love, not forgetting to include the aspects of his life from the non-Christian context that are usually ignored. Historical approach and passionate attitude of the religious explorer gave this book necessary validity and captivity of

attention and interest.

Works Cited

Flusser, David, and Steven Notley . *The Sage from Galilee: Rediscovering Jesus' Genius*. 4th ed.,  
Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing, 2007.