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Final

“ The Sage from Galilee ”

By David Flusser and R. Steven Notley.

Flusser, D., 2020. [online] Amazon.com. Available at: <<https://www.amazon.com/Sage-Galilee-Rediscovering-Jesus-Genius/dp/0802825877>> [Accessed 17 November 2020].

The book “ The Sage from Galilee,” is a skillful source for anyone interested in gaining a more explicit understanding in the context behind the historical Jesus. As David Flusser might have thought when he started his research on the subject, the followers of Jesus around the world have encountered themselves in great need of a more historical and cultural picture of our Messiah. Therefore, in the book Flusser begins his journey by emphasizing the pivotal role and influence of Jesus’ setting portrayed in the gospels. Furthermore, as Steven Notley stated in the foreword section of the current work, most of the time when some read Jesus’ saying in the synoptic gospels they disregard the fact that there was a cultural and linguistic context influencing the way in which we interpret the message today. This, in fact, is a point that the Jewish Flusser addresses in the earliest chapters of the book.

Moreover, in the first chapter entitled “ Sources” the author proceeds to impartially form his research statements. In response to the many arguments that originated to question the historicity of Jesus’ figure, Flusser references so many accounts that serve as evidence of the

subject. Firstly, it's important to note that though Flusser states that from historical research would be hard to expect to find any mention about Jesus in non-Christian documents, he also emphasizes that Jesus is not the only one having the same issue. "Moses and Buddha also shared the same fate," said Flusser. Nevertheless, even with this reality Flusser lists sources and historical evidence that allows any scholar to prove the accuracy found in the historical Jesus. To emphasize, the first thing he confronts is the old cliché often used by secular historians and even theologians of our era. The author explicitly explains with clear evidence the historical character of the synoptic gospels, only with the peculiar exception of the gospel of John who portrays a more theological perspective rather than historical. With this being said, it makes more sense to use these synoptic gospels as reliable sources on the many researches of the historical Jesus. Besides this unquestionable truth there is more important evidence that can be seen from Flusser's research. He barely mentioned other points that can be considered when discovering the historical Jesus. Those points are the contemporaneous emperors, politicians as Pontius Pilate and poets of his time, as well as writers. Equally important, is the case of the contrast between the synoptic gospels and the gospel of John and their way to portray Jesus. Very often, scholars confuse these two pictures of Jesus. If we were to find the historical Jesus using the theologian John as a source we would barely find accuracy details to support our research. On the other hand, if we take a good considerable time to spend in studying the synoptic gospels, especially the historian Luke it would become very easy for us to find fairly accurate information. Surely, this knowledge that Flusser introduces in this first chapter has a vast historical significance and authority for the development of any research.

To continue with, I appreciate the way in which the author sets every chapter of the book in a good and chronological order. Thus, in the second and third chapters, Ancestry and Baptism,

he conveniently stops in order to address two main points which I believe are very crucial for our current time. In the former he focuses more on important details such as Jesus' genealogy line, as well as his birth narrative and setting. To be honest, I clearly comprehend Flusser's motives and impulses to begin such a magnificent work in that order. It would be way more interesting and comprehensible for the scholars and readers of Jesus' genius to begin their study by comprehending first the setting that influenced his daily custom and belief. For as Flusser stated, throughout the gospels we can perceive the social differences in Jesus' society in Palestine which also determined particular beliefs concerning daily customs in which social and political groups in Jesus's time differed. Then, in the latter chapter he restates what was said in his earliest chapter by emphasizing the social and eschatological contrast between John the Baptist and Jesus. Most of the time scholars compare John character with Jesus assuming that because he was the precursor of Jesus' missionary ministry they uphold the same eschatological and theological vision. Nonetheless, as we have learned from Flusser both individuals shared very conflicting perspectives on eschatological issues. For instance, as we read the synoptic gospel of Mathew we see that John's belief was that the judgement day against evil was soon to be established while Jesus, on the other hand, knew that wouldn't be the case since evil and good will have to coexist until the harvest day. (Mathew 13: 24-52) Thus, John and Jesus are perceived with this common contrast in their analysis and interpretation of eschatology. This, in fact, was an issue often faced by Rabbis and teachers of the law before and after Christ which is why that was not a surprise for Jesus.

To summarize, David Flusser and R. Steven Notly both did a great job in the combination of their teaching throughout the leaves of this book. The resources compiled in this work serve as good reference not only to theologians but also for thousands of scholars whose often find

themselves unsuccessful to reach a good understanding in their intent to rediscover Jesus' Genius. Therefore, in this book Flusser teaches us that to rediscover the true picture of Jesus we can't just read the scriptures and then formulate an Eisegesis based on the text, but we must travel to Jesus' time, get in touch with setting and relate to the bible culture and language. Truly, that won't be an easy task but it will be the only path towards a good Exegesis on both the historical and theological Jesus.