

Yailyn Cordero

Professor Jeffery Garcia

New Testament Literature

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David Flusser, R. Steven Notley, and I

Do you know that feeling of complete and utter bliss you get when you find answers to questions you didn't even know you had? Well that's the feeling you get when reading *The Sage from Galilee: Rediscovering Jesus' Genius* by David Flusser. The book is set up in a way that makes the entirety of it feel like one fluid argument, everything is interconnected. Plus, it has pictures as well! The argument of the book in general could be found in the preface where it states: "The present volume not only reflects the truism that Jesus was a Jew and wanted to remain within the Jewish faith, but it argues that, without the long preparatory work of contemporaneous Jewish faith, the teaching of Jesus would be unthinkable." (Flusser, David, et al. *The Sage from Galilee: Rediscovering Jesus' Genius / David Flusser with R. Steven Notley ; with an Introduction by James H. Charlesworth*, William B. Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, MI, 2007, pp. xvii-xix.)

The first thing that is to be discussed will be from chapter 8, titled as *The Son*. The main argument in this chapter is stated as: "The miracle-worker is close to God -like a household companion, like a son." (Flusser, David, et al. "The Son." *The Sage from Galilee: Rediscovering Jesus' Genius / David Flusser with R. Steven Notley ; with an Introduction by James H. Charlesworth*, William B. Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, MI, 2007, pp. 97-106. ) Flusser proves his argument by uncovering the stories of two other miracle workers that came after Christ by the names of Hanian and Honni. These two men had a lot of practices that were similar to that of

Jesus, and they even called God their Father just as Jesus did. Hainan was even called “My Son” by a heavenly voice up above. Some of the practices these two men shared with Jesus were, doing things in secret, and hiding from others. Flusser later on continues his argument by adding that although a very similar relationship could be formed, the one Jesus had with God is much more superior. To this, I wholeheartedly agree. I tend to feel closer to God when mimicking the same practices that Hanian and Honni did.

The second topic to be discussed can be found in chapter 9, *The Son of Man*. Within this chapter Mr. David Flusser argues that the term “Son of Man” can fit into three categories, and it doesn’t always have something to do with the Messianic Image. Infact, He argues: “The Gospel sayings about the Son of Man fall into three groups: (1) those referring to the coming Son of Man, (2) those referring to his suffering and resurrection, and (3) those in which the son of man is at work in the present.” Flusser, David, et al. “The Son of Man.” *The Sage from Galilee: Rediscovering Jesus' Genius / David Flusser with R. Steven Notley ; with an Introduction by James H. Charlesworth*, William B. Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, MI, 2007, pp. 107–116. I truly enjoyed reading this chapter and agree with what is being stated because he was able to properly back up his argument by using several biblical references such as Luke 9:19 and Luke 13:33.

Now, Finally, the last topic to be presented is found in chapter 3, *Baptism*. The main argument in this chapter is that the connection between Jesus’ mother, Mary, and his aunt Elizabeth, mother of John the Baptist, could have influenced his decision on getting baptized. This honestly was one of the most eye opening chapters I read from this book. It completely shifted my perspective and allowed me to see it from a different point of view. Flusser defends his argument by mentioning what happens after the baptism of Christ.

In conclusion, I thoroughly enjoyed reading and studying the work of David Flusser. I think that at the end of the day, his initial argument of the book is an extremely solid argument. “The present volume not only reflects the truism that Jesus was a Jew and wanted to remain within the Jewish faith, but it argues that, without the long preparatory work of contemporaneous Jewish faith, the teaching of Jesus would be unthinkable.” (Flusser, David, et al. *The Sage from Galilee: Rediscovering Jesus' Genius / David Flusser with R. Steven Notley ; with an Introduction by James H. Charlesworth*, William B. Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, MI, 2007, pp. xvii-xix.) How would we be able to even begin to understand the depths of the teachings of Christ if we didn't understand His culture and the history of His people?