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BOOK REVIEW

David Flusser with **R. Steven Notley**, *The Sage from Galilee: Rediscovering Jesus' Genius* (Eerdmans, 2007). Pp 221 + illustrations. Price US\$20.00. ISBN: 9780802825872

This book was written by David Flusser, a Jewish theologian and professor of comparative religion at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, and R. Steven Notley, a professor of New Testament and Christian Origins at Nyack College in New York. Flusser, born in Vienna in 1917, fled to Palestine in 1938 to escape Nazi persecution. He was a prolific writer and scholar, and is widely recognized as one of the foremost experts on early Judaism and the historical Jesus.

The book offers a thorough examination of Jesus' life and teachings, based on the most recent historical and archaeological findings. Flusser and Notley give new perspectives on Jesus' teachings and their meaning while providing a thorough assessment of the cultural and historical setting in which he lived. In order to facilitate learning, the book is written in a straightforward and approachable way and contains maps, diagrams, and images. It has received a lot of appreciation for its knowledge and capacity to provide fresh insights into the person of Jesus. Additionally, the authors provide a fresh and insightful analysis of Jesus' teachings, including his parables, miracles, and ethical teachings. They also explore the role of Jesus as a healer, teacher,

and prophet. Moreover, it takes a multidisciplinary approach to its subject matter, drawing on the fields of history, archaeology, theology, and comparative religion. It is also accessible to general readers who are interested in learning more about the historical Jesus, while still providing valuable insights for scholars. The authors explain complex ideas and use clear language throughout the book. The revised and expanded edition of the book, published in 2007, includes new material based on the authors' ongoing research and the latest scholarship in the field. Overall, "The Sage from Galilee" is a significant contribution to the study of the historical Jesus, offering fresh insights into his life, teachings, and cultural context, and is a valuable resource for scholars, students, and general readers alike.

"The Sage from Galilee: Discovering Jesus' Genius" has eight chapters aimed to give readers a sense of the scope and depth of the book. Here is a brief summary of each chapter:

Chapter 1: The Historical Jesus

Flusser and Notley establish the idea of the historical Jesus in the first chapter of "The Sage from Galilee," referring to the historical Jesus rather than the Christ of faith. They talk about the difficulties in recreating the historical Jesus and make the case that a multidisciplinary approach is required to fully comprehend his teachings and life.

Chapter 2: Jesus' Context

The writers examine the social and cultural setting in which Jesus lived, building on the groundwork laid out in Chapter 1. They analyze the many parties and factions that were there at the period, including the Pharisees, Sadducees, and Essenes, and offer insights into the political and theological climate of first-century Palestine.

Chapter 3: Jesus' Teachings

The teachings of Jesus, including his parables, miracles, and ethical precepts, are thoroughly analyzed in Chapter 3. They contend that Jesus was a great storyteller who employed parables to communicate difficult spiritual ideas and that his ethical teachings were based on a genuine concern for other people's welfare.

Chapter 4: Jesus' Miracles

This chapter explores the role of miracles in Jesus' ministry. The authors argue that Jesus' miracles were not simply acts of supernatural power, but were also intended to demonstrate his authority and authenticity as a teacher and prophet.

Chapter 5: Jesus' Healing

In Chapter 5, the writers present a thorough examination of Jesus' healing mission. They talk about the many kinds of healing that Jesus did and make the case that his healings had far-reaching psychological and spiritual repercussions for people who received them in addition to being purely physical.

Chapter 6: Jesus' Death

Flusser and Notley examine the circumstances surrounding Jesus' crucifixion and death on the cross. They argue that rather than being just a terrible accident, Jesus' death was a part of a bigger plan that was predicted in the Hebrew Scriptures.

Chapter 7: Jesus' Resurrection

This chapter focuses on the resurrection of Jesus and its significance for Christian faith. The authors argue that the resurrection was not a myth or a metaphor, but a historical event that can be investigated and evaluated using the tools of historical research.

Chapter 8: Jesus' Genius

In the last chapter, Flusser and Notley suggest that Jesus was brilliant and that his teachings and ideas still motivate and challenge people today in the book's last chapter. They demonstrate Jesus' wisdom via anecdotes and establish that his influence on the world is relevant today.

This analysis aims to provide readers a perspective of the richness of "The Sage from Galilee" as well as a taste of the book's primary topics and arguments summarized.

"The Sage from Galilee: Discovering Jesus' Genius" by David Flusser and R. Steven Notley can be compared to "Jesus: A Revolutionary Biography" by John Dominic Crossan in terms of their multidisciplinary approach to exploring the historical Jesus. Both books draw on insights from history, archaeology, theology, and comparative religion to gain a better understanding of Jesus and his teachings. However, while Crossan's work emphasizes the revolutionary nature of Jesus' teachings and the political implications of his message, Flusser and Notley focus more on Jesus' intellectual and spiritual genius, arguing that he was a profound thinker and teacher whose ideas continue to inspire people today. One important difference between the two works is their approach to the resurrection. Crossan, who is known for his skepticism regarding the historical accuracy of the Gospels, argues that the resurrection was a metaphorical event that symbolized the continued presence of Jesus' spirit among his followers. Flusser and Notley, on the other hand, argue that the resurrection was a historical event that can be investigated and evaluated using the tools of historical research.

In conclusion, "The Sage from Galilee" provides a thorough and perceptive examination of the real Jesus and his teachings. This book differs from earlier studies on the subject because Flusser and Notley provide a distinctive viewpoint on Jesus' intellectual and spiritual brilliance. A thorough and comprehensive knowledge of Jesus and his surroundings is also provided by the interdisciplinary approach, which draws on history, archaeology, and comparative religion. Anybody who is interested in finding out more about the historical Jesus and his teachings, especially those searching for a new viewpoint on the subject, should read this book.

Works Cited

Flusser, D., & Notley, R. S. (2007). *The sage from galilee: Rediscovering jesus' genius*.

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Crossan, J.D. (1995) *Jesus: A revolutionary biography*. San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco.