

Book review
The sage from Galilee

By David Flusser

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1. "The Sage from Galilee" is a book written by the Jewish scholar David Flusser, originally published in Hebrew in 1978 and translated into English in 2007 by Gregory and Ruth Kaplan. The book has 288 pages and is available in paperback and ebook formats, with a cost ranging from around \$15 to \$25 depending on the edition.
2. David Flusser (1917-2000) was a Czech-born Israeli scholar of Judaism and Christianity, and a professor of religious studies at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. He was known for his expertise in the Second Temple period and the origins of Christianity, and for his deep understanding of Jewish thought and tradition. Flusser was a prolific writer, and his books and articles have had a significant impact on the study of Judaism and Christianity.
3. "The Sage from Galilee" by David Flusser is divided into nine chapters, each of which explores a different aspect of Jesus' life and teachings.

Chapter 1: Introduction - In this opening chapter, Flusser sets out the main themes of the book, namely that Jesus was a Jewish sage who taught a message of love, repentance, and ethical behavior. He argues that Jesus should be understood in the context of Second Temple Judaism, and that his teachings were not intended to create a new religion but rather to reform Judaism from within.

Chapter 2: The Parables and the Kingdom - This chapter explores Jesus' use of parables to convey his message, and his emphasis on the coming of the kingdom of God. Flusser argues that the parables were a distinctive feature of Jesus' teaching style, and that they served to challenge his listeners and to invite them to a deeper

understanding of the message of the kingdom.

Chapter 3: Miracles and Identity - This chapter examines Jesus' miracles and the question of his identity as a divine or human figure. Flusser argues that Jesus saw himself as a human being with a special mission from God, and that his miracles were intended to demonstrate the power of God at work in the world.

Chapter 4: The Pharisees and the Jewish Groups - In this chapter, Flusser looks at Jesus' relationship with the Pharisees and other Jewish groups of his time. He argues that Jesus was deeply influenced by the teachings of the Pharisees, but also challenged them on certain points. He also explores the question of whether Jesus was a political revolutionary, and concludes that while his message had social implications, it was not primarily concerned with overthrowing the Roman occupation.

Chapter 5: Women, Marriage, and Divorce - This chapter explores the role of women in Jesus' ministry, and his teachings on marriage and divorce. Flusser argues that Jesus had a positive view of women, and that he challenged the prevailing attitudes of his time on divorce and remarriage.

Chapter 6: Forgiveness and Repentance - This chapter discusses the concept of forgiveness in Jesus' message, and its connection to the Jewish practice of teshuvah (repentance). Flusser argues that Jesus' message of forgiveness was rooted in the Jewish tradition, but also represented a radical departure from it in its emphasis on the love of God for all people.

Chapter 7: The Last Supper and the Cross - In this chapter, Flusser examines the Last Supper and Jesus' death, and their significance in Jewish and Christian tradition. He argues that the Last Supper was a Passover meal, and that Jesus' death was a sacrifice that fulfilled the Jewish concept of atonement.

Chapter 8: The Resurrection and the Future - This chapter looks at the Resurrection and its meaning in both Jewish and Christian thought. Flusser argues that the Resurrection was a historical event that transformed the disciples' understanding of Jesus, and that it represented a new phase in God's plan for the world.

Chapter 9: Conclusion - In the final chapter, Flusser reflects on Jesus' legacy and his continued relevance for people of faith today. He argues that Jesus' message of love and repentance has the power to transform individuals and societies, and that his example of service and sacrifice remains a powerful model for all people.

4. "The Sage from Galilee" is a unique work in its focus on Jesus as a Jewish sage and teacher, and its attempt to bridge the gap between Jewish and Christian interpretations of his message. It shares some similarities with other works on the historical Jesus, such as John Dominic Crossan's "The Historical Jesus" and Marcus Borg's "Meeting Jesus Again for the First Time," in its emphasis on the social and cultural context of Jesus' life and teachings. However, Flusser's book stands out for its deep knowledge of Jewish thought and tradition, and its willingness to engage with both Jewish and Christian perspectives on Jesus

5. In my opinion, "The Sage from Galilee" is an excellent and thought-provoking book that offers a fresh perspective on Jesus and his message. Flusser's scholarship is impressive, and his insights into the cultural and historical context of Jesus' teachings are valuable for both Jews and Christians. I would highly recommend this book to anyone who is interested in the historical Jesus, Jewish-Christian relations, or the intersection of faith and ethics. It is a challenging and rewarding read that will stimulate reflection and discussion.