



Life of Jesus

Ernest Renan

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The following translation of Renan's Vie de Jesus is made from the 13th edition of the complete work, which embodies the author's more mature views of his subject. The original work was begun, carried on, and, in its first form, completed during Renan's stay in Palestine, in the midst of the scenes in which the tragic story it relates had taken place. Partial Contents: Place of Jesus in the history of the world; Childhood; Education; First sayings; John the Baptist; Jesus at Capernaum; Disciples; Preaching; First attempts on Jerusalem; Miracles; Institutions of Jesus; Opposition to Jesus; Last Journey; Last Week of Jesus; Arrest, Trial and Death; Essential nature of the work of Jesus.

Life of Jesus Details

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Author : Ernest Renan

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From Reader Review Life of Jesus for online ebook

Czarny Pies says

In this book the Positivist Historian Ernest subjects the texts of the New Testament to pitiless critique. He cites multiple contradictions between the four gospel stories of Christ's life. He expresses severe reservations as the reliability of the Gospel of St. Jean. He notes frequent use of mythological stereotypes in the New Testament. In other words, Vie de Jesus is the work of a profound sceptic.

The book has an unquestionable value to any Christian about to set out to read the New Testament. There are clear problems in the New Testament with respect to factual accuracy and parts of it read like a fairy tale. If you are not prepared for this, the New Testament like the Old Testament can serve to undermine your faith as much as it can to reinforce it.

Manuel Cartes says

Este libro fue uno de los tantos textos que ingreso al salón de la fama de el Index librorum prohibitorum (Índice de libros prohibidos), que no es otra cosa que la lista de aquellas publicaciones que la Iglesia Católica catalogó como libros perniciosos para la fe.

Admirador de Hegel y Kant, en este libro, Renan describe la vida del Cristo-Hombre, alejándolo del contexto mitológico y sobrenatural de la Biblia, para ponerlo en un contexto mucho más terrenal y humano. Si bien, en ningún caso niega la incalculable importancia de su presencia en la tierra como maestro, profeta, e incluso, como agitador político, para el momento histórico de su publicación, esta biografía causó una gran controversia en Roma y en toda Europa, convirtiéndose en uno de los más grandes ajís en el hoyo de la Iglesia Católica hasta el día de hoy.

Pavel says

This is a brilliant attempt to create historical biography of Yeshua from Nazareth in Galilee, who became Jesus as we know him, and changed human civilisation forever. Renan, French scholar from XIX century, tries to look at him as a historical figure who never claimed that he was god, never performed any miracles, but was the greatest philosopher of all times. The book is free from any desire to expose something false or controversial in the Bible. Renan just wants to clear it from the latest additions and readjustments and see how Jesus (as a person!) has achieved what he achieved. How his teaching was monstrously misinterpreted and driven into Inquisition, church rituals and hierarchy and all the hypocrisy of it.

Renan stops his story at the Crucifixion and doesn't go into whole Resurrection story, he just doesn't need it, because from his point of view Jesus has already created whole new way of thinking and living for thousands years to come, even without that main miracle.

For me as a mild non-believer, who never goes to Church or pray, but appreciates what Christianity brought into art and literature and politics, this book was like a gift. I definitely recommend it to anyone who feels the same way.

Adam Floridia says

This historical account of JC's life is not exactly what I expected; I very naively thought it would be the smoking gun that would disprove the existence of God once and for all. Instead, with a clearly Christian bias, Renan unpacks the Synoptic Gospels as well as other primary sources from the time to present a believable/realistic account of what Jesus' life most approximately would have been like. I took away from it a much clearer understanding of the tenets that literally constitute the cornerstone of Christianity, and a sounder belief in how much this cornerstone has eroded over the past two millennia.

Suggestions for improvement to Renan (should he be reading this from Heaven):

- 1) As a historian, avoid conjectures and assumptions about motive.
- 2) Strive for objectivity by avoiding phrases like "this wretch [Judas of Kerioth]" when referring to historical persons and those like "All that is done outside of this great and good Christian tradition is barren" just in general.
- 3) Try to come up with a more original ending...I mean I saw this coming from page one!

Finally, I wonder if Renan's history would change were it written today after such discoveries as the Gnostic Gospels. . . God only knows.

Spencer says

A classic Leben approach to the historical Jesus. Renan's brief narrative documents the life of Jesus from a rationalistic slant much in the tradition of his day. Miracles are explainable due to the charismatic personality of Jesus, the resurrection of Lazarus was a hoax contrived by his sisters, and Jesus's post resurrection appearance to Mary was a figment of her overactive imagination. Yet despite that Hist Jesus research has moved on from these largely unsubstantiated claims, Renan's influence remains in the minds of modern scholars who still reiterate such explanations for Jesus's life.

Michael Hou says

I like this book very much. The narration is full of passion and poetic praises to Jesus. This book gives a very clear picture of Jesus Christ as a great religion founder, his pains and joys as a human being, and his compromises. It also helps me understand the complex relationship between Judaism and Christianity. I was deeply moved by this book.

Jane says

I read most likely a good thirty years ago. I am rereading it now, and simply marveling at this tremendous work. Renan's encyclopedic knowledge of ancient history shines through every page, and yet the work is not turgid or wearisome (although I believe the first chapter was one I hurried through). It is beautifully written,

and lyrical to a degree I have seldom experienced. His description of the people and countryside of Galilee made me utterly transported to that time, people and place.

Although M. Renan was not a believer, the fact that he dearly loved Jesus the person permeates his observations. It is a generous portrayal and, although I am a believer, I am still the richer for having read it.

Pete daPixie says

I read this book almost exactly forty years ago. A mid nineteenth century biography by Ernest Renan, this was the very first book I read, setting me off on my odyssey search for the historical Jesus. I have never entered the Christian faith, but back in 1972 I was a care free beach bum when I borrowed this work from a library in Cornwall.

I certainly recall being glued into this. In spite of Renan's christology, this came across to me as a very descriptive and realistic travelogue. The land was Palastine and in the mid nineteenth century the author seemed to be able to delineate a time and place in the first century.

If I discovered this book sat upon my library shelf today, I wouldn't hesitate to read this once again.

???? ???? says

I belive that Ernest Renan was one of the most brilliant and courageous men in his age to write an publish such this masterpiece of human thinking. He introduced Jesus as a man and the Bible like a book written by people. The book should be read by every intellectual man.

Onyango Makagutu says

what a great read.

Erik Graff says

This is one of the earliest, if not the earliest, historical biographies of Jesus which does not appeal to the miraculous and which treats its sources, particularly the Christian scriptures, like any other documentation. I read it because of Albert Schweitzer's description of it in his history of the quest for the historical Jesus. Although dating from the mid-19th century, the text still holds up as a plausible reconstruction.

Leonardo says

Y así que vuelvo y revuelvo sobre los inteligentes, hermosos, cansadores e inútiles libros modernos; el título de uno de ellos detiene mi mirada. Se llama "Juana de Arco" de Anatole France. Solamente lo he hojeado, pero una mirada bastó para recordarme la "Vida de Jesús", de Renán. Sigue el mismo método que el reverente escéptico. Desacredita los relatos sobrenaturales que tienen algún fundamento, simplemente

contando historias naturales que no tienen fundamento alguno. Porque no podemos creer en lo que hizo un santo; debemos pretender que sabemos exactamente lo que sintió. Pero no menciono a ninguno de ambos libros con objeto de criticarlo, sino porque a causa de la accidental combinación de los nombres, recordé dos sorprendentes ejemplos de sensatez que hacen desaparecer todos los libros que tenía ante mí. Juana de Arco no se turbó en la encrucijada, ni rechazando todas las sendas como Tolstoy ni aceptándolas todas como Nietzsche.

Ortodoxia Pág.25

Berrett says

This was a pretty good, but not great, account of the (probable) life of the historical Jesus. When Renan was writing about historical context, food, work, and play, I was glued to the pages. But there were other times when he seemed to guess a little too much, filling in gaps where no reliable historical record exists.

I also really loved some of his comments about the teachings of Jesus. For example:

He is, in the highest degree, a revolutionary; he calls all men to a worship founded solely on the ground of their being children of God. Love of God, charity, and mutual forgiveness - in these consisted his whole law. Nothing could be less sacerdotal. It was on his return from Jerusalem, as he passed near Shechem, and when talking with a Samaritan woman, that Jesus gave utterance to the saying upon which will rest the edifice of eternal religion: "Believe me, the hour cometh when neither in this mountain nor in Jerusalem shall ye worship the Father .. but the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth." On the day when he said these words he was truly Son of God.

Pretty sweet.

Kevin Byrne says

a decent book, with some great historical correlations. The challenge is that much of the quotes references soon come amost solely from the bible; quite limited historical analysis
