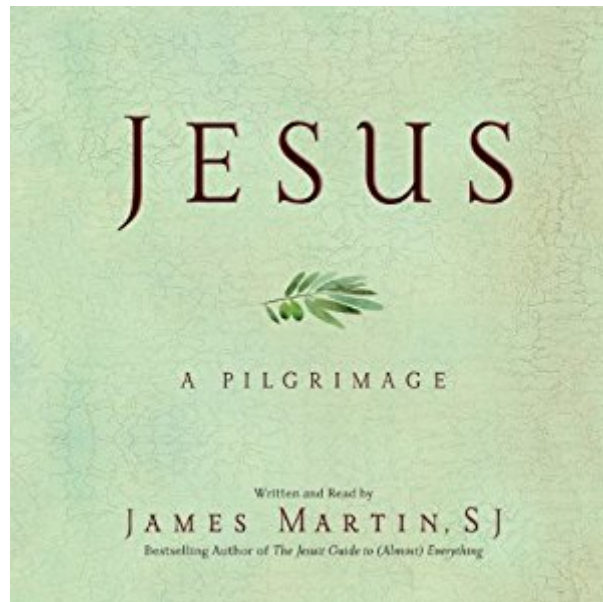


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Jesus: A Pilgrimage



Synopsis

A gifted storyteller and spiritual director, Father James Martin, SJ, invites listeners to experience the stories of the Gospels in a completely new, vivid, and exciting way to gain a deeper understanding of Jesus. Moving sequentially through the Gospels, considering not only familiar passages but also the "hidden life" of Jesus, the book offers a bold retelling of the life of Christ, faithful to the Christian tradition, while meditating on parts of the narrative that have often escaped notice. Martin provides personal stories from his own life, the most up-to-date biblical scholarship, and powerful anecdotes from beloved spiritual teachers, and brings the listener along on his own real-life travels through the Holy Land. Combining the fascinating insights of historical Jesus studies with profound spiritual reflections about the Christ of faith, Martin re-creates the world of first-century Galilee and Judea to usher us into Jesus's life and times and reveal how Jesus speaks to us today. *Jesus: A Pilgrimage* is an invitation to know Jesus as Father Martin knows him: Messiah and Savior, as well as friend and brother.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Jesus: A Pilgrimage begins with an introduction that clearly lays out what the book is and more importantly, what the book is not. I point this out because, I generally go in with preconceived notions of what I expect or want from a book. Fr. Martin is quick to point out that this book is not a theological discussion on who Jesus is, nor is it a Bible commentary. This book, however, is a look at Jesus, as we see Him in the Gospels, through the viewpoint of Fr. Martin's education, experience,

and a recent pilgrimage to the Holy Land. If we keep this in mind when reading the book, we can give it a proper review. Each chapter is laid out in the same format. Fr. Martin first mentions the place he is going to visit. He then describes the journey there. Details from this include the actual process of travelling to the location, scenery along the way, and bits of the culture and environment he encountered. Then, comes the heart of each chapter - his reflections. Mixed with theology, history, tradition, and Fr. Martin's wisdom and wit, we put ourselves in the exact moment and location of Jesus and try and picture what it must have been like for both Jesus and those around Him. We then end with the Scripture passage which served as the basis for the site Fr. Martin visited. The most interesting chapter in this book to me was entitled, "Nazareth." In this chapter Fr. Martin talks about the "Hidden Life" of Jesus. This term refers to the period of Jesus' life, age 12-30, that is absent in the Bible. Fr. Martin, like many, are drawn to this period of Jesus' life because they imagine it is a lot like our lives. "None of us is going to be preaching and performing miracles - at least not as Jesus did - but all of us live everyday lives, as Jesus did in Nazareth, being taught and cared for by our parents, loving and squabbling with our families, playing with our friends, learning what it means to be an adult, and in time earning a living." I never thought of Jesus in this light, but it does make sense. In this chapter, I also learned about just how small and poor Nazareth was. Knowing this, it really puts into perspective the disparaging remarks people make regarding Nazareth. It also shows you the environment Jesus grew up in, and influenced his parables. Fr. Martin is an excellent storyteller. He does a fine job painting pictures of the places he visited, and he draws out details in the Gospels that one could easily miss. There were, however, parts of this book that I didn't enjoy. The beginning annoyed me a little when he waffled about wanting to go to the Holy Land. (Really what Christian, wouldn't want to see the place of Jesus?!) I also got bored in the beginning reading about the trek to get to each of their destinations, and would think to myself, "Hurry up and get there." However, I eventually accepted that that was the nature of this book as a personal pilgrimage. It would be incomplete to ignore the journey and focus solely on the destination. Those complaints aside, I still enjoyed the book. It was quite interesting to see Jesus, the Gospel passages, and the modern day Holy Land through the eyes of Fr. Martin. This book was provided to me for free by Harper Collins in exchange for an honest review.

It's difficult to fit this marvelous book comfortably into any one genre. Some of it is personal memoir of a pilgrimage to the Holy Land the author made with a fellow-Jesuit (for example, the author's search for a site, the Bay of Parables, whose location stumps everyone except a German Benedictine). Part of it is exegesis, with an exploration of the sometimes hidden meaning of the New

Testament's original Greek (did you know, for example, that the Greek word, *existasthai*, for "to be amazed" that Mark uses to describe those who have just witnessed one of Jesus's healings means "to stand outside oneself," to be so amazed that one's yanked out of one's intellectual skin? Part of it is pastoral/devotional reflection on events recorded in scripture. (In reflecting on the Eucharist, for example, Martin muses on how Jesus moved his "body" from place to place to give himself to others, and how we're called to do likewise--to go where we can feed people.) In the hands of a less skilled and less insightful author, combining these three genres between a single volume could be a train wreck. But Martin pulls off the job seamlessly. I can't recommend this book highly enough.

I've read several of Fr. Martin's books and this one is possibly the best one of all. I've always wanted to visit Israel and take in the sites and reading this book, I feel like I'm there with him. He writes with such humor, wit and insight that it is hard to put this book down. Like the author says, this isn't a theology book, but a book about his travels seen through the lens of his faith (as a Catholic and Jesuit priest) - but his writing is "down to earth" and accessible. He isn't writing it just for Catholics or Christians necessarily, so I think anyone with an interest in the Jesus of history and/or Jesus of faith will find something to like here. I've never met Fr. Martin but I think he would be an excellent teacher and a fun person to travel with - and all of that comes out in this book. I just wish he could write books more quickly so we didn't have to wait so long between them - ha ha!

I have laughed out loud, been moved to contemplative prayer on aspects of Jesus' life and brought to tears, and I'm not completely finished with this book. I have read several of Father Jim's books, and he continues in this one to write in easy to read but informative prose. I find it hard to put down. The book weaves his joyful enthusiasm for the Gospel with his personal travel to the Holy Land with a brother Jesuit. I felt like I was there with him in the crowded, noisy Church of the Nativity, riding with the cab driver in Bethlehem and also at the peaceful Bay of Parables. Father Jim is down to earth, intelligent, inspiring and funny and this book reflects all of that. If you don't have a copy, what are you waiting for?

I've never left a rating on before but am writing one now since Fr. Martin just requested via twitter for some feedback and felt i should contribute. I am over halfway through the audiobook version (which the author reads) and it is no less wonderful than all of his other books. His way of weaving in the life/teaching of Jesus with his trip to the holy land is perfectly done. This might sound cheesy but he really makes you feel like you are there with him on his journey (which i feel saves me from

taking the trip myself). In particular, his retelling of gospel stories not only breathes new life into them but also leads you to see them from several different perspectives. (Which is exactly what a great teacher does!) It's clear why Fr Martin has been so successful in spreading the good news. His genuine, down-to-earth, accessible writing style makes this book (as well as his others) a joy to read. I thank him for continuing to write!!

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