


Jesus of Nazareth, Part Two: Holy Week: From the Entrance into Jerusalem to the Resurrection

Pope Benedict XVI

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For Christians, Jesus of Nazareth is the Son of God, who died for the sins of the world, and who rose from the dead in triumph over sin and death. For non-Christians, he is almost anything else—a myth, a political revolutionary, a prophet whose teaching was misunderstood or distorted by his followers. Jesus of Nazareth is the Son of God, and no myth, revolutionary, or misunderstood prophet, insists Benedict XVI. He thinks that the best of historical scholarship, while it can't "prove" Jesus is the Son of God, certainly doesn't disprove it. Indeed, Benedict maintains that the evidence, fairly considered, brings us face-to-face with the challenge of Jesus—a real man who taught and acted in ways that were tantamount to claims of divine authority, claims not easily dismissed as lunacy or deception.

Benedict XVI presents this challenge in his new book, *Jesus of Nazareth: From His Transfiguration Through His Death and Resurrection*, the sequel volume to *Jesus of Nazareth: From the Baptism in the Jordan to the Transfiguration*.

Why was Jesus rejected by the religious leaders of his day? Who was responsible for his death? Did he establish a Church to carry on his work? How did Jesus view his suffering and death? How should we? And, most importantly, did Jesus really rise from the dead and what does his resurrection mean? The story of Jesus raises these and other crucial questions.

Benedict brings to his study the vast learning of a brilliant scholar, the passionate searching of a great mind, and the deep compassion of a pastor's heart. In the end, he dares readers to grapple with the meaning of Jesus' life, teaching, death, and resurrection. *Jesus of Nazareth: From His Transfiguration Through His Death and Resurrection* challenges both believers and unbelievers to decide who Jesus of Nazareth is and what he means for them.

Jesus of Nazareth, Part Two: Holy Week: From the Entrance into Jerusalem to the Resurrection Details

Date : Published March 15th 2011 by Ignatius Press

ISBN : 9781586175009

Author : Pope Benedict XVI

Format : Hardcover 362 pages

Genre : Christianity, Catholic, Religion, Theology, Nonfiction, History

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From Reader Review Jesus of Nazareth, Part Two: Holy Week: From the Entrance into Jerusalem to the Resurrection for online ebook

Barron says

I finished this book early this morning before bed. It is an excellent work and you do not need to read Part One before reading this book. I do, however, intend to read part one at some point in time.

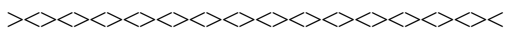
There is much theology in this book so it can get pretty deep at times. However, it is very readable in most parts and the lay person should have no problem understanding most of it. The nice thing about it is that there is a Glossary in the back of the book that was put together by the publishers so that helps with terms that the reader may not necessarily understand.

Most of the books in the Bibliography are in German so if you are looking to read some of the works referenced in this volume you will have to speak the language and be able to read it.

I recommend this book for anyone who wants to go deeper into the events of our Lord's passion during Holy Week.

booklady says

Chapter 4 may well be my most favorite chapter this second time, though I am fairly sure I glossed over it first go through as being 'too theological' or 'not so interesting' as some of the other chapters. Aren't we always most interested in things with which we can most easily relate? In Chapter 4, PBXVI asks the (presumed) Christian lay reader to stretch in three unfamiliar and potentially challenging directions: toward greater understanding of the ministerial priesthood, Jewish tradition, and Rabbinic theology. It is in reaching toward unfamiliar ideas where we learn the most. In addition to being our Savior, Jesus was the consummate teacher. He would not give His disciples all the answers but would expect them to work for them. He was also the new High Priest. Born into and raised in Jewish tradition, we know that He was well-versed in its theology. And He was twice referred to by His followers as 'Rabboni': (Mark 10:51 and John 20:16). It was the most honorable of all the titles.



Listening to Pope Benedict describe Jesus' entrance into Jerusalem I am struck by the things which strike Him. He notices blind Bartimaeus along the road who only asks to see and then granted sight wants nothing more than to follow Jesus. The differences among the four Gospels are fascinating in the hands of Pope Benedict as he shows the subtle differences among the texts and explains the backgrounds of the authors as well as citing early liturgical references such as the Didach?.

Br Stabin John Capuchin says

My rating will be 4.5. I am so happy to live in an era which a legend like Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI is living. The brilliance is marked by commitment makes his life more affectionate towards Christianity. The book Jesus of Nazareth, Part Two about the passion and resurrection of Jesus is a great experience for me. I read this book during the Triduum and the following days of Easter. This helped me to meditate more on the mysteries of these days. A wonderful book full of doctrinal evaluation. He did a wonderful job to present the paschal mysteries to us. I recommend this book to all Christians who want to know more about the passion, death and resurrection of our Lord. I hope, by the grace of God I may be able to read this book again in next year holy week.

Julie Davis says

REREAD

Despite what I said the first time around (below) I have not gone back to this repeatedly. Partly because it is such demanding reading (one must pay attention!) and partly because there was always some other shiny new book I wanted to read.

After attending Stations of the Cross last Friday, though, I realized that Lent is half over and I haven't really dug into Passion week. So here I am with Pope Benedict's second Jesus of Nazareth book, marveling again at how lucid it is, how erudite, and how accurately he hits the nail on the head for my spiritual needs.

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ORIGINAL

Wow. This is a book that I'll be going back to repeatedly. Such good insights into what Scripture really tells us and that is often glossed over. I also was impressed by how Ratzinger (because he wrote this as a personal project, not as Pope Benedict) always began by acknowledging what modern theology, science, and popular opinion would say about certain subjects ... before going on to unpack what is known and what can be reasonably assumed. His way of constantly bringing the material back to what it means to us as believing Christians was also wonderful and the most helpful part of the material.

Joseph says

As a Mormon, I was raised to think that we (Mormons) had the monopoly on truth. Though I've long since given up that idea (while retaining my Mormonism), I suppose there are some things so deeply ingrained in one's culture and upbringing that, no matter how one tries, will always seem to encumber one's train of thought. Reading this second installment of Pope Benedict's book on Jesus Christ was, I suppose as a consequence of my culture, a constant surprise: at every turn, it seems like Benedict had insight into the Bible that far surpasses many of the books my own fellow Mormons have come across in their superficial reading of the scriptures. This is quite clearly a man who is not only a supreme scholar of the Bible, but an obvious disciple of the One of whom he writes so insightfully. While I appreciated this insight in his first book, this second was in its own way gripping. That seems silly to say, but for a student of the scriptures, Benedict's reading resonated in important ways with my own amateur readings.

In my opinion, the most important message that comes through this installment is the self-giving that so characterized Christ's final hours, and what this self-giving ought to mean to us: "His very being is a "being-for". If we are able to grasp this, then we have truly come close to the mystery of Jesus, and we have understood what discipleship is." Benedict teaches so clearly what is sometimes obscured by the lack of detail offered in the New Testament. He sheds light on the manner in which Christ lived and the calling that his life offers us. One excellent example of this comes when Benedict is discussing the apostles sleeping while Christ suffers in the garden of Gethsemane: "Across the centuries, it is the drowsiness of the disciples that opens up the possibilities of the power of the Evil One. Such drowsiness deadens the soul, such that it remains undisturbed by the power of the Evil One at work in the world and by all the injustice and suffering ravaging the earth...[the soul] is easily persuaded that things cannot be so bad, so as to continue in the self-satisfaction of its own comfortable existence." Though his tone is never more accusatory than its mild form here, there is plenty of criticism of our own complacent Christianity so popular in the United States today.

This drowsiness is often justified by Christians *because* of Christ's suffering; or in other words, our comfortable existence is given to us because of our righteous devotion to the suffering Christ, who suffered so we wouldn't have to. Benedict, however, does not believe - nor do I think the scriptures bear out - this unfortunate interpretation of Christianity. He writes instead that "the world is 'true' only to the extent that it reflects God...[and] it becomes more and more true the closer it draws to God. Man becomes true, he becomes himself, when he grows in God's likeness." The Christian may counter that God's likeness - or the likeness of the *living* Christ is in glory. But even this falls short of Benedict's reading of the New Testament, for it is the "Cross itself [that becomes] God's glorification, the glory of God made manifest in the Son." In other words, it is the suffering of Christ to which we should aspire.

I suppose I should clarify by saying that Benedict does not believe we should all be suffering as Christ suffered. But all too often it seems we are unwilling to interrupt our "comfortable existence" to bear our own cross. Indeed, it is hard to say that a comfortable existence witnesses the Truth, when, as Benedict states, "Truth is outwardly powerless in the world, just as Christ is powerless by the world's standard: he has no legions; he is crucified. Yet in his very powerlessness he is powerful: only thus, again and again, does truth become powerful." Here we see the full implications of the words of Christ, such as his call to "resist not evil" and turn the other cheek; to pray for one's enemies, bless them that curse you and despitefully use you. A comfortable existence cannot be sustained if Christ's teachings are to be taken seriously, and unfortunately a comfortable existence seems to be what many of us are most keen on sustaining: "Again and again, mankind will be faced with the same choice: to say yes to the God who works only through the power of truth and love, or to build on something tangible and concrete - on violence."

Christ's message was a message of peace, and Benedict makes it clear how this message comes through in the New Testament. If ever we needed a book, it is this one - if only because the Bible, where the message of peace is written clearly for all to read, is consistently *misread* by so many today. I highly recommend this book to anyone who presumes to be a Christian.

Jeff Miller says

It does seem rather superfluous to review *Jesus of Nazareth: Holy Week: From the Entrance Into Jerusalem To The Resurrection* on a Catholic blog. For my own mindset a new book written by the Pope, even if as a private theologian, is all the incentive I need. It's not as if I need to wait to see reviews come in to decide to buy it. Especially since this book is a continuation of the first book in what the Pope hopes will be completed by a third book.

My advice would be simply to just buy it, borrow it, etc.

Instead I will just give some quick thoughts about the book. Again the Pope is showing his approach to Biblical scholarship and theology. He fully engages all the modern tools of Biblical exegesis while also applying the analogy of faith. He knows the limits of the modern tools, but also sees how they can be used to good purpose. The same goes with interacting with the scholarship of predominately German scripture scholars along with others. He can take what is good from the writings of Rudolf Bultmann while remaining skeptical of Bultmann's excessive skepticism in what Biblical texts could be accepted. His openness in engaging ideas from others was demonstrated in the first book of this series in regards to Rabbi Jacob Neusner, and really his whole life as a theologian has demonstrated this.

As the Pope writes in the beginning of this book this series is not intended as a life of Christ. What he does though is like a life of Christ in structure where he follows questions in scriptural scholarship that intrigue him. He does not try to cover everything and highlights areas he finds interesting. For example in his discussion of whether the Last Supper was a Passover meal he presents several lines of scholarship on the subject that are fascinating and while some of these ideas he obviously is skeptical of – he does not dismiss them out of hand and again is open to discovering the truth. Even in areas where you think this is the conclusion he most accepts, his language is never definitive. Partly he is careful since he is writing as a private theologian and not as Pope, but mainly I think this is the deep humility he has always shown in his writings.

As is almost certainly always the case the few bits the media found in the book they considered newsworthy are really nothing and certainly not the most important parts of the book to highlight. His writing on blaming the Jewish people for the death of Christ are nothing new and really nothing different than what was written as part of Vatican II.

As for Lenten reading the book is perfect as it covers Holy Week and gives you much to think about. I just hope we don't have to wait another four years for part 3.

Thadeus says

I really loved this book. I think the most impactful part for me on this first read was the epilogue and its discussion of Jesus being one with the Father and being present to us in that way. Very powerful!

This is such a well written book. Very accessible to read straight through, but so much to ponder and so many biblical and other references included. Well put together! Includes bibliography, glossary, and index of proper names and subjects. Text ends on page 293.

Highly recommended for someone who wants to get to know Jesus of Nazareth!

Chris Hall says

I was expecting great things from Pope Benedict XVI after reading the first part of this trilogy and I wasn't going to be disappointed. Let me just say that this book is excellent!

If you haven't read it because you think it's a 'Catholic' book then I implore you to put down any prejudice and just read it. Benedict has written these books in such a way so they become open and personal to all Christians.

This book follows the ministry of Jesus during the Holy Week up to his crucifixion and resurrection. It's extremely well written and provides enough to make you think deeply and if needs be find out more yourself.

Benedict provides a good depth of detail when it comes to looking at the Old Testament prophecies concerning. Consider Jesus and the colt, John implies that Jesus was 'put on' the donkey which ties up with Zadok and Nathan's enthronement of Solomon on David's mule in 1 Kings. A nice touch.

If you haven't read this book then do, you won't be disappointed.

Patrick says

I've read a few "Jesus books" in my time. Outside of the Bible, this now ranks as the best of them. It's scholarly without being weasel-worded, and while not a Life of Christ in the strict sense, it's strewn with profound insights throughout. Among other things, I learned about the roots of the "High-Priestly Prayer," the significance of Jesus requisitioning a young donkey for his entrance into Jerusalem, the importance of salt, and the two traditional groups of Resurrection accounts.

Pope Benedict is intimately familiar with the strengths and weaknesses of the historical-critical method of exegesis, and this book offers gentle but unmistakable corrections to some of the mistakes made by fans of that theological approach (Rudolf Bultmann foremost among them, as on p. 165, when he and Adolf von Harnack are admonished because "an exegesis that turns a text into its opposite is no exegesis"). The pope looks at individual Greek words in the scriptures when necessary, but he's no slave to the perils of "proof-texting," and never loses sight of broad themes, either.

Apart from the thought-provoking, prayerful content, even production values in the hardback edition are first-class: Philip J. Whitmore did a masterful job of translating the pope's manuscript from its original German into English. Ignatius Press should also be commended for supplying an index, a glossary, and a list of biblical references (there are a lot of them, but none sounds forced).

The book is simultaneously accessible and challenging, a bit like what you'd expect from an introductory college class taught by a professor in love with his subject. Pope Benedict shines welcome historical and theological light on Holy Week, helping his readers meet Jesus with full hearts and fresh eyes. Mischevously, the book even includes "bonus material" -- a fascinating epilogue on the Ascension, which isn't part of Holy Week but does lend context to those earth-shaking events.

In short, this book is highly recommended for all Christians, and also for anyone still laboring under the misconception that Benedict XVI would be little more than a "placeholder pope" following the long pontificate of his friend John Paul II.

Darryl says

Pope Benedict's 'Jesus of Nazareth' is a testimony to a man who has spent his life learning about and loving God. This book will be one I turn to in the future when I want to reference the events of Holy Week.

Pope Benedict's understanding of Scriptures, the Church Fathers, and the History/tradition of the Church, gives competent understanding to the most important week in the history of the world.

Each important event in Holy Week is looked at, and various viewpoints from different exegetes are considered.

Thank you Pope Benedict for being a good shepherd and "feeding your sheep!(cf. John 21:15-17)"

Read this book!

Fred Warren says

This is the second part of Joseph Ratzinger's three-volume opus on the life of Jesus. Like the first book, this isn't Catholic dogma, and there's no reason for Protestant readers to shy away from it. This series is a solid, well-researched, engagingly-written, and Biblically-focused examination of the life and person of Jesus, penned by an eminent theologian with a pastor's heart. There's probably a copy at your local library. Check it out.

This is a more challenging read than the first volume, mostly because it's packed even fuller with insights that take some time to digest. Nearly any paragraph could sustain a solid week or two of Bible study. Where Part One surveyed the broad scope of Jesus' ministry years, Part Two zeroes-in on Holy Week, and the books are about the same size. This reflects a quantum leap in the level of detail—Ratzinger drills deeply into the significant events surrounding the Crucifixion and Resurrection, examining them both in their immediate context and their larger significance to the mystery of the Incarnation, and the Pope Emeritus has a lot to say in answer to the question, *Who is Jesus, and how did his life, death, and resurrection transform our relationship with God?*

As in Part One, Ratzinger employs a wide range of Biblical scholarship and analysis in support of his narrative, while continuing his gentle critique of the historical-critical method of Biblical scholarship that pursues a "historical" Jesus but neglects the role of faith that illuminates the Scriptural account and reveals the meaning that permeates it. His method and intent are important to understand before delving into these books, so I strongly recommend reading Part One first, where he discusses this in detail.

In Part One, Ratzinger presented Jesus as the new lawgiver, the perfected "Moses" leading his people into the Promised Land. In Part Two, tracing the events of Holy Week, he shows how Jesus is revealed as the new, perfected High Priest, simultaneously God and Man, King and Intercessor, Priest and Sacrifice.

He spends a lot of time examining how Jesus prayed during these days—the High Priestly prayer at the Last Supper, the intercessory prayer in the Garden of Gethsemane, and the words from the Cross. He also delves into Jesus' prophetic discourses and instructions to his disciples that set the stage for the emergence of the Church that will carry on his ministry to the world, a calling and example epitomized in his washing of the disciples' feet. Holy Week culminates in Jesus' death and resurrection, wholly unprecedented and revolutionary events with implications that Jesus' followers, guided by the Holy Spirit, would spend

generations unpacking.

Not one to shy away from the hard questions, Ratzinger takes on the controversies surrounding the four Gospel narratives and shows how their harmony is preserved despite differing perspectives, emphases, and timelines. He concludes with a very simple and practical evidence of the reality of these events and this person he's shared with us in the pages of his book, displayed in the aftermath of Jesus' ascension into heaven:

The conclusion surprises us. Luke says that the disciples were full of joy at the Lord's definitive departure. We would have expected them to be left perplexed and sad. The world was unchanged, and Jesus had gone definitively. They had received a commission that seemed impossible to carry out and lay well beyond their powers...And yet it is written that they returned to Jerusalem with great joy, blessing God. How are we to understand this? In any case, it follows that the disciples do not feel abandoned. They do not consider Jesus to have disappeared far away into an inaccessible heaven. They are obviously convinced of a new presence of Jesus...they know that he is now permanently among them, in the way that only God can be close to us.

This is the Jesus revealed to us in Holy Week, the joy and hope of those who believe. Not absent, but ever and always present with us in a new way.

AvvαΦ says

In tempi nei quali la figura di Gesù Cristo e le sue ultime, drammatiche ore, sono oggetto di narrazione superficiale e dilettesca, più per soddisfare una curiosità bulimica e incline alla fiction più becera – il riferimento agli scritti di Augias è puramente voluto – è davvero un piacere leggere un'esegesi così approfondita, colta, affatto auto referenziale, anzi, ricca di rimandi alla tradizione teologica del XX secolo e quella classica (Joachim Ringleben, Marius Reiser, Karl-Heinz Menke, Tommaso d'Aquino per citarne solo alcuni), con la quale Ratzinger continuamente si confronta, oltre che ai vangeli sinottici, ricchissima di deduzioni personali e spunti davvero illuminanti.

Joseph Ratzinger è, notoriamente, un teologo di raffinata cultura e di spiccata intelligenza, ma leggendo questi suoi scritti sulla figura di Gesù, viene fuori tra le righe anche un tratto della sua personalità più nascosta: la dolcezza, la mitezza, l'empatia profonda con la figura di Cristo, del quale egli è *in primis* discepolo, più che studioso; spesso si è stigmatizzata la sua figura, quando ricopriva il ruolo di Sommo Pontefice, tacciandolo di freddezza, di gelido, teutonico distacco, di debolezza, di vanità, addirittura, solo perché amava indossare scarpette rosse di Prada (esiste, è chiaro, ancora qualche ingenuo che crede le personalità facciano shopping presso le note Marche, e che non sa come queste vengano – beate – fatte omaggio dei più costosi ed esclusivi capi della loro *maison*), o il camauro, trascurando o ignorando bellamente di sottolineare come questi fossero tipici vestimenti papali che papa Ratz ha voluto adottare nuovamente. Gusti un po' d'antan, il massimo che gli si possa imputare. Diluvi di maldicenze sul suo passato giovanile, dove si è voluto anche accusarlo di essere nazista perché bambino della gioventù Hitleriana, come dire che tutti i bambini balilla degli anni Trenta, Quaranta in Italia erano fascisti. In ogni caso, anche i suoi più feroci detrattori, in una cosa sono stati concordi: Ratzinger è un eccellente teologo. Qui si rivela un sensibilissimo discepolo di Cristo.

Ogni momento della vita di Cristo, dall'ingresso a Gerusalemme seduto su un'asina che non apparteneva a

nessuno, alla purificazione del Tempio (comunemente nota come la Cacciata dei mercanti dal Tempio), fino ai momenti cruciali della lavanda dei piedi, l'Ultima Cena, la preghiera nel campo dei Getsemani e la Passione, la Resurrezione, ogni momento è oggetto di riflessione profondissima, ad un tempo storica e teologica, ed esegesi che spesso per me, è stata illuminante. Mi sia concesso un piccolo spoiler: alla morte di Gesù, nell'ora nona, le tre del pomeriggio, i sinottici dicono che il velo del Tempio si squarciò da cima a fondo e si fece buio e la terra tremò. Nella mia profonda ignoranza teologica io ho sempre pensato, be' certo, gli massacrano il Suo unico Figlio, il minimo che possa fare Dio padre è incxxxi e recidere il simbolo più sacro di Israele, il Velo che cela il *Sancta Sanctorum*, il luogo che porta alla presenza di Dio e a cui una volta sola l'anno può accedere il Sommo Sacerdote. Nix. Ciò, contrariamente, simboleggia il totale accesso di Israele, del popolo di Dio, alla Sua presenza: ora, con la morte di Gesù, non è più necessario aver intermediari per accedere al Padre, attraverso Gesù, che lo chiama "Abbà", il più confidenziale e tenero dei nomi, "babbino" diremmo noi, ogni credente ha accesso alla presenza di Dio, Gesù ci introduce come facenti parte della Famiglia celeste, a pieno titolo di figli, senza timori reverenziali. Solo il Figlio prediletto poteva rompere tutti i muri, tutte le etichette celesti e far osare a ciascuno di noi rivolgersi al Padre con il suo nome, il nome che i figli danno a chi li ha generati. Ce lo insegna con "Padre Nostro" e la simbologia lo ribadisce con la lacerazione del velo del Tempio. Questo è un piccolissimo esempio di come tutta l'esegesi di Ratzinger sia esplicativa nel rivelare la simbologia chiarissima che è alla base di ogni gesto, di ogni azione, anche non di Cristo stesso. Ogni cosa che accadde in quei tempi, era già preannunciato prima dai Salmi e dai profeti, questo rimarca il testo, pone Gesù come figura regale e messianica (il Messia che Israele attendeva) e salvifica (l'Agnello di Dio). Ecco che la Sua Crocifissione, avviene all'ora stessa e nel momento stesso in cui, nel Tempio di Gerusalemme, vengono immolati gli agnelli in occasione della Pasqua ebraica: è Lui il vero, unico agnello sacrificale, d'ora in poi nessun sacrificio animale dovrà essere più compiuto, il Dio della pace che ha preso su di sé tutti i peccati del mondo si è immolato e si immola fino alla fine del mondo per tutti, credenti e non credenti, per ogni essere animato.

Su quel palcoscenico, ha avuto luogo una rappresentazione che si riproduce eterna, ognuno di noi vi prende parte, intorno a Gesù e ai suoi piedi sotto la Croce. Ci siamo tutti: ogni oppresso dalle iniquità del mondo è in Gesù, ogni perseguitato a causa dell'ingiustizia, della malizia e dell'avidità del mondo, ogni amico che tradisce per paura o inerzia è lì, ogni madre dal cuore squarciato per la morte di un figlio è in quella scena, ogni peccatore che si pente e ogni peccatore che *non* si pente, ogni cuore di pietra che sbeffeggia il Signore e diabolicamente lo spinge dar prova di poteri sovranaturali e ogni cuore di pietra che si scioglie di fronte al Mistero "Davvero costui era figlio di Dio".

Pertanto, il maggior pregio di questo libro, a mio parere, non è la raffinata trama teologica, che è quasi scontata vista l'altissima caratura intellettuale del suo estensore, ma è la tenerezza con cui Ratzinger parla di Gesù. Davvero incomprensibile che qualcuno ancora lo derubrichi a mito, favoletta rassicurante. Gesù è esistito, ribadisce Ratzinger, qualora ce ne fosse bisogno e tanto ce n'è ed Esiste, vive, è risorto da morte. Questa è ben più di una speranza, è una certezza di fede, è una testimonianza che tanti discepoli hanno testimoniato fino alla morte in croce (a croce a testa in giù, come Pietro chiese di essere crocifisso, perché era un onore troppo grande, per lui, essere crocifisso nella maniera in cui fu crocifisso il suo Signore). Questa è la nostra serena certezza, che Ratzinger tanto sublimemente rimarca: "Se Cristo non fosse risorto, vuota è allora la nostra predicazione, vuota anche la nostra fede. Noi, poi, risultiamo falsi testimoni di Dio, perché contro Dio abbiamo testimoniato che Egli ha resuscitato Cristo" dalle Lettere di san Paolo (1 Cor, 15, 14s).

Nicolás says

Give this man a pen and he can destroy your heart, together with your arguments.

Dale a este hombre una pluma y podría destruirte el corazón, junto con tus argumentos.

Joseph R. says

Benedict continues his deep analysis of the Gospel texts to understand who Jesus is and what faith in Him brings about for believers. This book follows Jesus from His Palm Sunday entrance into the holy city of Jerusalem through the resurrection with an epilogue about His ascension. Naturally, other relevant texts from the Old Testament and the New Testament are referenced and explained in light of Jesus's passion, death, and resurrection. The songs of the Suffering Servant from Isaiah and a surprising number of the Psalms have fuller and deeper meaning. The book is steeped in Holy Scripture.

The book is also very aware of recent scholarship about Jesus. Benedict frequently references the work of the historical-critical method without going into depth about the method. Rather, he uses their work to investigate who Jesus is and what faith in Him brings about for believers (i.e., Benedict sticks to his purpose!). Benedict has an awareness of academics and often references their work, not to engage in controversies, but to grow in understanding. He also references the Church Fathers and the great theologians from history such as Saint Augustine of Hippo and Saint Thomas Aquinas. The book never bogs down in scholarly conundrums or technical details.

Benedict stays focused on certain details and often admits that more can be said about the events and details than he presents. Such a claim is amazing considering the depth and originality of his own analysis. Consider his discussion of Jesus's trial with Pilate, where John quotes the crowd as demanding Jesus's death and saying that His blood will be upon them and their children. Historically, this text is used to justify anti-Semitic violence and hatred, a fact Benedict acknowledges. But he goes deeper and says that "the Christian will remember that Jesus' blood speaks a different language from the blood of Abel (Heb 12:24): it does not cry out for vengeance and punishment; it brings reconciliation. It is not poured out against anyone; it is poured out for many, for all." [p. 187, emphasis in original] The crowd is just as worthy as anyone else to be redeemed by His blood, even if they did not immediately intend it. Benedict also says the crowd was probably full of Barabbas supporters waiting for the moment when they could get their condemned man out of trouble by taking advantage of Pilate's Passover amnesty. The crowd certainly didn't represent the Jewish people as a whole. Benedict does go into detail when discussing events and issues when he deems it appropriate. Naturally Jesus's death and resurrection are so fundamental to Christian history and faith that endless details and meanings can be brought out of them.

This book is a wonderful presentation of Jesus in the definitive moments of His mission for us, that is, to reconcile mankind to the Father and to open up a greater intimacy between God and His creatures. Readers will find much to inform and inspire them to strive for that intimacy through greater knowledge of Jesus of Nazareth.

Carol says

This book was read as a Lenten Devotional with discussions featured by St Ignatious Press on Facebook. Pope Benedict writes a book that is clear, easily understood and very inspirational. It is a book I will definitely read again to

savor more deeply what the Pope wrote.
