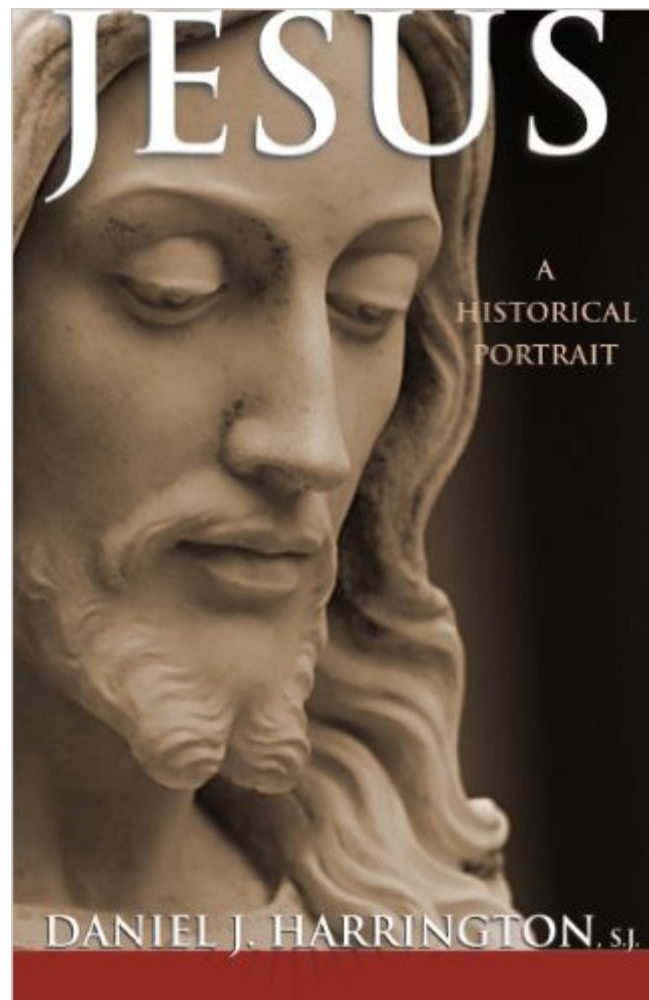


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# Jesus: A Historical Portrait



## Synopsis

Was Jesus a feminist? Who really killed Jesus? Did all those miracles actually happen? How do we know who Jesus is? How are we supposed to know what Jesus really said? How does Jesus' Judaism fit in with our salvation as Christians? Questions about the life and times of Jesus Christ, one of the most written-about people of all time, continue to intrigue us two millennia after his death. Between the vagueness of the canonical Gospels and the sensational claims made in modern films and books, what is a Christian to believe about the only Son of God? Employing a popular take on current New Testament scholarship, Jesuit scholar Father Daniel Harrington explores difficult as well as less complicated issues surrounding the life of Christ. By helping us to place Jesus in a historically accurate context, Father Harrington helps us to better understand the real Jesus, and ultimately, our salvation. Fascinating sidebars and engaging questions for reflection and discussion make *Jesus: A Historical Portrait* a must-have book for the individual, small group or classroom.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

In his latest work, Father Harrington shares his conclusions on what current New Testament scholarship "allows us to say with confidence" about Jesus as a historical figure. He presents the basis for these conclusions in clear language accompanied by examples, Scripture citations, sidebars, and questions for reflection. Chapters address such topics as Jesus in relation to the kingdom, prayer, women, and politics; and Jesus' death, resurrection, and second coming. Harrington begins by comparing the Gospel Jesus and the "historian's" Jesus. The Gospels,

our strongest basis for faith, show Jesus as a moral and religious figure, while biblical scholarship places him in his proper historical context "to arrive at a reliable and coherent interpretation of what Jesus said and did." For example, the chapter on the death of Jesus addresses two opposing views: (1) Jewish leaders sought Jesus' execution, which was merely ratified by the Romans, and (2) Jewish authorities were not involved in any way. Harrington cites Scripture references to support a variety of possible reasons Jesus died; explains historical and theological circumstances that led to his death; and concludes that Pontius Pilate and certain Jewish leaders were responsible for it. The sidebar discusses the film "The Passion of the Christ" and its portrayal of the role of the Jews in the death of Jesus. Chapter questions ask us to reflect on lingering anti-Semitism related to the Jews' perceived role in the death of Jesus. This is an enlightening and engaging work suitable for individuals and small groups wishing to enlarge their concept of Jesus' life on earth.

The author, Daniel Harrington, is a Jesuit. Therefore, I was expecting a more scholarly work, with deeper insights into who was Jesus. Clearly that is not what the author had in mind. The author conveys a factual, historical perspective of Jesus in a relatively short and easy to read style. For those looking for such a book, look no further. I have read many books about Jesus. From this book, you will learn a lot about who Jesus was. On the other hand, if like me, you are looking for a deep scholarly examination of the life of Jesus, this is not your book. Of course such a book would have been four times as long as this one, with lots of details and footnotes few people have any interest in.

It is a very short book, and a vast subject, but maybe Harrington should have trimmed his sails somewhat. The end result is a book that tries too hard to reach too far, and ends up with a disjointed, superficial feel to it. It is clear that Harrington can write good prose, and I will have a look at some of his longer work, but this book is disappointing. It is too detailed to be a real entry-level primer, and far too basic to serve as anything else. Hardly a "historical portrait".

The book is easy to read, easy to follow and the questions are probative. The information is provided in concise chapters to allow the reader to absorb the great information,

Great clarity about the Creator God who I trust in Faith to be as forgiving and loving in whatever comes next as He has been in this wonderful gift of life..

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