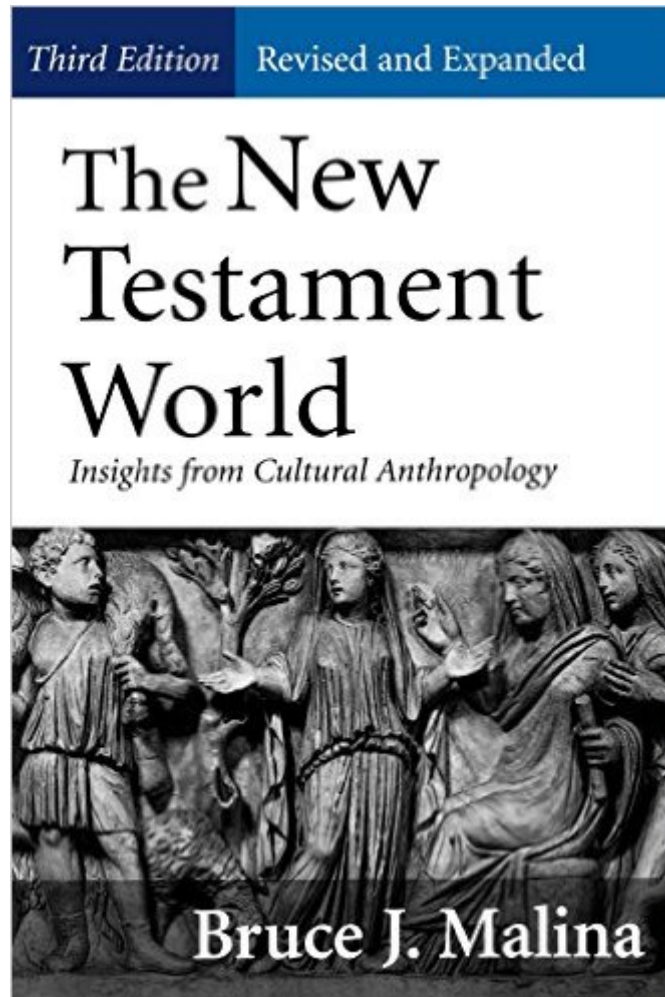


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# The New Testament World: Insights From Cultural Anthropology 3rd Edition



## Synopsis

A classroom standard for two decades, *The New Testament World: Insights from Cultural Anthropology* has introduced students to both the New Testament and the social-scientific study of the New Testament. This revised and expanded third edition offers new chapters on envy and the Jesus movement, updates chapters from earlier editions, augments the bibliography, and offers student study questions.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Malina's book was written for "the beginning student of the New Testament" and he has achieved his goal, although intermediate and advanced students will benefit as well. He covers a wide range of subjects (e.g., honor and shame, group vs individual personality, social status, envy, kinship and marriage, clean and unclean) with sufficient depth to get his points across. Personally I would have preferred more in depth discussions and certainly more documentation, but perhaps that would have made a much larger book. Malina's discussion provide insights into the broad sociocultural and psychological constructs which were operational at the time of the 1st millenium. Thus, they help us understand the customs and language of the New Testament where we might otherwise fail to grasp a critical saying or event. For example, his chapter on envy puts into perspective one of the chief motivations for the conspiracy to kill Jesus, which might otherwise not be apparent. In this same vein, his chapter on maintaining social status goes a long way toward explaining what appear to be strange greetings between Jesus and his prospective followers. The book is not perfect. The

writing style tends toward the academic, yet it lacks the true scholarly flavor some might be searching for. Perhaps this comes from the attempt to make academic material more accessible to the general public. I certainly recommend it as a supplementary text for anyone interested in understanding Jesus and his time period.

Expanding and reissuing an established classroom text, Professor Malina provides the beginning Bible student with an historically and culturally accurate panorama of first century a.d. Palestine. The greatest value in his work is that it helps contemporary Christians to avoid anachronisms when contemplating Jesus and the early Jesus movements. Professor Malina's syntax is often stilted and verbose. This text reviews substantial amounts of materials published elsewhere. Nevertheless, the text is useful, especially for the beginning student of the New Testament.

I really enjoyed this book and its insights into the norms and mores of the time when Jesus walked the earth. Being American, most of the material regarding everyday life in the Middle East at that time is somewhat foreign to me, my way of thinking and my upbringing. This book will help clear up difficulties encountered in the Gospels in the areas of: honor and shame, individual versus group, social status, kinship and marriage and what is considered clean and unclean. It is written in a relaxed, easy style and is a great resource for studying the life and times of Jesus. I have made room for this fine work on my shelves so that it will be at my fingertips when I need a first century reality check. -- Moza

Malina looks into the culture, presuppositions and values of the first century Mediterranean peoples. The understanding of the way of life and values open up new understanding of many passages principally of the Gospels which are difficult to understand. The value of honor & shame illumine many of the controversies surrounding the person of the historical Jesus. This really is great reading for anyone who wants to understand the Gospels today. Enveloped in a Western materialistic and individualistic culture (anti-culture?) it's difficult to enter into the mind of the first century. Malina helps us to do this and therefore to be able to understand the Gospels and the person of Jesus better.

If you ever wanted to read the Bible and truly understand the text behind the text, then this is the book you want to read. Malina does a wonderful job of giving us insight in to the world that is 1st Century Judea. He brings out the cultural scene of the times to aid us in the understanding of what it

was like to be someone in this time period. Malina breaks down the culture based on the 4 levels of understand. They include kinship, power, religion and economics. He discusses the impact that kinship and power had on this era and how these two items were most prevalent in terms of how people viewed each other. Kinship is broken down into blood lines, where you were born, gender issues and so forth in a way that amazes a reader when it comes to truly seeing the time. Power discusses the fine art of challenge and repose and how challenge was used to try to break down status of an individual (why do you think the Pharisees asked Jesus so many questions???? To lower his power. Funny how Jesus always wins.). Malina discusses the impact of shame and honor and how that plays a role in the family and community. For anyone who really wants to understand the message behind the text of the Bible this is a must have volume for your library.

All in all, I've been very pleased with this purchase. The book came to me highly recommended and I wasn't disappointed. I would caution the reader though when I say that the book is more than a little dry. Also, Malina tends to rely on abstract models to make his point, which is fine, but may not work well for some. On the whole, though, the book is indispensable and will serve anyone well.

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