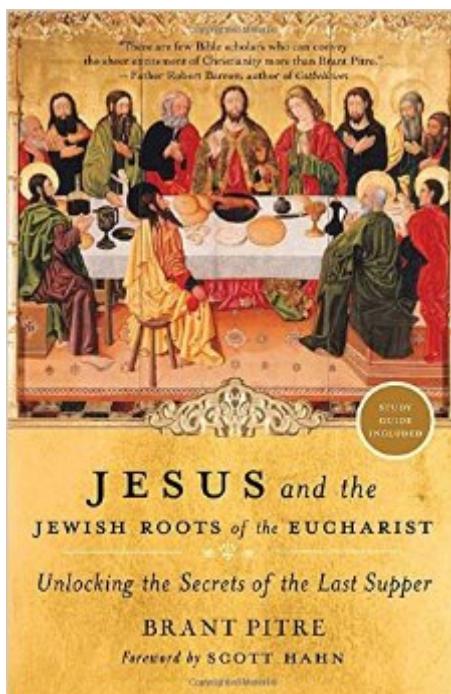


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Jesus And The Jewish Roots Of The Eucharist: Unlocking The Secrets Of The Last Supper



Synopsis

In recent years, Christians everywhere are rediscovering the Jewish roots of their faith. Every year at Easter time, many believers now celebrate Passover meals (known as Seders) seeking to understand exactly what happened at Jesus' final Passover, the night before he was crucified. *Jesus and the Jewish Roots of the Eucharist* shines fresh light on the Last Supper by looking at it through Jewish eyes. Using his in-depth knowledge of the Bible and ancient Judaism, Dr. Brant Pitre answers questions such as: What was the Passover like at the time of Jesus? What were the Jewish hopes for the Messiah? What was Jesus' purpose in instituting the Eucharist during the feast of Passover? And, most important of all, what did Jesus mean when he said, "This is my body | This is my blood"? To answer these questions, Pitre explores ancient Jewish beliefs about the Passover of the Messiah, the miraculous Manna from heaven, and the mysterious Bread of the Presence. As he shows, these three keys—"the Passover, the Manna, and the Bread of the Presence"—have the power to unlock the original meaning of the Eucharistic words of Jesus. Along the way, Pitre also explains how Jesus united the Last Supper to his death on Good Friday and his Resurrection on Easter Sunday. *Inspiring and informative, Jesus and the Jewish Roots of the Eucharist* is a groundbreaking work that is sure to illuminate one of the greatest mysteries of the Christian faith: the mystery of Jesus' presence in the breaking of the bread.

•From the Hardcover edition.

Book Information

Paperback: 256 pages

Publisher: Image; Reprint edition (February 2, 2016)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0385531869

ISBN-13: 978-0385531863

Product Dimensions: 5.2 x 0.7 x 8 inches

Shipping Weight: 12.6 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.8 out of 5 stars [See all reviews](#) (327 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #41,456 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #8 in Books > Christian Books & Bibles > Worship & Devotion > Sacraments #30 in Books > Religion & Spirituality > Worship & Devotion > Ritual #50 in Books > Christian Books & Bibles > Theology > Salvation Theory

Customer Reviews

Brant Pitre's book, "Jesus and the Jewish Roots of the Eucharist", is a tour-de-force of biblical

scholarship and theology. Although Jesus clearly stated that "salvation is from the Jews" (John 4:22) and although he told his disciples "The scribes and the Pharisees sit on Moses' seat; so practice and observe whatever they tell you" (Matt 23:2-3), far too often the Jewish roots of Christianity have been ignored. Although this is not true of works by Doctors of the Church--Jerome studied with Jewish rabbis before translating the Vulgate and Thomas Aquinas regularly drew from rabbis such as Maimonides in works like the *Summa Theologiae*--too many Christians today fail to see the unity of the Old and New Testaments. Moreover, too many modern Jews mistakenly suppose Christianity represents a denial and rejection of their tradition. This book successfully attempts to remedy these problems by, as I explain at the end of this review, challenging some common stereotypes. First, it is worth noting that Pitre's unimpeachable credentials as a scholar. Among other things, Pitre studied archaeology in Israel and received his Ph.D. from Notre Dame where he worked under world-class scholars such as John P. Meier and David Aune. His roughly 600-page doctoral dissertation ("Jesus, the Tribulation, and the End of the Exile") has been published by the prestigious German publisher Mohr Siebeck. It was later reprinted for American audiences by Baker Academic. The back cover of this edition contained endorsements by numerous leading historical Jesus scholars (Dale Allison, Scot McKnight, etc.). Yet, despite his first-rate training, Pitre has somehow figured out how to remain accessible to all audiences.

Thankfully much of the silly season when it comes to Catholic scripture scholars is over and the new breed of Catholic scripture scholars are not likely to get their views displayed on the History or Discovery Channel. This comes to mind after reading Brant Pitre's new book released today *Jesus and the Jewish Roots of the Eucharist: Unlocking the Secrets of the Last Supper*. When it comes to the Eucharist, the better understanding that we have of the Eucharist in the Jewish context the better understanding we have of the Eucharist itself. It was a fulfillment of the Old Testament and gave in that what came before became fully realized. The God-given manna which nourished the Israelites physically when brought to the fullness nourishes us spiritually as the Body, Blood, Soul, and Divinity of Christ. Brant Pitre has focused on the Old Testament along with several non-scriptural sources of Jewish writing to fully give us an understanding of the Eucharist from its Jewish roots. He starts by looking at the Last Supper and how Jesus' words must have gone beyond surprising from a Jewish point of view. We so often hear the words of institution at Mass and have accepted them that it is so easy to forget what they meant to the Jews of that time when it came to eating his body and blood. Even if you saw the blood as pure symbolism it would still be upsetting to Jewish ears and the commandment not to eat the blood of the sacrifice. He goes on to

discuss what was the idea the people had of the coming Messiah. We have often heard that they expected a political Messiah and like so many common facts it isn't exactly true. Some expected a more political Messiah, but the majority expected a new Moses with all that entails.

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