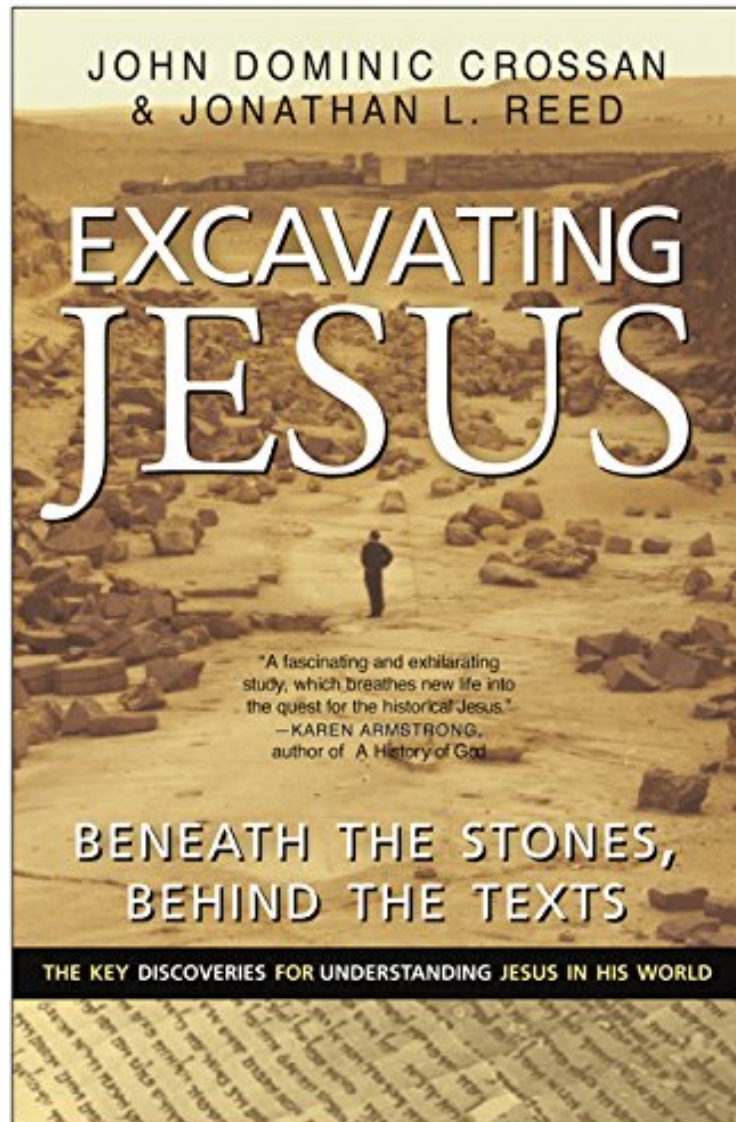


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Excavating Jesus: Beneath the Stones, Behind the Texts

John Dominic Crossan, Jonathan L. Reed

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The premier historical Jesus scholar joins a brilliant archaeologist to illuminate the life and teaching of Jesus against the background of his world. There have been phenomenal advances in the historical understanding of Jesus and his world and times, but also huge, lesser known advances in first-century Palestine archaeology that explain a great deal about Jesus, his followers, and his teachings. This is the first book that combines the two and it does it in a fresh, accessible way that will interest both biblical scholars and students and also the thousands of lay readers of *Biblical Archaeology Review* (150,000+ circulation), *National Geographic*, and other archaeology and ancient history books and magazines. Each chapter of the book focuses on a major modern archaeological or textual discovery and shows how that discovery opens a window onto a major feature of Jesus's life and teachings.

.com "Why did Jesus happen when and where he happened?" is the question that drives *Excavating Jesus*, a collaboration between the leading historical Jesus scholar John Dominic Crossan and noted Galilean archeologist Jonathan Reed. *Excavating Jesus* is a groundbreaking work of popular biblical scholarship, an extraordinarily mature and accessible integration of textual study with archeological research. "Words talk. Stones talk too. Neither talks from the past without interpretive dialogue with the present. But each demands to be heard in its own way," the authors write. True to this principle, Crossan and Reed consider archaeology and exegesis "as twin independent methods, neither of which is subordinate or submissive to the other." The bulk of the book identifies, analyzes, and integrates what the authors believe to be the "top 10" archeological discoveries pertaining to the life of Jesus (such as the house of the apostle Peter at Capernaum), and the top 10 exegetical discoveries (such as the Dead Sea Scrolls). Their excavation of the most important sites and texts, accompanied by stunning illustrations and photographs, provide perhaps the most precise picture of the world in which Jesus lived. For many readers, this information will also shed light on the central themes of Christianity. For instance, in the first century in Galilee, "the Kingdom" meant the Roman Empire. "When, therefore, Jesus spoke of the Kingdom of God, he chose the one expression most calculated to draw Roman attention to what he was doing. Not the 'people' or the 'community' of God, but the 'Kingdom' of God." That's why the Baptism movement of John and the Kingdom movement of Jesus started there and then." --Michael Joseph Gross

From Publishers Weekly

In his monumental *The Historical Jesus: The Life of a Mediterranean Jewish Peasant*, Crossan brilliantly challenged conventional historical Jesus scholarship. Using social-scientific and literary critical methods, he uncovered the layers of the Jesus traditions in the Gospels, excavating not an eschatological prophet preaching a future divine kingdom, but an itinerant Galilean peasant preaching a kingdom based on "commensality," or the just distribution of food. Many critics disagreed violently with Crossan, contending that his book was full of outlandish assertions. Now Crossan partners with archeologist Reed to demonstrate the material basis of his earlier textual arguments. With exceptional skill, the authors weave a spellbinding tale of the ways that recent archaeological finds support the rich textual layers of the Gospel stories. For example, Crossan and Reed show the radical nature of Jesus' kingdom of itinerancy and commensality by using the archeology of Herod's palace to demonstrate that his meals, far from the all-encompassing feasts associated with earlier temples, had become elite affairs. Jesus' invitations to the marginalized and outcast to sit at the table flew in the face of this social and political structure. Like any other book that uses archeology to support its claims about biblical texts, this one will be criticized for using material remains to read the Bible in a particular way. However, Crossan and Reed's book provides a fascinating, beautifully illustrated and elegantly written account of the life and times of Jesus, providing readers with one of the richest glimpses into Jesus and his world now available. Copyright 2001 Cahners Business Information, Inc.

From Booklist

Crossan, author of several best-selling books about Jesus, now goes beyond biography to examine what clues archaeology can offer about Jesus' life and times. With coauthor Reed, a Galilean field archaeologist, Crossan examines the 10 most significant archaeological digs in the towns of ancient Palestine (Nazareth, Tiberias, and Jerusalem) in context with 10 important textual discoveries, including the Dead Sea Scrolls and writings such as the Gnostic gospels of Thomas. First-century Palestine comes alive here. Readers are invited along to visit places like Sepphoris, an urban center only four miles from Nazareth; the Sea of Galilee, where a boat was found and carbon-dated to the time of Jesus; and Peter's house at Capernaum. This is another winner for Crossan, written in language simple enough for the layperson but stimulating and provocative for readers of all kinds. To be illustrated with black-and-white archaeological drawings throughout and a full-color insert. Ilene Cooper

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