



Women Who Knew Jesus: Revised Edition

Bonnie Ring

URLink Print & Media

(236pp)

978-1-68486-741-7

Women Who Knew Jesus is a biblical critical text with a self-help element that focuses on the faith and courage of the women around Jesus.

Episcopal priest Bonnie Ring's provocative religious text *Women Who Knew Jesus* concerns biblical women whose taboo-breaking interactions with Jesus are used as models of challenging patriarchal systems.

Rooted in feminist biblical scholarship related to the gospels, including noncanonical and the synoptic gospels, the book addresses Jesus's ministry in terms of its revolutionary inclusiveness and for its having empowered the women around him, who broke religious and social taboos by refusing to be submissive, silent, and dependent. Indeed, as the book moves through stories from Jesus's life in each chapter, his humanity is emphasized, including his occasional reluctance to help and conflicted feelings about breaking taboos. In many instances, the women become the heroes of the biblical record in addition to Jesus; they are recalled for having been steadfast until Jesus met their demands.

Personal anecdotes, as of a healing experience following a visit to a church, are used to flesh the material out further, humanizing it and placing it in contemporary context. However, the book's more prevalent instances of historical context, exegetical commentary, and psychological suggestions are more credibility building from an academic standpoint. Indeed, it makes use of ample footnotes and a ranging bibliography to support its claims about the prevailing attitudes toward women in Jesus's day, making it persuasive on topics like the gender-specific restrictions and laws that kept the era's women at the margins. Its discussions on the differences between the gospel accounts where they relate to Jesus's teachings and life events widen its scope further. Punctuation errors, instances of unnecessary capitalization, and malapropisms undermine the book's delivery, though.

There's a self-help element to the text as well. Its short chapters are conversational and encouraging in tone, and the book addresses its audience in direct terms, calling on readers to identify with the emotions of each woman featured within. Its tales become examples of meeting massive challenges with faith and courage—from Mary's decision to give birth to Jesus despite the social threats of being unmarried and pregnant to a bleeding woman begging to be healed. Each such story is followed by questions for reflection and guided meditations, as with the suggestion to "imagine living under laws that make you unclean and untouchable ... not being touched, held, caressed, or helped for twelve years!"

Women Who Knew Jesus is a biblical critical text that focuses on the faith and courage of the women around Jesus as a source of contemporary inspiration.

KRISTINE MORRIS (June 13, 2024)

Disclosure: This article is not an endorsement, but a review. The publisher of this book provided free copies of the book and paid a small fee to have their book reviewed by a professional reviewer. Foreword Reviews and Clarion Reviews make no guarantee that the publisher will receive a positive review. Foreword Magazine, Inc. is disclosing this in accordance with the Federal Trade Commission's 16 CFR, Part 255.