



The Third Jesus: The Christ We Cannot Ignore

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Who is Jesus Christ?

In *The Third Jesus*, bestselling author and spiritual leader Deepak Chopra provides an answer to this question that is both a challenge to current systems of belief and a fresh perspective on what Jesus can teach us all, regardless of our religious background. There is not one Jesus, Chopra writes, but three.

First, there is the historical Jesus, the man who lived more than two thousand years ago and whose teachings are the foundation of Christian theology and thought. Next there is Jesus the Son of God, who has come to embody an institutional religion with specific dogma, a priesthood, and devout believers. And finally, there is the third Jesus, the cosmic Christ, the spiritual guide whose teaching embraces all humanity, not just the church built in his name. He speaks to the individual who wants to find God as a personal experience, to attain what some might call grace, or God-consciousness, or enlightenment.

When we take Jesus literally, we are faced with the impossible. How can we truly “love thy neighbor as thyself”? But when we see the exhortations of Jesus as invitations to join him on a higher spiritual plane, his words suddenly make sense.

Ultimately, Chopra argues, Christianity needs to overcome its tendency to be exclusionary and refocus on being a religion of personal insight and spiritual growth. In this way Jesus can be seen for the universal teacher he truly is—someone whose teachings of compassion, tolerance, and understanding can embrace and be embraced by all of us.

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From Reader Review The Third Jesus: The Christ We Cannot Ignore for online ebook

Carol says

Picked this book up because of the back-cover comments from Bishop Spong: "As a Christian, I welcome his (Chopra's) insights into my Jesus and his provocative call to me to enter the 'Christ consciousness'" Chopra's "Third Jesus", the Jesus of the spiritual path, is the radical loving Jesus that I long to find more often in conversations within the Christian Church. Reminding us that we don't have to wait on the church and its doctrine to walk a spiritual path, Chopra provides practical ways to apply Biblical teachings to every day life. I particularly appreciate his commentary on Jesus' teachings and his East-West linkages. Whether it's called 'Enlightenment' or 'The Kingdom of God', it's still all about love as a radical path to transformation and renewal.

Tim says

I'm not going through it very quickly because the class I'm taking is kicking my butt, but what I have read has given me much to think about. And that's a good thing. Deepak Chopra makes it an easy read but gives you a lot to contemplate.

Favorite quote so far:

"You must find the place inside yourself where nothing is impossible."

I looked and looked and for the life of me I could never find that place. So I decided to build it from scratch.

Second favorite quote:

"'In everything do to others as you would have them do to you.' (Matthew 7:9-12)

If you contemplate the Golden Rule, it turns out to be an injunction to live by grace rather than by what you think other people deserve."

Usually, when we think of the Golden Rule, we think in terms of a proactive situation; we treat someone nice so they'll be nice to us in return. But Deepak Chopra is looking at it from a reactive situation; someone has just been thoughtless/rude/mean to us and in our anger we want to give them what they deserve, or at the very least turn away, but Grace requires us to be nice, as if they'd been nice. This goes back to treating people as they ought to be, rather than as they are.

I apologize to my non-Christian friends for quoting scripture at you. I'm trying to be more spiritual than religious. Despite the fact that many have used Scripture to beat us up and leave us to die tied to a fence, there is some spiritual wisdom in scripture. And that's Deepak Chopra's intent in writing this book; to look beyond Jesus "the man" whose factual history has been all but lost and to bypass Jesus "the arbitrator of rules" who has been kidnapped by the conservative false prophets, and look at the spiritual, mystical leader he was trying to be all along.

Aaron says

I found Deepak's interpretation of the bible and Christianity interesting coming from his outside perspective. An outside interpretation is wildly needed to be heard for the devout Christian. Unfortunately, many Christians wouldn't read this book or at least not read it completely through.

It is the last chapter where Deepak addresses the controversial issues that face Christians today; homosexuality, war, abortion, etc... This is where the book becomes most intriguing however, the proceeding chapters are necessary in order to understand Deepak's thoughts on the issues. For the most part he addresses the issues with an honest clear perspective. He creates an opportunity for Christians to view their opinions from a different perspective.

If a Christian is interested in increasing their faith or converting others to their understanding of God; I highly recommend reading this. This will increase their understanding of where non-Christians may be coming from. I personally think that it is the criticisms that drive forward contemplation of one's faith or rather increase someone's faith or understanding of who God is to them individually.

Overall Deepak offers an honest subjective opinion of Christianity today without attacking the religion.

Liz says

I was never a fan of Deepak Chopra, sometimes I think he talks out of his ear, but I was intrigued by the title of this book, I skimmed through it in the library and it looked interesting enough for me to at least give it a shot. At first, I had a huge chip on my shoulder, I thought "This guy is a flake", "He doesn't know Jesus from Joe". But I kept reading, because the more I read the better the book seemed. I didn't agree with some stuff he said, but some of what he wrote was enlightening. And by the end of the book, though still not a fan of Chopra's, I had to appreciate the effort that went into this book. He does admit he is not a committed Christian, which is why I initially thought this book would be full of bull, but maybe it takes someone who approaches the religion from the outside to see how it works (or doesn't). The chip is no longer on my shoulder, and I am thinking a little differently about Jesus. I cannot say this is the best inspirational book I've ever read, but it was worth the read.

Deepak talks about Jesus and religion today. How today's Christian doesn't know the real Jesus, how the church hides and misuses doctrine. He takes passages from the Bible and attempts to explain them for the average person to understand. This is where the chip on the shoulder comes in, how can someone who is not a Christian explain the Bible to me? However, he does a pretty good job, I think he's explained it better than people who have been Christian all of their life.

Ana says

I really enjoyed this book. Being a Christian, there were some parts which were hard to digest, but overall - this was a great read with few extremely powerful thoughts (which I hope will accept as a part of my attitude

toward life and faith). So..whatever I write in this review will surely not spoil the beauty or enjoyment of reading it. It's not a fiction with some characters you will love or hate...there is only one person here involved..YOU and your thoughts about the Third Jesus. Long time ago, people were scared of even mentioning the term GOD...Today there are many books and surely many doubts of who Jesus was, was He the Son of God, was He a man of flesh and blood?

Well, I must admit this book did clear some foggy thoughts of mine considering some parts of the Bible (for which I thank you Mr Chopra) and I am glad I read this book.

Davis Aujourd'hui says

As the author of a series of spiritually-themed novels, I am always on the outlook for spiritual books that broaden my perspective. This book not only accomplished that, but it helped me develop an even more intimate relationship with Jesus.

This is a book that could totally transform the spiritual understanding of Christians along with opening them up to a relationship with the Holy Spirit. It will also speak to people of other faiths since it releases so much of the dogma that can exist within traditional Christian churches. It not only personalizes Jesus, the man, but it makes his messages more clear.

I love the way Deepak Chopra uses meditative techniques in order to allow the teachings of Jesus as presented in the scriptures to come alive. Through my own use of these techniques, the underlying messages of the scriptures spoke to me as they never have before.

The beauty of this book is that it freed me from the mental aspects of theology as it allowed me to develop a more personal relationship with the man who came to teach us the way to love. This book will especially appeal to individuals who are seeking a mystical experience within their own faith.

The book may be offensive to some closed-minded individuals. Deepak Chopra opens the door to all in order for them to develop their own Christ potential as equals with Jesus as other children of God. Personally I believe that the humble man, Jesus, would approve. He was here to help us all develop our highest potential. After all, he stated that it would be possible for us to perform even greater works than he. By taking individual and collective responsibility for our own spiritual development, perhaps we could indeed realize peace on earth and good will toward all "men."

Davis Aujourd'hui, author of "The Misadventures of Sister Mary Olga Fortitude"

Kimberly Cain says

For those who appreciate Jesus' teachings, but do not appreciate much of what has happened to them at the hands of the Church. Christ-consciousness is something most people, even those not spiritually minded, can buy into when they understand that it is linked to knowing, understanding & embracing our own highest, most excellent selves.

Dr. Chopra does a good job expressing the teachings of the highly aware man, Jesus.

Queen says

This book deserves time and contemplation. Because of the complex nature of the subject, I have to re-read certain sections to make sure I really understand the message. On the whole, however, the writing flows smoothly and simply with moments of insight that seem to exude the PEACE that Deepak Chopra promotes via Jesus's teachings. I was magnetized to the book specifically because of the easy blend of western and eastern ideas, but I'm still skeptical of the "band wagon appeal" in which everyone thinks it's a popular concept and it seems like you've heard it all already. How many ways can you analyze the same person or story? Yet, The Third Jesus offers just such a fresh perspective!

I'm more interested in reading an autobiography of Chopra's life experiences because you can naturally "hear" the heart of his writing / voice in those parts of the book in contrast to the passages intended to teach ideas.

Chuck Engelhardt says

Warning!!! This is not a book about the Jesus of the Bible even though it claims to be. Chopra's take is that Jesus "attained God-consciousness." As you would expect he does selective quotations from the Bible, but explains away what he doesn't want to use as information that was obviously biased because of the views of the writer. It doesn't seem to strike him that his selections are exactly that, selections made specifically to fit the bias of the writer.

I am saddened by the impression of Christianity that Chopra has developed. He occasionally mentions his experience with the "church" and quotes church leaders he knows, but his understanding of orthodox christianity is so far from what the truth is that his arguments become pathetic. The Church does have its problems and Chopra points those out, but he also treats fringe and extreme ideas as if they are mainstream.

The book is an easy read, a credit to Chopra's writing skill, but his reasoning and arguments fall flat to anyone who has basic Biblical understanding. Chopra often makes an argument from a single verse taken out of context to which someone familiar with the broader scriptures would understand that the verse is in reference to something else entirely and the reasoning depends on completely ignoring other passages. Of course, Chopra has no problem with that because those other verses were obviously distorted by the author's bias.

I was almost amused as I read the last pages of the book and found the author lifting up Jesus as courageous because he understood that anytime you stand up against evil that you draw closer to God, and just paragraphs later accused fundamentalist Christians of being bigoted, self-righteous, and fearful for doing the exact same thing.

Deepak Chopra is no fan of Christians, intentionally ignorant of the Bible, and sadly has a distorted view of the Church which leaves this book with no true redeeming quality.

Frank says

After reading this book twice I was left with the impression that Mr. Chopra is trying to construct a Jesus of his own from his preconceived notions. His research, or lack thereof, is appalling. His knowledge of the Bible extends only to the point of his using very selective passages to try and reinforce his point. When his book is subjected to any level of scrutiny it reveals that he simply fails not only to prove his point but that he is in fact wrong. One embarrassing example is as follows. On p. 11 Mr. Chopra wrote, "But Jesus doesn't mention sin." Anyone with a biblical concordance can and will easily refute this assertion. Some references to where He does can be found in Matthew 12:31; John 8:7, 34; 16: 8, 9 and many more. There are many more such examples but for fear of being tedious I'll leave it at that. The Jesus of the Bible and the Jesus of Mr. Chopra's imagination have absolutely nothing in common whatsoever. What Mr. Chopra is attempting to do is fit a square peg inside a round hole and he fails miserably.

My Amazon.com review of the book can be found here (<http://www.amazon.com/gp/cdp/member-r...>) and my somewhat longer and more in depth review can be found here (<http://www.godandscience.org/apologet...>).

MattA says

First, a recommendation about who should NOT read this book. Do NOT read this book if you are a Christian fundamentalist who cannot abide interpretations of Jesus different than the traditional one you receive at church. A non-traditional view of Jesus is what this book is all about. I've read many *extremely* negative reviews of this book from Christian fundamentalists. Most of those negative reviews were likely inspired by the last chapter of the book which directly criticizes the Christian right (as I describe later) and would not satisfy readers of that political or religious persuasion. Be warned.

However, if you can handle different ideas about Jesus, even if you don't fully embrace them spiritually, the this book might be for you. Especially if you've never been exposed to the gnostic view of Jesus.

From the jacket flap:

There is not one Jesus, [Deepak] Chopra writes, but three. First, there is the historical Jesus, the man who lived more than two thousand years ago and whose teachings are the foundation of Christian theology and thought. Next there is Jesus the Son of God, who has come to embody an institutional religion with specific dogma, a priesthood, and devout believers. And finally, there is the third Jesus, the cosmic Christ, the spiritual guide whose teaching embraces all humanity, not just the church built in his name. He speaks to the individual who wants to find God as a personal experience, to attain what some might call grace, or God-consciousness, or enlightenment.

The book is split into three parts. Part 1 is an introduction section, and sets up the premise quoted above.

Part 2 is entitled "The Gospel of Enlightenment" and consists of quotations from the Bible as well as gnostic texts, with the author's commentary following each quote. This section was the main reason I decided to read the book. This is the "meat" of the book. True, these quotes could be found in any Bible or Gospel of Thomas, but having them collected in this manner, along with the commentary, I found particularly thought-provoking.

Part 3 is entitled "Taking Jesus As Your Teacher: A Guide For Seekers." This last section might be viewed as a "how-to" guide to implementing the lessons of Part 2. There were a few interesting passages, but overall I found this third section mediocre.

And then there's the last chapter of the book, entitled "What Would Jesus Do?", where the author takes direct aim on the Christian right and explicitly criticizes their stances on abortion, gay rights, women's rights, war, etc. It leaves little question as to why a fundamentalist would give this book a negative review. I happen to agree with most of what the author says, but the entire chapter seems out of place. Even if you accept that a liberal interpretation is the inevitable conclusion of a "Third Jesus" reading of Christ, calling it out so explicitly feels like a stumble and weakens the argument. If you're on the left, politically, the chapter is just preaching to the choir. If you're on the right, the chapter will just piss you off. Readers might as well skip it.

In the end, I would give Parts 1 and 2 four, maybe 4.5 stars, and Part 3 two stars. Splitting the difference I give the whole book three stars.

Dana says

I just started reading this one. I picked it up on the weekend, and had been waiting for it to come out.

Deepak Chopra elegantly unwraps the reconciliation of Jesus Christ with Eastern thought and raising consciousness. He differentiates the historical Jesus, the one that would be revealed on the likes of Discovery Channel documentaries, from the Christian church Jesus, the one who various denominations have created to provide an example of "Christian" living...forgiveness, love, etc, from the "third Jesus" as he has coined it, the one who was an example, just like Buddha and many other spiritual leaders, of raising our consciousness to be in alignment with God and the Universe. The idea is that Jesus was really trying to tell us that each of us had the same powers he had. (I know...sounds like blasphemy, right? But it's not...trust me...read on.) We all live eternal lives, we all have the power to use our talents and gifts for good or for bad and it's our choice, we all can use the energy of God, etc. I'm not even halfway through the book yet, but I love reading it and look forward to finishing it in the next two weekends.

I've always believed that there was more to Jesus than what I've been taught, and I always believed that I could reconcile Him with all spiritual thought and energy. This book is gutsy and pushes Christians and non-Christians alike to examine our beliefs, prejudices and assumptions about spirituality and what it can do for us.

Joyce says

Not much in this book is new if you've read the Bible for yourself. However, Deepak Chopra dilutes much of the Scriptures and says that all that is in the Bible is not "true." Already, believers are closing Chopra's book

and running for the hills. I found some mental and spiritual challenges in this book that made me think....that's not a bad thing. Thinking and then, believing, are certainly two entirely different action verbs regarding this book. It would be a great book to take on a trip with four or five other "debaters of Scripture and philosophy" and just talk and talk.

Chopra says, "Jesus is a Spritual Revolutionary and he is inviting Christianity to perform yet another miracle -- that of transforming the world once again."

That certainly provokes questions within me. And you? Do you like to read a book that cause you to reaffirm you own faith and beliefs? Or, had you rather not venture into a "foreign land with foreign teachings?"

I would like to know your feeling if you choose to read "The Third Jesus."

Joyce Norman
ja329@bellsouth.net

Lauren Smith says

Jesus taught God-consciousness. If you are open to reading this masterpiece, you will awake.

Jeremy says

Well, this officially closes the door on my reading of Chopra. His "novel" on Jesus' life was bad, but this book is just brutal in every regard. I actually quit it three times but ended up with nothing else to read on a road trip so finished.

First, dude can't write. The novel was a pathetic stab, but I thought, "Maybe it's not his genre. I'll give him one more shot..." So I found "The Third Jesus" in our school bookstore for \$1 and thought I'd give him another shot.

Even worse (and over-priced).

At his best he's repetitive, at his most common he's stealing ideas, at his worst he's incredibly insensitive and judgmental.

Let's start with repetitive: the book has chapters full of Bible verses which Deepak then "reveals" to us.

They're just translations and they go one for pages and pages as he hammers home his messages of 1.) Jesus is just a model of God-conciousness, 2.) Fundamentalists/Catholics/Conservatives are out of line, 3.)

Religion is a scam.

As for his most common trait, NOTHING he says is new. Read Joseph Cambpell, Native American legends, Aquinas, Thomas Merton, Eckhart or even his buddy Wayne Dyer. Nothing here is new, it's just rehashed in a new cover (which is both Dyer and Chopra's M.O. as they put out a book a month and probably rake in.

Speaking of which, with all his judgments of society not once does he mention giving to those in need...).

As for his worst he drops lines like "Jesus is not reachable as a personality." and "The beautiful moods Christianity arouses are powerful but temporary." and "Christian women often find themselves between Eve and Mary, either vilified or idealized" (horrible sentence, by the way, as "being between" is not an "either" situation). It goes on and on like this, as Chopra even goes so far as to write a chapter that is almost 100% political to wrap up the book (in case you wondered, Jesus would support abortion rights, gays and liberals).

In the process he takes down Christians, Catholics, conservatives and fundamentalists under the pre-qualifier of "We shouldn't judge these people, but..."

It's like he's saying, "Don't take this personal, but you're ugly and you smell."

In the end my beef with Chopra is this: where are the credentials? He happened to be born in India with a Christian school upbringing, has written some books, but so what? Hell, even this book offers no bibliography, no basis for fact; just a set of opinions he's presented as the truth. It's disingenuous, almost plagiarism when one considers that ALL of this has been said before.

I read a lot of spiritual literature, listen to a lot of speeches/presentations, and spend hours in study to see where my soul fits in to this world. I don't claim to be an authority, but I do know Deepak is a hack.
