



## The Philosophy of Jesus

*Peter Kreeft*

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## **The Philosophy of Jesus** Peter Kreeft

Looking at Jesus as a complete human being and philosopher, explores the most radical revolution in the history of philosophy--the differences Jesus made to metaphysics, epistemology, anthropology, and philosophical ethics and politics.

## **The Philosophy of Jesus Details**

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## From Reader Review The Philosophy of Jesus for online ebook

### **C.J. says**

If one wants the simple and factual -- ever the illusive quarry in the philosophic and academic milieu -- the simple and factual of exactly the point of JESUS (and his points), you can't get anything clearer or true than Kreeft's little volume here (so much simpler, clearer, and grammatical than this run-on).

But in keen earnestness: To meet Jesus' philosophy is to meet a person. He is peculiarly personal, for his words always point back to a person. Himself. No other teacher guides quite this way. Kreeft pokes at the fact that often goes pleasantly unpoked -- the fact that Jesus rather bluntly does not do what the Buddha does, or Confucius does, or Socrates does.

He does not say, "look at what I say! Follow its guidance." He says, "Look at me. Follow ME." Offensive? Depends. Shocking? Was rather. Probably still is.

This in itself is worth the book. After all, it then gives one options for attitude and action, instead of a ceaseless mind-flip on pleasant references to wise teaching, and mutual agreement on the Golden Rule.

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### **Christopher Goins says**

I read this 150-page book in 5 hours--and it is frequently glorious.

Jesus' philosophy is both shocking and joyful, both romantic and sexy; and Catholic philosopher Peter Kreeft shows readers that Jesus himself answers the four big questions of philosophy—What is real (metaphysics)? How can we know what's real (epistemology)? Who are we, who want to know the real (philosophical anthropology)? What should we be, how should we live, to be more real (ethics)?

If you have read and understood the Gospel of John in the New Testament, then you are going have a good background on what Kreeft has to say, but you won't know all of what he has to say.

For example, he touches on the sexual revolution; says that Pope John Paul II was the greatest Christian philosophical anthropologist at one time, an assertion that is not unreasonable if you have ever read John Paul II's philosophical works ("Christ is the meaning of man"); touches on the importance of family in society; and the discusses the political left and the political right.

I'm not going to give the answers to those four questions in detail; rather, I encourage you to pick up this book and read it. His prose is excellent as always, and his examples to support his argument are often humorous and concrete.

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### **Sean says**

Very good, but, since it was not what I was expecting or hoping for, a bit of a disappointment.

I have become very interested lately in listening to what Jesus actually has to say, as if his words mattered.

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Sadly, the downside of the beautiful and wise theology which the Church has come to understand is that we sometimes overlook Jesus' actual teachings. I was hoping for an exploration of his words, considered philosophically. But Kreeft, being Kreeft, gave me something different, though certainly very good. He presents Jesus himself as the answer to four primary philosophical questions. Theologically quite profound, and I enjoyed his presentation--maybe I even learned something lasting from it, let's hope. But since it was not what I am most interested in at the moment, it was a bit of a let down.

A person expecting a "philosophical" book, will, perhaps, be disappointed. He might throw up his hands and declare, "Why, this is just theology after all!" But Kreeft makes the case well, that Jesus, considered as Christians believe him to be (fully God and fully human), is philosophically pertinent. Jesus, the author claims, makes his philosophical claims simply by being, not by teaching. I would hope that the reader would allow the argument some respect and weight.

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### **Joshua D. says**

I don't have a lot to say about this book other than I'm not sure I'm well versed enough in the finer points of philosophy to appreciate some of the questions Kreeft is trying to answer. He writes about Jesus as a philosopher, not in the sense of understanding him as one who engages in socratic dialogue with Kantian ethics. Nor is he writing about Jesus as a philosopher in the sense that we are all philosophers (everyone has some philosophy of life). "But Jesus [is] a philosopher in a meaningful middle sense, the sense in which Confucius, Buddha, Muhammad, Solomon, Marcus Aurelius, and Pascal were philosophers." (p.3)

*The Philosophy of Jesus* is organized according to the four big philosophical questions, and Jesus' answer to these questions.

1. What is? What is real? Especially what is real? (The question of metaphysics)
2. How can we *know* what is real, especially the most real? (The question of epistemology)
3. Who are we, who want to know the real? (The question of anthropology)
4. What *should* we be, how should we live, to be more real? (The question of ethics)

As I worked through this relatively short book, it became clear that much of the philosophical nuance was lost on me. That may be my own dimness, but I have taken several courses in philosophy at both the college and postgrad level. That leads me to believe that this book is probably not all that suitable for those without a background in philosophy (or who don't read philosophy regularly). Still, there were some helpful nuggets, particular in the sections on Jesus' approach to ethics.

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### **Rod says**

I'm fascinated by Peter Kreeft. And I generally enjoy his books on philosophy. (although I have a huge problem with his Catholicism... But I have a huge problem with most areas of theology and religion. So he doesn't get off the hook. Not much different than some Baptists, Lutherans, Pentecostals that I've dealt with).

this book is fun though. I love down and dirty philosophy (not that academic crap for the pseudo-enlightened). Yes, the very existence of Jesus is philosophy at it's most meaningful. I'll get into that later...

I'm watching a video right now by Kreeft called: 7 Reasons Why Everyone Should be Catholic

- 1) It's True
- 2) It's Good

- 3) It's beautiful
- 4) the facts of history prove it
- 5) It produces Saints
- 6) It gets you to heaven
- 7) This is where you meet Jesus Christ

I heartily and theologically (and historically) disagree with ALL 7 of those insistencies. the problem is that I don't need the Pope or the Vatican to achieve ANY of those 7 items. I have the Very Word of God in His Bible, I have Jesus as my God King Lamb and Savior and Friend, I'm surrounded by Christian Saints already, and history shows us much much more. In no way do I need the current, or even the Catholic church of the last 5 centuries, to achieve any of those 7 items.

Here's my thinking: If I was a missionary in a Chinese Prison for 20 years (armed with only a bible) - Could I not have all 7 of those items now? Yes I could. Similar to the Thief on the Cross having a brief and theologically sound moment with Christ on the Cross. We simply DO NOT NEED THE CATHOLIC CHURCH. the Church of Jesus is much more simple and profound than that. NO Popes needed: Just the Word of God.

Honestly, I thought peter kreeft was smarter than that. This is just silly stuff. In the video Kreeft tells a story of how his early professor asked who would be more comfortable in the 1st century Church: Protestants or Catholics. Kreeft got all excited and convinced by the presumption of Catholics being more comfortable. Ummmh? That's a poorly understood question then. Depends on which church he's attending in the 1st century: Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, Laodicea, Or the letter to the churches Paul sent: Corinth, or Galatia or etc...

Or possibly the Prison church that Paul and Silas were creating, or the house churches...

Yes, all these churches were different and had numerous problems. None had most of the teachings that the Catholic church currently spews out. So why would they assume Roman Catholics would feel comfortable there? And I wouldn't? That's just lazy.

More to come...

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### **Luciana says**

Great!! Short quick, but deep read. A lot of the typical Kreeft wit :) I was reading this at the same time as I was reading "The Everlasting Man" by Chesterton and hearing some interesting talks on CD and having some interesting discussions, so it was cool seeing the connections.

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### **booklady says**

Review soon...

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### **Kirsten says**

This book is about the substance of Jesus and what that means for us. The book covers the four great philosophical questions:

What is? What is real? Especially, what is most real?

How can we know what is real?

Who are we, who wants to know the real? "know thy self"

What should we be, how should we live, to be more real?

The questions are about being, truth, self and goodness. Kreeft says that, "The logical order of questions is that: we must first know something real before we can know how we know it, and we must first know who we are before we can know what is good for us."

Kreeft points out that philosophers have argued since the beginning over whose philosophy is most right.

Most have been disputed. Kreeft suggests that the answer to those four questions is simple – it is Christ.

Throughout the book he re-emphasises that point of view. He even ends the book on that note. For him 'Jesus is God's Philosopher'. Jesus is seen as a human being as well as divine. He represents wisdom. His philosophy is seen in light of him and not the other way around.

This book covers complex ideas with a lightness and ease. Kreeft is a talented theologian able to take the intricate and make the material clear. I thoroughly enjoyed this book and would recommend it to mature readers who want to extend their knowledge into philosophy and the role of Christ in that discourse.

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## Wanda says

I was fascinated by this little book. The book discusses the "four great questions of philosophy" as taught/revealed by Jesus. The four questions are: What is real?; How do we know what is real?; Who are we who know what is real?; and What should we be to be more real? The answers are, of course, Christ-centered, but the author's way of explaining the answers is quite interesting.

In the chapter on "Jesus' Metaphysics", the Trinity is discussed and the author concludes:

"Since God is complete, He is complete love: Lover, Beloved, and Loving all in one: subject of love, object of love, and act of love. Each of these three is so real in God that they are not just mentally-distinguished, abstract aspects but really-distinct, concretely real Persons. So the nature of ultimate reality is Trinity: not only absolute oneness but also absolute manyness." p. 29

This book is an easy read, but it will make you think! And I think I need to read it again!

I gave the book 4 stars instead of 5 because I somehow got the impression that the author is telling people that God wants people to be with him in Heaven so that he can have sex with them. See p. 138 where the author writes: "At the heart of the theology of the body is the vision of sex as an icon of the Trinity and of our final, mystical Heavenly destiny to be married to God." I've read the works of many spiritual writers who discuss the mystical union with Christ, and even describe it as a marriage, but Kreeft is a bit more explicit. But for all I know, he might be right. Personally, I was hoping when/if I make it to Heaven God would simply show me where the library was, send up some hot tea and donuts, and let me enjoy eternity. But hey, I'm easy to please!

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## Annie says

This is so fantastically bad it's good. The very first thing he says in this book is that he's a Christian "butwaitdontleaveyet it's a GOOD thing because only a Christian is qualified to talk about the philosophy of

Jesus! After all, we wouldn't really trust a text on Buddhist philosophy by a non-Buddhist, right?" (What? Why not? Anyone who has studied Buddhist philosophy in depth is qualified to write about it, regardless of personal beliefs. I wouldn't expect any academic writer to inform their audience of their personal beliefs, I would expect them to write impartially no matter what they personally believe).

Next he points out that while yes, God is unequivocally male, no two ways about it, Jesus was practically a feminist compared to others back then and we ought to tip our hats to his enlightened mind. This is categorically untrue; anyone who has studied classics (or ancient philosophy- take Plato, for instance) knows that Jesus was far from the most liberated- at least, he expressed little on the topic (though note his apostles were all men), while others were quite explicit on their positions.

There's also this slant to the whole book that, if he had not immediately insisted that Jesus Christ is his personal savior, would have made his personal beliefs clear. I.e. "Hinduism and Judaism had both risen above paganism by realizing that God was one and perfect." Right. Because theology has an objective hierarchy.

Kreeft also drops these sweeping generalizations that are AMAZINGLY idiotic. "Abraham's Muslim children have never succumbed to the temptation of pop psychology, relativism, secular humanism, or politically correct feminism, as many American Jews & Christians have. They have different temptations, like Islamo-fascism." WOW. I'll be sure to let all the feminist Muslims I know that... that they're not really Muslim? Not really feminist? Secretly Islamo-fascists?

He even managed to slip a dig about Clinton in there. Honestly, it was impressive how many aspects of his personal beliefs he managed to cover in this short little book.

Best of all, he ends the book by saying "the choice is up to you: heaven or hell? Jesus or sin?" And concludes- direct quote here- "If philosophy has nothing to say about that, then the hell with it." THERE WE GO. Finally we get to the heart of the matter. Calling this book \*philosophy\* is a j o k e he's been playing on us from the first page. Kreeft has given up on philosophy and all that silly logic stuff because it doesn't insist we repent for non-procreative sex and electing Clinton.

Look, I'm saying nothing about religion or Jesus. Religion has a special place in the world, but trying to justify religion using philosophy is just ridiculous, an insult to religion \*and\* to philosophy. Isn't religion about taking a leap of faith? And philosophy about making a tight argument with analytic rigor? Please don't mix the two and pretend you're not!

I guess I went into this book thinking it would deconstruct Jesus's philosophy (I'm fully on board with calling him a philosopher by the way, and a potentially respectable one at that). Instead, 60% of it was picking apart the Bible to find evidence that he's divine and the son of God and Christianity is doing it right. Honestly, it reads a little like one of those conversion pamphlets that nutters thrust at you on street corners.

The "philosophy" he gets into is to actual philosophy what Hooked On Phonics is to the discipline of linguistics. Or maybe that's an overly generous analogy. Maybe it's more like what the Pray & Play Bible is to the discipline of linguistics. Totally and utterly IRRELEVANT.

### **Emerson John Tiu Ng says**

Dr. Peter Kreeft is one of my favorite authors of apologetics... this book is quite timely because it discusses the issues our church faces nowadays...

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### **Tom says**

Much of what Peter says here is true and helpful, but often the spirit in which it is said is not. There is a sickening triumphalism lurking about some of the sections. I was disappointed not to find a gentler, kinder apologist. It will, perhaps, please already-believers, but it may alienate some sincere searchers, and that's too bad. Kreeft's books are almost always gems. This is a zircon.

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### **Kevin says**

One of the best philosophy/religious books I've read in a long, long time. It was perfect from page one to page 126. Easy to read with many "Wow" moments. Kreeft is a wonderful writer. It's as if he is speaking with you and he makes complex ideas simple. By breaking down Jesus' philosophy into metaphysics, epistemology, philosophical anthropology and ethics, he shows you how real Christ is. He explained stories I've heard a thousand times in a different, simpler way that enlightened me.

I mentioned the book was perfect from page one to page 126, although the book is 150 pages. My rating should be 4.8 stars, as the last 25 pages didn't seem to fit into the Ethics section. Or maybe it just made me uncomfortable, which is what Jesus did to those around him. He asked the hard questions. Kreeft does the same. By shaking me out of my comfort zone, he made me a better person. But it wasn't what I was expecting from this book.

Still, I highly recommend it.

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### **Jessica Bondarczuk says**

melhor do que eu pensei, muito bom

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### **Camila Rauber says**

Impossible to read without make a reflection on each subject. Tre three final chapters bring the most new, interesting and motivated way to look for the relation between Jesus and us like church, like individuals and like a political person.

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