



Moses: A Life

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Lawgiver and liberator. Seer and prophet. The only human permitted to converse with God "face-to-face." Moses is the most commanding presence in the Old Testament. Yet as Jonathan Kirsch shows in this brilliant, stunningly original volume, Moses was also an enigmatic and mysterious figure--at once a good shepherd and a ruthless warrior, a spiritual leader and a magician, a lawgiver who broke his own laws, God's chosen friend and hounded victim. Now, in *Moses: A Life*, Kirsch accomplishes the wondrous feat of revealing the real Moses, a strikingly modern figure who steps out from behind the facade of Sunday school lessons and movie matinees.

Drawing on the biblical text and a treasury of both scholarship and storytelling, Kirsch examines all that is known and all that has been imagined of Moses. In these vivid pages, we see the marvels and mysteries of Moses's life in a new light--his rescue in infancy and adoption by an Egyptian princess; his reluctant assumption of the role of liberator; his struggles to wrest his people from the pharaoh's dominion; his desperate vigil on Mount Sinai. Here too is the darker, more ominous Moses--the sorcerer, the husband of a pagan woman, the military commander who cold-bloodedly ordered the slaying of innocent people; the beloved of God whom God sought twice to murder.

Jonathan Kirsch brings both prodigious knowledge and a keen imagination to one of the most compelling stories of the Bible, and the results are fascinating. A figure of mystery, passion, and contradiction, Moses emerges from this book very much a hero for our time.

From the Hardcover edition.

Moses: A Life Details

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Karen says

The author draws on rabbinical literature and biblical scholarship to write this autobiography. Of course, nothing factual is known of Moses. Much of the information available about Moses comes from sources who tried to make sense of the Biblical inconsistencies concerning Moses. The inconsistencies are duly noted, legends that can be little more than fairy tales are cited as such. This is a very good, well-researched book. The author assumes intelligence and interest in his topic but does not assume Biblical expertise. I really enjoyed this book and would recommend it to others.

Steven Williams says

A very nice analysis of the, in my opinion, mythical Moses. Very enjoyable.

Cara Spaccarelli says

I read 75% of it - but it's really long and I didn't need to read the other 25% for the research I was doing. Jonathan Kirsch is an easy to read author, but this book was longer than it needed to be.

Robert says

Re-reading this pre-pesach

Rae says

The author tries to portray the historical Moses using Biblical text and sources...his conclusion is that Moses' existence really can't be proven. I don't agree with that premise but the book was still interesting.

Kara Neal says

While the information on from the rabbinical texts and from literature such as the writings of Flavius Josephus was interesting, the author's disdain for a divinely inspired Bible and mockery of God and Christianity was beyond distracting. In fact, I wonder why someone who puts forth such an attitude would then choose to write about Biblical figures such as Moses and David. He goes far beyond playing neutral or even an devil's advocate sort of role. I was interested in some of his other titles, but I think I'm offended enough by this one to set this author aside and choose something else.

Amanda says

This was a fascinating read!!!

Alexander says

There were elements I loved. It was refreshing to read into the complexities of Moses as he appears in the bible. My primary issue was the author's tendency to allow his opinion to color what would have otherwise been a brilliant and objective work revealing the many facets of Moses life. His tendency to not treat the theological record without bias ruined the book for me, ultimately. And not because I am offended, but simply because his opinion on the veracity of the bible and its origins do not seem relevant outside of when he attempts to discern the actual Moses.

I won't give away too much but a stark example is the manner in which the author describes Moses' and his brother, Aaron's, meeting. After describing Moses' ascent to the burning bush, where God tells Moses to return to Egypt to free the Children of Israel, and to first meet his brother, Aaron, in the wilderness, we are informed that God ALSO speaks to Aaron, too, telling him to meet his long lost brother, Moses, in the wilderness. Both brothers, instructed by God to meet in a non-disclosed location of the wilderness, having possibly never met before, successfully do meet, and astoundingly, despite stating God speaks to both brothers separately only paragraphs before, the author is troubled enough to comment that Aaron's immediate compliance to Moses' declaration of being Israel's redeemer renders the event implausible. Whether one is a believer or not shouldn't matter in the biography. The goal seemed to create a picture of Moses from an array of sources, some well known, some eclectic. Why would Aaron, also instructed by God through prophecy to meet and receive Moses, question his brother's account so baldly?

Jessica says

Based off of the first 20 or so pages, the author of this book is not a Christian, does not think Moses was a good man, and at the very least is misguided about God, but really it seems more like he actually dislikes God.

Ted says

Pretty fascinating study not only of the Bible's Moses, but of the Moses of rabbinical tradition and midrash. At times it can be a bit overwhelming, but it is an important and impressive collection of all the lore surrounding this most influential of religious figures.

Ellen Prewitt says

This book had two strengths: it focused on the exact story actually told in the Bible (free from the trappings we've wrapped around it in movies, etc.) and it organized the Moses story between Genesis, Numbers, and Deuteronomy. I've read the 5 Books of Moses many times, so I needed something more, and this book

provided it. I read it as research for my next novel, so I paid close attention to where the author seemed to be coming from (I put down another Moses biography I'd bought because the slant was condescending to the reader and too obviously intended to prop up belief.) Mr. Kirsch regularly preferred the unconventional explanation for admitted discrepancies in the Biblical story, which I'm sure some readers will find off-putting. Some I found interesting; some I dismissed. But that decision was left up to me, which I appreciated.
