



Hard Sayings of Jesus

F.F. Bruce

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Like his original hearers many people today find Jesus' sayings hard. Some sayings are hard because they are difficult to understand, others because the demands they make on us are only too clear. F. F. Bruce examines seventy of the hard sayings of Jesus to clear away the cultural and historical difficulties which keep us from grappling with the real challenge of Jesus' message. Evident in each chapter is Bruce's keen evangelical scholarship and pastoral insight.

Hard Sayings of Jesus Details

Date : Published July 14th 1983 by IVP Academic (first published June 1st 1983)

ISBN : 9780877849278

Author : F.F. Bruce

Format : Paperback 266 pages

Genre : Religion, Theology, Christian, Christianity, New Testament, Reference

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Joshua Lawson says

I enjoy the scholars for all the historical and theological nuggets they afford which you won't find in popular works. This book is no exception; however, what it encompasses in breadth it lacks in depth. Bruce reviews seventy "hard sayings" of Jesus from the gospels, and, as such, can only afford to give each passage one or two pages. Even still, a worthwhile read.

Jacob Savage says

Bruce's writing is easy to follow and understand, which makes his book interesting. He seeks to take many of the sayings of Jesus which are often difficult to understand, and he seeks to give meaning to them. Although his writing is simplistic and has a lack of depth, this book would be good for someone seeking to get a brief overview of one of Jesus' teachings.

Justin says

There are some interesting nuggets and some dry interpretations. It's a nice book to have as a resource, but it's not the most exciting read. In covering 70 passages, Bruce only gives a few pages to each, so he rarely pushes deep and he's not often too surprising. It probably works better as a devotional or a read-with-breakfast sort of thing rather than a book to just sit down and read straight through.

Lotte says

Excellent companion to a reading of the New Testament!

Nick says

How many of us have ever read one of Jesus' sayings in the Gospels and said, "I wonder what that means?" or "Wow! That's extreme." I have read or heard the words of Jesus all of my life--so much so, that I often forget to be shocked at many of the things He says. What did Jesus mean when He said, "unless you eat the flesh of the Son of man and drink his blood, you have no life in you" (Jn 6:53)? Or why did He say that whoever says "You fool!" merits hell? How are we to understand Jesus' statements about divorce and remarriage? Or the cry of dereliction "My God! My God, why have you forsaken me?"

Here, the late evangelical scholar F.F. Bruce has helpfully worked through 70 of these hard sayings in the chronological order in which they are found in the Gospels. The chapters are usually 2-3 pages, which makes it suitable as a tool for daily devotional reading. On the whole, lay people should be able to read this with ease, though Bruce does occasionally foray into the world of Biblical criticism. People not familiar with ideas such as Q or "pillar sayings" may need to do a bit of research to better understand his insights, but most of the chapters would not require this. There is minimal work with Greek or Aramaic. The little he does use,

he explains well. So, I would feel comfortable recommending this book to educated laity.

I enjoyed many of the insights Bruce brought to the table. The scholar in me often wanted him to go further and deeper in his explanations, but he gave sufficient evidence for his statements in most cases. 4 out of 5 stars.

Adam says

As our society becomes more and more oriented toward the soundbite and internet chatter, we're quickly losing the ability to read truly important, enduring books with any depth. But F.F. Bruce—with a gift for succinctly explaining historical context and rhetorical technique—gives us an invaluable and detailed map through what has, with relative suddenness, become difficult territory for the modern reader. I can't imagine studying the gospels without this book.

Royce Ratterman says

Most books are rated related to their usefulness and contributions to my research.

Overall, a good book for the researcher and enthusiast.

Read for personal research

- found this book's contents helpful and inspiring - number rating relates to the book's contribution to my needs.

Greg Dill says

Many of those who listened to Jesus during His earthly ministry and those who read His words in the Gospels today find many of His teachings hard to understand and difficult to live by. Jesus taught many things that ran against the grain of society and were counter to the culture of His day. His teachings truly were radical. He made no provisions in offending those who were in authority, and was often found praising those who were considered the trash heap of society. All of His teachings make both the hearer and reader think, not only about their own lives, but how they are to live amongst and interact with others. In his book, "The Hard Sayings of Jesus" F.F. Bruce explores many of these difficult teachings and exposites them in a way which allows the student of the Bible to better understand what Jesus taught on these more difficult subjects.

The reading of, "The Hard Sayings of Jesus" by F.F. Bruce was instrumental in helping me gain a better understanding to some of the more challenging passages found throughout the Gospels, particularly certain teachings of Christ. Jesus often used spiritual allegory, parables, and symbolic illustrations to help teach certain truths to His disciples. However, Jesus also employed the use of literal teachings absent of any illustrations or allegory, proclaiming truths for all of us to live by that are pertinent to us today. How does the student of the Bible distinguish between spiritual allegory and literal interpretation? I believe Bruce clearly differentiated the two throughout his book and clearly articulated what is to be taken as symbolic versus literal.

From a personal level, this book helped me understand some of the teachings of Christ that I myself struggled with. For example, in the Olivet Discourse (Matthew 24, Mark 13, Luke 21), Jesus explains that certain things will occur within “this generation”. Was He speaking to the generation of the disciples, or was He speaking of a future generation? I believe Bruce cleared up this matter very clearly. I also struggled with the passage concerning Jesus’ instructions for His disciples to purchase two swords (see Luke 22:36). Why would Jesus who taught peace and non-violence contradict himself and do such a thing? Again, Bruce cleared up this matter very well in that the swords are not literal, but a figurative understanding of what the disciples will soon experience.

Lastly, understanding some of these more difficult passages will better equip me, as a missionary, to communicate the true meaning of Jesus’ teachings to a people group who do not yet know Him. As a part of my ministry serving amongst the Roma people of Albania, I will be conducting Bible studies to non-believers as a tool for evangelism. Furthermore, I will be conducting Bible studies to new believers and will help disciple them into mature and faithful followers of Jesus Christ. Imparting the truth behind some of these more difficult teachings of Christ to both the non-believers and believers alike will certainly help them truly understand who Jesus is.

♥ Ibrahim ♥ says

F. F. Bruce is always great. This book of his made a big difference and helped understand things that no other book was able to resolve.

David says

A short but very good book about the hard sayings of Jesus in the Gospels. Worth reading and profitable to have on your shelf for reference.

Ian Rees says

I confess I wasn't always sure from some of the chapters whether Bruce wasn't giving too much ground to liberal scholars in his interpretation of these sayings, but generally he tackles them head on and gives useful insight into the difficulties they present and how we might understand them.
