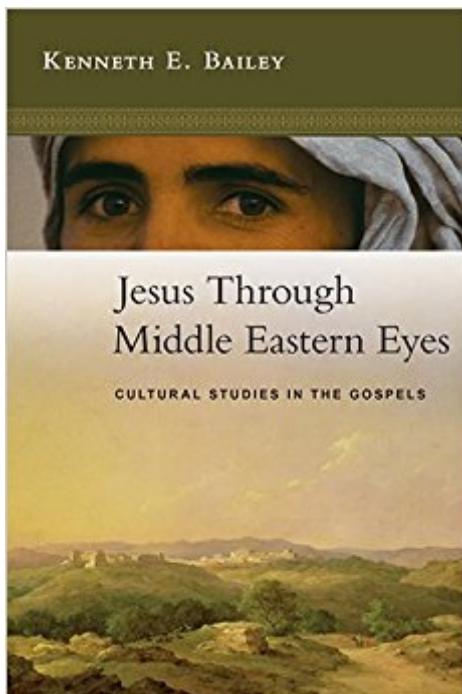


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# Jesus Through Middle Eastern Eyes: Cultural Studies In The Gospels



## **Synopsis**

Beginning with Jesus' birth, Ken Bailey leads you on a kaleidoscopic study of Jesus throughout the four Gospels. Bailey examines the life and ministry of Jesus with attention to the Lord's Prayer, the Beatitudes, Jesus' relationship to women, and especially Jesus' parables. Through it all, Bailey employs his trademark expertise as a master of Middle Eastern culture to lead you into a deeper understanding of the person and significance of Jesus within his own cultural context. With a sure but gentle hand, Bailey lifts away the obscuring layers of modern Western interpretation to reveal Jesus in the light of his actual historical and cultural setting. This entirely new material from the pen of Ken Bailey is a must-have for any student of the New Testament. If you have benefited from Bailey's work over the years, this book will be a welcome and indispensable addition to your library. If you are unfamiliar with Bailey's work, this book will introduce you to a very old yet entirely new way of understanding Jesus.

## **Book Information**

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## **Customer Reviews**

Jesus was not an American. Nor a capitalist. Nor a product of the Enlightenment or Romanticism. He wasn't a postmodernist or a CEO or a copilot. Believe it or not, Jesus was a Middle Easterner. And a Jew. He could speak Hebrew and some Greek, but mostly he spoke Aramaic. What does all this have to do with us? Well, if you're reading this, chances are that you are none of the above-mentioned things that Jesus was, and you are many of the things Jesus was not. Therefore, when you and I read the Bible, we tend to read it through lenses quite different from those worn by

the first hearers of the message. We may reach accurate doctrinal conclusions about the essentials of the faith, but we may also miss much of the richness that comes from understanding the culture in which the Bible was written. When it comes to Jesus, we miss the sheer audacity of his words and his person, even as we bow before Him for our salvation. That's where Kenneth E. Bailey comes in. Bailey grew up in the Middle East (mostly Egypt) and taught there for 40 years. His 60 years of life experience, linguistic ability, and curiosity come together in this amazing look at the Jesus of the gospels. It is impossible to read this book without growing in an appreciation of the cleverness, theological and philosophical depth, social brazenness, and deep compassion that go into describing the incarnate Christ. Bailey's insights are not "novel" in the sense of being unorthodox theologically. Rather, they are like a key that opens a door and allows a much fuller view than what one was heretofore gaining through a keyhole. The previous view was accurate, but limited. The new view is broader and richer and gives deeper meaning to what was seen before.

Review of Kenneth E. Bailey, *Jesus Through Middle Eastern Eyes: Cultural Studies in the Gospels* (Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2008). ISBN 978-0-8308-2568-4. 443 pp. This review originally appeared on the Exploring Our Matrix blog. In his latest book, *Jesus Through Middle Eastern Eyes*, Kenneth Bailey provides further discussion of various parts of the New Testament Gospels, from the perspective that has been his own unique contribution over the past three decades or so. To my knowledge, there is no comparable New Testament scholar who is a native speaker of English and yet who has grown up, lived and taught in the Middle East and been fluent in Arabic, and as a result has been able to mediate the cultural perspective of that region on the New Testament to English-speaking readers. As such, Bailey provides a genuinely unique perspective, and I expect anyone interested in understanding the New Testament will want to read his latest book, as well as earlier ones. The book is divided into six main sections, each containing several chapters each of which is focused on a particular passage from the Gospels. The introduction should not be skipped, since it emphasizes the importance of the unique perspective Bailey offers and the neglected sources he draws upon. Bailey draws heavily not only on his own experience of life in the Middle East, but also the neglected witness of Christian authors writing in Syriac and Arabic over the centuries. The insights that can be gleaned both from contemporary life in this part of the world, and from the Christians who lived there prior to the modern era (and in particular those who spoke Syriac, a dialect of Aramaic, the language Jesus himself spoke) are extremely important.

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