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Brake and Beachs' "They called him Yeshua: The story of the young Jesus" (book review)

Cathie Chatmon
Piedmont International University

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Book Reviews



Brake, D. & Beach, S. (2019). *They called him Yeshua: The story of the young Jesus*. Bloomington, IN: Archway. 438 pp. \$28.99. ISBN 9781480872967

Brake and Beach have collaborated to produce a fascinating and well-documented account of the early life of the Savior. Using verifiable historical resources, they have invited their readers to walk the paths of first century Israel through their narrative. Beginning with a glimpse of the occupation of Israel by the cruel Roman armies, the authors are able to imbue their readers with the sense of fear that permeated Jewish society of that day. Readers witness the announcement of the birth of the Savior, as well as his birth and early years – those years of growing up in a family who are not certain what to make of this son and brother. He is so strikingly different and has a God-like aura about Him. Yet, he refuses to perform a miracle to prove His deity or to give them what they desire. The juxtaposition of the divine and human natures is evident throughout the story, and through the razzing of His brothers and friends as they demand miracles, the reader can understand what the writer of Hebrews is saying when he writes that Jesus “learned obedience through the things that He suffered.” (Hebrews 5:8). Throughout the book, He is called Yeshua or more affectionately Yeshi. When the time is right, he submits to the baptism of His cousin, John, and embarks on the journey that had been planned for Him since before the beginning of time; all the years prior had been but preparation.

I found this to be somewhat weighty for a work of fiction, and yet there is great value in reading it. Readers can see the conflicts that existed between Jesus and His family and see that He was often misunderstood. A key factor in the misunderstanding was His brother, James, who chose to leave home and involve Himself in unsavory activities. Readers can also see how Jesus stood by His family after the death of Joseph. He was a true son to Mary and true Son of God, and the two roles were never in conflict.

They Called Him Yeshua would be best suited for three library situations: a fiction section of an academic library, a Christian school library with a focus on the high school library, or a church library. If the reader remembers that it is fiction, there is great value in learning of the Savior and his earthly family.

Reviewer

Cathie Chatmon, Piedmont International University