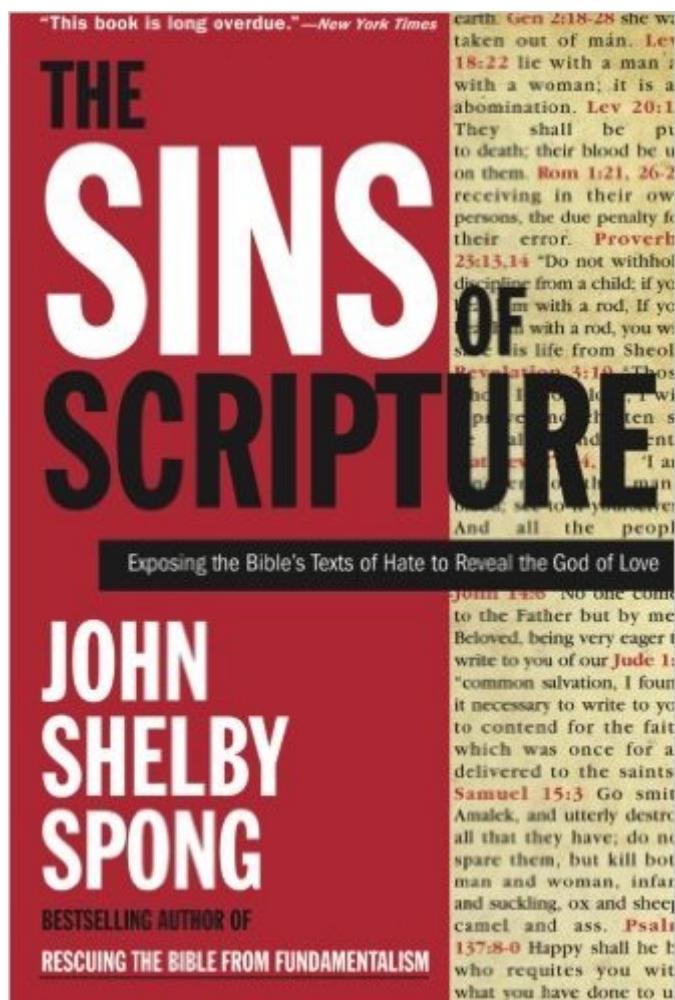


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The Sins Of Scripture: Exposing The Bible's Texts Of Hate To Reveal The God Of Love



Synopsis

The Bible contains many passages that believers and nonbelievers alike would recognize as appalling theology. Whether these texts are used to discriminate, oppress, or condemn, they distort the truth of Christianity and cast doubt upon the love of God. Now, legendary Episcopal bishop and advocate for liberal Christianity John Shelby Spong addresses these passages, shattering our misconceptions and delivering a new vision of how Christians today can use the Bible.

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Customer Reviews

Well the attacks have begun, a series of one star reviews that do not discuss the books content, but just attack Spong generally. I sat and read this book in one sitting. Like all of Spong's work it is the work of a seeker. Those who accuse Spong of being dogmatic are simply dishonest. Spong is careful to point out the number of things he doesn't know. This was made clear in his appearance on The O'Reilly Factor this Wednesday. He feels the presence of God, he finds God most clearly in Jesus, and he SEEKS to understand this presence. I don't always agree with him. He is pro-choice, I am pro-life. He is an economic liberal, I am an economic conservative. I do not entirely agree with his linking of fundamentalism to anti environmentalism; however, the important thing is that he is seeking the truth. He acknowledges he has not completely found it, he acknowledges that he never may, and as he often says he has no wish to change anyone's conception of God. He doesn't write for the fundamentalist or the theologically conservative. He writes for those of us who believe, but can't accept what can be disproven, ie. Virgin Birth, miracles, etc. Like many of us he does not need

proof to believe, but he does need something not to be disproven to be believed. If you are interested in looking beyond the literal words of scripture -which are often misleading, contradictory or proveably wrong- to the message and experiences behind it Spong is your man, if not.. then fine. If you are comfortable in your faith than neiher he, nor his supporters are seeking to change your mind.Oh and as for the review pointing out that he does not engage more conservative believers in debate, rubbish. He has held several public debates with scholars of other beliefs. And many more times has chalanged fundamentalist to a debate and been rejected. He once wanted to do a lecture tour with Jerry Fallwell. He said that the two of them discussing the Bible seriously might encourage more people to read it. Fallwell refused as he was afraid such a tour might make Spong more well know. It is the fundamentalists who wil not engage him.

I have read this book and others by Bishop Spong. This is the first review I have written on but felt compelled to write after reading some of the hateful things that have been said about this book and the insults that have been hurled at Bishop Spong. I am reminded of a quote that was attributed to Gandhi. He said, "First they ignore you, then they laugh at you, then they fight you, then you win." Bishop Spong seems to be receiving blows from the "fight you" people now. Several of the reviewers have called the book hate filled and demonic. I could not disagree more. If someone actually reads the book then it becomes evident that most of the one star reviewers probably didn't read the book and that their critiques are more hate filled than anything that the book remotely contains. That said, I must praise the book. As Spong often points out in his writings, there is no such thing as liberal or conservative Bible scholarship. There is only responsible and irresponsible Bible scholarship. The truth is under neither conservative or liberal ownership. One need only look up the passages mentioned in this book, review the historical context of the period when the scripture was written, and see how the passages were used centuries later in order to soon realize that this book uses responsible Biblical scholarship. Contrary to what some reviewers say, this book does not degrade the Bible. This book makes one think about the ways that people through the centuries have far too often misused the Bible for acts that are in direct conflict with Jesus' prime directive to love God and love each other. This book also makes one ponder issues that are all too often swept under the rug in weekly sermons across the country for fear of "offending" a certain population of "conservative" Christians. It asks serious questions about war, child abuse, homosexuality, birth control, gender roles in the church, the way we have treated the environment, etc. As Bishop Spong pointed out in an essay I read, "Why is it that the churches that have all the answers don't allow any questions?" This book shows that to ask questions and point out mistakes

made by mankind's use of the Bible does not degrade the Bible. It only causes us to want to know more and search for understanding that brings us closer to God. The one star reviewers brought the overall rating of a wonderful book down because of their ultraconservative views and an apparent fear of questioning the Bible. I for one enjoyed the book immensely and am better for it. Just think for yourself and do your own research. An open mind is all Bishop Spong is asking.

I got the following alert: "As someone who has purchased books by John Shelby Spong, you might like to know that "The Sins of Scripture. . . will be released on April 12, 2005." The attacks on this book started getting posted April 13. Somehow, I doubt that these "moral" "Christians" managed to buy the book of a man they despise instantly on release, and read it and digest it in 24 hours or less. Quite apart from the time frame, I doubt any of these people would pay money for this book, and it isn't available in libraries as I write this. Hmmmm. I only got my copy at a local store last night. I find the book very thoughtful and careful in its analysis. I can find no heresy or "satanism" in Spong's belief that the Christian way should involve compassion for the poor and suffering in this world. What is there to complain about? The quotes he takes are directly from the Bible--he is not misrepresenting anything. I suppose we ought to thank these people for being so ludicrously obvious about their close-mindedness and dishonesty. If they hadn't jumped the gun, they might have been more able to successfully pretend that they'd actually read what they are condemning.

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