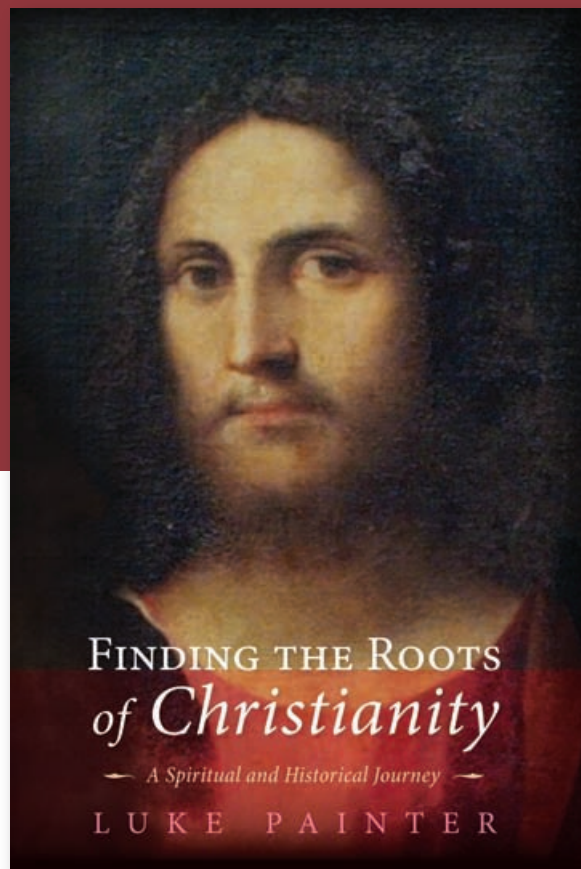


FINDING THE ROOTS of Christianity

— A Spiritual and Historical Journey —

LUKE PAINTER

Finding the Roots of Christianity is for people who are curious about the historical Jesus, his followers, and the movement they began. Who were they, and how was their message understood by those who heard them? Where did the New Testament of the Bible come from? In a personal, thoughtful style, Luke Painter brings into focus the life and times of the Jewish prophet Jesus of Nazareth, bridging the gap between personal study of the Bible and academic scholarship. Sources outside the Bible, including the ancient historian Josephus and recently discovered “lost scriptures” such as the Dead Sea Scrolls, reveal the diversity of early Christian beliefs. Roman religious beliefs influenced how the Christian message was understood during the transition from Jewish sect to the official religion of the Roman Empire. Clear and concise, and based on careful historical research, this book guides the reader through what is known about the earliest origins of Christianity as well as recent discoveries and debates. The author’s personal journey of faith and passionate interest in the people behind the New Testament enliven the facts of history, illuminating their meaning for their own time and today.



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Luke Painter's interest in religion began at an early age, as the son of church pastors. A scientist and musician, with degrees in religion, philosophy, and ecology, he teaches ecology and conservation at Oregon State University. The author of numerous scientific articles, *Finding the Roots of Christianity* is his first book on Christian origins, written for the general reader. He has an unusual ability to speak clearly and personally about this controversial and complex subject.

“Luke Painter’s work is a fine service to thoughtful people. He writes with clarity and honesty on the basis of much careful research.”

—**ELAINE H. PAGELS**, Professor of Religion, Princeton University

“Luke Painter’s *Finding the Roots of Christianity: A Spiritual and Historical Journey* is a compelling exegesis on the origins of belief. His approach is sensitive to the diversity of interpretations that flow from the text of the Christian Bible. As a college professor who teaches about belief (religious and otherwise), I find his analysis eminently teachable and would be pleased to use it alongside the Old and New Testaments and other foundational texts in my school’s first-year student seminar.”

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