



The Fourth Gospel: Tales of a Jewish Mystic

John Shelby Spong

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John Shelby Spong, bestselling author and popular proponent of a modern, scholarly and authentic Christianity, argues that this last gospel to be written was misinterpreted by the framers of the fourth-century creeds to be a literal account of the life of Jesus when in fact it is a literary, interpretive retelling of the events in Jesus' life through the medium of fictional characters, from Nicodemus and Lazarus to the "Beloved Disciple." The Fourth Gospel was designed first to place Jesus into the context of the Jewish scriptures, then to place him into the worship patterns of the synagogue and finally to allow him to be viewed through the lens of a popular form of first-century Jewish mysticism.

The result of this intriguing study is not only to recapture the original message of this gospel, but also to provide us today with a radical new dimension to the claim that in the humanity of Jesus the reality of God has been met and engaged.

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