



Biblical Literalism: A Gentile Heresy: A Journey into a New Christianity Through the Doorway of Matthew's Gospel

John Shelby Spong

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A global and pioneering leader of progressive Christianity and the bestselling author of *Why Christianity Must Change or Die* and *Eternal Life* explains why a literal reading of the Gospels is actually heretical, and how this mistaken notion only entered the church once Gentiles had pushed out all the Jewish followers of Jesus.

A man who has consciously and deliberately walked the path of Christ, John Shelby Spong has lived his entire life inside the Christian Church. In this profound and considered work, he offers a radical new way to look at the gospels today as he shows just how deeply Jewish the Christian Gospels are and how much they reflect the Jewish scriptures, history, and patterns of worship. Pulling back the layers of a long-standing Gentile ignorance, he reveals how the church's literal reading of the Bible is so far removed from these original Jewish authors' intent that it is an act of heresy.

Using the Gospel of Matthew as a guide, Spong explores the Bible's literary and liturgical roots—its grounding in Jewish culture, symbols, icons, and storytelling tradition—to explain how the events of Jesus' life, including the virgin birth, the miracles, the details of the passion story, and the resurrection and ascension, would have been understood by both the Jewish authors of the various gospels and by the Jewish audiences for which they were originally written. Spong makes clear that it was only after the church became fully Gentile that readers of the Gospels took these stories to be factual, distorting their original meaning.

In *Biblical Literalism: A Gentile Heresy*, Spong illuminates the gospels as never before and provides a better blueprint for the future than where the church's leaden and heretical reading of the story of Jesus has led us—one that allows the faithful to live inside the Christian story in the modern world.

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