



The Gospel in Brief: The Life of Jesus

By Leo Tolstoy, Dustin Condren

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The greatest novelist of all time retells the greatest story ever told, the life of Jesus Christ, in *The Gospel in Brief*—Leo Tolstoy’s riveting, novelistic integration of the four Gospels into a single, twelve-chapter narrative. Virtually unknown to English readers until now, Dustin Condren’s groundbreaking translation from the Russian opens a precious new world of Tolstoy’s masterful literary talent to fans of *War and Peace* and *Anna Karenina*.

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

Tolstoy's no-frills, just-the-facts-ma'am version of the life of Jesus Christ and his teachings makes a readable account out of the four Gospels that begin the New Testament, but it bears little stylistic trace of the Tolstoy familiar to most readers. Starting with the conception by an "unknown father" (but glossing over the first 30 years of Jesus' life) and ending with the crucifixion (but avoiding the resurrection), Tolstoy's account is a tight, accessible, and refreshing distillation of Christ's teachings. The author eschews the miracles from Christ's story to focus instead on his messages. Those messages can be pedantic, but generally are conveyed with economy, although some of Christ's teachings--for instance, his views on celibacy for bachelors--are a hard sell today. Tolstoy's preface, in which he explains his conversion to Christianity and justifies his reconstruction of the Gospels by arguing that Jesus never wrote his own version, is a nice addition, as is the appendix of verses the Russian author draws on for his life of Christ. (Mar.)

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From [Booklist](#)

Tolstoy is best known as a novelist and towering figure in world literature, but he is also the author of several works of Christian theology, owing to a midlife crisis that sent him on a quest for spiritual meaning. Unfulfilled by many conventional answers, Tolstoy returned to the Russian Orthodox Christianity of his youth and determined that the teachings of Jesus could indeed give meaning to life. In this short work, he sets out to distill the essence of that teaching from the four Gospels and present the reader with one, harmonized account of Jesus' teachings that is free from irrelevant details in the Gospel texts and the gloss applied to them by church ritual and hierarchy. Omitted, for example, is the resurrection story because Tolstoy believed it recounted only an event and did not present a teaching. The result is a fascinating and thoroughly unorthodox rewriting of the Gospels and restatement of Christianity. --Christopher McConnell

Review

"Dustin Condren captures, in this fresh idiomatic translation, the dazzlingly audacious achievement of *The Gospel in Brief*, Tolstoy's daring synthesis the New Testament accounts of Jesus." (Edward E. Ericson, Jr., editor of *The Solzhenitsyn Reader*)

"A fascinating and thoroughly unorthodox rewriting of the Gospels and restatement of Christianity."
(Booklist)

"This is the first English translation in more than a century; Condren worked from Tolstoy's original version and restored material deleted in previous translations. The result is not unlike Hermann Hesse's 'Siddhartha' — the story of a life that illustrates a path." (Los Angeles Times)

"Newly translated by Dustin Condren, Tolstoy's *Gospel in Brief* offers us a Jesus stripped of the overlay of Christian dogma and ancient metaphysics: his Jesus confronts readers with a real challenge and a call to change their lives." (George Pattison, Lady Margaret Professor of Divinity, University of Oxford, and canon of Christ Church Cathedral)

"*The Gospel in Brief* lives at the center of Leo Tolstoy's thinking about the meaning of life. ... Beautifully translated by Dustin Condren. ... Although little known, this book remains hugely important." (Jay Parini, author of *The Last Station: A Novel of Tolstoy's Last Year*)

“A fresh translation destined to introduce a new generation to a fuller understanding of Tolstoy’s mind.”
(Kirkus Reviews)

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Lucile Brown:

Playing with family in a very park, coming to see the marine world or hanging out with good friends is thing that usually you might have done when you have spare time, after that why you don't try thing that really opposite from that. One activity that make you not sense tired but still relaxing, trilling like on roller coaster you already been ride on and with addition of knowledge. Even you love The Gospel in Brief: The Life of Jesus, you can enjoy both. It is excellent combination right, you still would like to miss it? What kind of hangout type is it? Oh come on its mind hangout folks. What? Still don't have it, oh come on its called reading friends.

Patricia Smith:

This The Gospel in Brief: The Life of Jesus is great guide for you because the content that is full of information for you who always deal with world and still have to make decision every minute. This specific book reveal it info accurately using great arrange word or we can state no rambling sentences within it. So if you are read the idea hurriedly you can have whole facts in it. Doesn't mean it only provides you with straight forward sentences but tough core information with lovely delivering sentences. Having The Gospel in Brief: The Life of Jesus in your hand like obtaining the world in your arm, facts in it is not ridiculous 1. We can say that no guide that offer you world in ten or fifteen minute right but this guide already do that. So , this can be good reading book. Hey Mr. and Mrs. stressful do you still doubt which?

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William Harris:

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