



The Apocryphal Jesus: Legends of the Early Church

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
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This accessible selection of the most important and significant of the remarkable and often bizarre apocryphal stories surrounding the life of Jesus and the Early Church has established a reputation as an invaluable introduction to the genre of Christian apocryphal literature. J. K. Elliott clearly explains the scholarly importance of the genre and introduces each section of texts with reference to biblical texts and later church history. Stories found in this selection include Jesus' birth in a cave, his childhood escapades, his secret sayings, and his descent to the underworld; the torments in Hell; Saint Paul baptizing a lion; the death of Pontius Pilate and Saint Peter being crucified upside down. These all come from early Christian legends which did not get into the Bible, yet have had a profound influence on art, literature, and theology from the second century through the Middle Ages and even modern times. Some of the stories included here, especially those involving the Virgin Mary, have affected matters of doctrine; others have influenced the church's teaching on the after life, whilst from the apocryphal Acts there are some of the best examples of accounts of the lives of Christianity's earliest saints.

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