
Dr. Daniel Fanous, an Orthodox independent researcher with degrees in medicine and engineering, presents to the reader the most profound sayings of Jesus and attempts to decipher their meanings by contextualizing them within the framework of first-century Mediterranean culture. Taking into account that the sayings represent God’s speech and are “intrinsic manifestations of Jesus’ entire life and mission” the author empathetically insists on the necessity of placing the sayings into their proper historical and intellectual contexts to extract their significance. He does so because the un-contextualized reading of ancient sources leads to the fusion of ancient and modern horizons and results in misinterpretations at best and to significant doctrinal distortions of the original meaning at worst.

The volume references various canonical, deuterocanonical, patristic, and rabbinic sources representing the intellectual world of first century Judea as well as the tradition of its interpretation, aiming at approximating the meanings of the sayings to contemporaries. What is the meaning of Jesus’ saying that “the kingdom of heaven suffers violence”? Can we intelligibly grasp its significance? The author makes a successful attempt to make this among many other sayings intelligible to the reader.

The book’s first part elucidates a set of sayings reflecting Jesus’ attitude to the law; the second part focuses on Jesus’ sayings relating to the others; the third part is dedicated to the sayings regarding the kingdom; and the fourth part “seeks to come close to what Jesus revealed of Himself in the sayings.” Its language and exposition of materials makes the book easily readable and enjoyable to all interested in Christianity.

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