



# The Five Gospels

*Robert W. Funk*

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**The Five Gospels** Robert W. Funk

- \* **Did Jesus claim to be the Messiah?**
- \* **Did he promise to return and usher in a new age?**
- \* **How did Jesus envision the kingdom of God?**
- \* **Did he commission his disciples to convert the world and establish a church?**

*The Five Gospels* answers these questions in a bold, dynamic work that will startle traditional readers of the Bible and rekindle interest in it among secular skeptics. In 1985 the Jesus Seminar, a distinguished group of biblical scholars led by Robert W. Funk and John Dominic Crossan (co-chairs), embarked on a new assessment of the gospels, including the recently discovered Gospel of Thomas. In pursuit of the historical Jesus, they used their collective expertise to determine the authenticity of the more than 1,500 sayings attributed to him. Their remarkable findings appear in this book.

Each saying attributed to Jesus is color-coded and presented in a completely new translation of the Greek and Coptic texts. In the judgment of the Jesus Seminar:

- \* only those sayings that appear in red type are considered by the Seminar to be close to what Jesus actually said;
- \* the words in pink less certainly originated with Jesus;
- \* the words in gray are not his, though they contain ideas that are close to his own;
- \* the sayings that appear in black have been embellished or created by his followers, or borrowed from common lore.

According to the Seminar, no more than 20 percent of the sayings attributed to Jesus were uttered by him.

This book contains illuminating commentary and notes on the text of the gospels and rigorously explores the historical and literary factors behind the Seminar's findings. The enlightening introduction by Robert W. Funk, founder of the Jesus Seminar, sums up two hundred years of gospel scholarship and provides a rare insight into the workings of the Seminar. *The Five Gospels* is a major work of biblical scholarship that gives new dimensions to the historical Jesus.

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