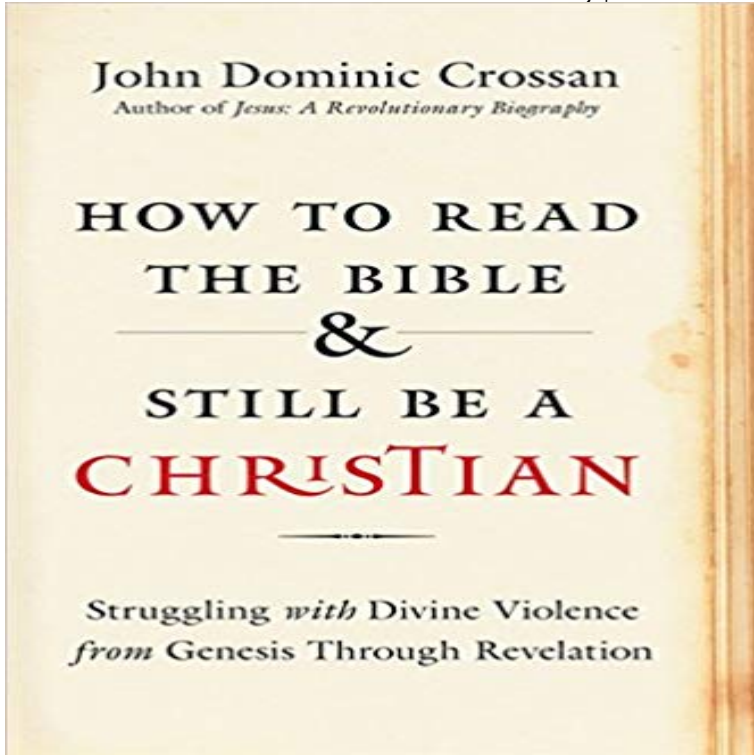


How to Read the Bible and Still Be a Christian: Struggling with Divine Violence from Genesis Through Revelation



The acclaimed Bible scholar and author of *The Historical Jesus* and *God & Empire*, the greatest New Testament scholar of our generation (John Shelby Spong) grapples with Scripture's two conflicting visions of Jesus and God, one of a loving God, and one of a vengeful God, and explains how Christians can better understand these passages in a way that enriches their faith. Many portions of the New Testament introduce a compassionate Jesus who turns the other cheek, loves his enemies, and shows grace to all. But the Jesus we find in Revelation and some portions of the Gospels leads an army of angels bent on earthly destruction. Which is the true revelation of the Messiah and how can both be in the same Bible? *How to Read the Bible and Still Be a Christian* explores this question and offers guidance for the faithful conflicted over which version of the Lord to worship. John Dominic Crossan reconciles these contrasting views, revealing how different writers of the books of the Bible not only possessed different visions of God but also different purposes for writing. Often these books are explicitly competing against another, opposing vision of God from the Bible itself. Crossan explains how to navigate this debate and offers what he believes is the best central thread to what the Bible is all about. He challenges Christians to fully participate in this dialogue, thereby shaping their faith by reading deeply, reflectively, and in community with others who share their uncertainty. Only then, he advises, will Christians be able to read and understand the Bible without losing their faith.

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