

The Jewish Jesus: How Judaism and Christianity Shaped Each Other
by Peter Schäfer.
Princeton University Press 2012.

The refined features of Peter Schäfer on the inside back cover evince a combined warmth and authority, and these qualities are reflected in *The Jewish Jesus*, a book that develops five original lectures given in Germany in 2010.

The author acknowledges that the title of the book is slightly misleading, likely as it is to draw in both Jewish and Christian readers, but Schäfer makes it clear that this was not so much an exercise in cynical marketing but rather a desire to find a title for the book that would be neither too weighty nor too long.

The Jewish Jesus is actually much less about Jesus and much more about the complex early relationship between Christianity and Judaism as well as the practical and cultural influences each exerted on the others. The book is divided into nine chapters with an introduction, each chapter having its own sub-sections. The chapter headings are: Different Names of God; The Young and the Old God; God and David; God and Metatron; Has God a Father, a Son or a Brother?; The Angels; Adam; The Birth of the Messiah or Why Did Baby Messiah Disappear?; The Suffering Messiah Ephraim.

Professor Schäfer is as at ease with the Christian and Gnostic sources as he is with the Jewish, and his writing, synergies and theses have the magisterial quality that one only rarely encounters in a scholar whose learning, ability to communicate, and intellect come together in one authoritative package. Whether you are a student of Judaism or Christianity, an interested lay person, or someone immersed in the field of inter-faith relations *The Jewish Jesus* is a key work.

Rabbi Dr Charles H Middleburgh