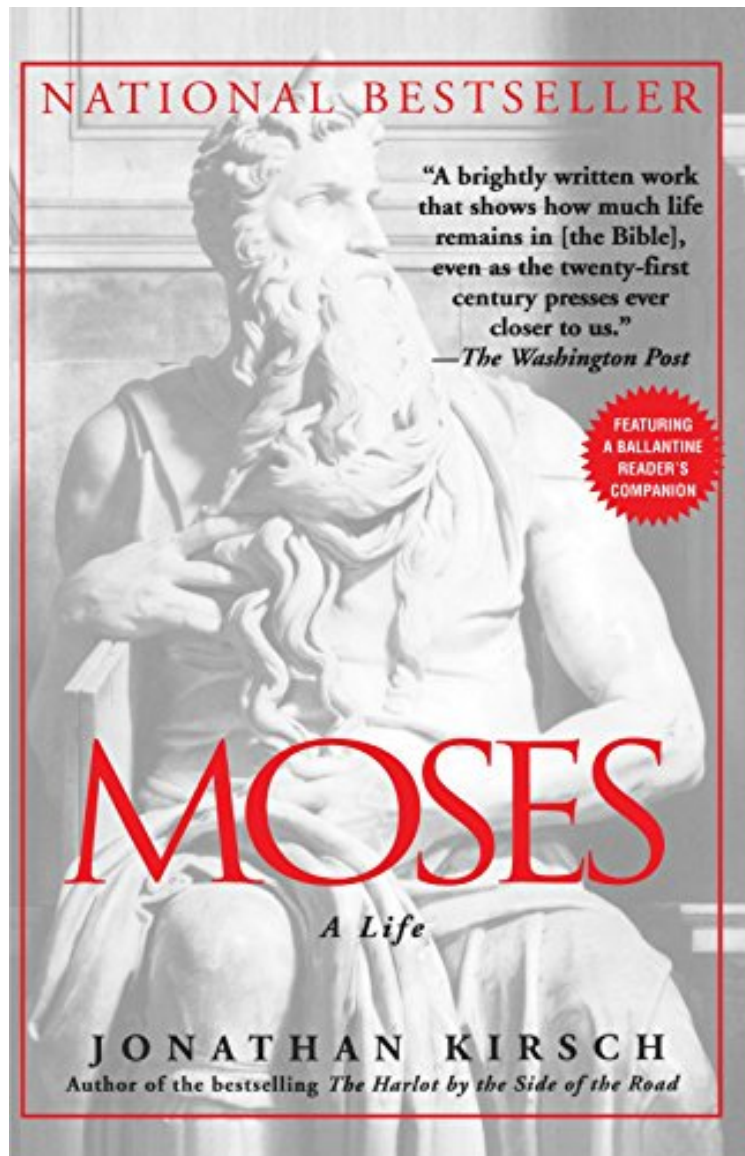


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Moses: A Life

Jonathan Kirsch

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Jonathan Kirsch : Moses: A Life before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Moses: A Life:

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Spectacular WorkBy MITCH Quite academic, very thought provoking work. It incorporated many views, even though some would disagree at times. It does make one pause to

verify or at least look at the history, both from a biblical point as well as secular. All points are valid and as an objective student of history one must take into account even opposing thought, perhaps even challenging ones own dogmatic perception. I myself did not agree with all the subjective analysis or personal points. However, it is even within the more subjective views still thought provoking. One is either strengthened or offended, yet that very same will be moved non the less to much greater thought. Very inspiring and more than worth the read! 2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Moses the mystery. By R. Morell I'm not finished with this book, but it's rather readable. I picked it up because I wanted to know about the "Moses Archetype" if you will, and it's been somewhat helpful there. I'm fascinated that there is so much that's contradictory, and Mr. Kirsch does an admirable job of explicating some of the details. It's definitely a great read. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. A Very Different View. By Edward J. Barton For those who view Moses in light of Charleton Heston, or a Michelangelo statue (pictured on the cover), Jonathan Kirsch will dispell these views and provide many other facets of analysis on the life of Moses. Viewing the life of Moses through the lenses of the Bible, the Talmud, other Midrashim as well as popular legend, archaeology, sociology, history and literature, Kirsch attempts to unpeel the onion to discover the "real" Moses. Kirsch walks the reader chronologically through the life of Moses, from the birth and discovery in the Nile through his death on Mount Nebo - all the while applying the lenses noted above to see what each might tell us. What he finds is that the "real" Moses is the Moses of myth and legend, and the stories are rich with symbolism, theology and meaning at many levels. While the Moses of history is lost to time, and impossible to recover, Kirsch does a masterful job of bringing the meaning of Moses to life, and helps the reader understand that "real" is more than just "historical". A good read.

Lawgiver and liberator. Seer and prophet. The only human permitted to converse with God "face-to-face." Moses is the most commanding presence in the Old Testament. Yet as Jonathan Kirsch shows in this brilliant, stunningly original volume, Moses was also an enigmatic and mysterious figure--at once a good shepherd and a ruthless warrior, a spiritual leader and a magician, a lawgiver who broke his own laws, God's chosen friend and hounded victim. Now, in *Moses: A Life*, Kirsch accomplishes the wondrous feat of revealing the real Moses, a strikingly modern figure who steps out from behind the facade of Sunday school lessons and movie matinees. Drawing on the biblical text and a treasury of both scholarship and storytelling, Kirsch examines all that is known and all that has been imagined of Moses. In these vivid pages, we see the marvels and mysteries of Moses's life in a new light--his rescue in infancy and adoption by an Egyptian princess; his reluctant assumption of the role of liberator; his struggles to wrest his people from the pharaoh's dominion; his desperate vigil on Mount Sinai. Here too is the darker, more ominous Moses--the sorcerer, the husband of a pagan woman, the military commander who cold-bloodedly ordered the slaying of innocent people; the beloved of God whom God sought twice to murder. Jonathan Kirsch brings both prodigious knowledge and a keen imagination to one of the most compelling stories of the Bible, and the results are fascinating. A figure of mystery, passion, and contradiction, Moses emerges from this book very much a hero for our time. From the Hardcover edition.

.com *Moses: A Life* is Jonathan Kirsch's attempt to depict the historical Moses. There is not one whit of archeological evidence that the great lawgiver ever lived, but Kirsch, a California lawyer, combs through the Scripture and its cultural remains with forensic zeal in his efforts to uncover the man he calls "the most haunted and haunting figure in the Bible." Although his thirst for empirical evidence remains, at the end, unsated, Kirsch's imagination is given new life by his quest. Moses emerges, in this fascinating, wide-ranging, and somewhat frustratingly logical book, as a person both necessary and nebulous. Kirsch concludes that Moses' existence cannot be proven, even though his influence is as great as that of any man who ever lived. --Michael Joseph Gross From Publishers Weekly Kirsch's treatment is less a biography of Moses than a meticulous distillation of the considerable secondary literature that has grown up around the sparse biblical material. Kirsch (*The Harlot By the Side of the Road*) draws extensively on the various theories elaborated by biblical scholars over the past centuries to explain multiple accounts of Moses' life. He also draws extensively on myths, legends and midrashim that have been woven around the figure of Moses, who figures, in various interpretations, as warrior, magician, shepherd, God's favorite, sorcerer's apprentice and reluctant prophet. Kirsch offers interesting speculation on Moses's identity, including the depth of his connection to Egypt, and on the power struggles that he believes underlie the patchwork narrative of Hebrew scripture. He also notes the succession of strong women who intervene on Moses's behalf, and he pays careful attention to the struggle between Miriam (who was a priestess in her own right) and Moses. Ultimately, Kirsch's Moses emerges less as a presence than an absence. But an absence that determines the structure of the whole narrative around him. Copyright 1998 Reed Business Information, Inc. From Booklist Kirsch meticulously distills the vast secondary literature that has grown up around the sparse biblical material on Moses. He draws on the myths, legends, and midrashim of Moses to soften ragged edges left by competing images of him as warrior, magician, shepherd, God's favorite, sorcerer's apprentice, and reluctant prophet. He wavers between a dispassionate historicism, intent on cutting through "secondary accretions" to get at "the kernel of genuine tradition," and a symbolic approach in which it is not so much Moses as the "values" he represents that matter. Finally, he leans toward the latter approach, which he says embraces the truth found in myth,

legend, and poetry, rather than trying to ascertain what "really" happened. Yet, like Freud (whose pseudoscientific treatment of Moses is an obvious source of fascination), Kirsch has chosen to write a biography rather than a historical novel. A novel might better sustain the competing images of Moses and the unpredictable deity who befriended him, but the historical approach will better please serious though nonspecialist readers of all sorts. Steven Schroeder