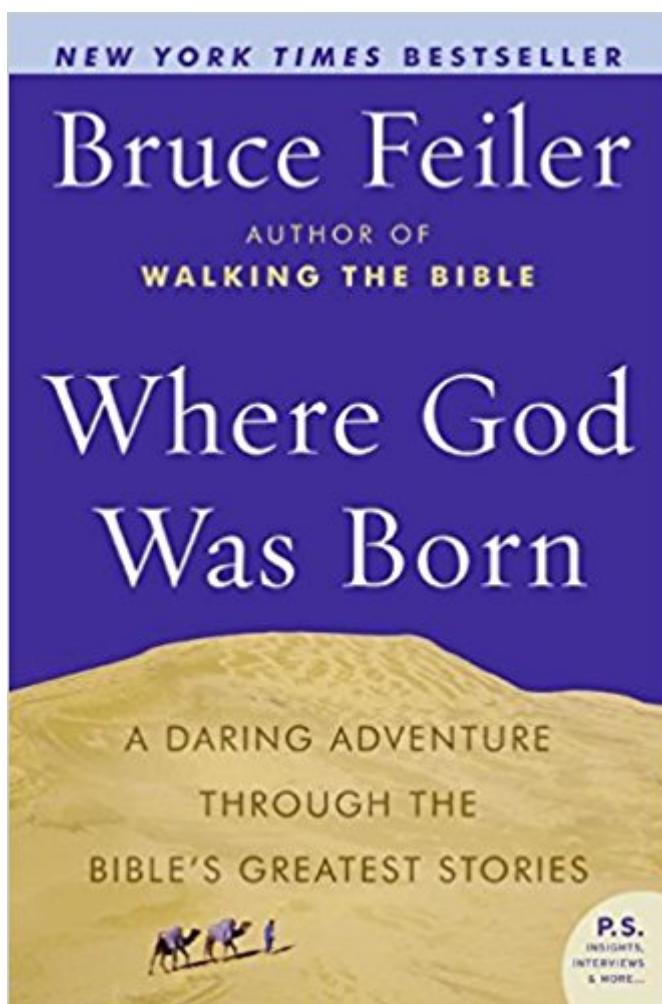


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Where God Was Born: A Daring Adventure Through The Bible's Greatest Stories (P.S.)



Synopsis

At a time when America debates its values and the world braces for religious war, Bruce Feiler, author of the New York Times bestsellers *Walking the Bible* and *Abraham*, travels ten thousand miles through the heart of the Middle East—Israel, Iraq, and Iran—and examines the question: Is religion tearing us apart . . . or can it bring us together? *Where God Was Born* combines the adventure of a wartime chronicle, the excitement of an archaeological detective story, and the insight of personal spiritual exploration. Taking readers to biblical sites not seen by Westerners for decades, Feiler's journey uncovers little-known details about the common roots of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, and affirms the importance of the Bible in today's world.

Book Information

Series: P.S.

Paperback: 448 pages

Publisher: William Morrow Paperbacks; Reprint edition (February 5, 2007)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0060574895

ISBN-13: 978-0060574895

Product Dimensions: 5.3 x 1 x 8 inches

Shipping Weight: 12.8 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.4 out of 5 stars 64 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #309,586 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #71 in Books > History > Ancient Civilizations > Mesopotamia #207 in Books > Christian Books & Bibles > Bible Study & Reference > History & Culture #477 in Books > History > World > Religious > Religion, Politics & State

Customer Reviews

Bruce Feiler's latest book combines now familiar elements into his own peculiar, delightful alchemy. Any particular page may be found effortlessly weaving together strands of theology, biblical exegesis, physical exploration, history and personal reflection as Feiler continues his journey of discovery, looking at the common roots of Christianity, Islam and Judaism. The Middle East has become a more dangerous place since the writing of his first book in this vein, *Walking the Bible*. But Feiler is impelled to answer his continued call, even when a flak jacket is necessary. He explores tunnels under Jerusalem. Goes to where David may have slain Goliath. Even looks for the Garden of Eden in Iraq while acknowledging that "the garden would never be found." It is this

externalization of searches typically only made in the heart that fascinates us and brings power to Feiler's narrative. In one of the more compelling sections of the book, a meditation on Jonah, Feiler makes a persuasive argument that "God cares only that you conduct yourself in a moral way." And what might come across as preaching in another context is instead organic; Feiler's ideas seem to grow as much out of his travel and present-day experience as they do from Scripture and history. Of particular interest is his writing on King Cyrus II. He travels to Persepolis, in modern-day Iran, and finds an ancient precedent for religious tolerance in this king who helped the Jews build the Second Temple. Feiler provokes us to reflect that if the Bible itself can sing the praises of a king who accepted the various religions of those he ruled, perhaps there is hope we can find room for more tolerance in our own time. Highly recommended.--Ed Dobias --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Starred Review. The third of Feiler's books on the Bible and the Middle East, this is another absorbing blend of travelogue, history, Bible commentary, memoir, current events and passionate preaching. In *Walking the Bible* (2001), Feiler surveyed the Torah. This sequel picks up with Joshua, first of the prophetic books, and follows Israel's story through the Hebrew scriptures: from the invasion of Canaan through the reigns of David and Solomon to the Babylonian captivity and the Diaspora. What differentiates Feiler from most other Bible commentators is that he actually visits the places he describes, despite Palestinian suicide bombers, Iraqi insurgents, Iranian fundamentalists and his very worried family back home. Readers will almost effortlessly learn a lot about antiquity--thanks again to his travel companion, archeologist Avner Goren--and also about recent history, today's headlines and Feiler's own spiritual journey. Enlarging on his vision of unity in Abraham (2002), he contends that the Bible's moral vision transcends land, power and nationality. "The only force strong enough to take on religious extremism," he concludes, "is religious moderation." For Feiler, now ready to affirm his Jewishness, this means "willingly asserting your faith in public, not with raging fire but with a single, quiet flame." Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

This audiobook, read by the author, is entertaining and light-hearted enough to make for easy listening. You don't have to prepare yourself for a lecture. The author weaves various historical information and present-day observations into his unique travelogue. He shares his thought processes, giving travel experiences with biblical commentary. Caution: I don't know about the

author's relative correctness on biblical commentary as I'm not a biblical scholar. Long after listening to the book, there are parts I still think about. I liked Feiler's description of Jericho and the battle of Jericho. As per the story, one wonders what the residents of Jericho did to deserve utter annihilation, with the killing of every man, woman and child. At this stage, Feiler was with Yoram Yair, one of the most decorated generals in Israel's history, who described the psychological effect of the marching around the walled city before destroying it. One can never think of Jericho the same way again. Feiler reflects on the problem of a people that can only establish a homeland by destroying the local inhabitants to achieve it. Feiler also describes David (later King David) in a very unique way. One tends to think of David from the scriptures as a man after God's heart. With the background and perspective of Feiler, one cannot only never think of David the same way again, but one is drawn into reflection of what attributes win God's heart. Later Feiler travels in Iraq and goes to the ruins of the Great Ziggurat of Ur. I would love to visit this place. The temple was built in the 21st century BC and as he describes it, the top is gone but it is still a massive structure. This very early city-state emerged as a local power so long ago because, it is believed, they mastered irrigation techniques that provided agricultural productivity. And this is supposed to be where Abraham came from. The geography has changed a great deal over time as have the locations of the great rivers, and thus one cannot see what the ancients saw. Feiler then goes to the ruins of Babylon and explains how Babylon became a nation-state. He explains what made Babylon unique and powerful. Feiler takes the position that the Jewish exile to Babylon was quite beneficial in the long run. Later he and his wife visit Iran to experience the ancient ruins of the city of King Cyrus, who ruled an actual empire. Feiler seems to have nothing but positive things to say about the manner in which King Cyrus ruled. This is an entertaining travel book with many anecdotal observations. If Feiler has an agenda or if he is not correct in his religious perspectives, it doesn't matter to me. I found the book informative and entertaining.

Very interesting exploration and discussion with current people of the land. Author's goal seems to be the bringing together of all the region to peace and acceptance of each other religion.

Bruce Feiler has written several books similar to this, and they're all excellent reading. You almost feel like you're there with him.

A slow and overdone beginning soon morphs into a fascinating narrative of discovery by a man in search of his culture's ancient roots and the significance of his Jewish past. Join in this tour of myths

and facts spread across the deserts, ruins and dusty towns of the Middle East and southwest Asia for a look at from where and why the most important foundations of Judaism, Christianity and Islam were laid down.

I really enjoy books written by Bruce Feiler. I have previously read "Walking The Bible" and "Abraham", and would recommend all 3 of these books.

Have read a number of his books, "Abraham" being the best, but this one seems a bit thrown together. Also, as a book on CD, Feiler is not the best reader. Should have used someone with spoken word performance background.

This was a book several of us read for a Bible study class. It was interesting to read. It was certainly easy and entertaining while reading. I think it is one of those that a person can return to at another time and continue to learn something from it. It was especially good as a study because of everyone's opinions and experiences that entered into the learning.

I am a fan of Bruce Feiler, so I started out anticipating an enjoyable book and he delivered. In a sense, it is an update of his first big seller about "Walking the Bible." There is new material here because it is a new trip. But there is a sense of deja vu in that he seems to be hitting the same general locales with a similar theme of bringing to life the Hebrew Scripture, its sites and its people. But it has enough newness to make it very readable. He does a good job of weaving current archeological finds into the narrative and addressing the big issue of competing digs in and around Jerusalem. I tend to read scripture, both New and Old, with a questioning mind. Feiler does the same, showing that this trip is as much a spiritual journey as a physical (and sometimes dangerous) adventure. This is a fast read, but thoughtful nevertheless. As one who has visited Israel, I found his descriptions written in such a way that I could visualize the locale from my mental pictures and recollections. Would recommend this to anyone interested in the topic.

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