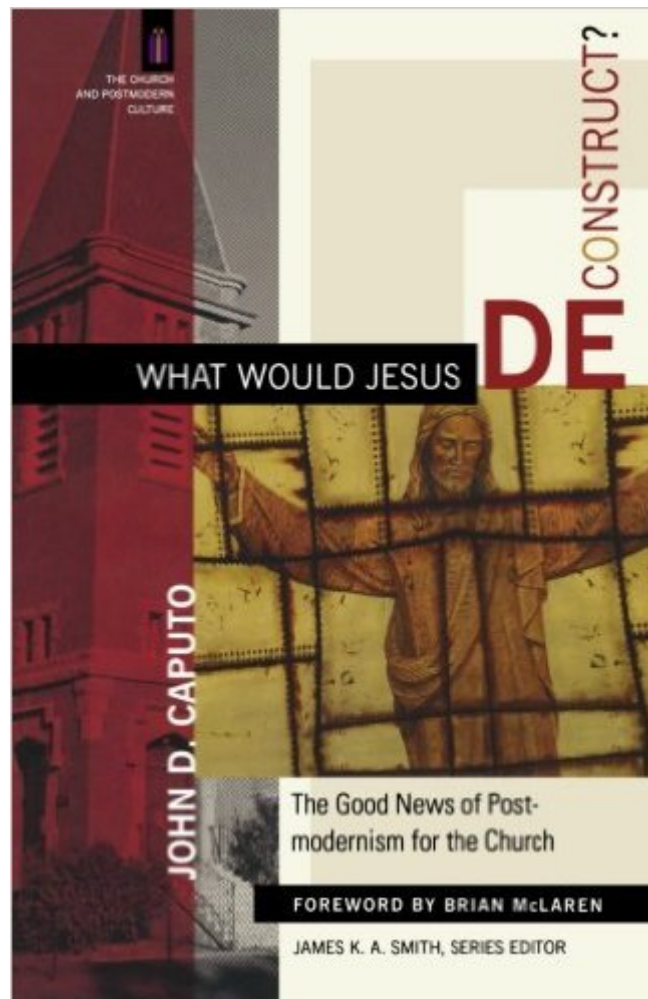


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# What Would Jesus Deconstruct?: The Good News Of Postmodernism For The Church (The Church And Postmodern Culture)



## Synopsis

This provocative addition to The Church and Postmodern Culture series offers a lively rereading of Charles Sheldon's *In His Steps* as a constructive way forward. John D. Caputo introduces the notion of why the church needs deconstruction, positively defines deconstruction's role in renewal, deconstructs idols of the church, and imagines the future of the church in addressing the practical implications of this for the church's life through liturgy, worship, preaching, and teaching. Students of philosophy, theology, religion, and ministry, as well as others interested in engaging postmodernism and the emerging church phenomenon, will welcome this provocative, nontechnical work.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

I take the publication of this book as an announcement of sorts. It tells us that what could be loosely called post structural Christianity is going public. There have been a number of other books that deal with Derrida's work in the Christian context but *What Would Jesus Deconstruct?* is the first book I know of that attempts to outline the profound sympathy between Derrida's later work and Christianity in a readable, non-academic way. That alone makes this an important book. The wonderful thing for me about this text is that Caputo did a great job selecting the ideas and themes from Derrida that can be used as a lens through which to read scripture and address Christian faith. These ideas open up a variety of potentials, and energies that just don't have the same resonance when examined without the tools that post structuralism generally, and Derrida specifically provide

us. Some of these themes include the journey, the unavoidable nature of impasses; the idea that the moment when we are faced with the impossible is the exact moment when real potentials are opened. He also addresses Derrida's unique understanding of justice, the economy of the gift and hospitality, to name a few. What makes Caputo's summary of Derrida useful is that it directs our attention to the structure of how themes such as love, or loving God, or one's neighbor (as only one of many potential examples) are articulated in scripture but also the significant pragmatic and philosophical challenges posed by such themes, their aporias, and the difficulties we face when we are willing to take this kind of challenge seriously. This is important work and frankly it strikes me that Christianity in America today is often dead set against doing this kind of work.

I just finished reading John Caputo's *What Would Jesus Deconstruct?*. Below is the posted book review that I put up on my Facebook account. My opening comments are referring to this review: "Caputo's other books have been light in a dark place, and this series of books looks promising. But this particular volume strikes me as poorly written and poorly reasoned, surprising for Caputo. He rails against an undefined "religious Right" in a way that Brian McLaren, in the preface, describes as "hospitable" but which I can only describe as straw-man hostility. He takes Derrida to have something to say about religion, which is fair enough and true, I think. But he never here makes the case for why we should listen to Derrida, or why Deconstruction is a desirable Biblical hermeneutic. In the end, he has very little to offer other than his opinion. I say this as one who usually finds his opinions interesting and his philosophy worth reading. This time, however, I think Caputo writes sloppily. He either does a disservice to the views he espouses, or else exposes them as largely empty of theological content. When he talks about the key themes in Derrida's work, he's lucid; when he talks about what they mean for us, his wordplay seems to mask a lack of argument. This is unfortunate." The review above is superb and right on target. I read this work because I do believe that deconstruction can be appropriated in useful ways by Christians. When Caputo is explaining what deconstruction is and its concerns, the work is insightful and helpful. The 2nd half of the work is nearly useless (at least to me).

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