

# My Jesus Year



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One day a Georgia-born son of an Orthodox rabbi discovers that his enthusiasm for Judaism is flagging. He observes the Sabbath, he goes to synagogue, and he even flies to New York on weekends for a series of "speed dates" with nice, eligible Jewish girls. But, something is missing. Looking out of his window and across the street at one of the hundreds of churches in Atlanta, he asks, "What would it be like to be a Christian?" So begins Benjamin Cohen's hilarious journey that is My Jesus Year —part memoir, part spiritual quest, and part anthropologist's mission. Among Cohen's many adventures (and misadventures), he finds himself in some rather unlikely places: jumping into the mosh-pit at a Christian rock concert, seeing his face projected on the giant JumboTron of an African-American megachurch, visiting a potential convert with two young Mormon missionaries, attending a Christian "professional wrestling" match, and waking up early for a sunrise Easter service on top of Stone Mountain—a Confederate memorial and former base of operations for the KKK. During his year-long exploration, Cohen sees the best and the worst of Christianity— #8212;from megachurches to storefront churches; from crass commercialization of religion to the simple, moving faith of the humble believer; from the profound to the profane to the just plain laughable. Throughout, he keeps an open heart and mind, a good sense of humor, and takes what he learns from Christianity to reflect on his own faith and

relationship to God. By year's end, to Cohen's surprise, his search for universal answers and truths in the Bible Belt actually make him a better Jew.

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