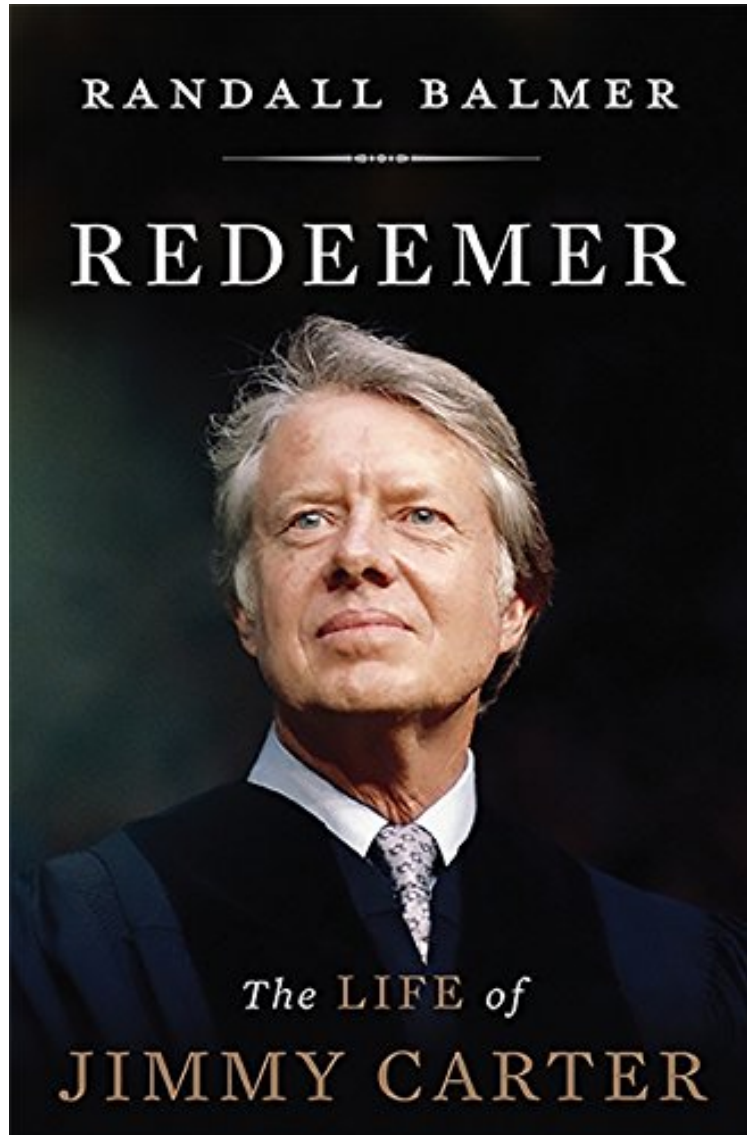


Redeemer: The Life of Jimmy Carter

Randall Balmer

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Randall Balmer : Redeemer: The Life of Jimmy Carter before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Redeemer: The Life of Jimmy Carter:

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Remarkable portrait of a remarkable manBy Russell J. SandersRandall Balmers Redeemer: The Life of Jimmy Carter is an examination of how evangelicals got Jimmy Carter elected President of the United States in 1976 and how those same evangelicals kept him from a second term in 1980. It is a fascinating look at political machinations done by mensupposedlyof God. The book painstakingly relates

all the derring do of many famous preachers, Billy Graham among them, as they plot to dump Carter and get Ronald Reagan elected. Reagan, who claimed to be a born-again Christian, played right into their hands: they wanted a President who was an elitist, who wanted to maintain racial separation, and who professed to be against abortion. The born-again Carter was their 1976 choice simply because of his profound faith, but his personal beliefs were counter to those of the men who placed Reagan in office. Balmer tells this tale while analyzing a remarkable man. Jimmy Carter, a man of faith and principal, might have been a good President had he had more cooperation from his supporters. Yes, he made some poor choices and perhaps he was a bit nave, but his ideals and ideas were sound. He proved that in his after-Presidential years. He has made a second career out of caring for the poor, looking out for peoples interests throughout the world, focusing on curing diseases, and brokering peace deals. And for all that, in 2002, he was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize. This is a truly remarkable man who has accomplished more than any other ex-President of the United States. He is a national treasure. And Randall Balmer wants us to know that.2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Excellent Book; focusing on Carter's runs for governor and presidentBy ChristFollowerAnother excellent book by Balmer that is more a focus on how he related with evangelical Christianity than a bio of Carter's life. He traces Carter's life from birth, but focuses on his run for governor and president. In Blamer's typical style, it well documented and footnoted. He also was privileged to interview the Carters at their home after listening to Jimmy teach a Sunday School lesson in Plains, GA. He emphasizes that Carter stands n a long history of progressive Christians and his actions are more in keeping with Christina values of the past than the Republican Party is. Balmer makes an excellent case for how evangelical Christians chose to turn their backs on Carter for a second term and chose the divorced Ronald Reagan instead, just as the Religious Right pivoted from preaching against divorce and other moral failures to abortion. Some material in this book is a rehash of some of his previous work.1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Read this one!!By B. David LilesA wonderful, very forward work about a man of faith. In order to really get the gist of what Jimmy Carter was, this book should be read. It tells of his own shortcomings as governor, President and peace maker. The most important part was his faith that sustained him through it all; victories, defeats, and abandoning by many who had supported him before. I highly recommend this book. It should not be missed by anyone.

Evangelical Christianity and conservative politics are today seen as inseparable. But when Jimmy Carter, a Democrat and a born-again Christian, won the presidency in 1976, he owed his victory in part to American evangelicals, who responded to his open religiosity and his rejection of the moral bankruptcy of the Nixon Administration. Carter, running as a representative of the New South, articulated a progressive strand of American Christianity that championed liberal ideals, racial equality, and social justiceone that has almost been forgotten since. In Redeemer, acclaimed religious historian Randall Balmer reveals how the rise and fall of Jimmy Carter's political fortunes mirrored the transformation of American religious politics. From his beginnings as a humble peanut farmer to the galvanizing politician who rode a reenergized religious movement into the White House, Carter's life and career mark him as the last great figure in America's long and venerable history of progressive evangelicalism. Although he stumbled early in his careercourting segregationists during his second campaign for Georgia governorCarter's run for president marked a return to the progressive principles of his faith and helped reenergize the evangelical movement. Responding to his message of racial justice, women's rights, and concern for the plight of the poor, evangelicals across the country helped propel Carter to office. Yet four years later, those very same voters abandoned him for Ronald Reagan and the Republican Party. Carter's defeat signaled the eclipse of progressive evangelicalism and the rise of the Religious Right, which popularized a dramatically different understanding of the faith, one rooted in nationalism, individualism, and free-market capitalism.An illuminating biography of our 39th president, Redeemer presents Jimmy Carter as the last great standard-bearer of an important strand of American Christianity, and provides an original and riveting account of the moments that transformed our political landscape in the 1970s and 1980s.

From Booklist*Starred * The ambitions of a Georgia governor and former peanut farmer aligned with the reemergence of evangelicals on the political scene in 1976. Horrified by the immorality of the Nixon administration and enamored of the overt religiosity of candidate Carter, evangelicals rushed to support their kindred Christian. But four years later, embracing social conservatism and capitalism, theyd moved on to Ronald Reagans brand of religion. Religious historian Balmer, a college student during Carters presidential campaign, has maintained his fascination with Carters political rise and fall as a reflection of changes among evangelicals themselves as they morphed into the Religious Right. Balmer looks at Carters life through the prism of his faith. Carter learned the importance of faith and progressive ideals from his parents and the works of Reinhold Niebuhr, Paul Tillich, and others. Balmer explores the paradoxes of a man balancing faith and ideals against the pragmatics of politics and the evangelical tide that favored him and later turned so vehemently against him. He also explores how Carter fits into the long history of progressive evangelicalism in the U.S. as he offers readers a new perspective on Carters faith journey and a religious sector that has come to be reduced and simplified in the nations social and political landscape. --Vanessa Bush Baptist Joint Committee MagazineAnyone who is interested in squaring appropriate expressions of faith in politics along with the

separation of church and state, 20th century American political and religious history, and Baptist life in this country over the past four decades will want to read and savor this important and incisive effort by Randall Balmer. Booklist, starred review Balmer explores the paradoxes of a man balancing faith and ideals against the pragmatics of politics and the evangelical tide that favored him and later turned so vehemently against him. Library Journal Balmer provides an engaging religious-centric interpretation of his subject. Kirkus A sympathetic account of a president too often overlooked, embedded in a rethinking of the rise of the religious right. T. M. Luhrmann, author of *When God Talks Back: Understanding the American Evangelical Relationship with God* Redeemer is a fascinating account not only of Jimmy Carter, but of progressive evangelicalism and its place in American history. Beautifully written and moving, it offers an eye-opening account of the man and the period. Evangelicalism emerges as more complex and unpredictable than many observers imagine. Leigh E. Schmidt, Mallinckrodt Distinguished University Professor in the Humanities, Washington University in St. Louis Redeemer offers an astute, sympathetic, and engrossing account of how Jimmy Carter's Southern Baptist faith shaped his political career. Randall Balmer's feel for the religious dynamics of the 1970s the ways in which right-wing evangelicalism swamped Carter's more progressive rendering of born-again Christianity is remarkable. He combines an insider's knowledge with a historian's erudition to create a revelatory account of Carter's religious and political fortunes. A story replete with betrayal and redemption, Balmer tells it exceptionally well. Bill Leonard, James and Marilyn Dunn Professor of Baptist Studies and Professor of Church History, Wake Forest University Professor Balmer provides an insightful summary and analysis of Jimmy Carter's life and work as farmer, politician, president, humanitarian and born-again Baptist. His study moves beyond biography to place Carter within the larger context of an American evangelicalism that continues to struggle with its role in the political sphere and the impact of personal faith on the lives of elected officials. Balmer knows the issues well and explores them creatively. Harry S. Stout, Jonathan Edwards Professor of American Religious History, Yale University "In this brilliantly argued and thoroughly substantiated biography of Jimmy Carter, Randall Balmer charts a unique course, choosing to situate Carter's presidency in the religious context of Born Again Christianity,' which catapulted him into the White House on the back of a neo-evangelical revival. A must-read for all who are interested in understanding the religious and political tumults of the 1960s and 70s, and how they speak to our present." Edward J. Blum, co-author of *The Color of Christ: The Son of God and the Saga of Race in America* This is religion and politics at its finest. With wit, insight, and narrative freshness, Randall Balmer recalls that dynamic moment in the 1970s before evangelicalism became a handmaiden to political conservatism. Jimmy Carter was the born again president who would redeem the nation from the sins of Watergate and Vietnam. How he tried, how many failed, and the evangelical-conservative knot that rose after his presidency is a tragic and beautiful story, and none explains it better than Randall Balmer. Grab a cup of tea or coffee, for Redeemer is one of those books not to skim, but to savor. George Marsden, author of *Twilight of the American Enlightenment: The 1950s and the Crisis of Liberal Belief* Focusing on Carter as a religious figure, Balmer recounts a fascinating story of unintended consequences. Carter's progressive evangelicalism had liberal political implications, but his capitalization on being born again' during his 1976 presidential campaign led eventually to the emergence of a religious right. By 1980 that conservative movement was strong enough to help defeat Carter and to establish itself as a force on the national political scene. As Balmer nicely observes, Carter's many admirable activities after leaving office illustrate that religion may be at its prophetic best when distanced from political power. Jon Butler, Yale University Randall Balmer's Redeemer deftly reveals modern America's most misunderstood president. Randall Balmer melds Carter's famous evangelical sensibilities into a story of cascading successes and failures, the world ultimately indifferent to a man who hoped politics could be religion realized and redeemed more in retirement than in his frustrated presidency a compelling, wistful tale briskly rendered. Seattle Times Best Books of 2014