



2015

The Last Days of Jesus: His Life and Times

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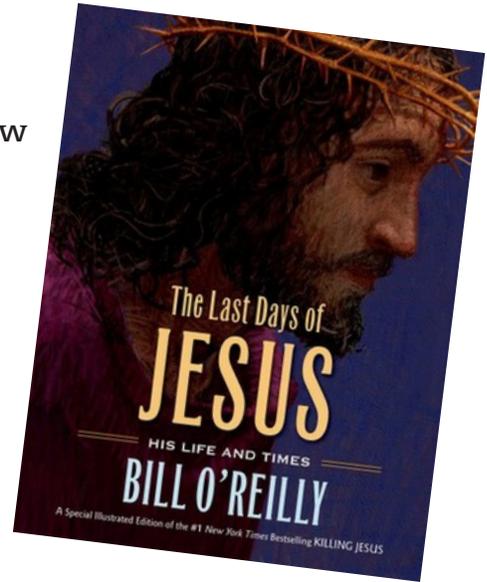
(2015) "The Last Days of Jesus: His Life and Times," *Children's Book and Media Review*. Vol. 36 : Iss. 3 , Article 16.

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Book Review

Title: The Last Days of Jesus: His Life and Times
Author: Bill O'Reilly
Illustrator: Inc Cobalt Illustrations Studio, William Low
Reviewer: Liz Kazandzhy
Publisher: Henry Holt and Co. (BYR)
Publication Year: 2014
ISBN: 9780805098778
Number of Pages: 320
Interest Level: Young Adult
Rating: Excellent



Review

In this historical account, Jesus Christ's life from birth to death is portrayed in chronological story form. The book includes a prologue that sets the scene for the characters and political situation of the time, a section that covers what little is known about Christ during his childhood, a second section that outlines the major teachings and miracles of Christ, a final section which focuses in on Christ's last days before the crucifixion, and finally an afterword which wraps up the stories of Christ's apostles and adds several tidbits of information related to Christ's life. Throughout the pages can be found a plethora of black and white illustrations that aid in the understanding of the text, as well as several informational inserts that pertain to the history and politics of the time.

O'Reilly mentions in the foreword that this book would be more historical than religious, and he truly achieved that goal. Here he has written about the life and times of Jesus Christ with the tone of a historical novel rather than a spiritual guidebook, with zealotry but not overbearingness. One of the major downsides to this book, however, is the lack of citations and references. Although a short bibliography is included in the end, the information included in the book is presented without any sources, leading to some skepticism in the reader, especially considering how many different interpretations exist regarding Christian history. That being said, the book does present a thorough overview of Christ's life and ministry and sheds a great deal of light onto the politics of Christ's day and the motivations that influenced the major characters of his story. It can be read from front to back like an engaging novel, or it can be used as a reference book for those studying Christ's life from other sources. While the writing is more advanced than perhaps in other books for young adults, it is still understandable and makes historical accounts very personal and interesting. This book will surely give its readers a greater appreciation for and deeper understanding of the life and times of Jesus Christ.

*Contains moderate violence - detailed account of Christ's crucifixion and some other martyrdom accounts.