



10-1-1992

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Recommended Citation

Wells, Matthew G. and Welch, John W. (1992) "Recent Bibliography on the Trials of Jesus," *BYU Studies Quarterly*: Vol. 32 : Iss. 4 , Article 6.

Available at: <https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/byusq/vol32/iss4/6>

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Recent Bibliography on the Trials of Jesus

John W. Welch and Matthew G. Wells

In recent years, numerous books and articles have been written about the arrest, accusation, interrogations, trials, mocking, and execution of Jesus. Many of the details about these procedures are insignificant when compared with the eternal consequences of the suffering, death, and resurrection of Jesus. Nevertheless, questions about the historicity and interpretation of the New Testament accounts continue to generate controversy in large part precisely because of their association with those culminating events in the mortal mission of Jesus. Since the scriptures and revelations leave many questions unanswered about the trials of Jesus, readers are left to sort through the data to understand their meaning as best as they can. As Elder Bruce R. McConkie has stated, "There is no divine *ipse dixit*, no voice from an archangel, and as yet no revealed latter-day account of all that transpired when God's own Son suffered himself to be judged by men so that he could voluntarily give up his life upon the cross" (*The Mortal Messiah* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1981], 4:142).

Anyone striving to survey and assess the vast array of scholarly analysis and religious reflection that has been published on this topic in recent decades confronts a formidable task. In the end, final solutions to textual and historical problems will probably continue to elude us, especially concerning the questions of legal and moral accountability for the death of Jesus. But this outcome is undoubtedly what Jesus would have wanted: ultimately, no person or group should be blamed for the death of Jesus—an event that, from a Christian point of view, had to happen and that Jesus wanted and needed to happen. Consistent with his infinite mercy, the records

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BYU Studies 32, no. 4 (1992)

about his death make it clear that responsibility was dispersed among several individuals and groups, Jews and Romans. Thus blame cannot be focused on anyone in particular.

The following bibliography classifies the major books and articles published in the last few decades that have dealt specifically with various legal dimensions of the trials of Jesus. Within each category, authors are listed alphabetically. Not mentioned are numerous textual commentaries on the New Testament gospels and the many basic works on the life of Christ.

Bibliography

Several studies cover the trials of Jesus in general and tend to recognize the joint complicity of Jews and Romans in the death of Jesus. Some of the main studies follow:

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- Bammel, Ernst, and C. F. D. Moule, eds. *Jesus and the Politics of His Day*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984.
- Bartsch, H.-W. "Wer verurteilte Jesus zum Tode?" *Novum Testamentum* 7 (1964): 210-16.
- Betz, Otto. "Probleme des Prozesses Jesu (Mk 14, 15)." *Principat* 25 (1982): 565-647.
- Boers, Hendrikus. *Who Was Jesus?* San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1989.
- Brown, Raymond E. *The Gospel according to John, XIII-XXI*. Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1970.
- Cassidy, Richard J., and Philip J. Scharper, eds. *Political Issues in Luke-Acts*. Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis, 1983.
- Catchpole, David R. *The Trial of Jesus: A Study in the Gospels and Jewish Historiography from 1770 to the Present Day*. Leiden: Brill, 1971.
- Dabrowski, E. "The Trial of Christ in Recent Research." *Studia Evangelica* 4 (1968): 21-27.
- Jeremias, Joachim. "Zur Geschichtlichkeit des Verhörs Jesu vor dem hohen Rat." *Zeitschrift der neutestamentlichen Wissenschaft* 43 (1951): 145-50.
- Kertelge, Karl, ed. *Der Prozess gegen Jesus: Historische Rückfrage und theologische Deutung*. Freiburg: Herder, 1988.
- Kilpatrick, G. D. *The Trial of Jesus*. London: Oxford University Press, 1953.
- Limbeck, M., ed. *Redaktion und Theologie des Passionsberichtes nach den Synoptikern*. Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1981.

- Maier, Paul J. "Who Killed Jesus?" *Christianity Today* 34 (April 1990): 16-19.
- Millar, Fergus. "Reflections on the Trials of Jesus." In *A Tribute to Geza Vermes: Essays on Jewish and Christian Literature and History*, edited by P. R. Davies and R. T. White, 355-81. Sheffield: JSOT, 1990.
- Pawlikowski, J. "The Trial and Death of Jesus: Reflections in Light of a New Understanding of Judaism." *Chicago Studies* 25 (1986): 79-94.
- Sanders, E., ed. *Jesus, the Gospels and the Church*. Macon, Ga.: Mercer University Press, 1987.
- Sloyan, Gerard S. *Jesus on Trial*. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1973.
- . "Recent Literature on the Trial Narratives of the Four Gospels." In *Critical History and Biblical Faith*, edited by T. Ryan, 136-76. Lanham, Md.: University Press of America, 1979.
- Sordi, Marta. *The Christians and the Roman Empire*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1986.
- Stalker, James A. *The Trial and Death of Jesus Christ*. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Academie Books, 1983.
- Yamauchi, Edwin M. "Historical Notes on the Trial and Crucifixion of Jesus." *Christianity Today* 15 (1971): 634-39.

The following studies support or deal with the historicity and traditional interpretations of the New Testament accounts, which tend to place responsibility on the Jews.

- Blinzler, Josef. *The Trial of Jesus*. Westminster, Md.: Newman Press, 1959; trans. from German, 4th ed., Regensburg, 1969.
- Bruce, Frederick F. "The Trial of Jesus in the Fourth Gospel." In *Gospel Perspectives*, edited by R. France, 1:7-20. Sheffield: JSOT, 1980.
- Catchpole, David R. "The Answer of Jesus to Caiaphas (Matt. 26:64)." *New Testament Studies* 17 (1970): 213-26.
- Donfried, Karl Paul. "Paul and Judaism: 1 Thessalonians 2:13-16 as a Test Case." *Interpretation* 38 (1984): 242-53.
- McGing, Brian C. "Pontius Pilate and the Sources." *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 53 (1991): 416-38.
- Maier, Paul J. "Who Was Responsible for the Trial and Death of Jesus?" *Christianity Today* 18 (1974): 806-9.
- Walaskay, Paul W. "The Trial and Death of Jesus in the Gospel of Luke." *Journal of Biblical Literature* 94 (1975): 81-93.
- Wead, David. "We Have a Law." *Novum Testamentum* 11 (1969): 185-89.

Several recent insightful studies have argued particularly that the New Testament places culpability for the death of Jesus not on the Jews in general, but on only a small group of Jewish leaders:

- Chance, J. Bradley. "The Jewish People and the Death of Jesus in Luke-Acts: Some Implications of an Inconsistent Narrative Role." *Society of Biblical Literature* (1991 Seminar Papers): 50-81.
- Gilliard, Frank D. "The Problem of the Antisemitic Comma between 1 Thessalonians 2:14 and 15." *New Testament Studies* 35 (1989): 481-502.
- Kosmala, Hans. "His Blood on Us and Our Children." In *Annual of the Swedish Theological Institute*, edited by Hans Kosmala, 7:94-126. Leiden: Brill, 1970.
- Matera, Frank J. "Responsibility for the Death of Jesus according to the Acts of the Apostles." *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 39 (1990): 77-93.
- . "The Trial of Jesus: Problems and Proposals." *Interpretation* 45 (1991): 5-16.
- Schalit, A. "Kritische Randbemerkungen zu Paul Winters 'On the Trial of Jesus.'" In *Annual of the Swedish Theological Institute*, edited by Hans Kosmala, 2:86-102. Leiden: Brill, 1963.
- Schippers, R. "The Pre-Synoptic Tradition in 1 Thessalonians ii 13-16." *Novum Testamentum* 8 (1966): 223-34.
- Schmidt, Daryl. "1 Thess. 2:13-16: Linguistic Evidence for an Interpolation." *Journal of Biblical Literature* 102 (1983): 269-79.

Many publications, the most emphatic written by Jewish scholars in the 1960s and 1970s, have focused on the Roman laws relevant to the trial of Jesus and have tended to exonerate the Jews by arguing that the Romans were responsible for Jesus's death:

- Bamberger, Henry. "New Light on the High Priest." *Journal of Ecumenical Studies* 18 (1981): 653-55.
- Brandon, S. G. F. *The Trial of Jesus of Nazareth*. New York: Stein and Day, 1968.
- Burkill, T. A. "The Competence of the Sanhedrin." *Vigiliae Christianae* 10 (1956): 81-96.
- . "The Condemnation of Jesus: A Critique of Sherwin-White's Thesis." *Novum Testamentum* 12 (1970): 321-42.
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- Campbell, W. A. *Did the Jews Kill Jesus?* New York: Peter Eckler, 1964.
- Cohn, Haim. "Reflections on the Trial and Death of Jesus." *Israel Law Review* 2 (1967): 332-79.

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- Enslin, M. "The Trial of Jesus." *Jewish Quarterly Review* 60 (1969): 353-55.
- Mamluk, Gershon. "The Two Trials of Jesus." *Midstream* 35 (1989): 29-32.
- Mantel, Hugo. *Studies in the History of the Sanhedrin*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard, 1961.
- Overstreet, R. Larry. "Roman Law and the Trial of Christ." *Bibliotheca Sacra* 135 (1978): 323-32.
- Richardson, P., and D. Granskow, eds. *Anti-Judaism in Early Christianity*. Waterloo, Ont.: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 1986.
- Rivkin, Ellis. *What Crucified Jesus? The Political Execution of a Charismatic*. Nashville: Abingdon, 1984.
- Sherwin-White, A. N. *The Trial of Christ, Historicity and Chronology in the Gospels*. London: SPCK, 1965.
- Sobosan, Jeffrey G. "The Trial of Jesus." *Journal of Ecumenical Studies* 10 (1973): 70-93.
- Winter, Paul. *On the Trial of Jesus*. 2d ed., rev. and edited by T. A. Burkill and Geza Vermes. New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1974.
- . "The Trial of Jesus and the Competence of the Sanhedrin." *New Testament Studies* 10 (1963): 494-99.
- . "The Trial of Jesus as a Rebel against Rome." *Jewish Quarterly* 16 (1968): 31-37.
- Zeitlin, Solomon. "The Crucifixion: A Libelous Accusation against the Jews." *Jewish Quarterly Review* 54 (1964): 8-22.
- . "The Crucifixion of Jesus Re-examined." *Jewish Quarterly Review* 31 (1941): 327-69.
- . "The Trial of Jesus." *Jewish Quarterly Review* 53 (1962): 77-88.
- . *Who Crucified Jesus?* New York: Bloch, 1964.

Other studies have focused specifically on the nature of the various charges brought against Jesus, especially the charges of blasphemy, desecration of the temple, and political offenses against Rome:

- Connolly-Weinert, Frank. "Assessing Omissions as Redaction: Luke's Handling of the Charge against Jesus as Detractor of the Temple." In *To Touch the Text*, edited by M. Horgan and P. Kobelski, 358-68. New York: Crossroad, 1989.

- Evans, Craig A. "In What Sense 'Blasphemy'? Jesus before Caiaphas in Mark 14:61-64." *Society of Biblical Literature Seminar Papers* (1991): 215-34.
- Hill, D. "Jesus before the Sanhedrin—On What Charge?" *Irish Biblical Studies* 7 (1985): 174-86.
- Horvath, Tibor. "Why Was Jesus Brought to Pilate?" *Novum Testamentum* 11 (1969): 174-84.
- Jensen, Ellis E. "The First Century Controversy over Jesus as a Revolutionary Figure." *Journal of Biblical Literature* 60 (1941): 261-72.
- Juel, Donald. *Messiah and Temple: The Trial of Jesus in the Gospel of Mark*. Missoula, Mont.: Scholars Press, 1977.
- Kennard, J. Spencer, Jr. "The Jewish Provincial Assembly." *Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft* 35 (1969): 25-51.
- Lamarche, P. "Le Blasphème de Jesus devant le Sanhedrin." *Recherches de Science Religieuse* 50 (1962): 74-85.
- Linton, Olof. "The Trial of Jesus and the Interpretation of Psalm CX." *New Testament Studies* 7 (1960-61): 258-62.
- Michaels, J. Ramsey. "John 18:31 and the Trial of Jesus." *New Testament Studies* 36 (1990): 474-79.
- Powell, Mark Allan. "The Plot to Kill Jesus from Three Different Perspectives: Point of View in Matthew." *Society of Biblical Literature Seminar Papers* (1990): 603-13.
- Rensberger, David. "The Politics of John: The Trial of Jesus in the Fourth Gospel." *Journal of Biblical Literature* 103 (1984): 395-411.
- Schlosser, Jacques. "La parole de Jesus sur la fin du temple." *New Testament Studies* 36 (1990): 398-414.
- Walker, William O., Jr. "Jesus and the Tax Collectors." *Journal of Biblical Literature* 97 (1978): 221-38.
- Watson, Francis. "Why Was Jesus Crucified?" *Theology* 88 (1985): 105-12.
- Young, Francis M. "Temple Cult and Law in Early Christianity." *New Testament Studies* 19 (1972): 325-38.

A few articles have scrutinized the legal and religious implications of the fact that Jesus was executed by crucifixion, which may have been a Jewish form of execution at the time of Jesus and not merely a Roman procedure:

- Baumgarten, Joseph M. "Does *tlb* in the Temple Scroll Refer to Crucifixion?" *Journal of Biblical Literature* 91 (1972): 472-81.
- Betz, Otto. "The Temple Scroll and the Trial of Jesus." *Southwestern Journal of Theology* 30 (1988): 5-8.

- Ford, J. Massyngberde. "'Crucify Him, Crucify Him' and the Temple Scroll." *Expository Times* 87 (June 1976): 275-78.
- Rosenblatt, Samuel. "The Crucifixion of Jesus from the Standpoint of Pharasaic Law." *Journal of Biblical Literature* 75 (1956): 315-21.
- Wilcox, Max. "'Upon the Tree'—Deut 21:22-23 in the New Testament." *Journal of Biblical Literature* 96 (1977): 85-99.
- Yadin, Yigael. "Peshar Nahum (4Q pNahum) Reconsidered." *Israel Exploration Journal* 21 (1971): 1-12.

The Barabbas incident in connection with Pilate's passing judgment against Jesus has evoked interesting historical and theological commentary:

- Bajsic, A. "Pilatus, Jesus und Barabbas." *Biblica* 48 (1967): 7-28.
- Chavel, Charles B. "The Releasing of a Prisoner on the Eve of Passover in Ancient Jerusalem." *Journal of Biblical Literature* 60 (1941): 273-78.
- Maccoby, H. "Jesus and Barabbas." *New Testament Studies* 16 (1969): 55-60.
- Merritt, Robert L. "Jesus, Barabbas and the Paschal Pardon." *Journal of Biblical Literature* 104 (1985): 57-68.

Literary and theological studies have also yielded fruitful insights into the nature and purposes of the trial narratives in the Gospels:

- Beavis, Mary Ann. "The Trial before the Sanhedrin (Mark 14:53-65): Reader Response and Greco-Roman Readers." *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 49 (1987): 581-96.
- Derrett, J. Duncan M. *An Oriental Lawyer Looks at the Trial of Jesus and the Doctrine of Redemption*. London, 1966; see also *Law in the New Testament*. London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 1970, 389-460.
- Ehrman, Bart D. "Jesus' Trial before Pilate: John 18:28-19:16." *Biblical Theology Bulletin* 13 (1983): 124-31.
- Giblin, Charles H. "John's Narration of the Hearing before Pilate (John 18:28-19:16a)." *Biblica* 67 (1986): 221-39.
- Green, Joel B. "The Death of Jesus and the Rending of the Temple Veil (Luke 23:44-49): A Window into Luke's Understanding of Jesus and the Temple." *Society of Biblical Literature Seminar Papers* (1991): 543-57.

- Heil, John Paul. "Reader-Response and the Irony of the Trial of Jesus in Luke 23:1-5." *Science et Esprit* 43, no. 2 (1991): 175-86.
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- . "The Trials of Jesus and Jeremiah." *BYU Studies* 32 (Fall 1992): 61-75.
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- Marin, Louis. "Jesus before Pilate: A Structural Analysis Essay." In *New Testament and Structuralism*, edited by A. M. Johnson, 97-144. Pittsburgh: Pickwick, 1976.
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- Soards, Marion L. "A Literary Analysis of the Origin and Purpose of Luke's Account of the Mockery of Jesus." *Biblische Zeitschrift* 31 (1987): 110-16.
- Tiede, David L. "The Death of Jesus and the Trial of Israel in Luke-Acts." *Society of Biblical Literature Seminar Papers* (1990): 158-64.
- Tyson, Joseph B. "The Lukan Version of the Trial of Jesus." *Novum Testamentum* 3 (1959): 249-58.