



Jesus, the Final Days: What Really Happened

Craig A. Evans , N.T. Wright

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What do history and archaeology have to say about Jesus' death, burial, and resurrection? In this superb book, two of the world's most celebrated writers on the historical Jesus share their greatest findings. Together, Craig A. Evans and N. T. Wright concisely and compellingly convey the drama and the world-shattering significance of Jesus' final days on earth.

Jesus, the Final Days: What Really Happened Details

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Rick Boyer says

Beautiful discussion of some of the problems and stumbling blocks which have gotten in the way of many peoples' understanding of the death and resurrection of Jesus. If, for intellectual reasons, you have a hard time accepting the gospel accounts of Jesus' final days and resurrection, you should read this book, by two of the finest New Testament scholars of our time. I highly recommend it.

Nathan Albright says

One of the signs of a good book is the way it leaves you wanting more rather than wishing you had not wasted time on it. This is the sort of book where one would want more, a lot more, than one gets. The work of a symposium that seeks to bridge the divide between theologians and scholars of biblical history, this is a book written for a wide and generally educated lay audience but a book that boldly enters into scholarly disputes and makes some intense criticisms of the approach of many scholars, some of whom will likely not appreciate being made to look ridiculous as they do here. Knowing the book's subject matters I was pretty sure there would be some mistakes in biblical interpretation because of the chronology and that was definitely the case here, but it surprised me just how good this book was at putting the reader within the historical context and situation of Jesus Christ and the early disciples through a close and fair-minded reading of the scriptural and non-biblical history [1]. And, considering this book is a short 113 pages, the book could easily have been double its size and still an excellent read. One wonders why the publishers were so intent on the book being so short.

The contents of this book are pretty straightforward and easy to understand. The book (and it barely qualifies as a book, I would say) is composed of three essays. The first two, by Craig A. Evans, are a discussion of the "shout of death" and the "silence of burial" with a discussion of the legal nature of Jesus' trial, who wanted him dead, and how this does not in any way justify anti-Semitism as well as a discussion of the burial practices of late Second Temple Judaism and Roman acquiescence in Jewish burial customs that mandated burial even of criminals, with suitable and grisly examples from the history of the time and place. Although the author has a faulty view of the chronology of Jesus' death, he at least gets a lot of the details right about Jewish beliefs in resurrection being feasible within the first three days (which is what made the timing of Jesus' raising of Lazarus so important), and these details make it a very worthwhile group of essays. The third essay, by N.T. Wright, is a rather pointed discussion of the surprise of resurrection and some half a dozen changes to the Jewish background of the early Church that the experience of Jesus' resurrection led to that were not paralleled within the view of contemporary heathen or even later Gnostic accounts, including the prominent role that women played as witnesses of the resurrection. Here again, the author's insistence in the Christian view of a bodily resurrection after a shadowy interim period of time in the grave is something quite congenial with the understanding that some churches have and quite distinct from the views of contemporary Hellenistic Christianity.

So, even though this collection of essays is extremely short and contains a few errors because of the backgrounds of the authors in churches that have an inaccurate view of three days and three nights, the book is an immensely worthwhile one in the way that the authors seek to overcome their own background and the weight of corrupt tradition and deal with the Bible and the history of the time seriously. In addition, the

authors are to be praised for bringing a rigorous attention to fact to discussions of faith and doctrine, something that is not done nearly often enough given the false dilemma that often exists between faith and evidence in the minds of some. Overall, this is a powerful if all-too-brief collection of essays from some thinkers and scholars worthy of attention and considerable praise. Given the way that the introduction speaks of there being more where this came from, one wants to see it in books like this one.

[1] See, for example:

<https://edgeinducedcohesion.blog/2016...>

<https://edgeinducedcohesion.blog/2016...>

<https://edgeinducedcohesion.blog/2016...>

<https://edgeinducedcohesion.blog/2015...>

<https://edgeinducedcohesion.blog/2014...>

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<https://edgeinducedcohesion.blog/2013...>

<https://edgeinducedcohesion.blog/2012...>

Benjamin Vineyard says

This was a good book to read with a study group through Lent. It's a short one, but filled with very helpful guidance as to why Jesus died and why his death was and is important.

We studied this book in pursuit / guidance for the questions: "Why did Jesus die?" and "Why did Jesus have to die?" (Note the nuance between dying and the necessity of his death.)

I feel this little book helped us explore the answers to that question. And, it sums up like this:

Jesus, the crucified one, is also the resurrected one. In crucifixion, our king (Jesus) goes to battle against death, sin, and the Accuser. And then he rises:

"Jesus is raised," they say, "therefore he is the Messiah; he is the true Lord of the whole world; therefore we, his followers, have a job to do: we must act as his heralds, announcing his lordship to the entire world."
(Chapter 3)

Connie says

The editor combines the writings of Biblical scholars Craig Evans and N.T. Wright in this book that searches the scriptures to answer the question, what really happened? Though often heavy reading for me, but it was a good book for the Lenten season. I learned things from the scripture that I had never recognized before.

"...the line of thought within the Gospels themselves is, 'Jesus is raised, therefore God's new world has begun, and therefore we, you, and everybody else are invited to be not only beneficiaries of that new world but participants in making it happen.'"

Eric Nelson says

Wonderfully short book for the interested layman which details the historical evidence for the passion and resurrection of Jesus. Passages from biblical, second temple, and other late antiquity sources abound. Great book for anyone wanting a brief but substance discussion on the historicity of the core of the New Testament.

William says

Three good essays, two by Evans on the death and burial of Jesus and a third by Wright on his resurrection. Wright's essay covers his usual bases and if you've read "The Resurrection of the Son of God" or "Surprised by Hope" there's nothing new here. Evans' essays on Jesus' death and burial are very helpful and bring to light a lot of background evidence from ancient sources and archaeology that give greater insight into the Gospel accounts.

Jeff says

This book is a great read for Holy Week. Only 128 pages in three chapters, New Testament scholars, Craig Evans and N.T. Wright look at the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus from a historical perspective. Lots of helpful background information dealing with the Roman practice of crucifixion and 1st century Jewish burial custom. Wright's chapter on the resurrection is superb, focusing on how the Christian understanding of resurrection, based on Jesus' own, is an unexpected and otherwise inexplicable development on earlier Jewish expectations of resurrection.

Jeff McCormack says

I really enjoyed aspects of this book. The history behind death, crucifixion and burial was of great interest. Wright's sections on resurrection, while mainly a recap from his massively work on the topic, was a great little condensed view of the more thorough book, and fit well in the confines of this overall topic. Offering much insight for those modern day church goers who have not looked just a little more deeply than the Sunday school lessons, this is a very good, short eye-opening view at what lies below the surface of biblical theology.

Mark Eikema says

A rather scientific approach of the resurrection, which is quite nice in the world of christian books about 'relationship with God', 'Jesus loves you' and other things that are hard to grasp for someone who is in search of the truth. I recommended it several times to people, and I probably will read it again around Easter.

Ron W. says

This book by Craig A. Evans and Tom Wright examines the apologetics behind the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth-the historical man rather than the divine entity, so there is a great deal of scientific and historical insight into events described in the gospel accounts. Both authors do a stellar job in unpacking details related to Jesus's last few days on earth. I picked this book up on a 'specials' desk at a bookstore and I was surprised at the value I got at that low price. After reading it, I would have not have had buyer's remorse had I paid the full amount. Packed with historical, social, scientific, and theological information, the small book is well worth the read.

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Michael Woods says

A very good look of the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus as told in the four Gospels and evaluated through a historical lens. The book is really a collection of three presentations given by the authors at the Symposium for Church and Academy lecture series of Crichton College, so the style of writing is a little different than what readers may be used to in terms of academic books. But the authors have researched their topics well and put forth convincing arguments.

Although the subtitle may come across as a little provocative, at first glance, Evans and Wright take an orthodox view of Christ's final days, challenging both liberal and fundamentalist attempts to reinterpret the final part of the gospel story.

Danny Daley says

A short and accessible book by two of the best historical Jesus scholars out there. It works, in some ways, as a counter balance to the popular work by Borg and Crossan on the final days of Jesus' life. The scholarship is rigorous but the information presented in a way that would be helpful to any reader.

David Campton says

At little over 100 pages this is a relatively slim volume, but contains a lot of scholarship within its few pages. It's essentially 3 lectures looking at the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus, with Craig Evans covering the first 2 and Tom Wright dealing with the third (does anyone else write about the resurrection from an evangelical perspective these days, and indeed, does Tom Wright write about anything else without bringing the implications of the resurrection into it?) Whilst the scholarship is rigorous, the writing style is accessible and, especially with Wright's section, engaging. Should be on every preacher's shelf, and will probably provide the material for Good Friday/Easter sermons for a generation.

Andrew Smith says

A great summary of Jewish burial practices and then a wonderful summary of what to make of the resurrection as only Tom Wright seems to do, cutting to the heart of the matter.
