

Maccoby, *The Mythmaker*, xi-49

Wesley Advocates 4 December 2016

The following questions will help, I hope, as you read and review.

1. According to the preface, Maccoby relies on what principal texts?
2. Early in his chapter on the “problem of Paul,” Maccoby consistently says “Paul claimed” or “he claimed”—ignore the usage error and consider why Maccoby uses the term *claim* to raise distrust about Paul’s assertions.
3. On what evidence does Paul contend he knows Jesus? What is Hellenization?
4. Where does Paul say he comes from? From what kind of family? What kind of education? What citizenship? What does he tell us about his past—and where does he tell it? Why, for Maccoby, is Acts as suspect as Paul’s epistles? What evidence does Maccoby cite to raise distrust about the gospels? How did Paul influence the gospels even though dead by the time most were written?
5. List five things we know for sure about Paul.
6. List five things we know for sure about the Pharisees.
7. List five things we know for sure about the Sadducees.
8. Why were the gospel writers eager (or anxious, depending on your point of view) to attack the Jerusalem Church and the Jews, especially the Pharisees?
9. Describe three main differences between Sadducees and Pharisees. Who were the Essenes, and where did they come from and go to?
10. On what evidence does Maccoby conclude Jesus was a Pharisee? From what branch of Pharisaism? Why is Jesus’s Pharisaism important?
11. On what evidence does Maccoby conclude Paul was never a Pharisee? Why is that important?

12. Who were the Ebionites, and why are they important?
13. Describe the denotation, connotation, and significance of the term *messiah*. Do the same for the phrase “son of man.”
14. For what crime(s) did the Romans use crucifixion? How often did they crucify?
15. Describe the role of the High Priest and Sadducees in the Romans’ governance of Palestine. Describe the role of the Pharisees in Palestine.