

Maccoby, *The Mythmaker*, Chapters 14 and 15
Wesley Advocates 22 January 2017

The Trial of Paul

In Jerusalem, who tried Paul? Why? With what result?

Who are the Asian Jews purportedly attacking Paul?

How does Paul shift his message, even his identity, to suit the occasion?

According to Acts, James tells Paul there are *myriads* of Jewish Christians. How many is that?

When purportedly attacked by Jews, Paul receives rescue from Roman police. Why do they rescue him? How significant is the letter of Claudius Lysias, the commandant, in authenticating Paul's claims?

In what ways might Paul have been or become a Roman citizen? HM assumes Paul used what monies to purchase his citizenship? (See Corinthians.) And how might Paul justify using those monies in that way?

What did the Roman governor Felix expect from Paul? Why?

How would Jerusalem Church leaders likely have reacted to news of Paul's Roman citizenship?

What characteristics particularly suit Pauline Christianity to survive and thrive under a power like Rome's?

By the time of this trial, some years after Paul's initial quarrels with the Jerusalem Church, even longer after his revelation on the way to Damascus, what is his relationship with the Sadducees and, especially, the High Priest?

Initially, the High Priest charges Paul with political crimes. Which? But those charges become religious—which crimes? Why the change?

Luke's retelling of Paul's trial suggests the Sanhedrin behaves like an unruly mob. What does HM say about that?

Why would it serve Pauline Christianity to blacken the Pharisees?

List three or four ways HM finds Paul duplicitous.

What evidence do we have that, after requesting a trial before the emperor in Rome, Paul was actually tried and executed? What does HM speculate might have happened instead?

Evidence of the Ebionites

Who were the Ebionites? What is their source? How long did the sect last? What happened to end them?

What do the words *euyonim* and *notzerim* mean? What are their sources? Where does the term *Christian* come from? When?

What happened to the site of Jerusalem after the Romans destroyed the city? Where did the Ebionites go?

On p. 176, note the top paragraph: "In general, however, . . . abrogated the Torah." What is significant about these beliefs?

What meaning originally did *Christ* carry? From what Hebrew word does it come? And what did that word mean in first-century Palestine? How does that differ from *chrestos*? From *shekhinah*? From *ru'ah ha-godesh*?

Why does it matter that Nazarenes saw Jesus as both messiah and prophet?

What is millenarianism? What is Arianism? Why might the RCC avoid both?

What is significant to us about the Ebionites' writings as preserved in works by Eusebius, Justin Martyr, Irenaeus, Hippolytus, Tertullian, Origen, Epiphanius, Jerome?

What is significant about *The Pseudo-Clementine Writings*? About the Arabic MS found by Pines?

Was Paul a Hellenized Greek? A Jew? What motivated him to break with the Jerusalem Church? What motivated him to travel through the Mediterranean world asserting his brand of Christianity? Given what we know of the Roman Empire in its early centuries, why might Paul's brand of religion prevail over that of the Nazarenes? Should we call it *Christianity* or *Pauline Christianity* or something else?