

Maccoby, *The Mythmaker*, Chapters 6-8
Wesley Advocates 18 December 2016

According to Maccoby and others, the term *messiah* meant what precisely to first-century Jews in Palestine? How did Jesus fit this description? What were the political expectations of a messiah at that time?

Who was Gamaliel, and what did he say in Acts 5 about Jesus's disciples? What is a Hillelite? Why would anyone call Gamalil a "father of Judaism"?

How does Maccoby interpret Gamaliel's importance to the Sanhedrin? To Peter's trial? to the conflict between Sadducees and Pharisees in the Sanhedrin and elsewhere in first-century Palestine? How relevant is Josephus's history to our knowledge of Gamaliel?

Who was Judas of Galilee? What party did he found? What were that party's aims? How did that party differ from Sadducees, Pharisees, and Essenes?

How did Jesus's followers—and the Jerusalem Church—respond to the Bar Kokhba revolt? Why?

According to Maccoby, what is Luke's main approach in his gospel, as differentiated from the main approaches of Mark and Matthew?

What does the word translated *savior* mean to Jews? To Pauline Christians?

Since the Sadducees cooperated actively with the Romans, and since Paul apparently worked as an agent of the Sadducees' High Priest, what do we infer about Paul's relations with the Romans? What exactly did Paul do for the High Priest?

List the evidence Maccoby presents to conclude Paul was never a Pharisee.

Why would it suit Paul and others to represent Paul as a Pharisee-turned-Christian?

Again, who were the Ebionites? What do they tell us about Paul and his purported biography?

Why might Paul be able to create a wholly revised biography and pass it off in his letters?

Where does the term *Christ* come from? Whence does Paul derive his ideas about fusing the individual sinner's character with Christ's? Whence does he derive his ideas about atonement and resurrection?

What was Paul's primary language? His second language? Why did he rely on the Septuagint instead of the Hebrew Bible? Why did he not rely on the Targum?

What is *qal-va-homer*? What is *dayo*? And what does Paul's attempted use of this device reveal about his knowledge of the Mishnah and other rabbinical documents? About his purported rabbinical training?

How does syllogism differ from analogy in argument? Why does that matter? What mode of logic does Paul prefer?

Who was Stephen, and why was he martyred? What is the difficulty of the charges leveled against Stephen and his subsequent assassination on a new charge?

According to Maccoby, why is it impossible the trial of Stephen occurred as reported, particularly with regard to the Sanhedrin's behavior?

On what points does the writer of Acts attempt to parallel Stephen's trial and death with Jesus's trial and death? Why?

What was the Pharisees' and typical Jews' attitude toward the Temple, particularly that one built or renovated by Herod?

According to Maccoby, why would the Pauline Christian church wish to hide the political charges against Jesus and Stephen and transform the charges into religious ones? Similarly, why would the Pauline church wish to portray Saul merely as a young observer of Stephen's martyrdom?