



Constructing Jesus: Memory, Imagination, and History

By Dale C. Jr. Allison

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What did Jesus think of himself? How did he face death? What were his expectations of the future? In this volume, now in paperback, internationally renowned Jesus scholar Dale Allison Jr. addresses such perennially fascinating questions about Jesus. The acclaimed hardcover edition received the Biblical Archaeology Society's "Best Book Relating to the New Testament" award in 2011.

Representing the fruit of several decades of research, this major work questions standard approaches to Jesus studies and rethinks our knowledge of the historical Jesus in light of recent progress in the scientific study of memory. Allison's groundbreaking alternative strategy calls for applying what we know about the function of human memory to our reading of the Gospels in order to "construct Jesus" more soundly.

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

Starred Review. Do the gospels contain "the gospel truth"? The answer depends on how you define truth and whether you're willing to see beyond evangelical assumptions about the historicity of the canonical Jesus stories to a higher, more fully realized truth, according to author Dale Allison Jr. (see InProfile in this issue). To Allison, the gospels and the abundance of extrabiblical sources constitute a rich, heady brew of fact and fiction, all of which must be read not as a strictly historical record but as the collective memory of a people whose experience and dedication would define the direction of history. Allison, who is on the faculty of Pittsburgh Theological Seminary, insists that efforts to reconstruct a purely historical narrative from the gospels are not just impossible but irrelevant. Looking beyond notions of inerrancy and consistency, the author convincingly presents a richly nuanced view of Jesus Christ and the birth of Christianity. The result is a feast to be savored. (Nov.)

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From the Back Cover

"This is vintage Allison: masterful in his marshaling and exposition of sources, thorough in his interaction with contemporary and opposing views, and robust and persuasive in his argumentation."

--**James D. G. Dunn**, Durham University

"A brilliant book on Jesus. . . . Especially fascinating is the never-ending stream of references from the history of religions to apocalyptic (in the broadest sense of the word) prophets worldwide whose teachings and deeds bear many interesting parallels to Jesus. . . . Such references . . . are among the many pearls we find in this book, rich treasures that one does not already know for oneself but can learn from Allison."

--**Ulrich Luz**, *Theologische Literaturzeitung*

"Dale Allison has written another brilliant book. He manages to dissect technical, complicated subjects and then present them to his readers with remarkable clarity and simplicity. *Constructing Jesus* will be read with great benefit by scholars, pastors, students, and laity. Readers will find everywhere in this book mastery of the topic, judicious assessment of the options, and invariably sensible and compelling conclusions. If you are interested in learning more about the historical Jesus, then you must read this book."

--**Craig A. Evans**, Acadia Divinity College

"Allison has written an innovative book on the historical Jesus based on the idea that general features and recurrent motifs are much better witnesses than particular words or deeds of Jesus. Allison's books on the historical Jesus are among my favorite books in Jesus research. I admire his erudition, sobriety, honesty, and creativity. I recommend this book to all students and colleagues."

--**Gerd Theissen**, University of Heidelberg

"Displaying jaw-dropping acquaintance with primary evidence and the oceanic body of scholarship on Jesus, a sweet reasonableness toward the complexities involved, and just plain good judgment time after time on controverted issues, *Constructing Jesus* is essential reading for anyone concerned with the scholarly approach to the Jesus of history."

--**Larry W. Hurtado**, New College, University of Edinburgh

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Relating to the New Testament" award in 2011.

About the Author

Dale C. Allison Jr. (PhD, Duke University) is the Richard J. Dearborn Professor of New Testament Studies at Princeton Theological Seminary in Princeton, New Jersey, and is counted among the top Jesus scholars working today. He is the author of numerous books, including *The Historical Christ and the Theological Jesus*, *Studies in Matthew*, *Resurrecting Jesus*, *The Intertextual Jesus: Scripture in Q*, and *Jesus of Nazareth: Millenarian Prophet*. He is also coeditor of *The Historical Jesus in Context* and coauthor of a three-volume commentary on Matthew in the International Critical Commentary series.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Victoria Williams:

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