

CRUCIFIED BY PONTIUS PILATE: A NOVEL ABOUT CHRISTIAN ORIGINS  
C.W. GRIFFIN, INFINITY PUBLISHING.COM, West Conshohocken, PA, \$11.95, paperback,  
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In "Crucified by Pontius Pilate - A Novel About Christian Origins," C.W. Griffin critically analyzes the crucifixion of Jesus Christ by the Romans and examines the real reasons behind this event. In order to illustrate his point, Griffin constructs a thought-provoking dialogue between two early second century philosophers. Through their philosophizing, Griffin demonstrates that there is a considerable difference between the historical and Biblical versions of the crucifixion.

Focusing on the accounts of Jesus' crucifixion in the gospels of Mark and Matthew, Griffin claims the gospel says that Jesus was crucified for blasphemy. However, this account is not true. In fact, according to historians, Jesus was convicted of rebelling against Rome; and he was one of the many generations of Jews who were engaged in resistance against the Roman regime. Further, Jesus was not the only victim of crucifixion by the Romans, but was rather one of the 2000-odd dissident Jews who also suffered this horrible death at the Romans' hands. As a result of the conflicting accounts, the crucifixion of Jesus, which had minimal historical significance, has been glorified as a major 'cultural transformation' by Jesus' followers.

There are other discrepancies between the gospels' version of the crucifixion and the historical one. The gospels present Pontius Pilate as a weak personality, claiming that he yielded to pressure from the Jewish high priests in his decision to punish Jesus, whom the high priests handed over to Pilate's custody after deciding that Jesus was guilty of offending Judaism. This account is not very likely, since the Jews would not approach the Romans to punish someone for an offence against Judaism, especially when both parties had large ideological differences, "In summary, a Roman governor orders the crucifixion of a politically inoffensive Jew for what, in the only specified charge-i.e., blasphemy-is an offense against the Jewish religion! Historical evidence also points out that Pilate was a hardened individual who was actually stripped of his post on account of his excesses.

The book also highlights a number of other contradictions with regards to the account of the crucifixion within the gospel versions. One instance is when the gospel states that Pontius Pilate washed his hands in the customary Jewish fashion. This account is not credible. A few examples are also provided to prove that Jesus was subject to emotions like any other human being, and thus not actually a perfect deity. A case in point is his loss of faith in God at the time of his death. Though Jesus claimed that he had been chosen to sacrifice himself for the benefit of mankind, he cried aloud to the Lord at the moment he was crucified, that God had forsaken him. The author notes that if Jesus was in fact the chosen one, there would be no reason for him to question the Lord.

Through the medium of letters, the philosophers shed light on some irrational aspects of the Christian faith and investigate the reasons behind Roman hostility towards the Christians. One major cause for Roman resentment is that Christians tend to spurn Roman authority. The Romans also thought that Christians' attempts to 'sell' Christianity to Romans was audacious. The philosophers also note some historical reasons that led the Christians to lay the blame for the crucifixion on the Jews. Finally, one of them concludes that the Christian 'cult' is doomed to vanish before long in light of its imbalanced nature that tilts the scales in favor of its priests at the cost of laymen.

Summing up, "Crucified by Pontius Pilate" is an honest, evidence based endeavor by Griffin to disclose numerous facts pertaining to Jesus' crucifixion that lay hidden from the common man and to demystify this seemingly momentous event in the history of mankind. Recommended for the reader who enjoys critical works.

*BookWire Review*

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