

## **Jewish Scholars on Jesus' Resurrection**

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**Abstract.** Surveying various studies of the historical Jesus as viewed through the eyes of Jewish researchers,<sup>1</sup> David Mishkin has done a very helpful and credible job of bringing together a wide variety of perspectives and critiques regarding the essential Christian message. It aims particularly at viewing these Jewish authors' thoughts concerning the chief event of all--the resurrection of Jesus (214). This review essay will summarize various key findings of this volume, while also providing some additional critical interaction.

### **Overview**

In his Introduction (Chapter One), David Mishkin states at the outset that his research on Jewish views of resurrection is the “first research of its kind, and it seeks to answer a straightforward question: *what have Jewish scholars said about the historicity of the resurrection of Jesus?*” (8, author’s emphasis; also 10). While acknowledging helpfully at the outset that he is a Messianic Jew (9), Mishkin also notes that much of this study, especially Chapter Four, “does not include those identifying as Hebrew Christians or Messianic Jews, although they will be occasionally mentioned” (9).

Mishkin includes other introductory notes as well, such as the landscape of Jewish scholarship on Jesus having changed significantly. He writes, “A century ago it was still all but taboo for Jewish scholars to talk openly about the life of Jesus, but a few pioneers attempted to

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<sup>1</sup> David Mishkin, *Jewish Scholarship on the Resurrection of Jesus*. Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock (Pickwick), 2017. 256 pages. \$32.00 (Paperback). ISBN: 9781532601354. Page numbers in the text refer to this volume.

break new ground” (6). Now Jewish scholarship on Jesus is much more common.<sup>2</sup> Discussion on Jesus’ resurrection “did not advance quite as rapidly,” but recently this has likewise taken a new turn and has “begun to emerge as a topic of serious discussion among Jewish authors” (7).

Mishkin’s book seeks to contribute to these more recent scholarly trends regarding the Jewish study of the historical Jesus in general and Jesus’ resurrection in particular.

Chapter Two is designed as a “backdrop” for the remainder of the book by providing a survey of fifteen different scholars who have documented Jewish research on Jesus and the New Testament (10). By doing this, Mishkin aims to present the wider context of Jewish scholarship before focusing more specifically on the analyses of Jesus’ resurrection. He believes that this will help orient the reader to the fact that “the resurrection has not been an issue of interest among Jewish New Testament scholars” (10).

Mishkin begins his survey with a chapter found in Clyde W. Votaw’s 1905 book, *The Biblical World* entitled, “The Modern Jewish View of Jesus.” The chapter ends with Shaul Magid’s chapter, “The New Jewish Reclamation of Jesus in Late Twentieth-Century America,” included in *The Jewish Jesus* (2014). Over half the authors in this chapter wrote *prior* to 1985. Other writers include Jacob Jocz (1949), David Catchpole (1971), Pinchas Lapide (1983), and Neta Stahl (2012). Mishkin briefly notes some of the issues that prevented Jewish scholars from writing on Jesus in more detail before concluding that there has been a tremendous shift over the past century. In fact, over the last twenty years or so “there has been a profound new wave of Jewish scholars studying New Testament themes” (33).

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<sup>2</sup> This is perhaps best exemplified in the recent volume edited by Amy-Jill Levine and Marc Zvi Brettler, *The Jewish Annotated New Testament* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017).

Chapter Three examines the possible causes for either a premature Jewish dismissal of Jesus' resurrection or the overall lack of interest in this topic on the part of Jewish scholars (8, 34-37, cf. 134-135). Mishkin acknowledges that some of the objections to Jesus' resurrection extend beyond Jewish discussions, emphasizing particular issues that occur more frequently in Jewish studies.<sup>3</sup>

The issue of anti-Semitism, in particular, has historically generated quite a large amount of miscommunication and separation between Jews and Christians. For example, Mishkin argues that because Christians have sometimes charged the Jewish people with deicide, Jewish scholars have "paid much more attention to Jesus' trial and crucifixion than his resurrection" (36).<sup>4</sup> Similarly, much depends on whether these researchers understand the Gospels as purposely anti-Jewish documents (50-54), as taking a more balanced or even a mixed view (54-58), or believe that the Gospels are less antagonistic than previously thought (59-62).<sup>5</sup> Mishkin also highlights the Jewish understanding of the afterlife (76-89, cf. 138-139), their concept of a Messiah (89-103), and soteriology (103-117) as presenting additional obstacles for Jewish discussion on Jesus and the resurrection. Each of these views will affect how one approaches Jesus and the resurrection.

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<sup>3</sup> Those extending beyond Jewish research include more detailed questions and discussion regarding the dating of the New Testament, alleged discrepancies, or how to treat the miraculous claims found especially in the Gospels, though there is some mention of these and related topics (37-50, 62-76, 164-165, 177-178).

<sup>4</sup> Intriguingly, Mishkin notes that in 1874 the charge of deicide was one of the reasons Isaac Wise denied that Jesus actually died (203). Mishkin notes several other Jewish writers who at least considered the swoon or apparent death theory (146, 179-184, 202-203), perhaps to avoid altogether the Christian critique that the Jews killed Jesus.

<sup>5</sup> Mishkin locates Samuel Sandmel and his student Rabbi Michael J. Cook being among those who understand the Gospels as anti-Semitic documents. Amy-Jill Levine and Adele Reinhartz are thought to take a varied but more balanced approach. Lastly, Louis Feldman and Paula Fredriksen are understood by Mishkin as seeing the Gospels as opposing Judaism but usually fairly so, without their writings being overly negative.

Chapter Four provides a very helpful catalogue of the wide array of views taken by Jewish scholars regarding Jesus' resurrection, an overview he claims is unique in both Jewish and resurrection research (8, 10). He surveys specifically those Jewish scholars who have commented on the subject of Jesus' resurrection (8). Importantly, this list *does not* include "those identifying as Hebrew Christians or Messianic Jews" (9).

This section is separated into six sub-categories in which Jewish scholars have addressed Jesus' resurrection (historical fiction, Jewish history, biographies of Jesus, articles, focus on the resurrection, and alternative suggestions) and covers thirty-five different authors over the span of more than a century. Mishkin summarizes briefly the views of each of these Jewish writers by identifying the key historical facts surrounding Jesus' resurrection with which they either agree or disagree, along with their overall conclusions. Surprising to many will be the discussion of the late Pinchas Lapide, who accepted Jesus' resurrection as a historical event (158-164), with the views of Geza Vermes being positive in several regards, though Vermes ultimately remained agnostic or non-committal overall on this event (164-169).<sup>6</sup>

Chapter Five is Mishkin's last, consisting of a Conclusion that summarizes the key matters addressed in this volume. This final review and analysis also assesses particularly Jewish views regarding the most crucial issues surrounding the historical Jesus: his crucifixion (203-204), burial (204-205), the disciples' belief in Jesus' resurrection (205-207), the empty tomb (207-208), and Paul's conversion experience (208-210).

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<sup>6</sup> Pinchas Lapide, *The Resurrection of Jesus: A Jewish Perspective* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2002). Examples of Vermes' works here include *Jesus the Jew: A Historian's Reading of the Gospels* (London: Collins, 1973) and *The Resurrection of Jesus: History and Myth* (London: Penguin, 2008). Mishkin also identifies at least three other Jewish writers who affirm the resurrection of Jesus: Michael S. Kogan, Michael Goldberg, and Peter Zaas, though without this necessitating personal faith (212, cf. 110-113), and mentions a few other scholars who take more positive views than normal. Mishkin notes that he is uncertain regarding Jon D. Levenson's position, but states that "perhaps" he as well may have believed this event (212, cf. 115-116).

Mishkin notes several caveats that have emerged from his study. Many of the Jewish writer's thoughts on these issues were peripheral comments, made "without a study of the larger context" (202). The time frame for the Jewish studies was stretched out over a period of approximately one and a half centuries. It was sometimes difficult to determine whether particular comments were made in a scholarly manner or were merely intended fancifully. The very small size of the research pool was a factor as well (202-203, also 211). Overall, while some useful data and trends may definitely be extracted here, it is also difficult to determine more precisely *why* some of these events occurred, according to the Jewish authors. For example, although the disciples certainly believed that they had actually encountered the risen Jesus, the material reasons or causes for their belief definitely engenders various responses (202-203).

### **Mishkin's Historical Analysis**

What did Mishkin's research reveal? Concerning *crucifixion*:

Virtually all of the scholars affirmed the historicity of the crucifixion, or at least did not deny it. . . . That Jesus died on a Roman cross in Jerusalem is perhaps the one truth with virtual unanimity in this study (along with his existence and the fact that he was a Jew). (203)

Interestingly, three of the authors in this study embraced the swoon or apparent death theory:

Schonfield (1965), Cornfeld (1982), and Kaufmann (1929-1930).

The *burial* is mentioned by a fair number of Jewish authors, though again, precise numbers are difficult to evaluate without a specific overall number being given from this study alone.<sup>7</sup> Mishkin notes only two dissenters from the traditional burial tradition found in the

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<sup>7</sup>It should be noted carefully that this comment is *not* a complaint that a more thorough search for Jewish authors should have been conducted by the author, i.e., a search of the nature of the Minimal Facts Argument mentioned below or something similar. That is definitely not the point being made here, especially when the author has made it clear that his pool of writers is rather small (202-203, 211). Rather, the question is an internal one: at several junctures, instead of simply telling the reader that several of the authors being considered within this work made this or that comment, it would have been helpful to know how many scholars in each category are actually being considered. In other words, when the reader is told that, "Virtually all of the scholars" hold this or that view, as in the citation above, what is the total pool of authors in this category? Further, does the figure of those accepting the swoon theory adjust this distinctive comment?

Gospels, while also mentioning a major scholar who makes at least some opposing claims (204-205).

Regarding the *disciple's belief*, Mishkin concludes that all the Jewish scholars he surveyed “acknowledged that the disciples continued to believe in Jesus after the crucifixion.” Further, virtually all of them also agreed “that the disciples’ belief was in some way related to the resurrection. . . . The most common response was a psychological explanation of one type or another.” (205) Several suggested natural causes for the disciples’ experiences were proposed, including discussions of what may have convinced the disciples that Jesus was alive, with a few researchers offering more than one potential explanation (205-207).<sup>8</sup>

Strangely enough, several of these Jewish scholars made some incredible concessions in these areas. Prominent researchers Paula Fredricksen and Alan Segal concluded that the disciples’ faith in the resurrection along with the very real experiences that caused them both should be considered as bedrock truths. A number of researchers concluded that the early creedal testimony in 1 Corinthians 15:3ff ought to be dated just barely after the crucifixion (39, 203). After arguing against the major alternative hypotheses regarding the resurrection, Geza Vermes still opted for an agnostic view. But orthodox Jewish scholar Pinchas Lapide shocked the Western religious world with his book arguing that the resurrection of Jesus really occurred!<sup>9</sup>

Mishkin notes that some of the Jewish authors proposed several natural theses to account for the Gospel reports of the *empty tomb*. On the other hand, he cites an even larger number of

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<sup>8</sup> For a number of other comments regarding naturalistic theories, pro and con, cf. 66-71; 90-93; 138-146; 164-169; 179-186; 202-203; 210-211; 214.

<sup>9</sup> For these scholars’ views plus an amazing number of concessions on these subjects by still other Jewish researchers such as Martin Goodman, Paul Goodman, Claude G. Montefiore, and Joseph Klausner, see Mishkin, 133-139, 142, 158-176, 205-207, 210.

Jewish authors who either argued against these critical moves or otherwise made strong comments that favored the empty tomb (207-208).

In these Jewish writings, *Paul* most regularly receives the lion's share of the criticism, as the apostle was often thought of both as importing pagan ideas into Christianity and perhaps being the culprit who really founded Christianity, tearing it away from its Jewish roots. This heavy criticism of Paul was manifest most frequently in the older Jewish literature, with a few of Mishkin's works that mention these themes dating to the 1920s, and another prior to 1950.

By far the majority of the authors mentioned in this chapter prefer subjective psychological explanations for Paul's conversion. Paul was regularly and alternatively interpreted as being so excitable, angry, guilty, convicted of his own sin, or so envious of the disciples' faith and peace that he experienced a momentous conversion to Christianity (208-210)! Each of these hypotheses, however, betrays a distinct lack of any historical or literary evidence. As Mishkin comments, "All of the theories rely heavily on speculation." (208) But the views on Paul from Jewish authors in the last few decades have been more positive than in previous times (210-211).

This chapter ends with several conclusions drawn by Mishkin, a few of which might be somewhat surprising to readers. For example, particular Jewish writers such as Martin Goodman thought that Christianity was quite an incredible movement, founded as it was on the claim that Jesus had been raised from the dead (210). Geza Vermes concluded similarly that the resurrection "is an unparalleled phenomenon in history" though he remained agnostic on the historical issue (212). This serves as a reminder of a critical point: for Jewish scholars such as Pinchas Lapide, Michael Kogan, Michael Goldberg, Peter Zass, and perhaps Jon Levenson, "A belief in the historicity of the resurrection does not necessarily lead to personal faith" (212). Here

an additional discussion of the relevant worldviews along with other beliefs would have to be introduced and treated.

The “two distinct boundary markers” for Jewish scholars, with some overlap, are the cultural and theological restrictions. Yet, many of even the formerly taboo areas have been changing in the Twentieth Century and beyond. What was “dangerous for Jews to say about Jesus a century ago is now commonly acknowledged.” Among the major changes and adjustments are new attitudes toward the Jewishness of Paul, the New Testament not necessarily being an anti-Jewish document, and even some positive thoughts regarding the incarnation (211)! The resurrection may gain even further traction among these new interests, as well (214).

While this study of Jewish scholarship “is in some ways quite different from the wider field of scholarship” it is similar in other areas. A crucial instance is Mishkin’s statement “that the main historical events” such as the “crucifixion, burial, disciples’ belief, empty tomb, and Paul’s dramatic turnaround” were “virtually the same” for Jewish writers as with general critical scholarship as a whole. Still, the most crucial question here is “which hypothesis fits the evidence best?” Yet, “Not all of these points have the same level of acceptance.” For example, there was less agreement regarding Jesus’ burial. However, the Jewish discussions in Mishkin produced “no viable alternatives presented to these points individually or collectively.” (210)

Mishkin thinks that Jewish scholars might be more aware than most if plausible counter-hypotheses actually existed, “But no theory has yet received even a modicum of popularity even among skeptics.” He concludes that two “simple truths” follow from this study: “1. There *is* historical evidence pointing to the resurrection of Jesus, and, 2. This evidence cannot be explained away easily” (211, Mishkin’s emphasis).

### **Final Analysis**



Mishkin's summarized conclusions from the last chapter were very helpful, particularly when they focused on the central Christian events of the crucifixion, burial, empty tomb, and appearance accounts reported in the New Testament, including Paul's conversion experience. The caveats from the same chapter were revealing, too. The briefness and peripheral nature of the Jewish treatments of key Christian emphases (202) made sense, especially in light of the often much longer treatments of less central matters. Mishkin insinuates that this could possibly indicate that some of the expressed views were not well thought out or may have been largely undeveloped, especially in light of the earlier comments that these Jewish authors have had generally little to say about Jesus' resurrection (34-36, 134-135, 201).

One might wonder if the lack of intricacy in some places contributed at all to Mishkin's study extending to over a century and a half of authors. On the one hand, he no doubt wished to be inclusive and complete. On the other hand, a very broad field was traversed, complete with mismatched authors, some who were specialists and others not so much. Some wrote in depth, while others appeared to skim the surface seemingly in search of a way to expand on preconceived opinions. Sometimes the gap over time contributed to the writers' taking views that were common enough in their own time, while looking strangely out-of-place as more recent research has been done.

But one-and-a-half centuries in itself would likely reveal an unevenness, as scholarly trends change over the years. As an example, of the three mentioned writers who preferred the swoon or apparent death thesis for Jesus, only one was written as recently as thirty years ago (203). This could be contrasted instructively with the views of several of the most influential skeptical scholars who published their research more recently.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Just a few examples (two of which are identified as atheist New Testament scholars) include Gerd Lüdemann with Alf Özen, *What Really Happened to Jesus: A Historical Approach to the Resurrection*, translated by

Another more troubling issue, according to Mishkin, is that the Jewish treatments, explanations, and responses were sometimes handled in more fanciful or even fictional ways. Though these latter efforts were not tallied in Mishkin's count (202, cf. 119-134), too many other ideas that were also quite imaginative were included here. Several notions were "far-fetched, outrageous and controversial" but were still counted, such as those of Hugh Schonfield's habit of inventing circumstances or ideas that would not be defended by specialized scholars of virtually any theological persuasion (179-181). Still additional efforts were far off the beaten scholarly path (90-93, 184-186), being termed "simplistic" by Mishkin (214) and likewise criticized by more sophisticated Jewish scholars themselves (92).

Listing scholars on both sides of issues was a helpful and positive feature of Mishkin's research. But internal tallies of the dissenting scholars in this particular study were often missing when such would have helped at several points in this evaluation. What percentages of the scholars in this study agreed or disagreed? Further, counting scholars who "at least did not deny" something (203) as part of the affirmative view was very confusing, for many of these may in fact have rejected the ideas in question. This would seem to include arguments from silence in the tallies. As already noted above, it was very difficult to extrapolate the overall strength of the factual arguments in such cases, or what the actual scholarly breakdown looked like. Similarly, bypassing in some sense the overall amount of Jewish scholars who take this or that view

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John Bowden (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1995), who referred to Jesus' death by crucifixion as "indisputable" (17); Bart D. Ehrman, *Did Jesus Exist? The Historical Argument for Jesus of Nazareth* (New York: Harper Collins, 2012), 156-158, 163-164, 290-291; John Dominic Crossan, *Who Killed Jesus? Exposing the Roots of Anti-Semitism in the Gospel Story of the Death of Jesus* (New York: Harper Collins, 1995), who asserted that "Jesus' death by execution under Pontius Pilate is as sure as anything historical can ever be" (5). Marcus Borg and Dale Allison plus many other skeptical authors could also be listed here.

impedes observations regarding the ebb and flow of scholarly tides and whether it is moving in one direction or another.<sup>11</sup>

Several other items could be highlighted positively from Mishkin's volume. The Jewish authors were creative, and the reader may not always be prepared for what the particular authors actually concluded. The Gospels are sometimes complimented as being decent historical sources (39-41, 44, 48, 137, 203). Jesus may also have performed miracles (93, 143, 167).

Moreover, the resurrection was sometimes acknowledged as the central Christian teaching and even that it was this belief that powered early Christianity (139, 210, 212, 214). Jesus' early disciples claimed that the risen Jesus appeared to them alive after his crucifixion (44, 134, 142, 166-167). The Jewish commentators sometimes held that Jesus thought that he was the Messiah or otherwise taught special things about his identity (53, 60, 141, 143, 179, 210-211). Moreover, while Paul was and still is frequently attacked, incredibly enough, none of what are by far the most popular natural hypotheses regarding the apostle are grounded in the known historical data regarding him.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Other examples might include the comment regarding virtual agreement among the Jewish writers on issues regarding Jesus' crucifixion, burial, the disciples' belief, the empty tomb, and Paul's experience (210) when so many exceptions were noted by Mishkin on Jesus' potential apparent death or the alternative stances on Paul, as already noted above. These are some of the places where overviews or internal tallies would have been very helpful. Brief, nuanced statements would also have been more appreciated, such as why Mishkin counted rather positively those authors who at least did not deny something (203)? What more, precisely, was meant by Jesus thinking of himself as the Messiah or other such lofty notions (53, 60, 141, 143, 211)? What, more exactly, is meant by the disciples continuing to believe after the resurrection and what might those notions actually entail (205-206)? A key issue is to make careful distinctions regarding "visions," and potential bodily and/or non-bodily appearances of Jesus (134, 138, 159, 205)? Why are hallucination theses simplistic (214)?

<sup>12</sup> For additional details on this point, see Gary R. Habermas, "Jesus' Post-Resurrection Appearance to the Apostle Paul: Can it Withstand Critical Scrutiny?" in *Defending the Faith, Engaging the Culture: Essays Honoring L. Russ Bush*, edited by Bruce A. Little and Mark D. Liederbach (Nashville: Broadman and Holman Academic, 2011), 101-118.

A few puzzling items are also present in the text. No footnotes appear for a full nine pages, even though many scholars and quotations are mentioned during this stretch (203-211)!<sup>13</sup> Was this simply an editing oversight? Also, a couple of times, the views of critical scholars seem to be mischaracterized (37, 179).

In some of the crucial portions of his research in this text, Mishkin builds upon a research strategy known as the “Minimal Facts Method/Approach” to Jesus’ resurrection, developed chiefly by Gary Habermas and others (see 201-202; cf. similar “moves” on 40-45, 65-66, 210). This strategy employs a sort of common denominator approach that utilizes only those historical facts that are acknowledged by the vast majority of scholars in relevant fields, whether the particular scholars tend to be more liberal or conservative. Mishkin notes that his research differs from Habermas’, due to the sheer volume of Habermas’ study (201).<sup>14</sup> Mishkin also claims that the scholars’ positions in Habermas’ study may simply result from their own faith commitments, while none of the scholars in his study “had a predisposition to affirm the historicity of the resurrection and many had a predisposition leaning in the opposite direction” (202).<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> Another area where footnotes would have been incredibly beneficial would have been after Mishkin’s assertion that “Lapide, Kogan, Goldberg, Zass, and perhaps Levenson” believe in the historical resurrection while refraining from becoming Christians. Where do each of these scholars make these comments?

<sup>14</sup> For the sake of clarity, it should be noted carefully that the 2000 research sources mentioned by Habermas and noted by Mishkin come from a 2005 journal article and that the ongoing details of the Minimal Facts Method have moved quite far beyond this point, almost 15 years ago.

<sup>15</sup> Unfortunately, a number of Habermas’ critical nuances seem to be missing from Mishkin’s characterization of this research. Mishkin asserts, for example, that most of the works studied by Habermas were “conservative” and that many scholars in Habermas’ research were actually “committed Christians who already believed in the resurrection by faith” (201). Mishkin added further that, “The fact that most of them affirm...that there was an empty tomb *might mean nothing more than many of them already had a faith commitment*” (202, emphasis added). Many scholars cited in Habermas’ extended study, however, were agnostics, atheists, or skeptics of one sort or another, including those of other faiths, or those who hold no faith position at all. Further, Mishkin apparently does not realize that “*conservative*” as used in the context above refers to the particular views of the resurrection that the scholars held, *not* to their own faith. Moreover, it must be remembered that while personal belief can prejudice one’s case, so can a contrary belief or unbelief cause one to prefer virtually any position to that of the deity or resurrection of Jesus. In fact, it would appear that *many* believing scholars potentially may be trained

An additional comment here is that probably a majority of the Jewish authors in Mishkin's study cite the presence discrepancies in the New Testament texts, especially during end of Jesus' life.<sup>16</sup> This complaint is found commonly in the writings of many critical scholars as a whole, far beyond these Jewish writers alone. In fact, it may well be the most prevalent species of objection in critical writings as a whole.

Initially, many sophisticated studies not mentioned here address the extent, accuracy, or reasons why such claimed discrepancies, either in antiquity or at present, are seldom thought to annul the force of strong testimony. This can be seen in legal or other historical cases, too. More obviously, if a critical scholar holds that there are textual discrepancies but then concludes that the events in question happened anyway, which is often the case, this indicates that the issues are insufficient to annul the overall positive research. It should be noted briefly that a feature of the Minimal Facts Approach is that it bypasses the crux of this objection altogether, since the chief thrust of this argument is that the best-attested historical facts are accepted by the vast majority of critical scholars *precisely because* they establish events that are based on this known data alone.

Mishkin closes his study by noting that recent trends in Jewish scholarship have indicated an increase of research in New Testament studies (Jesus, Paul, resurrection, and so on) and have increased the dialogue between Jews and Christians.<sup>17</sup> These trends lead Mishkin to suggest that

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as well or even better than many unbelieving scholars, and one's starting point does not preclude objectivity in research in the first place. Lastly and very crucially, whatever beliefs the individual researchers hold is their own business. No effort was made to choose or even favor the conservative scholars among them. The Minimal Facts Research simply refers to the authors who wrote on these subjects, with the resulting head-count simply being a product of their own, published views, whatever their beliefs. This survey yielded the ensuing conclusions.

<sup>16</sup> Many examples are found on pages 40-45, 164-165, 177-179, 203, 207 and elsewhere.

<sup>17</sup> Mishkin also notes the increased interest of the Jewish context of the New Testament period by Christians.

“the next generation or two of Jewish New Testament scholarship should be quite fascinating” (214).

The Jewish scholars in Mishkin’s volume, almost from first to last, seem plainly not to know what to make of the resurrection appearances claimed by Jesus’ earliest disciples. One indication of this, for example, might be that very little cogency exists among the alternative responses that seek to deny these events and any data that support these options, as Mishkin points out, as well. Rather, the critiques reflect a great deal of variation. Given that many of the authors have a common history along with many similar religious, theological, and social views, it is at least intriguing that a more concrete and agreed-upon natural thesis does not seem to be offered (210-211). Though a few critical comments have been made in this review article, Mishkin has made great strides in presenting and summarizing specific material on a key topic that is seldom explored.