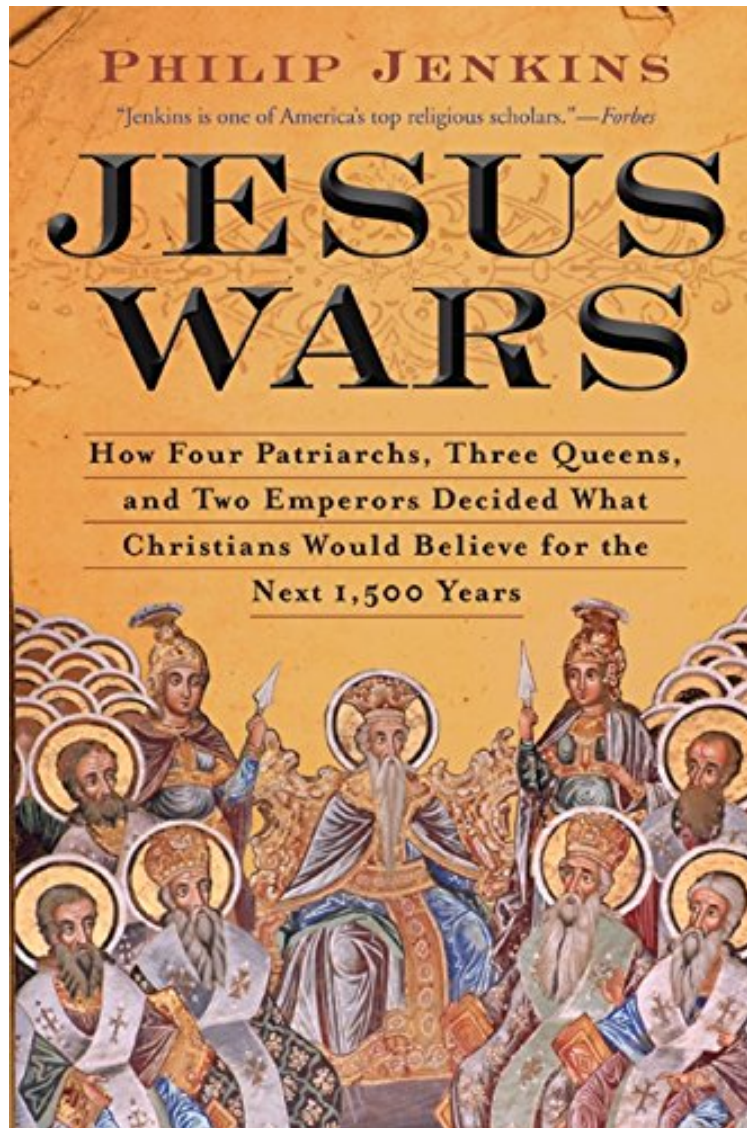


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Jesus Wars: How Four Patriarchs, Three Queens, and Two Emperors Decided What Christians Would Believe for the Next 1,500 years

John Philip Jenkins

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John Philip Jenkins : Jesus Wars: How Four Patriarchs, Three Queens, and Two Emperors Decided What Christians Would Believe for the Next 1,500 years before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be

worth my time, and all praised Jesus Wars: How Four Patriarchs, Three Queens, and Two Emperors Decided What Christians Would Believe for the Next 1,500 years:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Jesus warsBy Stephen EmbryA lively presentation of the the efforts during the first six centuries of the Christian Era to make sense of the events of the Jesus experience. While there was a consensus that something remarkable had occurred, the transition to Christianity was difficult and violent. There were those who held that Jesus was merely a man. Others felt he was a man adopted by God. Another faction believed he was solely god with no human nature. Still others believed the experience was not real but phantasmal. This presented political problems for the Emperors since it provoked disunity and violence, so numerous councils were called in an effort to reconcile difference and establish a uniform orthodoxy. Not surprisingly this was not entirely successful, leading the schism and controversies which the author suggests contributed to weakening of the empire, leaving it vulnerable to the rise of Islam and the splintering if the classical world. Modern readers may view the discussion as surprising since the western church survived in those areas where the orthodox belief was strongest but the controversies remain in the belief of the various and recurrent reviews of the faith, indeed are included to some extent in the gospels which became the canon.3 of 4 people found the following review helpful. Not the religion of revelation but the religion of bureaucracies, committees and politicsBy Malleus MaleficarumThis is a fantastic book for anyone looking to understand the progression of early Christian belief about the nature of Jesus. Modern readers will be surprised to know that the early Christians were excessively obsessed with minutiae regarding the description of Jesus' human and divine natures and just about every conceivable hypothesis put forward on the topic was regarded as heresy by someone else. Most interesting is the realization that while the story of Jesus probably ended on the hill of Golgotha in 30 CE, the long and tortuous journey of finalizing Christian belief about him carried on for another 6 centuries. The divisions were driven as much by sincere theological beliefs as by the political aspirations of forceful personalities behind them, as the great ancient sees of Rome, Constantinople, Antioch and Alexandria fought with ever changing alliances and stratagems to undermine each other. The issues under debate, such as descriptions of various flavours of Monophysite belief will strain readers at first as will the anathemas of Cyril or the Chalcedonian creed, but the very fact that 300 years of debate went into settling this issue will give an idea how disunited and diverse early Christian belief was. The author also shows how the final victory of the Chalcedonian creed was pyrrhic, while it made the current Roman Catholic belief the orthodox creed of Christianity, the Church as a whole lost its Eastern strongholds, with Alexandria, Antioch and Constantinople absorbed into the rising tide of Islam. This is truly a must read for anyone looking to understand the evolution of Christology in the early centuries of the first millenium0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Excellent book. Easy to read and some very interesting ...By M. FuentesExcellent book. Easy to read and some very interesting perspectives.

The Fifth-Century Political Battles That Forever Changed the ChurchIn this fascinating account of the surprisingly violent fifth-century church, Philip Jenkins describes how political maneuvers by a handful of powerful charactersshaped Christian doctrine. Were it not for these battles, todays church could beteaching something very different about the nature of Jesus, and the papacy as weknow it would never have come into existence. Jesus Wars reveals the profoundimplications of what amounts to an accident of history: that one faction ofRoman emperors and militia-wielding bishops defeated another.

From Booklist*Starred * The fifth-century Christian church faced a doctrinal issue, now largely forgotten, that precipitated intramural Christian savagery unparalleled until the 11-centuries-later Thirty Years War. The bone of contention was the nature of Jesus Christ. That he wasnt a mere man was indisputable. But was he a human-divine cross-breed, so to speak, or was he purely divine and his human body an illusion? Neither was accepted, but the conclusion of the council of Chalcedon in 451 that he was fully divine and fully humanthat is, said dissidents, of two naturesincensed those who held he was of one nature, entirely divine. The fight broke out well before Chalcedon, entailing the death-from-assault of the patriarch of Constantinople during the 449 council of Ephesus, thereafter disowned as the Gangster Synod. Chalcedon eventually triumphed, but not until well after 250 years of intermittent violence in which monks behaved like the Waffen SS. Jenkins condenses centuries of church and imperial strife with admirable clarity despite the continuous blizzard of historical names and ecclesiastical terms the narrative entails. He suggests that this era, not the later Dark and Middle Ages, is the most violent (un-Christian?) in Christian history and that it may have lessons for the present and future conflict between Christians and Muslims over the nature of God. -- Ray Olson Are you hungry for a rip-roaring tale of theological intrigue filled with conspiracies, Byzantine plots, murder, and mayhem? Or are you longing for a solid, informative, and accurate history of the development of Christian orthodoxy? If your answer is yes to both, Philip Jenkins's Jesus Wars...is your book. (Christianity Today)Jenkins...has done a remarkable job of documenting this little-understood slice of history. Theres lots of excitement and plenty of intrigue, and Jenkins does a fine job in his recitation of this strange story. (Publishers Weekly)In showing general readers how he finds fresh ideas and the resurrections of past teachings invigorating to

religious studies, Jenkins provides an accessible book . . . the book enlightens readers on the backstory to current Christian divisions . . . (Library Journal) Jenkins condenses centuries of church and imperial strife with admirable clarity... (Booklist (starred review)) Jenkins manages to explain very clearly why people in the early Christian era were so passionately concerned with issues of high theology. (The Economist) From the Back Cover Jesus Wars reveals how official, orthodox teaching about Jesus was the product of political maneuvers by a handful of key characters in the fifth century. Jenkins argues that were it not for these controversies, the papacy as we know it would never have come into existence and that today's church could be teaching some-thing very different about Jesus. It is only an accident of history that one group of Roman emperors and militia-wielding bishops defeated another faction. Christianity claims that Jesus was, somehow, both human and divine. But the Bible is anything but clear about Jesus's true identity. In fact, a wide range of opinions and beliefs about Jesus circulated in the church for four hundred years until allied factions of Roman royalty and church leaders burned cities and killed thousands of people in an unprecedented effort to stamp out heresy. Jenkins recounts the fascinating, violent story of the church's fifth-century battles over "right belief" that had a far greater impact on the future of Christianity and the world than the much-touted Council of Nicea convened by Constantine a century before.