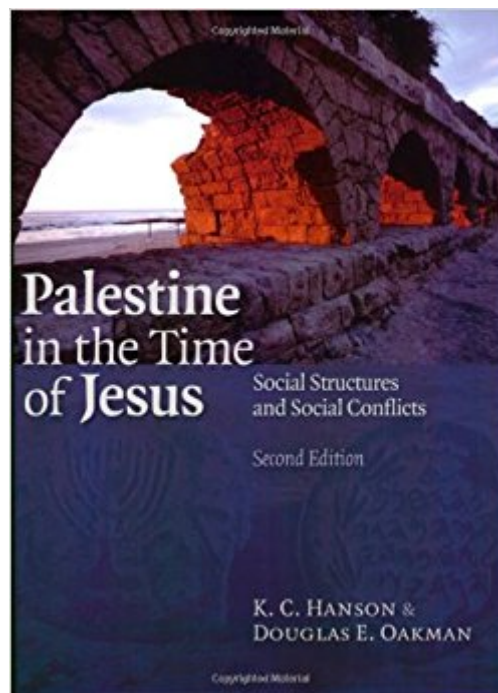




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# **Palestine In The Time Of Jesus: Social Structures And Social Conflicts**



## Synopsis

Hanson and Oakman's award-winning and illuminating volume has become a widely used and cited introduction to the social context of Jesus and the early Jesus movement. This second edition updates all the discussions in light of more recent scholarship, improves clarity and readability of diagrams and maps, provides additional diagrams and images to enhance the book for student use, and includes new classroom resources, for professors and students, on a Companion Web site. Along with an overview of the ancient Mediterranean worldview, *Palestine in the Time of Jesus* explores major domains and institutions of Roman Palestine: kinship, politics, economy, and religion.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

K. C. Hanson has taught biblical studies at Episcopal Theological School and the School of Theology at Claremont, Creighton University, and St. Olaf College. Douglas E. Oakman is Professor of Religion and Dean at Pacific Lutheran University, Tacoma, Washington.

Wonderful book, a ton of information, and easy to read format. Gives a lot of useful info if you're interested in the historical situation in Palestine as it's described in the Bible and other sacred writings. It explains a lot of words and relationships that show up in the Bible as they would have been understood two thousand years ago, words and concepts which may seem meaningless or

incomprehensible to us without an understanding of what the society was like when the Romans occupied Palestine.

A helpful book when reading Scripture. By providing a social analysis of the 1st century Palestinian culture the authors provide us with categories for analyzing our own culture and highlighting the differences and similarities between "us" and "them". The authors provide a needed corrective to our frequent assumption that the people of the New Testament thought and acted as we would think and act in a given situation.

Thorough look into first century Palestine! A must have for any theologian or minister

Received my book the day after I bought it and it was in amazing condition. Definitely recommend this seller!

This is a scholarly and interesting introduction to the social and political world in which Jesus lived and carried out his mission. It certainly increased my understanding of that world; of family relations, power structures and patronage, and political economy. I had not fully grasped the extent to which the "elite" creamed off the surplus produced by the peasants, leaving them at subsistence level or indebtedness. The book is well-designed for students with maps and photographs, clear diagrams of the "models" proposed by the authors, suggestions for further study, an extensive bibliography and useful glossaries. The publisher's website (page 2, Research Tip 1) is no longer available (at 2015) but the information can be found on the Home Page of K C Hanson. However, the book leaves us with the impression that the "Jesus Movement" was no more than a movement for social and political reform of the system, a return to the Deuteronomic requirement that debts should be forgiven every seven years and a redistribution of produce to the needy and the many rather than to a small elite. According to Hanson and Oakman, the "Reign of God" is purely economic and it means no more than that God is the ultimate and only patron, believers are his clients and Jesus is broker between God and humanity. Are the authors dismissing the Christianity that arose from the Jesus Movement, from belief in the resurrection of Jesus, as simply false? And I have a quibble. Hanson and Oakman say that a Century in a Roman Legion numbered 80 infantrymen plus 20 support troops (Figures G1 and G2, pp 171 and 172). Now, I have read a lot of books on the Roman army (including, for example, G

Webster *et al.* "The Roman Imperial Army" and A Goldsworthy *et al.* "The Complete Roman Army". They all agree that a Century had 80 infantrymen but "support troops" are never mentioned. Hanson and Oakman do not appear, from their Bibliography, to have consulted any specialist book on the Roman army. I suspect they have used a source that added 20 support troops to make the number up to 100. Now it is true that the word "Century" should mean a hundred, but words can have more than one meaning and can change their meaning over the years. The Roman army seems to have used the word to mean something like a "Company" *et al.* "Company" *et al.* *et al.* an unspecified number. In the Republican Roman army (according to the Greek historian Polybius) there were two types of century: one of 60 men, one of only 30. The authors also claim that the six tribunes of a legion rotated in command every two months (p 169). This may have been true of the Republican legion but it was not true of the Imperial legion which was commanded by its Legate. I call this a quibble because the book is not about the Roman army, which scarcely features in the text. However, if the authors can get things wrong which I can check, how can I be sure they are right about matters which I am unable to check?

Palestine in the time of Jesus is an excellent resource for students of scripture, preachers, and anyone who is interested in life at the time of Jesus Christ. The book pays attention to the archeological evidence that can help us better understand scripture, but its greatest strength is the way in which it looks at the social world of Jesus' days. Hansen and Oakman delve into topics such as kinship, patronage, public religion (as opposed to personal faith) and economic realities. Some of the information in the book can be somewhat complicated, especially when a twenty first century reader attempts to think in terms of the mindset of a person living in ancient Palestine, but thinking in the mindset of a person in the ancient world can help a reader better understand the world Jesus was speaking to and apply the message to the world of today. Preachers who are tired of delivering the same old sermon or homily can find new twists for old passages after reading this book--insights that can challenge congregations to think about scripture in a new way without upsetting the faith. The book has an ample bibliography for students doing research. It also contains a scriptural and ancient writings index, an author cited index, as well as a general index for quick reference. Just an interesting note: When I first purchased this book two years ago, I looked for reviews by putting the name Douglas Oakman in a search engine. In the process I came across his own website that includes a listing of his other publications as well as links to other scripture related sites. He also

includes links to some of his other interests including jazz and railroads.

The book has outstanding diagrams that really add to one's understanding of the political, economic and social systems prevalent back then, although they take some serious studying to understand. While the book is hardly easy reading, the authors have gone out of their way to make it user-friendly. There is a glossary, an accompanying CD and a website designed for readers of the book. It also has a great list of suggested reading at the back of each chapter - not just a list of books, but a targeted commentary on what book is best for the specific type of information you want. I absolutely loved the content of this book, but I found the title misleading. I don't know how they define 'social conflicts,' but I was looking for conflict between the classes - rich and poor, tax collectors and peasants, etc. If you're looking for explanations of how that played out socially, such as whether tax collectors were banned from the synagogue or could witness in court, don't buy this book. I also wish it had more pages! Some of the cultural chapters left me with a realization of how much I don't know, rather than a clear idea of what I learned.

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