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## Cook's "Crucifixion in the Mediterranean world" (Book Review)

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Miletus and Heraclitus of Ephesus) view of creation-centered gods with the biblical account. Chapter 10 describes Jewish wisdom with the creation references in Job 28 and Proverbs 1-9 and the eroticism of the Song of Solomon.

Throughout the book are fine line drawing illustrations of items in the collections of the Department of Biblical Studies in University of Freiburg in Germany. An Epilogue provides a selection of twelve nonbiblical texts from Enki and Ninmah to the Lugal myth. It is understandable but unfortunate that this English translation includes a very extensive 27 page bibliography of almost entirely of German language sources. Hopefully the reader would be successful locating an English language version through the Internet. The book concludes with author and Scripture indexes.

The authors through extensive use of ancient Near East artifacts and theology connect with biblical creation accounts. This scholarship work is one that theologians and graduate students would find insightful and engaging.

### Reviewer

Paul B. Drake, Pacific Islands University

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Cook, J.G. (2014). *Crucifixion in the Mediterranean world*. Mohr Siebeck. 522 pp. \$76.60. ISBN 9783161537646

John Granger Cook, professor of religion and philosophy at LaGrange College, offers in *Crucifixion in the Mediterranean World* a comprehensive study of crucifixion as a form of capital punishment in the ancient world. Analyzing the various methodologies of crucifixion, Cook draws heavily from ancient, Greek, Hebrew and Aramaic text of historical accounts. Through the course of six chapters, an introduction, and conclusion the reader is introduced to crucifixion through its terminology, legal and historical implications. Much attention is given to linguistics in this work in an effort to categorically define crucifixion as “execution by suspension” the primary method examined in this volume. In addition, extensive accounts of the practice are provided with significant consideration to Roman crucifixion and its relation to the New Testament. Greater understanding is afforded the reader of the social and physical importance surrounding the Gospel accounts of the crucifixion of Christ.

The author provides well-researched scholarly content that includes numerous footnotes and sizable supplementary appendices. Additionally, each chapter is afforded its own conclusion summarizing the text, a helpful feature for researchers. Bearing note is the inclusion of a brief section of sketched and photographic images of crucifixion which are graphic in nature and may be unsuitable to some readers.

As customary with the publisher Mohr Siebeck this work is highly academic and suitable for serious scholars. *Crucifixion in the Mediterranean World* is a unique and significant work that would make a valuable addition to an academic theological collection.

### Reviewer

Jill Botticelli, Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary

Adams, E. (2016). *The earliest Christian meetings places: Almost exclusively houses?* London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark. 263 pp. \$29.95. ISBN 9780567663146

Adams proposes to disprove the common (and influential) assumption that early Christian congregations met “almost exclusively” in homes. The author tackles the literary evidence by New Testament corpus, arguing that the “house” evidence “is not as abundant as is usually thought” (p. 137). Adams also examines the archaeological testimony, concluding that Dura Europos remains “the only certain archaeological example of a house adapted into a church building, dating to the Pre-Constantinian era” (p. 111). Adams discusses various meeting-sites in addition to “conventional” houses, including *tabernae* (shop-houses), *insulae* (apartments), workshops, inns, restaurants, warehouses, schoolrooms, bathhouses, barns, gardens, tombs, riversides, and beaches. By applying a rubric to these different space-types (availability, analogous usage, adequacy, and advantageousness), Adams characterizes them all as “plausible” venues. Adams generally tends to downplay evidence for “house” meetings (often described as inconclusive or “subject to debate”), while accentuating evidence for other venues, even if the data is merely suggestive or “suitable.” Moreover, he uses literary evidence for open-air evangelism or debate as support for open-air congregational assembly, which does not necessarily follow. Nevertheless, Adams provides a needed corrective to the assumption that early Christian assemblies met almost *exclusively* in houses, thereby promoting “a wider and richer scholarly discourse on ecclesial space in early Christianity” (p. 202). One wonders how this study might affect future research into early Christianity, including organizational theory (polity and governance), liturgical development (agape meal, Eucharistic, and baptismal practices), and the sociological study of “sacred space.” Adams’ work demonstrates that early congregations were highly creative and flexible. This should not surprise contemporary missiologists, who study rented storefront assemblies in Manhattan and open-air prayer meetings in Mombasa. But Adams might surprise many New Testament scholars, who have overlooked Justin Martyr’s reported claim that early Christians assembled “Wherever is chosen and it is possible” (*Mart. Justin* 3).

### Reviewer

Paul Hartog, Faith Baptist Bible College & Theological Seminary