

Comparative Details

Explanation

The trial of Jesus is one of the most complicated historical matters in the entire New Testament and perhaps in all of legal history. Commentators have greatest difficulty dealing with varying details in the four accounts, particularly when those variations contradict each other. Chart 10-9 spells out the varying details. In these cases, it is possible to reconcile the accounts by assuming that both are correct, even though this may produce puzzling or awkward results. Chart 10-10 shows twenty ways in which the accounts of the trials of Jesus contradict each other. In these instances, reconciliation is less obvious. Usually a reader must choose to follow one account or another. Chart 10-11 points out well-attested elements in the trial of Jesus that are absent in some of the Gospels but are present in all three of the other accounts. John contains by far the greatest amount of unique information, but Luke also has expanded his account well beyond those of Mark and Matthew.

Reference

Kurt Aland, *Synopsis of the Four Gospels: Greek-English Edition of the Synopsis Quattuor Evangeliorum*, 10th ed. (Stuttgart: German Bible Society, 1993).

Conspicuous Omissions

Details left out though included in all three other Gospels

Matthew

None

Mark

1. Jesus rebukes disciple who struck with a sword
(Mt 26:52–54; Lk 22:51; Jn 18:11)
2. Jesus gives a hedging answer to whether he is the Christ
(Mt 26:64; Lk 22:70; Jn 18:21)

Luke

1. Arresters come with weapons
(Mt 26:47; Mk 14:43; Jn 18:3)
2. Jesus prophesies about destroying temple
(Mt 26:61; Mk 14:57–58; Jn 2:19)
3. Caiaphas accuses Jesus of blasphemy
(Mt 26:65; Mk 14:64)
4. Roman soldiers scourge Jesus
(Mt 27:26; Mk 15:15; Jn 19:1)
5. Jesus wears crown of thorns
(Mt 27:29; Mk 15:17; Jn 19:2)
6. Roman soldiers mock Jesus
(Mt 27:27–31; Mk 15:16–20; Jn 19:2–3)
7. Women at cross are named
(Mt 27:56; Mk 15:40; Jn 19:25)
8. Pilate gives permission for Joseph of Arimathea to take body of Christ
(Mt 27:58; Mk 15:45; Jn 19:38)

John

1. Disciples fall asleep in the garden
(Mt 26:36–46; Mk 14:32–42; Lk 22:39–46)
2. Judas betrays Christ with a kiss
(Mt 26:49; Mk 14:45; Lk 22:47)
3. Jesus prophesies of Peter's denial
(Mt 26:34; Mk 14:30; Lk 22:34)
4. Peter denies Christ three times
(Mt 26:69–75; Mk 14:66–72; Lk 22:56–62)
5. Chief priests and elders accuse Jesus
(Mt 27:12–13; Mk 15:3–5; Lk 23:9–10)
6. Jews mock Jesus at Caiaphas's palace
(Mt 26:67–68; Mk 14:61–65; Lk 22:63–65)
7. Jewish council meets in the morning
(Mt 27:1; Mk 15:1; Lk 22:66)
8. Crowd desires Jesus to be crucified
(Mt 27:22–23; Mk 15:13–14; Lk 23:18–23)
9. Simon of Cyrene carries Jesus' cross
(Mt 27:32; Mk 15:21; Lk 23:26)
10. Crowd mocks Jesus at Golgotha
(Mt 27:39–44; Mk 15:29–32; Lk 23:35–38)
11. Thieves speak to Jesus
(Mt 27:44; Mk 15:32; Lk 23:39–43)
12. Darkness covers the earth from the 6th to 9th hour
(Mt 27:45; Mk 15:33; Lk 23:44)
13. Temple curtain tears
(Mt 27:51; Mk 15:38; Lk 23:45)
14. Marys come to sepulchre
(Mt 27:61; Mk 15:47; Mk 23:55)