

I recently received a question from a blog member about when it was in the Christian tradition that Jesus came to be thought of as “perfect,” without sin. I feel no great need to answer the question myself because my friend and occasional guest blog poster Jeffery Siker, long-time professor of New Testament at Loyola Marymount University, has written an entire book on the topic. And so I asked him to prepare some blogposts, and here’s the first one.

For what it’s worth, he and I both liked very much the title he wanted for the book, [Jesus the Perfect Sinner](#); but, as often happens, the publisher went with something less scintillating: [Jesus, Sin, and Perfection in Early Christianity](#). But the cover of the book is to die for. He has also written [Liquid Scripture: The Bible in the Digital World](#) and [Homosexuality and Religion: An Encyclopedia](#).

Jesus and Sinlessness

How and when did Jesus come to be viewed as sinless in earliest Christianity? Surprisingly, this question has received scant attention from NT scholars over the years. For this reason I wrote *Jesus, Sin, and Perfection in Early Christianity* (New York: Cambridge, 2015), which explores early Christian understandings of Jesus in connection with sin, especially in light of Jesus’ death and subsequent belief that God had raised him from the dead.

Several passages in the New Testament make it plain that the common view among early Christians was that Jesus was (as Hebrews 4:15 puts it) “one who in every respect has been tested as we are, yet without sin.” This same conviction that Jesus was perfectly sinless can be found in Paul (2 Cor 5:21 – “for our sake he [God] made him [Jesus] to be sin who knew no sin”), 1 Peter (2:22, echoing Isaiah 53:9 – “he committed no sin”), 1 John (3:5, “in him there is no sin), and the Gospel of John (8:46, “Which of you convicts me of sin?”).

And yet, at the same time, there is plenty of evidence that shows ...

To see the rest of this post, you’ll need to be either to be sinless or a member of the blog. Or both. Joining is actually the easier option. And won’t cost much. That’s what I’d suggest.

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