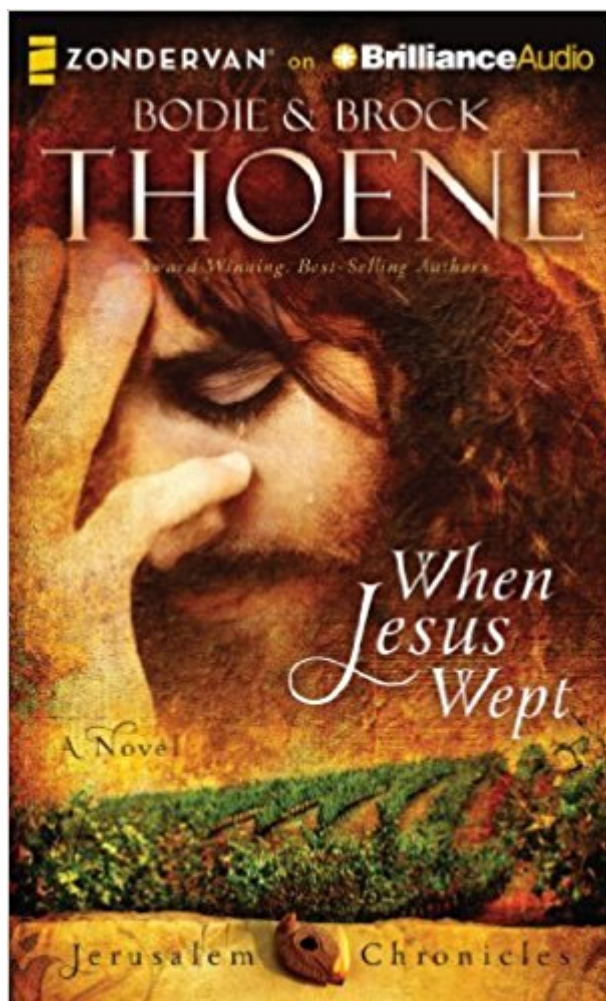


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# When Jesus Wept (Jerusalem Chronicles)



## Synopsis

âœPage-turningâ | Set against the political and religious turmoil of the times, the Thoenesâ™ story vividly reimagines the evolving friendship between Jesus and Lazarus.â • â”Publishers WeeklyLazarusâ”the man Jesus raised from the dead in one of the most extraordinary encounters with The Living Savior in all of Scripture. But the life of Lazarus holds interest well beyond this miraculous event. Living in Bethany, near Jerusalem, Lazarus witnessed many of the most important events of Jesusâ™s life and ministry.Lazarus owned a vineyard and devoted his life to caring for its vines and fruit. But he encountered another manâ”Jesusâ”whose vineyard was the world, its fruit the eternal souls of men. When Lazarusâ™s story and the story of Jesusâ™s crucifixion and resurrection touch in When Jesus Wept, we are offered a unique vision into the power and comfort of Christâ™s love.Brock and Bodie Thoenesâ™s most powerful and climactic writing project to date, When Jesus Wept, captures the power and the passion of the men and women who lived through the most important days in the history of the world.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Bodie and Brock Thoenes are bestselling authors of over sixty-five works of historical fiction. Their timeless classics have sold more than thirty-five million copies and won eight ECPA Gold Medallion Awards.Bodie and Brock Thoenes are bestselling authors of over sixty-five works of historical fiction. Their timeless classics have sold more than thirty-five million copies and won eight ECPA Gold Medallion Awards.

I had never read a Thoene book prior to reading *When Jesus Wept*. I feel that should be some big confession since the husband and wife writing team have written over 60 novels. I can't exactly explain why I'd never read any, but I can say that I was intrigued by the description of their newest work. I missed the opportunity to receive a copy to review when it first came out, so I took advantage of a Kindle deal. The story of Lazarus being raised from the dead appears only in the Gospel of John. Although it is extensive, we know little about the man himself. We know he had two sisters - Mary and Martha - but did not appear to be married. Because he was buried in a cave, scholars have concluded he and his sisters were wealthy. We also know that after Lazarus was returned to life, the Temple Council wanted him dead. They feared what this walking proof of Jesus's power could mean for them, their riches, and their status in society. The Bible, however, is short on other details. The Gospel writer focused on the miracle and not the man. The Thoenes, therefore, have imagined a backstory and a life for this dear friend of the Lord. As a novel, *When Jesus Wept* is excellent. It's beautifully written and incredibly detailed. Granted, at times it does read like a manual for vineyard owners. We get paragraphs on pruning, and yes I get the allegory which is the only reason I didn't skim those parts. We get to understand what it must have been like living under Roman rule, where the slightest thing could get you enslaved or executed. The first person scenes of Lazarus in heaven are written without sounding like a science fiction cliché. While reading about the Palm Sunday entrance into Jerusalem, I could feel the excitement and the power mixed with the undercurrent of fear that Lazarus felt. But then, it stops. There's this amazing build-up, along with the sadness Jesus and Lazarus have over the knowledge that some of the Jewish people will never accept Jesus as Messiah. I knew I was near the end, but when I pushed the little button to turn the electronic page I didn't expect to get the Notes section! Where's the Passover meal, the arrest, the trial, the crucifixion and the resurrection? And that's where this novel falls short. Because I've read the New Testament, I knew there were more events after the parade arrives in Jerusalem. The publisher's write-up also includes the crucifixion and resurrection. So where are those events? There are other Biblical elements as well that I found problematic. Our Lazarus is given the full name of David ben Lazarus. I'd always presumed Lazarus to be a first name; after all, I don't think there were many who were given a last name in the Gospels, and if they were, they weren't known by it. Consequently, I thought at first I was reading from the point of view of Lazarus's son! Then there's the convenience of Lazarus being at so many of the important events that took place during Jesus's three year ministry. He sees Jesus being baptized, the turning of water into wine, the feeding of the 5000, Jesus walking on water, and so forth. My biggest

disappointment, however, is the portrayal of Lazarus's sister, Mary. The writers have combined her with Mary of Magdala, and then presumed she's the same woman who was accused of adultery. Even if you accept that she is Mary of Magdala, there is no mention of immorality when that woman is introduced. Instead, it is written that she had been freed from seven demons that resided in her (Luke 8:2). There is no mention of demons in *When Jesus Wept*. As a result, I had difficulty in reading and accepting this character. It's a shame I had problems with these elements because otherwise I might have given it a perfect review. Interestingly, *When Jesus Wept* is listed as being a book of The Jerusalem Chronicles. I presume this means it is the first of a series, but I can find no information regarding a follow-up.

I've never read a book by the Thoene's before. Quite honestly, I've never even known how to pronounce their last name. (It's pronounced "TAY-nee" by the way.) I've always thought the Thoene's wrote Amish, sappy, girly novels (according to the cover designs), so I never even picked one up off any bookstore shelf. The title of the book, "*When Jesus Wept*" sounded intriguing, so I figured it was a perfect chance to read one for free. Am I ever glad I did!

**HISTORICAL FICTION:** As I read just the first few chapters of this historical fiction novel loosely based on the life of David ben Lazarus (aka Lazarus), I turned to the back pages and read about the Thoene's. Apparently, they have a number of historical fiction novels and series that are anything but sappy sounding. "*When Jesus Wept*" is the story of Lazarus, and it is narrated in first-person by Lazarus himself. It's as if he were narrating to you his life story at the dinner table. It was rather interesting, because the story takes the reader into the life of Lazarus as he meets a new man on the scene, Jesus. Jesus and his teachings seem to be having profound influence on the people and the religious authorities of the region. And what impact it has on Lazarus, his family, and his livelihood have relevance to any reader today. As Lazarus told his story, the teachings and life of Jesus inter-twined that of Lazarus's everyday life. Familiar stories were made more personal -- like the crippled beggar at Solomon's Portico (who was young and given a name) and the cripple at the pool of Siloam (who was a man who once defrauded Lazarus's father, and whom Lazarus forgave), etc. Although the stories' details are not necessarily biblical, the fiction aspects provide the reader with a little more personality and imagination in the biblical narratives.

**ONE PROBLEM:** I had only one issue with the book. On page 269, Lazarus is engaged in a conversation with a certain loved one in heaven (before he was raised from the dead by Jesus). I will not mention who it is, but this person, when referring to heaven, says, "I was not sorry to return home...here." This troubled me theologically because, after all, a return implies a person or thing was once somewhere, went somewhere else, and then went back to the

original place. Return. And there is one particular cult that suggests humans existed as spiritual beings before their physical birth. After physical death, then, they return to their creator in heaven. Thankfully, they did not suggest in the novel that the particular loved one became a god. This particular view is NOT one that is taught in the pages of the Bible. However, I searched in efforts to find out if the Thoene's had theological views other than Biblical Christianity. Since I could not find anything that either confirmed or denied my question, I relegated it to the possibility that the authors made a poor word choice in this particular conversation. THE END: I was a little disappointed with the ending of "When Jesus Wept". It wasn't bad; just not what I had expected. However, it certainly left the door open for a second book in "The Jerusalem Chronicles". RATING: Overall, I give "When Jesus Wept" 4 1/2 stars. I loved it, to be completely honest. Bodie's writing style is unique and highly descriptive, and I found myself clinging to her word usage, and Brock's historical research made the story even more believable. Disclaimer: I received this book free of charge from Booksneeze (Thomas Nelson Publishers) in exchange for my unbiased review of. All opinions are mine. I was not threatened or coerced to provide a positive review.

I own every one of the Thoene books and had never noticed any discrepancies with the Biblical descriptions of events until this book. I know it is not meant to replicate the Bible but a couple of events were re-arranged to fit the story and I was so surprised since that never had happened before that it colored my reading of this edition.

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