

THE
WORLD
OF THE NEW
TESTAMENT

CULTURAL, SOCIAL,
AND HISTORICAL CONTEXTS

JOEL B. GREEN
LEE MARTIN MCDONALD
EDITORS

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Abbreviations

General

AD	<i>anno Domini</i> , year of the Lord	i.e.	<i>id est</i> , that is
ANE	ancient Near East(ern)	KJV	King James Version
b.	ben	km	kilometer(s)
BC	before Christ	LXX	Septuagint
BCE	before the Common Era	m	meter(s)
ca.	<i>circa</i> , approximately	MT	Masoretic Text
CE	Common Era	NIV	New International Version
CEB	Common English Bible	NJPS	<i>Tanakh: The New Jewish Publication Society Translation</i>
cf.	<i>confer</i> , compare	NKJV	New King James Version
chap(s).	chapter(s)	NRSV	New Revised Standard Version
d.	died	NT	New Testament
DSS	Dead Sea Scrolls	OT	Old Testament
ed(s).	edited by, editors, <i>or</i> edition	par.	and parallel(s)
e.g.	<i>exempli gratia</i> , for example	pl.	plural
esp.	especially	R.	Rabbi
ESV	English Standard Version	rev.	revised
ET	English Translation	RSV	Revised Standard Version
et al.	<i>et alii</i> , and others	sg.	singular
etc.	<i>et cetera</i> , and the rest	trans.	translator, translated by
fl.	flourished	v(v).	verse(s)
frg(s).	fragment(s)	vol(s).	volume(s)
HB	Hebrew Bible		

Contemporary Literature

A1CS	The Book of Acts in Its First Century Setting	ABRL	Anchor Bible Reference Library
AB	Anchor Bible	AGJU	Arbeiten zur Geschichte des antiken Judentums und des Urchristentums
ABD	<i>Anchor Bible Dictionary</i> . Edited by David Noel Freedman. 6 vols. New York: Doubleday, 1992.	AJEC	Ancient Judaism and Early Christianity

ANF	<i>Ante-Nicene Fathers</i> . Edited by Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson. 10 vols. 1885–87. Repr., Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1978.	DLNTD	<i>Dictionary of the Later New Testament and Its Developments</i> . Edited by Ralph P. Martin and Peter H. Davids. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1997.
ANRW	<i>Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt: Geschichte und Kultur Roms im Spiegel der neueren Forschung</i> . Edited by H. Temporini and W. Haase. Berlin: de Gruyter, 1972–.	DNTB	<i>Dictionary of New Testament Background</i> . Edited by Craig A. Evans and Stanley E. Porter. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2000.
BA	<i>Biblical Archaeologist</i>	DSE	<i>Dictionary of Scripture and Ethics</i> . Edited by Joel B. Green. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2011.
BBR	<i>Bulletin of Biblical Research</i>	EDEJ	<i>Eerdmans Dictionary of Early Judaism</i> . Edited by John J. Collins and Daniel C. Harlow. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010.
BCH	<i>Bulletin de correspondance hellénique</i>	EDSS	<i>Encyclopedia of the Dead Sea Scrolls</i> . Edited by Lawrence H. Schiffman and James C. VanderKam. 2 vols. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000.
BibSem	Biblical Seminar	EEC	<i>Encyclopedia of Early Christianity</i> . Edited by Everett Ferguson, Michael P. McHugh, and Frederick W. Norris. 2nd ed. 2 vols. New York: Garland, 1999.
BIS	Biblical Interpretation Series	ExpTim	<i>Expository Times</i>
BR	<i>Biblical Research</i>	GBS	Guides to Biblical Scholarship
BRev	<i>Bible Review</i>	GNS	Good News Studies
BThS	Biblich-Theologische Studien	GRBS	<i>Greek, Roman, and Byzantine Studies</i>
BZAW	Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft	HBD	<i>Harper's Bible Dictionary</i> . Edited by Paul Achtemeier. New York: Harper & Row, 1985.
BZNW	Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft	HeyJ	<i>Heythrop Journal</i>
CBQ	<i>Catholic Biblical Quarterly</i>	HSM	Harvard Semitic Monographs
CBR	<i>Currents in Biblical Research</i>	HTR	<i>Harvard Theological Review</i>
CIG	<i>Corpus inscriptionum graecarum</i>	HTS	Harvard Theological Studies
CIJ	<i>Corpus inscriptionum judaicarum</i>	HUT	Hermeneutische Untersuchungen zur Theologie
CIL	<i>Corpus inscriptionum latinarum</i>	ICC	International Critical Commentary
CIS	<i>Corpus inscriptionum semiticarum</i>		
CJ	<i>Classical Journal</i>		
ConBNT	Coniectanea biblica: New Testament Series		
CPJ	<i>Corpus papyrorum judaicorum</i> . Edited by V. Tcherikover. 3 vols. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press for Magnes Press, 1957–64.		
CRINT	Compendia rerum iudaicarum ad Novum Testamentum		
DJD	Discoveries in the Judaean Desert		

<i>IDBSup</i>	<i>Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible: Supplementary Volume.</i> Edited by Keith Crim. Nashville: Abingdon, 1976.	<i>JTS</i>	<i>Journal of Theological Studies</i>
		LCL	Loeb Classical Library
		LDSS	Library of the Dead Sea Scrolls
<i>ILLRP</i>	<i>Inscriptiones Latinae Liberae rei publicae.</i> By Attilio Degrassi. 2 vols. Florence: La Nuova Italia, 1957–63.	LEC	Library of Early Christianity
		LNTS	Library of New Testament Studies
<i>ILS</i>	<i>Inscriptiones Latinae Selectae.</i> Edited by Hermann Dessau. 3 vols. Berlin: Weidmann, 1892–1916.	LSAM	<i>Lois sacrées de l'Asie Mineure.</i> Edited by F. Sokolowski. Paris: de Boccard, 1955.
		LSTS	Library of Second Temple Studies
<i>ISBE</i>	<i>The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia.</i> Edited by Geoffrey W. Bromiley. Rev. ed. 4 vols. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1979–88.	MNTS	McMaster New Testament Studies
		NA ²⁷	<i>Nestle-Aland: Novum Testamentum Graece.</i> Edited by Barbara Aland and Kurt Aland et al. 27th rev. ed. Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1993.
<i>JAAR</i>	<i>Journal of the American Academy of Religion</i>		
<i>JBL</i>	<i>Journal of Biblical Literature</i>	NEAEHL	<i>New Encyclopedia of Archaeological Excavations in the Holy Land.</i> Edited by Ephraim Stern et al. 5 vols. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1993–.
<i>JBQ</i>	<i>Jewish Bible Quarterly</i>		
<i>JNES</i>	<i>Journal of Near Eastern Studies</i>		
<i>JQR</i>	<i>Jewish Quarterly Review</i>		
<i>JR</i>	<i>Journal of Religion</i>		
<i>JRitSt</i>	<i>Journal of Ritual Studies</i>	NIDB	<i>New Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible.</i> Edited by Katharine Doob Sakenfeld. 5 vols. Nashville: Abingdon, 2009.
<i>JRS</i>	<i>Journal of Roman Studies</i>		
<i>JSJ</i>	<i>Journal for the Study of Judaism in the Persian, Hellenistic, and Roman Periods</i>	NIGTC	New International Greek Testament Commentary
		<i>NovT</i>	<i>Novum Testamentum</i>
<i>JSJSup</i>	Journal for the Study of Judaism in the Persian, Hellenistic, and Roman Periods: Supplement Series	NovTSup	Supplements to Novum Testamentum
		NPNF ¹	<i>The Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers</i> , series 1. Edited by Philip Schaff. 14 vols. 1887–1900. Repr., Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1956.
<i>JSNT</i>	<i>Journal for the Study of the New Testament</i>		
<i>JSNTSup</i>	Journal for the Study of the New Testament: Supplement Series	NPNF ²	<i>The Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers</i> , series 2. Edited by Philip Schaff and Henry Wace. 14 vols. 1890–1900. Repr., Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1952.
<i>JSOT</i>	<i>Journal for the Study of the Old Testament</i>		
<i>JSOTSup</i>	Journal for the Study of the Old Testament: Supplement Series		
<i>JSPSup</i>	Journal for the Study of the Pseudepigrapha: Supplement Series	NTL	New Testament Library
		NTOA	Novum Testamentum et Orbis Antiquus
<i>JSPub</i>	Judea and Samaria Publications		

NTS	<i>New Testament Studies</i>	SIG	<i>Sylloge inscriptionum graecarum</i> . Edited by W. Dittenberger. 3rd ed. 4 vols. Leipzig: Hirzel, 1915–24.
NTTS	New Testament Tools and Studies	SJLA	Studies in Judaism in Late Antiquity
OCM	Oxford Classical Monographs	SNTSMS	Society for New Testament Studies Monograph Series
OGIS	<i>Orientis graeci inscriptiones selectae</i> . Edited by W. Dittenberger. 2 vols. Leipzig: Hirzel, 1903–5.	StPB	Studia post-biblica
OTP	<i>Old Testament Pseudepigrapha</i> . Edited by James H. Charlesworth. 2 vols. Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1983–85.	StudOr	<i>Studia orientalia</i>
PAST	Pauline Studies	SUNT	Studien zur Umwelt des Neuen Testaments
PNTC	Pillar New Testament Commentary	SVF	<i>Stoicorum veterum fragmenta</i> . Edited by H. von Arnim. 4 vols. Leipzig: Teubner, 1903–24.
PTSDSSP	Princeton Theological Seminary Dead Sea Scrolls Project	TENTS	Texts and Editions for New Testament Study
RB	<i>Revue biblique</i>	TLNT	<i>Theological Lexicon of the New Testament</i> . By Celsus Spicq. 3 vols. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1994.
RVV	Religionsgeschichtliche Versuche und Vorarbeiten	TSAJ	Texte und Studien zum antiken Judentum
SA	Series of Antiquity	TynBul	<i>Tyndale Bulletin</i>
SAC	Studies in Antiquity and Christianity	UCOP	University of Cambridge Oriental Publications
SBEC	Studies in the Bible and Early Christianity	VC	<i>Vigiliae christianae</i>
SBLABS	Society of Biblical Literature Archaeology and Biblical Studies	VCSup	Supplements to <i>Vigiliae christianae</i>
SBLBMI	Society of Biblical Literature The Bible and Its Modern Interpreters	VEcc	<i>Verbum et ecclesia</i>
SBLDS	Society of Biblical Literature Dissertation Series	VT	<i>Vetus Testamentum</i>
SBL SBS	Society of Biblical Literature Sources for Biblical Study	VTSup	Supplements to <i>Vetus Testamentum</i>
SBLSCS	Society of Biblical Literature Septuagint and Cognate Studies Series	WBC	Word Biblical Commentary
SDSSRL	Studies in the Dead Sea Scrolls and Related Literature	WF	Wege der Forschung
SEJC	Studies in Early Judaism and Christianity	WMANT	Wissenschaftliche Monographien zum Alten und Neuen Testament
SI	<i>Scripture and Interpretation</i>	WTJ	<i>Westminster Theological Journal</i>
		WUNT	Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament

Hebrew Bible/Old Testament

Gen.	Genesis	Exod.	Exodus
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Lev.	Leviticus	Isa.	Isaiah
Num.	Numbers	Jer.	Jeremiah
Deut.	Deuteronomy	Lam.	Lamentations
Josh.	Joshua	Ezek.	Ezekiel
Judg.	Judges	Dan.	Daniel
Ruth	Ruth	Hosea	Hosea
1–2 Sam.	1–2 Samuel	Joel	Joel
1–2 Kings	1–2 Kings	Amos	Amos
1–2 Chron.	1–2 Chronicles	Obad.	Obadiah
Ezra	Ezra	Jon.	Jonah
Neh.	Nehemiah	Mic.	Micah
Esther	Esther	Nah.	Nahum
Job	Job	Hab.	Habakkuk
Ps(s).	Psalms	Zeph.	Zephaniah
Prov.	Proverbs	Hag.	Haggai
Eccles.	Ecclesiastes	Zech.	Zechariah
Song	Song of Songs	Mal.	Malachi

Old Testament Apocrypha/Deuterocanonical Books

Add. Esth.	Additions to Esther	Pr. Azar.	Prayer of Azariah
Bar.	Baruch	Pr. Man.	Prayer of Manasseh
Bel	Bel and the Dragon	Sir.	Sirach (Ecclesiasticus, or Ben Sira)
1–2 Esd.	1–2 Esdras		
Jdt.	Judith	Sus.	Susanna
Let. Jer.	Letter of Jeremiah	Tob.	Tobit
1–4 Macc.	1–4 Maccabees	Wis.	Wisdom of Solomon

New Testament

Matt.	Matthew	1–2 Thess.	1–2 Thessalonians
Mark	Mark	1–2 Tim.	1–2 Timothy
Luke	Luke	Titus	Titus
John	John	Philem.	Philemon
Acts	Acts	Heb.	Hebrews
Rom.	Romans	James	James
1–2 Cor.	1–2 Corinthians	1–2 Pet.	1–2 Peter
Gal.	Galatians	1–3 John	1–3 John
Eph.	Ephesians	Jude	Jude
Phil.	Philippians	Rev.	Revelation
Col.	Colossians		

Old Testament Pseudepigrapha

<i>Apoc. Zeph.</i>	<i>Apocalypse of Zephaniah</i>	<i>Jos. Asen.</i>	<i>Joseph and Aseneth</i>
<i>2 Bar.</i>	<i>2 Baruch (Syriac Apocalypse)</i>	<i>Jub.</i>	<i>Jubilees</i>
<i>1 En.</i>	<i>1 Enoch</i>	<i>L.A.B.</i>	<i>Liber antiquitatum biblicarum (Pseudo-Philo)</i>

<i>Let. Aris.</i>	<i>Letter of Aristeas</i>	<i>Sib. Or.</i>	<i>Sibylline Oracles</i>
<i>Mart. Isa.</i>	<i>Martyrdom of Isaiah</i>	<i>T. Mos.</i>	<i>Testament of Moses</i>
<i>Pss. Sol.</i>	<i>Psalms of Solomon</i>		

New Testament Apocrypha/Pseudepigrapha

<i>Acts Paul Thec.</i>	<i>Acts of Paul and Thecla</i>	<i>Gos. Pet.</i>	<i>Gospel of Peter</i>
<i>Gos. Jud.</i>	<i>Gospel of Judas</i>	<i>Gos. Thom.</i>	<i>Gospel of Thomas</i>

Apostolic Fathers

<i>Barn.</i>	<i>Epistle of Barnabas</i>	<i>Ign. Eph.</i>	<i>Ignatius, To the Ephesians</i>
<i>1–2 Clem.</i>	<i>1–2 Clement</i>	<i>Ign. Magn.</i>	<i>Ignatius, To the Magnesians</i>
<i>Did.</i>	<i>Didache</i>	<i>Mart. Pol.</i>	<i>Martyrdom of Polycarp</i>
<i>Diogn.</i>	<i>Epistle to Diognetus</i>	<i>Pol. Phil</i>	<i>Polycarp, To the Philippians</i>
<i>Herm. Mand.</i>	<i>Shepherd of Hermas, Mandate</i>		

Other Early Christian Writers

Augustine		Jerome	
<i>Civ.</i>	<i>De civitate Dei (The City of God)</i>	<i>Comm. Isa.</i>	<i>Commentary on Isaiah</i>
<i>Conf.</i>	<i>Confessions</i>	<i>Epist.</i>	<i>Epistulae (Letters)</i>
<i>Doctr. chr.</i>	<i>De doctrina christiana (On Christian Doctrine)</i>	Justin Martyr	
		<i>Dial.</i>	<i>Dialogue with Trypho</i>
Clement of Alexandria		Origen	
<i>Strom.</i>	<i>Stromata (Miscellanies)</i>	<i>Cels.</i>	<i>Contra Celsum (Against Celsus)</i>
Epiphanius		<i>Comm. Cant.</i>	<i>Commentary on Canticles (Song of Songs)</i>
<i>Pan.</i>	<i>Panarion (Refutation of All Heresies)</i>	<i>Comm. Matt.</i>	<i>Commentary on Matthew</i>
Eusebius		<i>Ep. Afr.</i>	<i>Epistle to Julius Africanus</i>
<i>Eccl. Hist.</i>	<i>Ecclesiastical History</i>	<i>Hom. Lev.</i>	<i>Homily on Leviticus</i>
		<i>Princ.</i>	<i>On First Principles</i>
Hippolytus		Tertullian	
<i>Haer.</i>	<i>Refutatio omnium haeresium (Refutation of All Heresies)</i>	<i>Apparel</i>	<i>On the Apparel of Women</i>
		<i>Idolatri</i>	<i>On Idolatry</i>
		<i>Pat.</i>	<i>On Patience</i>
		<i>Prescript.</i>	<i>On Prescription against Heretics</i>
Irenaeus			
<i>Adv. haer.</i>	<i>Adversus haereses (Against Heresies)</i>		

Targum

<i>Tg. Ps.-J.</i>	<i>Pseudo-Jonathan</i>
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Papyri

P.Egerton	Egerton Papyri	P.Par.	Paris Papyri
P.Lond. Inv.	London Papyri	P.Vindob.	Papyrus Vindobonensis
P.Mich.	Michigan Papyri	P.Zen.	Zenon Papyri
P.Oxy.	Oxyrhynchus Papyri		

Dead Sea Scrolls and Related Texts

CD	Cairo Genizah copy of the <i>Damascus Document</i>	4QFlor	<i>Florilegium</i> , from Qumran Cave 4
1QGenAp	<i>Genesis Apocryphon</i> , from Qumran Cave 1	4QMMT	<i>Halakic Letter</i> , from Qumran Cave 4
1QH ^a	<i>Thanksgiving Hymns</i> , copy a, from Qumran Cave 1	4QNum ^b	Numbers, copy b, from Qumran Cave 4
1QM	<i>War Scroll</i> , from Qumran Cave 1	4QpaleoExod ^m	Paleo-Hebrew Exodus, copy m, from Qumran Cave 4
1QpHab	<i>Pesher on Habakkuk</i> , from Qumran Cave 1	4QpNah	<i>Pesher on Nahum</i> , from Qumran Cave 4
1QS	<i>Rule of the Community</i> , or <i>Manual of Discipline</i> , from Qumran Cave 1	4QpPs ^a	<i>Pesher on the Psalms</i> , copy a, from Qumran Cave 4
1QSa	<i>Rule of the Congregation</i> , from Qumran Cave 1	4QTest	<i>Testimonia</i> , from Qumran Cave 4
4QDeut ^b	Deuteronomy, copy h, from Qumran Cave 4	11QT ^a	<i>Temple Scroll</i> , copy a, from Qumran Cave 11

Rabbinic Literature

'Abod. Zar.	'Abodah Zarah	Nid.	Niddah
'Abot R. Nat. b.	'Abot de Rabbi Nathan Babylonian Talmud	Pesaḥ.	Pesaḥim
B. Bat.	Baba Batra	Qidd.	Qidduṣin
Ber.	Berakot	Rab.	Rabbah (+ biblical book)
'Ed.	'Eduyyot	Roš Haš.	Roš Haššanah
'Erub.	'Erubin	Šabb.	Šabbat
Giṭ.	Giṭṭin	Sanh.	Sanhedrin
Ḥag.	Ḥagigah	Šeqal.	Šeqalim
Ketub.	Ketubbot	t.	Tosefta
Kipp. m.	(see Yoma) Mishnah	Ta'an.	Ta'anit
Ma'as. Š.	Ma'aser Šeni	Ter.	Terumot
Meg.	Megillah	y.	Jerusalem (Palestinian) Talmud
Menaḥ.	Menaḥot	Yad.	Yadayim
Miqw.	Miqwa'ot	Yoma	Yoma (= Kippurim)
Naz.	Nazir	Zebaḥ.	Zebaḥim

Other Ancient Authors and Writings

<i>Aelius Aristides</i>	<i>Font.</i>	<i>Pro Fonteio (In Defense of Fonteius)</i>
<i>Her. Heracles</i>	<i>Pis.</i>	<i>In Pisonem (Against Piso)</i>
<i>Aeschines</i>	<i>Prov. cons.</i>	<i>De provinciis consularibus (On the Consular Provinces)</i>
<i>Ctes. In Ctesiphonem (Against Ctesiphon)</i>	<i>Q. Fr.</i>	<i>Epistulae ad Quintum fratrem (Letters to His Brother Quintus)</i>
<i>Alciphron</i>	<i>Sest.</i>	<i>Pro Sestio (In Defense of Sestius)</i>
<i>Ep. Epistulae (Letters)</i>	<i>Tusc.</i>	<i>Tusculanae disputationes (Tusculan Disputations)</i>
<i>Apollodorus</i>	<i>Verr.</i>	<i>In Verrem (The Verrine Orations)</i>
<i>Lib. The Library</i>		
<i>Appian</i>		
<i>Syr. Syrian Wars</i>		
<i>Apuleius</i>		
<i>Apol. Apology</i>		
<i>Metam. Metamorphoses (The Golden Ass)</i>		
<i>Aristotle</i>		
<i>Ath. pol. Athēnaiōn politeia (Constitution of Athens)</i>		
<i>Eth. nic. Ethica nicomachea (Nicomachean Ethics)</i>		
<i>Metaph. Metaphysics</i>		
<i>Pol. Politics</i>		
<i>Virt. vit. De virtutibus et vitiis (On Virtues and Vices)</i>		
<i>Cicero</i>		
<i>Agr. De lege agraria (On the Agrarian Law)</i>		
<i>Att. Epistulae ad Atticum (Letters to Atticus)</i>		
<i>Br. Epistulae ad Brutum (Letters to Brutus)</i>		
<i>Cat. Cato maior de senectute (Cato the Elder on Old Age)</i>		
<i>Fam. Epistulae ad Familiares (Letters to His Friends)</i>		
<i>Flac. Pro Flacco (In Defense of Flaccus)</i>		
		<i>Dio Cassius</i>
	<i>Hist.</i>	<i>Roman History</i>
		<i>Dio Chrysostom</i>
	<i>Or.</i>	<i>Oration(s)</i>
		<i>Diodorus Siculus</i>
	<i>Lib. Hist.</i>	<i>The Library of History</i>
		<i>Diogenes Laertius</i>
	<i>Lives</i>	<i>Lives of Eminent Philosophers</i>
		<i>Dionysius (of Halicarnassus)</i>
	<i>Ant. rom.</i>	<i>Antiquitates romanae (Roman Antiquities)</i>
		<i>Epictetus</i>
	<i>Diatr.</i>	<i>Diatribai (Discourses)</i>
		<i>Gaius</i>
	<i>Inst.</i>	<i>Institutes</i>
		<i>Herodotus</i>
	<i>Hist.</i>	<i>History</i>
		<i>Horace</i>
	<i>Sat.</i>	<i>Satires</i>
		<i>Iamblichus</i>
	<i>Vit. pyth.</i>	<i>De vita pythagorica (On the Pythagorean Life)</i>

Josephus		Mos.	<i>De vita Mosis (On the Life of Moses)</i>
Ag. Ap.	<i>Against Apion</i>	Praem.	<i>De praemiis et poenis (On Rewards and Punishments)</i>
Ant.	<i>Jewish Antiquities</i>	Prob.	<i>Quod omnis probus liber sit (That Every Good Person Is Free)</i>
J.W.	<i>Jewish War</i>	Somn.	<i>De somniis (On Dreams)</i>
Life	<i>The Life</i>	Spec.	<i>De specialibus legibus (On the Special Laws)</i>
Julian		Virt.	<i>De virtutibus (On the Virtues)</i>
Or.	<i>Orationes</i>	Philostratus	
Juvenal		Vit. Apol.	<i>Vita Apollonii (Life of Apollonius of Tyana)</i>
Sat.	<i>Satires</i>	Plato	
Livy		Apol.	<i>Apology</i>
Hist.	<i>Roman History</i>	Leg.	<i>Leges (Laws)</i>
Lucian		Parm.	<i>Parmenides</i>
Icar.	<i>Icaromenippus</i>	Phedr.	<i>Phedrus</i>
Ovid		Prot.	<i>Protagoras</i>
Fast.	<i>Fasti (The Festivals)</i>	Rep.	<i>The Republic</i>
Pausanias		Pliny the Elder	
Descr.	<i>Description of Greece</i>	Nat. Hist.	<i>Natural History</i>
Petronius		Pliny the Younger	
Sat.	<i>Satyricon</i>	Ep.	<i>Epistulae (Letters)</i>
Philo		Plutarch	
Abr.	<i>De Abrahamo (On the Life of Abraham)</i>	Alex.	<i>Alexander</i>
Cher.	<i>De cherubim (On the Cherubim)</i>	Ant.	<i>Antony</i>
Conf.	<i>De confusione linguarum (On the Confusion of Tongues)</i>	Arist.	<i>Aristides</i>
Congr.	<i>De congressu eruditionis gratia (On the Preliminary Studies)</i>	Caes.	<i>Julius Caesar</i>
Contempl.	<i>De vita contemplativa (On the Contemplative Life)</i>	Conj. praec.	<i>Conjugalium praecepta (Advice to the Bride and Groom)</i>
Flacc.	<i>In Flaccum (Against Flaccus)</i>	Flam.	<i>Titus Flamininus</i>
Hypoth.	<i>Hypothetica</i>	Mor.	<i>Moralia (Morals)</i>
Leg.	<i>Legum allegoriae (Allegorical Interpretation)</i>	Stoic. rep.	<i>De Stoicorum repugnantiis (On Stoic Self-Contradictions)</i>
Legat.	<i>Legatio ad Gaium (On the Embassy to Gaius)</i>	Sull.	<i>Sulla</i>
Migr.	<i>De migratione Abrahami (On the Migration of Abraham)</i>	Polybius	
		Hist.	<i>Histories</i>

Pseudo-Diogenes		Suetonius	
Ep.	<i>Epistulae (Letters)</i>	Aug.	<i>Augustus</i>
Ptolemy		Cal.	<i>Caligula</i>
Geogr.	<i>Geography</i>	Claud.	<i>Claudius</i>
Quintilian		Vesp.	<i>Vespasian</i>
Inst.	<i>Institutio oratoria (The Orator's Education)</i>	Tacitus	
Seneca		Ann.	<i>Annals</i>
Dial.	<i>Dialogues</i>	Hist.	<i>Histories</i>
Epist. mor.	<i>Epistulae morales (Moral Letters)</i>	Valerius Maximus	
Sextus Empiricus		Fact. dict. mem.	<i>Factorum et dictorum memorabilium (Memorable Deeds and Sayings)</i>
Pyr.	<i>Outlines of Pyrrhonism</i>	Virgil	
Soranus		Aen.	<i>Aeneid</i>
Gyn.	<i>Gynecology</i>	Xenophon	
Stobaeus		Cyr.	<i>Cyropaedia (The Education of Cyrus)</i>
Flor.	<i>Florilegium (Anthology)</i>	Mem.	<i>Memorabilia</i>
Strabo			
Geogr.	<i>Geography</i>		
Anonymous Ancient Works			
Dig.	<i>Digesta (Digests)</i>		

1

Introduction

JOEL B. GREEN AND LEE MARTIN MCDONALD

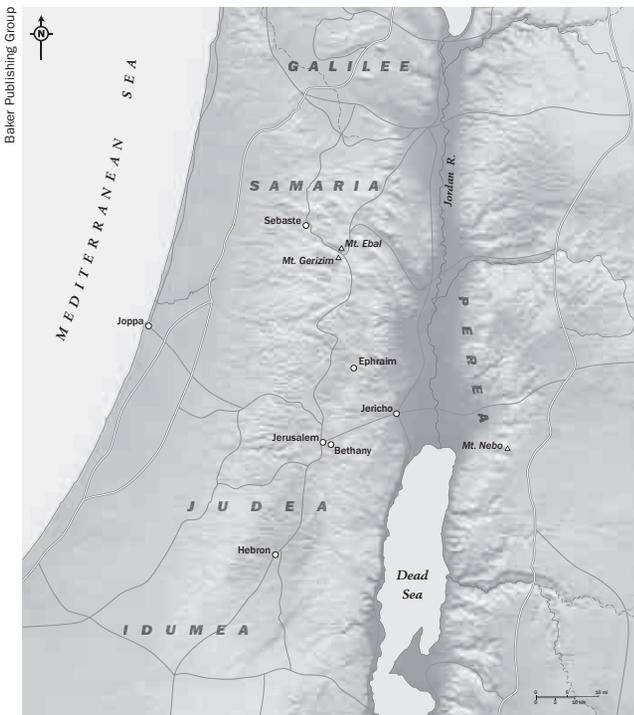
One of the characteristics of the Jewish and Christian Scriptures is that they are eminently translatable. A quick survey of the available English translations of the Bible is enough to demonstrate this truism, but translation into English is only a relatively recent example of the phenomenon. The “Bible” (what Christians today call the “Old Testament”) for most of the earliest Christians and the writers of the New Testament (NT) books was a translation from Hebrew into Greek. Synagogues were the sites of ongoing translation of the Hebrew Scriptures into Aramaic, the vernacular of the day in Palestine. The NT documents, written in “common Greek,” were quickly translated into various Coptic dialects and into Latin. And on the story goes, with the result that today the Bible or portions of the Bible are available in more than two thousand of the world’s languages.

Although we celebrate the accessibility of the Scriptures in the language of the people, we cannot overlook the basic fact that it is far easier to translate words on a page than it is to capture the deeper sense of those words. Linguists have long been aware that most of what is communicated is not actually expressed in words but is assumed among those involved in the communicative act. The history Paul shared with the Corinthians, the cultural assumptions Luke shared with his audience, those experiences of imperial Rome shared between the author and addressees of the book of Revelation—such shared histories, assumptions, and experiences shape how these authors’ words and phrases might be heard. They thicken the significance of the words of parables or letters or homilies. Precisely

because these pools of assumptions could simply be taken for granted by Paul, Luke, and John, they therefore do not sit on top of the pages of our New Testament. This is true whether we are reading the NT in English, in Greek, or in some other language. We need more than the words on the page. We need to be oriented to the background assumed by people in the NT era. We need context.

Students taking university or seminary biblical courses will often hear their professors say that the key to understanding the Bible is its context. They quickly learn the mantra of formal biblical studies: “Context, context, context! Without a context, texts easily become little more than pretexts.” Although we need more than cultural, social, and historical context in order to attend well to the NT message, we certainly do not need less. Greater awareness of the context within which the NT books were written helps us better to hear its words and to interpret them with greater precision.

This volume provides the reader with a more informed understanding of the context within which the events described in the NT would have taken place and within which the NT books themselves were written. Describing the world in which we live today would be a complex business. It is no less so for the first-century world of the NT. This is not because the first-century Mediterranean world was so much more complicated than our own, but because the day-to-day world of



1.1. Israel at the time of Jesus.

Roman antiquity is so much less familiar to us. Too easily we mistake its thought forms for our own or imagine that people everywhere and at all times are like us. Holding Bibles written in our languages, we easily assume that our assumptions are shared by its writers, its first-century audiences. We forget that reading the pages of the NT is for everyone in the twenty-first century a cross-cultural experience. To attend to the NT, we need a better grasp of the first-century world of Peter and Paul, Priscilla and Phoebe, as well as of the years, movements, struggles, and literatures that gave the NT era its shape.

The articles of this book are gathered into five major sections, each of which will foster greater understanding of the NT world as well as open fresh opportunities for further research. These articles provide orientation to the issues they discuss and thus serve as important first steps for gaining essential information on the background of the NT. Annotated bibliographies at the close of each chapter direct readers to some of the best resources available on each topic and will enable them to continue their research in greater depth.

For example, students today quickly learn that it is important to know the Jewish context of early Christianity. After all, Jesus was a Jew, and his earliest followers were Jews. Most of the writers of the NT documents were Jewish. They were reared in Jewish cultures, which influenced how they thought, taught, and responded within their various circumstances. Until recently, it was common to speak of a “normative Judaism” in the first century, and thus to make pronouncements about “the Jews” of the NT era—what “they” believed, “their” hopes, “their” practices, and so on. This was the key for unlocking the mission and message of Jesus, Paul, and other NT figures, whose beliefs, hopes, and practices were often understood as counterpoints to the beliefs, hopes, and practices of “the Jews.” We now know that this approach was working with little more than a caricature, a cartoon picture of the Jewish people in the Second Temple period.¹ Plainly stated, there was no singular expression of Judaism in the time of Jesus—no more than we can speak generically of “Christian beliefs in the US at the turn of the twenty-first century.” (Which Christians? Rich or poor? Old or young? Mainline or emerging? Socially progressive or conservative? Whose definition?) Although Jews shared some common characteristics, such as the practice of circumcision and Sabbath observance, they could differ, sometimes widely, on other issues, such as messianic expectation, perspectives on life after death, which religious writings were acknowledged as sacred Scripture, and precisely how to keep Torah. By filling in our understanding of the Jewish people during the NT era, we find a more complex picture than was often assumed in earlier days, and we find more continuity than we might have anticipated between these various expressions of Judaism and the beliefs and practices of the early Jesus movement. Indeed, in one of the essays that follows, we read that some twenty expressions of Judaism can be traced in the time of Jesus.

1. See the glossary for definitions of “Second Temple period” and a number of other words and phrases used in NT study.

Similarly, numerous and varied Jewish books and resources informed elements of early Christianity. These include the books that compose the Old Testament (OT), but also many of the so-called apocryphal and pseudepigraphic writings that were written before, during, and after the time of Jesus. Those who want to know more about the social and religious context of the NT and early Christianity should also familiarize themselves with the many books of Philo from Alexandria, Egypt (who was roughly a contemporary of Jesus), and the historical writings of Josephus, from the last quarter of the first century. It is also important to have a sense of the writings preserved by one of the Jewish sects that thrived before AD 70, namely, the Essenes—some of whom would have been contemporaries with Jesus—who produced many of the Dead Sea Scrolls (DSS) and preserved numerous other Jewish religious texts they welcomed into their community. Since this collection of writings was written and copied just prior to the time of Jesus, their importance for understanding the world and literature of the NT is obvious.

What of those Jews who survived the war with Rome and the destruction of Jerusalem and its sacred temple (AD 66–74), and who found ways to continue to express their faith in God and faithfulness to Torah? These Jews produced a wealth of literature that often, though not always, reflects traditions that both precede and are contemporary with the time of Jesus and the earliest Christians. Some of their writings reflect Jewish thinking one or more generations removed from the time of Jesus, but some of it is useful for understanding Jewish practices before and during the time of Jesus. The literature these pious Jews produced or collected and preserved from the second to the sixth centuries AD is known as the rabbinic tradition.

Following the destruction of the Jerusalem temple and the concomitant cessation of temple worship, some rabbis asked Rome for permission to gather at Jamnia (or Yavneh) to determine how a faith that was bound to the sacrificial system practiced in Jerusalem might continue after the temple's destruction. Over several centuries these rabbis collected and produced a large body of important literature that includes the Mishnah, the Tosefta, and the two Talmuds (or Talmudim). This literature must be read with discernment since it does not always reflect perspectives contemporary with NT times; nonetheless, it provides a wealth of material useful in interpreting various NT texts.

One of the more important advances in our study of the NT was the discovery that not only were a number of Jewish perspectives present in the land of Israel in the time of Jesus, but also Judaism itself did not exist in isolation from the dominant culture of its day. In fact, the various ways of being Jewish to which we have already called attention are a corollary of Greek and then Roman cultural influences. How is faithfulness to the God of Israel to be measured and lived in a world of Greek and Roman overlords and in the wake of pressing influences from Greek and then Greco-Roman education, religion, architecture, economics, and politics? Following the conquests of Alexander the Great in the late fourth century

BC, the Jewish people came under the control of the Greek (or Hellenistic) culture that influenced many of their learned leaders. And this influence continued right up to the time of Jesus and his followers.

And what of Jews living outside the land of Israel, that is, living in the Diaspora? Since the rabbinic tradition and its literature were produced only in Hebrew and Aramaic, Jews to the west, north, and south of Israel who spoke Greek and Latin were largely unaffected by that tradition until much later, in the eighth or ninth centuries AD. Jews living in the larger Mediterranean world read their Scriptures in the Greek translation of the Jewish Scriptures regularly called the Septuagint (LXX). This Greek translation of the books of the Hebrew Bible (HB), with certain other books composed in Greek, would constitute the Scriptures of the early churches. What was it like to navigate Jewish beliefs and faithful practices in a predominately gentile setting? What happened among Jews who could not assume that their neighbors shared their commitments to the one God of Israel or their commitments to Sabbath and purity?

Another example: after the Romans became the foremost power over the land of Israel in 63 BC, Hellenistic culture remained dominant; when traveling throughout the Mediterranean world, one could easily communicate effectively in the Greek language and encounter pervasive evidence of the influence of Hellenistic culture. Some NT writers show considerable familiarity with classical writers; moreover, some of the people and many of the events they mention are also found among the writings of Greek and Roman historians and poets. Some NT texts are set in sharper relief when read alongside the literature that originated in the worlds of Greece and Rome—their epics, histories, philosophies, religious beliefs and practices, and so on. Indeed, even on the relatively mundane level of dating events mentioned in the NT—such as the birth of Jesus and beginning of his ministry, aspects of Paul’s itinerant mission, and a number of other incidents mentioned in the Gospels and Acts—we would have little with which to work if we were unable to draw on Greco-Roman writings.

According to John’s Gospel, “the Word became flesh and made his home among us” (1:14 CEB). That is, even if the gospel it presents has a timeless appeal, the Christ to whom the NT bears witness was born on real soil found in a particular time and place. Paul, Aquila, and Priscilla had dirty hands from their work with leather (Acts 18:3). The Corinthians knew the smell of meat sacrificed to idols, and those Christ-followers to whom 1 Peter is addressed knew the real ache of scornful words tossed at them in the marketplace. On their every page, the NT writings bear witness to the settings, the times and places, of their writing. Whatever else they are, these documents are the products of the cultural world within which they were written.

All this is to say that context is crucial for understanding the NT message. Accordingly, the articles in this volume are designed to give us a firmer grip on the NT world so that we may become more able interpreters of the NT Scriptures.



Behind this volume stands the Institute for Biblical Research (IBR),² a scholarly community that gave the impetus for this publication to provide an introduction to the background of the NT. The IBR is a community of evangelical biblical scholars from a variety of church backgrounds and theological traditions, who are committed to advancing biblical inquiry within the broad orthodox and evangelical traditions. Several authors in this volume are internationally known for their expertise in NT scholarship and have made significant contributions to the field of biblical scholarship. Others are newer to the field but have already begun to distinguish themselves. All possess specialized knowledge in various aspects of biblical inquiry. Most are IBR members, but some are not. We celebrate all of their contributions toward producing this useful resource for those who want a better understanding of the NT in its own contexts.

The editors express their appreciation to those who have contributed to this volume, sacrificing valuable time and effort to make this an important resource for students of the NT. We also express thanks to the editors and staff of Baker Academic; from early on they recognized the usefulness of this collection as a tool for biblical research for students and pastors alike and brought their own considerable expertise to the shaping of the volume. We are particularly grateful to Timothy Reardon, who prepared the indexes for this volume. The members of IBR have long appreciated their partnership with Baker Academic, and we are grateful for their taking on this project.

2. See <http://www.ibr-bbr.org/>.

2

New Testament Chronology

LEE MARTIN MCDONALD

Biblical scholars have long recognized the value of knowing the history and chronology of the NT for understanding its texts, but they also recognize the complexity of establishing reliable dates for the books and events mentioned in the NT. Outside of broad agreement that most if not all of it originated in the first century, scholars continue to debate the precise time when the NT documents were produced.

Establishing a reliable NT chronology is not an exact science, and there are many variables involved and many difficult choices to make. In antiquity, calendars and various chronologies were often rooted in the years of a king's rule or the tenure of governors, local rulers, or high priests—as we see in the NT itself (cf. Luke 1:5; 2:1–2; 3:1–2).

Dating NT events involves examining not only the NT writings but also a number of nonbiblical writings, whether Jewish, Christian, or Greco-Roman—writings roughly contemporary with the NT. For example, some persons mentioned in the NT, such as rulers and leading biblical personalities, are also mentioned elsewhere. An important resource for dating many NT events and persons was produced in the last quarter of the first century by Josephus, a Jewish general during the Jewish war against Rome who wrote *Jewish Antiquities* and *Jewish War*, as well as *The Life* and *Against Apion*. A second primary resource is Eusebius's *Ecclesiastical History* (fourth century), the first widely recognized reliable history of early Christianity, which shows considerable awareness of ancient sources and events from

the beginning of Christianity and its subsequent development. Along with these, those seeking to date events mentioned in the NT will find helpful the writings of Dio Cassius, Pausanius, Pliny, Suetonius, and Tacitus. Along with these and other classical writings, the context of early Christianity is also considerably clarified by examining the writings of Philo, the DSS (or more precisely, the Discoveries in the Judean Desert [DJD]), rabbinic writings (including the Mishnah, the Tosefta, the two Talmuds [Babylonian and Palestinian]), and the Jewish targumim (expanded Aramaic translations/interpretation of the Jewish Scriptures), as well as the early church fathers, especially Clement of Rome, Justin Martyr, Irenaeus, Tertullian, and Origen.

Although students will often find these and other ancient sources indispensable in establishing both the chronology and the context of early Christianity, we should not be surprised to find different dates for the same events in the ancient sources and, periodically, different dates for the same event in the same author. This can be seen in Josephus's dating of Herod's temple; in one place he writes that it was begun in the eighteenth year of Herod's reign (*Ant.* 15.380), while in another he refers to his fifteenth year (*J.W.* 1.401). Although we would be at a considerable loss without the writings of Josephus, we should read him with caution, as we do all ancient historians.

Dating the New Testament

Some of the more important NT dates have to do with the stories of Jesus and Paul, but other important and related persons and events are also significant in establishing a NT chronology. Often scholars can come within a year or two of the actual date by the use of nonbiblical sources. For example, the reference to the Roman emperor Claudius's expulsion of Jews from Rome—which consequently led Aquila and Priscilla to come to Corinth, where they met Paul (Acts 18:1–4)—has several nonbiblical references that allow us to date the event to around AD 48–49. In another instance, because of the discovery of an ancient inscription at Delphi, north of the Corinthian Sea in ancient Greece, we know that Gallio, the governor of the province of Achaia, resided there; the inscription even allows us to say with relative precision when he was governor. The book of Acts refers to him in conjunction with Paul's ministry in Corinth (Acts 18:12–17), and this allows us to date with some assurance when Paul was in Corinth. We will discuss both of these items below.

Biblical scholars regularly acknowledge that the dates they set forth for the writing of the NT books as well as the events to which they bear witness are at best approximate, even if some dates are more likely than others. When some ancient dates are relatively well established, scholars use them as benchmarks to produce a chronology of the NT era. For instance, scholars continue to debate the dating of the NT Gospels, though there is general agreement they were written in the last half of the first century.

Some of the More Established Dates

Some of the more important dates that are relatively certain relate to events pertaining to Jesus and Paul. The following examples are debated among scholars, but an assessment of them allows readers to draw responsible conclusions. They focus mostly on Jesus and Paul, but also on actions of others mentioned in the NT—for example, Claudius, Felix, and Festus. These examples will make clear the importance of using nonbiblical sources to date many NT events.

The Birth of Jesus

According to Matt. 2:1–21, Jesus’ birth took place during the reign of Herod the Great. Josephus chronicled Herod’s life and concluded that Herod the Great died shortly before April (or March) 12, 4 BC (*Ant.* 17.190–91; *J.W.* 1.665). Since Josephus says that Herod died in April of 4 BC, and if Jesus was born during Herod’s reign, then he was born at least before April of 4 BC. If this is the case, then the traditional dating of the birth of Jesus in the year 0 (a year that does not even exist in traditional calendars) needs to be reconsidered. What complicates things is that Jesus’ birth was not widely celebrated by Christians until the fourth century, so the keeping of such records was not high on the early church’s agenda. If Herod, out of fear of a rival king in Israel, sought to kill all the male children in and around Bethlehem under the age of two (Matt. 2:16), and if he died in 4 BC, then it is reasonable to conclude that Jesus was born sometime around 6–4 BC.

Along with this, Luke dates the beginning of John the Baptist’s ministry, Jesus’ baptism, and the initiation of Jesus’ ministry in the fifteenth year of Emperor Tiberius’s reign (3:1–2). The first two years of Tiberius’s reign (AD 12–14) reportedly overlapped with the last two years of the reign of Caesar Augustus (Octavius), who died in AD 14. By adding fifteen years to that time, to either AD 12 or 14, we arrive at a date of sometime around AD 27–29 for Jesus’ baptism and the beginning of his ministry. Since Luke 3:23 indicates that Jesus was baptized when *about* age 30, we can go backward to *around* 4–3 BC for Jesus’ birth.

Further, John’s Gospel has a few references that allow us to conclude that the previous dating is likely. In the Gospel of John, Jesus says, “Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up” (2:19). Jesus’ critics respond that the temple has been in the making for forty-six years and question how Jesus could raise it up in three days (2:20). If the temple has been in the making for forty-six years, and if Josephus is correct in saying that construction of the temple began in the eighteenth year of Herod’s reign (namely, in 20–19 BC; see *Ant.* 15.354, 380; cf. *J.W.* 1.401), then Jesus, at about the age of thirty during this encounter with his critics (AD 26), would have been born at least around 4 BC (for further discussion, see Finegan, *Chronology*, 346–49). It is true that Josephus offers an alternative date for the beginning of the construction of the temple—during the fifteenth year of Herod’s reign (ca. 23 BC; see *Ant.* 15.354)—but the later date is more likely. If

we add John's forty-six years to 19 or 20 BC, then Jesus' ministry began around AD 26 and possibly as late as 27.

Some references are unclear or too confusing to be used for dating Jesus' birth or the onset of his ministry—for example, Matthew's reference to the star in Bethlehem that identifies the location of Jesus after his birth (2:1–12) and the reference to Jesus' age in John 8:57. Both are vague and not easily aligned with the biblical story. We should also note that the dating of Jesus' birth during a registration or census for taxation ordered by Quirinius (Luke 2:1–2) is problematic since there is a significant difference between the dating of this census in nonbiblical sources and Luke's dating of this census. For example, Tacitus claims that Quirinius began his rule *after* Archelaus, the son of Herod the Great, was deposed in AD 6 (*Ann.* 6.41). This is similar to Josephus (*Ant.* 18.1–10; *J.W.* 7.253), who agrees with Tacitus that Quirinius ordered the census in AD 6–7 and that it led to a Jewish revolt (mentioned in Acts 5:37). Support for a double reign of Quirinius, namely, an additional one in 7–6 BC, is not supported by the external evidence. Nonbiblical sources do not support Luke's report of a census during Herod the Great's reign and during the rule of Quirinius of Syria, so some caution is in order. Stanley Porter has noted that there is separate evidence that a census was taken in Egypt in 4 BC, and he suggests that a similar one may have been taken in Judea. Roman censuses for tax purposes normally occurred every fourteen years, but some recently discovered evidence indicates that in Egypt the censuses were taken every seven years, and they can be established for the years 11–10 BC, 4–3 BC, AD 4–5, and AD 11–12. This does not mean that the same pattern prevailed in Judea, but it is suggestive (Porter, "Chronology," 202).¹

In terms of the specific day of Jesus' birth, the familiar date of December 25 may be based on an ancient belief that the conception of Jesus took place on March 25, and that his birth took place precisely nine months later, namely, December 25 (see Finegan, *Chronology*, 320–28). There was considerable debate in the early churches over whether Jesus was born on December 25 or January 6. The later date was celebrated by Christians in the East as the day of Jesus' birth, but now most Christians celebrate the appearance of the magi or wise men coming from the East to visit Jesus in Bethlehem on January 6, twelve days after his birth. Matthew, however, suggests that Jesus may have been two years old at that time and in a house, not in a manger near animals (2:11); however, in Matthew it really is not clear how soon the magi came to the town where Jesus was born. The traditional "twelve days of Christmas" run, of course, between December 25 and January 6. Others have suggested that the celebration of the birth of Jesus on December 25 is rooted in the pagan celebration of the sun, the solstice, when the sun stands still briefly, after which days begin to lengthen. This is "Solis Invictus," the festival of the "Invincible Sun." Some early Christians thought that this parallel

1. Porter depends here on the work of R. S. Bagnall and B. W. Frier, *The Demography of Roman Egypt* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994).

was a fulfillment of the prophecy in Mal. 4:2: “But for you who revere my name the sun of righteousness shall rise, with healing in its wings.”

There is no mention of birth celebrations of Jesus by earlier Christian writers such as Irenaeus (ca. 130–200) or Tertullian (ca. 160–225).² Origen of Alexandria (ca. 165–264) even mocks Roman celebrations of birth anniversaries, dismissing them as “pagan” practices—a strong indication that Jesus’ birth was not marked with similar festivities at that place and time (*Hom. Lev. 8*). Apparently, Christmas was not widely celebrated before the fourth century.

Clement of Alexandria (ca. 200) made reference to the date when Jesus was born, claiming that several different days had been proposed by various Christian groups, but he does not mention December 25. He writes:

There are those who have determined not only the year of our Lord’s birth, but also the day; and they say that it took place in the twenty-eighth year of Augustus, and in the twenty-fifth day of [the Egyptian month] Pachon [May 20 in our calendar]. . . . And treating of His Passion, with very great accuracy, some say that it took place in the sixteenth year of Tiberius, on the twenty-fifth of Phamenoth [March 21]; and others on the twenty-fifth of Pharmuthi [April 21] and others say that on the nineteenth of Pharmuthi [April 15] the Savior suffered. Further, others say that He was born on the twenty-fourth or twenty-fifth of Pharmuthi [April 20 or 21]. (Clement, *Strom.* 1.21; *ANF* 2:133)

The Ministry of Jesus

All four Gospels agree that Jesus began his ministry during John the Baptist’s ministry, of which Luke writes:

In the fifteenth year of the reign of Emperor Tiberius, when Pontius Pilate was governor of Judea, and Herod [Antipas] was ruler of Galilee, and his brother Philip ruler of the region of Ituraea and Trachonitis, and Lysanias ruler of Abilene, during the high priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas, the word of God came to John son of Zechariah in the wilderness. (Luke 3:1–2)

The date of the fifteenth year of the rule of Tiberius is roughly AD 26–27 (28–29 if his sole regency, that is, without the coregency with Caesar Augustus, is in mind). This date is confirmed by Josephus, who discusses Jesus’ ministry during the time when Pilate was procurator of Judea (*Ant.* 18.63–64); although Josephus’s text was likely later expanded in order to clarify Jesus’ messiahship for a Christian audience, the original text almost certainly contained information about Jesus, and this provides an important, independent witness to the presence of Jesus as a teacher and miracle worker during the days of Pontius Pilate, as well as confirmation that his followers continued on even in the generation of Josephus.

2. For much of the content in this section, see Andrew McGowan, “How December 25 Became Christmas,” *BAR Magazine*, <http://www.bib-arch.org/e-features/christmas.asp#top>.

The length of Jesus' ministry is often based on the number of Passovers mentioned in the Gospels. Each of the Synoptic Gospels refers to a single Passover (Matt. 26:17; Mark 14:1; Luke 22:1) during Jesus' ministry, but the Gospel of John refers to three (2:13, 23; 5:1 [possibly]; 6:4; 11:55). Christians have generally followed John here, but some scholars suggest that Jesus' tenure of ministry was somewhere between two and three years. Long ago, Ethelbert Stauffer claimed that the stories of John could not be fitted into the timeframe of the Synoptic Gospels, but that the Synoptic Gospels could easily be incorporated into John's.³ If this is correct, then his ministry may have begun sometime between 26 (at the earliest) and 28 and lasted at least two and possibly slightly more than three years, that is, until around AD 29–31.

The Death of Jesus

Each of the four canonical Gospels provides detailed information about the time of Jesus' death, and all agree that his death took place on a Friday (Matt. 27:62; Mark 15:42; Luke 23:54; John 19:31, 42). According to John, Jesus was crucified just as the Passover lambs were being sacrificed. This would have occurred on the fourteenth of the Hebrew month of Nisan, just before the Jewish holiday that began at sundown (considered the beginning of the fifteenth day; in the Hebrew calendar, days both conclude and begin at sundown). In Matthew, Mark, and Luke, however, the Last Supper is held *after* sundown, on the beginning of the fifteenth (Matt. 27:62; Mark 14:12; Luke 23:54), unlike John, who places it the day before the Passover (19:14). All agree that Jesus was crucified the next morning, that is, on the fifteenth. All four Gospels place Jesus' death just prior to Passover and coordinate this event with the rules of Pilate as governor of Judea and Caiaphas as the high priest. Luke places Jesus' ministry in conjunction with John the Baptist, during the reign of Tiberius (Luke 3:1–2). Tiberius, as noted above, began his reign as the successor to Caesar Augustus (Octavian) during a two-year coregency in AD 10–12 or subsequently in AD 14. The fifteenth year would then be AD 25–27 or 29–30, and if Jesus had a two- to three-year ministry, then his death would likely be around AD 30–31.

The celebration of Easter, a much earlier development than the celebration of Jesus' birth, was simply the gradual Christian reinterpretation of the Passover in terms of Jesus' passion. Its observance could even be implied in the NT (1 Cor. 5:7–8: "For our paschal lamb, Christ, has been sacrificed. Therefore, let us celebrate the festival"); it was certainly a distinctively Christian feast by the mid-second century, when an apocryphal text, *Epistle of the Apostles* (*Epistula Apostolorum*) 15, says that Jesus instructed his disciples as follows: "And you therefore celebrate the remembrance of my death, which is the Passover."⁴

3. Ethelbert Stauffer, *Jesus and His Story* (New York: Knopf, 1960), 7; this comment is found in Finegan, *Chronology*, 351.

4. J. K. Elliott, *The Apocryphal New Testament: A Collection of Apocryphal Christian Literature in an English Translation* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1993), 565.

The Death of Herod Agrippa I

According to the Acts of the Apostles, Herod Agrippa I executed James the apostle and imprisoned Peter (12:1–3), and then he died suddenly and painfully following his pompous display of self-aggrandizement (12:18–23). This same story is reported by Josephus with several similarities and a few variants in the details (*Ant.* 19.344–52; see also 18.195–200, 237, 252), but it is sufficiently close to conclude that the broad details of this event are the same in both sources. Agrippa I was a close friend of the emperor Caligula, who succeeded Tiberius, and Caligula appointed Agrippa ruler over the tetrarchy of Herod Antipas. After the death of Caligula, and because Agrippa helped Claudius succeed Caligula as emperor, Claudius, who ruled from AD 41 to 54, made Agrippa I king over Judea and Samaria as well as the rest of the territory that Herod the Great had ruled, including Galilee, Transjordan, and the Decapolis. Josephus tells of Agrippa I's violent and painful death at the age of 54 after having ruled over all the territory of Israel from AD 41 to 44. Josephus dates this event at the time of the festival of dedication that was begun earlier by Herod the Great (*Ant.* 16.136–41) and in the year AD 44. Later Eusebius tells the story of Agrippa's death in Acts and brings it together with Josephus's account (*Eccl. Hist.* 2.10.1–10).

Paul's Conversion to Faith in Jesus Christ

Paul's conversion is more difficult to date with precision. However, Paul's brief chronology of his encounter with the risen Christ and early ministry (Gal. 1:11–2:10) gives us some dates with which to work. If one begins the chronology following his conversion (Gal. 1:18: "Then after three years"; 2:1: "Then after fourteen years"), then, combined with information obtained elsewhere, we can date Paul's conversion as early as 31 or as late as 36. In other words, we have either a total of fourteen years (if both dates mentioned are after his conversion) or seventeen (if they are sequential). Comparing Luke's reports (Acts 9:1–30; 22:3–16; 26:12–23) with Paul's own words, especially Gal. 1:13–2:10, Paul's encounter with the risen Christ (Gal. 1:16) gives us a time of AD 31–36. If Paul's visit to Jerusalem after his encounter on the Damascus road is the same as that mentioned in Acts 9:26–30, and the fourteen years came before the council recounted in Acts 15 (which was held almost assuredly sometime in AD 48 or 49), we have an early conversion date. This presumes a "South Galatian" destination of Galatians.⁵ If, however, Paul's letter was written *after* the conference recounted in Acts 15, or during his second missionary journey (a North Galatian destination; see Acts 15:36–41), then it is possible that his conversion was later, though not much later than AD 35–36.

5. This debate and the arguments in favor of each position are conveniently summarized in F. F. Bruce, *The Epistle to the Galatians* (NIGTC; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982), 5–10; and in more detail in Richard N. Longenecker, *Galatians* (WBC 41; Nashville: Nelson, 1990), lxiii–lxxii.

The Expulsion of Aquila and Priscilla from Rome

According to Acts 18:2, Aquila and Priscilla came to Corinth from Rome following Claudius's edict expelling Jews from the city. Josephus describes this expulsion (*Ant.* 18.65, 80–84), and so does Tacitus (AD 55–120), who claims that the expulsion had to do with disputes over Jewish and Egyptian rites (*Ann.* 2.85). Suetonius (ca. 75–140) describes this event in his *Lives of the Caesars* but claims that the expulsion of Jews from Rome was because of problems among the Jews in the city over “Chrestus,” a possible reference to Jesus, the Christ. He writes, “Since the Jews constantly made disturbances at the instigation of Chrestus,⁶ he [Claudius] expelled them from Rome” (*Claud.* 15.4; LCL). Dio Cassius (ca. 150–235) also describes this event in his *Roman History* (57.18.5). Because these other sources date this event essentially the same, we can reasonably place it with some confidence in AD 49, although some scholars place it in AD 41. This also fits well with Paul's coming to Corinth in mid to late AD 49 and his meeting with Priscilla and Aquila.

Paul's Appearance at Corinth before Gallio

According to Acts 18:12, Paul was brought before the proconsul Gallio, who was governor of Achaia and resided in Delphi. His visit to Corinth came during Paul's eighteen-month ministry there (Acts 18:11) and more precisely in the late spring of AD 51. Gallio was the older brother of the well-known poet Lucius Annaeus Seneca (ca. 4 BC–AD 65; see Seneca's reference to Gallio in his *Epist. mor.* 104.1), and he is mentioned in several places in Roman writings. Gallio's full name was Lucius Junius Gallio Annaeus, and Pliny the Elder (AD 23–79) addresses him by that name (*Nat. Hist.* 31.31). Gallio is also mentioned in the now-famous first-century fragmented inscription discovered at Delphi in the province of Achaia, in Greece. It reads as follows:

Tiberius Claudius Caesar Augustus Germanicus, Pontifex Maximus, Holder of the Tribunician Power for the twelfth time, Emperor for the twenty-sixth time, Father of the country, Counsel for the fifth time, and Censor to the city of the Delphians, greetings. For some time past I have been devoted to the city of the Delphians . . . and good will from the beginning; and I have ever observed the worshipping of the Pythian Apollo. . . . But as for the many current reports and those discords among the citizens, . . . just as Lucius Junius Gallio, my friend and proconsul of Achaia, wrote. . . . Therefore I am granting that you continue to enjoy your former. . . .⁷

6. Many scholars have suggested that “Chrestus” is a corruption of the word “Christ,” a word unfamiliar to Suetonius. F. F. Bruce (*History*, 268) observes, however, that the name “Chrestus” actually means “useful” and was a common name for slaves. The question is whether a slave name fits the context adequately.

7. Everett Ferguson has highlighted the most important parts of this fragmented inscription as follows: “Tiberius [Claudius] Caesar Augustus Germanicus . . . In his tribunician] power [year 12. Acclaimed emperor the 26th time, father of the country . . . [Lucius] Junius Gallio my friend and [pro]consul [of Achaia wrote] . . .” (*Backgrounds of Early Christianity* [3rd ed; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003], 585). The text is also conveniently found and discussed in Adolf

Gallio's governorship can be discerned by the twenty-sixth acclamation of the emperor. According to another inscription, the twenty-fourth acclamation took place in the eleventh year of the tribunate, that is, in the eleventh year of the reign of the emperor Claudius, January 25 of AD 51 to January 24 of AD 52 (see *CIL* 3:1977). By means of these inscriptions and others (see *BCH* 11.306–7; *CIL* 6:1256), the Gallio inscription has been dated between January 25 and August 1 of the year AD 51. Since a proconsul's term or governorship normally lasted one year (January 25 to the following January 24), this means that Gallio was governor of Achaia from AD 51 to 52, which overlapped Paul's eighteen-month ministry in Corinth, when he stood before Gallio at the *bēma* (or council seat) in Corinth (Acts 18:12). Because of the inscription found at Delphi, scholars have been able to date Paul's ministry at Corinth as having likely begun in late AD 49 and lasting to 51 or 52.⁸ As a result, by adding or subtracting the time mentioned in Acts and in Paul's Letters regarding his ministry before, during, and after Corinth, we are now able to date the beginning of Paul's missionary journeys mentioned in Acts from roughly 48–49 to approximately 58, a period of some ten years. Using the Delphic inscription, we are able to suggest approximate dates for several events related to Paul's ministry, including both before and after Paul's visit to Corinth.

Felix and Festus

According to the book of Acts, after Paul was arrested in Jerusalem, he was taken to Caesarea, where he was imprisoned for two years (21:27–26:32). Paul's time there overlapped the changing of the procurators Felix and Festus, and he stood before both (23:23–26:32), as well as before Agrippa II (26:1–32). Both Felix and Festus are mentioned by Josephus (*Ant.* 20.137–38, 142–44, 182; *J.W.* 2.247, 252–54, 271) and subsequently also in Eusebius, who describes Paul's arrest and imprisonment at Caesarea under Felix and Festus (*Eccl. Hist.* 2.19.1–22.8). Josephus's account of these two procurators fits well within the story in Acts, and similarly, they are also mentioned and dated by Tacitus (*Hist.* 5.9; *Ann.* 12.54). Because of these nonbiblical sources, we can safely date Paul's imprisonment at Caesarea to roughly AD 55–57.

The Death of Paul

Since Acts does not mention the death of Paul, the major hero in the book, some biblical scholars conclude that the Acts account was written prior to Paul's death. Since Acts follows the Gospel of Luke (see Acts 1:1–2; cf. Luke 1:1–4) and at its closing (Acts 28:23–31) Paul was in custody in Rome for two years but with

Deissmann, *Paul: A Study in Social and Religious History* (2nd ed.; trans. W. E. Wilson; New York: Harper, 1927), 261–86; and Finegan, *Chronology*, 391–95.

8. For discussion, see Lee Martin McDonald, "Acts," in *Acts–Philemon* (ed. Craig A. Evans; vol. 2 of *The Bible Knowledge Background Commentary*; Colorado Springs: Victor, 2004), 126–27; also Finegan, *Chronology*, 391–94. Finegan places the beginning of Paul's ministry in Corinth in December of AD 49, after his second missionary journey began in the spring of 49 (Acts 15:36–41).

relative freedom to continue his witness, it is unlikely that the death of Paul (likely in 62–64, as we will see) had taken place. If Paul died before the book of Acts was completed, it is difficult to understand why the death of its primary hero is missing from the story. Luke had no trouble mentioning the deaths of Stephen and James, so why not Paul's if it had already happened?

Clement of Rome (ca. AD 90) tells us that, after Paul had witnessed before rulers and reached the “limits of the West,” he passed from this world (*1 Clem.* 5.7). Having said this, there is no clear indication that Paul was released from Rome after his first imprisonment and that he journeyed on to Spain and perhaps Crete and elsewhere.

Tertullian, after mentioning the death of Peter in Rome, claims that in Rome Paul won “his crown [see 2 Tim. 4:8] in a death like John's” (John the Baptist was beheaded; *Prescript.* 36.3; *ANF* 3:260). Eusebius later says that the death of Peter and Paul took place during the reign of Nero, noting that “Paul was beheaded in Rome itself, and that Peter likewise was crucified, and the titles of Peter and Paul” were “given to the cemeteries there” (*Eccl. Hist.* 2.25.5; *NPNF*² 1:129). Nero ruled from AD 54 to 68, and Eusebius claims that Nero's persecutions of Christians began in his eighth year (i.e., AD 62; see *Eccl. Hist.* 2.25.1; 2.22.1–8), so it is likely that the death of Paul took place sometime near AD 64 and no later than 68 (the year Nero was murdered).

The reference to Paul's “first defense,” when no one stood with him (2 Tim. 4:16), suggests to some scholars that there was a second defense and that Paul was freed after the first defense for a time of ministry. Eusebius reports that Paul “spent two whole years” in Rome, was released with freedom to continue his ministry of preaching, but came a second time to Rome, whereupon he suffered martyrdom by Nero. Apparently citing 2 Tim. 4:16–17, Eusebius claims that the “first defense” came during his first imprisonment in Rome. Initially, Nero was apparently gentler with Christians, but according to Eusebius, at Paul's second defense Nero was “advanced toward reckless crime” and “the Apostles were attacked along with the rest” (*Eccl. Hist.* 2.22.1–8; *NPNF*² 1:123–25). After describing the atrocities carried out by Nero against the Christians, Eusebius reports that “Paul was beheaded in Rome itself, and that Peter likewise was crucified,” adding that both apostles were martyred at the same time (*Eccl. Hist.* 2.25.1–8; *NPNF*² 1:129–30).

Those who claim that Paul wrote the Pastoral Epistles have difficulty fitting them into the chronology presented in the book of Acts or harmonizing them with Paul's other epistles. The ecclesiology appears more advanced in them, and several of Paul's major themes (reconciliation, eschatology, Christology, and pneumatology) are largely missing from these books. If Paul wrote the Pastoral Epistles, and this is debated, it is best to place them after Paul's first imprisonment and before a second.

James, the Brother of Jesus

James the brother of Jesus is mentioned in several NT passages (Mark 6:3; Matt. 13:55; Acts 12:17; 15:13–21; 21:18; Gal. 1:19; 2:9; 1 Cor. 15:7; and, if he was

the author, in the Letter of James). After Peter's departure from Jerusalem (Acts 12:17), James became the leading spokesperson for the church (Acts 15:13–21; 21:18–26; Gal. 2:9–10). A NT letter attributed to him was written before AD 62–64, when, according to Josephus, Ananus the high priest in Jerusalem executed James (*Ant.* 20.197). Josephus says that James was well known and respected among the Jews, and he tells how Ananus, during the interim between the proconsuls Festus and Albinus in Judea in AD 62, “convened the judges of the Sanhedrin and brought before them a man named James, the brother of Jesus who was called the Christ, and certain others. [Ananus] accused them of having transgressed the law and delivered them up to be stoned. Those inhabitants of the city who were strict in observance of the law were offended at this” (*Ant.* 20.197, 199–201 LCL; see *J.W.* 2.166). The priesthood of Ananus lasted only three months; because of his action against James, Agrippa II removed Ananus from office, because he had convened the Sanhedrin without permission. We can therefore reasonably date the death of James, the brother of Jesus, during the high priesthood of Ananus at AD 62. Eusebius retells this same story and adds additional details (*Eccl. Hist.* 2.23.20–24), but less convincing is his report of the Hegesippus account (*Eccl. Hist.* 4.22.4).

Conclusion

The chronology of NT events is complex, but some events and persons can be reasonably dated. We can also approximate dates for some of the NT materials. The chart at the end of this chapter contains some of the most reliable dates for the context and background of the NT, but there is still some uncertainty about some of the listed dates. The chart begins with Alexander the Great, who had a significant impact on the land of Israel for several centuries and whose cultural agenda influenced the social context of early Christianity.

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Chronology of Major Events Related to the Study of the New Testament

334 BC	Alexander the Great assumes power after the assassination of his father, Philip of Macedon, and begins his conquest of the Persian Empire.
332–330 BC	Alexander the Great conquers Palestine and initiates a long Greek occupation of the land.
323 BC	Alexander the Great dies. Control of the conquered lands, including the land of Israel, is divided among his successors (<i>diadochoi</i>). Israel is first under the control of Ptolemy, headquartered in Alexandria.
281–100 BC	Origins of the Septuagint (LXX), the translation of the Pentateuch into Greek (ca. 281 BC), and subsequently other OT and apocryphal books.
198–142 BC	Seleucid control of Palestine passes from the Ptolemies following the defeat of Ptolemy V at Pan (Baniyas) by Antiochus III (called "the Great").
169 BC	Antiochus IV (called Antiochus Epiphanes) invades Egypt; he ruthlessly subjugates Palestine, including attempting to force the Jews to offer sacrifices to pagan deities.
168–167 BC	Mattathias Maccabeus, a Jewish priest, leads Jews in their revolt against the Seleucid dynasty.
165 BC	Religious freedom is won by Judas Maccabeus, "the Hammer," who inherited from his father, Mattathias Maccabeus, leadership of the Jewish revolt against the Seleucid dynasty.
159–142 BC	Jonathan Maccabeus succeeds Judas Maccabeus as leader of the rebellion against the Greeks.

150–125 BC	Possible time of establishment of the Essene community at Qumran. The Pharisee party comes into prominence.
142 BC	Jewish political independence is secured from Seleucid dynasty under the leadership of Jonathan and Simon Maccabeus.
142–134 BC	Simon Maccabeus establishes the Hasmonean dynasty, which continues in leadership in Israel until the time of Herod the Great (37 BC). He is both king and high priest.
134–104 BC	John Hyrcanus I succeeds Simon and extends the borders of the nation beyond the limits of the territory controlled by Solomon.
104–103 BC	Aristobulus has short rule as Hasmonean king.
103–76 BC	Alexander Jannaeus rules the Jewish people.
76–67 BC	Salome Alexandra succeeds her husband as ruler of the Jewish people, but without the title and role of high priest.
67–63 BC	Aristobulus II rules the Jewish people until Rome invades the nation and the Hasmonean dynasty loses power.
63 BC	Pompey invades Jerusalem.
63–40 BC	Hyrcanus II rules a part of the Jewish people, but with little power.
63–43 BC	Cicero flourishes.
58–44 BC	Julius Caesar flourishes. In 44 BC he is assassinated by Brutus and Cassius.
42–41 BC	Octavian, along with Mark Antony, defeats Brutus and Cassius at Philippi in Macedonia. At this time, the land of Israel comes under the control of Mark Antony.
40 BC	The Parthians invade Syria and help the Hasmoneans struggle in Jerusalem to retain political power.
40–35 BC	Aristobulus III serves as high priest until Herod the Great has him drowned at Herod's spa in Jericho (see Josephus, <i>Ant.</i> 15.50–56 and <i>J.W.</i> 1.437). This ends the threat of Hasmonean leadership among the Jews.
37 BC	Herod the Great captures Jerusalem and begins his reign as king.
32–31 BC**	Octavian defeats Mark Antony at Actium and unites the Roman Empire. Octavian becomes Caesar Augustus. Herod offers allegiance to Octavian and survives as king over the Jews.
30 BC–AD 10	Two leading rabbis, Shammai and Hillel, emerge and have considerable influence on the religious life of Jews from the late first century BC onward.
20–19 BC	Herod begins rebuilding the temple in Jerusalem.
10 BC–AD 40	Philo of Alexandria flourishes.
6–4 BC**	Jesus of Nazareth is born.
4 BC**	Herod the Great dies in April, and his kingdom is divided among his surviving sons: Archelaus, Herod Antipas, and Herod Philip.

4 BC–AD 39	Herod's sons (Archelaus, Antipas, and Philip) rule Palestine.
AD 6**	Augustus (Octavian) deposes Archelaus as ruler of Judea and establishes governors, or proconsuls, in Judea.
AD 12–14**	Coregency of Caesar Augustus and his son Tiberius.
AD 14**	Beginning of Tiberius's reign as sole Roman emperor.
AD 26–27**	Beginning of John the Baptist's ministry.
AD 26–36**	Pontius Pilate serves as procurator or governor of Judea.
AD 26/27–29	Jesus' ministry in Galilee and Judea.
AD 29–30 **	Jesus' death in Jerusalem.
AD 31–32	Stephen becomes the first Christian martyr (Acts 7:54–60).
AD 32–36	The conversion of the apostle Paul (see Gal. 1:13–2:1).
AD 33–44	Paul is in Tarsus for some ten years after his conversion, then he goes to the church in Antioch with Barnabas (Acts 11:25).
AD 40–65	Seneca of Rome flourishes.
AD 41–44**	Herod Agrippa I becomes king of Samaria and Judea. After he dies suddenly, Judea is ruled again by a Roman proconsul.
AD 44**	Peter is imprisoned in Jerusalem; James the apostle is beheaded.
AD 46–48	Paul begins his first missionary journey with Barnabas (Acts 13–14).
AD 48–49**	Jews are expelled from Rome (Acts 18:1–2).
AD 48–49	The Jerusalem Council (Acts 15:1–29).
AD 49–51**	Paul has an eighteen-month ministry in Corinth (Acts 18:11). His Letter to the Romans is produced here, on his second missionary journey (see Rom. 15:24–29).
AD 49–52	Paul's second missionary journey begins (Acts 15:36–41) and ends (Acts 18:20–22).
AD 49–62	Possible period of Paul's correspondence with his churches and coworkers in Christian mission.
AD 52–55	Paul's third missionary journey begins (Acts 18:23).
AD 53–55	Paul is in Ephesus (origin of his Letters to the Corinthians; see 1 Cor. 16:8).
AD 54–68	Nero is Roman emperor. His persecution of Christians begins ca. AD 62.
AD 55–57/58	Paul's arrest in Jerusalem and imprisonment at Caesarea and Rome.
AD 58–60	Paul goes to Rome as a prisoner for at least two years (Acts 28).
AD 60–69	Possible period of production of the Gospels of Mark and Luke.
AD 62	Peter goes to Rome.
AD 62**	James the brother of Jesus is martyred in Jerusalem.

AD 62–64**	Because of the outbreak of persecution against Christians in Rome, some persecuted Christians leave Jerusalem and settle in Pella, east of the Jordan.
AD 62–64**	Peter and Paul die in Rome under Nero’s persecution (end of apostolic era).
AD 64**	Rome is burned, probably by Nero, and Christians are blamed. Persecution of Christians follows in Rome.
AD 65–95	Post- or [sub]apostolic era begins with the deaths of the primary apostles (James the brother of Jesus, Peter, and Paul).
AD 66–73**	The First Jewish War with Rome. Jewish rebellion against Rome ends with the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple in 70. Skirmishes continue until the last stronghold (Masada) is destroyed in 73. Temple worship is concluded, along with animal sacrifices.
AD 68–69	Turmoil in Rome and year of four Roman emperors.
AD 70–95	Sometimes called the “Tunnel Period,” since not much is known of events during this time. Likely period during which the Gospels of Matthew, possibly Luke (see also AD 60–69 above), and John are written. Pharisaism and the rabbis emerge as the dominant expressions of Judaism. Likely time of the production of the <i>Didache</i> .
AD 70–90	Jews meet at Jamnia (Yavneh) to deal with the reformation of Judaism, especially Judaism without its temple cultus. A rabbinical academy is established there by Rabban Johanan ben Zakkai, son of Rabban Gamaliel (cf. Acts 5:34).
AD 75	Josephus writes <i>Jewish War</i> .
AD 81–96	Domitian rules the Roman Empire. Between 85 and 95, outbreaks of persecution against Christians emerge in Asia Minor.
AD 90–95	Rise of docetic heresy (see 1 John 4:1–3).
AD 93	Josephus writes <i>Antiquities of the Jews</i> .
AD 95–100	Clement of Rome writes <i>1 Clement</i> .
AD 100	Josephus dies in Rome.
AD 115–117	Epistles of Ignatius and his martyrdom.
AD 117–138	Hadrian reigns as Roman emperor.
AD 132–135	Second Jewish War: Bar Kochba rebellion is put down by Rome; Hadrian expels the Jews from Jerusalem and renames it Aelia Capitolina, after his mother.
AD 135	Gnosticism flourishes.
AD 140	<i>Shepherd of Hermas</i> likely written.
AD 140–160	Marcion and Valentinus begin their teaching. Marcion writes <i>Contradictions</i> and <i>Prologues</i> .
AD 156–185	Montanus begins ministry in Phrygia. Montanist controversy emerges.

AD 160	Justin Martyr writes <i>Apologies</i> and <i>Dialogue with Trypho</i> .
AD 175–180	Tatian produces the <i>Diatessaron</i> , a harmony of the Gospels.
AD 178	Celsus writes <i>True Reason</i> , the first known major reasoned attack against the Christian faith.
AD 180–185	Irenaeus writes <i>Against Heresies</i> , challenging the major heresies of his day.

Note: Dates with a double asterisk (**) behind them are generally recognized as most reliable, but few dates of events in antiquity are uncontested.

SETTING THE CONTEXT

Exile and the Jewish Heritage

Foundational to Christian faith are its Jewish heritage and roots. It is no exaggeration that Jesus and his contemporaries cannot be adequately comprehended without familiarity with that tradition.

The early Jesus movement, beginning with Jesus and his disciples and continuing with the apostolic mission, arose within a context shaped by centuries of religious reflection and practice within Israel, God's people. In the period leading up to the birth of Jesus of Nazareth, Israel's history was marked by turmoil from without and from within. As a people in exile, the people of Israel were subjected to the changing winds of military and political conquests. And as a people in exile, they struggled to maintain their particular identity as God's people. Chapters in this section help set the stage for NT study by delineating the broad contours of the Jewish heritage assumed by the major personages of the NT era.

3

Exile

NICHOLAS PERRIN

At its most basic level, the term “exile” refers to either one or both of two signal events in Israel’s history: the deportation of the northern kingdom at the hands of the Assyrians in 722 BC (2 Kings 15–17) and, the more common reference, the subsequent removal of the southern kingdom by the Babylonians in 587 BC (2 Kings 24–25; 2 Chron. 36:17–20). Whereas the ten tribes of the northern kingdom never came back from the land of their captivity, the Scriptures speak of the return of—at least in some measure—the two tribes of the southern kingdom in 539 BC under the Persian king Cyrus. Critical scholarship continues to explore the degree of correspondence between the historical events of the exile and the scriptural reflection on the same. Although some have regarded the biblical treatment of exile more as a mythographical construct than as a reflection of historical realities, there is broad agreement that the concept of exile remained an integral element of postexilic Jewish theology. Whether and to what extent the concept of exile had a theologically generative function in early Christian thought remains debated.

On any reckoning, exile certainly had *some* kind of function within the earliest Christian writings. A reader cannot pass the first page of the NT without noticing that Matthew organizes his genealogy (Matt. 1:1–17), a programmatic element within the Gospel, around the historical milestones of exile. Mark’s interest in exile surfaces not only through his initial invocation of the exodus (Mark 1:2–3) but also through his strategically deployed parable of the sower (4:1–20), a parable that is unpacked with reference to Isaiah’s warning of impending exile (v. 12; cf.

Isa. 6:9–10; on exile in Luke see Fuller, *Restoration*; in John, see Brunson, *Psalms 118*, 62–83). In Paul, exilic undercurrents have been detected in such classic Pauline passages as Gal. 3–4 (Scott, “Works of the Law”) and Rom. 8. The concept of exile has also come to fuller light in 1 Peter (Mbuvi, *Temple*), whose introduction, charged with exilic imagery, is very close to that of James (1 Pet. 1:1; cf. James 1:1). Skimming the surface of the NT, we would not be going too far to say that the motif of exile is quietly rampant.

As becomes apparent on review of the OT literature, the concept of exile was pliable, referring not only to the specific time period during which the southern kingdom endured geographical displacement (Jer. 29:10; Ezek. 4:6; 2 Chron. 36:20–23; Ezra 1:1–3) but also to a more general condition in which God’s elect were made to suffer marginalization, oppression, or deprivation. Because exile was regarded as the culminating punishment for covenantal disobedience (Lev. 26:14–46; Deut. 28:15–68), and was therefore closely associated with a litany of curses (including marginalization, oppression, and deprivation), this conceptual expansion was perhaps inevitable. The fact that the literal and metaphorical application of the motif continued well into the Second Temple period (and beyond) in turn raises questions relevant to the study of the NT. Assuming that the NT authors’ appropriation of exilic texts and terms depended, at least in part, on a theological framework already operative in Palestinian Judaism, it remains to be asked whether this implied a simple analogy of experiences or something more. If something more, how exactly does the use of the exile metaphor contribute to our understanding of the NT? By exploring the metaphor of exile as it was employed in Second Temple Judaism, one might identify recurring thought patterns that could then shed light on how the authors of the NT understood themselves and their audiences within the scope of redemptive history.

Precisely because the meaning of exile in Second Temple Judaism has proved so controversial in recent decades, and because even a brief account of the motif as NT background can hardly be undertaken apart from some initial awareness of the issues at stake in contemporary scholarly discussion, it seems best to look first at the various interpretive lenses that contemporary scholars bring to bear on this topic. Thus I begin not with a review of relevant historical data as contained in the primary sources but with a brief survey of the relevant secondary literature. This is followed by an analysis of representative Second Temple texts, namely, the Apocrypha, Pseudepigrapha, and Qumran texts, and finally some summarizing remarks.

Contemporary Research into Exile as a Background to the New Testament

In the field of OT studies, given such programmatic studies as that of Julius Wellhausen’s *Prolegomena to the History of Ancient Israel* (1957) and Peter R. Ackroyd’s *Exile and Restoration: A Study of Hebrew Thought of the Sixth Century*

BC (1968), there was little chance that twentieth-century scholars of the Hebrew Scriptures would allow the concept of exile to fall by the wayside. For whatever reason, academic interest in exile was almost entirely restricted to the HB. This relative neglect of exile outside the OT canon, however, began to change slowly with such seminal publications as Odil H. Steck's *Israel und das gewaltsame Geschick des Propheten* [Israel and the Violent Fate of the Prophets] (1967),¹ Ralph Klein's *Israel in Exile: A Theological Interpretation* (1976), and in the same year, Michael A. Knibb's article "The Exile in the Literature of the Intertestamental Period." By the last quarter of the twentieth century, the stage had been set for more thorough explorations of exile as a theological category beyond the OT.

As it turned out, the main impetus for the most recent discussions of exile was a short treatment of the subject offered by N. T. Wright (*People of God*, 268–72) in his account of Christian origins, only later to be developed further in volume 2 of the same series (*Victory of God*, xvii–xviii, 246–51, 576–77). Wright's shaping influence, notwithstanding the brevity of his initial case, is perhaps as much a tribute to his originality as a thinker as it is to his ingenuity in integrating the data within a compelling, heuristically rich account. According to Wright, "Most Jews of this period, it seems, would have answered the question 'where are we?' in language which, reduced to its simplest form, meant: we are still in exile. They believed that, in all the senses which mattered, Israel's exile was still in progress" (*People of God*, 268–69).

For Wright, first-century Jews would have found clear evidence of their exiled status in two incontrovertible facts: Israel remained subjugated to the gentiles (e.g., Neh. 9:36–37; CD 1.3–11), and Yahweh had not visibly returned to Zion (Ezek. 43:1–7; Isa. 52:8–11). True, Israel had been sent into exile on account of its sin, but there is more to the redemptive equation than may meet the eye:

If her sin has caused her exile, her forgiveness will mean her national re-establishment. This needs to be emphasized in the strongest possible terms: the most natural meaning of the phrase "the forgiveness of sins" to a first-century Jew is not in the first instance the remission of *individual* sins, but the putting away of the whole nation's sins. And, since the exile was the punishment for those sins, the only sure sign that the sins had been forgiven would be the clear and certain liberation from exile. (*People of God*, 273, italics original)

As Wright gladly acknowledges, this proposal is not entirely new: other scholars (notably Knibb, "Exile"; Scott, "Works of the Law") have made a similar case beforehand and in greater detail. What seems to be new, however, is the crucial role that Wright has assigned to exile in his account of first-century Judaism and early Christianity.

1. Odil H. Steck, *Israel und das gewaltsame Geschick des Propheten: Untersuchungen zur Überlieferung des deuteronomistischen Geschichtsbildes im Alten Testament, Spätjudentum und Urchristentum* (WMANT 23; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1967).

Although Wright's understanding of exile has resonated with a good number of scholars (notably Evans, "Aspects of Exile"; idem, "Continuing Exile"; and the majority of contributors to Scott, *Exile*; idem, *Restoration*), not everyone has been equally impressed. Criticism of the Knibb-Scott-Wright line—issued mostly through responses (e.g., Casey, "Wright"; Downing, "Exile"; Bryan, *Jesus*) to Wright's second volume of *Christian Origins and the Question of God*, focusing on the historical Jesus—has recurred on a handful of points. First, critics have questioned whether it is legitimate to ascribe a kind of metanarrative status to the exile-restoration schema on the basis of so few—and in some cases highly sectarian—sources. This criticism becomes more acute when we recognize that certain other ancient texts, rather than harboring a critical view of the Second Temple (ca. 516 BC–AD 70), actually assume that the then-current cultus was both highly functional and indeed the stage for Yahweh's long-awaited reestablishment of the theocratic order. Second, Wright's "ongoing exile" model is charged with imposing an overly tidy view of history onto the highly complex set of historical realities, replete with countless epicycles of victories and setbacks. It is difficult, in the words of Bryan, to imagine "a straight-line trajectory from exile to restoration" (*Jesus*, 14). As critics of the "ongoing exile" thesis seem to ask, would it not be closer to the mark to imagine the first-century Jewish outlook revolving around not the singular twofold event of Exile and Restoration (uppercase, as it were) but the experience of exile occurring alongside countless previous exiles and restorations (lowercase), all anticipating the eventual eschatological consummation?

Within the context of this debate, the crucial question is one of definition: What did the first-century Jew mean by "exile"? The logic of the Knibb-Scott-Wright line may be summarized as follows: For the first-century Jew (1) return from exile was a necessary and sufficient condition of the promised restoration, and (2) they had not yet experienced restoration; (3) therefore, the typical first-century Jew would reason, return from exile had not (truly) taken place. On this approach, exile was principally not a geographical reality but, through synecdoche (whereby one or more presenting symptoms of exile represents the whole idea) a theological and political reality. The Casey-Downing-Bryan model, maintaining that return from exile had already occurred some centuries beforehand, operates by a different set of historical judgments: Whereas return from exile was a necessary condition for full restoration, the former did not logically entail the latter. On this view, exile did indeed principally refer to Israel's removal from the land. The debate may also be reframed from a different angle. Was the return from exile conceived of as one stepping-stone among many to restoration (Casey-Downing-Bryan)? Or was it conceived of as the bridge, logically and temporally inseparable from other markers of divine restoration (Knibb-Scott-Wright)?

Three published dissertations centrally concerned with exile—all published within the past decade—have joined the conversation even as they have provided

fresh points of departure. Simultaneously commending and criticizing Wright for having “the *right insight* but the *wrong exile*” (Pitre, *Jesus*, 35), Brant Pitre maintains that first-century Jews were indeed looking for a geographical return but one that involved not just the return of the two southern tribes but the ten tribes of the northern kingdom as well (*Jesus*, 35–38). Interestingly, this view introduces a mediating position in the debate, aligning not only with the Knibb-Scott-Wright line in its insistence that return from exile had not yet occurred but also with the Casey-Downing-Bryan approach, which adheres to the geographical tenor of exile. Like Pitre, Michael Fuller also has sympathies with Wright’s proposal but maintains that Wright does not do justice to the motif’s complexity and contingency (*Restoration*, 10–11). According to Fuller, the authors of Tobit, Sirach, and 2 Maccabees did not think of return from exile as properly having taken place; return could only finally occur when the population of the Diaspora had also moved back to their land (*Restoration*, 25–48). Other understandings of exile are also teased out (including Qumran, 4 *Ezra*, and Philo); each of these has its own separate way of integrating the notion of exile with other theological commitments. Similarly, Martien Halvorson-Taylor’s study of the exile concept in certain OT texts seeks to emphasize the flexibility of the term. She helpfully writes:

By accommodating a variety of different metaphors that described it, exile laid the groundwork for its own metaphorization. When exile was rendered by other systems of association, it took on increasing conceptual depth. Now participating in, as Ricoeur would call it, “a whole array of intersignifications,” exile was absorbed into a nexus of associations that included death, sterility, bodily and emotional pain, and servitude. (*Enduring Exile*, 202–3)

Halvorson-Taylor concludes that such metaphorization afforded a “compelling motif within early Judaism” (*Enduring Exile*, 203), contributing in particular to apocalyptic and messianic speculation. Such “increased conceptual depth” may well explain the seemingly contradictory portrait of exile that has come down to us in the most relevant Jewish sources. To those sources we now turn.

Exile in Later Postexilic Judaism

Whereas a full-length survey of exile (as a background to the NT) would normally require treatment of texts from the whole range of Israel’s history (preexilic, exilic, and postexilic writings), space here requires limiting the range of inquiry to texts closest to the time of the first century. For discussion of OT materials, the reader is directed to the respective commentaries (see also Ackroyd, *Exile and Restoration*; Fuller, *Restoration*; Halvorson-Taylor, *Enduring Exile*). For the purposes of this essay, I have restricted myself to a representative sampling of some of the more significant texts.

Apocrypha

Tobit (second or third century BC) is a novelistic tale set in the Diaspora, likely written for a Diaspora readership. More than a source of entertainment, the book concerns itself with issues of divine justice and morality. In short, Tobit asks, What does it mean to live as a faithful Jew? Designed to provide its own answer to this question, the narrative closes with a final benedictory prayer on the lips of the main character, part of which reads as follows:

Acknowledge him before the nations, O children of Israel; for he has scattered you among them. He has shown you his greatness even there. . . . He will afflict you for your iniquities, but he will again show mercy on all of you. He will gather you from all the nations among whom you have been scattered. . . . In the land of my exile I acknowledge him, and show his power and majesty to a nation of sinners: “Turn back, you sinners, and do what is right before him; perhaps he may look with favor upon you and show you mercy.” (Tob. 13:3–6)

Impressed by the elaborate nature of the prayer, related apocalyptic material in 13:16–17, and Tobit’s later forecasting that the exiles “will return from their exile and will rebuild Jerusalem in splendor” *after* the initial return from exile (14:5), some scholars (Knibb, “Exile,” 264–68; Wright, *People of God*, 270; Evans, “Continuing Exile,” 82–83) see the book as providing solid evidence that the author regarded postexilic Israel as existing in a state of continued exile. On the other hand, it has been countered that this inference involves an overreading of the text; the prayer was not necessarily relevant to the situation of the audience, for Tobit is, after all, a textually problematic *novel* set in the seventh century BC, one that looks forward to restoration in a more generalized sense (e.g., Jones, “Disputed Questions,” 402). Similar arguments, both for and against the notion of continuing exile, have also been made in regards to Bar. 3:6–8, a text of roughly the same time period.

Another instance of exile language surfaces in the text of 2 Maccabees (late second or early first century BC). Here Jonathan offers a prayer similar to that which Nehemiah offered (cf. Neh. 9:36–37): “Gather together our scattered people, set free those who are slaves among the Gentiles, look on those who are rejected and despised, and let the Gentiles know that you are our God. Punish those who oppress and are insolent with pride. Plant your people in your holy place, as Moses promised” (2 Macc. 1:27–29).

Although the incorporation of exilic theology in Jonathan’s prayer is certainly of interest, not least because he casts his ongoing struggle with the opposing Seleucids in exilic terms, this point must be brought alongside indications within the same book that the regnant priesthood is stamped with divine approval (2 Macc. 2:17; see Jones, “Disputed Questions,” 402–3). The juxtaposition of the two sentiments raises the possibility that Jonathan’s talk of exile reflects a fairly complex understanding. Moreover, one may ask, if 2 Maccabees does presume a condition

of exile continuing well into the second century BC, how does this square with the quasi-messianic accolades accorded to Simon in 1 Macc. 14, the prequel of 2 Maccabees?

Pseudepigrapha

Two of the earliest examples of the genre of ancient Jewish apocalypse are the Apocalypse of Weeks (*1 En.* 93.1–10; 91.11–17; ca. 180 BC) and the Animal Apocalypse (*1 En.* 85–90; ca. 164 BC). As Knibb (“Exile”) has underscored in his now-classic study (see also VanderKam, “Exile,” 96–100), the authors of both texts seem to have attached strikingly little theological significance to the historical return from exile. The Apocalypse of Weeks is a short text that divides the course of history into ten “weeks,” at the conclusion of which a new and eternal heaven of righteousness displaces the old order. According to the Apocalypse of Weeks, those who live in the sixth week remain blinded, having forsaken all wisdom, a situation that results in the destruction of the “house of dominion” and the dispersal of the “whole race of the chosen root” (*1 En.* 93.8)—an obvious allusion to the Assyrian and Babylonian exiles. This is immediately followed by the seventh week, which, although retaining the eventual prospect of an established righteous remnant, is characterized for most of its duration by grim apostasy (*1 En.* 98.9–10). Since scholars broadly agree that the author of the Apocalypse of Weeks locates himself and his milieu within the sixth week, it follows that his assessment of Israel’s history, from 587 BC down to his own time, is essentially negative. Geographical return from exile remains unmentioned, seemingly because it neither reflects nor engenders a substantive change in Israel’s disposition or covenantal standing.

The Animal Apocalypse, an allegory assigning animal characters to various historical groups, is even darker in its reading of postexilic history. Following a reference to the sixth-century BC destruction of the temple (*1 En.* 89.66–67), there is a description of the sheep being handed over to the wild beasts (the gentiles) for destruction, all under the oversight of shepherds (angels?). The shepherds are guilty of allowing more sheep to be devoured than is divinely prescribed (89.69–70), but the Lord of the sheep (Yahweh) only notes this injustice for future reference (89.70–71). Then three of the sheep return to build the house anew; despite resistance from the wild boars, they succeed in building a tower (the temple) along with a table, but, significantly, the bread on the table (the temple showbread) is unclean and impure (89.72–73). From the time of the building of the Second Temple, the allegory indicates, matters only become worse: the sheep remain blind, the shepherds continue to exceed their punitive remit, and the Lord of the Sheep remains unmoved throughout (89.74–77). As the narrative unfolds the course of postexilic history, the gentiles continue to feast on the sheep in even greater gory detail (90.1–6), while the sheep come to be characterized not simply as blind but also as “exceedingly deafened and . . . dim-sighted” (90.7; *OTP* 1:69). For the

author of the Animal Apocalypse, the return from exile was, at its worse, an integral element of Israel's downward spiral and, at its best, of no consequence whatsoever. Although it is impossible to know whether the same author would have considered Israel to be in a technical state of exile as of the second century BC (if such a way of putting the question was even possible), clearly the author understood the covenantal curses associated with exile to be in even greater force in his own day than when the temple was destroyed.

Retelling biblical events as they occurred from creation to Sinai, the second-century BC text of *Jubilees* belongs to the genre of the "rewritten Scripture." The text begins with—and is therefore framed by—an encounter between Yahweh and Moses, in which Yahweh anticipates the apostasy and exile of Israel (*Jub.* 1.13–18). Although drawing largely on Deut. 28, the writer departs from familiar scriptural language by inserting mention of calendrical error as one of the besetting sins facing future Israel (*Jub.* 1.14); apparently the practice of misdating holy days had crept in, together with forgetfulness of God's law, during the time of exile. On the assumption that this point was intentionally added toward refuting (mis)construals of the calendar current in the day, it seems the author of *Jubilees* thought of Israel as still experiencing at least certain residual (as well as deleterious) effects of the exile. To what extent this constituted a continuation of exile depends in part on how one interprets Yahweh's stated intent to "gather them [i.e., the exiles] from the midst of all the nations" (1.15, *OTP* 2:53). From the vantage point of the author, this return from exile may refer to a future moment, marking the onset of the eschatological age (VanderKam, "Exile"), in which case, again so far as the author of *Jubilees* is concerned, God's people are certainly still in exile. Alternatively, this gathering may instead refer to the historical return from Babylon, which would mean that the author sees Israel as having taken only the first step in what amounts to a three-step process: (1) return from Babylonian exile, (2) earnest seeking after God, and (3) the onset of the eschaton (Halpern-Amaru, "Exile," 140–41). In either case, if return from exile has occurred for the author of *Jubilees* (a point that remains unclear), the true design of that return has yet to be realized.

A rather different perspective on exile seems to surface in the *Testament of Moses* (early first century AD). Explaining to Joshua important events as they will transpire, Moses looks ahead to the exile and lingers on the pious response of the captives (*T. Mos.* 3). Duly recognizing their plight and their sin, the tribes together call out to Yahweh, invoke the Abrahamic covenant (with added emphasis on the land), and wait for their God to respond. The author of the *Testament* through the mouthpiece of Moses then goes on to say that "they will be slaves for about seventy-seven years" (3.14, *OTP* 1:929). Since exile was tantamount to slavery (Ezra 9:9; Neh. 9:36; Jer. 25:11; 2 Macc. 1:27), this means that Moses anticipates a fixed seventy-seven-year exile (an unusual duration, but cf. Matt. 18:22; Gen. 4:24). For the same author, the Babylonian exile seems to have fulfilled redemptive purposes: those who are not able to return to offer sacrifices at the reestablished

cultus grieve out of a holy longing; meanwhile, the northern kingdom is described as flourishing among the nations despite its dislocation (*T. Mos.* 4.6–9). Even if the exile is followed by intensified suffering in subsequent chapters, the historical exile not only is finite but also appears to have successfully achieved its divine purpose.

Like the *Testament of Moses*, the post-temple text of *2 Baruch* (ca. AD 100) is also relatively sanguine in its understanding of the redemptive value of the deportation (cf. *4 Ezra*). Judah's rebellion is heinous, and so the Lord foretells, "Behold, therefore, I shall bring evil upon this city and its inhabitants. And it will be taken away from before my presence for a time. And I shall scatter this people among the nations that they may do good to the nations. And my people will be chastened, and the time will come that they will look for that which can make their times prosperous" (*2 Bar.* 1.4–5; *OTP* 1:621).

In contrast to some of the above-cited texts, *2 Baruch* finds redemptive value in Israel's exile. But judging by the Apocalypse of the Clouds (53.1–74.4) within the text, an allegory that summarizes Israel's history as symbolically alternating between dark and brightly lit waters, it is to be inferred that the author saw exile as cyclical reality. For better or worse, his audience is indeed in exile but stands to be restored once again per their obedience (85.3–5).

Qumran

The literary witness of the Qumran community consistently attests to a community that saw itself in exile in some sense. This much becomes clear on examination of only one of its charter texts, the *Damascus Document* (CD). Here one finds the repetition of the phrase *šby ysr'l* as a sobriquet or nickname for the covenanters (CD 2.4–5; 3.19–4.3; 6.2–7); the Hebrew phrase has been variously translated as "repentant of Israel," the "returnees of Israel," or, better yet, the "captives of Israel." Most likely they are "captives" in the sense of being exiles who "went out of the land of Judah" (CD 4.2–3; 6.5). The text of CD begins as follows:

For when Israel abandoned Him by being faithless, He turned away from them and from His sanctuary and gave them up to the sword. But when He called to mind the covenant He made with their forefathers, He left a remnant for Israel and did not allow them to be exterminated. In the era of wrath—three hundred and ninety years from the time He handed them over to the power of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon—He took care of them and caused to grow from Israel and from Aaron a root of planting to inherit His land and to grow fat on the good produce of His soil. They considered their iniquity and they knew that they were guilty men, and had been like the blind and like those groping for the way twenty years. But God considered their deeds, that they had sought Him with a whole heart. So he raised up for them a teacher of righteousness to guide them in the way of His heart. (CD 1.3–11)²

2. In this chapter, all translations of the Qumran material are from Michael Wise, Martin Abegg Jr., and Edward Cook, *The Dead Sea Scrolls: A New Translation* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 2006).

The faithful sectarians identify themselves as standing in the trajectory of the faithful remnant, the embodiment of the Isaianic “blind, . . . groping for the way” (cf. Isa. 42:16), who, according to the biblical prophet, will experience deliverance from exile (Isa. 42:1–43:9). Meanwhile, the Qumran covenanters affirm that God has taken notice of their piety and has responded accordingly by granting them a Teacher of Righteousness “to guide them in *the way*,” which exegetically is one and the same as “the way” (back from exile) heralded in Isa. 40:1–3 (cf. Isa. 40:14; 43:16, 19; Acts 9:2; 19:23). Isaiah 40, focusing on a vision of return from exile, was undoubtedly a defining text for the Qumran sectarians (1QS 8.12–14; 9.18–20; cf. 4Q258 frg. 3 3.4; 4Q259 frg. 1 3.19), as it would later be for John the Baptizer and the early Christians (Matt. 3:1–3; Mark 1:2–4; Luke 3:3–6; John 1:23; Rom. 11:33–34).

The numerical calculations in CD 1.3–11 should not go unobserved. The 390-year “era of wrath” derives from Ezek. 4:5, a text in which Yahweh informs the prophet that such will be the length of Israel’s captivity. The failure on the part of the Qumran author to mention any return from exile in the period between the sack of Jerusalem and the termination of the nearly four-century period suggests that his community saw the return under Cyrus as incidental to a much more dominant trend of disobedience and wrath. It is improbable that this 390-year term, together with the extra twenty years of groping about, held merely symbolic or ideal value. Counting 410 years from the destruction of the temple, we arrive at 176 BC, not an unlikely time for the formation of the Qumran sect. This same window of time is *roughly* corroborated by a separate calculation in 4Q390 1.7–8, where the end of exile is promised at the “seventh jubilee” (343 or 350 years) after “the destruction of the land.” If the founder of the Qumran community derived theological significance from his being forced into geographical exile by his enemies (1QH^a 12.8–9; 4Q177 frgs. 5–6 1.7–10), this point must have only paled in comparison with the implications of their numerological exegesis: Yahweh was about to exhaust the term of the exile in the very generation of Qumran’s founding.

Other important Qumran texts likewise cast the sect’s self-identity against the backdrop of exile and restoration. According to the *War Scroll*, for example, the eschatological battle between “the exiles of the Sons of Light” (1QM 1.3) and the Sons of Darkness was to be waged on the warrior-priests’ return from the “Wilderness of the Peoples”—a certain reference to Ezek. 20:35, foretelling a moment in which divine judgment is executed and Yahweh gathers his people from the nations to which they have been scattered (20:34). The Qumran sect saw itself as taking on the identity of true Israel in exile, enduring eschatological wrath for the sake of procuring national atonement (4Q504 2.7–17). All those who resisted their teachings would fall prey to a renewed captivity or, perhaps more precisely, the same captivity that befell Israel in 587 BC (4QMMT C18–22; it is difficult to stipulate this point). In any case, the Qumran corpus gives us some of the clearest evidence of a Second Temple Jewish community that saw exile as continuing and indeed climaxing in its own day.

Conclusion

The most recent scholarship on exile has issued a salutary reminder of the necessity of a nuanced understanding of exile in antiquity. Given the diverse ways in which various Second Temple Jewish texts employ the motif, it now becomes difficult to make unqualified generalizations regarding ancient Judaism's understanding of exile. Certain Jewish communities of the period seem to have cast their own difficult situations in exilic terms for both rhetorical reasons and theological reasons, the latter usually as an outworking of the conviction that their suffering could be usefully mapped onto a broader redemptive-historical timeline. Although some texts envisage exile as an event of finite duration in the past, others seem to assume an ongoing exile. Likewise, alongside indications of exile and return as being nonrepeatable events within a unilinear timeline, one also finds ascriptions that are more cyclical in nature. In short, for pious Jews exile was a lens through which to interpret their own experience within the ambit or scope of Yahweh's mysterious providence. The meaning of that experience and providence varied according to each community's theological commitments, religio-political situation, understanding of Israel's national history, and so on. Notions of exile were as variegated as Judaism itself.

This neither proves nor disproves the assumption that exile and return were fundamental categories for the NT writers. However, precisely because exile was put to such widespread and wide-ranging use in Second Temple Jewish texts, we have some reason to expect something similar in the texts of the NT. Each NT book should be understood on its own terms and with its own unique theology of exile. At the same time, since the authors of the NT held certain core convictions in common, there is reasonable warrant for teasing out family resemblances between these exilic theologies. One such family resemblance, difficult to dispute, is the sense in some NT texts that return from exile has already occurred in Christ even as, paradoxically, a condition of exile still endures. Much like the kingdom of God (at least as it is now commonly though not universally understood), exile retains an already-but-not-yet aspect. This makes sense inasmuch as return from exile is a highly allusive and rich way of describing the coming of the kingdom; it provides not only an eschatological framework but also conceptual handles for coming to terms with the "present evil age" (Gal. 1:4), the existence from which believers have been redeemed.

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