

REVOLUTIONS IN JUDAEO- CHRISTIAN BELIEFS ABOUT SALVATION

SECOND-TEMPLE PERIOD



LITERATURE

DOUG MASON

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SECOND-TEMPLE PERIOD: LITERATURE

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***DO YOU REALLY WANT TO LIVE FOREVER,
FOREVER AND EVER?***

Our exegesis must govern our theology, not the other way around.

If our exegesis is at odds with our theology—and if we are confident in our exegesis—then maybe we should begin making changes to our theology rather than searching for solace in the likes of Paul, John, or Acts. ...

Surely it is our duty to allow the results of our exegesis to reshape and even change, if necessary, our theology.—*Did Jesus Teach Salvation by Works?*, pages 317, 13, Alan P. Stanley.

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REVOLUTIONS IN JUDAEO-CHRISTIAN BELIEFS ABOUT SALVATION

IN THIS SERIES

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SECOND-TEMPLE PERIOD: SPIRIT WORLD: (IN PREPARATION)

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SATAN. LUCIFER. DEVIL: ASSUMPTIONS AND PRESUMPTIONS

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A LIBRARY OF REFERENCES

This Study Guide outlines key religious developments during the Second Temple period and their causes.

As the list of Resources in the associated Part shows, there is an array of excellent books and articles that deal with the Second Temple Period. This Study Guide only provides a few snippets from some of the listed Resources. These snippets are nothing more than “teasers”. Because this is simply a pointer, at times several resources are cited that provide the same or similar information. This gives you the opportunity to access several resources and obtain the widest range of information..

This Study provides a structured overview, a framework to help you extract the greatest value from these Resources. **The list of Resources is by far the most important part of this Study.**

We learn through activity, so accessing Resources strengthens convictions. They also provide the opportunity to verify whether my statements are well supported. Investigation will also uncover further gems.

In everything I write, I want to stimulate, to challenge, to generate the excitement that comes from self-discovery. Learning only comes through active working. The more difficult that a task is, the greater is the reward and the satisfaction when an issue is resolved. Never be afraid of investigating. Truth is its own reward. Never be afraid of accepting Truth, no matter how uncomfortable or challenging it is.

SECOND-TEMPLE PERIOD LITERATURE

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I Opened a Book

"I opened a *book* and in I strode.
Now nobody can find me.

I've left my chair, my house, my road,
My town and my world behind me.

I'm wearing the cloak, I've slipped on the ring,
I've swallowed the magic potion.

I've fought with a dragon, dined with a king
And dived in a bottomless ocean.

I opened a book and made some friends.
I shared their tears and laughter

And followed their road with its bumps and bends
To the happily ever after.

I finished my book and out I came.
The cloak can no longer hide me.

My chair and my house are just the same,
But I have a *book* inside me."

— Julia Donaldson

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TERMINOLOGY

The word “Bible” indicates a library of books, a collection. The term: “The Holy Bible” refers to a collection of books recognised by a religious body, authorised by some. Each religious affiliation has its own list (canon) of writings. Each sect, ancient and modern, whether Orthodox, Roman Catholic, Protestant, Ethiopian, Jewish, each has its own “Holy Bible”, its own Scriptures, its own “Word of God”.

Initially, scrolls (rolls) were used. When a scroll was too long to manage, it would be divided into multiple scrolls, for example: 1 Kings and 2 Kings. Early Christians adopted the *codex* format, which enabled a collection of writings to be assembled into a single volume.

A codex is essentially an ancient book, consisting of one or more quires of sheets of papyrus or parchment folded together to form a group of leaves, or pages. This form of the book was not widely used in the ancient world until around the second century AD, when it slowly but steadily began to replace the traditional book form, the papyrus roll. (<https://apps.lib.umich.edu/reading/Paul/codex.html> accessed 19 January 2021)

While a gathering of Hebrew scrolls might – and are – referred to as the “Hebrew Bible”, this is not technically precise, given that over the centuries they were not collected as a library in codex format. Equally, the term “Hebrew Scriptures” should not be considered as technically precise until the writings had officially been so declared – and it is not known when or whether that took place. But neither has the Protestant’s list of “Holy Scriptures” ever been formally voted on. All that can be assumed is that a collection resulted from a dominant Jewish sect, more than likely Rabbinic Judaism, who were the offspring of the Pharisees. Another Jewish sect, the Sadducees, recognised only the Torah. There does not appear to have been an authorised Jewish Canon as late as the first century CE.

Each list of books developed over time and the decisions on which writings were acceptable, as well as the contents and the sequence, was made by the dominant sect at the time. A writing was accepted when it agreed with the doctrinal position that had already evolved in that sect.

This sectarian attitude towards The Bible continues, with canons determined within sectarian boundaries.

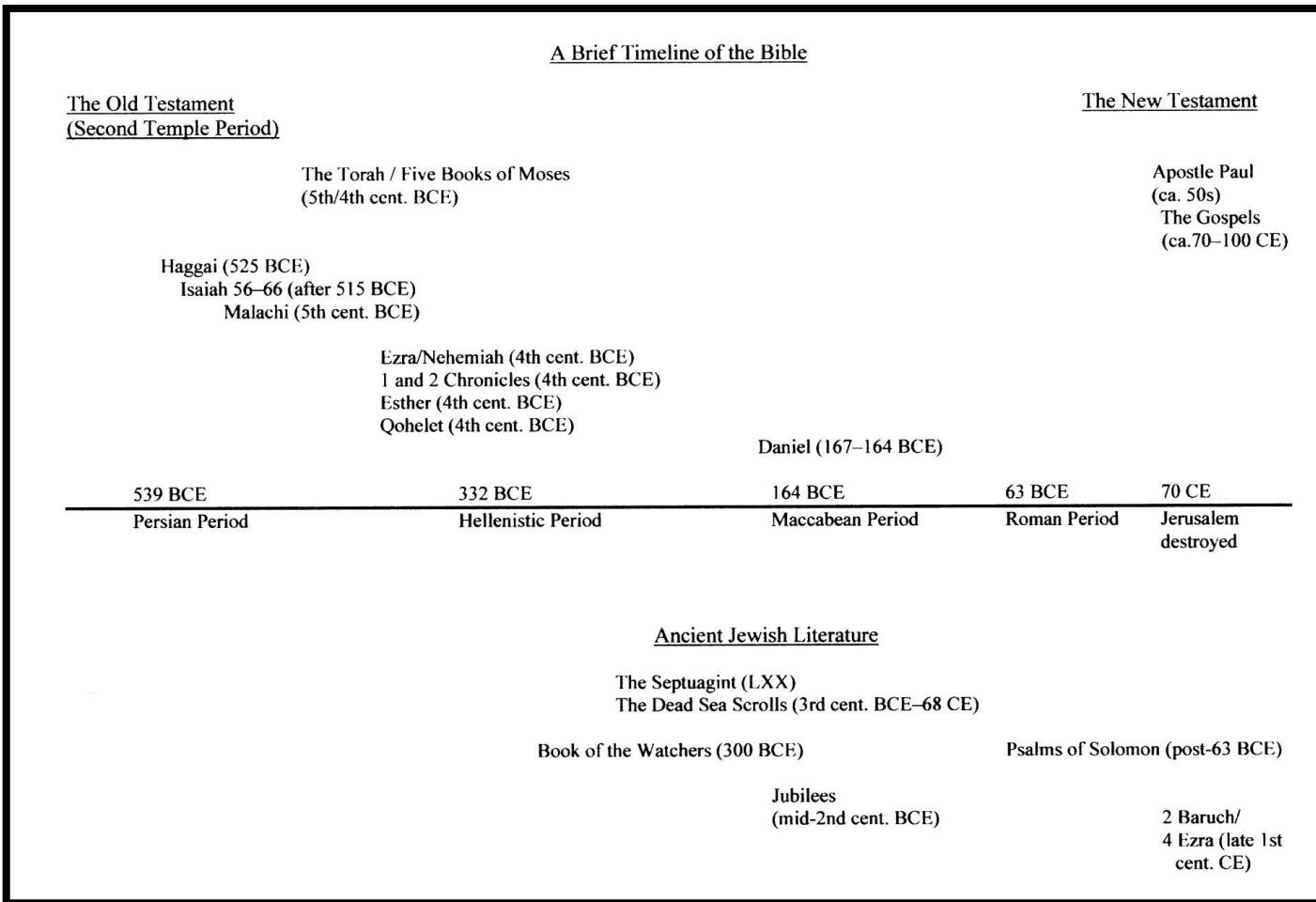
Protestants say the Bible contains 66 books: the 39 books of the Old Testament (OT) and the 27 books of the New Testament (NT). They might even be able to name them. Roman Catholics say the Sacred Scripture consisted of 77 books while the Eastern Orthodox say there are 81. The Ethiopian Orthodox Church has an even larger canon. There are other groups, like the Syriac and the Coptic churches which have different canonical criteria. (Carlson, Kindle Locations 265-274)

To that mix should be added the Septuagint(s) and the TANAKH, at least.

I would have preferred the expression “Hebrew literature”, or maybe “Jewish literature” at a pinch. The use of “Hebrew literature” would recognise the writings that later were not recognised as “Scripture” but nevertheless were genuinely produced by representative Hebrew/Jewish scribes and were accepted by many for centuries, even forming the basis of subsequent beliefs by Jews, Christians, and Muslims.

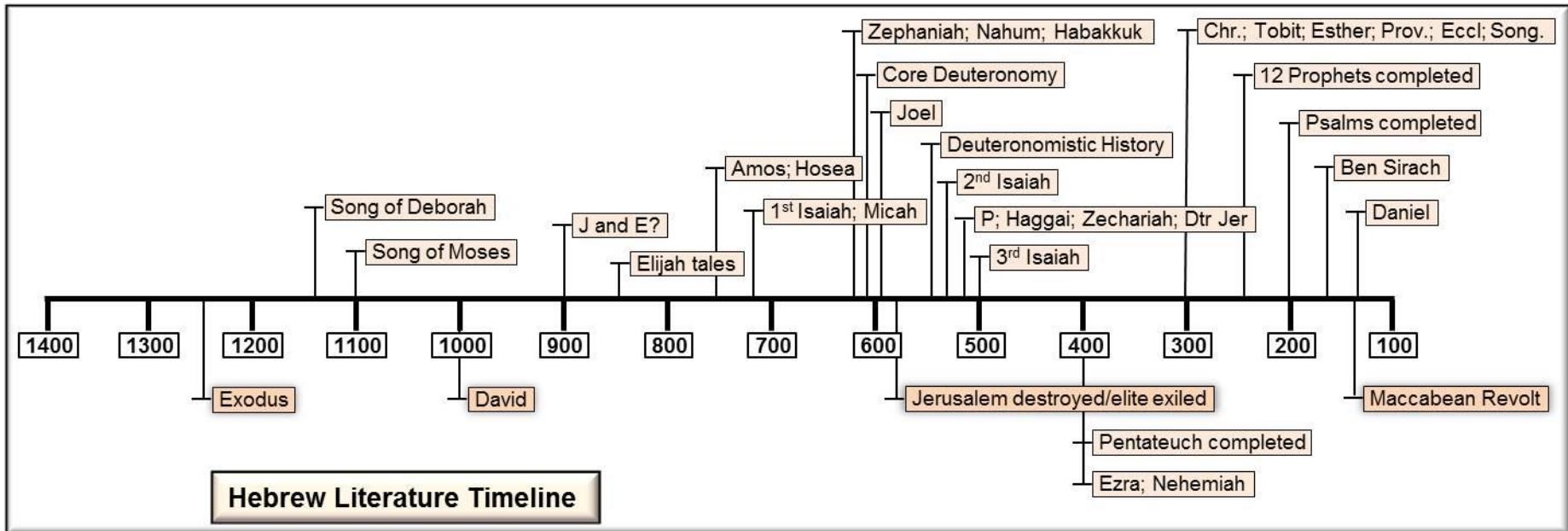
Each piece of literature shines a light on the community that produced or edited it. It indicates how they thought. We must never impress 21st century thinking and attitudes on cultures that existed thousands of years ago. We must let them speak for themselves, without judgement.

CHRONOLOGY OF BIBLICAL LITERATURE



(Henze (2017), 20)

Chronology of Biblical literature



Based on <https://www.pinterest.com.au/pin/423338433724326657/> also: <https://rationalfaiths.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/04/Hebrew-Timeline.png>
accessed 17 January 2021

Chronology of Biblical literature

CHART OF BIBLICAL LITERATURE, AND INFERRED CHRONOLOGY		(ref: Chilton,52)
PATRIARCHAL AGE (2000–1300 B.C.E.)	Nahum (612–610) Habakkuk (610–598)	Jonah, Ruth, Song of Songs, Lamentations (fourth century B.C.E.)
Oral production of patriarchal stories, cultic legends, and foundation epics		
AGES OF MOSES, JOSHUA, JUDGES: Clan period (1300–1000)	EXILIC PERIOD (587–539)	<u>HELLENISTIC PERIOD (332–164)</u>
Early poems (e.g., Exodus 15, Judges 5, Psalm 29, Deuteronomy 33, Genesis 49)	Parts of Jeremiah Early edition of D (Deuteronomy–Kings) by 586 Ezekiel (593–565) Compilation of Pentateuchal materials, including P, as well as Proverbs (between 560 and 450)	Former and Latter Prophets collected together, with composition of the second half of Joel, and <u>canonization of the Pentateuch</u> Ecclesiastes (fourth or third century)
UNITED MONARCHY: Saul, David, Solomon (1010–922)	POSTEXILIC PERIOD (538)	<u>Beginning of the Enochic tradition (third century)</u> , Esther (third century)
Early poems in 1–2 Samuel Some Davidic psalms Earliest versions of Court History (2 Samuel 9–1 Kings 2)	B.C.E.–70 C.E.): Return from exile, 538–516 B.C.E. (restoration with the beginning of Persian period) <u>Second Isaiah (chapters 40–55)</u> (538–522) Haggai (520)	<u>Translation of Pentateuch into Greek</u> (beginning in 250) Ben Sira or Ecclesiasticus (ca. 200)
DIVIDED MONARCHY (922–587/6)	First edition of Zechariah (chapters 1–8, and including the earlier prophecy of Haggai) (520–518)	<u>MACCABEAN PERIOD: In 164</u>
Tenth and Ninth Centuries Oldest prose of Pentateuch: J (920), E (850)	PERSIAN PERIOD (516–332)	B.C.E. Judas Maccabeus sees to the restoration of the cult of Yahweh in the Temple and establishes a dynasty nationally allied with the Romans in 161 B.C.E., which extends the borders of Israel to cover the greatest territory ever by the end of the century
EIGHTH CENTURY (fall of northern kingdom, 722/1)	<u>Third Isaiah (chapters 56–66)</u> (500–450) Malachi, Joel, Obadiah (fifth century B.C.E.)	<u>Daniel (ca. 165)</u>
Amos (760–740); Hosea (750–720)	Second edition of Zechariah (chapters 9–14) (fifth century, or later according to many scholars, some of whom locate chapters 12–14 during the Hellenistic period)	Final compilation of Psalter, and canonization with the Prophets; composition of 1 Maccabees (during the second century B.C.E.)
Early prose parts of Former Prophets	<u>Ezra/Nehemiah and Chronicles</u> (450–350)	<u>ROMAN PERIOD (63 B.C.E., when Pompey claimed Jerusalem and Israel for Rome, until the fourth century c.e.)</u>
First edition of Isaiah [chapters 1–39] (742–700)	Final shaping of Proverbs (400)	<u>Close of canon of Hebrew Bible, by 200 C.E.</u>
Micah (740–690)	<u>Job</u> (fifth or fourth century B.C.E.)	
SEVENTH CENTURY (Josiah, 640–609)		
More psalms produced		
Zephaniah (640–625)		
First edition of the source D, principally parts of Deuteronomy		
Most of Jeremiah (627–582)		

(Chilton, 52)

CHART OF LITERARY COMPOSITIONS

(McNamara (1983), 300-305)

DATE	EVENTS	LITERARY COMPOSITION
<i>Persian Period (539-333 B.C.)</i>		
538	Edict of Cyrus	
520	Rebuilding of temple	
ca. 500		Prophets Haggai and Zechariah Third Isaiah
445-433	Mission of Nehemiah	
428(or 398)	Mission of Ezra	
ca.450		Beginnings of rabbinic tradition (??) Malachi
ca. 350		Apocalypse of Isaiah (Isa 24-27) The Chronicler (1,2 Chronicles, Ezra-Nehemiah)
333-332	Destruction of Persian Empire. Greek Rule	
<i>Greek Period (333-63 B.C.)</i>		
323-198	Palestine under Ptolemies of Egypt	
312		Pseudo-Hecataeus of Abdera (Gr)
ca. 300		Pseudo-Eupolemus (Gr)
4th-3rd cent.		Enochic <i>Book of the Watchers</i> (1 Enoch 1-36)
do.		<i>Astronomical Book of Enoch</i> (1 Enoch 72-82).
do.		Aramaic <i>Testament of Levi</i>
do.		
do.		
do		
ca. 250		Aramaic <i>Testament of Kohath</i>
ca. 250		Hebrew <i>Testament of Naphtali</i>
250-100		Deutero-Zechariah (Zech 9-14)
220-205		Greek Septuagint translation of Pentateuch
198	Palestine passes from Ptolemaic to Seleucid rule; Mention of Gerousia of priests and scribes in ruling position (<i>Ant</i> 12,3,3 §142)	Later Greek translations Targum of Job (Qumran) Targum of Leviticus 16 (Qumran) Demetrius (Gr)
200-150		
2nd cent		
do.		
180		
ca. 175		
187-175	Seleucus IV. Beginnings of Hellenization. Resisted by High Priest Onias III.	Aristobulus (Gr) Artapanus (Gr)
175	Onias, on visit to Seleucus, ousted from High Priesthood by his brother Jason	Theodosius of Shechem (Gr) Sirach
175-164	Antiochus IV Epiphanes	Proto-type of <i>Shemoneh Esreh</i> (Hebrew Sirach 51:12)

Chart of literary compositions (McNamara (1983), 300-305)

172	Jason ousted from High Priesthood by non-Zadokite Menelaus.	
171	Onias III murdered	
do. 170		Philo the Elder (Gr) <i>Saga of the Tobiads</i> (Gr)
ca. 170		Apocryphal Psalm 154 (11QPs 154)
do.		
167-164	Persecution of Antiochus Rebellion of Maccabees~ Mention of Hasidim (1 Mac 2:42-44). Hasidim join with Maccabees.	
ca. 164		The Book of Daniel <i>The Assumption of Moses</i> (original version) <i>Enochic Book of Dream Visions</i> (1 Enoch 83-90)
162	Alcimus, "priest of the line of Aaron" made High Priest Hasidim withdraw support for Maccabees	
160-150		Jason of Cyrene (Gr)
160-142	Judas Maccabee Three sects, Sadducees, Pharisees, Essenes, first mentioned for his reign	
158-157		Eupolemus (Gr)
ca. 150		<i>Book of Judith</i> <i>Acts of Judas Maccabee</i> <i>Sibylline Oracles, Book III</i> (Gr) <i>Words (Liturgy) of Heavenly Lights</i> (Qumran)
152	Jonathan appointed High Priest	Qumran <i>Hymns</i>
ca. 150	Qumran: Man of Lies, Wicked Priest, Teacher of Righteousness	Qumran <i>Community Rule</i> Qumran text on New Jerusalem
142	Simon Maccabee declared High Priest	Qumran <i>Temple Scroll</i>
142-104	John Hyrcanus Hyrcanus breaks with Pharisees. Sadducees in favour	
125-105		Enochic <i>Book of Giants</i>
ca. 124		2 Maccabees
ca. 114		Greek Esther
ca. 100		Ezechiels, Tragic Poet (Gr)
ca. 100		<i>Letter of Aristeas</i>
103-76	Alexander Jannaeus: resisted by Pharisees. At death advises wife make peace with Pharisees	Qumran, <i>Damascus Document, Angelic Liturgy</i> (Qumran) 1 Maccabees <i>Prayer of Manasseh</i> (possibly) <i>Admonitions of Enoch</i> (1 Enoch 91-107)

Chart of literary compositions (McNamara (1983), 300-305)

76-67	Alexandra Salome. Pharisees regain royal favour	
<i>Roman Period (63 B.C.-180 A.D.)</i>		
63	Conquest of Jerusalem by Pompey. Palestine part of Roman Empire, in province of Syria	
50		3 Maccabees Wisdom of Solomon (Gr) <i>Psalms of Solomon</i>
ca. 48		
37 (or 31)	Qumran monastery destroyed	Philo Judaeus (Gr) <i>Testament of Job</i> <i>Qumran Blessings</i> <i>Qumran Midrash on Last Days</i> <i>Qumran Messianic Anthology</i> <i>Qumran Pesharim</i> <i>Qumran Genesis Apocryphon</i> <i>Qumran Pseudo-Daniel text</i> <i>Qumran Prayer of Nabonidus</i> <i>Qumran Messianic Rule (1QSa)</i> <i>Qumran War Rule</i>
25 B.C.-A.D. 50		
1st cent B.C.		
ca. 7 B.C.	Birth of Jesus Christ	<i>The Parables of Enoch (1 Enoch 37-71)</i> <i>2 (Slavonic) Enoch</i> <i>Life of Adam and Eve</i> <i>(The Apocalypse of Abraham)</i> <i>Testament of Abraham</i> <i>Biblical Antiquities of Pseudo-Philo</i>
1st cent A.D.		<i>4 Maccabees</i> <i>Testament of Twelve Patriarchs</i>
A.D. 38-ca. 100	Flavius Josephus	Josephus, <i>The Jewish War</i> Josephus, <i>Antiquities</i> Josephus, <i>Life</i> . Josephus, <i>Against Apion</i> <i>2 (4) Esdras</i>
ca. 78		
ca. 100		<i>2 Baruch</i>
80-100		<i>3 Baruch (Greek Apocalypse of Baruch.)</i>
ca. 100		Bar Cochba Letters
early 2nd cent.		
132-135	Second Jewish Revolt	Completion of the <i>Mishnah</i> The <i>Tosefta</i>
ca. 180		

INFLUENTIAL, PIVOTAL SECOND-TEMPLE LITERATURE

Studying the Second Temple literature brings rewards

The rewards for even non-specialists studying Second Temple texts far outweigh the challenges and supposed risks of doing so. Indeed, there are many advantages to becoming familiar with early Judaism and the relevant literature.

Bruce Metzger helpfully assessed the importance of these works (esp. the Apocrypha) for biblical studies over a half century ago:

Though it would be altogether extravagant to call the Apocrypha the keystone of the two Testaments, it is not too much to regard these intertestamental books as an historical hyphen that serves a useful function in bridging what to most readers of the Bible is a blank of several hundred years. To neglect what the Apocrypha have to tell us about the development of Jewish life and thought during those critical times is as foolish as to imagine that one can understand the civilization and culture of America today by passing from colonial days to the twentieth century without taking into account the industrial and social revolution of the intervening centuries.

(Footnote: Bruce M. Metzger, *An Introduction to the Apocrypha* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1957), 151– 52. See also David A. deSilva, *The Jewish Teachers of Jesus, James, and Jude: What Earliest Christianity Learned from the Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), who argues that Jesus and his half-brothers “learned and adopted … traditions otherwise known only in particular extrabiblical texts” (10); “Jesus’s teaching was certainly innovative, but much more of his teaching has a ‘pedigree’ than is often supposed” (9). A similar case is made by Matthias Henze, *Mind the Gap: How the Jewish Writings between the Old and New Testament Help Us Understand Jesus* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2017), 4: “In order to understand Jesus and his message, we have to have a basic understanding of first-century Judaism. To gain that understanding, reading the Old Testament alone is not enough. Jesus did not emerge from the Old Testament, he emerged from the Judaism of his time.”)

Concerns about canonicity are also difficult to justify. We, too, embrace the evangelical and wider Protestant belief in the authority of inspired Scripture. Refusing to engage early Jewish literature on theological grounds, however, goes well beyond this commitment.

Even Martin Luther famously insisted that the books of the Apocrypha “are not held as equal to the sacred Scriptures, and nevertheless are useful and good to read.”

(Footnote: Cited in *The Apocrypha: The Lutheran Edition with Notes* (St. Louis: Concordia, 2012), xviii. See also how Matthew Barrett defends the sufficiency of Scripture while also **urging Protestants to recognize the value of extrabiblical data for the task of hermeneutics**: “Such factors demonstrate the high importance of general revelation, even guarding us against certain biblical caricatures of sola Scriptura” (*God’s Word Alone— The Authority of Scripture: What the Reformers Taught ... and Why It Still Matters* [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2016], 338– 39, **bold** added.)

In fact, the Apocrypha was included in most early Protestant printings of the Bible (e.g., Luther’s Bible and the King James Version), though now separated into its own section. It was only in the early nineteenth century when Bibles began to be printed without it. (Maston in Blackwell (2018), 31)

To interpret the Gospels, engage with the Second Temple Jewish literature

To interpret the Gospels wisely, students must not ignore Second Temple Jewish literature but engage it with frequency, precision, and a willingness to acknowledge theological continuity and discontinuity. (Maston in Blackwell (2018), 32)

The various Old Testaments are the literatures of a long succession of many parties who were prepared to make compromises

Although II Chronicles may have been intended to replace Kings (which it repeatedly contradicts) both have been preserved.

The editors of the Pentateuch not only preserved, but combined in a single corpus, legal codes of which the details were obviously contradictory

The legislation of Ezekiel was independently preserved, although its contradictions of the Pentateuch continued to give trouble until Pharisaic times.

Thus what we have in the various Old Testaments is not the literature of a single party but the literature of a large number and long succession of parties which sometimes have come together by compromise in more or less enduring alliances, sometimes have been separated by quarrels, and finally, because of their separation, have preserved different collections of the literature—Pharisaic and Samaritan, Greek and Syriac. Evidence of their earlier differences appears in the contradictions between and within the various Old Testament books; evidence of their alliances appears in the common preservation of such contradictory material. (Smith, Morton (1987), 9)

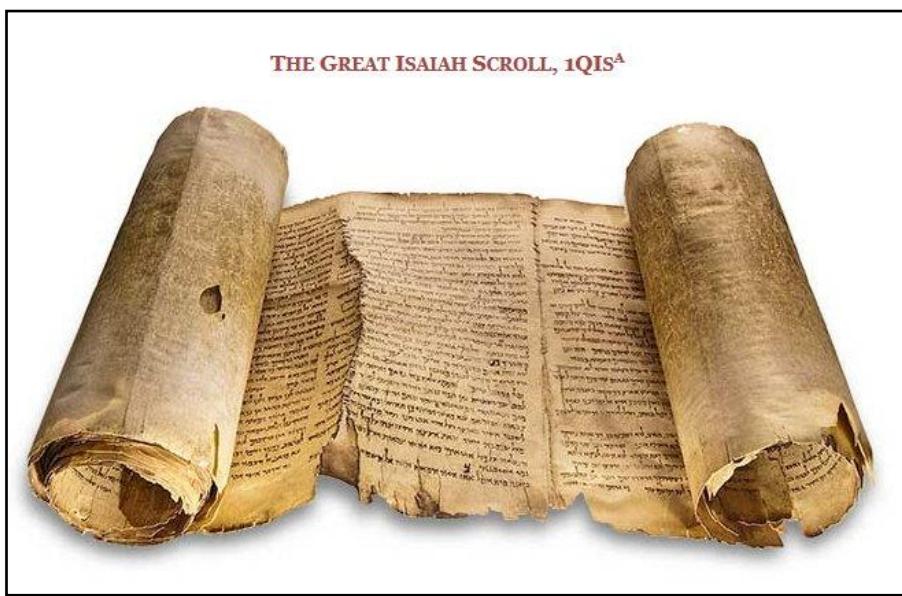


Figure 1: *The Great Isaiah Scroll, Qumran*

A variety of sources was used as Scriptures during the Second Temple period

The evidence from the Dead Sea Scrolls, Samaritan Pentateuch, Greek Jewish Scriptures, and MT (Masoretic Text) reveal that all were used as Scripture during the Second Temple period and that all witness to the Jewish Scriptures, but none may stake a historical claim for being the best witness to the original Jewish Scriptures or the Christian OT (Old Testament). (McDonald (2007), 235)

The Hebrew Bible presents the views of a small section of society, the literate elite

The Deuteronomistic texts, as well as much of the rest of the Hebrew Bible, mainly deal with the state religion and the religion of the powerful. The Hebrew Bible was written by a group of people who probably represent only a small section of the society, the literate elite, who was close to the society's powerful. (Pakkala, in Oorschot, 268)

The Aaronid priests exerted great authority during the period of the Second Temple

Certainly it was during the Second Temple period that the Aaronid priests were in authority. The stature of the priests in society at the time allowed them to establish and interpret the Bible. They were the main authority during this period, as there was no viable monarchy. (Alpert, 77)

Second Temple Judaism created the Bible

Second Temple Judaism is a "book religion." At its heart lies the Hebrew Bible, the book that Jews call Tanak (or Tanakh) and Christians call the Old Testament.

Preexilic Israel produced the raw materials out of which most of the Bible was constructed, but it was Second Temple Judaism that created the Bible, venerated the very parchment on which it was written, and devoted enormous energies to its interpretation. ...

The Jews of the Second Temple period created the document that Christians call "the Old Testament" and that Jews call "Tanak" (pronounced Tanakh)—an acronym for Torah (the five books of Moses), Neviim (the Prophets), and Ketuvim (the Writings)—that is, the Bible. In the Persian period, the various strands of the Torah were woven together. ...

In the Hellenistic period, the words of the prophets underwent a similar process of selection and edition. The prophecies of Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and the twelve prophets (Hosea to Malachi) had been augmented through the centuries by the words of numerous anonymous seers and interpolators, the most famous of whom are Second Isaiah and Third Isaiah. (Cohen, 11, 173)

Overview of Second Temple Jewish Literature

The Second Temple Jewish writings were composed by numerous authors in multiple languages over several hundred years. They derive from geographical provenances extending over much of the Ancient Near East. There is no easy way to characterize or categorize these texts. Still, scholarly surveys of ancient Judaism normally assign individual Second Temple Jewish texts to one of three main literary bodies—the Septuagint, the Apocrypha, and the Pseudepigrapha—collections which were unrecognized by the original authors, having been determined by later editors and scholars. Accordingly, these corpuses overlap in different places.

The Septuagint (abbreviated LXX) is a collection of Jewish texts in Greek that includes the Greek translation of the Old Testament as well as other Jewish writings. It was the most widely used Greek version in antiquity, though other Greek versions also existed. The Old Testament Apocrypha (also called the deuterocanonical books) are a subset of the texts found in the Septuagint (though not in the Hebrew Bible) that were accepted as authoritative by patristic (and medieval) Christians and included in the Vulgate (a Latin translation that became the authoritative version for the medieval church). (Footnote: The canonical status of these texts for patristic Christians is unclear, but they did treat them as authoritative. These texts were later included in

the Old Testament by Roman Catholic and Orthodox Christians because of their reception by the church in the patristic period.)

Different Christian groups have variations in their canonical lists related to the Apocrypha, but the primary collection includes the books of Tobit, Judith, Additions to Esther, the Wisdom of Solomon, Sirach (Ecclesiasticus), Baruch, the Epistle of Jeremiah, Additions to Daniel (the Prayer of Azariah, Song of the Three Young Men, Susanna, and Bel and the Dragon), and 1 and 2 Maccabees. Certain churches also afford special status to works such as 1 and 2 Esdras (= "Ezra" in Greek), the Prayer of Manasseh, and Psalm 151.

In addition to the Greek translation of the Hebrew Bible and what later became known as the Apocrypha, the LXX also includes, in certain copies, the books of 3 Maccabees, 4 Maccabees, 1 Esdras, the Psalms of Solomon, and Odes of Solomon (including the Prayer of Manasseh). (Maston in Blackwell (2018), 36)

The objective of the Deuteronomistic laws was to ensure the love of Yahweh and the worship of him alone

All the laws in Deuteronomy are dominated by the Yahweh alone tradition. It has encased them in a framework which declares, at the beginning and end of the code, that their object is to ensure the love of Yahweh and the worship of him alone. [Deut. 6.4f., 12.12ff.; 11; 26] (Smith, Morton (1987), 40)

The primary concern of the Old Testament was the cult of Yahweh

The Old Testament is primarily concerned with the cult of the god Yahweh. ... The Old Testament undertakes to show how this cult was established, to outline the rules for its practice (including the laws which must be observed by its adherents), and to show that, throughout history, its proper practice led to prosperity, its neglect to disaster. ...

The purposes of the Bible are to tell the worshipers of Yahweh what they should do and to persuade them that they had better do it. (Smith, Morton (1987), 11)

The psalms were originally written to describe David or another figure in the ancient world

Most modern commentators agree with Rashi that the psalms were not originally written with an inspired prophetic meaning, but rather to describe David or another figure in the ancient world. On the other hand, most Christian commentators still think that Jesus fulfilled the messianic hope of these psalms.

The majority position of evangelical interpreters is that the psalms were not intended originally by the author to describe a future messiah, but a deeper meaning (*sensus plenior*) was added later, either by the editors of the psalter (i.e., those who compiled them in their present order), by the New Testament, or by both. (Evans (2019), 93)

Jewish tradition divides the Bible into three divisions: Torah, Prophets, and Writings

The Hebrew Bible, also known as Mikra ("what is read") or TaNaKh, an acronym referring to the traditional Jewish division of the Bible into Torah (Teaching), Nevi'im (Prophets), and Ketuvim (Writings), is the founding document of the people of Israel, describing its origins, history and visions of a just society.

(<https://www.myjewishlearning.com/article/hebrew-bible/> accessed 17 July 2020)

The Hebrew Bible is traditionally divided into three sections: תּוֹרַה /Torah (Teaching), נְבִיאִים / Nevi'im (Prophets), and כֶּתֶבְיִם / Ketuvim (Writings) from which is derived

the name TaNaCh [also spelled Tanakh], an acronym denoting the three sections.
[\(https://www.myjewishlearning.com/article/bible-101/\)](https://www.myjewishlearning.com/article/bible-101/) (accessed 17 July 2020)

The order and contents of books in the Septuagint differ from the present Hebrew texts

Not only does the Septuagint arrange most of its books in groupings different from those of the Pharisaic collection, but also the texts of the individual books show innumerable minor differences from the present Hebrew texts, and major differences of arrangement or content appear in the books of Jeremiah, Psalms, Proverbs, Esther, Daniel, and I Esdras. (Smith, Morton (1987), 2)

The Hebrew Bible was originally the collection approved by the rabbinic successors of the Pharisees

The term ‘the Old Testament’ is used, chiefly by Christians, to refer to a number of different collections of ancient books, collections preserved primarily by different religious groups. The collection which here mainly concerns us is the one preserved principally by the Jews and taken over by most Protestant denominations; it is commonly referred to as ‘the Hebrew Bible’. It was originally the collection approved by the rabbinic successors of the Pharisees. (Smith, Morton (1987), 1)

The Sadducees recognized only the five books of the Mosaic law

The Sadducean high priests of the Jerusalem temple ... recognized only the five books of the Mosaic law, but after the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 the heirs of the Pharisaic party gradually won out and its collection came to be generally accepted. (Smith, Morton (1987), 1)

Fantastic and esoteric literature

The books of Enoch, Jubilees, the Testament of Moses, and the Damascus Covenant ... are only a fraction of the fantastic and esoteric body of Jewish religious literature from around the turn of the common era. (Wray, 107)

Together, [the texts] reveal a world obsessed with spiritual evil as an all too worldly presence, an impression that also emerges from the New Testament. This was, after all, a world that drew few distinctions between supernatural possession and illness in body and mind. (Jenkins, 167)

Many ancient Jewish books outside the Bible were read at the time of Jesus and early Christianity

The books of the Old Testament only represent a portion of the vast library of ancient Jewish texts that were in circulation at the time of Jesus. There are many ancient Jewish books outside the Bible that were copied and read in antiquity, and some of them were rather popular in early Christian circles. ... Books like 1 Enoch or Jubilees, were considered inspired and authoritative by some ancient groups, just like the books of the Bible. (Henze (2017), 4)

The Jewish texts outside the Bible are important for the study of Judaism and early Christianity

There is now a growing awareness, both among scholars and general readers, of the importance of these Jewish texts for the study of ancient Judaism and the beginnings of Christianity. The discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls in the 1940s and 1950s was a real game-changer in this regard. (Henze (2017), 5)

Many late Second Temple writings have been accepted as a secondary canon by segments of Christianity

Many Jewish compositions of the late Second Temple period have been incorporated into the writings hallowed by the church. These works were affirmed as deuterocanonical (a secondary canon) by the Roman Catholic Church in 1546, but rejected as inspired Scripture by the Protestant movement, who called them Apocrypha ("hidden writings"). (Evans (2019), 179).

The literature of the Second Temple period poses problems for Jewish and Christian traditionalists

The diversity of Second Temple literature, coupled with its divergence from the Rabbinic material that followed it, poses a problem for modern Christian and Jewish traditionalists. (Simkovich, xvii)

The texts not preserved by the cult of Yahweh-exclusive saw no objection to worshiping Yahweh alongside other deities

Those prophets whose prophecies have been preserved thought the cult of Yahweh exclusive and considered the worship of Yahweh together with any other god as tantamount to abandonment, whereas the people and the priests and probably most of the prophets — those whose prophecies have been destroyed — saw no objection to worshiping both Yahweh and other deities too. (Smith, Morton (1987), 20)

At times, biblical and nonbiblical books have notable similarities

The criteria used by the Rabbis to determine which books were to be canonized into the Hebrew Bible remain unclear. In some instances, there are notable similarities between biblical and nonbiblical books. (Simkovich, 207)

The first half of the book of Daniel displays remarkable similarities with stories about Daniel in Greek that were not canonized. While all of these stories emphasize Daniel's impressive wisdom, religious piety, and judicial expertise, it is likely that older stories about Daniel were preserved in the Hebrew Bible because they were written in Hebrew and Aramaic, which would have signified an older or more "authentic" tradition than the stories about Daniel written in Greek. Ben Sira, Judith, and Greek stories about Daniel would all be preserved in the Apocrypha, the collection of Greek texts that would be included in the Septuagint and are now part of the Catholic Bible, while Proverbs, Esther, and Daniel were canonized into the Writings section of the TANAKH. (Simkovich, 208)

The Adam books

The first Adam books may have been composed as early as the first century B.C. and probably circulated among some of the same sectarian Jewish groups among whom the Enoch literature was popular.

On the one hand, these Adam books show strong links with the apocalyptic Enoch tradition; on the other, they already contain many of the redemption ideas that were soon to be so radically developed in Gnosticism.

The chief surviving works upon which the reconstruction of the Adam books must depend are the *Vita Adae et Eva* (Life of Adam and Eve) and the misnamed *Apocalypse of Moses*, and the recently discovered Nag Hammadi text, the *Apocalypse of Adam*. (Forsyth, 227)

Eve leant over the wall and saw Satan, like an angel (*Apocalypse of Moses*)

Early in the *Apocalypse of Moses*, Adam briefly tells the story of his expulsion from Paradise, but there is no mention yet of the serpent, only of an “enemy.” (Apoc. Mos. 7.2)

Soon, however, Eve herself tells a much longer version of the story. She tells of her temptation by Satan, who appears first as an angel and then as a serpent, but she tells this only after a long account of the seduction of the serpent by Satan. “Be my vessel,” says Satan to snake, “and I will speak through thy mouth words to deceive her.”

She and Adam had been given charge of separate parts of the garden, she explains, and they had, moreover, been given angels to guard them. But “[the serpent] hung himself from the wall of paradise, and when the angels ascended to worship God, then Satan appeared in the form of an angel and sang hymns like the angels. And I bent over the wall and saw him, like an angel.” (Apoc. Mos. 17.1) ... The real tempter is now the devil, *Diabolos*. ... The tempter is the cosmic adversary. (Forsyth, 232-233)

Folkloric Heroes: Jannes and Jambres

Numerous late Second Temple, early Christian, and early Rabbinic texts refer to two brothers named Jannes and Jambres, who work as magicians for Pharaoh during the time of Moses. These brothers usually act as troublesome antagonists to both Moses and God. In the New Testament epistle of 2 Timothy, for example, sinful people who reject truthful teachings are compared to Jannes and Jambres, who rejected the teachings of Moses.

In midrashic literature, Jannes and Jambres ridicule Moses and Aaron for attempting to conduct magical feats against the Egyptians, who have mastered the art of magic. The Roman historian Pliny the Elder, moreover, cites the brothers in his discussion about how Jews conduct magic. These are only a few examples of about forty separate traditions circulating about Jannes and Jambres in antiquity.

In one surviving story about the brothers that is usually dated to the late Second Temple period, Jannes and Jambres stand in opposition to Moses and Aaron. Jannes soon dies, but, by practicing necromancy, Jambres brings his brother back from the dead. Once summoned, Jannes informs his brother that idolatry is wicked. ...

The stories circulating about Jannes and Jambres are consistent with the importance some Jews ascribed to the practice of magic. Indeed, Jewish incantations inscribed on bowls and amulets have been discovered by archaeologists at many ancient Jewish sites. (Simkovich, 254-255)

The Damascus Document is from the Second Temple period

Another Second Temple period text Schechter found in the Cairo Genizah also had a profound impact on the study of Early Judaism. It is known as the *Damascus Document* because of the writer’s allusion to a “new covenant” that would ultimately be forged between God and His Chosen People in “the land of Damascus.” This term paraphrases the biblical prophet Amos’s prediction that God will bring the Jews “into exile beyond Damascus” (Amos 5:27).

Since Damascus was once part of Israel’s empire under King David, perhaps the writer believed in a messianic time in which God would restore Judea to its former glory. The first half of what has survived of the Damascus Document recounts the origins and ideology of a sectarian Jewish community.

It is written in the voice of a leader or teacher who exhorts his students to remain pious and committed to the sect’s teachings by speaking of Israel’s history and the

ways in which God rewards and punishes those who observe or reject the Torah's laws. The second section of this text comprises the laws by which members of this community had to abide.

For a long time this text confounded scholars because its provenance was so difficult to determine. Some suggested the document arose in Samaritan circles—a community of people who believed they were the true Israel and followed a version of the Torah that was different than the Masoretic text of the Jews. Others thought it had been written by Sadducees—a priestly sect of Jews living in the Second Temple period who were known to reject the authority of the Jewish oral tradition. Still others believed that the document's parallels to legal material in Rabbinic literature pointed to a Pharisaic origin. The Pharisees were a sect of Jews in the Second Temple period who developed a body of Oral Law that would continue to be expanded and recorded by the Rabbis following the Second Temple period.

The divergent theories regarding who authored this document led to different interpretations and assumptions regarding how it should be read. Today, the prevailing view among most scholars is that the author of the Damascus Document was a Jew who identified with the Essenes, a sectarian group that lived in the Land of Israel and was devoted to a strict interpretation of halakhah (Jewish law) and yet remained separated from the Jerusalem Temple as well as the Pharisees and Sadducees associated with it. Because of this consensus, the Damascus Document is especially significant. (Simkovich, 17-18)

1 and 2 Maccabees record the Antiochene crisis

The books of 1 and 2 Maccabees record the events of the Antiochene crisis, the Maccabean resistance, and the Hasmonean restoration. According to 1 Macc 1:54, Antiochus IV built an abomination of desolation. He did this in response to a Jewish riot during his second campaign in Egypt. After rushing to Jerusalem, suppressing the riot, and massacring thousands of Jews (2 Macc 5:11-14, 23-26), Antiochus IV forbade the surviving Jews under penalty of death to practice their religion (Dan 9:27, 11:31). He ordered, instead, the erection of multiple altars for sacrificing pigs and other unclean animals, burning unlawful incense, destroying copies of the books of law, and killing circumcised babies and their families (1 Macc 1:43-61). This persecution of the Jews reached its climax with the abomination of desolation on the altar of the Jerusalem temple. According to Josephus, Antiochus IV built "an idol altar on God's altar . . . and slew swine on it." Antiochus IV dedicated the Jerusalem temple to Zeus (2 Macc 6:1-7) and broke down the walls that separated sacred space within the temple precinct from common space outside. (Ulrich (2014), 1066)

Judith was not an historical figure

The book of Judith, which recalls the story of a beautiful and pious Jewish woman who saves the Jews of her town from destruction at the hands of a ruthless enemy, was probably written by a Jew living in Judea in the second century BCE. (Simkovich, 255)

Although there might have existed a woman named Judith who was a highly respected leader of her Jewish community, there are many indications that Judith, as this author describes her, is not a historical character. Neither Josephus nor Philo mention her in their writings. Nor does she appear in the Mishnah or the Talmud. The figure of Judith did, however, become prominent in medieval Christian literature and art, and also in Jewish medieval texts regarding Hanukkah. (Simkovich, 256-257)

One version of the *Life of Adam and Eve* says Satan refused to bow down to them

An apocryphal version of the life of Adam and Eve gives a third account of angelic rebellion. In the beginning, God, having created Adam, called the angels together to admire his work and ordered them to bow down to their younger human sibling. Michael obeyed, but Satan refused. ... Thus the problem of evil begins in sibling rivalry. (Pagels, 49)

The *Psalms of Solomon* were likely written in the first century BCE

The Psalms of Solomon is a collection of eighteen psalms written in the late Second Temple period. The psalms are attributed to Solomon, who was known for establishing a prosperous and secure kingdom, and for building the Jerusalem Temple. ... Scholars believe that the author was a Jew from Jerusalem writing in the wake of the Roman general Pompey's invasion of Judea in 63 BCE. Lamenting Jerusalem's subjugation to a gentile ruler, the writer—or writers—of these psalms predicts that one day the Jews' enemies will be subjected to God's wrathful judgment. (Simkovich, 184)

The *Psalms of Solomon* said sinners will suffer terrible punishments in the end-time

The writer of the *Psalms of Solomon* was not without hope. He despaired of Jerusalem's current position, but also envisioned a time when the Jews would worship God in the Temple, free of a subjugating enemy. ... According to these psalms, sinners will suffer from terrible punishments in the end-time. Those who have followed God's commandments, on the other hand, will enjoy everlasting peace. (Simkovich, 185-186)

Ecclesiasticus; Sirach

Author: Jesus, son of Eleazar, son of Sirach; Date Written: 200-175 BC

Sirach was written by a Jewish scribe who lived in Jerusalem in the early third century BC. His name was Jesus, son of Eleazar, son of Sirach. He is often called simply "Ben Sira." The book has taken several different titles including "*The Wisdom of Jesus Ben Sira*" and "*Liber Ecclesiasticus*" (Church book). Ben Sira wrote in Hebrew, but his grandson later translated the book into Greek.

Most Bibles include the grandson's preface even though it is not canonical. The Hebrew of Sirach was lost about a thousand years ago, but in the late 19th century and early 20th century Hebrew fragments of Sirach were found which comprise about two-thirds of the book. Sirach is a deuterocanonical book of wisdom literature. (<https://www.catholicnewsagency.com/resources/bible/introduction-to-the-old-testament/sirach>, accessed 4 March 2018)

One of the seven Old Testament books rejected by Martin Luther and subsequent Protestants was the book of *Ecclesiasticus*, alternatively known by its "Old Latin" title *Sirach*. ...

Ecclesiasticus/Sirach is found among the Dead Sea Scrolls (three copies to be exact). It is also included in the Greek Septuagint, the Old Latin manuscripts, and the Latin Vulgate. The Catholic Church and Churches of the East receive the book as inspired, inerrant, and canonical. Sirach is also included in our oldest biblical manuscripts: *Codex Vaticanus* (ca. A.D. 350), *Codex Sinaiticus* (A.D. 360), and *Codex Alexandrinus* (ca. A.D. 400). In other words, the early Church in both the East and West revered this book and read it in Church ... not to mention Jews before the Incarnation of Christ.

There are a number of references to the book of Sirach in the New Testament. James 1:19 seems to quote Sirach 5:11. The Blessed Virgin Mary alludes to Sirach 10:14 in Luke 1:52.

There are four well known quotes from Christ that relate to Sirach. Most well known is Christ's statement in Matthew 7:16-20 which draws from Sirach 27:6. Also Matthew 6:12, "And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors," mirrors Sirach 28:2 "Forgive your neighbor a wrong, and then, when you petition, your sins will be pardoned." Mark 4:5, 16-17 also resembles Sirach 40:15.

Moreover, Patristic scholar Henry Chadwick claimed that in Matthew 11:28 Jesus directly quoted Sirach 51:27. (<http://www.calledtocommunion.com/2010/11/sirach-about-a-biblical-book-rejected-by-the-reformation/>, accessed 4 March 2018)

Sirach is a wisdom text

Sirach is above all a wisdom text and is in fact the most comprehensive example of its kind. The author, Ben Sira, writes at length about good conduct, sobriety, and sexual behavior. But he also praises God's work by means of a catalog of the heavenly bodies and their functions, sharing some of Enoch's characteristic interests. (Jenkins, 82)

Jesus ben Sira blamed Eve for the Human Race being subjected to Death

Jesus ben Sira, at least, blamed the fact that the Human Race was subject to death entirely on her. He says, "From a woman Sin had its beginning, and because of her we all die" (Sirach 25.24). Ben Sira knows about Satan, for a few chapters earlier he says: "When the godless man curses Satan [*ho Satanas*], he is cursing himself" (Sirach 21.27).

Sira does not blame Sin and Death upon Satan but upon Eve. Sirach was translated into Greek about a century before *[The Book of] Wisdom* was written. (Kelly (2006), 75)

Wisdom of Solomon and 4 Maccabees

The Dead Sea Scrolls, Enoch, and the Daniel tradition can be contrasted with *Wisdom of Solomon*, which uses a Greek notion of immortality, but also combines it with a more traditionally Jewish notion of resurrection: [*Wisdom* 3:1-4 quoted]. (Segal (2004), 385)

By the time of 4 Maccabees ... immortality was expressed as a synthesis of Greek and First Temple Israelite thought: [4 Maccabees 9:21-22 quoted]. ... The immortality is not resurrection. It is astral immortality. (Segal (2004), 386-387)

The Book of Wisdom was written in Greek by a Hellenistic Jew speaking in the voice of Solomon

The Book of Wisdom is celebrated as "the last book of the Old Testament." According to some scholars, it was written as late as AD 50: in other words, at the same time that Paul wrote his earliest extant letter, the First Epistle to the Thessalonians! But even if the Book of Wisdom were written fifty or a hundred years earlier (most authorities put it around 50 BC), it would still be the last book of the Old Testament. Actually, make that the last book of the *Catholic* and *Orthodox* Old Testament. ... It was accepted by Christians as Holy Scripture very early on.

It was written in Greek by a Hellenistic Jew, perhaps in Alexandria. It is a pseudepigraph, for the author speaks in the voice of Solomon. It was taken to be by Solomon, and its title in Greek is, "*Wisdom of Solomon*." (Kelly (2006), 70-71)

The Book of Wisdom introduced two masculine personifications: Death and Hades

In chapter 1 [of the *Book of Wisdom*], we are introduced to two masculine personifications, namely Death and his side-kick Hades. We are exhorted not to “court” Death by bad living. God did not create Death, for He wished all His creatures to live: they have health in them and no poison, and Hades has no power over the Earth (Wis. 1.12-14). But the ungodly summon Death as their friend and make a pact with him, agreeing to belong to him (Wis. 1.16). (Kelly (2006), 70-71)

The Book of Wisdom says the devil's envy brought death into the world

In the much later *Book of Wisdom* (not a canonical book in Hebrew and Protestant Scriptures but accepted in the Catholic canon), we read ‘it was the devil’s envy that brought death into the world’ (Wisdom 2:24, written in the first century BCE). (Malone, page 15)

The Genesis Apocryphon

The Aramaic text known today as the *Genesis Apocryphon* was written in Judea in the late Second Temple period. Its surviving segments, discovered in one of the Dead Sea caves near Qumran, begin with the illicit relationship between angels and human women in Genesis 6:1, and close with God’s promise in Genesis 15 to provide Abram with continuity by giving him both land and children. Many of the *Genesis Apocryphon*’s retellings diverge from the scriptural account by inserting information. (Simkovich, 225)

Tobit addressed the demonic threat on earth and the role of guardian angels

Tobit is a wonderful story, not to mention funny, but historically it shows concerns highly reminiscent of those of Noah and the Watchers: the demonic threat on earth, and the role of guardian angels. ... Tobit was popular reading at the angel- and demon-obsessed settlement of Qumran. (Jenkins, 81)

Tobit named seven angels, with two appearing in Daniel

According to Tobit 12:15, an Apocryphal book, there are seven distinctive angels who stand ever ready to enter the presence of God. Of the seven, only two are mentioned in the Hebrew Bible, both appearing in the book of Daniel: Michael (10:14) and Gabriel (9:21). Two other angels who are frequently mentioned in other literature are Raphael (Tob. 12:15) and Uriel (4 Ezra 4:1). (Torre, Kindle Locations 1022-1025)

Tobit, Judith, and Daniel: the birth of historical fiction

The book of Tobit was written around 200 BCE, but it situates its action in the time of “Shalmaneser of the Assyrians” (1:2), who lived a half millennium before and is recorded in the biblical book of 2 Kings. Other second-century texts, such as Judith and Daniel, placed their action in the time of the Babylonian Exile, some four centuries previously. ... Instead of consciously writing history, then, authors sought to fit their stories into an established historical record that they already knew from reading, and they did so by giving their works a spurious antiquity. Historical fiction was born. (Jenkins, 21-22)

The Testaments were written in the names of Patriarchs

During the second century B.C.E. through the first century C.E., when apocalypses were being written, an allied literary genre, the testament, became popular. Testaments, the purported last words of a famous figure to his sons or followers, have survived in the names of the patriarchs, Moses, Job, and others. In a testament the historical figure usually tells something about his life, exhorts his descendants to

virtue, and predicts his descendants' future, often in the form of an apocalypse concerning the last days and the ultimate destiny of Israel. The hortatory sections are similar to the Wisdom literature. The most extensive collection of second-century B.C.E. testaments is the work known as the *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs*. (Chilton, 375)

The *Testament of Moses* is a further witness to eschatological ideas around the turn of the era. ... There are indications that the text was originally composed in the Maccabean era and updated later, after the death of Herod the Great in 4 B.C.E. The Testament purports to be the parting speech of Moses ... [who] concludes his prediction with the coming of the kingdom of God and the exaltation of Israel to the stars. (McGinn (2003), 78)

The *Testament of Abraham*

This intriguing novella probably originated in the first century CE from the intellectual hub of Alexandria or Antioch. Scholars see the work as a humorous parody of what is known as the testament genre, a genre in which a biblical hero imparts his last words of wisdom to his children. Many medieval manuscripts of such testaments have been preserved, among them the Testament of Jacob, the Testament of Isaac, and the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs.

The Testament of Abraham, however, is different from all of these books. Instead of portraying Abraham as a wise sage serenely providing his descendants with advice on the cusp of his death, the author writes what one might call an "untestament." In this story God sends the archangel Michael to retrieve Abraham from earth and to bring him into the afterlife, but Abraham resists Michael at every turn, prompting a despairing Michael to request that God choose someone else to carry out this task. God then sends the Angel of Death to retrieve Abraham. While he is initially unsuccessful, the Angel of Death ultimately tricks Abraham into dying by having Abraham touch him. (Simkovich, 228-229)

Many scholars believe that the author of the Testament of Abraham was a Jew who penned a clever satire that other Jews would have found entertaining. At the same time, the author may have been targeting a gentile audience who would have found the book's humorous qualities appealing as well. (Simkovich, 230)

Testament of Judah: The spirit of understanding functioned between the spirits of truth and error

In the *Testament of Judah*, however, the deterministic implications are more firmly resisted—significantly by the introduction of a third "spirit." ...

Two spirits wait upon man—the spirit of truth and the spirit of error. And in between is the spirit of understanding of the mind [the conscience], which inclines as it will. (Forsyth, 203)

Seditious words in the *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs*

Seditious words are found in the *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs*, a work with a very long history in Judaism and Christianity. Supposedly the last words of the sons of Jacob in around 1500 BCE, they were actually written in the century or two before the Common Era. (Jenkins, 125)

Post-Exilic Psalms

No book of the Bible has a wider scope than the Psalms. Its tradition and literary history spans from the time of the Judges (ca. 1200 BC) to the centuries just prior to Jesus Christ. It stems from a variety of social circles: from the kingdom of northern

Israel to that of southern Judah, and from the royal court and the priestly temple to rural clan settings.

Many psalms originated during Israel's monarchy (ca. 1000 BC to 587 BC).

The Babylonian destruction of the Jerusalem temple in 587 BC should have resulted in the end of Israel's religion. But the songs that had accompanied temple rituals were rescued as scrolls carried by the deported scribes. In exile they were correlated with the other sacred scrolls, such as Exodus and 1–2 Samuel. During that period, the psalms became Scripture and thus a "book" in their own right. As indicated by the book's opening psalm, they now belonged to "the law of the Lord," on which His people should "meditate day and night" (Psa 1:2).

Even during the Babylonian exile (587–538 BC), psalms were composed and sung, either among the exiles or by those who remained in the land. Psalms 74 and 79 lament the destruction of Jerusalem and its temple. Psalm 106 confesses the people's sin and closes with a petition, "gather us from among the nations."

After the initial return from Babylonian exile under Zerubbabel (538 BC) and the building of the second temple (ca. 515 BC), the "Psalms of Ascents" (Pss 120–134) probably functioned as a prayer book for pilgrims as they "ascended" (Pss 122:4; 24:3; compare Isa 2:3) to the second temple (Pss 124–126 and 129–130 especially reflect a postexilic setting). Generally, most of these postexilic psalms appear in the latter third of the Book of Psalms.

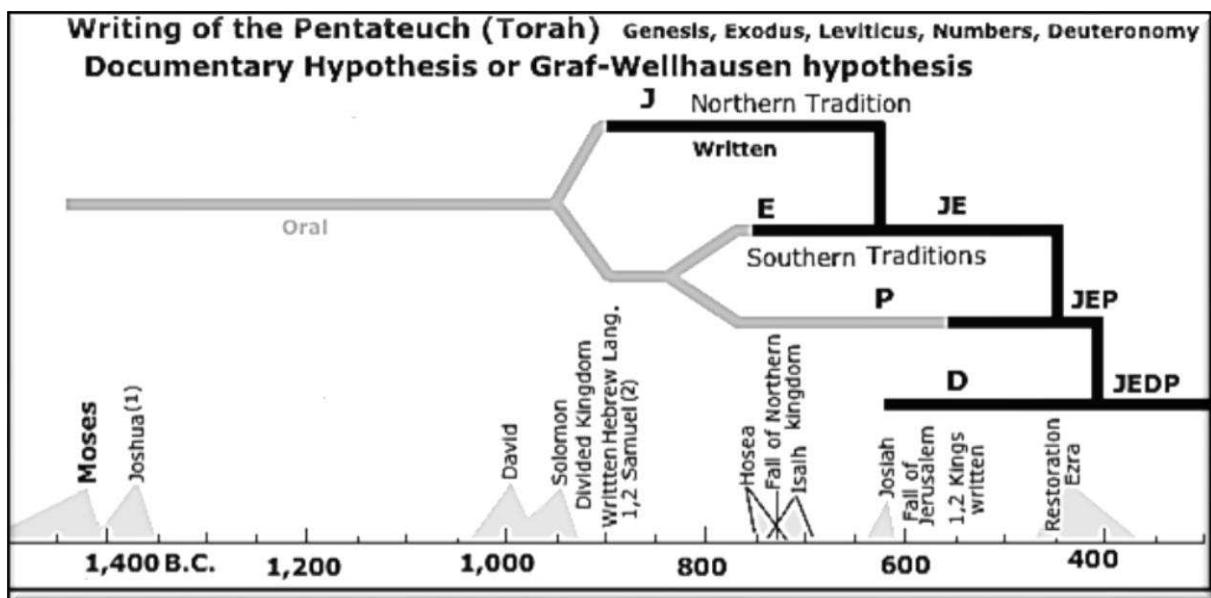
At a time when Judah was a province of the Persian Empire, and there was no Davidic king, why would scribes choose to retain the Royal Psalms? Their preservation was in part motivated by their reinterpretation in light of the prophecies of a new David (Isa 9:5–6; 11:1–5; Mic 4:14–5:4a; Jer 23:5–6; Ezek 34:23–24; Zech 9:9–10). Certain psalms therefore functioned not only as *liturgies* and *literature*, but also as *prophecies*, engendering hope for a new David.

(<http://www.crosswalk.com/faith/bible-study/remixing-the-psalms.html> (accessed 23 September 2015, underlining added)

***The Book of Giants* enormously expanded existing traditions and stories**

The book of the Giants tells the standard Enochian story of the descent of the angels and the birth of the giants, but elaborates further and provides new details. ... The book of the Giants illustrates one powerful theme from this era, namely, the enormous expansion of existing lore through popular storytelling, scholarly exegesis, and imaginative speculation. ... The book of the Giants includes the name of the Akkadian epic hero Gilgamesh. Once that process of invention and appropriation began, it rapidly spread and expanded. (Jenkins, 78)

RETURNNEES WERE RESPONSIBLE FOR MUCH OF THE SCRIPTURES



<https://smoodock45.files.wordpress.com/2015/01/jedp-1.png> accessed 17 December 2020

The Bible is a window into a culture that vanished long ago

The Bible cannot be fully understood without seeing it in its historical context—Egypt, Mesopotamia, and Canaan for the First Israelite Commonwealth period (ca. 1200 BCE-586 BCE), Persia and Greece for the Second Temple period (515 BCE-70 CE). In this context, it is not the familiar guide to our moral lives but a strange and sometimes off-putting window into a culture that vanished long ago. ...

Reading the Bible, we must be sensitive to both the constitutive and the polemical role of mythical narratives. (Segal (2004), 121)

The Hebrew Bible presents the views of a small section of society, the literate elite

The Deuteronomistic texts, as well as much of the rest of the Hebrew Bible, mainly deal with the state religion and the religion of the powerful. The Hebrew Bible was written by a group of people who probably represent only a small section of the society, the literate elite, who was close to the society's powerful. (Pakkala, in Oorschot, 268)

Most biblical books were written over several generations

Most of the biblical books were not written by one person nor at one particular time, but rather over many generations. (Tov (2012), 166)

The Hebrew Bible was produced by individuals and groups living in different times and places

It is widely regarded to be the case that the Hebrew Bible is long-duration literature, the final product of a complex process of composition and transmission, whose content (including language) is authorial, editorial, and scribal. The Bible was produced by individuals and groups who lived in many different times and places. (Rezetko, 61)

The triumph of the Aaronid priesthood would have tremendous implications for the formation of the Bible

Levites were regarded as secondary clergy, assistants to the Aaronids, who alone exercised the priestly prerogatives. The struggle between the Mushite and Aaronid priests was over. Somehow, the Aaronids had won completely. Their old claim that they alone were the legitimate priests was now the accepted view. The triumph of the Aaronid priesthood in this period was to have tremendous implications for the formation of the Bible. (Friedman (1997), 158)

The Bible is an anthology of ancient Israelite literary works for a specific, theological purpose

The Bible... [is] an anthology selected from a greater output of ancient Israelite literary works for a specific, theological purpose. ... When we look behind the voice of the redactor, or the editor, we often see a great deal of similarity between Israel and the cultures around it. (Segal (2004), 121)

Pentateuchal Israel not likely to have originated before Israel's assimilation by Assyria (722 BCE)

The pentateuchal 'Israel' is not likely, then, to have originated ... before the end of the northern kingdom in 721 BCE—the crucial event that permitted the possibility of Judah absorbing Israelite identity. (Edelman (2012), 2)

Israel's history was reshaped in Babylon

The literary and historical traditions of the Israelites were reshaped in Babylon. Written accounts of the past were framed in terms of the present, to construct a pattern or history influenced by their captivity and separation from Jerusalem. The scribes and redactors during this period had an enormous influence on the formation of Israelite tradition, since it was they who put their people's earliest memories into literary form during the Babylonian Exile. (Alpert, 77-78)

There was extensive literary activity during the exile

There was extensive literary activity during the exile, when the biography of Jeremiah was composed in the form familiar to us today. (Lipschits, 349, n, 281)

Writings were composed during and after the exile

Like the book of Psalms, the book of Isaiah and the Minor Prophets were all composed by the addition of previously independent books. Some of these originated before the exile, but were later revised; others originated after the exile. ...

The book of First Isaiah (Isa 1-39) and from the Minor Prophets the books Hosea, (Joel), Amos, Obadiah and Micah, as well as books 1-2/3 of Psalms, had their roots in the monarchic period. On the other hand, Second and Third Isaiah (Isa 40-55; 56-66), Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi, and the last third of the Psalter were composed during or after the Exile. (McDonald (2002), 134, underlining added)

Some of the largest and most important bodies of Old Testament material came from Babylonia

From Babylonia, during the same half century, come some of the largest and most important bodies of Old Testament material: the prophecies of Ezekiel and 'Second Isaiah' (Isaiah 40-55) , the 'Holiness Code' (Leviticus 17-26) and other elements of the 'Priestly' collection of traditions and laws which bulks large in Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and probably Joshua, also a number of psalms and of prophecies scattered as interpolations through the larger books, for example, Isaiah 13f. — all these are commonly assigned to Babylonia. But it seems likely, besides, that much of

Returnees were Responsible for much of the Scriptures

the editorial work of the Deuteronomic school in the Pentateuch, Joshua, Judges, Samuel and Kings, was done there. ...

Even more surprising than the amount of the material produced in Babylonia is the variety of it: the differences of mentality and style between Ezekiel and Second Isaiah, between the Deuteronomic and the Priestly legal traditions, and even within the Priestly tradition between the Holiness Code, the laws in Ezekiel, and the other P material.

And yet more surprising is the fact that this various and indeed contradictory material is now preserved in a single collection.

The quantity of the material testifies to the importance of this period in the history of the party. It seems to have been the time of formation. (Smith, Morton (1987), 76)

Much of the writing of Bible was edited or formulated after the Israelites returned from Babylonian captivity in 539 BCE

Archaeology suggests that YHWH'S cult really did not take hold completely until after the Israelites returned from Babylonian captivity in 539 BCE and that, indeed, much of the writing of Bible was edited or formulated then. (Segal (2004), 123)

Scholars assume that much of the Hebrew bible was assembled, revised and edited in the 5th century BCE

In recent decades it has become increasingly common among scholars to assume that much of the Hebrew bible was assembled, revised and edited in the 5th century BCE to reflect the realities and challenges of the Persian era. The returnees had a particular interest in the history of Israel: the written Torah (the books of Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus book of Numbers and Deuteronomy), for example, may have existed in various forms during the Monarchy (the period of the kingdoms of Israel and Judah), but it was in the Second Temple that it was edited and revised into something like its current form, and the Chronicles, a new history written at this time, reflects the concerns of the Persian Yehud in its almost-exclusive focus on Judah and the Temple. (*Wikipedia. Second Temple Judaism.*)

The Second Temple period includes composition of much of the Hebrew Scriptures

The Second Temple period, however, must begin with the Persians, and includes the editing, if not the composition, of much of the Hebrew Bible. (Collins (2012), 2)

Pentateuch came into existence during the Persian era

The only point of consensus in the current debate is that the Pentateuch came into existence during the Persian era. (Edelman (2012), 2)

The Pentateuch more or less as we have it today was completed and promulgated in the Persian period, about the time of Ezra

It is generally granted by scholars that the Pentateuch more or less as we have it today was completed and promulgated in the Persian period, about the time of Ezra, we must admit that we have relatively little evidence on Jewish culture and religion between the era of Ezra and that of the Book of Daniel and Qumran literature. (McNamara (2010), 53)

Most of the Kethuvim, the Writings, date to the Exilic or post-Exilic periods

The final section of the Hebrew Bible, Kethuvim, or Writings, comprises Psalms, Proverbs, Job, Song of Songs, Ruth, Lamentations, Ecclesiastes, Esther, Daniel, Ezra, Nehemiah, and Chronicles. These books vary in genre, place of composition, date of composition, and, in the case of Aramaic passages in Daniel, Ezra, and Nehemiah,

even in language, but most are dated to the Exilic or post-Exilic periods. (Simkovich, 205)

The present form of the Hebrew literature is from the period of the Babylonian Captivity and shortly after

It is recognized by all competent scholars that in the Pentateuch and Joshua four major strands of literary material are to be distinguished. ... Of these strands, the narrative ones referred to as J and E are commonly assigned to the early periods of the kingdoms of Judah and Israel respectively.

The present form of the legal material symbolized by D and exemplified especially in Deuteronomy is assigned to the age of Jeremiah, to whose style it is particularly close; finally, the legal and narrative material symbolized as P (because of its priestly concerns) is so close in style to the Book of Ezekiel as to be dated, at least as far as its language goes, by this relationship.

It is generally believed that some part of the D material was in the book 'found' in the Jerusalem temple in 621 BC and implemented by King Josiah in the reforms described in II Kings 23.

There is no serious doubt that the books of Judges, Samuel, and Kings were produced by one or more redactors of the D school, who put together sections of material from earlier sources; the redaction must date, at least in part, from the exilic period or later.

As to the prophets, there is general agreement that Isaiah 1 to 39 has been heavily interpolated and that chapters 40 to 55 are the work of an author contemporary with Cyrus the Great.

Everyone would agree that numerous interpolations are to be found in the other prophetic books, but there is much disagreement as to specific passages; perhaps the most important item of agreement is that the genuine prophecies of Zechariah stop with chapter 8. (Smith, Morton (1987), 4-5)

Some prophecies were composed during the Exilic and post-Exilic periods

The last accounts in the historical books of the Prophets section of the TANAKH close with the beginning of Babylonian exile. Scholars believe, however, that some of the prophecies that appear in Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and the Twelve Minor Prophets were actually composed during the Babylonian exile and in the decades following the Judeans' return to Judea under the Persian king Cyrus. These years are known as the Exilic and post-Exilic periods. (Simkovich, 205)

The Biblical writers drew on the literary traditions of the surrounding Near Eastern world

The biblical writers drew in various ways and to varying degrees on the literary traditions of the surrounding Near Eastern world, Mesopotamian, Egyptian, Hittite, and Canaanite. The most immediate contact, however, was with Canaanite culture: hence a consideration of what the Hebrew writers adopted from their Canaanite predecessors provides an illuminating instance of their relation to contiguous and antecedent literatures. (Alter, 545)

Babylonian traditions were adapted and absorbed into many parts of the Bible and in various extra-biblical works

Besides Zoroastrian and continuing Canaanite influences, ancient Mesopotamian influences are also much in evidence in Second Temple times. ... Babylonian traditions are absorbed in many different parts of the Bible and in various extra-

biblical works. Like all the other traditions that were borrowed into Judaism, they were adapted specifically to Hebrew purposes. (Segal (2004), 272)

The early form of Deuteronomy first appeared during Josiah's reign

Josiah changed worship in the Temple to accord with covenantal norms; he centralized sacrifice, even of the Pesach (Passover), in Jerusalem; he tolerated no foreign incursions. In his program, he was guided by a scroll of the law, which was found in the Temple during the restoration. That scroll has, since antiquity (and the scholarship of Saint Jerome in particular), been associated with the present Book of Deuteronomy, which presses an agenda of radical centralization and separation from foreign nations such as impelled Josiah. ... The end of the kingdom of Judah came quickly after the death of Josiah. (Chilton, 49)

The rudiments of the Torah were falling into place following the ending of the Babylonian exile

The Babylonian exile ended in 538 BCE, after the Persian empire, under Cyrus the Great, conquered the weakened Neo-Babylonian state.

Although many of the exiles remained in Babylon (thus forming the beginning of the great Jewish community there that would produce, a millennium later, the Babylonian Talmud), others returned to Judah. There, with the leadership of scribes such as Ezra, they compiled at least the Torah and the Nevi'im and likely an early formal collection of Psalms as well. According to Nehemiah 8:1-3, Ezra assembled the people in Jerusalem and read to them the "book of the law of Moses."

Although it is unlikely that this book was the Torah in the shape we now have it, the rudiments of the canon are here falling into place. (Knight, 71)

The five books of Moses were assembled following the return to Judea from Babylon

Some Israelites—not all, but some—returned from Babylon to rebuild their state on their ancient model; but they returned to a whole new world. ...

Their attempt imaginatively to reconstruct and record their past and their plans for the future is known to us today as the Bible, or at least the five books of Moses. The documents we understand as the core of the Bible were assembled in this period by the new aristocracy of Judea, the priests. (Segal, 174)

Scribes combined disparate oral and written traditions to form the Pentateuch

The composers of the Pentateuchal sources arguably combined disparate narratives that circulated in Israelite oral tradition. ... Narrative units that may have at one time circulated separately (in oral and/or written traditions) were arguably combined episodically by the written composers. (Hendel, in Oorschot, 255-256)

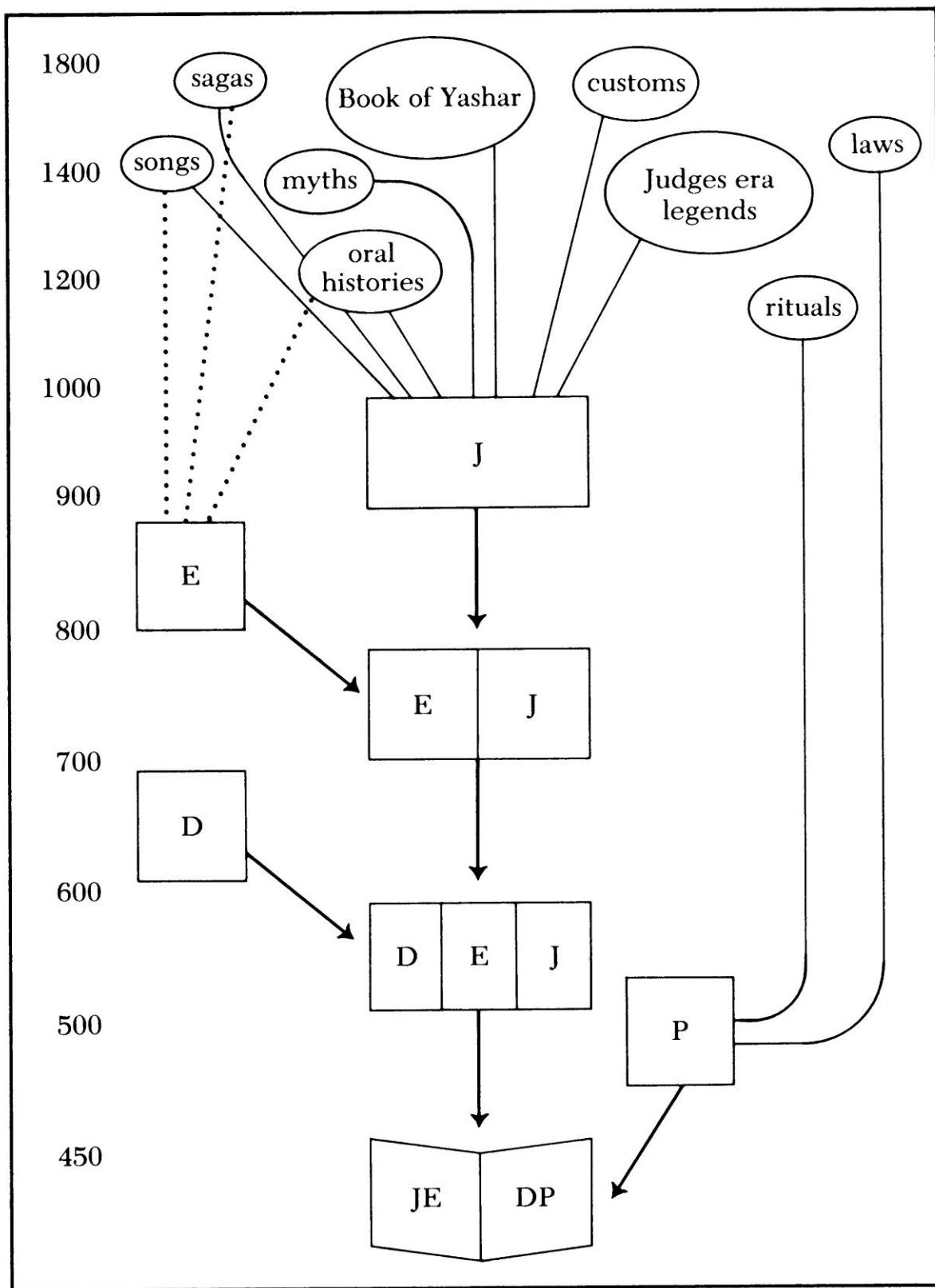
The destruction of Israel and the exile of Judah caused the priestly and prophetic movements to join forces and memorialise their vision in a book

Had events [in Judah] followed what had happened to Israel in the north, there would today be no Judaism to study. Paradoxically, however, just the forces that must have seemed sure to destroy the religion of the covenant with Yawheh instead assured its survival and nurtured its international dimension.

During the Babylonian exile, the priestly and prophetic movements joined forces to form a united program of restoration that put a form of Israel back on the map within a generation. Of even greater influence, they memorialized their vision of that Israel in a book and made it classic for their successors. (Chilton, 49)

Returnees were Responsible for much of the Scriptures

Formation of the Torah took place during the early part of the Second-Temple period



(Boadt, 96)

Returnees were Responsible for much of the Scriptures

The Pentateuch came into existence during the Persian era

In evaluating recent developments in pentateuchal research, it must be conceded that the only point of consensus in the current debate is that **the Pentateuch came into existence during the Persian era.** ...

The pentateuchal 'Israel' is not likely, then, to have originated in the imagination, let alone the memory of any social or national group before the end of the northern kingdom in 721 BCE—the crucial event that permitted the possibility of Judah absorbing Israelite identity.

The reign of King Hezekiah (ca. 715-687 BCE) or of King Josiah (ca. 640-609 BCE), the so-called exilic (Neo-Babylonian) period (586-538 BCE) or the Persian period (538-333 BCE) now appear to most scholars as more plausible moments for such literary creativity. (Edelman (2012), 2)

The Pentateuch was created in the Persian province of Yehud (previously Judah)

In order to contextualize the creation of the Pentateuch, we need to set forth what can be known about socio-economic, religious and political conditions and currents in Yehud under Persian rule and administration (ca. 538-333 BCE). In light of the likely use of source material from the kingdoms of Israel and Judah in the production of the Pentateuch, it is logical to conclude that these individual books, as well as the larger sequenced collection, were created in Yehud rather than in Babylonia or Egypt amongst the elite of those diaspora communities. (Edelman (2012), 51)

The dispossession by Babylon resulted in the emergence of the Pentateuch and the priestly and prophetic hegemony

Priestly/prophetic scribes redacted "D," the source of the Pentateuch in tune with the message of Deuteronomy, together with J and E. That work, probably completed during the sixth century B.C.E., was shortly later combined with what is known as the "Deuteronomistic History," a relation of events between Moses and the exile that explains success or failure according to the nation's adherence to the program that drove Josiah.

The Pentateuch as we know it was completed during the fifth century, with the addition of "P". ...

With the emergence of the Pentateuch, an ideal Israel, attributed to the regulations of Moses, emerged as a truly canonical standard.

The dispossession of Judah to Babylon, then, set up the priestly and prophetic hegemony that made restoration possible. (Chilton, 49-50)

Scholarship places the Pentateuch's final composition during the fifth century B.C.E

A consensus of scholarship — not universal, yet very broad — places the Pentateuch's final composition during the fifth century B.C.E., with the addition of a specifically Priestly source, which provides direction for the conduct of sacrificial worship

The materials within the Priestly source were not invented only during the fifth century. Earlier sources had already been composed. During the tenth century B.C.E., the Temple constructed by Solomon had become a new center of the understanding of Israel and therefore a focus of the codification of tradition. In addition to the "Court History," an account of David's reign produced shortly after his death (2 Samuel 9-1; Kings 2), the source within the Pentateuch known to scholarship as "J" was produced. (Chilton, 48)

The source of the Pentateuch known as "E" portrays God at Horeb revealing his personal name to Moses

The works of the northern prophets were preserved in the south, together with another source of the Pentateuch, known as "E" (for the "Elohist," after the Hebrew name for "God"). That source also tells the story of Israel's beginnings, but with a northern slant.

God is portrayed as revealing his personal name to Moses alone in E, so that beforehand he was known as '*elohim*', "God". The mountain of Moses' revelation is known as Horeb, rather than Sinai, and there are alternative versions of stories known in J, and some new stories; in addition, the conception of God is markedly less anthropomorphic. (Chilton, 48)

The Pentateuch's unity lies in its structure of narrative interspersed with societal laws

The unity of the Pentateuch consists not in its supposed Mosaic authorship, which is not overtly claimed in the texts themselves or in any canonical status. Rather, it is inherent in the structure: a narrative interspersed with law that defines a society. (Edelman (2012), 3)

The Mosaic Sources

There was evidence that the Five Books of Moses had been composed by combining four different source documents into one continuous history. For working purposes, the four documents were identified by alphabetic symbols. The document that was associated with the divine name Yahweh/Jehovah was called J. The document that was identified as referring to the deity as God (in Hebrew, Elohim) was called E. The third document, by far the largest, included most of the legal sections and concentrated a great deal on matters having to do with priests, and so it was called P. And the source that was found only in the book of Deuteronomy was called D. (Friedman (1997), 24)

Many scholars consider the literature was compiled during the Persian and Greek periods

Many scholars came to regard the Persian period (539-331 BCE) and perhaps even the early Hellenistic period (331-63) as the most likely context for the compilation of traditions and production of the literature. (Knight, 71-72)

The Bible created an idealised portrait of the Battle with the Canaanite religion

The Bible gives us an idealized portrait of the battle between Yahwism and Canaanite religion, largely as it was remembered after the Babylonian captivity. (Segal (2004), 124)

Emphases of the Biblical texts from the Persian period

The emphases in the Persian period texts [of the Hebrew Bible] include the importance of reconstructing Jerusalem and establishing a temple center there, instituting religious law and a "covenant" relationship with a single deity, and promoting ethnic consciousness, all features that are clearly related to a process of self-definition (or redefinition).

The literate class of this new society, usually regarded as having been composed of those who had returned from Babylonia, appear, then, to have generated a kind of ideological superstructure in which they created an identity and heritage that were continuous with the Iron Age II kingdoms of Israel and Judah. Written into this "history" was an "Israel" that promoted their own self-interests and explained their own situation, over against those of others such as the "people of the land," that is, those who had remained behind, and peoples from other regions such as Samaria.

Returnees were Responsible for much of the Scriptures

The biblical texts assert, for example, that there was a wholesale removal of all classes of “significant” people, and that only the poorest “people of the land” remained behind (2 Kings 24:14; 25:12; Jer. 39:10; 52:15), or that during the period of exile, the land was essentially emptied of people (2 Chron. 36:17-21). When the deportees returned, according to this construct, they met with opposition from the “people of the land,” who are regarded as polluting and as having no legitimate claims in the new community (Ezra 4:1-5; 10:1-17). This “myth of the empty land,” it has been suggested, is not supported by the archaeological evidence, and is most likely an ideological construct intended to benefit those who had returned from exile. (Mcnutt, 182-183, underlining added)

MAKING HISTORY

Books of the Hebrew Scriptures are referred to as *law, prophets and writings*, but never as *history*

The Hebrew Bible does not use the designation *historical books*. Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy comprise the Torah, “law” or “instruction.” Joshua, Judges, Samuel and Kings are classed as the Former Prophets. The rest of the books named above are in the Writings. None of these books refers to itself as history. Indeed, the word *history* is Greek in origin. (Arnold, 418)

Jeremiah 8:8

How can you say, “We are wise,
and the law of the LORD is with us,”
when, in fact, the false pen of the scribes
has made it into a lie? (Jeremiah 8:8, NRSV)

The biblical writers may not have understood their task simply as relating what happened in the past

History, for most modern Westerners, is what happened in the past, and history writing as a literary genre is an account of what happened in the past. The latter is judged by how accurately and objectively it recounts past events. There is some recognition that historians have their own biases, that no one is completely objective and that writing history involves interpretation. If pressed, most moderns probably will admit that it may be impossible to know for certain exactly what happened in the past. Nevertheless, telling exactly what happened remains the goal and the essential definition of the genre as it is generally envisioned. Thus there is a tendency to apply to history the same standards that apply to journalism. This same understanding is typically applied not only to modern history writing, but also to ancient history writing, including that found in the Bible.

Recent biblical scholarship has called into question the assumption that ancient historians, and the biblical writers in particular, had the same definition of history and history writing as we do. The biblical writers may not have understood their task simply as relating what happened in the past. (Arnold, 418)

Our concept of history would strike the ancients as absurd

Our modern concept of history—as an objective, chronological arrangement of facts—would have struck the reader in the Greco-Roman world as absurd. For him, a story had no purpose unless it imparted a moral or ethical message, and symbolic imagery was one device. (Irbouts, 5)

Ancient historians told stories rather than provide an objective report as a journalist

Ancient history writing was not journalism; it was closer to storytelling than to the objective reporting of past events. (Arnold, 419)

Recording of history was not strong among those Jews

The absence from the Dead Sea Scrolls of historical texts proper should not surprise us. Neither in the inter-Testamental period, nor in earlier biblical times, was the recording of history as we understand it a strong point among the Jews. Chroniclers are concerned not with factual information about bygone events, but with their religious significance. (Vermes (2011), 49)

History writing was not primarily the accurate reporting of the past

History writing considered the reason for recalling the past and the significance of past events and was not primarily the accurate reporting of the past. (Arnold, 420)

An etiology is a story that explains the cause or origin of a given phenomenon—a cultural practice or social custom, a biological circumstance, even a geological formation. It is not a scientific explanation, not historical in the modern sense of an event that actually took place in the past exactly as described; etiologies can be quite imaginative, even if not always constituted of fiction. An etiology is, rather, a story that “renders an account”—that is, offers some explanation—of present conditions and circumstances based on past causes.

The Bible’s historical literature is etiological in the sense that it seeks to “render an account” of the past—to provide an explanation (*aitia*) for circumstances or conditions in the historian’s day. Whether the events that the Bible relates as past causes or explanations actually took place as described was not the ancient historian’s primary concern. This does not mean that all of the traditions recorded as part of Israel’s history writing are fictional. Many are no doubt based on actual events of the past. According to this view, a proper understanding of ancient history writing allows for the incorporation of non-historical and even fictional narratives. Van Seters’s definition of history writing implies that to attempt to read the account of Israel’s history in the Bible from a modern perspective as strictly a record of actual events is to misconstrue its genre and force it to do something that it was not intended to do. (Arnold, 420)

Recounting exactly what happened in the past was not the chief objective of biblical historiographers

Chronicles provides the clearest perspective on the nature of history writing in the Bible, for we have both the historian’s final product and his main sources. The differences between Chronicles and Samuel-Kings show that the recounting of exactly what happened in the past was not the chief objective of biblical historiographers. Rather, history served ideological purposes. It was the forum for the presentation of theology. Biblical historians used history to draw and illustrate theological lessons. The composition of speeches was a principal tool for the Chronicler and other biblical historians to draw out the lessons that they found in history. Chronicles exemplifies the inventiveness of biblical historians and the freedom they exercised in shaping sources and filling in gaps left by them. (Arnold, 425)

The historical record was not intended to provide a strict record of an actual event

To attempt to read the account of Israel’s history in the Bible from a modern perspective as strictly a record of actual events is to misconstrue its genre and force it to do something that it was not intended to do. (Arnold, 420)

Objectivity and fact checking did not exist

Modern historiography, with its requirements for objectivity and fact checking, simply did not exist in antiquity. It was common, for example, for an author to ascribe to characters speeches that he himself composed. ... Furthermore, the authors do not offer what might be called objective historical accounts. (Wassén, Kindle Locations 342-343, 346)

The explanation of history was theological

The story of the flight of the Hebrews from Egypt and their defeat of Canaanite cities may contain genuine historical elements, as scholars from widely divergent

perspectives have contended. But the primary intent of the story is to account for how Israel gained possession of the land of Canaan. Its explanation is theological: God gave Israel the land of Canaan. (Arnold, 420-421)

Tales from pious storytellers provide insights into the religious mentality of the Hebrews but are of little historical worth

Historians do not believe in a divine act of revelation that establishes a religion; foundational revelations are considered the subject of popular etiologies¹, as mere imaginative answers to the question of what the origins were, as tales from the inexhaustible repertoire of pious storytellers. While these tales give invaluable insight into the religious mentality of the Hebrews, they are historically of little worth. (Lang (2002), 177)

The texts testify primarily and reliably about the life of the authors and only secondarily and unreliably about the events they purport to narrate

The primary *Sitz im Leben* of the books of the Old Testament therefore is their role in the life of those who wrote, copied, and corrected them.

Like the books of the New Testament, they testify primarily and reliably about the life of the church or the synagogue, only secondarily and unreliably about the events they purport to narrate.

Accordingly the Hebrew Bible, as we have it, is primarily evidence of the interests of the Pharisees and their successors, who not only selected and interpreted the books but also carefully determined and corrected their texts. (Smith, Morton (1987), 7)

The primary objective was to render an account of the past in order to explain the present

The primary objective of ancient history writing was to “render an account” of the past that explained the present. “Rendering an account” carried two connotations.

First, it entailed assessing responsibility for and passing judgment on a nation’s past actions as a way of explaining consequences for the present. Ancient historians had axes to grind—theological or political points to make.

Second, a civilization rendering an account of its past also entailed an expression of the corporate identity of the nation—what it was and what principles it stood for.

Hence the historian’s primary concern was not detailing exactly what happened in the past as much as it was interpreting the meaning of the past for the present, showing how the “causes” of the past brought about the “effects” of the present.

These cause-effect explanations were not scientific in nature, but typically had to do with moral and religious matters. (Arnold, 419)

In Israel, prophets most commonly provided an interpretation of history

History should not be seen naïvely as an attempt to recount what really happened. ... We have become so intrigued with what journalism provides for us that we have tried to extend its work into the writing of history (historiography). ...

We reflect a certain set of values that privileges the eyewitness and places the reconstruction of an event or sequence of events as the highest objective. ...

¹ Definition of *etiology*

1. CAUSE, ORIGIN specifically: the cause of a disease or abnormal condition
2. a branch of knowledge concerned with causes. (<https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/etiology> accessed 4 January 2021)

Not all cultures think about history the same way. In the ancient world it is difficult to find anyone who could legitimately be identified as a historian or journalist. Their cognitive environment had no need of such professions.

In the ancient Near East visible events on earth were reflections of the activity of the gods. Consequently, rather than providing journalists who could seek out eyewitnesses, they needed experts who could interpret what deity was communicating through events (priests and palace officials), and those who could be part of building the documentation that would serve to elevate and legitimize the king (public relations departments for the palace). In Israel it was the prophets who most commonly provided the interpretation of history.

In this sense one could perhaps go so far as to claim that there is no such thing as history, only the recounted interpretation of the past. (Walton (2007), 224)

The ancient authors conveyed the *meaning* of what had happened

We expect modern historians to tell their story objectively, without any additions that may distort or “fictionalize” the story. But things were quite different for the author in ancient times. The evangelist, like any other learned scribe in antiquity, was expected not only to recount what had happened, but also to convey the *meaning* of what had happened. (Ibsbouts, 5)

Explanations were concerned with moral and religious matters

These cause-effect explanations were not scientific in nature, but typically had to do with moral and religious matters. (Arnold, 419)

History was theology written for an ideological purpose

In the Bible, history was written for an ideological purpose. History writing was theology. (Arnold, 420)

Hebrew history is written from a theological perspective

All Hebrew historiography, however, is written from a theological perspective. Even the work of Herodotus has a strong interest in divine providence. The Dtr history, as the authoritative “canonical” tradition, stimulated a variety of responses, as can be seen by the great diversity of additions that were made to the work. ... These additions do not reflect upon the general question of Israelite identity but upon more specific theological and institutional lessons from the past.

Other histories were written subsequent to Dtr’s work and are directly related to it. One is the work of the Yahwist, who supplemented Dtr by extending the history back in time to the beginning of the world. This history has a different conception of corporate identity from that of Dtr and therefore makes a different selection of traditions and focuses upon a different period of history.

J’s use of the stories about the eponymous ancestors is meant to express a strong ethnic identity so important to a people scattered in exilic and diaspora communities. In contrast to Dtr, J expresses this identity in a more universalistic fashion, both temporally and geographically, and as a positive relationship to “all the families/nations of the earth.”

P builds upon both J and Dtr a system of institutional and cultic identity that could be meaningful both for the diaspora Jews and for the renewed cultic community in Jerusalem.

A strongly “revisionist” history is that of the Chronicler, who makes use of both the Pentateuch and the Dtr history (with additions) to rewrite the tradition. He puts forward his own conception of David’s founding of the Jerusalem religious

community as the “kingdom of God,” excluding or altering what is incompatible with this view. (Van Seters, 361)

The earlier stories convey an ethical or political message

The earlier stories in Genesis are etiological tales. That is, they are created to convey an ethical or political message. (Alpert, 14)

The Bible's historical literature provides an explanation for the circumstances or conditions in the historian's own day

The Bible's historical literature ... seeks to “render an account” of the past—to provide an explanation for circumstances or conditions in the historian's day. Whether the events that the Bible relates as past causes or explanations actually took place as described was not the ancient historian's primary concern. (Arnold, 420)

The religious histories in the Bible are cultural memories relevant to the authors and their groups

The histories of religion in the Bible are not just incorrect histories. They are better described as cultural memories, that is, a group's (or authoritative interpreter's) representation of the past with present relevance. The J, E, and P histories of religion portray a collective past that is relevant to the interests of these authors and the social groups to which they belong. Subsequently, the composite text becomes authoritative to other groups, who reinterpret these native histories in ways that retain or regenerate contemporary relevance. (Hendel in Oorschot, 241)

Bible history was derived from myths, stories, and tales handed down over time

Bible history is derived from myths, stories, and tales handed down over time until they have become the nucleus of the literature composed by the Biblical authors. Some of this material may have actual basis in fact and helps to preserve pre-Israelite traditions; however, personal bias could have accounted for the other stories that are now believed to be hypothetical. The format of the Biblical writing, especially from the Pentateuch, reached its final state due to the efforts of redactors who supported a historical reconstruction that had little connection to actual historical events. It seems that they imposed the events of their time onto their collective past. (Alpert, 5)

The Hebrew Bible has long lost its undisputed role as a key witness for the reconstruction of the (religious) history of ancient Israel

The reconstructions of the history and religious history of ancient Israel continue to depart increasingly from the biblical portrait. The Hebrew Bible has long lost its undisputed role as a key witness for the reconstruction of the (religious) history of ancient Israel. This is especially the case for the early period, which the Hebrew Bible links to the stories of the Patriarchs, the Exodus from Egypt, Sinai and the conquest of the land. (Pfeiffer, in Oorschot, 115)

The Hebrew Bible is a problematic source for the history of Israel's religion, especially during its monarchic period

The Hebrew Bible is not an unproblematic source for investigating the history of Israel's religion especially in the monarchic period. Most texts were written after the destruction of Jerusalem in 587 BCE, which meant the destruction of the main structures of the ancient Israelite society: the temple, monarchy, and other state institutions. This destruction necessitated and entailed a complete reorientation of Israel's religion, and this has to be taken into consideration when using the Hebrew Bible as a historical source. (Pakkala, in Oorschot, 267)

The scribes and priests created a “new” history that would serve as Judah’s central scripture

The end of the aggressive Northern Kingdom actually served as a catalyst for the growth of the kingdom of Judah. ... Changes brought economic stabilization, which in turn led to an accumulation of wealth in Jerusalem that supported the training of scribes and priests. Their role was to create a “new” history that would serve as Judah’s central scripture and create cohesiveness among the people. (Alpert, 67)

Discovery of Deuteronomy

The book that the priest Hilkiah said he found in the Temple in 622 B.C. was Deuteronomy. ... De Wette concluded that the book of Deuteronomy was not a long-lost document, but rather was written not long before its “discovery” by Hilkiah ...

The first key breakthrough in finding out the identity of the person who produced this account was the recognition of a special relationship between Deuteronomy and the next six books of the Bible: Joshua, Judges, 1 and 2 Samuel, and 1 and 2 Kings. These six books are known as the Early Prophets.

In 1943, a German biblical scholar, Martin Noth, showed that there was a strong unity between Deuteronomy and these six books of the Early Prophets. The language of Deuteronomy and parts of these other books was too similar for coincidence. Noth showed that this was not a loose collection of writings, but rather a thoughtfully arranged work. It told a continuous story, a flowing account of the history of the people of Israel in their land. It was not by one author. It contained various sections, written by various people (such as the Court History of David, and the stories of Samuel). The finished product, nonetheless, was the work of one person. That person was both a writer and an editor. He (the person was male, as we shall see) selected the stories and other texts that he wanted to use from sources available to him. He arranged the texts, shortening or adding to them. He inserted occasional comments of his own. And he wrote introductory sections which he set near the beginning of the work. Overall, he constructed a history that extended from Moses to the destruction of the kingdom of Judah by the Babylonians. For this man, Deuteronomy was *the* book. ...

Noth’s analysis and the term “Deuteronomistic history” came to be widely accepted among investigators. The case was strong. The first book of the Early Prophets, the book of Joshua, begins where Deuteronomy leaves off. It develops themes that are begun in Deuteronomy, and it refers to matters first mentioned in Deuteronomy. Key passages in Joshua, Judges, Samuel, and Kings use terminology that comes from Deuteronomy and refer to specific passages in Deuteronomy. ... The Deuteronomistic history covers the period from Moses to the end of the kingdom. (Friedman (1997), 101, 102, 103, 104, underlining added)

Deuteronomy provides the key

The book of Deuteronomy is often called the keystone of the entire documentary hypothesis of the Pentateuch. ... In the Graf-Wellhausen theory of the composition of the Pentateuch, the four documentary sources were J, E, D, and P. The D document was the major portion of Deuteronomy (chs. 12-26). ... In 1805, W. M. L. de Wette sought to show that Deuteronomy came from a source not found in the first four books of the Pentateuch. He proposed a date in the seventh century, later than J and E. ...

A host of scholars once dated “the book of the law,” according to a theory that it was composed just prior to discovery in 621. ... Some have pushed the date of

Deuteronomy back to the days of Manasseh or Hezekiah or Amos, or even as early as Samuel. Others set the work after the Exile, in the time of Haggai and Zechariah or later.

As a result of these varied conclusions, the term “Deuteronomist” came to the fore, and scholars began speaking of the “Tetrateuch” (Genesis-Numbers) and “Deuteronomic history” (Deuteronomy, Joshua, Judges, Samuel, and Kings. ...

The book as we have it, like many Old Testament works, appears to have undergone a lengthy process of composition. The process entails updating and modification to fit the changing needs of Israel’s life through the centuries. (Lasor, 114, 116, underlining added)

The two editions of the Deuteronomistic History were written about the time of the Babylonian Exile

In the case of the Deuteronomistic history, the degree of similarity of Dtr¹ and Dtr² is phenomenal. ... The first edition of the history, Dtr¹, had to be written before Josiah died in 609 B.C. The second edition, Dtr², had to be written after the Babylonian destruction and exile in 587 B.C. That is only a difference of twenty-two years. (Friedman (1997), 146)

The Deuteronomists’ History

Although the Deuteronomistic History did not reach its final form until after the exile (during the sixth century B.C.E.), substantial parts had certainly been completed by the time of Josiah’s death in 609 B.C.E. This history tells the story of Israel and Judah from the entry to the land of Israel to the destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem in 587/6 B.C.E. and the early days of the subsequent exile. (Chilton, 111, underlining added)

Two Histories: Kings (part of the “Deuteronomic History”) and Chronicles

The Bible contains two works that tell the history of the people in their land. The first is the Deuteronomistic history, and the second is the books of 1 and 2 Chronicles. The Deuteronomistic history came from the circle of the priests of Shiloh. The Chronicles history also came from a priestly circle: the Aaronid priests. (Friedman (1997), 211, underlining added)

The books of Kings and Chronicles may differ in their perspectives, in their evaluations of kings, and occasionally in their facts. (Friedman (1997), 214, underlining added)

The Biblical Historiography continued after the Return to Zion

After the Return to Zion, the reworking of ancient biblical historiographical sources and the books of prophecy continued. New ideological nuances were added, and ancient messages were interpreted according to the spirit of the era. (Lipschits, 358)

The historiographical texts began to reflect the second-generation’s acceptance of Babylonian rule

A realization began to dawn on the second-generation exiles: opportunities for rehabilitation hinged on their willingness to accept Babylonian rule. In this way, Deuteronomistic historiography at a later stage “adopted” Jeremiah’s political world view: if the reality was that there was no realistic chance of fighting a superpower, Judah was obliged to maintain a moderate stance and not be drawn into activism of any kind. This realization has resulted in the ideological unity that is reflected in the historiographical texts. (Lipschits, 357)

Accounts of the past were reframed in terms of the Israelites' Babylonian experiences

The literary and historical traditions of the Israelites were reshaped in Babylon. Written accounts of the past were framed in terms of the present, to construct a pattern of history influenced by their captivity and separation from Jerusalem. The scribes and redactors during this period had an enormous influence on the formation of Israelite tradition, since it was they who put their people's earliest memories into literary form during the Babylonian Exile. (Alpert, 77-78)

Second Isaiah invoked the conclusion of the Babylonian Exile with Creation and the Exodus

The new creation will manifest itself physically in a reformed earth. For the exiles eager to return from Babylon to Judah God will make the wilderness route passable, leveling the terrain and straightening the road, providing water in the desert, turning darkness to light, and guarding against wild animals ([Isaiah] 40:3-4; 41:17-20; 42:16; 43:19-20).

The trip from Babylon evokes memories of the exodus from Egypt, when the waters parted and the enemy was overwhelmed (43:2, 16-17; 51:10). With explicit references to the creation language of Genesis 1, Second Isaiah affirms that God did not create chaos; in Isaiah 45:18-19 the word *tohu*, meaning "chaos" or "emptiness," is the same word used in the phrase *tohu vavohu*, "formless void," in Genesis 1:2. Rather, YHWH conquered "Deep" (*tehom*, Isa. 51:10; Gen. 1:2), used here in the sense of both the primordial abyss and the Reed Sea, which was parted for the exodus from Egypt.

Another proper noun without the definite article, *Rahab*, meaning "raging" or "surging," is a mythical monster also associated with the sea: "Was it not you (YHWH) who cut Rahab in pieces, who pierced the dragon? Was it not you who dried up the sea, the waters of great Deep; who made the depths of the sea a way for the redeemed to cross over?" (51:9b-10).

God formed the people of Israel (43:1) and now is calling the Persian emperor Cyrus to free the Israelites so they can return to their homeland (44:28-45:8).

In the biblical tradition creation is both an episode of the past and a process continuing in the present and the future. Various biblical texts, not just those at the beginning of the Bible, describe creation with an array of images, rhetoric, and plots, and from this assemblage comes no single account that incorporates all. (Knight, 228-229)

The account of creation at Second Isaiah, near the end of the Babylonian Exile

The final example of the biblical accounts of creation occurs in the book of Isaiah, especially chapters 40-45, 48, and 51. Often called Second Isaiah or Deutero-Isaiah, Isaiah 40-55 stems from an unnamed prophet active in the waning years of the Babylonian exile, about 545-540 BCE.

The work of this prophet follows in the tradition of the prophet behind Isaiah 1-39, but Second Isaiah differs markedly in its message and tone of comfort and encouragement, in contrast to the strong social and religious criticism present in First Isaiah. Drawing on creation rhetoric, Second Isaiah reinforces the image of YHWH as creator in the past: God "measured the waters in the hollow of his hand and marked off the heavens with a span ... and weighed the mountains in scales and the hills in a balance" (40:12).

God “sits above the circle of the earth, … stretches out the heavens like a curtain, and spreads them like a tent to live in” (40:22), bringing out “their host [the stars] and numbers them, calling them all by name” (40:26).

YHWH “made the earth, and created humankind (adam) upon it” (45:12).

But the distinctive feature in Isaiah 40-45 pictures God not only as a creator at the beginning of time, but also as a creator of new things in the future, which is precisely the message the Babylonian exiles want to hear. (Knight, 228)

The creation account at Psalm 104 reflects the common tradition in various Southwest Asian countries

Other creation accounts exist in the Hebrew Bible besides these in Genesis 1-11. Of three that stand out, Psalm 104 is especially distinctive for its apparent ties to “The Great Hymn to the Aten.” This beautiful Egyptian song is directed to the Aten, the sun disk and manifestation of the sun god, Re. …

Psalm 104 contains numerous statements and allusions close to those in “The Great Hymn to the Aten.” They may stem not directly from the Aten hymn but from a common tradition, especially since astral and solar worship seems to have taken hold in various Southwest Asian countries including Israel, as attested in 2 Kings 23:5, referring to Josiah’s reform in deposing the priests “who made offerings to Baal, to the sun, the moon, the constellations, and all the host of the heavens” (see also 17:16). (Knight, 224, 225)

A detailed creation account at Job

A second biblical text filled with creation language is Job 38-41. In the chapters leading up to this point, Job has been arguing with his friends about his suffering, maintaining against them that he has done no wrong, does not deserve such treatment, and needs a response from God to explain his unjust afflictions.

Evading Job’s question, God explains instead that Job cannot even understand how the world was made, which God then proceeds to describe. These images of creation are normally left aside by those who argue for a literal interpretation of Genesis 1-11, perhaps because a literal interpretation of the language in Job 38-41 cannot be defended. However, there is no textual basis for treating the creation descriptions in Genesis and Job differently—they are both mythic and poetic.

Job 38-41 speaks of creation and cosmology in vivid language, set mostly in the form of questions God poses to Job. God “laid the foundation of the earth” and “its cornerstone,” “shut in the sea with doors when it burst out from the womb” (whose womb is unspecified), and made “thick darkness its swaddling band,” setting “bars and doors” to contain the ocean (38:4, 6, 8-10).

God can cause the dawn to “take hold of the skirts of the earth” (probably meaning the earth’s edges or corners) and shake the wicked out of it (38:12-13). There are “gates of death,” a “way to the dwelling of light,” “storehouses of the snow … and the hail,” and a “place where the light is distributed” and where “the east wind is scattered upon the earth” (38:17, 19, 22, 24).

The ice and frost are also born from a womb, and the surface of Deep freezes (38:29-30; here is the word *tehom* again, the waters of the abyss, as in Gen. 1:2; 7:11).

God is in control of the stars—the Pleiades, Orion, the Bear (the dipper), and the signs of the zodiac—and can also “send forth lightnings, so that they may go and say to you, ‘Here we are’; there are also “waterskins of the heavens” that can tilt to water

the earth (38:31-33, 35, 37-38). God provides food for baby birds and observes the birthing of mountain goats (38:41; 39:1-4).

Who else can control the wild ass, the ox, the ostrich, the horse, the hawk, and the eagle—let alone Behemoth and Leviathan, perhaps representing the hippopotamus and the crocodile (40:15-41:34; Tanakh 40:15-41:26)?

All of these striking images, colorful and dramatic as they are, give literary voice to the theological affirmation of divine superiority and creativity, part of the message also underlying Genesis 1-11. (Knight, 227-228)

In P's history, there are no other native gods beside YHWH, and there are no angels, heavenly host, and no divine monsters

The history of religion in P is positioned differently. There are no foreign gods, and there are no other native gods beside YHWH - no angels, no heavenly host, no divine monsters to conquer. P's history of religion is animated by a critique of native Israelite religious concepts. (Hendel, in Oorschot, 265)

No historical parallels or archaeological patterns support the family saga that begins with Abraham

The actual individuals mentioned in the Bible probably did not exist. Their personalities described in the text may bear similarities to characters, life styles, and cultures of the times. There are no historical parallels or archaeological patterns to support the great Biblical family saga that begins with Abraham, chosen by God to lead his people from Mesopotamia to the land of Canaan and build a great nation. The travels and experiences Abraham encountered with his family as they wandered in foreign environments, entered the new homeland, and fled to Egypt are all enduring and engaging stories, reflecting the history of the late 10th to 8th century BCE, but projected back onto the characters of the patriarchal period. Several names and places used in the contents of the early time periods did not exist until the 10th to 8th centuries. (Alpert, 15)

Ur of the Chaldees did not exist until approximately 800 years after the time of Abraham

Abraham, according to the Biblical account, came from Ur “of the Chaldees,” although the Chaldean empire was not in existence until the end of the 7th century BCE. (Alpert, 76)

The archaeological record tells us that Ur of the Chaldees did not exist until approximately 800 years after the time of Abraham. The city of Ur predated the Chaldeans and thrived as one of the largest cities of its time (2500 BCE). It is mentioned four times in the Bible with the Hebrew word “Kesdim” rendered as “Chaldeans” (Genesis 11:28, 11:31, and 15:7; and Nehemiah 9:7). The redactors used “Ur of the Chaldees” since it was the political reality of the time in which they were writing. Their use of the expression “of the Chaldees” tells us that the Chaldeans had already captured the throne of Babylon and ruled the entire region (8th to 7th century BCE).

This is only one of many instances in the Pentateuch of the misplacement of sequences of historical events that occurred almost one thousand years later, according to written documents. Another example is found in Genesis 36:31: “These are the kings who reigned in the land of Edom before any king reigned over the Israelites.” This passage assumes the knowledge that kings eventually ruled over Israel, an event that did not happen until the time of Saul and David, several hundred years later. (Alpert, 14-15)

The camels and products mentioned in Joseph's story reflect the later 8th century Assyrian period

In Genesis 37:25, camels are described as beasts of burden, used in caravans, as in the Joseph story. However, camels were not domesticated for caravan use until Iron Age II (1000-580 BCE), and the merchandise mentioned (gum, balm, and myrrh) was most widely traded in the 8th century BCE during the Assyrian period. (Alpert 16)

The search for the historical Patriarchs has continued to the present time with great zest. Most of the historical periods of the Patriarchs suggested by the Bible parallel the archaeological record. Circular argumentation in which the Biblical text serves as primary evidence of its own historical proof is frequently cited as evidence. (Alpert, 17)

Not one Egyptian record mentions the presence of Israelites

According to the Bible, the families that followed Joseph to Egypt spent 430 years there and multiplied miraculously (Exodus 12:40). This ought to make it reasonable to fit the Israelite presence in Egypt into an identifiable historical context. Egypt's history is well documented and the Biblical account is quite explicit in its detail. An exodus of such epic proportion, made up of 603,550 men under the age of 20 along with women, children, and support groups, could not have been overlooked, although it was customary in Egypt to obliterate evidence of any defeats or negative circumstances. This can be seen in the destruction of monumental buildings, the erasure of documents, and the changing of doubtful outcomes to positive conclusions.

Despite the large number of contemporary records uncovered, there is not one historical reference to the presence of the Israelites in Egypt at this time. There is no mention of Joseph, who acted as the pharaoh's grand vizier, nor any word about Moses, the massive Exodus of his followers, or the disappearance of the pursuing Egyptians into the Red Sea. (Alpert, 21)

David's rise to power cannot be corroborated and the Biblical accounts are conflicting and irreconcilable

The account of David's rise to power cannot be corroborated by historical and/or archaeological remains. Three conflicting and irreconcilable stories about David are found in the Bible. In I Samuel 16:1-13, David is secretly anointed by Samuel as king-to-be, which is part of Samuel's rejection of Saul. The second incident is found in I Samuel 16:14-23, when David the harpist is summoned to Saul's court to soothe the king's melancholy spirits. The third story, and the one most frequently repeated, is when David is transformed from shepherd boy to folk hero when he kills the Philistine giant Goliath with one stone from his trusty slingshot, an event that also marks the beginning of Saul's jealousy toward him (I Samuel 17:49). However, in II Samuel 21:19, the credit for killing Goliath goes to Elhanan, the son of Jair of Bethlehem. (Alpert, 49)

There was a King David but not in the Bible's exaggerated manner

Perhaps [David] did not exist in the same exaggerated manner that the Biblical account portrays him, and not to the extent of the size of his empire, but we can say that there was a King David! (Alpert, 49)

Manasseh was portrayed as "wicked" because he did not support his father's religious reforms

However successful Manasseh was in integrating Judah into the economy of Assyria, the scribes of the Bible condemn him for destroying all of his father's religious reforms. According to II Kings 21:16, he spilled the blood of his own people. The

archaeological record, however, does not bear this out. That the scribes portrayed him as the wickedest of all kings only attests to the prejudices of the Deuteronomists, who took power for a short period after Manasseh's death in 642 BCE. (Alpert, 71)

King Josiah was lauded because of his support for the priests and scribes

Josiah is represented as the quintessential example of a king and is probably the model for the grandeur that is attributed to David. During his reign the Jerusalem priests and scribes flourished, leaving us the history they devised based on current events. These writings were later redacted into the Hebrew Bible. II Kings 23:25 sings the praises of Josiah at a level that surpasses all other kings. He is portrayed as the hope for national redemption. (Alpert, 72)

In I Kings 13:2 an unknown Judahite prophet proclaims: "Behold a child shall be born to the house of David, Josiah by name." No clear archaeological evidence has been found to confirm the messianic role that Josiah was fulfilling in the Davidic tradition, or the notion that Deuteronomistic history was revealed to him. The priests played an important role in formulating the bulk of Deuteronomy. (Alpert, 73)

Archaeological evidence for Josiah's reign and his role in the interface of the material finds and the Biblical account is also lacking. ... Despite all the praise lavished on Josiah by the priestly scribes, he is only known from Biblical sources. There are no references to him in contemporary Egyptian or Babylonian texts. (Alpert, 74)

The book of Ezra was originally combined with the writing of Nehemiah. As one volume, they first appeared around 440 BCE, approximately 150 years after the decree of Cyrus encouraging the Judeans to return to their homes. The books of Ezra continued to be revised until the 1st century CE. (Alpert, 77)

Little in the Bible's narrative books tells what happened to the generation of exiles and refugees from Judah

The period that followed the disasters of 587 B.C. is the hardest for us to know. Even though it is more recent than the other periods I have described, it is the hardest to write about. There are two reasons for this. The first is simply the lack of sources. Neither the Bible nor archeology has told us very much.

There is very little in the narrative books of the Bible that tells us about what happened to the generation of exiles and refugees from Judah. The story ends in the books of Kings and Chronicles with the fall of the kingdom, and the next books of historical narrative in the Bible (Ezra and Nehemiah) pick up the story fifty years later. (Friedman (1997), 150)

Little clarity in the record of the Persian period

Many of the social-scientific studies of the Persian period focus on issues relating to the traditions recorded in Ezra-Nehemiah. ... Although they purport to contain records relating to this period and earlier, there are a number of problems interpreters face in attempting to reconstruct the history and society of fifth-century Judah using these traditions as sources. One has to do with their propagandistic orientation. Another relates to the uncertainty regarding whether Ezra went to Judah before or after Nehemiah, or whether he was there at all, and which Artaxerxes appointed them. One commentator remarks: "I very much suspect the text of Ezra-Nehemiah to be a highly fictionalized account with little historical worth." Others nevertheless believe it is possible to reconstruct, at least in broad outline, the events of the period. (Mcnutt, 183, underlining added)

Establishing identity, and the boundaries that define self-identity, are clearly significant issues in the Persian-period biblical literature. This is particularly apparent

in the passages in Ezra 9-10 and Nehemiah 13, where inter-marriage with “foreign” women is strongly discouraged. But there are a number of problems confronted if we try to sort out what the meaning and significance of these references are. As Tamara Eskenazi and Eleanore Judd point out, we are missing important information about these charges against mixed marriages: we are not told what constituted “foreignness,” what proportion of the community was guilty of having married these “foreign” women, why men would have married such women, whether women also married “foreign” men, or what, if anything, happened to these marriages. Most importantly, it is not clear who counts as a “foreigner” or who counts as a legitimate member of “Israel.” (Mcnutt, 202)

If we are to believe the biblical texts, the actual political and religious restoration of Judah, at least in Jerusalem, did not really begin in earnest until the reign of Darius (522-486 B.C.E.), and, as the exiles began to return, the internal stability of the province seems to have been affected by steadily increasing tensions between the native and immigrant populations. (Mcnutt, 188-189)

Written in retrospect, Chronicles lauded Hezekiah because of his support for the priests

The books of Chronicles were probably written several hundred years after the books of Kings and they describe, in retrospect, the places that Hezekiah ordered reinforced for the imminent Assyrian attack. (Alpert, 69-70)

Hezekiah the son of Ahaz is well liked by the Deuteronomic scribes. The second book of Kings states that “he did what was right in the sight of the Lord” (II Kings 18:3). According to scripture, this citation was probably given to him because of his religious reforms. (Alpert, 67)

Chronicles was written more than a century after the latest events he records

The Chronicler could not have compiled his work much before 400 B.C., especially if he is also responsible for the books of Ezra and Nehemiah. Thus removed by more than a century from even the latest events that he records, the author singles out those episodes whose significance he finds of lasting value, particularly with regard to his contemporary circumstances. (Lasor, 545, underlining added)

The setting of the book(s) of Chronicles is the postexilic community of Judea. Nevertheless, the specific time of the writing of Chronicles remains open to debate. Proposals range from the Persian time frame (400s BC) to the Greek/Hellenistic time frame (300s-200s BC) to the Maccabean/ Hasmonean time frame (100s BC). ... Observations indicate a likely range of 430-340 BC for the writing of Chronicles, with some preference for the earlier side of this range (ca. 430-400 BC). (Longman (2010), 25-26, underlining added)

The construct of “Israel’s” “history” in Chronicles reflects the Persian period context in that it is strongly biased in favor of Judah, Jerusalem, and the people who remained faithful to the Jerusalemitic cult as comprising the true “Israel.” (Mcnutt, 184)

Chronicles is not literal history

Continuity and selectivity are twin considerations for a historian. Continuity is necessary because of the interrelatedness of history. Each event bears a definite relationship to others, like a thread in a fabric, and cannot be understood in isolation. Selectivity is mandatory because no one could record everything that happened in any given era. The historian, therefore, singles out and highlights what is significant.

Both considerations involve subjectivity: the historian makes decisions on the basis of what seems important, influenced by personal interests, such as economics, sociology, politics, religion, or military encounters.

The Chronicler is not a historian in the strict western sense. To him Israel's history was pregnant with spiritual and moral lessons, which he brought to birth through a kind of historical midwifery. He is not concerned so much with the bare facts of Israel's history as with their meaning. If all valid historical writing is interpretative, the Chronicler's is highly interpretative. Above all, it is paradigmatic history. As a paradigm tells us how to frame the various tenses of a verb, Chronicles tells its readers how and how not to live, by presenting both positive and negative role models. (Lasor, 543)

The numbers in Chronicles, particularly regarding the size of combating armies, sometimes seem inflated. ... These numbers appear to be a deliberate part of the Chronicler's homiletical presentation, a resort to rhetorical mathematics in order to enhance the glory of the ancient narratives. (Lasor, 544)

Chronicles is theological history

The Chronicler's survey of events in the history of Judah is articulated through a theological framework centered on covenant. (Longman (2010), 36)

The biblical texts with which Chronicles has parallel passages or differing thematic emphases (such as Samuel and Kings) reflect selectivity, shaping, and emphasis in line with their respective authorial intent in a given pericope. Thus, distinctions and differences in parallel texts (such as Kings and Chronicles) may simply reflect different approaches to telling the same story or reflect a different voice (such as thematic emphasis or theological point) drawn from one event. (Longman (2010), 38)

Chronicles is in the style of an annal, written for a political and/or religious agenda

Chronicles has more in common with the genre of "annal" than it does with the genre of "chronicle." ... A chronicle is typically an abbreviated listing of historical events, while an annal features more sustained summaries of historical events with narrative shaping and an overall ideological purpose. The narrative shaping of annals typically summarizes the deeds of rulers and people against the backdrop of divine blessing (or judgment). In short, the genre of annal, like the text and content of Chronicles, features documentary details (what took place), ideological aspects (the significance of what took place), and literary elements (the shaping and stylistics of the account of what took place). ...

Chronicles, like the genre of annalistic literature discussed above, reflects the usage (selectivity) and shaping (literary-theological) of a wide range of sources from the administrative realm (e.g., kings and officials, military, taxation, royal assets) and the religious realm. (Longman (2010), 32-33)

Annalistic literature such as Chronicles is not history for history's sake. Instead, such texts arrange historical information with an overarching political and/or religious agenda ... significant to the historical context (social, political, etc.) of the original audience. In the case of Chronicles, a theology of covenantal hope guides the selection, shaping, and structure of the text, with the goal of imparting this perspective to the Chronicler's readers and hearers. This perspective makes the tone of the Chronicler's presentation of historical events didactic, almost sermonic, in its literary style and presentation. (Longman (2010), 35)

The book of Ezra and Chronicles may have had the same author

The book of Ezra was originally combined with the writing of Nehemiah. As one volume, they first appeared around 440 BCE, approximately 150 years after the decree of Cyrus encouraging the Judeans to return to their homes. The books of Ezra continued to be revised until the 1st century C.E.

It has been questioned whether Ezra himself wrote the text, or if it was done by the author or authors of Chronicles; alternatively, Ezra may have written both books.

Is it possible that it was Ezra who assembled the five sources into the books of Moses (the Pentateuch) as we know them today? According to R. E. Friedman in *Who Wrote the Bible?* (1989, pp. 218-239), Ezra is the most likely of all the Aaronid priests to have had access to priestly documents such as the Book of Generations, a text focusing on name lists and genealogy. He may have structured the book of Genesis using priestly terminology and added the ending while in exile in Babylon or after the construction of the Second Temple. (Alpert, 77)

It is possible that Ezra brought the Torah with him

In the entire Bible, two men are known as lawgivers: Moses and Ezra. Ezra came from Babylon to Judah eighty years after the first group of exiles returned, in 458 B.C. He was a priest and a scribe. The biblical record states explicitly that he was an Aaronid priest. It also indicates that he was no ordinary scribe. His writing skills were associated with one document in particular: "the torah of Moses."

Ezra arrived in Jerusalem with two important documents in his hand. One was this "*torah* of Moses," and the other was a letter from the Persian emperor, Artaxerxes, giving him authority in Judah. The emperor's authorization empowered Ezra to teach and to enforce "the law of your God which is in your hand." The enforcement powers included fines, imprisonment, and the death penalty.

What was this "*torah* of Moses," this "law of your God which is in your hand"? References to it in the biblical books of Ezra and Nehemiah include material from JE, D, and P. It is therefore likely that the book that Ezra brought from Babylon to Judah was the full Torah—the Five Books of Moses—as we know it. (Friedman (1997), 159)

Several theological themes were woven throughout Ezra-Nehemiah

The author/compiler of Ezra-Nehemiah has woven several theological themes amid the seeming tangle of lists of names and personal memoirs. First, the book stresses the continuity of the postexilic religious community under Ezra and Nehemiah with Israel's ancient past.

A second theme underscores the temple and the Torah as the twin bases of postexilic Israel's identity.

The temple is a preface to the emergence of Torah in the book. No sooner is the temple finished than Ezra the priest suddenly appears armed with his imperial commission to teach the law (Ezra 7). It is Torah that guides the postexilic community to divorce its foreign wives (10:3) and to banish certain aliens from Israel (Neh. 13:1ff.). The law defined postexilic Judah's understanding of what behavior God required.

Some readers, however, see the law's centrality in Ezra-Nehemiah as the root of an unattractive exclusivism and fear of foreigners. But fairness demands that one understand Israel's postexilic faith in its own context. The restored community was a tiny island in a vast, turbulent ocean of pagan peoples. That harsh reality called for the book's stern measures. (Lasor, 563, 564)

The Gospels are not biographies; the Gospel writers were not journalists. They wrote “good news” for their own communities

The gospels are not biographies in the modern sense of the word. Rather, they are stories told in such a way as to evoke a certain image of Jesus for a particular audience. They're trying to convey a message about Jesus, about his significance to the audience and thus we have to think of them as a kind of preaching, as well as story telling. That's what the gospel, The Good News, is really all about. (White (1998))

The gospels are very peculiar types of literature. They're not biographies. I mean, there are all sorts of details about Jesus that they're simply not interested in giving us. They are a kind of religious advertisement. What they do is proclaim their individual author's interpretation of the Christian message through the device of using Jesus of Nazareth as a spokesperson for the evangelist's position. The evangelist is not an author of fiction. The evangelist has traditions that go back through the Greek to the spoken language of Jesus, which was probably Aramaic. In other words, I think there's some kind of continuity between what Jesus would have been saying to other Jews in 27 to 30 [CE/AD] and what the Evangelists in Greek are saying to their own communities, that Jesus said. But, as historians, we have to sift, and go through and try to figure out what corresponds mostly to the period of the composition in Greek and what corresponds to the lifetime of the historical Jesus. (Fredriksen (1998))

What the gospels do share, of course, is Jesus. But that is almost trivial to say that. Because they are interested in not simply repeating Jesus. They are interested in interpreting Jesus. Matthew, even when he has Mark in front of him, will change what Jesus says. And that's what's most important for me, to understand the mind of an evangelist. It is that Matthew is saying, "I will change Mark so that Mark's Jesus speaks to my people." Now, there's a logic to his change. He's not just changing it to be difficult. He will change Mark, but what Jesus says in Mark does not make sense to Matthew's people.... What is consistent about the gospels is that they change consistent with their own theology, with their own communities' needs. They do not change at random. ... They were gospels. And a gospel is good news ... "good" and "news" ... updated interpretation. So when I went into Matthew, I did not expect journalism. I expected gospel. That's what I found. I have no problem with that. (Crossan (1998))

Matthew's and Luke's birth narratives are inconsistent

According to the Gospel of Matthew (Matthew 2:1), Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea sometime toward the end of Herod the Great's reign. Since Herod died in 4 B.C., Jesus was likely born around 5 or 6 B.C. In time, his parents relocated to Nazareth in the Galilee.

Matthew indicated that shortly after the birth of Jesus, the family fled into Egypt to avoid the wrath of Herod the Great. This, however, seems to be an artificial device so as to allow Jesus' family eventually to return from Egypt. Thus Matthew could feel comfortable applying Hosea's saying to Jesus: "Out of Egypt have I called my son" (Matthew 2:15 quoting Hosea 11:1). The prophet Hosea clearly meant Israel as God's son, referring to the Exodus of the Israelites out of Egypt, but here Matthew applied it directly to Jesus.

Luke recorded a very different tradition. Shortly after the birth of Jesus, his family returned to Jerusalem, directly into the heart of the lion's lair—the exact opposite of what Matthew would have us accept.

The gospels are inconsistent. We cannot, for instance, reconcile both Matthew's and Luke's accounts of what happened immediately after the birth of Jesus. We cannot have Jesus' family both going to Jerusalem, to Herod's stronghold, while simultaneously fleeing into Egypt away from Herod's influence. Siding with Luke on this matter, most scholars today interpret Matthew's flight into Egypt either as symbolic or highly artificial. (Wilson, 66-67)

Matthew's story is not historically plausible

When, for example, Matthew wants to emphasize the role of Jesus as a new Moses, as the agent of a new covenant with God, he has Mary and Joseph travel to Egypt after the birth in Bethlehem, and then later come back. While the story is not plausible as a historical event, its symbolic meaning is no less potent. It reminded Matthew's audience of the Exodus, and how the Israelites, too, left Egypt in search of their ultimate destiny. (Isbout, 6)

The birth accounts by Matthew and by Luke only agree on Bethlehem

Matthew and Luke's stories of Jesus' birth are anything but congruous. In fact, the manifold contradictions in the Gospels' crucifixion/resurrection narratives pale in comparison to the stunning discrepancies found in the New Testament's two infancy narratives. Moreover, many details in the accounts found in Matthew's and Luke's stories about Jesus' birth are historically untenable.

Matthew and Luke agree only that Jesus was born in the city of Bethlehem to a virgin named Mary. These Gospels do not agree on any other detail in their accounts. ... What is most striking is that these two Gospels contain completely contradictory accounts. ... All of the specific details found in Luke's Gospel are not found in Matthew's account, just as none of Matthew's details appear in Luke. Most importantly, the problem with these infancy narratives is not simply that they differ from one another. Rather, they do so in a way that makes them hopelessly irreconcilable. (Singer, Tovia (Vol. 1), 322; also to page 328)

It is highly likely that Jesus was born in Nazareth.

Matthew's and Luke's accounts of Jesus' birth are radically different

Matthew's and Luke's accounts of Jesus' birth are also radically different. Although both authors maintain that Mary was a virgin when she conceived and that Jesus was born in Bethlehem, the stories differ regarding practically everything else. It is clear that theological interests steer the evangelists, who want to stress the fact that Jesus was born of a virgin in David's city, Bethlehem (1 Sam. 16). Because they also know that Jesus was from Nazareth they offer varying solutions for how he could nevertheless have been born in Bethlehem. (Wassén, Kindle Locations 429-433).

Mark, John, and Paul seem unaware of any birth narratives

Neither Mark nor John addresses Jesus' birth and neither is aware that Jesus may have come into being through the Holy Spirit. In this context it is interesting to note that Paul, too, seems completely unaware of any virgin birth. Rather he states with certainty that Jesus 'was born of the seed [Greek *sperma*] of David according to the flesh' (Rom. 1.3). (Wassén, Kindle Locations 444-446)

Luke described a census that never existed

Matthew described Mary and Joseph as living in Bethlehem, since that is where the Davidid Messiah was supposed to be born. Luke has a better tradition, that the family lived in Nazareth. How, then, could he get them to Bethlehem for the birth? He says that Caesar Augustus ordered a worldwide census by which people had to be registered at their birthplace — and Joseph, as a descendant of David, had therefore

to go to Bethlehem. ... The problem with this is that Augustus never ordered a worldwide census. Luke is confusing a nonexistent Augustan census with the famous and resented census in Judaea, that of Quirinius, that took place ten years after Augustus's death, and it did not cover Galilee. (Wills, 119-120)

For those who believe that the Gospels are accurate historical records of Jesus' life, one of the most difficult problems in the NT is the census Luke presents in Luke 2:1-2. First, there is no evidence for an empire-wide census being taken during the time of Augustus, and we might expect that such a mammoth undertaking would have been mentioned by one or another of the ancient historians who recorded the period.

Second, Quirinius was sent by Augustus to be governor of Syria and Judea in A.D. 6 (not 6 B.C.) and thereafter did take a notable census for the empire. Josephus tells us he visited Judea in A.D. 6-7 to assess the property of the Jews in preparation for the registering and taxing of that property (Josephus *Ant.* 18.1.1-2.). There is no evidence that he was governor of the region twice or that he undertook a census of the region twice. ...

Third, a Roman census would not have required Jews to travel to their ancestral home for registration. (Reid, 126)

In Herod's time, the Syrian governor was not Quirinius but a man named Sentius Saturninus

Luke, who is more concerned about the historical context of his story than any of the other evangelists, provides additional information about the moment of Jesus' birth. Unfortunately, his dating system has confounded scholars no end. "In those days," says Luke, "a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered." By "all the world," Luke meant the Roman Empire. ... Luke gives us additional information about this putative census by Augustus, telling us that it was "the first registration" (i.e., since the beginning of the Roman conquest of Palestine) and that it was taken on orders of "Quirinius, governor of Syria." ...

The problem, however, is that in Herod's time, the Syrian governor was not Quirinius at all, but a man named Sentius Saturninus, who served in office from 9 to 6 B.C.E. He, in turn, was succeeded by Quintilius Varus, who ruled from 6 to 4 B.C.E., the year of Herod's death. There *was* a governor in Syria named Quirinius, but he did not enter office until 6 C.E., a full ten years *after* the death of Herod. (Ibsouts, 55-56)

Quirinius' census pertained to the sub-province of Judea and not to Galilee

The link with Quirinius is not the only problem we have with Luke's dating system. Another, and more substantial, problem is the very mechanism of a Roman census. ...

Since they had no idea what Judea was worth in terms of projected tax revenues, the then-governor, quite possibly the same Quirinius referred to in Luke, ordered a census to be taken. The thing is, however, that this census pertained only to the sub-province of Judea and *not* to Galilee, for Galilee remained under the control of one of Herod's other sons, Herod Antipas. Therefore, the census would not have affected Joseph's or Mary's family in any way. (Ibsouts 56-57)

The Roman census would want people to record their current place of residence, where the tax man could find them

Even if there had been such a census, and even if by some stretch of the imagination Joseph would have been compelled to register, he would not have traveled to Bethlehem at all, even if—as the Gospels tell us—Joseph's family originally hailed from that village. The whole purpose of a Roman census was to update the mechanism of *taxation*. Therefore, the Romans would have wanted people to appear

in their current place of residence, where the tax man could find them, rather than in the place of their ancestral home, which in some cases could have been many miles away. And as Luke makes eminently clear, Joseph and Mary resided in Nazareth, in Galilee. (Isbouts, 57)

Luke's references to secular historical events testify more to Luke's skills as a storyteller than as an historian

Luke's specific references to secular historical events—the reign of Herod, the governorship of Quirinius, the tetrarchy of Herod, Philip, Lysanias, and so on—all serve to anchor his story concretely to the public past. Examined more closely, this chronography turns out to testify more to Luke's skills as a storyteller than as an historian, for his references are often muddled by anachronisms. For instance, Herod the Great, King of Judea, ruled until 4 B.C.E.; the census under Quirinius occurred around 6 C.E.; but the chronology of the birth narrative presupposes synchrony (cf. Lk 1:5, 26; 2:2). Likewise, when Gamaliel the Pharisee, pleading for tolerance for the new movement, recalls previous insurrections, his speech contains significant chronological gaffes (Acts 6:34-39).

Even if inaccurate, however, these allusions to the public past help concretize Luke's tale. It is as if he were saying, "These things really happened, and not so very long ago, when all these other things that everyone knows about also occurred." This sort of secular chronography, despite the errors of fact, contributes directly to the *vraisemblance* [*"appearance of truth"*; *"the likeness or semblance of a narrative to reality, or to the truth"*] of Luke's story by grounding sacred events in secular time. (Fredriksen (2000), 31)

Luke was not familiar with Palestine and was heavily influenced by the Septuagint (LXX)

The author of Luke is not very familiar with Palestine or Palestinian topography. What's more, his Greek is heavily influenced by the "biblical" style of the Septuagint, the Greek translation of the Hebrew Scriptures composed in Alexandria, Egypt. This would suggest that "Luke" wrote for a Diaspora Judeo-Christian community somewhere in the Mediterranean region. ... Neither the Luke Gospel itself nor Acts provides a clue to the identity of its author, so that once again there is no certainty about who Luke was. (Isbouts, 8-9)

John's motive was theological, not to provide an historically accurate account

When John explains to his readers, or rather his audience, why he has written his story about Jesus, it becomes clear that his motivation is not to give a historically accurate account of Jesus' life:

Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book. But these are written so that you may come to believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that through believing you may have life in his name. Jn 20.30-31

The Gospels thus represent ideologically motivated literature, written above all to arouse or strengthen the conviction that Jesus is the Christ, that is, the Messiah. In other words, we cannot read the Gospels as anything near detached accounts; instead, they constitute literary works which offer various portraits of Jesus rooted in each author's distinctive theology. (Wassén, Kindle Locations 346-354)

The Gospels' contradictory utterances by Jesus while hanging on the cross

'My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?' These are Jesus' last words, uttered while he hangs on the cross, according to the Gospel of Mark. By contrast, at the moment of his death in the Gospel of Luke, Jesus says: 'Father, into your hands I commend my spirit.' Since the two utterances contradict one another, he cannot possibly have said both. What did Jesus really say? Did he say one of these alternatives, or neither of them? As surprising as it may seem, most scholars consider Jesus' words on the cross to be literary inventions of the authors, written in order to provide fitting conclusions to their narratives of Jesus' earthly existence. (Wassén, Kindle Locations 335-340)

The Gospel narratives reflect the views about Jesus that emerged a generation later

The Gospels were written towards the end of the first century, c. 65– 100 CE, and thus a generation after Jesus' death. They were composed by Christ-believers, not by disciples of the historical Jesus, and at a time when the movement had spread beyond Palestine and small groups of Christ-believers met regularly, for reasons that included holding services and worshipping the figure they saw as their saviour, the risen Jesus Christ. Naturally, the Gospel narratives reflect the view of Jesus that had emerged by the time they were written. (Wassén, Kindle Locations 365-369)

NO ORIGINAL MANUSCRIPTS

There are no original biblical manuscripts

We have no original manuscripts of any biblical book. The Bible even mentions books—the “Book of the Wars of YHWH” (Num. 21:14); the “Book of Jashar” (Josh. 10:13); the “Book of the Acts of Solomon” (1 Kings 11:41)—that are, if they ever existed, now lost.

Whether there was a pristine version of any biblical book cannot be known. What a speaker states and what a scribe inscribes may be two different things. Two scribes, hearing the same sentence, may write two different versions of it. (Knight, 51)

There is no solid evidence to determine the original text of the biblical books

The question of the original text of the biblical books cannot be resolved unequivocally, since there is no solid evidence to aid us in deciding in either direction. As a result, the textual praxis may never be described in a definitive way and each generation has to redefine the issues involved. (Tov (2012), 162)

The archaeological finds do not support an assumption of stabilization or a standard text

The [archaeological] finds from the Judean Desert do not support an assumption of stabilization or a standard text since both early (Masada) and late texts (the Bar Kochba sites of Wadi Murabba'at, Wadi Sdeir, Nahal Hever, Nahal Arugot, and Nahal Se'elim) reflect [the Masoretic Text], while Qumran reflects a textual plurality. During the same period, we thus find a stable text tradition at Masada and the other sites and textual fluidity at Qumran. (Tov (2012), 179)

Those who claim that a certain reading is preferable assume there was an original text

For those who claim that a certain reading is preferable to another one are actually presupposing an original text, since they claim that that reading better reflects the original composition from the point of view of the language, vocabulary, ideas, or meaning.

The very use of such an argument is based on the perception of an original text, since otherwise two or more different readings could have been “equally original”. ...

Two models have been devised for the early written shape of Scripture, supported mainly by theoretical arguments and less so by actual data:

- a. Multiple pristine texts.
- b. An original text or a series of determinative (original) texts.

While some scholars posit the existence of an original text of the biblical books from which all or most known texts derived, others reject this assumption. (Tov (2012), 162-163)

No biblical text is likely to preserve authentic details of the original language

Neither the Masoretic Text nor any other biblical text is likely to preserve the authentic details of the language of any biblical author. (Rezetko, 406)

A discussion of the original Scripture text includes its development and literary history

A discussion of the original Scripture text pertains not only to an analysis of the textual praxis, but also to our understanding of the development of the biblical books, including their literary history. ... The questions are very complex. (Tov (2012), 162)

THE HEBREW BIBLE WAS EDITED

The Hebrew Bible was edited

Substantial editing took place in the history of the Hebrew Bible. ... Successive scribes updated the texts to accord with changed historical and social circumstances and with new religious concepts. ... Editing has been so substantial and frequent that biblical scholars may not neglect or bypass editorial processes as irrelevant. ... Editors could replace parts of the transmitted texts with new passages. ... Ancient editors—even those behind the transmission of the Pentateuch—were able to replace one passage with another. ... Editorial processes comprised not only expanding texts but also substantial rewriting—even omissions. (Müller, 1, 2, 6, 7, 12)

Changes were made to all texts

Ancient scribes took the liberty of inserting various changes (omissions, additions, changes in content), for at the beginning of the transmission of the biblical text, intervention such as that reflected in these changes was considered acceptable. These changes were inserted into all texts, and therefore found their way into the proto-Masoretic texts, the Hebrew *Vorlage* of several ancient translations, and [the Samaritan Pentateuch]. (Tov (2012), 240-241)

Editorial reworking of the Hebrew Bible continued unabated for centuries

It can reasonably be assumed that editorial reworking of the Hebrew Bible continued unabated for centuries before the texts gradually became unchangeable. Their growing religious authority does not seem to have precluded scribes from changing the form, meaning, and content of the texts. On the contrary, for some scribes the religious authority attributed to the texts was reason to update or otherwise improve their wording in order to make sure that no blemish could be found in them. The empirical or documented evidence indicates that editorial modification was the rule rather than the exception, and accordingly signs of editing can be found in all parts of the Hebrew Bible. (Müller, 1)

A complicated editorial processes lies behind the texts of the Hebrew Bible

It is imperative to be aware of the complicated editorial processes behind the texts of the Hebrew Bible. ... In many cases the text was so substantially changed by later editors that the original meaning was greatly altered. This undermines any attempt to use the final texts for historical purposes. (Müller, 219, 220)

Each book of the Hebrew Bible is the product of a complicated and often unrecoverable history of composition and redaction

Naïve assumptions about the value of the MT for establishing what was taking place at the earliest stages of the production of any text must be abandoned.

In the case of the Hebrew Bible it is difficult to define what the ‘original’ means, since each book is the product of a complicated and often unrecoverable history of composition and redaction. The ‘original text’ that lies somewhere behind the archetype is usually not the product of a single author, but a collective production, sometimes constructed over centuries, perhaps comparable to the construction of a medieval cathedral or the composite walls of an old city.

Due to the high level of textual variation in the extant fragments of the Scrolls, we can now better appreciate the nature of the biblical text in the prerabbinic period. Put simply, the expression ‘the biblical text,’ which was used in the previous sentence, is a misnomer. There was no single version of the Bible that one could point to as the biblical text, but rather many different texts. The textual variety in this early period in both minor details and major features is striking. ...

Scholarly analysis can only attempt to recapture primary formulations underlying the current major Hebrew and translational versions, but cannot achieve the reconstitution of one primary text from which they derive, much less the biblical authors' *ipsissima verba* [very words]. ... It has become manifest that the further back the history of the biblical text is traced and the older the biblical manuscripts collated, the wider their textual discordance.

The text of the Hebrew Bible is in a state of radical uncertainty. That means that we cannot be sure about any word or phrase in Hebrew Bible texts we have today that these were the words and phrases of their original authors.

What ended as a stable and unchangeable text for each book had for centuries been pluriform and dynamically growing, in the form of both major new editions and minor expansions or errors, through the repeated creativity of anonymous religious leaders and thinkers, priests and scribes.

Such quotes could be multiplied almost endlessly, since the views expressed in the previous paragraphs are the consensus views of text-critical scholars on the text of the Hebrew Bible. (Rezetko, 72-73)

The Hebrew Bible is the product of a long series of partisan collections and revisions

The Hebrew Bible is the product not merely of partisan collection and revision but of a long series of partisan collections and revisions. Moreover, the relation between the parties concerned has not been one of simple succession and pious preservation, as represented in the Mishnah. On the contrary, the Pharisees kept Daniel in their canon and Hanukah in their calendar, but dropped the Books of the Maccabees, although these were accepted in other (certainly Jewish) Bibles. (Smith, Morton (1987), 8)

Scribal additions and corrections attest to the development of the Hebrew Bible's texts

Even the smaller, individual scribal additions and corrections in manuscripts illustrate the minor forms of growth in the texts. They attest to the scribal contribution to the development of the texts that became the Hebrew Bible. (von Weissenberg, 268)

The biblical text is the result of a continuous process of redactional activity

There is substantial agreement between experts on the main points of a model of the emergence of the BH [Biblical Hebrew] text. The text-critical consensus holds that "the biblical text is the result of a continuous process of redactional activity." "[N]one of the texts in the O[ld] T[estament] are original. ... "All one needs to do is to think about the long and complicated editorial histories of the biblical books to recognize that the texts of our biblical books are very far from the traditionally envisioned 'Moses and the Prophets and the Sages', and to realize that the quest for the 'original text' is naive in the extreme. The books grew organically and dynamically over the centuries, in what we can call new and expanded editions or revised literary editions". (Rezetko, 71-72)

Literary developments took place after the initial composition was completed

Sometimes the process of literary crystallization occurred more than once in different periods when additional literary developments took place after the completion of the initial composition. (Tov (2012), 182)

Ezra was influential in the redaction process

By the time of Ezra most of the material included in the Bible had already been attributed to the tradition of Moses by the scribes. If Ezra was a primary redactor his main task was to retain as much of the original text as possible without too much contradiction so as not to disillusion the community. At the same time, he had to appease the priests by not diminishing their part in the narrative as he wove the stories together. The redacted texts were diverse and complicated, and yet there seems to be a meaningful organization. If Ezra was not the redactor, then he probably had a large part in the process and he is acknowledged by most scholars as a prime contributor in the redaction of first five books of Moses. (Alpert, 78-79)

Ezra is remembered because, more than any other scribe, he seems to have crafted the guidelines that kept the Biblical narrative viable until the present time. (Alpert, 79)

Persian period Judah is the most likely setting for the final construct of much of the material in the Hebrew Bible, even though many of the independent traditions originated in earlier periods. (McNutt, 182, underlining added)

Some Biblical texts reveal an earlier, pre-monotheistic level of development

Some of the divine names seem originally to have referred to gods other than the Hebrew God.
They permit a glimpse of Israel's originally polytheistic religion.

In certain biblical texts, the use of more than one divine name can be seen as revealing an earlier, pre-monotheistic level of development. This is the case with one passage in the book of Deuteronomy (Deut 32:8-9). Here "the Most High" (Elyon) figures along with "Yahweh," and the two appear to belong to different levels within a polytheistic pantheon: Elyon occupies the superior rank, while Yahweh holds the inferior position.

Monotheism has identified the two divine figures, making Yahweh just another name of the Most High; in this way, a minor figure of the pantheon acquired the highest rank by being identified with the actual high god. (Lang (2002), 202)

There were several Deuteronomistic redactions

The historical books also originate from traditions and sources of the monarchic period, and are certainly based on writings such as the ones quoted in those books (*The Book of Jashar*, Josh 10:13; *The Book of the Acts of Solomon*, 1 Kgs 11:41; *The Book of the Annals of the Kings of Israel*, 1 Kgs 14:19; 2 Kgs 15:26, 31, and *The Book of the Annals of the Kings of Judah*, 1 Kgs 14:29; 2 Kgs 24:5). The historical books have been subjected to one or more Deuteronomistic redactions to form another "account on a large scale" which stretches from the death of Moses to the Exile. The book of Jeremiah and to a lesser extent the book of Ezekiel also underwent Deuteronomistic redaction. (McDonald (2002), 135, underlining added)

Among the Prophets, the book of Isaiah and the Minor Prophets, as well as Psalms, were composed by the accretion of writings from before and after the Exile, whereas the historical books are distinguished for having been subjected to one or more Deuteronomistic redactions. (McDonald (2002), 136, underlining added)

The Former Prophets feature larger-scale revisions of passages

When we move to the Former Prophets, there are several cases where the proto-MT, when compared to the LXX and/or some Qumran documents, features larger-scale revisions of passages. (Carr (2011), 171)

Changes in Chronicles ranged to substantial changes, rewritings, and replacements

The editorial changes in Chronicles range from small additions, such as the ones conventionally assumed in literary criticism, to substantial changes, rewritings, and replacements. (Müller, 8)

Reacting to the Greeks, many Jewish intellectuals portrayed the Jewish Patriarchs as the greatest of heroes

Aware that some Greek writers described the Jews' early history in decidedly uncomplimentary ways, many Jewish intellectuals tried to restore the integrity of the Jewish religion by portraying the Jewish Patriarchs as the greatest of heroes. One such figure was Artapanus, who lived sometime between the middle of the third century BCE and the early first century BCE. (Simkovich, 228)

Writers expanded on unknown biblical characters

Many writers in the Second Temple period expanded on biblical stories by exploring the lives of unknown biblical characters. (Simkovich, 251)

2 Kings 23 is one of the most edited texts in the Hebrew Bible

Josiah's reform in 2 Kings 23, ... is one of the most edited and debated texts in the Hebrew Bible. (Pakkala, in Oorschot, 274)

David's census was rewritten through the lens of monotheism

The Bible contains two versions of the story [of David's census]. The tale was first told in 2 Samuel 24 and was retold in 1 Chronicles 21. Both stories detail a census taken by David, a practice forbidden in the *Torah* (Ex 30:11-16). ... David's census so angers the LORD that the deity unleashes a plague that kills 70,000 innocent people. ...

Although the stories in 2 Samuel 24 and 1 Chronicles 21 are very similar, there is one glaring difference. ... In the version presented in 2 Samuel 24, it is *God* who moves David to number the people:

Again the anger of the LORD was kindled against Israel, and he incited David against them, saying, "Go and count the people of Israel and Judah" (2 Sam 24:1).

In the later version of the same story, however, it is not God who incites David to number the people, but Satan:

Satan stood up against Israel, and incited David to count the people of Israel. (1 Chron 21:1) ...

The Chronicler is retelling Israel's history through the lens of his own theology and at a later date. ... When the author of Chronicles came to the census episode in his sourcebook, 2 Samuel, he was confronted with an account of the deity at his most murderous. ...

The Chronicler, then, reflects the growing existential frustration of a monotheistic people who find it difficult to accept a God who is the author of both good and evil. Hence, in the Chronicler's tale, it is not *Yhwh* but *Satan* who orders the census. (Wray, 66-67, underlining supplied)

A court historian slipped the *Satan* into an account concerning the origin of census taking

Around the time Job was written (c. 550 B.C.E.), other biblical writers invoked the *satan* to account for division within Israel. (Cf 2 Samuel 24:1-17; also Forsyth, 119-120). One court historian slips the *Satan* into an account concerning the origin of census

taking, which King David introduced into Israel c. 1000 B.C.E. for the purpose of instituting taxation.

The author of 1 Chronicles suggests that a supernatural adversary within the divine court had managed to infiltrate the royal house and lead the king himself into sin: ... [1 Chron. 21:1].

Here the *satan* is invoked to account for the division and destruction that King David's order aroused within Israel. (Pagels, 42-43)

Less stable and diverse redaction, editing, and transmission of Ezekiel, Jeremiah, and Daniel

Within the section of the Prophets, the historical books, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel, as well as Daniel in the tradition represented by the Septuagint, exhibit a history of literary redaction, editorial formation, and textual transmission which is less stable and more diverse than that of Isaiah and Minor Prophets; they are hardly used for explicit quotations but they are the source of many parabiblical rewritings, especially of an apocalyptic or prophetic character. (McDonald (2002), 145, underlining added)

There are important differences between Chronicles and Samuel

The book of Chronicles is one of the earliest surviving documents we have that revises early biblical material. Many scholars believe Chronicles was written in the early Second Temple period, while the Jews in Judea were living under the authority of the Persian Empire. While there is significant overlap between Chronicles and Samuel, there are important differences as well. Because the author of Chronicles seeks to portray David and his descendants in a positive light, he makes certain changes to older versions of the same stories. Small differences between Chronicles and Samuel point to big differences in ideology. The changes that Chronicles makes to older stories about the early kings of Israel are not random or careless. The differences between Chronicles and Samuel suggest that the Chronicler deliberately made changes to older versions of the stories about Saul and David with the purpose of presenting David as the true heir to the Israelite monarchy. The Chronicler's changes to earlier material in the Bible reveal a new and distinct ideology. (Simkovich, 174, 177-178)

Examples of textual evidences of changes

The textual evidence in Lev 17:1-4 is a prime example of additions that took place in the transmission of the Hebrew Bible. The text was expanded by editors who had a particular perspective, different from that of the older text, and who made additions irrespective of the passage's original idea. It is probable that similar additions were made throughout the Pentateuch (as well as other books) for centuries. (Müller, 24)

Communities preserved differing readings (variants) of the texts

Initially, there was no single version of these books; different copyists produced different texts, and different communities preserved different readings. The Dead Sea Scrolls, which contain parts of all the Hebrew books (with the exception of Esther) as well as Hebrew versions of some of the deuterocanonical books, such as Tobit, attest to numerous variants.

It is likely that the Greek translators in some cases, such as for the book of Jeremiah, which is about one-eighth shorter in the Septuagint than in the Hebrew text, worked with versions much different from those of the extant Hebrew manuscripts.

The standardized Hebrew version that was later developed is called the Masoretic text (MT). Of course, the standardizations differed depending on where the Masoretes were located. (Knight, 49)

The Hebrew Bible was edited

People were aware that textual changes were introduced into manuscripts

Ancient writers and readers were not unaware of the fact that textual changes sometimes were introduced into MSS in the process of transmitting them. (Footnote" An obvious [New Testament] example is Rev. 22.18-19). (Kraft, *Christian Transmission*, 208)

SCRIBES CORRUPTED THE TEXT

Corruptions and scribal interventions are evidenced in all textual witnesses of Hebrew-Aramaic Scripture

Most texts—ancient and modern—that are transmitted from one generation to the next get *corrupted* in one way or another. ...

In ancient texts ... these corruptions (the technical term for various forms of “mistakes”) were more frequent as a result of the complexities of the writing on papyrus and leather and the length of the transmission process, conditions that prevailed until the advent of printing. The number of factors that could have created corruptions is large. ...

Corruptions as well as various forms of scribal intervention (changes, corrections, etc.) are evidenced in all textual witnesses of Hebrew-Aramaic Scripture, including the group of texts now called the medieval Masoretic Text as well as in its predecessors, the proto-Masoretic+ (also named proto-rabbinic) texts. (Tov (2012), 9)

Scribes frequently changed the supposedly revealed texts that they transmitted

“How can you say, ‘We are wise, and the law of the Lord is with us,’ when, in fact, the false pen of the scribes has made it into a lie” (Jer 8:8)

[Jeremiah] was certainly concerned that the authority of the prophet to speak for God was being usurped by the scribes, as indeed it was. But it is also established beyond doubt that scribes frequently changed the supposedly revealed texts that they transmitted. Ironically, the book of Jeremiah is itself a prime example of scribal composition, where the original oracles of the prophet are now overshadowed by the accretions, often ideological, of scribal transmission. (von Weissenberg, 23)

Scribes altered the transmitted text

When creating new copies, scribes altered the transmitted text, first as authors / editors-scribes, and later as copyists-scribes. Editorial freedom ... is also reflected in changes in orthography and morphology, while careless copying brought out many mistakes, erasures, and corrections. (Tov (2012), 184)

Scribes significantly revised the texts they transmitted

Ancient scribes significantly revised the texts they transmitted and the reality that this process of revision—often by way of memory—often was too fluid to reconstruct in detail. (Carr (2011), 7)

Another insight that has emerged from the study of literary cultures in Israel and elsewhere is the idea that not all ancient authors were created equal. Not only were certain scribal scholars more able to write elegantly, but they also enjoyed a distinctive prestige that allowed them to promote new texts and new versions of older texts. (Carr (2011), 6)

Scribes took liberties

The so-called Masoretic *corrections of the scribes* (*tiqqunê soferim*) also reflect a greater degree of liberty than one would connect with the term scribe. (Tov (2004), 24)

Each scribe produced a different wording of the text being copied

Each scribe produced a different wording of the text being copied. The kind of changes that will have occurred range from alterations in the spelling which reflect the way the scribe was used to speaking the word rather than the correct spelling, through a wide range of unconscious errors, to places where conscious decisions were

made. What is important to note here is that as part of the copying process scribes will have had to deal with difficulties which they noticed in the manuscript from which they were copying (known as the exemplar). While these should have been picked up at a preparatory stage, it is reasonable to assume that there must have been occasions when copyists found a difficulty in the exemplar after they had already written part of the problematical text, and decided it was easier to make adjustments to the next words to be copied. (Parker, 28)

Some scribes took the liberty of altering the *content* of the text

Some scribes took the liberty of altering the *content* of the text in both large and small details. The following types of changes are recognized, with a certain degree of overlap:

- a) exegetical changes,
- b) linguistic-stylistic changes,
- c) insertion of synonymous readings,
- d) harmonizations,
- e) additions to the body of the text. (Tov (2012), 240)

Texts were significantly expanded

We have manuscript attestation for significant expansions of books such as Esther, Daniel, and other books. (Carr (2011), 166)

In the course of the copying, scribes created variations

In the course of the copying, scribes created variation in (a) minuses, (b) pluses, (c) interchanges, and (d) sequence differences. (e) In addition, scribes changed the layout of the texts and embedded their interpretations in the sense divisions inserted in the text. (Tov (2012), 221)

Copyists made errors as well as making deliberate changes

One will find not only errors of copyists and different translation techniques but also many deliberate changes of the transmitted texts. (Müller, 2)

They were careless

Even with all necessary caution, we sometimes find that certain scribes were careless. (Abegg, 269)

As each scroll was copied, it differed slightly from its predecessors

All the books in these collections date, in their present forms, from the years between 500 and 100 BC. 'In their present forms', however, is an ambiguous expression which requires explanation.

It is extremely difficult to copy a manuscript with absolute accuracy. Therefore, so long as the books of the Old Testament were handed down as manuscripts, each successive copy differed slightly from its predecessors by reason of the copyist's mistakes.

Moreover, besides accidental mistakes, copyists made deliberate corrections, or what they believed to be corrections, and these might be anything from slight changes in spelling or word order to omission, rearrangement, or addition of words or phrases or even large sections of the text. (Smith, Morton (1987), 1-2)

At times, the linguistic background of the scribes is reflected in changes

In the process of copying, the linguistic background of the scribes is reflected in some changes inserted into manuscripts, as a rule consciously, but sometimes unconsciously. (Tov (2012), 256)

No necessary connection between the sacred status of the Scripture books and the nature of the scribal transmission

There is not necessarily a connection between the sacred status of the Scripture books and the nature of the scribal transmission. Even the most sacred Scripture book, the Torah, was not transmitted more carefully than the other books, neither in the proto-Masoretic scrolls nor in other text traditions. (Tov (2012), 21)

The Jews read, copied, retold, expanded, and interpreted the texts

While there may not have been a closed biblical canon during the late Second Temple period, there were, by this time, biblical texts that were broadly regarded as authoritative. These texts were read, copied, retold, expanded upon, and interpreted by Jews living in both Judea and the Diaspora. Most Jews at this time did not consider such creative expansions of the scriptures to be acts of sacrilege but rather believed them to be acts of homage. (Simkovich, 187)

During the Second Temple period, Jews began to rewrite the stories about their early history

If the Bible was a house, then the stories written by Jews in the late Second Temple period are the house's embellishments: the landscaping, the decorative flourishes, and the fixings that resolve or distract from perceived weaknesses in the original foundation. ... There is no evidence that they made a formal distinction between texts that were canonized into Scripture and texts that were written about Scripture. But virtually all Jews would have agreed that the Torah contained divinely inspired retellings of Israel's earliest national history. And, sometime during the Second Temple period, Jews began to rewrite these stories about their early history. Given how many such rewritings have survived, one can only imagine how many more were composed that were not preserved for two millennia. (Simkovich, 221)

Freedom of the translators resulted in variations jostling with each other

One of the challenges of the book of Daniel is that the Septuagint (LXX) version of the book, diverges from the Masoretic Text (MT) in significant ways, especially, but not only, in chs. 3-6. At the same time, another version known as Theodotion (Θ) has become the well-known and better attested Greek version of Daniel.

Neither of these phenomena on their own is unique in the Greek Bible. The apparent freedom of the translators of Job or Proverbs is well known, as are the substantial differences in length of other texts, such as Jeremiah and portions of the former prophets.

The presence of a differing Greek tradition is also a feature of the history of the book of Esther. What is unique about the Greek translation of Daniel is that somewhere in the history of the Greek Bible the LXX of Daniel was replaced by Θ which is much closer to the MT, as the authoritative Greek version.

How and why this situation came about is uncertain. What can be determined is that the two Greek versions [of Daniel] jostled with each other for many years from possibly the early first century BCE until at least the time of Origen, who was aware of both. (Meadowcroft, 15)

SCRIBES MADE THE TEXTS REFLECT THEIR VIEWS

Ideas developed after the exile, such as on messianism, the future life and angelology

The doctrine of messianism, the future life and other beliefs developed considerably after the Exile. R. Tournay has shown how ideas on the future life and angelology, developed in the later years of Old Testament Judaism, were inserted into the biblical text when the earlier tradition came to be reedited. This process of recasting earlier teaching in the light of later doctrine is known as rereading. At the end of his study Tournay (Footnote: Robert Tournay, "Relectures bibliques concernant la vie future et l'angelologie," *Revue Biblique* 69 (1962): 481-505, at 504-5) remarks

It is interesting to see to what extent the Scriptures continued to live within the community of believers and how the faith of these believers poured itself into the very text of the ancient writings, thus registering the development of revelation for future generations. The forward thrust [elan] of this revelation went beyond the material content of the texts, and these latter were not considered as dead documents, fixed once for all; they always remained open to eventual enrichment. The Bible was already read and meditated on within a living tradition, a tradition anxious to answer the spiritual need of the Jewish people at every moment of its existence. (McNamara (2010), 58-59)

The last 200 years of the post-exilic period witnessed great changes in Israel, including doctrines

The development that went on in Israel during the post-exilic period, in particular over the last two centuries before our era, must have been very great. From the doctrinal point of view we have the emphasis on angels, on the otherworld, the afterlife, bodily resurrection and other matters besides. There was development also in matters of Jewish observance, in particular markers to set off the chosen people from outside nations, on the importance of circumcision, the signs of the covenant, the sabbath and regulations governing it (see Isaiah 56:2, 4, 6; 58:13; Jeremiah 17:21-27). (McNamara (2010), 48)

The later ideas, as on messianism, afterlife, and angelology were read into the final form of the text that was to become canonical

Revelation developed between the time of an original oracle or teaching and the date of the final redaction of the work that contained it; this was registered in the final edition of the work.

Sometimes, even after the final edition of a biblical book had been made, newer insights could be worked into the now completed composition to become part of the canonical text. ... In the matter of fixation of the text and of the ensuing interpretation of this within the community, one must keep in mind the prevailing mental climate.

... An enlarged world view had later generations interpret and formulate earlier tradition in the light of its faith on matters such as messianic teaching, afterlife, angelology and such like. And these later ideas were read into the final form of the text, the one that was to become canonical. (McNamara (1983), 41)

Authorized scribes intruded their later ideas, such as of a future life and of angelology, into early texts

Examples of editorial additions can probably be seen in the presence of brief texts on the future life and on angelology in contexts which appear to be older than the time of the emergence of these ideas in Israel. Examples of this kind could be multiplied.

In the abstract one could say that these later elements are mere haphazard intrusions into the corpus of earlier tradition as it was being transmitted. Much more likely, however, they are evidence of an intentional updating of the tradition by the authorized scribes as they set down to give definitive shape to the tradition, a form that would become concrete in a book intended for the believing and worshipping community, one that would have the particular book speak to the contemporary and to a later generation. (McNamara (1983), 40)

Scribes tampered with the texts to make them suit their preferences

Some biblical texts show evidence of ancient scribal or editorial tampering: certain divine names have been replaced by others.

The scribes working in the biblical period were the first to be confronted with the problem of the divine names. Some felt a preference for Yahweh and edited their texts accordingly; others thought that the use of Elohim was more appropriate—and not only in order to avoid the sacred name Yahweh, but also to convey a more universal message.

It seems that at an early stage of textual transmission the name Yahweh was deleted from Psalms 42-83 and replaced by Elohim. The opposite was frequently done in the book of Proverbs, from which "Elohim" was almost completely eliminated. (Lang (2002), 201)

As the Scriptures passed from generation to generation, it experienced developments that reflected their thinking and poetic imagination

As generation after generation found its own new experiences in the Scriptures or traditions, it was always tempted to develop them further and refashion them, to continue them and then to hand them on in a way which would ensure that its own new experiences would henceforth always be understood exactly and in every detail. As it pursued its course through the generations, the Bible reflected their thinking and poetic imagination. (Baeck, 53)

The man transmitting the tradition has become a commentator. (Baeck, 56)

Texts were updated to correspond with changed circumstances and with new religious ideas

A recurrent motive to insert an additional passage was to update the older text to correspond to changed socio-historical circumstances and to new religious ideas and concepts. (Müller, 221)

Contemporary debates helped shape presentations of the past

This story of Israel and its relationship with Yahweh over time is the result of theological reflection and the combination of a number of originally independent writings and traditions to form a sequenced 'epic'. It presents a view of the past from particular points in time, where contemporary debates and developments helped shape the presentation and interpretation so that they addressed current events and views. (Edelman (2012), 129)

The literature reflected writers' goals

The perspective of those who returned to Zion is represented in these verses [Jeremiah 25:22ff]. Their goal was to minimize the significance of those who remained in Judah and to amplify the importance of those who returned. ... This was a struggle regarding the role of the elite, who were trying to return and assert themselves over those who remained. This confrontation could have developed only after the Return to Zion, and it is evidence that the remnant of Judah was unwilling to accept the leadership of the returnees. (Lipschits, 359)

Sometimes later theology resulted in comprehensive editing

Some books were comprehensively edited from a certain theological perspective (e.g., the Deuteronomistic editing in Jeremiah). (Müller, 198)

Texts were revised to conform

The final redactors of the proto-MT seem to have revised semi-Priestly material (Josh 20:1-3, 7-9) to conform to Deuteronomistic prototypes. (Carr (2011), 172)

The events expressed the authors' various ideological and polemical outlooks and they reflected questions that troubled the editors

Most scholars agree that the Deuteronomistic portion of the sequence (from Deuteronomy through Kings) was redacted during the Babylonian exile (sixth century BCE) or a little earlier (the end of the seventh century BCE), and the first four books of the Pentateuch [Genesis through Numbers] were placed ahead of it some time later, toward the end of the Babylonian exile and the beginning of the Persian period.

The various hands that left their imprint on the composite work in the stages of writing or editing also account for its diversity of views. ... The events that make up the sequence are meant to express the ideological, polemical and various outlooks of the authors, to reflect the questions that troubled the editors, even their disagreements and their final compromises. The redactors themselves did not hesitate to expose the disputes between the different messages, because they shared the common ideology of monotheism and dealt with the need to understand history and the complexity of the human spirit, which both acts in history and reads about it.

Above all, they were aware that for historical writing to influence its readers, it must make use of the rhetorical effects that shape the historical narrative in the Bible. (Arnold, 714-715)

Many changes were probably derived from the scribes' wish to adapt texts to their own understanding

Many of the changes introduced by scribes cannot be ascribed to any of the external influences. They probably derived from the contexts themselves, reflecting the scribes' wishes to adapt the texts to their own understanding or to an exegetical tradition known to them. (Tov (2012), 241)

Sometimes changes were made to facts

Texts have been factually changed during the process of their transmission. (Müller, 16)

THE TEXT WAS IN A CONSTANTLY FLUID STATE

The transmission of the texts was fluid

The clearer we become on the fluid character of the transmission of many ancient texts, the more difficult it becomes to insist on an early date of biblical texts—centuries before the Hellenistic period—at least in something like their present form. (Carr (2011), 7)

Largely thanks to the Dead Sea Scrolls and new analysis of the LXX tradition, we now know that early biblical textual traditions tended to be more fluid, manifesting ... semantic shifts. Later, however, there was an increasing emphasis on precise copying of the consonantal text, still later, a codifying and standardization of textual vocalization, and finally the accentuation of the text was fixed. (Carr (2011), 35)

Evidence from LXX and Qumran shows that the Hebrew text was in flux

We know from textual evidence preserved at Qumran and in the LXX and Samaritan Pentateuch that Hebrew texts were in flux. Many of the manuscripts in question date from the Hasmonean period or later, but they preserve an array of textual shifts that could date to earlier periods as well. (Carr (2011), 166)

Scribal use and reproduction of texts was fluid at every stage

Not only Second Temple manuscripts, but also other evidences—for example, the parallels between Samuel-Kings and Chronicles—show that fluidity was characteristic of scribal use and the reproduction of texts at every stage to which we have access. (Carr (2011), 491)

Ancient textuality was fluid

Significant differences and textual variations measure the distance between Hebrew texts and Hellenistic-period Greek versions. Our modern ideas of “book” or of “canon” or of “the Bible” simply do not capture this fluid aspect of ancient textuality. (Fredriksen, Paula (2017), Kindle location 211)

The manuscript tradition is fluid

This fluidity inherent in manuscript tradition must be kept in mind when it is stated that the books of the Hebrew Bible date ‘in their present forms’ from the years between 500 and 100 BC. The statement means that after this period the copyists of these books no longer made deliberate, major alterations of that systematic sort which run through the whole text and produce what can be called ‘a new edition’. ...

Such major alterations seem to have been inflicted on almost all the books of the Hebrew Bible. ... What form a book had before its present form we can only guess. (Smith, Morton (1987), 2-3)

The Writings section of the TANAKH was more fluid during the Second Temple period

Discussions in the Mishnah regarding what books should be canonized in the Writings section suggest that in the Second Temple period this section was treated with more fluidity than the Torah and the Prophets sections, which by this time may have been more or less fixed. Indeed, Jesus is cited as making reference to “the law and the prophets” in the New Testament, but he makes no reference to the Writings. (Simkovich, 208)

Texts earlier than the 3rd century BCE must have been much more fluid

The textual diversity visible in the Qumran evidence from the 3rd century BCE onwards is probably not representative of the textual situation in earlier periods, when the text must have been much more fluid. (Tov (2012), 166 n. 24)

The text was in a constantly fluid state

The scriptural texts were unstable

We think of the Bible as a book. ... The Bible is not a book: it is a library. No one in Paul's period would ever have seen a "Bible." Individual texts or discrete collections (such as Psalms, or Proverbs, or various prophets) were bound together as separate scrolls. The scriptural texts in themselves, further, were unstable. (Fredriksen, Paula (2017), Kindle location 201)

Oral traditions were not stable

Ethnological studies of 'oral traditions' have shown they are not at all stable and it is almost impossible to claim an unaltered, verbatim oral transmission of legends and epics. (Edelman (2012), 2)

MANY UNTRACEABLE CHANGES

The documented changes are a mere fraction of what actually occurred

We do not possess empirical evidence for most of the texts in the Hebrew Bible ... but we can assume that these documented cases attest to merely a fraction of the actual changes that have taken place in the transmission of the Hebrew Bible. (Müller, 9)

Some texts have been lost while others are embedded and only partially identifiable

Certain texts are lost for ever, some of which are referred to (and perhaps preserved in fragments) in existing biblical books (e.g., identifiable parts of the "book of Yashar"; Josh 10:13b; 2 Sam 1:18; [note also LXX 3 Kgdms 8:53a]) and probably others that failed the test of religious orthodoxy or usability in later periods.

Other texts, such as those now embedded in the Pentateuch, are only partially identifiable ... and early Moses-exodus traditions largely lost behind the haze of centuries of focus on development of the Mosaic Torah. (Carr (2011), 489)

The documented evidence covers only the latest stages and it does not provide every detail of the earlier forms

It should be noted that the documented evidence covers only the latest stages of the textual development. There is no reason to assume that similar changes could not have taken place during earlier stages of the textual development as well. ... It is unlikely that scholarship would be able to reconstruct every detail of the earlier forms of the texts. (Müller, 44)

The composition of the book of Jeremiah is an untraceable complex process

The book of Jeremiah is an anthology of diverse materials relating to the prophet Jeremiah (e.g., poetic oracles, prose narratives, etc.). It seems to be organized primarily in a thematic and literary rather than chronological fashion. Few biblical books have stirred up as much discussion concerning their origin as has Jeremiah. Without doubt the process of composition was a complex one whose stages we probably can never retrace. (Lasor, 339-340, underlining added)

Josephus suggest that the revising of texts happened much more frequently and haphazardly

The gradual differences between the MT, LXX, 4QSam^a, and Josephus suggest that the revising of texts happened much more frequently and haphazardly than the limited number of editions now accepted suggests. (Müller, 98)

POST-EXILIC EDITING

Characteristics of the compositions before they were combined shows the fracturing of scribal activity during the exile

The Hexateuch contains the remains of what probably were two compositions with strong echoes of exile: a post-D non-Priestly Hexateuch and an almost contemporary Priestly counterwork (likely expanded later in the exilic period by various "H"-like additions). This latter P counterwork covered much of the same material, often in a pointedly contrastive way.

The distinctive character of the two compositions indicates that they were composed by and transmitted in different scribal subgroups of Judean exiles, groups that also seem to have left their distinctively different stamp on other competing traditions, such as Jeremiah on the one hand (non-P, post-D) and Ezekiel and Chronicles, Ezra-Nehemiah on the other (P). Indeed, the creation of such competing representations of early history by distinct scribal groups may be a reflection of the temporary fracturing of Judean scribal activity during the exile. (Carr (2011), 303)

The Hebrew Bible is largely a Persian – Hellenistic-period recension

Numerous elements suggest to me [David M. Carr] that large blocks of biblical material long predate the identifiable extensions, coordinations, and other sorts of revisions characteristic of the Neo-Assyrian through Hasmonean periods. Yes, it is true that the Hebrew Bible is in large part a Persian- into Hellenistic-period recension, yet I see those periods as times primarily of coordination, reframing, and extension of earlier Torah and prophetic material (the latter broadly construed), rather than the creation of the bulk of the Hebrew Bible (but cf. Haggai, proto-Zechariah, P and H, Chronicles, Nehemiah, and Rebuilding-Ezra materials). (Carr (2011), 489)

Evidence from outside the Bible suggests that the Persian period was a time when Judeans in the diaspora achieved a level of integration into administrative roles and processes not documented in earlier decades. An increasing array of specifically Persian-period epigraphic evidence shows figures with Judean names occupying administrative posts and participating in legal transactions. (Carr (2011), 204)

The Hebrew Bible throughout lacks a remarkable critique of the Persian Empire

The generally pro-Persian cast of the Hebrew Bible is reflected in the remarkable lack of critique of the Persian Empire throughout the Hebrew Bible, with most exceptions occurring in materials datable on other grounds to the Hellenistic period (mainly the Daniel visions and probable late prayer in Nehemiah 9). Every other pre-Hellenistic empire and nation in the world is criticized at least once and often more times across the Hebrew Bible. Only the Persians emerge free of judgment, portrayed as the enablers of return, restorers of the temple, and sponsors of the republication of the Torah. This argument, albeit from a broad silence across otherwise diverse writings, suggests two things: (1) that the Bible was significantly shaped by scribes with pro-Persian sympathies; and following that, (2) that the Persian period itself was a crucial time for the formation of the Hebrew Bible. (Carr (2011), 206)

Job dates to the post-exilic period, after the exilic revision of Jeremiah

The poetry of Job echoes various parts of the rest of the Hebrew Bible, particularly traditions from the early prophets, second Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Proverbs. These uses establish a date for the poetic portions of Job in the exile or—more likely—in the post-exilic period after some of the exilic revision of Jeremiah. (Carr (2011), 210)

Post-exilic editing

The poetry of Job does build not only, as does other exilic and post-exilic literature, on pre-exilic prophecy, but also on a snippet of a post-exilic psalm. This post-exilic dating for the poetry of Job is significant because it would suggest that this poetry represents a stage of biblical textuality where the return from exile stands in the past, but the Pentateuch is not yet a foundational document for many Judeans. (Carr (2011), 211)

EDITING OF THE TORAH, JOSHUA

Post-exilic Jews were not clear on which books, other than the Pentateuch, constituted sacred scripture

Though most postexilic Jews agreed on the holiness of the Pentateuch (the “Torah”), they were much less clear on whether other books contained “prophetic” inspiration, and if so, which ones. Some recognized the Torah alone as scripture. Most recognized the scriptural status of other Hebrew scriptures, like Isaiah or Psalms. Still others, such as the Qumran community of the Dead Sea Scrolls, saw books like Enoch and Jubilees as holy scripture as well. Just as Judaism of this time was highly varied—consisting of diverse groups (Pharisees, Sadducees, and others)—so also the texts recognized by these groups was varied. (Carr (2014), 147)

There were several versions of the Mosaic Torah

Initiatives, such as they were, did not prevail among several contemporary groups. We continue to see alternative editions of the Mosaic Torah appear, including the Samaritan Pentateuch that was endorsed by an ongoing religious community parallel to Judaism. The community at Qumran clearly worked with a more expansive and porous concept of authoritative writings, as did late Second Temple Jewish movements such as the early Christians. (Carr (2011), 178)

The Torah experienced the same degree of editorial intervention as the other books

The Torah had a distinctive, sacred status that could have influenced scribes to approach that book with special care and a lower level of intervention than the other Scripture books. However, the evidence does not support such an assumption.

- 1) The various witnesses of the Torah reflect the same degree of editorial intervention as the other books.
- 2) While the orthography of the Torah in [the Masoretic Text] is usually more conservative than that of the rest of the biblical books, the number of its textual variants is no smaller than that of those books.
- 3) Several Torah scrolls are written carelessly and inconsistently. (Tov (2012), 188)

Texts such as the Hexateuch (Torah plus Joshua) show signs of being composed in light of the experience of exile

Dynamics would suggest an exilic (or perhaps early post-exilic) setting for the Priestly composition similar to that for the post-D Hexateuch. Nevertheless, there are some indicators in P itself that provide further support for this placement of the composition of at least an early form of P in the exilic period. The affinities of the P material with (putatively exilic) Ezekiel materials are well known, as are the resonances between P and Second Isaiah. These similarities include shared terminology, themes, and narrative motifs. To be sure, one might argue for a dependence of P on Ezekiel and Second Isaiah or vice versa, and some have. Here, I suggest that it would make more sense to suggest that all three documents share a common exilic profile, especially since there is not sufficient overlapping language to establish clear literary dependence of one on the other.

Like the non-P Hexateuchal composition with which it interacts, this Priestly composition shows signs of being composed in light of the experience of exile. (Carr (2011), 297)

Social, economic, political and material conditions necessitated and shaped the Pentateuch

How, why and when did the pentateuchal ‘Israel’ come to be created, and to what kind of real society does it correspond? The increased awareness in biblical scholarship of socio-historical issues also requires us to consider the social, economic, political and material conditions that necessitated the Pentateuch and shaped it. (Edelman (2012), 2-3)

Several verses of Numbers 13-14 contain several substantial major textual witnesses to editorial activity

Num 13-14 is of particular interest since these chapters contain several verses where the major textual witnesses differ substantially. ... The textual history of Num 13-14 attests to several cases of late editorial activity. The text of the spy narrative was changed by virtue of a substantial number of smaller and larger expansions. All of these changes show a clear interpretive tendency. (Müller, 35, 43)

Joshua 20 provides evidence of substantial editorial changes

Joshua 20 provides evidence of substantial editorial changes. This is reflected in the two versions of the MT and the LXX, which differ considerably. The differences have to be seen as the result of deliberate editorial decisions regarding the judicial content. The text was changed to such an extent that the concept of the case of the slayer was substantially altered. (Müller, 56)

HELLENIST PERIOD EDITING

The Hebrew Bible is a product of the Hellenistic (and Roman) periods

One absolute datum on which most scholars are agreed [on] is that the Hebrew Bible as we have it, even just the consonantal text, is—at the earliest—a product of the Hellenistic (and Roman) periods. (Carr (2011), 7)

There were logical inconsistencies and/or terminological shifts during the early Hellenistic period

These early Hellenistic-period scribes do not seem to have been preoccupied with hiding every trace of their work, and occasionally we can discern telltale logical inconsistencies and/or terminological shifts marking later expansions. Nevertheless, the bulk of documented cases of textual revision in this period are done fluidly enough that methodologically controlled reconstruction of the earlier stages would have been impossible without having manuscript evidence for those earlier stages. (Carr (2011), 202)

Chronicles appears to date to the very late Persian period or to the first 150 years of the Hellenistic period

Chronicles appears, in large part, to be a redaction of traditions otherwise seen in 1 Samuel 30 through the end of 2 Kings, though traditions possibly in a form more like that seen in 4QSama rather than the proto-MT or LXX recensions of Samuel-Kings. Chronicles lacks parallels to numerous sections present in Samuel-Kings, such as the history of the North, perhaps because of exclusive interest in Judah during the Persian and early Hellenistic periods.

Chronicles is obviously familiar with a relatively late form of the Pentateuch, containing both P and non-P traditions, though its genealogies merely draw on, but do not redact or replicate Pentateuchal materials. It is only starting with the report of Saul's death in 1 Samuel 30 that Chronicles reproduces and expands on certain portions of Samuel-Kings (in a version not available to us), while lacking parallels to other parts.

Chronicles appears to date either to the very late Persian period or (more likely) the first century and a half of the Hellenistic period. Its use of Persian loan words, including an anachronistic mention of Darics ["talents"] in 1 Chr 29:7, and the genealogy of Davidides in 1 Chr 3:17-24, suggest a date in the Persian period or later. (Carr (2011), 196)

Ben Sira's survey does not yet completely match the later Hebrew Bible

Ben Sira's survey [late third and early second century BCE] is distinctive for the ways it does not yet completely match the contents of the later Hebrew Bible and is not paralleled by expressions from other Hellenistic-period Jewish writers. ... There is no "scripture" versus "pseudepigrapha" versus "apocrypha" at this point, but just different types of texts that were produced as part of a broader corpus of indigenous literature. (Carr (2011), 184)

Proto-Masoretic Esther and Daniel do not include Septuagint additions

The proto-Masoretic editions of Esther and Daniel do not include the range of pious, theological, and other additions reflected in the Septuagint editions of those books, many of which were part of Hebrew editions of those books. (Carr (2011), 178)

EDITING OF THE BIBLICAL TEXT AT QUMRAN

There were several versions of biblical texts at Qumran

The Masoretic text is not the only version of the Bible that the Jews used in ancient times. Many of the biblical scrolls preserved at Qumran, for instance, differ from the Masoretic text, which raises the question of whether the Masoretic text should be amended by using biblical texts preserved at Qumran. This issue is further complicated because there was not one single version of the Bible preserved at Qumran, but several. Among these versions, there is evidence for the existence of a biblical version that was extremely close to what would later become the Masoretic text. (Simkovich, 207)

Evidence from Qumran seems to suggest that the editing processes were more radical than assumed

The Qumran material is fundamentally modifying our understanding of many central questions, such as the textual development of the Hebrew Scriptures, the formation of the canon, and biblical interpretation in the Second Temple period. The texts from Qumran also provide valuable information about scribal techniques in this period. With the Qumran evidence, it has now become clear that the texts of the Hebrew Scriptures continued to be edited and changed until much later than what has traditionally been assumed. Moreover, the evidence seems to suggest that the editing processes were more radical than assumed. Changes to the older texts were not restricted to expansions. Rewriting and rearranging were not uncommon. (von Weissenberg, 3)

Approaches from different perspectives and different fields of Biblical Studies, including Qumran and Septuagint studies, are now coming to similar conclusions regarding the pluriformity of the texts and changes still being made to them at the turn of the eras. (von Weissenberg, 3-4)

Relatively late Qumran Pentateuch texts were still freely rearranged

The Reworked Pentateuch texts from Qumran also challenge our preconceived ideas, but in a different way, for the authors of these texts seem to have taken the freedom to rearrange and alter the Pentateuchal text in a relatively late setting when the Pentateuch already was perceived as authoritative. (von Weissenberg, 5-6)

Qumran and Septuagint studies show pluriformity of the texts and changes as late as the turn of the eras

Approaches from different perspectives and different fields of Biblical Studies, including Qumran and Septuagint studies, are now coming to similar conclusions regarding the pluriformity of the texts and changes still being made to them at the turn of the eras. (von Weissenberg, 3-4)

The Qumran community found no need to select a particular version of the text

The Qumran movement could have variant literary editions of authoritative texts in their possession, with no apparent need to choose between the two. It was the book that was authoritative, not the exact form of the text (footnote: See, for example Ulrich, *The Dead Sea Scrolls and the Origins of the Bible* (SDSRL; Leiden: Brill, 1999), 32). (von Weissenberg, 268-269)

Qumran scribes were rarely required to achieve a de-luxe standard of copying

Even when copies of texts that had already gained elevated status (as it was in the case of the Minor Prophets) were produced, the scribal practices were not necessarily any different

when compared to the production of non-authoritative literary works. [footnote: Tov, *Scribal Practices*, 252–53] It is rather an exception that scribes were required to achieve the high standards attested by the *de-luxe* copies. (von Weissenberg, 268)

Isaiah scrolls, notably 1QIsa^a, contains highly instructive variants

Though large-scale variant editions are preserved for some other books (for example, Jeremiah and 1 Samuel), for Isaiah the scrolls and the other ancient witnesses preserve apparently only one edition of this book, with no consistent patterns of variants or rearrangements. Nevertheless, these scrolls (most notably 1QIsa^a) contain hundreds of highly instructive variants from the traditional form of the Hebrew text—variants that teach us much about the late stages of the history of the book's composition and provide many improved readings. (Abegg, 267-268) ...

Some variant readings are major in that they involve one or more verses present in some texts but absent from others. ... The existence of such variants provides a privileged window—one that was unavailable before the scrolls—on the gradual growth process of the biblical text in general.(Abegg, 268)

The two Jeremiah scrolls at Qumran reflect a Hebrew text that is very different from the Masoretic form

Two important scrolls are 4QJer^b and 4QJer^d, which reflect a Hebrew text that is very different than the Masoretic form of Jeremiah from which modern Bibles have been translated. It is also interesting to note that the biblical text in these two manuscripts is very similar to the Hebrew text from which the Septuagint (LXX) was translated. This is true not only in small details but also in major aspects where the Septuagint differs from the Masoretic Text. Most notably, 4QJer^b and 4QJer^d (before they were damaged) and the Septuagint present a version of Jeremiah that is about 13 percent shorter than the longer version found in modern Bibles! (Abegg, 382)

One Jeremiah scroll at Qumran contains the largest number of corrections relative to its length

Another fascinating scroll is 4QJer^a, one of the oldest of all the Dead Sea Scrolls (copied about 200 BCE or even earlier). This manuscript contains a large number of corrections; in fact, no other Qumran text has as many corrections in proportion to the length of the document. (Abegg, 383)

EDITING DURING THE LATER SECOND-TEMPLE PERIOD

The Hasmonean period affected the text

A set of changes in Deuteronomy and Joshua that can be related to Hasmonean antagonism toward the Samaritans, in particular, their destruction of the Samaritan temple on Mount Gerizim. (Carr (2011), 167)

The Hasmonean scribal establishment did play an active role in the final shaping of the Hebrew Scriptures. (Carr (2011), 170)

The proto-MT appears in numerous instances to be a comparatively ancient text that was literarily revised in the Hasmonean period. In so far as one can judge from this limited evidence, we have the most potential documentation of this literary revision in the Former Prophets and Jeremiah, along with some notable possible additions/modifications in Ezekiel (including harmonization with Jeremiah) and Esther. In addition, it may be that the LXX order of the book of the Twelve Prophets was modified to the more Jerusalem focused (and possibly anti-Edomite) proto-MT order around this time. Aside from this, we have additional documentation in the LXX and proto-MT of divergent recensions of Proverbs, neither of which is clearly prior to the other, and there are a number of examples of documented redaction of biblical books that probably post-date the proto-MT. Yet in the cases of Deuteronomy, Joshua, Judges, Samuel, Kings, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Esther, and Ezra-Nehemiah, we have evidence of a redaction occurring so close to/simultaneous with the finalization of the proto-MT that manuscript documentation—whether in Greek translation or at Qumran—was preserved. These late, proto-MT redactions seem to have focused particularly on Deuteronomistic materials outside the Pentateuch (Joshua-Kings and Jeremiah) and some revision of Priestly materials toward Deuteronomistic models. (Carr (2011), 176)

The onset of the Hasmonean monarchy marks the endpoint of inclusion of texts in what would become the Hebrew Scriptural corpus and the beginning of the proto-Masoretic textual tradition. These other writings were valued by certain groups of the time, and many found their way into the Scriptural canons of Christian churches. (Carr (2011), 178)

Before the Hasmonean period, Jewish groups produced highly varied copies of the Hebrew manuscripts of the Bible

It is during the period of the Hasmonean monarchy that we first see standardized manuscripts of the books in the Hebrew Bible. Before, Jewish groups produced highly varied copies of the Hebrew manuscripts of the Bible, none of which closely corresponds to the text of the Hebrew Bible we now have. But during the Hasmonean period we see the emergence of Hebrew manuscripts whose texts are almost identical with the traditional Hebrew text of today's Bible. In addition, Jews started to produce Greek translations of Hebrew scriptures matching this emerging standardized Hebrew text. (Carr (2014), 148)

Maccabaeans revised old texts and wrote new ones

Members of the Maccabaean party not only revised old texts but also wrote new ones, imitating the style of earlier books so successfully that some of their new compositions — notably I Maccabees and perhaps Esther — have been preserved in one or more Old Testament collections. (Smith, Morton (1987), 8)

Jews at the end of the Second Temple period were flexible with the idea of authoritative texts and they were rewriting them

While the notion of sacred scriptures was well in place by the end of the Second Temple period, Jews at this time enjoyed a higher degree of fluidity when it came to the notion of authoritative texts. It would not be until the Rabbinic period that Jews confronted the question of what books were to be included in or excluded from the biblical canon. ...

Jews in the late Second Temple period were not only translating biblical passages but at times even rewriting them. (Simkovich, 220)

Jews in the late Second Temple period rewrote their Scriptural texts that added new dimensions

Jews in the late Second Temple period paid homage to their scriptural texts by rewriting them in ways that added entirely new dimensions. These dimensions often situated biblical characters within the world of Greco-Roman life by attributing to them Hellenistic soliloquys and Homeric bravado. ... In these rewritten versions, biblical heroes were meant to prove that Judaism was a religion to be admired, and Jews were people to be welcomed as they continued to spread and build communities throughout the Greco-Roman world. (Simkovich, 250)

In the late Second Temple period, intentional scribal interventions were permitted

It is clear that in the late Second Temple period, even in the copying of authoritative and sacred texts, in some cases or for some scribes, intentional scribal interventions of varying degree were permitted. (Footnote: As pointed out by Segal ("Between Bible and Rewritten Bible," 16): "The active intervention of scribes in these texts [=the Bible] was accepted in this period [=late Second Temple period] and was not viewed as an affront to the sanctity of the text. The text was of secondary importance to the composition itself, and thus scribes allowed themselves the freedom to "improve" these works."). (von Weissenberg, 268)

The texts of the Hebrew Scriptures continued to be radically edited and changed much later than is traditionally assumed

The Qumran material is fundamentally modifying our understanding of many central questions, such as the textual development of the Hebrew Scriptures, the formation of the canon, and biblical interpretation in the Second Temple period. The texts from Qumran also provide valuable information about scribal techniques in this period. With the Qumran evidence, it has now become clear that the texts of the Hebrew Scriptures continued to be edited and changed until much later than what has traditionally been assumed. Moreover, the evidence seems to suggest that the editing processes were more radical than assumed. Changes to the older texts were not restricted to expansions. Rewriting and rearranging were not uncommon. (von Weissenberg, 3)

Reflective and poetic imagination fashioned many new stories and books of the Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha

There is still another literature in which we encounter many peculiar variations of this process of continual creation and elaboration: the Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha which are intermediary between the Bible and the oral doctrine. Here the reflective and poetic imagination, which was constantly attracted by the Bible and revolved around it, has fashioned many new stories and books. (Baeck, 56)

At a relatively late setting, authors of the Pentateuch texts rearranged and altered the text

The Reworked Pentateuch texts from Qumran also challenge our preconceived ideas, but in a different way, for the authors of these texts seem to have taken the freedom to rearrange and alter the Pentateuchal text in a relatively late setting when the Pentateuch already was perceived as authoritative. (von Weissenberg, 5-6)

There was no canon of Scriptures during the Second Temple period

Although Jews in the Second Temple period held certain texts to be scriptural, they did not assemble all of their sacred writing into a canon. ... There was a degree of fluidity regarding how Jews collected sacred texts. (Simkovich, 203)

It is virtually impossible to determine the canonical writings during the Second Temple period

It is almost impossible to determine precisely which books Jews [of the Second Temple period] considered to be canonical, and in which communities. If there was a deliberate method of categorizing books at this time, the criteria for determining the status of each book could have differed from community to community. (Simkovich, 222)

There were collections of scripture but no fixed list (canon)

At the time of Jesus and Rabbi Hillel—the origins of Christianity and rabbinic Judaism—there was, and there was not, a “Bible.” ...

There was a Bible in the sense that there were certain sacred books widely recognized by Jews as foundational to their religion and supremely authoritative for religious practice. There was not, however, a Bible in the sense that the leaders of the general Jewish community had specifically considered, debated, and definitively decided the full range of *which* books were supremely and permanently authoritative and which ones—no matter how sublime, useful, or beloved —were not.

The collection or collections of the Scriptures varied from group to group and from time to time. ... The exact contents of “the Prophets” may not have been the same for all, and the status of other books beyond “the Law and the Prophets” was neither clear nor widely accepted. ...

The Dead Sea Scrolls help us see the state of affairs more clearly from an on-the-spot perspective. “The Bible,” or more accurately then, “the Scriptures,” would have been a collection of numerous separate scrolls, each containing usually only one or two books. There is indeed persuasive evidence that certain books were considered “Scripture.” But there is little evidence that people were seriously asking the question yet about the extent or the limits of the collection—the crucial question for a “Bible” or “canon”—which books are *in* and which books are *outside* this most sacred collection. (Abegg, vii, underlining added)

Many New Testament quotations of Jewish literature deviate from the majority of preserved Greek manuscripts

New Testament literature abounds with quotations from Jewish scriptures (and/or closely related material), many of which deviate in some way from the majority of preserved Greek MSS of Jewish scriptures. ... The quotation in Mt. 4.15-16 contains five significant divergences from most OG texts of Isa. 9.1-2. (Kraft, *Christian Transmission*, 222)

EDITING BY THE MASORETES

Many details in the Masoretic Text do *not* reflect the “original text” of the biblical books

One of the postulates of biblical research is that many details in the text preserved in the various representatives (manuscripts, editions) of what is commonly called the Masoretic Text do *not* reflect the “original text” of the biblical books.

Even though the concept of an “original text” necessarily remains vague, differences between [the Masoretic Text] and the other textual witnesses will continue to be recognized. Scholars will constantly hesitate regarding the originality of the readings of either [the Masoretic Text] or one of the other sources. However, one thing is clear, it should not be postulated that [the Masoretic Text] better or more frequently reflects the original text of the biblical books than any other text. Furthermore, even were we to surmise that [the Masoretic Text] reflects the “original” form of Scripture, we would still have to decide *which* form of [the Masoretic Text] reflects this “original text,” since [the Masoretic Text] itself is represented by many witnesses that differ in small details. (Tov (2012), 11-12)

Paradoxically, the *soferim* and Masoretes carefully preserved a text that was already corrupted

Those who are unaware of the details of textual criticism may think that one should not expect corruptions in [the Masoretic Text], or any other sacred text, since these texts were meticulously written and transmitted. The scrupulous approach of the *soferim* and Masoretes is indeed manifest in some of their techniques. They even counted all the letters and words of [the Masoretic Text]. Therefore, one would not expect corruptions to have been inserted into the text through their work, or corrections to have been made.

Yet, in spite of their precision, even the manuscripts that were written and vocalized by the Masoretes contain corruptions, changes, and erasures. More importantly, the Masoretes, and before them the *soferim*, made their contribution at a relatively late stage in the development of the biblical text; at that time the text already contained corruptions and had been tampered with before the scribes began to treat it with such reverence and before they put their meticulous principles into practice.

Therefore, paradoxically, the *soferim* and Masoretes carefully preserved a text that was already corrupted. (Tov (2012), 9-10)

The Masoretic Text is often inferior to other witnesses, particularly the Septuagint

Although the MT [Masoretic Text] is a witness of high quality, it contains many readings that are probably secondary in relation to the text of other witnesses, the LXX [Septuagint] in particular. The most conspicuous examples of such differences between the MT and the LXX are found throughout the book of Jeremiah, but one can also find secondary readings of the MT in other parts of the Hebrew Bible. Many of these readings are not due to scribal mistakes but go back to deliberate changes that give insight into the late stages of editorial activity. (Müller, 101)

The MT contains substantial editorial additions of a very late origin

The MT cannot be the single starting point when investigating the Hebrew Bible. ... The MT is a witness of high quality, and in many cases there are good reasons to assume that it represents a relatively old textual tradition. Yet, the Hebrew Bible also contains many passages where the primacy of the MT has been challenged for good reasons. There is empirical evidence in various parts of the Hebrew Bible that the MT

contains substantial editorial additions of a very late origin. ... In many cases, a more original version of a passage is documented in witnesses other than the MT, while the MT is substantially edited and contains secondary readings. (Müller, 3, 4)

Medieval manuscripts and scrolls from the Second Temple period differ in numerous details

Analysis shows that medieval manuscripts and scrolls from the Second Temple period differ in numerous details, ranging from single letters and whole words to entire verses. (Tov (2012), 8)

Manuscripts of the Masoretic Text are sometimes read in a different way

Since the manuscripts of [the Masoretic Text] were handwritten, and therefore sometimes difficult to decipher, it is not surprising that they are sometimes read in different ways by the editors of modern Scripture editions. ...

Editions differ from one another in many details, partly as a result of the difficulties in deciphering details (especially vowels and accents) and partly due to different editorial perspectives. Furthermore, some of these editions contain printing errors. (Tov (2012), 7)

SECOND ISAIAH

The formation of Isaiah was complex

Isaiah did not reach its present form in three simple stages consisting of composition of 1-39, addition of 40-55, supplementation with 56-66. Chapters 1-39 contain much material that is later than “Isaiah of Jerusalem,” for example, while 66:24 echoes 1:6-9.

Although we can only estimate the actual process of edition, the person or persons who put the book into its present form apparently intended certain themes to run through the whole. (Chilton, 200)

The writing and editing of the book of *Isaiah* may have taken 400 years, perhaps longer

The entire Isaianic tradition enshrined in the canonical book of Isaiah may stretch from the eighth to the fourth century BCE or even later, from early prophecy to the apocalyptic of the age of Daniel. (McNamara (2010), 47)

Structure of Isaiah

Many scholars suspect that chapters 24-27 of Isaiah, the so-called “Isaianic Apocalypse,” are from a much later time than the original Isaiah of chapters 1-39.

Most of Isaiah 1-39 is from the First Temple period, from the eighth century BCE. ...

Chapters 24-27 are in many ways like Isaiah 40-66, which discuss the return from exile (538-515 BCE). ... We call the nameless prophet of Isaiah 40-66 Second Isaiah (also called Deutero-Isaiah) since his prophecies were combined with the earlier one.

There is also a third writer in the later parts of Isaiah 56-66, who can be called, conventionally, Third Isaiah. (Segal, (2004), 259)

Isaiah 1-39: The Prophet Isaiah and His Period

The division of the Book of Isaiah into three blocks (1-39, 40-55, and 56-66) might create the false impression that chapters 1-39 as a whole belong to the eighth-century B.C.E. “Isaiah of Jerusalem.” In fact, chapters 12-13, 15-16, 19, 21, 23-7, and 33-9 were all written later than the eighth century. (Chilton, 189)

Isaiah 11: Jerusalem had fallen to the Babylonians

Isaiah 11:1-9 seems to imply that the tree of the house of Jesse (David’s father) has been cut down, that is, that the fall of Jerusalem in 587/6 B.C.E. has occurred, so that chapter 11 and the hymn of praise in chapter 12 are probably exilic or postexilic. (Chilton, 192)

Isaiah 24-27: The “little apocalypse”

Often called the “little apocalypse,” this section in fact does not represent a calendar of the final events of history, such as characterizes works that are thoroughly apocalyptic. Yet these chapters do contain apocalyptic motifs, such as that the heavenly host will be punished and imprisoned for many days, that the sun and moon will be confounded and ashamed (24:21-4), that the dead will be raised (26:19), and that the primordial sea dragon Leviathan will be slain (27:1) — but without specifying when those ultimate events are to occur. (Chilton, 192)

Isaiah 39:5 introduces “Second Isaiah”

Although it is customary to see a break between chapters 39 and 40, it is arguable that 39:5 — “Days are coming when all that is in your house ... shall be carried to Babylon” — is an introduction to the restoration theme, with which chapters 40-55 are concerned. (Chilton, 193)

The sixth-century setting of Isaiah 40-66

The traditional view that Isaiah wrote the entire book is held today by exceedingly few scholars. Many critics today accept two books (1-39 and 40-66), usually called "First" and "Second" (or "Deutero") Isaiah. ... Three major arguments have been given for dividing the prophecy of Isaiah among two or more authors responsible for chs. 1-39 and 40-66: the historical perspective, including the mention of Cyrus, king of Persia from 559-530 B.C. (45:1); the style; and the theological themes. (Lasor, 281, underlining added)

Many recent works no longer give any reasons for accepting the notion of two or three Isaiahs. The authors state as solid fact that chs. 1-39 were written by "Isaiah of Jerusalem" and 40-66 (or 40-55) by "an unknown prophet of the Exile." It is fair to say, however, that the break between chs. 39 and 40 is much clearer than that between chs. 55 and 56. (Lasor, 282, underlining added)

There can be no question concerning the development of ideas in the book of Isaiah. A notable difference can be seen between chs. 1-39 and 40-66, as even a perusal of the outline will show. (Lasor, 286)

Second Isaiah is most meaningful to the community of faith today precisely when the sixth-century setting of Isa 40-55 is understood and clarified. As a pastor who has taught the book of Isaiah both ways, I can testify that the message of its original historical context, namely, Second Isaiah from the sixth century B.C.E., is readily understood and appreciated by the congregation. (McDonald (2007), 470, underlining added)

Isaiah 40-55 (Second Isaiah): an unknown prophet in exile in Babylon towards its end

Isaiah 40-55 (often referred to as Second Isaiah or Deutero-Isaiah) represents the work of an unknown prophet who lived in exile in Babylon toward the end of the reign of Nabonidus (556-539 B.C.E.) and into the early part of the reign of the Persian king Cyrus (who conquered Babylon in 539 B.C.E.). (Chilton, 193)

In these chapters of Isaiah [40-55], a prophet spoke God's word to the exiles in sixth-century Babylon by addressing their conditions directly. Nothing in the Book of Isaiah suggests that an eighth-century prophet set out to provide a social description of a future community that had no relevance to his own circumstances.

The social setting implicit in Isaiah 40-55 corresponds to what exilic and postexilic texts say of the condition of the exiles in Babylonia as a whole. (Chilton 193-194)

What seems most pertinent to the background of Isaiah 40-55 is Babylon itself. This great city formed a focus of the unknown prophet's concern. (Chilton 194)

Second Isaiah [chapters 40-55] begins with the words "Comfort, comfort my people" (40:1), which set the tone for a series of passages from which denunciation, and threats of imminent judgment — familiar from the preexilic prophets — are absent. The prophet reassures his people that the time of punishment is over (40:2). (Chilton, 195)

Ezekiel and the unknown prophet of Isaiah 40-55 were dominant prophets of the sixth century BCE Exilic Period

The exile produced two dominant prophetic works: Ezekiel and the unknown prophet of Isaiah 40-55. (Chilton, 188)

Isaiah 40-55 (known as Second Isaiah) ... sees the victorious march of the Persian king Cyrus toward Babylon as God's action prior to restoring his people.

The Servant of Isaiah 40-55

The term “servant” occurs many times in Isaiah 40-55. The servant is identified as Israel (41:8), who is now a worm but will become a threshing sledge (41:14-16) when God vindicates him. The servant is reassured when he believes that God has forgotten or forsaken him (40:27-31; 49:14-21). He has sinned (42:21-5), but is now forgiven (43:25-8). (Chilton, 196)

The mysterious “Servant of the Lord” at Isaiah 40-55 is the prophet himself, perhaps with his disciples

[Isaiah 40-55] speak of the sufferings of the mysterious “Servant of the Lord” (the prophet himself or the prophet and his disciples, who are the true remnant of Israel), sufferings that make the people recognize their wrongdoing and the possibility of renewal. (Chilton, 188)

The four “Servant Songs”, distributed throughout the chapters of Second Isaiah, are about Israel or the prophet himself

In the Servant Songs (42:1-4; 49:1-6; 50:4-9; 52:13-53:12) we have a different picture, which is why scholars have treated these passages separately from the rest of Isaiah 40-55. If the servant remains Israel (49:3 is the only direct identification within the Servant Songs proper), this identification is not prominent.

The servant is passive (42:2-3) and has a mission *to* Israel (49:6) and possibly to the nations (49:6). If he needs reassurance, it is not because he thinks God has forgotten him, but because he fears he has labored in vain (49:4). Rather than having been justly punished and now forgiven, the servant has suffered innocently (50:6), and his suffering will bring about forgiveness for others (53:3-6).

Given that the songs are not collected together in a single section, but are distributed throughout the chapters, it could be argued that the editor or author intended readers to connect the servant in the songs with the servant elsewhere in the chapters. Israel, then, as a complete entity, consisting of a faithful remnant that suffered vicariously and the larger body that had been justly punished and that is now reassured, would be at issue. However, even if this is the case, we are still justified in asking the identity of the remnant, that is, the identity of the group or individual that suffers vicariously.

A widely held view, accepted here, is that the servant in the Servant Songs is the prophet himself and that the songs describe this prophet’s ministry. We can surmise, from 50:6, “I gave my back to those who struck me,” and 53:4, “we accounted him stricken, struck down by God and afflicted,” that the prophet had some physical wound or disability and that his mission was badly received. Opinions are divided about the interpretation of 53:9, “they made his grave with the wicked.” Does this indicate an actual death (in which case the fourth song was composed by a disciple after the prophet’s death), or should we compare it to one of the psalms (e.g., 22 or 130) in which the psalmist came close to death, regarded himself as in the grave, and yet survived? In either case, the prophet’s mission succeeded when his rejection and suffering brought his detractors to the realization that he truly was God’s servant (see 53:4-11). Although an understanding of the servant as an individual provides the most convincing reading, there is also an argument for a corporate identity. (Chilton, 197)

The “Servant: Hebrew and LXX compared

		Isaiah 53:4b, 8–11b
	Hebrew	LXX
4b	And we considered him stricken, and (Q) smitten by God and afflicted. . . .	And we considered him to be in distress and under a blow of misfortune and under oppression. . . .
8a	By coercion and by judgment he was taken away. . . .	By humiliation his justice was taken away. . . .
b	For he was cut off from the land of the living; by/for the transgression of my (MT) people the stroke (MT) was upon him.	For was taken up from the earth his life; by the lawless deeds of my people he was led to death.
9a	And he [the Servant] (MT) makes with the wicked his grave and with the rich in his death (Q sg.).	And I [the Lord] will give/hand over the wicked instead of his grave, and the rich instead of his death, because he did not do wrong nor was found deceit in his mouth.
b	although he did no wrong, and (MT) no deceit was in his mouth.	And the Lord desires to cleanse him of the plague. If you [pl., the wicked] make an offering, of his soul, he will see offspring; and (Q) he will prolong days.
c	And the desire of the Lord in his hand will prosper.	And the Lord desires to take away from the agony of his soul, to show to him light and to fill [him]
10a	And the Lord desires to bruise/crush him; he will make [him] suffer (MT).	with understanding, to vindicate the righteous one who well serves the many.
b	If/although you [sg., the Lord] make an offering, of his soul, he will see offspring; and (Q) he will prolong days.	
c	And the desire of the Lord in his hand will prosper.	
11a	After the suffering of his soul, he will see light (Q) and (Q) he will be satisfied. And (Q) through his knowledge	
b	will justify the righteous one my servant the many.	

(Bellinger, 183)

Isaiah's "preparing the way" was likely a spiritual metaphor

The desert in Isaiah 40–55 is the place of hope where true Israel is reconstituted. Although Isaiah is often read as envisaging a literal highway, in context the image speaks less to physical construction than to repentance, trust, and obedience. (Footnote: Rikki E. Watts, “*Consolation or Confrontation? Isaiah 40– 55 and the Delay of the New Exodus,*” *TynBul* 41 (1990): 31– 59.)

This suggests that Isaiah's “preparing the way” was primarily a spiritual metaphor, which is how 1QS takes it. (Maston in Blackwell (2018), 43)

Isaiah 56-66, “Trito-Isaiah”, introduces a later social period

As we move from chapters 40-55 to 56-66, we find ourselves in a different world. ...

The diversity of the material involved has left scholars divided over whether these chapters are the work of one prophet at one period or of several prophets over a time span of two hundred years. ... Even if these chapters are ascribed to one prophet and one period, the historical setting they imply is impossible to determine with certainty.

On the whole, the chapters make most sense if set in the period between 539 and 520 B.C.E. (Chilton, 198-199)

The core of Trito-Isaiah is one of hope and consolation

Chapters 60-2, with their words of hope and consolation, form the core of chapters 56-66 (sometimes called the Third Isaiah, or Trito-Isaiah). (Chilton, 199)

ONGOING OPPRESSION CAUSED THEM TO CREATE APOCALYPTIC EXPECTATIONS

The Israelite apocalyptic writings were created following the post-exilic period

Before contact with the Persians, the Israelites did not harbour apocalyptic ideas. (McDonald (2002), 125)

Apocalyptic ideas resonated with Jews who experienced Antiochus IV's persecution. Jewish writers developed a belief in an earthly messiah who would restore the Kingdom of David. By around 150 BC, the messiah had come to be seen as a heavenly figure who would usher in the Kingdom of God. This understanding is expressed in Second Temple period apocryphal literature including the Dead Sea Scrolls. (McDonald (2002), 125)

During the Hellenistic period, Jewish (and later Christian) writers produced a flood of apocalyptic writings. Moses, Solomon and Enoch were appropriated as intermediaries who provided safe passage to celestial realms. Satan, a *bene ha-elohim* (son of the gods) was transformed into an opponent of God and cast out of heaven. The notion of fallen angels can be traced to Orphic (and Zoroastrian) ideas. The Qumran community, an offshoot of the Hasidim who fled to the Judean desert during Antiochus IV's reign, saw themselves as the True Israel. (McDonald, 125-126)

The apocalypse genre arose in the Second Temple period

As a literary genre, the apocalypse is a new phenomenon of the Second Temple period. (Henze (2019))

"Apocalypse" appeared within Palestinian Judaism sometime after 300 BCE

"Apocalypse" is a genre of literature that appeared within Palestinian Judaism sometime after 300 BCE. ... Apocalypticism is the social setting in which the Jewish apocalypses and apocalyptic works first emerged.

The fact of being subjugated by Persians, Greeks, and Romans often led to the perception that God was no longer working through history (Heilsgeschichte); God had withdrawn to appear at the end time, when God will bring all evil to an end and reward the righteous and faithful Jews. (Charlesworth, in Boccaccini, 86)

Under the distress of occupation, Jews created apocalyptic eschatology that assumes that time has meaning and is linear. The end time will be a return to the beginning of time, when humans walked in the cool of the evening with God, could talk to animals, and were at peace with themselves in a pleasant land. The concept of paradise was inherited from Persia and "the island of the blessed ones" from the Greeks; as these ideas blended, they influenced the conception of Eden that had long before been developed within ancient Israel. Eventually, Eden was imagined as a garden in which it would be possible to be at one with all, especially the Loving Creator. (Charlesworth, in Boccaccini, 86)

First major cluster of Jewish apocalyptic writings occurred about the time of the Maccabean revolt

The first major cluster of Jewish apocalyptic writings originated in the period shortly before and during the Maccabean revolt. For another comparable cluster of writings we must wait until the next great crisis in Jewish history, the revolt against Rome in 66-70 which led to the destruction of the Jerusalem Temple. In the intervening period of more than two centuries we do not find many apocalypses, but we find

Ongoing oppression caused them to create apocalyptic expectations

considerable evidence of the spread of apocalyptic ideas in several areas of Jewish life. ...

While [the Dead Sea Scrolls] do not yield many apocalypses in the literary sense, they provide plenty of evidence for apocalyptic eschatology, most strikingly in the *Scroll of the War of the Sons of Light against the Sons of Darkness*. The sect that produced the major scrolls evidently adapted the apocalyptic tradition for its purpose. (McGinn (2003), 77-78, underlining added)

Apocalyptic literature flourished in Judaism during the Hellenistic and Roman periods

It was above all in the apocalyptic literature, which flourished in Judaism during the Hellenistic and Roman periods, that an elaborate end-oriented view of history was developed. Apocalyptic literature was not uniform; it embraced different modalities of this view of history. (Evans (1997), 74)

Foreign oppression in the second century BCE revived prophetic vision

The crisis of foreign oppression, which had earlier called forth the prophetic writings of the seventh and sixth centuries B.C.E., produced a revival of the prophetic vision beginning in the second. (Fredriksen (2000), 83)

Downtrodden, persecuted, and oppressed, the Jews were the great creators of apocalypses

For many, Enoch, Daniel and later John's visions of God punishing wrongdoers and rewarding the righteous fill a very large hole in the human heart. We need a vision of how things should be rather than how they might actually be. Rather than being an illusion, then, such a myth is enabling — it enables us to accept suffering, carry on and look to the future. Downtrodden, persecuted and oppressed, the Jews were the great creators of apocalypses because of their historical plight. Later, Christianity, an offshoot of Judaism, assimilated the Jewish apocalyptic tradition into its fantasies, visions and prophecies about the end of the world. (Pearson, 51)

Second Temple books looked to the End Times as a glorious age of national restoration and salvation

Plenty of Second Temple books looked to the End Times as a glorious age of restoration and salvation, a time when Diaspora exiles would return home and all nations would acknowledge Israel's God. This hope is evident, for instance, in Tobit and Sirach. In none of these cases, though, is this expectation linked to a specific individual. (Jenkins, 170)

Writers of the late Second Temple period wrote that God would ultimately end the Jews' hardships

In the late Second Temple period, Jewish writers drew on past experiences to make different polemical arguments. Some reframed the stories of the Patriarchs in order to argue for the strict observance of ancestral law, while others aimed to retell stories about early Israelite kings to argue for the legitimate rule of David and his descendants. For many Jews, the hardships of the Israelites, and of Jews in their recent history, were reminders of the lasting covenantal promises made to them by their God. Despite their current sufferings, God would ultimately put an end to the Jews' hardships and usher in an era of redemptive peace. (Simkovich, 186)

Apocalyptic texts were the alchemist's crucible to form something shiny and new

All of these apocalyptic texts were wholly excluded from the Hebrew Bible itself. In fact, they represent the imaginings and yearnings of men and women who placed

Ongoing oppression caused them to create apocalyptic expectations

themselves at the outer fringes of the Jewish community and sometimes, as in the case of the community at Qumran, far beyond it. And yet these texts are the place where some of the most familiar figures in both Judaism and Christianity were first fleshed out, including the divine redeemer known as the Messiah and the divine adversary known as Satan. Indeed, the apocalyptic texts were the alchemist's crucible in which the raw materials extracted from the Bible were refined and recoined into something shiny and new. (Kirsch, 42, underlining added)

Apocalyptic eschatology gives hope

"Apocalyptic eschatology" filled a gap perceived between lived experience and the promises, covenants, and hopes that shaped Jewish scriptures. Apocalyptic eschatology corrects history. It promises a speedy resolution of history's moral dissonances: good triumphs over evil, peace over war, life over death. (Fredriksen, Paula (2017), Kindle location 211)

Apocalyptic writings do not reflect the viewpoint of the established power

All the apocalypses we have considered here are born out of a sense that the world is out of joint. The visionaries look to another world, either in the heavens or in the eschatological future, because this world is unsatisfactory. This sense of dissatisfaction is not necessarily an invariable aspect of apocalyptic expectations. In principle, it is possible to conceive of an apocalypticism of the powerful. Divine revelation can be used to buttress established authority and one might look for its ultimate confirmation in the eschatological judgment. But in practice none of the Jewish apocalyptic writings of the Second Temple period reflects the viewpoint of established power. (McGinn (2003), 86)

In the post-exilic period, the blessing of Jacob and Balaam's oracle were reinterpreted and given an eschatological sense

It will be useful at the outset to highlight two biblical motifs that exercised considerable influence on the later tradition:

The first is the "end of days," Hebrew *'ah̄ ărî t hayyāmîm*.

The second is the end (*qēš*) as the day of judgment or the day of the Lord.

The phrase *'ah̄ ărî t hayyāmîm*, or end of days, probably originally meant "in the course of time, in future days". ... The phrase appears already in the Pentateuch in Gen 49:1 (the blessing of Jacob) and Num 24:14 (Balaam's oracle). Both of these passages ... originally referred to the future, in an unspecified but limited sense, but they were reinterpreted and given an eschatological sense in the postexilic period, so that they were now understood to refer to a final, definitive phase of history.

The phrase "end of days" ... occurs in Deuteronomy with reference to future turning points in Israel's history, in relation to the observance of the covenant (Deut 4:30; 31:29).

In the prophets, the "end of days" implies a definitive transformation of Israel in the distant future. Usually, the reference is to the time of salvation. (Evans (1997), 75)

Many Jews were deeply influenced by apocalypticism

Many Pharisees and other Jews were deeply influenced by apocalypticism, but they were neither in the group behind the *Books of Enoch* or Qumranites (or Essenes). (Charlesworth, in Boccaccini, 93)

Apocalyptic literature was convinced God's kingdom is at hand

A breadth of speculation, in short, characterizes late Second Temple apocalyptic literatures. What unites them is not the details of their individual visions, but their

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sounding urgency and the conviction that marks their message: God's kingdom is at hand. (Fredriksen, Paula (2017), Kindle location 566)

Apocalyptic Jewish groups had different beliefs and practices, but all agreed that the end was about to unfold

Even within the apocalyptic wing there were many Jewish groups with different beliefs and practices. They were united in thinking that the world as we know it was about to come to an end, and that the end of time was about to unfold according to a plan predetermined by God. One such episode in the eschatological scenario was the arrival of the Messiah. Several early Jewish texts mention a messianic figure who will come at the end of days. (Henze (2019))

Apocalyptic thought focussed attention on the heavens above or on far-off and ideal sacred spaces

What happened when a first-century Jew read an apocalypse? Two phenomena occurred. First, the person was transported from this horrible world to the heavenly world above, spatially, or beyond time. That means all conceptions and hope were transferred to another realm in which peace and harmony could be found. Oneness was once again achieved as imagined in the story of Eden.

How was the early Jew enabled to transcend? Sometimes, it is by vision, as in *1 Enoch*, or by a literal trip into the heavens guided by an angel, as in *2 Enoch*. To help the reader to image such transference, an author sometimes provides a means and a command. A good example of a means and invitation is found in Revelation:

After this I looked, and lo, in heaven *an open door*. And the first voice, which I had heard speaking to me like a trumpet, said, "*Come up hither*, and I will show you what must take place after this." (4:1; italics mine [Charlesworth]).

The second phenomenon that occurred was "redefinition." The poor were revealed to be the rich. The conquered were disclosed to be the conquerors. The lost were the found. Thus, the faithful Jews who refused to obey the edicts of the Seleucid kings and Roman governors were willing to be martyred. To be obedient and to die for God and country was to live eternally.

Not all apocalyptic thought is eschatology, that is, focused on the end of things or end time. It may be primarily spatial, focusing our attention on the heavens above or on far-off and ideal sacred spaces such as Eden, paradise, and the isle of the blessed ones. The noun "eschatology" should be reserved to discuss and comprehend concepts and terms that are shaped by time and the end of time. (Charlesworth, in Boccaccini, 87)

Unfulfilled prophecy appears to be a major defect of apocalyptic works

If Antiochus IV Epiphanes was the arch-tyrant of the visions, as all the evidence indicates, and if the visions were recorded during the persecution, then the promises of his demise, accompanied by the establishment of an eternal kingdom of righteousness, create an ongoing problem for the reader. Antiochus did die soon, but the kingdom seems not yet to have come, and certainly not the resurrection promised in 12:2. The issue of unfulfilled prophecy appears to be a major defect of this and other apocalyptic works (and not only those books, for Jesus and Paul also claimed that the consummation was near). Can we avoid saying the book of Daniel was wrong in this respect, and if it was wrong, does not that raise a serious question about its value and its inspiration?

One response to that serious question has been to insist that since Daniel is Holy Scripture, it could not be mistaken; so some way must be found to justify projecting the unfulfilled parts into our own future. ... There is nothing like accurate, detailed

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prediction of the future in the prophetic books of the Old Testament, and the unique, amazing details of Dan 11 are best understood as not being prediction after all. (Gowan, 38, underlining added)

“Apocalypse” and “apocalyptic” are modern analytical categories that coincide only partially with ancient generic labels

The word “apocalyptic,” or rather the corresponding German nominal form *Apokalyptik*, was introduced into scholarly discussion by Gottfried Christian Friedrich Lücke in 1832, in the context of an introduction to the Apocalypse of John, or Book of Revelation (Lücke 1832). Prompted in part by the recent publication of the Ethiopic Book of Enoch, Lücke grouped together such works as 1 Enoch 1, 4 Ezra and the Sibylline Oracles to reconstruct a literary context for the Christian apocalypse.

The corpus would be enlarged in the following century, as more ancient “apocalypses” were discovered in a range of ancient languages, including Greek, Syriac, and Old Church Slavonic. Some of these texts are actually labeled “apocalypses” or “revelations” in the manuscripts, but many are not (Smith 1983). “Apocalypse” and “apocalyptic” are modern analytical categories that coincide only partially with ancient generic labels. There was little sustained generic analysis in either ancient Judaism or early Christianity. (Collins (2014), 1)

The apocalyptic writers were somewhat off the mainstream of Judaism and cannot be taken to represent the normal religious teaching of their age

The importance of Jewish apocalyptic for an understanding of certain sections of the New Testament cannot be denied. But neither should the influence of this form of literature on the New Testament be exaggerated. The apocalyptic writers were somewhat off the mainstream of Judaism and they cannot be taken to represent the normal religious teaching of their age. Their religious ideas were peculiar to themselves rather than the common beliefs of the people within which, according to our evidence, Christianity arose. (McNamara (2010), 19)

“Fall and Redemption” is not prominent in the apocryphal books

[Donald Gowan’s] title “*The Fall and Redemption of the Material World in Apocalyptic Literature*,” is thus something of a misnomer. The title clearly comes from a theme which does occur in the canonical books of both testaments, but which is not prominent in the [apocryphal] books I have surveyed. ...

I [Donald Gowan] came to this study of Jewish apocalyptic literature prepared to find evidence for a strong tradition growing out of Gen 3:17, concerning a fallen world in need of redemption, and hoping to find a creative development of the vision in Isa 11:6-9, but I found neither. (Gowan (1985), 100, 101)

How distinctive are passages such as Gen 3:17, Isa 11:6-9; 24, Rom 8:19-23, Col 1:15-20, etc. They represent a thin strand of tradition in the Scriptures and did not produce a strong response in the literature of the Intertestamental Period or in the subsequent history of the synagogue or the church. (Gowan (1985), 101-102)

There is no need for a Messiah to be associated with the End

Just as there are messiahs without Ends, so there are Ends without messiahs. ... There is no reference to a messiah in the *Hodayot*, nor in the *Habakkuk commentary*, where we should expect one. ... Many OT prophecies of the coming kingdom or world have no messiah, and there is none in *Jubilees* (though chap. 23 contains a prophecy of the coming age from which the messiah’s absence is conspicuous ... nor in *Enoch* 1-36 and 91-104, nor in the *Assumption of Moses*, nor in the *Slavic Enoch*, nor *Sibylline Oracles IV*, though all of these contain prophetic passages in which some messiah might

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reasonably have been expected to make an appearance. As for rabbinic literature, the comparative rarity of messianic references in the older material is notorious. (Smith, Morton (1959), 68)

A future redeemer was not an essential part of Jewish eschatology

The expectation of a future redeemer, whether called “anointed” or not, is not an essential part of Jewish eschatological thinking. (De Jonge, 147)

Many passages associate some sort of messiah(s) with the End

There are many passages in which the coming of some sort of messiah (or messiahs) is definitely associated with the End. (e.g., 1QS ix.11; CD xix.10, xx.1, xii.23, xiv.19.) (Smith, Morton (1959), 68-69)

Primitive Christianity held that the end-time had already begun

Contrary to what might be expected, primitive Christian literature hardly contains any references at all to an expected bestowal of forgiveness at the end-time. Early Judaism looked forward to such an ultimate eschatological forgiveness by God. This would usher in an era of sinlessness. The simplest explanation for the virtual absence of this expectation from primitive Christianity is that Christians held the end-time to have begun already: the promised bestowal of forgiveness had taken place through Jesus’ death and resurrection, and believers were now both enabled and obliged to lead a sinless life. (Hägerland, 91)

Paul’s theology was especially formed by Jewish apocalyptic eschatology

Paul’s theology was deeply formed not only by Jewish thought, but especially, by Jewish apocalyptic eschatology. … “Apocalyptic” denotes something which Paul really does seem to have made central. (Charlesworth, in Boccaccini, 84)

Paul is influenced by the typical Jewish apocalyptic contrast between this age and the age to come (4 Ezra 8:1-3) when he mentions “the present evil age” (Gal. 1:4). Paul both inherits from Jewish apocalyptic thought and compositions and appeals to his own apocalyptic experiences (as in Gal. 1:12; 2:2, and especially, in 2 Corinthians 12). (Charlesworth, in Boccaccini, 84)

The context of Pauline theology and Christology is Jewish apocalypticism and apocalyptic eschatology

All scholars know that a text must have a context; otherwise, it can mean anything we wish or nothing at all. The context of Pauline theology and Christology is Jewish apocalypticism and apocalyptic eschatology. In that context, we can explore the meaning of Paul’s concept of justification, salvation, reconciliation, expiation, redemption, freedom, sanctification, transformation, new creation, and glorification. Schweitzer accurately perceived that Paul lived in the world of Jewish apocalyptic eschatology. (Charlesworth, in Boccaccini, 100)

Paul’s concept of time and space was shaped by apocalyptic eschatology

What had been perceived to be Paul’s own creation appeared already within apocalyptic Judaism. His concept of time and space was shaped by apocalyptic eschatology. Obviously, Paul added his own creativity to these cognitive structures. For Paul, Jesus was the Christ, the Messiah, who had died for the sins of all and who was raised by God. Those ideas are not necessarily unique to Paul; he most likely inherited them from Jews who believed in Jesus in the 30s of the first century CE. (Charlesworth, in Boccaccini, 93)

Paul’s thought can now be recognized as shaped and defined by Jewish apocalyptic thought in numerous fundamental ways. In the following passage, Paul expresses his earliest thoughts: (1 Thess. 4:14-18 cited). (Charlesworth, in Boccaccini, 94)

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Paul applied the restoration of the twelve tribes of Israel in an apocalyptic fashion

While other members of the early Jesus movement seem more interested in a perspective of restoration of the twelve tribes of Israel (see the incipit of the letter of James), in Paul, there is a special emphasis on the inclusion of gentiles. It was not a new problem: long before Paul, Jewish-Hellenistic communities had already developed models of inclusion of gentiles into their communities as "God-fearers." Paul, instead, did it in an apocalyptic fashion, along the lines of texts such as the Enochic *Book of Dreams*, where we read that, in the world to come, the "white sheep" (the righteous Jews) will be united with the "birds of the sky" (the righteous gentiles) to form the new people of God. In the *Parables of Enoch*, also, the Messiah Son of Man is indicated as the "light" of the gentiles. (Boccaccini, 15)

Paul supported the apocalyptic tradition of a superhuman origin of evil and with the Enochic traditions of a cosmic battle

Paul sides with the apocalyptic tradition of a superhuman origin of evil. With the Enochic traditions, he shares a similar context of cosmic battle between the Prince of Light and the Prince of Darkness—"What fellowship is there between light and darkness? What agreement has Christ with Belial?" (2 Cor. 6:15)—as well as the hope for future redemption from the power of the devil: "The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet" (Rom. 16:20). What we can notice, however, is a certain—more pessimistic—view of the power of evil. In the Pauline system, the sin of Adam takes the place of the sin of the fallen angels: "Sin came into the world through one man [Adam], and death came through sin, and so death spread to all because all have sinned" (Rom. 5:12). ... Paul exploits the Enochic view of evil by radicalizing its power. While in Enoch, people (Jews and gentiles alike) are struggling against the influence of evil forces, Paul envisions a postwar scenario where "all, both Jews and Greeks, are under the power of sin" (Rom. 3:9). (Boccaccini, 11-12)

Paul: The time of the end had come

Paul shared the apocalyptic idea that the judgment will be according to deeds and that humankind is divided between the "righteous" and the "unrighteous." But now that the time of the end has come, the unrighteous have been offered the possibility to repent and receive justification through forgiveness. Paul preached to gentiles, but his message was neither addressed to gentiles only nor uniquely pertinent to them. Exactly the same gospel was announced to Jews and gentiles—the good news of the gift of forgiveness: "I had been entrusted with the task of preaching the gospel to the uncircumcised, just as Peter had been to the circumcised" (Gal. 2:7). (Boccaccini, 19)

Christ is Paul's eschatological Deliverer

Paul's Christ is the eschatological Deliverer ([Rom] 11:26). With his resurrection, he signaled the beginning of the End; with his return, he will shortly sum up the ages. The rescue mission for which God had commissioned his Son (Phil 2:5-11) is now all but complete, Paul urges. Soon, with Christ's defeat of the hostile cosmic powers and his final victory over Death, the sons of God both adopted (Gentiles, Rom 8:23) and "natural" (Jews, [Rom] 9:4) will join with the divine Son in rejoicing in God's kingdom. (Fredriksen (2000), 61)

John the Baptist fits squarely within Jewish apocalypticism, that the end of time was about to unfold

Judaism of the Second Temple period was characterized by fragmentation: it consisted of many groups that held different worldviews. John the Baptist belonged

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to the apocalyptic wing of early Judaism, in close proximity to, though not identical with, the people of Qumran who left us the Dead Sea Scrolls.

Even within the apocalyptic wing there were many Jewish groups with different beliefs and practices. They were united in thinking that the world as we know it was about to come to an end, and that the end of time was about to unfold according to a plan predetermined by God. One such episode in the eschatological scenario was the arrival of the Messiah. Several early Jewish texts mention a messianic figure who will come at the end of days. With his apocalyptic message and his proclamation of the arrival of the Messiah, John the Baptist fits squarely within Jewish apocalypticism. (Henze (2019))

Jesus responded to John's apocalyptic message

John [the Baptiser] called to the people to repent their sins in order to prepare for the judgment preceding God's Kingdom: "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand!" (Mt 3:2). John, in other words, like so many Jews of his day, believed that the hour of Israel's restoration had dawned, perhaps even that the messiah was about to arrive. ... Jesus heard John's apocalyptic message and responded to it by receiving baptism. (Fredriksen, (2000), 97-98)

Jesus' disciples expected the imminent return of Jesus as God's eschatological King and Judge

Jesus preached the "Kingdom of God", meaning thereby the *kingship* or *rulership* of God. Jesus did not preach the "Kingdom of the Son". Yet he could still speak about "his" kingdom and that it was "not of this world". He spoke of the Son's future coming in full glory and power. His followers were told they would act as judges in it. When the Gospel writers were expressing these hopes, decades after Jesus' ministry, they still fully expected this shattering Divine Intervention was imminent and Jesus would manifest as the eschatological King and Judge.

The disciples of Jesus experienced his resurrection appearances as revelatory confirmations of his Kingdom message. They assumed that these appearances heralded his imminent return as God's eschatological King and Judge. Accordingly, very soon after they began to proclaim the risen Jesus, they also began to reinterpret the eschatological cleansing with water that Jesus had received earlier from John the Baptizer. (Perry, in Fortna, 159)

The marvels of the charismatics such as John the Baptist and Jesus were interpreted as announcements of God's approaching Kingdom

Charismatics were prophets of the End, spokesmen for God, calling the people to prepare for the approach of the Lord. Such were John the Baptist and Jesus. Miracles of course validated one's claim to speak for God. The gospels attribute many to Jesus; Josephus, as we have already noted, tells that Theudas promised to part the Jordan River; the Egyptian, to collapse the walls of Jerusalem; others, to perform marvels before those who followed them out into the desert ... The promise of such mighty works would have been interpreted, in the atmosphere of intensifying hostility to Rome, as announcements of God's approaching Kingdom. (Fredriksen (2000), 92)

The Mission and Message of Jesus was apocalyptic

How did Jesus take this apocalyptic message to Israel? According to the gospels, in several ways. He presented himself as the uniquely authoritative spokesman for God's Kingdom. He demonstrated his authority by working exorcisms and miracles. And whether by personal example or explicit instruction, he taught against the prevailing Jewish understanding of Torah, while exhorting his followers to live by a new, radical ethic. ...

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The apocalyptic context of such teachings accounts as well for much of their sheer impracticality. No normal human society could long run according to the principles enunciated in the Sermon on the Mount. (Fredriksen (2000), 98, 100)

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Charismatics were prophets of the End, spokesmen for God, calling the people to prepare for the approach of the Lord. Such were John the Baptist and Jesus. Miracles of course validated one's claim to speak for God. The gospels attribute many to Jesus; Josephus, as we have already noted, tells that Theudas promised to part the Jordan River; the Egyptian, to collapse the walls of Jerusalem; others, to perform marvels before those who followed them out into the desert ... The promise of such mighty works would have been interpreted, in the atmosphere of intensifying hostility to Rome, as announcements of God's approaching Kingdom. (Fredriksen (2000), 92)

Jesus saw his own activity as literally fulfilling some of Isaiah's eschatological prophecies

Jesus' reply to John, then, indicates that he saw his own activity as a healer as fulfilment – in a most literal way – of some of Isaiah's prophecies concerning the eschatological age. (Hägerland, 198-199).

Jesus concluded that Isaiah's eschatology was being realised in his own lifetime

The clearest allusion to the Book of Isaiah is Jesus' assertion that 'poor are evangelized' (cf. Isa 61.1), but there is also an Isaianic background for 'blind regain their sight' (29.18; 35.5; 42.7, 18; 61.1 LXX), 'crippled walk' (35.6), 'deaf hear' (29.18; 35.5; 42.18) and 'dead are raised' (26.19). Only the reference to lepers who are being cleansed cannot be traced back convincingly to Isaiah. ... It seems secure to conclude that Jesus believed that this eschatology was being realized, at least in part, during his own lifetime. (Hägerland, 197)

The "Son of Man" was about to come in his father's glory with his angels, and he will repay everyone

"For the Son of Man is to come with his angels in the glory of his Father, and then he will repay everyone for what has been done. Truly I tell you, there are some standing here who will not taste death before they see the Son of Man coming in his kingdom." (Matthew 16:27-28)

Matthew's and Luke's diminished expectations of an imminent End

Writing at least a generation after Mark, [Matthew's and Luke's] expectation that the End is imminent is diminished. Salvation has more to do with membership in the community of the church than with enduring as a community until the eschatological finale. (Fredriksen (2000), 51)

The parable section of the *Book of Enoch* (chapters 37-71) and much of the *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs* might be late Christian compositions

A certain caution is also necessary in the use of some of those apocalyptic works which show the most marked resemblance to the New Testament, a caution due to the uncertainty of the date to be ascribed to these works or to the relevant sections of them. This is particularly true of the parable section of the *Book of Enoch* (chapters 37-71) with its speculations on the Son of Man. The same holds for much of the *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs*.

It is not in the least certain whether the close relationship between these works and the New Testament is to be explained through dependence of the New Testament on

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them or through dependence of the relevant sections of the works in question on the text of the New Testament. It is quite possible that the works in question are really Christian compositions on the basis of Jewish documents or traditions. (McNamara (2010), 19-20)

THE BOOK OF ENOCH

Enoch is arguably the most important Jewish writing that has survived from the Greco-Roman period

Enoch is a collection of apocalyptic (revelatory) texts that were composed between the late fourth century B.C.E. and the turn of the era. The size of the collection, the diversity of its contents, and its many implications for the study of ancient Judaism and Christian origins make it arguably the most important Jewish writing that has survived from the Greco-Roman period. (Nickelsburg, introduction, Kindle)

The Book of Enoch is a substantial work

THE BOOK OF 1 Enoch is a substantial work, running to some thirty-eight thousand words in English translation (for comparison, the gospel of Matthew is about twenty-three thousand). It is anything but a tightly connected narrative. ... Sections are usually identified as follows:

The Book of the Watchers—chapters 1–36 ... The Parables (or Similitudes) of Enoch—chapters 37–71 ... The Astronomical Book—chapters 72–82 ... The Book of Dream Visions—chapters 83–90 ... The Epistle of Enoch—chapters 91–108. (Jenkins, 70)

The interests introduced in Enoch were, at the time, surprising, even shocking

The array of interests and obsessions we find in the Enochian texts would often resurface in Jewish literature over the coming centuries. In the third-century context, though, these ideas were surprising, even shocking. (Jenkins, 80)

The Enochic writings introduced a vital new theme of sacred books and heavenly writings

The Enochic writings are dominated throughout by visions of sacred books and heavenly writings, a vital new theme from this era that would so permeate the thought of the Abrahamic religions. In this vision, truth came from scripture rather than direct charismatic or prophetic inspiration. Prophets are prophets only insofar as they faithfully transmit that wisdom inscribed above. (Jenkins, 82)

Enoch speaks “according to that which appeared to me in the heavenly vision, and which I have known through the word of the holy angels, and have learnt from the heavenly tablets.’ And Enoch began to recount from the books.” That message of “Read and ye shall find” is what his disciples are meant to obey in later generations. Books and writings are a fundamental component of wisdom, which is here so often extolled. Jubilees, likewise, often mentions the discovery of mysterious writings and the truths they contain. (Jenkins, 83)

Theodicy, eschatology, and a belief in angelic beings are key embryonic elements of Enoch

Theodicy, eschatology, and a belief in angelic beings—already constitute many of the key elements of the Enochic writings, at least in embryo. (Jenkins, 73)

The Book of 1 Enoch is centrally concerned with judgment and the Last Day. ... [It] pioneers new visions of apocalyptic. (Jenkins, 74)

Judgment has eternal consequences, and portraits of the afterlife are another core theme of 1 Enoch. Hellfire, in fact, was now invented. (Jenkins, 75)

Without precedent, the Book of Enoch introduced the spiritual universe

Seemingly without warning or precedent, Enoch’s visions suddenly plunge us into a phantasmagoric universe of angels and demons, judgment and apocalypse, Heaven

and Hell. These wildly innovative works were the first to present those ideas in any detailed or systematic form in a Jewish context.

They were the first to list the names of the great archangels, to imagine hellfire, to map the phases of the apocalypse, to depict evil figures very much like the later Satan in his demonic court. (Jenkins, xx)

The book of 1 Enoch, then, is the oldest monument to the new concepts of the spiritual universe. It drew a new road map of the heavens, and it largely did so between about 250 and 100 BCE. (Jenkins, 73)

1 Enoch introduced celestial beings and gave them names

In 1 Enoch 6:2, the Watchers are referred to as “sons of heaven.” This designation appears to juxtapose them with the “sons of men” (6:1) who had “comely daughters.” The distinction is quite important. It seems to establish the fact that each group, the Watchers and human beings, have clearly delineated habitats: humans are on earth, while the Watchers are in heaven. Immediately after this general description, a particular celestial being, Shemihazah, is named (6:3). Nineteen others are then named in 6:7 and along with their “leader” Shemihazah, each was the chief of ten others for a total of 200 who would descend to earth. Once they are on earth, they immediately transgress the established boundary between heavenly and earthly beings, taking wives to themselves and going into them and in so doing, defile themselves (7:1).[10] The outcome of this transgression is the production of the Nephilim, the “great Giants” (7:2). After outlining the secrets that the Watchers revealed to humanity (ch. 8), Michael, Sariel, Raphael, and Gabriel are brought into the story. These names are elsewhere used for archangels (e.g., 1QM 9:15). In this text they refer to themselves as “the holy ones of heaven” (9:3). . . .

The four appeal to God, outlining the wrongs of the Asael and Shemihazah and ask what they should do (9:4-11). They are then sent to earth with tasks in response to the actions of the Watchers: Sariel is sent to Noah to prepare him for the Flood (10:1-3), Raphael is sent to imprison Asael (10:4-8), Gabriel is sent to destroy the Giants (10:9-10), and Michael is to imprison Shemihazah, destroy the Giants, and restore the earth (10:11-22). After all of this work is outlined, the narrative shifts to a discussion of Enoch, his being taken up to heaven, and his residence with the Watchers (12:1-2). Enoch is sent to speak to Asael and the fallen Watchers (13:1-3). The Watchers, hearing the words of woe that Enoch brings, commission Enoch to speak to God on their behalf (13:4-7). (Harkins, 94)

It is extremely likely that the *Book of Enoch* was accepted in some circles as authoritative

The *Book of Enoch* is an “Inter-Testamental” work, that is, it was composed after most of the books of the Old Testament were written, and before New Testament times. Most of *Enoch* itself was probably written early in the second century BC. But the term “Inter-Testamental” makes sense only after it was decided what books were included in the Old and New Testaments. In the time of Jesus, before there were any Christians, let alone Christian writings, the Old Testament was not yet “canonized” — and it was certainly not yet called “Old Testament.” In fact, it is extremely likely that *Enoch* was accepted in some circles as authoritative, and therefore as “Holy Scripture”. (Kelly (2006), 34)

1 Enoch was authoritative to the Jewish community at Qumran, some considering it to be God's word

Of all the “nonbiblical” books found in the caves adjacent to the Dead Sea, the one that offers the most promise of having been considered authoritative to the Jewish community at Qumran is 1 Enoch. That some have considered this writing to be God’s word is without question. ... The caves at Qumran have produced twenty manuscripts of Enoch—as many as the book of Genesis—all of them in Aramaic. (Abegg, 480-481)

The Enochic view of the origin of evil had profound implications in the development of Second Temple Jewish thought

The Enochic view of the origin of evil had profound implications in the development of Second Temple Jewish thought. The idea of the “end of times” is today so much ingrained in the Jewish and Christian traditions to make it difficult even to imagine a time when it was not, and to fully comprehend its revolutionary impact when it first emerged. ... The angelic rebellion had made it difficult for people to follow any laws (including the Mosaic Torah) in a universe now disrupted by the presence of superhuman evil. (Boccaccini, 6)

1 Enoch 6–16 appears to be explaining the origins of evil in the world

The audience for the *Book of the Watchers* would likely have been familiar with the tradition seen in Gen. 6:1-4. The primary concern of 1 En. 6–16 appears to be explaining the origins of evil in the world. ... Without a reference to the Adam and Eve story (though there is an allusion to them and the garden in 1 En. 32:3-6), this account in some ways exonerates humans and God and places blame for the fallen nature of the world upon the intermediary class; the struggle for the world is placed into this sphere and its inhabitants. (Harkins, 93)

The early Enochic writings sought ways to explain the existence of evil

The early Enochic writings seem to be looking for ways to explain the existence of evil in the world, as are some texts from the Dead Sea Scrolls and the New Testament. In these texts an individual—whether it is Belial (1QH, 2 Cor. 6:14-15), Melchiresa (11QMELCH), Mastema (Jub. 10:7-9), or Satan (Job 1-2, Zech. 3, Matt. 4:1-11)—stands in opposition to God’s plan, and his chosen people or agents. While the Watchers seem to begin as angels, they seem also to have given birth (literally and figuratively) to the demons of later Christian literature. (Harkins, 95-96)

Parts of 1 Enoch are deeply concerned with problem of the origin of evil

Parts of 1 Enoch were written at a time when the Jews were suffering from Syrian and Roman oppression. It is not surprising therefore that it is deeply concerned with problem of the origin of evil. Why had God abandoned Israel and allowed evil to rule the world in their time? Chapters 6 to 16 of 1 Enoch, known as the *Book of Watchers*, provides us with an answer to such a question. It provides us with an origin myth about how the demons came into existence and, for a time at least, ruled the earth. (Pearson, 47)

Without the Enochic writings, early Christianity would have been unthinkable

(1 Enoch) was anything but conventional or familiar in its time, the late third and early second centuries BCE, and it represented a breathtaking departure from the Old Testament worldview. With its focus on eschatology and heavenly visions, its angels and devils, the book powerfully prefigures so many later texts, including the New Testament itself, as well as a broad sweep of apocryphal writings.

Beyond foreshadowing them, 1 Enoch actually shapes many of those later works, and without the Enochic writings, early Christianity would have been unthinkable. More striking than any single statement in the Enochic corpus is the lack of suggestion that this was anything terribly new or surprising in its time.

Such texts did not spring into existence from a vacuum. However brilliant these works' insights, their ideas would never have achieved the impact they did unless there was already an audience willing to hear them.

As I [Philip Jenkins] have remarked, the Jewish world in these years was passing through a cultural revolution, marked by an influx of troubling new influences and new questions from the transcontinental Hellenistic realm. (Jenkins, 68)

The Book of Enoch may have had the most influence on the writers of The New Testament

Of all the books quoted, paraphrased, or referred to in the Bible, the Book of Enoch has influenced the writers of the Bible as few others have. Even more extensively than in the Old Testament, the writers of the New Testament were frequently influenced by other writings, including the Book of Enoch. (Lumpkin (2011), 10)

The *Book of the Watchers* became famous and influential, especially among Christians

One anonymous author who collected and elaborated stories about fallen angels during the Maccabean war was troubled by wartime divisions among Jewish communities. He addressed this divisiveness indirectly in the *Book of the Watchers*, one of the apocryphal books that would become famous and influential, especially among Christians. (Pagels, 49)

Particularly relevant in the development of Satan is a collection of visionary tales included in the Enoch material known as the "book of the Watchers." (Wray, 99)

The *Book of Enoch* influenced early Christianity

In 1773 a Scottish traveler brought the Ethiopian text [of Enoch] back to Europe. When it was translated, scholars recognized the book's influence on early Christianity. (Jenkins, 69) Reading the Parables, we find so much that sounds akin to early Christianity, with substantial passages about Hell, the Messiah, and even the resurrection of the dead. (Jenkins, 72)

Many key concepts used by Jesus Christ seem directly connected to those in the Book of Enoch

The first century Christians accepted the Book of Enoch as inspired, if not authentic. They relied on it to understand the origin and purpose of many things, from angels to wind, sun, and stars. In fact, many of the key concepts used by Jesus Christ himself seem directly connected to terms and ideas in the Book of Enoch. (Lumpkin (2011), 11)

Enochic Judaism can be traced through to early Christianity

Scholars have identified a whole alternate strand of Enochic Judaism that can be traced from its appearance in the century after 250 BCE and running at least up to the fall of the Temple and into early Christianity. ...

Distinguishing marks of this tradition included an emphasis on the story of the Watchers and fallen angels as the source of sin and evil, the focus on the End of Days and the final Judgment, and a general interest in angelic lore and the afterlife. (Jenkins, 90)

“Pseudepigrapha” (“falsely attributed writings”), particularly *Enoch* and *Jubilees*, were popular and provided illustrations for the New Testament

The three hundred years that led up to the New Testament period were a time of significant literary output in the Jewish community. ...

During the late Second Temple period, events known from the Torah were often retold and embellished. ... These works are called “pseudepigrapha,” meaning “falsely attributed writings.”

It is unknown which circles of the Jewish community considered these works authoritative. The relatively high number of manuscripts of pseudepigraphical works that were found among the Dead Sea Scrolls (fifteen scrolls of Jubilees and twenty scrolls from Enoch) and in Greek translation suggests that at least Jubilees and the early portions of Enoch were popular in various circles in the Jewish community. Several New Testament passages use illustrations drawn from pseudepigraphical works, confirming the wide popularity of these works in the first century CE. (Evans (2019), 177-178)

With Enoch, we are not going beyond THE Bible, we are going beyond OUR Bible

Our search for deeper understanding often leads beyond the Bible itself. Even in our attempt to fully understand the Bible we must go beyond the book. As we encounter references to social conditions, cultural practices, and even other writings mentioned within the scriptures we are called to investigate and expand our knowledge in order to fully appreciate the context, knowledge base, and cultural significance of what is being taught.

Thus, to fully understand the Bible, we are necessarily drawn to sources outside the Bible. These sources add to the historical, social, or theological understanding of Biblical times. As our view becomes more macrocosmic, we see the panoramic setting and further understand the full truth within the scriptures. Yet, in the case of Enoch, we are not going beyond THE Bible. We are simply going beyond OUR bible. The Book of Enoch is contained in the Bible of the Ethiopic Christian Church. (Lumpkin (2011), 7)

The five sections of 1 Enoch

1 Enoch divides into five major sections, which are followed by two short appendices: *The Book of the Watchers* (chaps. 1-36); *The Book of Parables* (chaps. 37-71); *The Book of the Luminaries* (chaps. 72 – 82); *The Dream Visions* (chaps. 83-90); *The Epistle of Enoch* (chaps. 91-105); *The Birth of Noah* (chaps. 106-107); *Another Book by Enoch* (chap. 108). The sections represent developing stages of the Enochic tradition, each one building on the earlier ones—though not in the order in which they presently stand in the collection. (Nickelsburg, introduction, Kindle)

Key points regarding the contents of 1 Enoch

Several points about Jewish history and religion emerge from 1 Enoch 1-36 and 72-82 and the Book of Giants:

- These chapters and the book as a whole are one of the best examples of the development of apocalyptic.
- The myth of the fall of the Watchers, evidently a widespread myth in early Judaism, has its fullest exposition here. It is very important theologically because it presents an explanation of the present evil state of the world, and why humans sin, that differs from all other Jewish and Christian theologies

(e.g., the fall of Adam and Eve or the existence of the two ‘tendencies’ in each individual).

- Eschatology is a significant theme, including interest in the future and the endtime and attempts to calculate it. The fate of all who live, whether good or evil, and the question of an afterlife are dealt with explicitly.
- The book is one of the first Jewish writings to exhibit the concept of a soul that survives death.
- 1 Enoch 72–82 demonstrates the importance of the calendar. ...
- Cosmic secrets, revealed through Enoch’s visions and heavenly journeys, are a feature of the book. ...
- The extent to which angelology and demonology at this time had evolved is well indicated. No other early Jewish writing gives such details about the spirit world. ...
- The growth of authoritative scripture seems to have included the book, since 1 Enoch had the status of scripture in some Jewish circles. (Grabbe (2008), 83)

The *Book of Enoch* is a collection of revelatory materials, written from the third century B.C.E. through the first century C.E. (It is sometimes referred to as the *Ethiopic Book of Enoch* because a complete copy survives only in Ethiopic, and because the Ethiopic Church regards it as canonical.) ...

Several parts of the book are apocalypses or apocalyptic in orientation; they illustrate the mystical, speculative, and cosmic side of Jewish thought. Two such sections, the Book of Watchers (*1 Enoch* 1-36) and the Book of Luminaries (*1 Enoch* 72-82), have their origins in third-century B.C.E. Palestine. (Chilton, 344-345)

The Book of the Watchers and *The Animal Apocalypse* are only two of the texts that have been gathered together in the first book of Enoch. Other apocalyptic writings in the same collection include *The Astronomical Book*, *The Book of Dreams*, and *The Apocalypse of Weeks*, all equally exotic to any reader whose experience of Judaism is based on the Torah and the Talmud. (Kirsch, 42)

1 Enoch is an apocalyptic book

The apocalyptic book of Enoch (also known as 1 Enoch or Ethiopic Enoch) contains a variety of material dating from between 200 and 60 B.C.E. (Wray, 99)

First Book of Enoch may be the starting point of apocalypticism

The book of Daniel is hardly the only or even the oldest apocalypse of the ancient Jewish world. In fact, the author of Daniel may have been inspired by still older texts, and not only by the prophetic writings that are readily found in the Bible. ...

The starting point of the apocalyptic tradition in Judaism may well be found in a strange and unsettling collection of ancient texts called the *First Book of Enoch*, the oldest of which predate the book of Daniel by a half century or so. ... Here we find “the kernel in which the essence of apocalypticism is contained,” according to Italian scholar Paolo Sacchi, a specialist in apocalyptic studies, “and from which the whole tradition grows.” ...

The Book of Watchers goes on to reveal that the fallen angels are, in fact, the minions of the Devil and “the cause of all the evil upon the earth.”

Significantly, the author of *The Book of Watchers* uses the term “watcher” to identify the celestial figures who are elsewhere called angels, a turn of phrase that also

appears in the book of Daniel: "I saw in visions of my head upon my bed," writes Daniel, "and, behold, a watcher and a holy one came down from heaven." (Dan. 4:13, KJV) Here is yet another point of linkage between Daniel and the other writings in the apocalyptic tradition: nowhere else in the Hebrew Bible is an angel called a "watcher." And here, too, the author chooses language that is eerie and even scary: the watchers are spies and provocateurs rather than guardians.

The watchers are guilty of more than crimes of passion, or so Enoch discovers. They also reveal "heavenly secrets" to the human race, including "charms and spells" for working feats of magic, "the art of making up the eyes and of beautifying the eyelids" for purposes of seduction, and the craft of fashioning "swords and daggers and shields and breastplates" for use in making war. God sends the archangel Raphael to bind the chief of the defiant angels, a demonic figure here called Azazel, and cast him into a pit in the desert until "the great day of judgment" when "he may be hurled into the fire." (Kirsch, 40, 41, underlining added)

The revelation given to patriarch Enoch was being made public in the last times

Their authority lies in their claim that they transmit divine revelation, which the patriarch Enoch received in primordial times (Gen 5:21-24) and which is made public in the last times to constitute the eschatological community of the chosen. (Nickelsburg, introduction, Kindle)

1 Enoch was a major influence on the outpouring of apocalyptic literature during the 2nd and 1st centuries BCE

When scholars studied Aramaic fragments of 1 Enoch found among the Dead Sea Scrolls, paleography—handwriting evidence—showed that parts of the surviving text dated back to perhaps 200 BCE, suggesting that portions of Enoch were much older than had been assumed. Some, it now appeared, predated the great outpouring of apocryphal and apocalyptic literature in the second and first centuries BCE and were in fact a major influence on it. (Jenkins, 70)

The third century BCE cultural crisis resulted in 1 Enoch

1 Enoch was a product of the cultural crisis of the third century—or, in the context of the time, a crisis of competing versions of wisdom. Multiple forms of wisdom were available, and it was crucially important to select the one that was truthful and godly: these were matters of eternal life and death. The theme of true and false knowledge runs throughout 1 Enoch, especially the Book of the Watchers. (Jenkins, 85)

The Enochic writings must first be read in their Hellenistic context. (Jenkins, 85)

Dating The Similitudes (1 Enoch 37-71) to before 40 C.E.

The Similitudes parallel the picture of early Christian eschatology as it appears to have prevailed shortly before Paul developed the new emphases in his letters to the Thessalonians. The stage of eschatological development reflected in the Similitudes is therefore highly compatible with that which the main line of Christian eschatology had probably reached in the late 40s A.D. A correspondingly early date is therefore indicated for the Similitudes. (Mearns, 369)

1 Enoch features a messianic character named Son of Man

Another mystery that the scrolls have only clouded concerns the origin of the important and frequent (88 times) New Testament title for Jesus: Son of Man (e.g., Matt 12:32). 1 Enoch 37-71 also features a messianic character of this name. (Abegg, 481)

In the time of 1 Enoch, Satan rose impressively from a minor official in the heavenly court to the titanic Lord of Evil

Satan was by no means a major character in the canonical Old Testament. In every aspect of his story, he owes his origin ... especially to the time of the Enochic writings. Precisely in that era, the Devil enjoyed an impressive rise both in his professional status and in his assigned areas of responsibility. From being a minor official at the heavenly court, he rose to become a fully fledged adversary of God, almost an anti-God, the titanic Lord of Evil known through much of Christian history.

Like God, he acquired his own institutional hierarchy of inferior angels, and many of those operatives also bore individual names and titles. Satan's authority extended to the material world, and he could rely on the faithful service of significant numbers of the human population. His history was retroactively rewritten to build up his role in historic events, especially the Fall of Man. (Jenkins, 161)

On Earth, the main teacher of corrupting skills was Azazel (*Enoch*)

Enoch's main revelation is that 200 Angels, the Sons of God known as Watchers sinfully abandoned their supervisory duties over the Earth by lustng after Human women and mating with them, begetting the Giants.

The first leader of the Watchers was Semyaz, but on Earth the main teacher of corrupting skills to Humans was Azazel (originally the mysterious recipient of the scapegoat in Leviticus 16:810). The Giants were a nasty lot, who killed each other off, but their Ghosts or Spirits survived. The Watchers were sequestered by God and kept in dark caves to await final judgment at the end of time, but the Giant-Ghosts remained to cause trouble among Humankind (*1 Enoch* 6-16). (Kelly (2006), 34-35)

In this early portion of *Enoch* is a brief reference to the Seven Stars who transgressed the commandments of God from the beginning of their rising because they did not arrive at the proper time. They too were bound and imprisoned to await future punishment (18.13-16). (Kelly (2006), 35)

Other Angels who run afoul of Divine justice are the Seventy Celestial Shepherds who stand guard over Israel. (Kelly (2006), 35)

Enoch blamed Azazel for sin, not God or humans

Enoch credits the existence of sin not to God or humans, but to Azazel: "The whole earth has been corrupted through the works that were taught by Azazel: to him ascribe all sin" (1 En 9:6; 10:8). (Wray, 101)

In the actions of the Watchers, we can observe that these evil agents are now several steps removed from God, acting on their own. (Wray, 101)

In bringing out the evil nature of the Watchers, the apocalyptic writers of Enoch contribute to the growing chasm between God and some of his "sons," the *benay elohim*. This separation is critical in understanding the emergence of Satan. (Wray, 102)

The supreme demon is known by several names

Demons and evil spirits were a constant presence at Qumran. ... The supreme demon, is known by many names in the scrolls: Mastema (the same name that is used in *Jubilees*), Belial, Satan, and the Angel of Darkness. ... The people at Qumran were greatly concerned with protecting themselves against demonic powers. (Henze (2017), 110)

The Jewish rebellion myth developed through the rewriting of the Flood Myth

Although there is no apparent allusion to a cosmic rebellion in the Genesis text, it was through the subsequent rewriting of the flood myth that the Jewish rebellion myth developed.

The earliest stage was probably the composition in Hebrew of a “Book of Noah,” perhaps as early as the fourth century, of which only fragments survive. To judge from these fragments, the Book of Noah was an apocalyptic work that told a fuller version of the flood myth ...

The next stage of development was probably incorporation of the Book of Noah or the tradition it represents into the Enoch literature. Most of this does survive, at least in Ethiopic translation. (Forsyth, 160, 161)

The Second Temple period elaborated the brief account in Gen. 6:1-4

Especially striking are the numerous writings that take up various aspects of the myths about angels who descend from heaven to mate with women—an account only briefly mentioned in Gen. 6:1-4. In an enigmatic sequence of events, the “sons of God” leave heaven and sire the “warriors” (הַגְּבָרִים) and “men of renown” (אֲשָׁרֶת אֲשָׁרֶת) with earthly women (Gen 6:4). This succinct story in Genesis stands in contrast to the many traditions that circulated in the Second Temple period that elaborated upon the angels themselves, their deeds on earth, and their divine chastisement. These interpretive traditions make frequent reference to the angels who descend to earth as “Watchers”. ...

Well-known stories about fallen angels were engaged either directly or indirectly by much of the literature of this period. Diverse communities of Jews and Christians expanded upon, reacted against, and appropriated the varied traditions concerning the Watchers and their fall from heaven. Their wide reach is demonstrated by the currents that run through later Jewish mystical traditions, the Qur'an, medieval Christianity, and even seventeenth-century Western writers. (Harkins, 2)

The account at Genesis 6:1-4 is opaque

Given the opaque nature of this pericope, readers of Genesis [6:1-4] rightly ask what the author and audience assumed or took for granted about this account. (Harkins, 3)

When people began to multiply on the face of the ground, and daughters were born to them, the sons of God saw that they were fair; and they took wives for themselves of all that they chose. Then the LORD said, “My spirit shall not abide in mortals forever, for they are flesh; their days shall be one hundred twenty years.” The Nephilim were on the earth in those days — and also afterward — when the sons of God went in to the daughters of humans, who bore children to them. These were the heroes that were of old, warriors of renown.—Genesis 6:1-4 (NRSV)

In the 3rd century BCE, Jewish authors retold the story of the fallen angels

The function of the fallen angel story in the Bible is to explain *why* the wickedness of humankind increased so exponentially that God felt compelled to undo God’s own creation. ... In the book of Genesis, the story of the fallen angels is only a short episode. It is never picked up again anywhere else in the Old Testament. ... Beginning in the third century BCE, a number of Jewish authors told the story of the fallen angels anew, albeit in much greater detail. (Henze (2017), 102)

The story of the fallen angels changed over time but with each new rendition, the story acquired a new meaning. ... In the expanded versions of the story, the fallen

angels are called “spirits” or “watchers” (the term *watchers*, which is a direct translation of the Aramaic, implies that they do not sleep). (Henze (2017), 103)

The author of 1 Enoch reinterpreted the Flood Myth, with a key being the term “Watcher”

The whole of the Genesis flood myth is reworked into a full vision of history, with the apocalyptic and eschatological perspective dominant. Primordial events are reinterpreted as typological anticipations of the end-time, according to the common hermeneutical principle of Jewish apocalyptic. ...

The author [of 1 Enoch] has converted the Yahwist’s theology of transgression into a genuine conspiracy. ... One key to this radical transformation of the Genesis passage is probably to be found in the term “Watcher,” by which the *benē ‘elōhīm* of Genesis are now designated. ... The Satan now has subordinates to help him with the business of keeping an eye on human affairs.

These Watchers appear again with a similar function in a second-century apocalypse, the Book of Daniel, in which the Watchers and the Holy Ones give the decree against Nebuchadnezzar. (Forsyth, 166-167)

Jubilees, Enoch, and Jasher presented stories of “The Watchers”

The books of Jubilees, Enoch, and Jasher present stories of “The Watchers,” a group of angels sent to earth to record and teach, but who fell by their own lust and pride into a demonic state. (Lumpkin (2019), Kindle location 8619)

Apocryphal and pseudo-epigraphic stories said lust drew the angelic “sons of God” down to earth

Far more influential in first-century Jewish and Christian circles, however, was a second group of apocryphal and pseudo-epigraphic stories, which tell how lust drew the angelic “sons of God” down to earth. These stories derive from a cryptic account in Genesis 6. ...

Some of these angels, transgressing the boundaries that the Lord had established between heaven and earth, mated with human women, and produced offspring who were half angel, half human. According to Genesis, these hybrids became “giants in the earth ...the mighty men of renown” (Gen. 6:4).

Other storytellers, probably writing later, say that these monstrous offspring became demons who took over the earth and polluted it. (Pagels, 48-49)

1 Enoch elaborated on the sons of God in *Genesis* by casting them as fallen angels

By casting the sons of God in *Genesis* as fallen angels and elaborating on their story, the Enoch author has accounted for the presence of absolute evil in a God created world. These Watcher angels had a leader who went by the name of Semhazah. During this period, this was merely one name in a number of names that was being used to identify the supremely Evil One. This figure encapsulated the absolute essence of evil. Satan is course the name most people know him by. (Pearson, 48)

Sons of God who mated with human women identified as Angels called Watchers

Before the story of Noah gets going, we are told of Sons of God who mated with Human women and produced the heroes of old (Gen. 6.1-4). In later literature, as we will see, these Sons of God will be identified as Angels called Watchers, who violated their function of watching or guarding and fell into sin and were punished. This is the only historical fall of Angels mentioned in the Bible. (Kelly (2006), 13)

The “sons of God” who mate with human women seem to have some sort of superhuman status (Gen 6.1-4; cf. Job 1.6): according to Enoch, they were fallen angels, their progeny evil spirits. (Fredriksen (2017), Kindle location 253).

The “Watcher” angels, appointed by God to supervise (“watch over”) the universe, fell from heaven

The *Book of the Watchers*, a collection of visionary stories, is set, in turn, into a larger collection called the *First Book of Enoch*. It tells how the “watcher” angels, whom God appointed to supervise (“watch over”) the universe, fell from heaven.

Starting from the story of Genesis 6, in which the “sons of God” lusted for human women, this author combines two different accounts of how the watchers lost their heavenly glory. The first describes how Semihazah, leader of the watchers, coerced two hundred other angels to join him in a pact to violate divine order by mating with human women. These mismatches produced “a race of bastards, the giants known as the nephilim [“fallen ones”], from whom there were to proceed demonic spirits,” who brought violence upon earth and devoured its people.

Interwoven with this story is an alternate version, which tells how the archangel Azazel sinned by disclosing to human beings the secrets of metallurgy, a pernicious revelation that inspired men to make weapons and women to adorn themselves with gold, silver, and cosmetics. Thus the fallen angels and their demon offspring incited in both sexes violence, greed, and lust. (Pagels, 50)

The apocalyptic book of Enoch (also known as 1 Enoch or Ethiopic Enoch) contains a variety of material dating from between 200 and 60 B.C.E. (Wray, 99)

The Watchers enjoyed a special status being close to God but chose to go down to earth

In 1 *Enoch*, the Watchers seem to enjoy a special status in heaven, very close to God, but the Watchers who choose to go down to earth become distinct for very different reasons: their transgression of having intercourse with human females, which brings about the Giants, and also their role as bringers of secret knowledge into the world. It appears that the conduct of these Watchers was significantly evil as to cause them and their hybrid offspring to be barred from heaven. (Harkins, 96)

1 Enoch created the idea that carnal relations of fallen angels produced a voracious race of giants

When Enoch is taken on an inspection tour of Sheol, the shadowy underworld place of the dead, he sees angels in a fallen state and learns that these angels came down to earth, took on human form and had carnal relations with the ‘daughters of men’. In doing so the angels forfeited their special spiritual quality God had endowed them with and became polluted. To make matters worse, these libidinous angels and their earthly consorts produced progeny — a race of giants whose appetites were so voracious that they set about devouring everything on earth, including human beings and one another. (Pearson, 47)

One Watcher, Semyaz, mustered 200 angels to mate with human women, producing monsters who devoured everything in sight (*Enoch*)

According to Enoch, in the beginning God appointed certain angels to watch over the universe (the Watchers). One of the watchers, Semyaz, mustered a group of two hundred “lust-filled” angels who descended to earth in order to mate with human women (cf. Gen 6:1-4).

Among Semyaz's lieutenants is an angel named Azazel who dominates the subsequent narrative. This angelic trespass of a cosmic border results in a race of giants (the *nephilim*, or "fallen ones") who, in turn, bring forth demonic spirits.

These terrifying demons are voracious monsters, devouring everything in sight, including people. The whole terrible scenario unleashes such violence and corruption in the world that God is forced to send good angels down to put a stop to things. Under the leadership of these good angels (and under the direction of God), a cosmic combat ensues, and God delivers a prediction for the future: After seventy generations, the demonic insurgents will be defeated and condemned to eternal torment, and the earth will enter into a period of rest and peace. (Wray, 100)

The Similitudes contrasts the righteous with those seduced by the satans

The latest section of the *First Book of Enoch*, the "Similitudes," written about the time of Jesus, simply contrasts those who are righteous, who stand on the side of the angels, with those, both Jews and Gentiles, seduced by the *satans*. (Pagels, 53)

After seventy generations in prison, the rebels will be locked away in torment (*Enoch*)

The parts of the Enoch material that concern us are those that convert the Genesis flood myth, by midrash or retelling, into a rebellion of angels. ... A group of angels join with their leader in a plot to violate their assigned role; they descend to the earth and have sexual intercourse with the daughters of men; as a result, the earth is corrupted and eventually cries out in its agony to heaven; God intervenes and sends down good angels, among them Michael, to put a stop to the goings-on and imprison the rebels; at the same time, God foretells the ultimate end of all this—after seventy generations in prison, the rebels will be permanently locked away in torment, while all wrong is destroyed from the earth and a new world is born in righteousness and peace. (Forsyth, 163)

1 Enoch expected a coming divine judgement will eradicate evil and injustice

Overall they express a common worldview that characterizes this present world and age as evil and unjust and in need of divine adjudication and renewal. With the possible exception of the *Book of the Luminaries*, they focus on the common concern and expectation that a coming divine judgment will eradicate evil and injustice from the earth and will return the world to God's created intention. (Nickelsburg, introduction, Kindle)

1 Enoch describes Hell as a fiery deep pit where the wicked are sent

The concept of a place of eternal punishment, especially by fire, was developed in the apocalyptic literature, for example *1 Enoch*, which describes Hell as "a deep pit with heavenly fire on its pillars" (18:11-16) and a place where the wicked who are blotted out of the Book of Life are sent (108:3). (Torre, Kindle Locations 1101-1102)

Revivification in the *Book of Watchers* (1 En. 1– 36) predates resurrection at Daniel 12

Since the *Book of Watchers* (1 En. 1– 36) can be dated to a compositional process that transpired in the third century BCE, the work anchors an early hope in human revivification to a setting that was at least a generation earlier than Daniel 7– 12, the Hellenistic Reform, and the Maccabean Revolt. It is possible that portions of the Enochic Epistle (1 En. 92– 105), with its own rendition of a spiritualized resurrection, may also slightly antedate (= *predate*) Daniel 7– 12.2. (Elledge, 214-215, Kindle Edition)

THE BOOK OF JUBILEES

Scholars believe Jubilees was composed in the second century BCE

Scholars believe *Jubilees* was composed in the second century B.C. ... An analysis of the chronological development in the shapes of letters in the manuscripts confirms that *Jubilees* is pre-Christian in date and seems to have been penned between 100 and 200 B.C. (Lumpkin (2019), Kindle location 8592)

Based on the approximate time of writing, *Jubilees* was created in the time of the Maccabees, in the high priesthood of Hyrcanus. (Lumpkin (2019), Kindle location 8647)

The Book of *Jubilees* alludes to the Maccabean situation before the death of Judah Maccabee

Though *Jubilees* apparently speaks only about early biblical events, it in fact alludes to the Maccabean situation before the death of Judah Maccabee. The apocalyptic review of history in *Jubilees* 23 describes the oppression and apostasy of the Maccabean period (chapters 16-25), the rise of the faithful group to whom *Jubilees* is written (*Jubilees* 26), and then God's direct, apocalyptic intervention in history (chapters 27-31). In addition, the battles against the Amorites (*Jubilees* 34) and the Edomites (chapters 37-8) — neither of which the Bible reports — allude to Judah Maccabee's battles against Nicanor (1 Maccabees 7:39-50) and against the Edomites.

Jubilees was found among the Dead Sea Scrolls, but probably antedates the foundation of the Qumran community and so was written between 160 and 140 B.C.E.

Similarities shared among *Jubilees*, parts of the *Enoch* tradition, parts of *Daniel*, and documents from Qumran such as the *Genesis Apocryphon* suggest that Second Temple society featured circles of apocalyptically oriented Jews who shared many of the same ideas and ideals. (Chilton, 375, underlining added)

***Jubilees* presented a trenchant manifesto for the Maccabean cause**

Writing around 160, the author of *Jubilees* presented a trenchant manifesto for the Maccabean cause and a diatribe against Gentiles. He held ferocious views on the issue of circumcision, a detonator for the revolution, and he claimed to cite a prophecy from Abraham's time. (Jenkins, 122)

The writer of *Jubilees* lived in a traditional, perhaps sectarian, environment

Jubilees is not a text that would have attracted the admiration of all Jews. The author condemns Jews who disregard ancestral practices and gentiles who oppress Jews, which implies that he was living in a traditional, and perhaps sectarian, environment. An even stronger indication that the author does not adhere to a mainstream Jewish worldview is his attitude toward the calendar year. He advocates for a solar, rather than lunar, year, believing that every year is 364 days long. The ramifications for following a solar calendar are huge. (Simkovich, 179)

The Book of *Jubilees* left its mark at Qumran and on other documents

It is also hard to tell exactly what or how old the book of *Jubilees* is. ... It has left its mark at Qumran and in many other documents like *The Genesis Apocryphon* and *The Temple Scroll*. It is a rehashing of the story, with new motifs added, including some apocalyptic ones like the division of all history into Jubilee periods of 49 years, but it is not an apocalyptic book in and of itself. The earliest copy of the text was found at Qumran in Hebrew but it is widely known elsewhere in Greek, Syriac, Latin, and Ethiopic. (Segal (2004), 353)

At Qumran, *Jubilees* may have been considered scriptural whereas *Esther* was not

The line between scriptural and nonscriptural works was not always clear in the Second Temple period. Many Jews likely regarded some books that are now preserved in the Hebrew Bible as not scriptural, and other books that would not be canonized as scriptural. The library of the Dead Sea Scrolls illustrates this point well. The caves where the scrolls were found contained fragments of every single book of what is now the Hebrew Bible except for the Hebrew book of Esther. The caves also held fragments of fifteen manuscripts of Jubilees, a book that would not be preserved in the Hebrew Bible or in the Apocrypha. For the owners of the Dead Sea Scrolls, Jubilees may have been considered a scriptural book, whereas Esther was not. (Simkovich, 208-209)

***Jubilees* influenced Jews and early Christians**

The book of Jubilees was once very influential for Jews and early Christians. Over time, Jews suppressed it within their own writings, and Christians largely lost contact with it, except in Ethiopia. (Jenkins, 79)

The Book of Jubilees is obsessed with time

The name "Jubilees" comes from the division of time into eras known as Jubilees. One Jubilee occurs after the equivalent of forty-nine years, or seven Sabbaths of weeks of years have passed. It is the numerical perfection of seven sevens. In a balance and symmetry of years, the Jubilee occurs after seven cycles of seven or forty-nine years have been completed. Thus, the fiftieth year is a Jubilee year. Time is told by referencing the number of Jubilees that have transpired from the time the festival was first kept. For example, Israel entered Canaan at the close of the fiftieth jubilee, which is about 2450 B.C. The obsession with time, dates, and the strict observance of festivals are all evidence of legalism taken to the highest level. (Lumpkin (2019), Kindle location 8647)

***Jubilees* understood Jewish history through the structure of jubilees**

The author of Jubilees wanted his Jewish readers to strictly observe aspects of Jewish practice that made Judaism distinct from other ancient religions, such as the Sabbath and holidays, circumcision, and dietary laws. ... The author of Jubilees advocated for understanding Jewish history through the structure of jubilees. ... He explains that the history of the Jewish people can be divided into units of jubilee years, with each unit lasting forty-nine years. ... According to Jubilees, the period between Adam and Eve's expulsion from the Garden of Eden in the eighth year of the world's creation and the Israelites' Exodus from Egypt is a span of 2,401 years, which is exactly forty-nine jubilees. (Simkovich, 178-179)

***Jubilees* saw Israelite history as patterns that reflect God's plan for his people**

The author of Jubilees ... wants his readers to perceive Israelite history as consisting of patterns that reflect a larger divine plan for God's elect people. (Simkovich, 225)

The Book of Jubilees is attributed to Moses

The Book of Jubilees, also known as *The Little Genesis* and *The Apocalypse of Moses*, opens with an extraordinary claim of authorship. It is attributed to the very hand of Moses; penned while he was on Mount Sinai, as an angel of God dictated to him regarding those events that transpired from the beginning of the world. The story is written from the viewpoint of the angel. (Lumpkin (2019), Kindle location 8592)

The Book of Jubilees is a second century BCE rewriting of Genesis

The book of Jubilees is a Hebrew document that consists of a fifty-chapter rewriting of Genesis and the beginning of Exodus. Written sometime in the second century BCE, Jubilees was one of the most popular Jewish books in circulation in the late Second Temple period. (Simkovich, 178)

Jubilees is a commentary on, or rewriting of, Genesis and part of Exodus

Jubilees was composed around 150 BC, a generation or so after *Enoch*. It is basically a commentary on, or rewriting of, Genesis and part of Exodus. It is presented as a revelation to Moses, and Yahweh orders an Angel of the Presence to preserve the revelation in writing. (Kelly (2006), 36)

Jubilees is an expanded commentary on Genesis and Exodus

Jubilees is an extended commentary, or midrash, on the book of Genesis and the opening of Exodus, and, as commonly occurs when later writers develop a canonical story, they added a lot of frills and ornamentation. (Jenkins, 79)

The Book of Jubilees retells Genesis and parts of Exodus

Jubilees is an imaginative, at times fanciful, retelling of Genesis and parts of Exodus. While it follows the story line of the Bible in broad terms, it also introduces some new elements, short stories, and brief interpretive vignettes we won't find in the Bible, all intended to interpret the original biblical text. (Henze 106)

Jubilees depicts episodes from creation to Israel's escape from Egyptian bondage

Jubilees represents a midrash on Genesis 1:1 through Exodus 12 depicting the episodes from creation with the observance of the Sabbath by the angels and men; to Israel's escape from Egyptian bondage. Although originally written in Hebrew, the Hebrew texts were completely lost until the find at Qumran. (Lumpkin (2019), Kindle location 8606)

Jubilees systematically rewrote biblical stories

Retroactive rewriting became more common in the second century BCE. It was strongly in evidence in Jubilees, which systematically rewrote biblical stories to shift the blame from God to Mastema/Satan. (Jenkins, 165)

Jubilees rewrote events in Genesis and Exodus, crediting the unsavoury deeds of God to a malicious, evil being

In a very real sense, Jubilees is to Genesis-Exodus what Chronicles is to Samuel-Kings 22.

Chronicles revisits the events of Samuel-Kings, and the author (or authors) rewrites much of Israel's history from his own theological perspective. Hence, the Chronicler's version of events differs somewhat from the events presented in Samuel-Kings.

Recall that in 1 Chronicles 21, it is *Satan*, not *God*, as in 2 Samuel 24, who incites David's census. In much the same way, when the author of Jubilees rewrites his version of the events in Genesis and Exodus, he credits the more unsavory deeds of God to a malicious, evil being. (Wray, 103)

Jubilees expanded stories

Jubilees expands the stories about Abraham and his family. Jubilees emphasizes that the Patriarchs observed all of God's commandments, including holidays that commemorate events in Israelite history that occurred *after* the Patriarchs lived. (Simkovich, 223)

Jubilees seeks to clarify the moral standing of figures who are portrayed ambiguously in the Patriarchal narratives. (Simkovich, 224)

Jubilees attempted to answer questions left unanswered in Genesis

The Book of Jubilees seems to be an attempt to answer and explain all questions left unanswered in the Book of Genesis as well as to bolster the position of the religious law. It attempts to trace the source of religious laws back to an ancient beginning thereby adding weight and sanction. (Lumpkin (2019), Kindle location 8647)

The Book of Jubilees presents a dramatic portrayal of the development of God's Satanic minister

We have in the *Book of jubilees* a remarkable dramatization and development of God's Satanic minister and his interaction with other less cynical ministers of the Divine dispensation.

The Angels of the Presence are in charge of disposing of the Watchers and their ghostly progeny, while Satan/Mastema is in charge of disciplining the Humans. This disciplining often seems to consist of driving them to further moral turpitude, making them all the more deserving of punishment.

Mastema encourages Yahweh to test Abraham, but the Angel of the Presence witnesses the testing along with Mastema, and passes on Yahweh's order to call it off. (Kelly, (2006), 40

Jubilees identified Mastema as the leader of the demons

Jubilees identifies [Mastema] as "the chief of the spirits." ... He is the chief leader of the demons, the equivalent of Satan. ... Mastema himself, the leader of the demons, is subservient to God and can only do what God allows him to do. (Henze (2017), 108, 109)

In the Book of Jubilees, Mastema ("Hostility") fills a role very close to that of the later Satan

The Enochian mythology also appears in Jubilees, where Mastema ("Hostility") fills a role very close to that of the later Satan. Mastema is a transitional figure between the divine servant found in Job and the cosmic adversary of New Testament times, although the divine enemy is also titled Belial or Beliar. (Jenkins, 162)

God assigned a ruling spirit to lead each nation astray (Jubilees)

Jubilees says that God assigned to each of the nations a ruling angel or spirit "so that they might lead them astray" (*Jub.* 15:31); hence the nations worship demons (whom *Jubilees* identifies with foreign gods). But God himself rules over Israel, together with a phalanx of angels and spirits assigned to guard and bless them. (Pagels, 54)

The fallen angels spawned violent, evil, cruel spirits (Jubilees)

According to *Jubilees*, the angels' fall spawned the giants, who sow violence and evil, and evil spirits, "who are cruel, and created to destroy" (*Jub.* 10:6). Ever since, their presence has dominated this world like a dark shadow. (Pagels, 54)

Demons are a potent force in [the Book of] Jubilees. (Jenkins, 166)

In Jubilees, the Spirits of the Ghosts led Noah's grandchildren astray and were killing them

We hear Noah complaining to Yahweh about "the Unclean Demons" who are leading his grandchildren astray and killing them. These Demons turn out to be the Spirits or Ghosts of the Giant offspring of the Watcher/woman unions. These Spirits were the loose ends left over in *Enoch*, and now Noah wants them put out of the way, like their Angelic progenitors. (Kelly (2006), 37)

In *Jubilees*, Mastema proposes to God a test for Abraham that he offers his son as a burnt offering

Mastema ... takes a leaf from the Book of Job: he proposes a test for Abraham. He says to God, "Behold, Abraham loves Isaac, his son, and he is more pleased with him than everything. Tell him to offer him as a burnt offering upon the altar, and you will see whether he will do this thing. And you will know whether he is faithful in everything in which you test him" (*Jub.* 17.16). (Kelly (2006) 38)

In *Jubilees*, Mastema commands Abraham to kill his son, Isaac

Jubilees depicts Mastema testing Abraham himself to the breaking point. For according to this revisionist writer, it is Mastema—not the Lord—who commands Abraham to kill his son, Isaac.

Later Abraham expresses anxiety lest he be enslaved by evil spirits, "who have dominion over the thoughts of human hearts"; he pleads with God, "Deliver me from the hands of evil spirits, and do not let them lead me astray from my God" (*Jub.* 12:20).

Moses, too, knows that he and his people are vulnerable. When he prays that God deliver Israel from their external enemies, "the Gentiles" (*Jub.* 1:19), he also prays that God may deliver them from the intimate enemy that threatens to take over his people internally and destroy them: "Do not let the spirit of Belial rule over them" (*Jub.* 1:20).

This sense of ominous and omnipresent danger in *Jubilees* shows the extent to which the author regards his people as corruptible and, to a considerable extent, already corrupted. Like the *Book of the Watchers*, *Jubilees* warns that those who neglect God's covenant are being seduced by the powers of evil, fallen angels. (Pagels, 54-55)

Abraham prays that "the spirit of Mastema" will not rule (*Jubilees*)

Abraham prays that "the spirit of Mastema" not rule over Jacob and his descendants (*jub.* 19.28). (Kelly (2006) 39)

Moses asked Yahweh to create an upright spirit for his people, not the spirit of Beliar (*Jubilees*)

Moses interrupts Yahweh's discourse with a petition, asking Yahweh to create for his people an upright spirit. He implores Him not to allow the spirit of Beliar to rule over them to accuse them before Yahweh and cause their destruction (*jub.* 1.20) (Kelly (2006), 36)

***Jubilees* warns that if the angels' fall brings God's wrath, how can humans expect to be spared?**

Another devout patriot, writing around 160 B.C.E., also siding with the early Maccabean party, wrote an extraordinary apocryphal book called *Jubilees* to urge his people to maintain their separateness from Gentile ways. ...

The author of *Jubilees* is concerned ... with the conflicts over assimilation that divide Jewish communities internally, and he attributes these conflicts to that most intimate of enemies, whom he calls by many names, but most often calls Mastema ("hatred"), Satan, or Belial.

The story of the angels' fall in *Jubilees*, like that in the *First Book of Enoch*, gives a moral warning: if even angels, when they sin, bring God's wrath and destruction upon themselves, how can mere human beings expect to be spared? (Pagels, 53)

***Jubilees* anticipated the coming apocalyptic age**

Another essential element in *Jubilees* is the coming apocalyptic age, when God's judgment over all of creation will yield to an era of reward and punishment, followed

by a period of universal peace. The author of Jubilees is especially concerned with the punishments that those who do not observe the Law will incur. (Simkovich, 182)

Jubilees speaks of an apocalyptic Jerusalem and a coming judgment of a heavenly “Son of Man”

Jubilees, an extremely important apocryphon from the second century B.C.E., retells in accents peculiar to itself the older stories from Genesis and Exodus; other important traditions, associated with the figure of Enoch, retail visions of fallen angels, of an apocalyptic Jerusalem, and of the coming judgment of a heavenly “Son of Man.” (Fredriksen (2017), Kindle location 211)

THE BOOK OF DANIEL

For centuries, Prophets were promising the Jews that God will restore them and bless them. They were a minor people living in the shadow of the powerful. They were shattered by and subjected to a series of oppressors: Assyria, Egypt, Babylon, Persia (who treated them better than others) and Greece.

To address their disappointment and utter frustration, they looked to God for his direct and immediate intervention. In the 3rd century BCE, Jews adapted concepts from the Persians and the Greeks, modifying them to their own perceptions, and they produced literature that included elements of eschatology — the Last Days have arrived.

The immediate concern of the authors of Daniel was the oppression under Antiochus Epiphanes and their stories were designed to provide moral support — without raising the suspicion of their overlords.

Daniel was formed in that environment, but it did even more, as it was the first fully apocalyptic writing — events portrayed on a world-wide scale.

Daniel's authors made correct “predictions” of past events but they failed to correctly predict the outcomes of current events (Kings of the North and South, for example — the Ptolemaic and Seleucid empires).

Probably the most important contribution by Daniel is the introduction of the concept of “resurrection” where the “wise ones” (themselves) would partake. (Chapter 12).

Apocalyptic writings, including *Daniel* and the *Apocalypse*, were composed in Judaism from the 2nd century BCE to the 2nd century CE

Apocalyptic writings were composed in Judaism from the second century BCE to the second century CE. The best-known works in this class of literature are the book of *Daniel* and the *Apocalypse* — the former from the Old Testament, the latter from the New. But apart from these two canonical writings we have a number of apocryphal apocalyptic books, such as the *Book of Jubilees*, the *Book of Enoch*, the *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs*, *Fourth Esdras* and *Second Baruch*. (McNamara (2010), 19)

Apocalyptic writings existed in the late 3rd century BCE, far earlier than *Daniel*

The origins of the apocalyptic genre and the existence of certain apocalyptic books go back beyond the Book of Daniel, and at least into the late third century B.C. (McNamara (1983), 206)

***Daniel* was related to events of the 2nd century BCE when it was written**

The seventeenth century also saw developing interest in the two related convictions that underlie the critical study of Daniel characteristic of the modern period: as well as the belief that all the prophecies relate historically to the Antiochene period, the conclusion that this was the period in which the book was actually written. (Goldingay, xxxvi, underlining added)

Daniel's historical problems, Greek words, its prophecies, and its location among the Writings are factors that date *Daniel* to the 2nd century BCE

The main features of the critical argument for the second-century date of Daniel are then already present in the work of A. Collins (1727): the historical problems, the Greek words, the prophecies relating to the second century, the book's location among the Writings, the late Aramaic. (Goldingay, xxxvi, underlining added)

The Book of Daniel was written between 169 and 165 BC, probably by more than one author

In the Hebrew Bible the last book to be composed was the Book of Daniel, which in its present form is a product of the Antiochan persecution. ... In reality these chapters were written between 169 and 165 BC, and probably by more than one author. (Cohn, 167, 168)

Daniel was completed only decades before the Hebrew Bible closed

The book of Daniel, which probably was completed only decades before the Scriptural corpus was closed, was not updated to contain a correct prophecy of the death of Antiochus or anticipate the Hasmonean monarchy. (Carr (2011), 166)

Stories of Daniel and the visions were collected during the 2nd century BCE

The stories of Daniel were finally collected during the first half of the second century BCE in Palestine, and combined with the visions as a direct result of the religious and national crisis centred on Antiochus IV Epiphanes.

Whatever circle was responsible for the MT [the Hebrew Masoretic Text] compilation, it was probably not one sympathetic to the Hasmonean or Maccabean approach.

The stories were very soon translated into Greek [the LXX, Septuagint] in the light of the vision material. (Meadowcroft, 275-276, underlining added)

Few scholars believe that the Book of Daniel originated during the days of the Babylonian exile

The entire book claims to take place in the sixth century B.C. and to report a series of visions that come to the boy Daniel, who is remarkable for his great wisdom and his ability to receive divine revelation about the future. Few scholars today, however, believe that this book originated in any way during the days of the Babylonian exile. And the ones who do usually have a very difficult time explaining the references to historical people and places which seem to be grossly wrong.

Darius the Mede is called the son of Xerxes in 5:31 and 9:11, but both are wrong: Darius was not a Mede but a Persian and the father of Xerxes. Belshazzar is called the king of Babylon in chapter 7 and the son of Nebuchadnezzar in chapter 5. He was neither: he was only crown prince under his father Nabonidus. In chapter 6 Cyrus succeeds Darius as king of the Persians. This, too, has history backward, since Cyrus was the founder of the Persian dynasty. The author seems to be quite confused about his facts and either lived long afterward or else intended the giant bloopers to warn the audience that what follows is not intended as a history but a *story of faith*—similar to the approach of the Book of Judith. (Boadt, 507-508)

Daniel's purported setting during the Babylonian exile is not plausible; the book must be from a later era

Some of the book [of Daniel's] claims are at odds with historical fact:

- Daniel depicts the Babylonians, Medes, Persians, and Greeks as four consecutive empires (chap. 2); however, some of those states existed concurrently.
- It talks about Nebuchadnezzar's being exiled from his kingdom (chap. 4); this probably reflects events involving the last king of Babylon, Nabonidus, who took a "leave of absence" from being king and lived in an oasis on the Arabian peninsula.
- It depicts Belshazzar as the last king of Babylon (chap. 5); this is an error.

Someone living in the Babylonian exile would not have made these kinds of mistakes. In other words, Daniel's purported setting during the Babylonian exile is not plausible; the book must be from a later era. In fact, it employs Greek loanwords (e.g., *sumfoniah* or "bagpipes," related to the English word "symphony," appears in 3:5), which establishes that someone wrote it during the Greek period. (Brettler 212-213)

Daniel is a composite book written down some time in the third or early second century BCE

The book of Daniel is also a composite book. Chapters 1-6 contain a collection of traditional tales, often legendary in character, about Daniel and his companions in the Babylonian Exile. These tales were written down some time in the third or early second century B.C.E. Chapters 7-12 report the visions of Daniel, interpreted by an angel. Already in antiquity the Neoplatonist Porphyry showed that these visions did not come from the time of the Babylonian Exile. They give an accurate report of history down to the time of Antiochus Epiphanes (to about 167 B.C.E.) but not beyond that point. Although Porphyry did not realize it, the account of the death of the king "between the sea and the holy mountain" (11:45) was inaccurate, and so we know that this prophecy was completed before the news of his death reached Jerusalem. (He died in Persia, late in 164 B.C.E.) The visions of Daniel are pseudonymous, just like those of Enoch. (McGinn (2003), 73, underlining added)

Daniel written in response to a religious and political threat in the 2nd century BCE

With the contents dated in the sixth century it would be natural to look for a sixth-century background as the historical setting of the book, but here the student finds that most commentaries direct otherwise, for almost without exception it is taken for granted that the book was written in response to a religious and political threat upon Judea in the second century BC.

The writer, using legendary material well known to his fellow Jews, and adding the visions to bridge the course of history between the exile and his own day, was encouraging opposition to the foreign oppressor and rallying the faithful to the fight. So firmly is this viewpoint maintained that many commentators do not explain the reasons for their statements asserting a second-century date. (Baldwin, 18, underlining added)

Daniel completed shortly before the death of Antiochus

The Book of Daniel was completed shortly before the rededication of the Temple and the death of Antiochus: the date is suggested by both the narrative's detailed review of Antiochus's reign and the incorrect prediction concerning Antiochus's final battle and place of death (Daniel 11:40-5). Revised dates for the coming of God's victory and judgment in the penultimate verse (Daniel 12:12) indicate that the author, writing during the turmoil itself, had to adjust the predictions to fit unfolding events. (Chilton, 371)

The Book of Daniel was the most important book resulting from the Maccabean revolution

Among the wave of actual pseudoprophecies and neoscriptures directly inspired by the Maccabean revolution, by far the most important was the book of Daniel. Daniel is, in fact, the charter text of later apocalyptic, as well as the foundation for so many later ideas about messianic figures, the Antichrist, and the Day of Judgment. ... Contemporary analysis masquerades as historical narrative. ... Daniel's second and

more phantasmagoric section can be dated precisely to 165 BCE. (Jenkins, 118, 118-119)

1 Maccabees shows that Daniel 9 had Antiochus IV in mind

Regarding the abomination of desolation, Collins says that 1 Maccabees 1:54 "stands as the earliest interpretation of the phrase in Daniel." Given Daniel's interest in Antiochus IV, 1 Maccabees' reading of Dan 9:27, 11:31, and 12:11 with reference to the Antiochene crisis would seem to be not just the earliest interpretation of these verses but also an indication of the original intention of the author of Daniel. 1 Maccabees 1:54 understood Daniel's abomination of desolation with reference to the Antiochene crisis. It would seem, then, that the writer of 1 Maccabees considered the Maccabean resolution of that crisis the climax of Daniel's seventy sevens. (Ulrich (2014), 1066, underlining added)

Daniel chapters 7 to 12 shows all events down to Antiochus IV Epiphanes

In chapters 7-12 ... Daniel is shown all the events of the centuries to come right down to the time of Antiochus IV Epiphanes and his persecution of the Jews. (Boadt, 508)

Although the Book of Daniel is not intended to be primarily an historical record, it does reflect the general course of events in the post-exilic period from the time of Nebuchadnezzar down to the Maccabees, a period of nearly four hundred years. Its whole purpose is to interpret that history without being wedded to the details. The authors were intensely interested in what was happening and what God would do about it. They were convinced that *God really does act at every moment even when it may seem that he has abandoned his people*. They also tried to answer why Israel suffered, and why God allowed people to be martyred for following his law. These were pressing problems at the time of the Maccabees, and the authors used all the skill at their command to create an answer, combining wisdom, prophecy and the new form of apocalyptic. They needed to convince a despairing people of the mercy of God. (Boadt, 510)

Most scholars assign the final form of Daniel 7-12 to the Antiochene period

Bergsma and Collins observe that most scholars assign the final form of Daniel 7-12 to the Antiochene period. Each of Daniel's visions (the four metals in chapter 2, the four beasts in chapter 7, the ram and goat in chapter 8, the seventy sevens in chapter 9, and the kings of the north and south in chapter 11) is read with reference to the Antiochene crisis. Such an understanding of the book means that the terminus ad quem of the seventy sevens is 164 B.C.E., the year that Judah Maccabee rededicated the temple. Antiochus IV had desecrated it three and a half years earlier in 167 B.C.E. If these scholars agree on the *terminus ad quem* of the seventy sevens, they are divided about the *terminus a quo*. (Ulrich (2015), 3, underlining added)

Daniel's visions predicted the end of the kingdom of Antiochus Epiphanes

The clear purpose of these visions is to predict in a veiled fashion the end of the kingdom of Antiochus Epiphanes and his persecution. This makes it highly probable that the author of chapters 7-12 was living through this terrible time and wrote these visions to give strength to Jews suffering for their faith with the promise that God would end both the persecutor and his persecution shortly. The author actually predicts the death of Antiochus in a great battle with Egypt (Dn 11:40-45). But since this was not the way the king actually died—he perished defending his empire in the east—we can suggest that at least this part of the book was completed by 164, the year before he died.

Today the consensus of scholars understands the whole book to be put together by an author and editor who first collected traditional stories in chapters 1-6 about the boy-hero Daniel showing his courage during the persecutions of exile and then added to them the visions of chapters 7-12 that predicted the coming end of Antiochus Epiphanes and his persecution. This kind of writing is called a *vaticinium ex eventu*, a "prediction after the fact," (Boadt, 509)

Enoch and Daniel arise out of crises created by Hellenism and Antiochus Epiphanes

The definition of an apocalypse ... has a history and evolved over time. In the early books of Enoch and Daniel, the genre is in an experimental stage. ... Further, it is important to recognize at least two distinct types of apocalypses—the otherworldly journey, typified by the Book of the Watchers, and the historically oriented apocalypses, such as the Apocalypse of Weeks or Daniel 7-12. ...

One may say, on a fairly high level of abstraction, that [apocalypses] serve to exhort and console their addressees. The books of Enoch and Daniel arise out of a cultural crisis precipitated by Hellenism and aggravated by the persecution of Antiochus Epiphanes. Regardless of their status within the Jewish community, the authors of these books surely felt relatively deprived, because of the impact of foreign culture and religious persecution. (McGinn (2003), 77, underlining added)

The apocalyptic Chapter 8 of Daniel deals in not-so-veiled language, with Antiochus IV Epiphanes

[Daniel] Chapter 8 is a typical example of [apocalyptic visions]. ... The passage deals, in not-so-veiled language, with Antiochus IV Epiphanes, the Greek king who in 167 B.C.E. took the unprecedented step of converting the Jerusalem Temple into a temple for Zeus, while prohibiting central Jewish practices. (We know little about why he did so. Most Greek kings, like their Persian predecessors, were quite tolerant of local religions.)

Other sources tell us that he suspended the regular Temple offerings; this is reflected when Daniel hears mention of a current crisis, "the regular offering ... forsaken because of transgression" (v. 13). Thus, someone wrote down this vision after 167 (when Antiochus took control of the Temple) but before 164 (when the Hasmoneans restored the Temple following the Maccabean victory). Probably much—if not all—of the apocalyptic material in Daniel was written around that time. (Brettler, 213)

The Jews placed the book of Daniel in the Writings

In Judaism, with its custom of copying works of Scripture on scrolls, a Daniel scroll would not necessarily have a fixed place with reference to other scrolls, but the church's copies of the Septuagint were in codex (book) form, and they located Daniel with the prophetic books. Eventually, Judaism located the book in the third section of the canon, however, the Writings, between Esther and Ezra. (Gowan, 23)

The Hebrew Bible does not consider Daniel to be prophecy

The Hebrew Bible always places Daniel among the last of the writings, and does not consider it to be prophecy at all. Indeed, it can be readily understood as edifying examples of trust in God not much different from the stories of Esther, Judith and Tobit. (Boadt, 506)

Daniel presented current events as precursors to titanic changes in the world order and God's judgment

Daniel presented current events—wars, rumors of wars, revolutions—as precursors to titanic changes in the world order and God's judgment. ... These histories form a prologue to the book's main subject, which is Antiochus IV himself and his hatred for Jews and Judaism. (Jenkins, 119, 120)

Daniel says the physical conflict in Palestine would escalate to a full-scale supernatural war

Antiochus's crimes would provoke the final catastrophe: [Daniel 9:26–27]. ... However dreadful the threat, however, God would intervene to help his people and establish his rule. The physical conflict in Palestine would escalate to a full-scale supernatural war, a moment of ultimate judgment and of bodily resurrection. (Jenkins, 120)

Parts of the Book of Daniel were written in Aramaic and the remainder in Hebrew

About half of Daniel was written in Aramaic. ... The book opens in Hebrew and continues in that language until we come to Daniel 2:4, where the narrator tells us that in response to a demand by King Nebuchadnezzar, "the astrologers answered the king in Aramaic," and then the language shifts from Hebrew to Aramaic. ... The book of Daniel continues to be written in Aramaic until the end of chapter 7. And then it shifts back to Hebrew from chapter 8 until the end of the book. (Longman III, 13)

The earliest attested form of Middle Aramaic is that of the book of Daniel (ca. 166 BCE)

With the advent of the Greek Empire, Greek replaced Aramaic as the official language of the chanceries. When new peoples came to write down Aramaic, dialectal differences are noticeable. The earliest attested form of Middle Aramaic is that of the book of Daniel (ca. 166 BCE). (McNamara (2010), 86)

The strong Aramaic influence on the later Hebrew books of the Old Testament argues towards a growing use of Aramaic among the Jews of Palestine. The fact that almost half the book of Daniel is written in Aramaic is a strong argument that by 166 BCE this language was commonly spoken among them. (McNamara (2010), 88)

There are already Greek loan words in the Book of Daniel (Daniel 3:5), a work written about 165 BCE. (McNamara (2010), 136)

The Book of Daniel contains many Zoroastrian ideas

The Book of Daniel contains many Zoroastrian ideas. Nebuchadnezzar's prophetic dream mirrors a much older Zoroastrian work, the *Zand-i Vohuman Yasht*. (McDonald (2002), 124 ftnt. 5)

The Book of Daniel exhibits affinities with the Iranian language and literature

To return to the Book of Daniel: even linguistically there is something odd about the work, for chapters 2 to 7 are written not, like the rest of the Old Testament, in Hebrew but in the language of the Iranian empire, Imperial Aramaic; and they contain no less than twenty Persian loan-words.

More importantly, in chapter 2 there is an image which has a close parallel in Zoroastrian lore: the statue in Nebuchadnezzar's dream, with its head of gold, breast and arms of silver, belly and thighs of bronze, legs of iron, and feet part iron and part

terracotta. In the Iranian apocalypse *Zand i Vahman Yasht* (meaning ‘Commentary on the hymn in praise of the god Vohu Manah’), Zoroaster dreams of a tree with branches of gold, silver, steel — and iron mixed with clay.

Nebuchadnezzar’s statue and Zoroaster’s tree both symbolise the same thing: a succession of four historical periods. The concept of four ages, symbolised respectively by gold, silver, bronze and iron is to be found already in an eighth-century Greek work, Hesiod’s *Work and Days*; but the addition of iron mixed with clay is an innovation, and such a curious one that it cannot be coincidental. Nor is there much doubt as to which is the original, Nebuchadnezzar’s statue or Zoroaster’s tree. Although the extant version of the *Zand-i Vahman Yasht* is — like all Zoroastrian texts — late, its origin is very ancient. Some scholars hold that it goes back to the time of Alexander the Great, others that it goes back further still. What is certain is that it is far older than the *Book of Daniel*.

That being so, one would expect the Iranian interpretation of the dream to be more natural, more persuasive than the Jewish. And so it is — especially the interpretation of ‘iron mixed with clay’. In the *Zand-i Vahman Yasht* the image symbolises the age when ‘non-Iranians will be mixed with Iranians’ — that is, when the good strong iron of Zoroastrian Iranians will be weakened by an influx of infidel foreigners. In Daniel ‘iron mixed with clay’ is interpreted as the time when Seleucid rule will be weakened by unsuccessful dynastic marriages — a forced comparison if ever there was one!

There is other, even more convincing evidence of Zoroastrian influence. When Nebuchanezzar asks Daniel to interpret this same dream, Daniel invokes ‘a God in heaven who reveals mysteries ... mysteries of what is to be’ — and the word for ‘mysteries’ is *rz*. It is the very same word as is used in the Scrolls to denote the secret knowledge which the Qumran community treasured above all things: knowledge of God’s plan for the world, and especially for the end of time. And it is a Persian word, much used by Zoroastrians in precisely the same sense. (Cohn, 222-224)

The plot of the book of Daniel

The plot of the stories in Daniel may be summarized as follows: The lives of Jews are put into jeopardy because they insist on remaining faithful to the precepts of their religion, but the Jews persevere, and their God saves them, whereupon the king recognizes the superiority of the God of the Jews. (Gowan, 28)

A major theme runs through all six of the stories in Daniel. Both superior wisdom and the vindication of the faithful one lead to the same conclusion; all must acknowledge that the God whom the Jews serve is “God of gods and Lord of kings” (Dan 2 47) (Gowan, 28-29)

Messages of Daniel chapters 2 to 4

The ancient Jews did not write literal histories. Every narrative had a religious purpose aimed at their own contemporary community. Each story was intended to create a direct and immediate response.

In the case of Daniel, it was compiled in the 2nd century BCE at a time when prophetic speculation, eschatology, and Messianic expectation had recently become rife, in response to the failed promises. Writings such as Jubilees, Enoch and others had proliferated. Daniel was quickly taken up by Dead Sea communities. (Note the appearance of “holy watchers”, a sop to the earlier writings of Enoch.)

Chapters 2, 3, and 4 of Daniel form a set. Whether the number had mythical significance, I do not know but that possibility must not be denied. They did not think literally like we do.

In chapter 2, the king is told he is the head of gold but his reign will not last forever (aimed at their 2nd century oppressors). In Chapter 3, the king defies this, and he creates an idol that is all gold, thus

signifying his defiance to the earlier declaration that his kingdom is to be followed by others, even though they are of baser qualities. And if the king still has not learned his lesson that YHWH determines who will rule on Earth, in Chapter 4 Nebuchadnezzar experiences his own debasement. (It is likely that the authors repurposed the later estrangement of Nabonidus in order to make the stories. Literal histories these are not.)

The key passages in these three chapters are the doxologies, aimed directly at the immediate 2nd century communities. These show the moral values that caused these stories to be created.

Daniel gives meaning to present happenings by explaining past events

[Daniel's] focus is *not* predicting the *future*, but giving some meaning to *present* happenings by explaining the *past* events that led up to this terrible situation, and showing that all along God has permitted everything that takes place and is planning to act soon again to rescue his people.

To achieve such an important purpose, the authors mixed historical facts with older religious traditions and even pagan myths. (Boadt, 509)

Daniel's stories proved that God is great

The last of these narrative chapters is about Daniel and the lion. This story parallels that of the three friends and the fiery furnace (chap. 3). ... These stories are not really about specific historical individuals. Rather, they "prove" that God is great and will save any pious Jew, especially those persecuted for religious beliefs. Obviously these stories belong in the literary genre of "royal tales." In addition, they all feature competition between Jew and non-Jew, in which the underdog—who is the Jew—always wins. (Brettler (2007), 217, underlining added)

The point is rather that the God of Israel is in control of history and that this control will eventually be made manifest. (McGinn (2003), 74, underlining added)

Daniel's stories illustrate an attitude about living as a Jew

Daniel creates the illusion of history with notes such as "the second year of the reign of Nebuchadnezzar" (2:1) and "Darius the Mede received the kingdom, being about sixty-two years old" (6:1). Nevertheless, the stories of Daniel are so exaggerated and implausible that we must wonder whether readers in antiquity believed them.

Ultimately, it may not matter whether the editors and copyists of the stories in Daniel believed that they were true. For the stories exist mainly to illustrate an attitude about living as a Jew: be pious, and even if threatened you will ultimately be saved—to enjoy a better fate than your non-Jewish adversaries.

... Did these stories originate in the Diaspora, and thus illustrate that God saves even outside of the land of Israel? Or did they originate in Israel during the persecutions of Antiochus, and thus illustrate reasons for hope during a dark time? The historical-critical method has not answered this question decisively. No matter how we resolve such issues, the message of the stories in Daniel is what is important. (Brettler (2007), 217-218, underlining added)

Daniel's fanciful narratives provide instruction for living in the Diaspora

The Book of Daniel, the Bible's major Hebrew apocalypse, did not originate as an apocalyptic text. The first six chapters are folktales, set in the sixth century B.C.E. in Babylonian and then Persian exile; these fanciful narratives provide instruction for living in the Diaspora and encourage trust, fortitude, and fidelity to the Law. ...

During the persecution of the Jews by Antiochus IV Epiphanes, when Temple worship was violated and those faithful to Torah were being killed, the Book of Daniel attained its final form.

With the appended chapters 7-12, the genre of the text shifts to apocalyptic. ... Daniel's God-given "mantic" wisdom (the ability to interpret dreams, visions, and oracles), which played a prominent part in the stories in chapters 1-6, becomes the vehicle for understanding the Maccabean crisis. (Chilton, 370, underlining added)

Daniel brought the good news that God is in control and will be victorious

While prophets are often the bearers of bad news for the people of God ("you have sinned, and you will be punished unless you repent"), Daniel is the bearer of good news ("though you are living under oppression, know that God is in control and will have the final victory"). (Longman III, 10)

Daniel's message: in spite of present difficulties, God is in control, and he will have the final victory

The book of Daniel contains six stories about Daniel in a foreign court (chaps. 1-6) and four apocalyptic visions (chaps. 7-12). ... [Al]though there are interesting differences between them, they all have the same basic theme or message: *in spite of present difficulties, God is in control, and he will have the final victory.* (Longman III, 15. *Italics supplied*)

The people of God were under the stern control of foreign powers that had animosity toward the faith of the faithful. They were living in a toxic and dangerous culture, and they had no control over their situation. The book of Daniel is intended to bring comfort to these faithful, oppressed people. As they surveyed their world, it looked like their oppressors were in control. The temptation would be to think that the gods of their oppressors were more powerful than their God. The book of Daniel pulls back the curtains and points out that in reality God is in control and he will have the final victory. Stay faithful in spite of your present pain and trouble. (Longman III, 44)

The Book of Daniel is prophecy told retrospectively designed to console and fortify an oppressed and suffering people

In *Daniel*, then, contemporary events are presented as though they have been divinely prophesied from the distant past. It is prophecy told retrospectively. By creating the character from the exilic period, the author or authors of *Daniel* are presenting their prophecies as though they have been divinely underwritten.

Look, we are asked to believe, the overthrow of this Greek despot has been prophesied hundreds of years ago by the exilic sage. ... Apocalyptic literature generally is a very effective way of consoling and fortifying an oppressed and suffering people. In such a view, the political and the metaphysical are inextricably bound up with each other. (Pearson, 42)

Versions of the Book of Daniel

One of the challenges of the book of Daniel is that the Septuagint (LXX) version of the book diverges from the Masoretic Text (MT) in significant ways, especially, but not only, in chs. 3-6. At the same time, another version known as Theodotion (θ) has become the well-known and better attested Greek version of Daniel. Neither of these phenomena on their own is unique in the Greek Bible. ...

What is unique about the Greek translation of Daniel is that somewhere in the history of the Greek Bible the LXX of Daniel was replaced by θ , which is much closer to the MT, as the authoritative Greek version. ... The two Greek versions jostled with each other for many years from possibly the early first century BCE until at least the time of Origen, who was aware of both. By then θ was the Greek text of Daniel favoured by Christians. Jewish opinion during the period in question is less accessible. ...

The two versions [LXX and the MT] differ markedly in the way they tell their stories as well as in the concerns that motivate them. ... At one point [the evidence] suggests a LXX which is later than the MT while at another the position is reversed. Gradually a picture emerges into focus of differing, if not competing, wisdom circles witnessed to by the two versions of Daniel 2-7 under scrutiny. These divergent outlooks, possibly originating as early as the Persian period, are hinted at by such things as the way the different kings are viewed, how Daniel and his friends are understood, the use made of symbols, and the picture painted of the interaction between heaven and earth. (Meadowcroft, 15-17, underlining added)

Daniel 7 is the most influential passage in Jewish apocalyptic literature

Daniel 7 is arguably the most influential passage in Jewish apocalyptic literature, and it had a profound influence on the Synoptic Gospels where Jesus is identified as the Son of Man. It is also a powerful vision in its own right. ...

It draws on the imagery of the Canaanite combat myth, where Baal, rider of the clouds, triumphs over Yamm, the turbulent sea. It is clear that the little horn represents Antiochus Epiphanes, and that the vision predicts his overthrow. But as Daniel sees it, the struggle is not just between Greeks and Jews, It is a reenactment of the primordial struggle where the beasts of chaos rise from the sea in rebellion against the rightful God.

The most striking aspect of the imagery is that there seem, *prima facie*, to be two divine figures. Elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible it is always YHWH, the God of Israel, who rides on the clouds; here he must be identified with the Ancient of Days. This anomaly reflects the Canaanite background of the imagery. In the ancient myth, El is the ancient one while Baal is the rider of the clouds. In the Jewish context, the "one like a son of man" has often been taken as a symbol for Israel. He does indeed represent Israel in some sense, but such an interpretation misses the significance of the imagery.

Elsewhere in Daniel, human figures in visions often represent angels (e.g., 10:5, 18; 12:5-6). "Holy Ones" nearly always represent angels both in Daniel and in the contemporary Jewish literature. In the context of Daniel, the one like a son of man is most satisfactorily identified as the archangel Michael, who is introduced as the "prince" of Israel in 10:21 and 12:1. The Holy Ones of the Most High are the angelic host and Israel is the people of the Holy Ones.

The vision predicts the exaltation of Israel, the real conflict is between the angelic hosts and the infernal beasts. This reading of Daniel 7 is confirmed by the dialogue between Daniel and the angel Gabriel in chapter 10. (McGinn (2003), 74, underlining added)

The author of Daniel drew from the surrounding cultures

The author [of Daniel] was clearly a learned person who could use for a new purpose theme, and genres drawn not only from wisdom, prophecy, and worship in the Jewish world but also from the cultures in which he lived. (Gowan, 32)

The book of Daniel is Hellenistic

The book of Daniel, one of the latest books, and probably Hellenistic in date. (Dever, 217)

In asking what the Hebrew Bible would look like if it were really a Hellenistic religious document, we need to recognize that we actually have such literature. First, there is the biblical book of Daniel, almost certainly written in the context of the Hasmonean wars of the 2nd century, although of course artificially set in the

Babylonian-Persian period for literary effect, as was customary in much ancient literature.

And it is no coincidence that the last chapter of Daniel clearly presupposes the Greek notion of the “immortality of the soul” totally foreign to ancient Israel, and therefore conspicuously absent in all the rest of the Hebrew Bible.

Daniel is what a “Hellenistic Bible” might look like; and it is atypical, indeed unique, in the corpus of the Hebrew Bible. (Dever, 276, underlining added)

Daniel records Alexander, the Ptolemies and the Seleucids

The coming of Alexander the Great into the Middle East is recorded in cryptic terms in 8:5, 21 and 11:3 (333-323 BC). Chapter 11 then tells the history of the rule of Ptolemies (kings of Egypt, called “king of the south”) and Seleucids (kings of Syria and Mesopotamia, called “king of the north”) until the time of the persecution of the Jews by the Seleucid king Antiochus IV Epiphanes. (Gowan, 19, underlining added)

In chapter 11, where symbolism is not used, the Ptolemies and Seleucids, whose names the reader can supply from other sources, are simply called “king of the south” and “king of the north”. (Gowan, 30, underlining added)

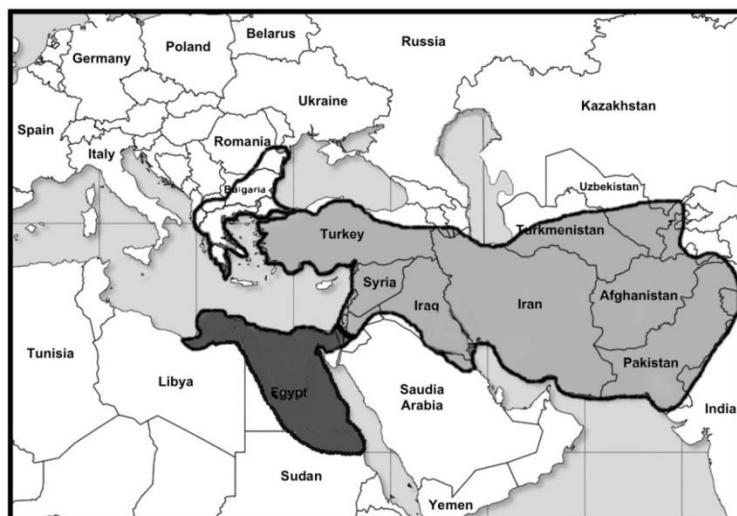


Figure 2: The Ptolemaic (“King of the South”) and Seleucid (“King of the North”) Empires

Daniel’s interest in the Seleucid Kingdom

Daniel 9 sits between two visions that have an interest in the Seleucid Kingdom, especially the reign of Antiochus IV. (Ulrich (2015), 2)

Daniel provides esoteric explanations

Few prophetic texts are more straightforward than Jeremiah’s seventy-year oracle, which promised seventy years of Babylonian world domination beginning in 605, followed by punishment of the Babylonians and a restoration of Israel. At first glance, this would seem like the last prophecy that one who lived centuries later would “consult” for contemporary insights.

However, an author who was writing between 167 and 164 would have had good reason to study that passage carefully. For Jeremiah had promised an ultimate, permanent restoration of Israel after seventy years; yet people were now—under Antiochus IV—unable to worship in Jerusalem, and under pain of death for observing basic Jewish practices. Thus, either Jeremiah’s prophecy was false, or else

what he said must have a hidden meaning—one that only close study could reveal. The author of Daniel chose the latter approach, revealing this esoteric meaning:

[Daniel 9:21-22, 24 quoted].

The author here reinterprets the prophecy of Jeremiah as if the word *shiv'im* in the phrase “seventy years” were tacitly repeated and revocalized: *shavu'im shiv'im*, “seventy weeks” of years, namely $70 \times 7 = 490$ years. Thus, the author grants this central prophecy of Jeremiah a 420-year extension!

This reading enables Jeremiah’s oracle to remain a true prophecy, and Jeremiah a prophet of truth. Certainly, the reading in Daniel is not what Jeremiah meant. Several factors that would typify later postbiblical interpretation are already visible here, particularly “creative philology,” where words need not have their usual meaning, especially if they are divine words, which are treated as special. (Brettler (2007), 214-215, underlining added)

The Book of Daniel is not meant to be literal history

It is sufficient to say here that Daniel’s main purpose is not to record detailed history but to use stories and symbols to demonstrate God’s control of history. ... When Daniel gives its accounts of “Nebuchadnezzar,” “Belshazzar,” and “Darius the Mede,” it intends to reveal the meaning of their destinies with God and the superiority of God’s kingship to theirs. It will not do to read Daniel the same way we read the writing of the history of the Roman Empire. (Lasor, 567, underlining added)

Questions arise. ... Why would God give a revelation concerning “what will happen at the end of days” (2:28) to these gentile (thus pagan) rulers rather than to the covenant people? Is it not more reasonable to assume that such revelations were directed to the Jews (Israelites) through this literary means? If the effect of the various events was so great on the kings, why have we found no evidence outside the Bible? In the case of “Darius the Mede,” whose laws could not be altered, why was not his decree (6:26f. [MT 27f.]) carried out by succeeding kings? What kind of history are these stories and the visions they record? (Lasor, 572, underlining added)

Daniel is an historical book written around 167-165 BCE

Though 537 is the last date given in the book [of Daniel], it is not the last recorded event, for the ‘prophecies’ cover the fifth, fourth and third centuries and some of the second. Since it is axiomatic that the date of the final form of a historical book cannot be earlier than the last event it includes, those who think that most of chapter 11 is recording history and not prophecy are committed to a date around 167-165 BC in Palestine. Heaton, for example, marks the change from history to prophecy at 11:40, and argues that this gives us the date of the final composition of the book.

Writing in 165/4 BC, he [the author] looked for the imminent destruction of the fourth kingdom, when God would finally take the power and reign. Whereas the writer had been accurate up to 165, from that point on he revealed ignorance of the movements of Antiochus, so betraying the fact that he was writing prophecy and not history. If this is sound reasoning the book of Daniel proves to be the only book of the Bible whose date of writing can be fixed to within a year. (Baldwin, 35, underlining added)

Some of the historical errors in Daniel

Some of the book [of Daniel’s] claims are at odds with historical fact:

- Daniel depicts the Babylonians, Medes, Persians, and Greeks as four consecutive empires (chap. 2); however, some of those states existed concurrently

- It talks about Nebuchadnezzar's being exiled from his kingdom (chap. 4); this probably reflects events involving the last king of Babylon, Nabonidus, who took a "leave of absence" from being king and lived in an oasis on the Arabian peninsula.
- It depicts Belshazzar as the last king of Babylon this is an error.

Someone living in the Babylonian exile would not have made these kinds of mistakes. In other words, Daniel's purported setting during the Babylonian exile is not plausible; the book must be from a later era. In fact, it employs Greek loanwords (e.g., sumfoniah or "bagpipes," related to the English word "symphony," appears in 3:5), which establishes that someone wrote it during the Greek period. (Brettler (2007), 212-213)

Historical accuracies and inaccuracies date the completion of the book of Daniel

The author [of Daniel] accurately refers to two campaigns Antiochus led against Egypt, but then speaks of a third, after which Antiochus was to die on the coast of Palestine (11:40-45). This did not happen. (Gowan, 19, underlining added)

The inaccuracies in the stories set in the Neo-Babylonian period, the great accuracy of the account of the affairs of the Ptolemies and Seleucids up to a point near the end of the life of Antiochus IV, and the mistaken prediction of his death, have led contemporary scholars to a conclusion about the date of the final form of the book. (Gowan, 19, underlining added)

The date of Daniel became a matter of great controversy in the nineteenth century. ... The sixth-century date continues to have defenders, but ... the efforts to explain the apparent historical errors in chapters 1-6, especially those concerning Belshazzar and Darius the Mede have not been found to be adequate, as most scholars evaluate them.

... When the author writes of the distant past, Neo-Babylonian and Persian periods, he is sometimes accurate, sometimes not, depending on the resources available to him. Memory or written record of the recent past, the Hellenistic period, enables him to describe it very accurately.

When he speaks of his own actual future, he usually does so in very general terms (as in 2:44-45; 7:26-27; 8:25b; 9:27b) and when he does get specific (11:40-45), he has no more exact knowledge of the future than any other human being—inspired or not. So Daniel can be dated more closely than any other biblical book, in 165 BC. These discussions have referred to the completion of the book and do not necessarily account for the entire history of its composition. (Gowan, 20, underlining added)

The writer of Daniel lived long after the events, and made mistakes

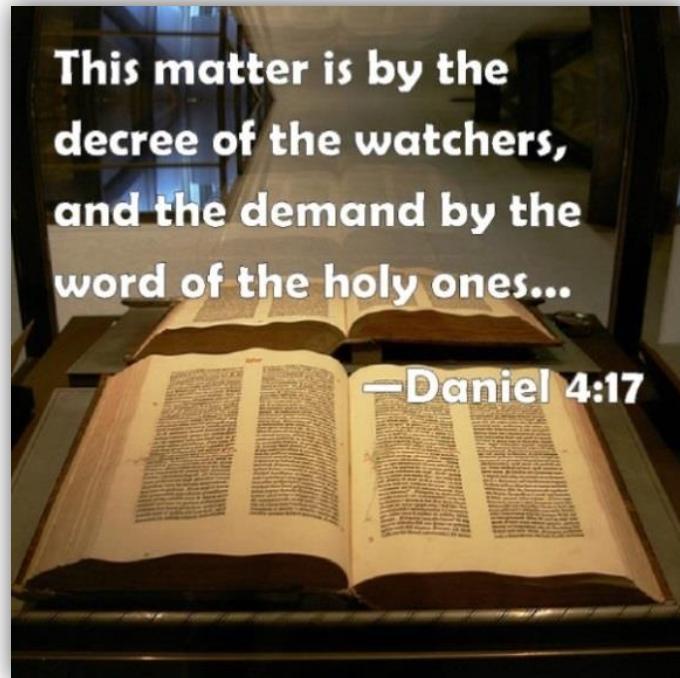
It could be that the writer lived so long after the events to which he referred that he had only a hazy knowledge of the relevant historical data and so made mistakes. The majority of scholars have assumed that the last is the most likely explanation. (Baldwin, 19, underlining added)

Nothing is known historically of a Daniel in Babylon

The first six chapters are stories about Daniel, speaking of him in the third person, and so are anonymous as to authorship. Daniel speaks in the first person in chapters 7-12, and since he dates his visions in the reigns of Belshazzar and Cyrus, the traditional view has been that this sixth-century character was responsible for the whole book. There may well have been a Daniel in exile around whom these legends grew up, although we know nothing more about him. (Gowan, 21)

There is no place in history for Daniel's "Darius the Mede"

The city of Babylon was taken over by the Persians in 539, and this leads to another problem in the book of Daniel, which says the city fell to "Darius the Mede." Chapters 6 and 9 are dated in his reign, but no such figure has been found in any of the texts from the ancient Near East, and indeed there is no place in history for the reign of such a person. Nabonidus was succeeded immediately by Cyrus the Persian, who is the last king to be named in Daniel (1:21 and 10:1). (Gowan, 19, underlining added)



In Daniel, a Watcher, a Holy One, comes down from Heaven

Another "Eye of the Heavenly King" who both observes and executes, or at least commands execution, is to be seen in the Book of Daniel, in a section that may come from the Persian period (539-333 BC) or from the following period (Early Hellenistic, 333-168 BC).

In the dream of Nebuchadnezzar, which he reports to Daniel: "There was a Watcher, a Holy One, coming down from Heaven," who ordered the great tree that he saw in his vision to be cut down. Then the "it" (the tree) becomes a "he" (Nebuchadnezzar himself) in the Watcher's proclamation: "Let his mind be changed from that of a Human, and let the mind of an animal be given to him." The Watcher concludes: "Such is the sentence proclaimed by the Watchers, the verdict announced by the Holy Ones, so that every living thing may learn that the Most High rules over Human sovereignty" (Dan. 4:13-17). (Kelly (2006), 27)

In the 2nd century BCE Book of Daniel, Watchers communicate with the King of Babylon in a dream

In Daniel 4:13-18, the king refers to watchers, which are the same as angels, such as seen in Genesis 18:16-22, Genesis 28:12-15, Genesis 32:1-2, Daniel 10:4-13, Daniel 12:1 and Zechariah 1:8-11. ...

King Nebuchadnezzar heard in his dream the watchers saying to chop down the tree, cut off the branches, scatter the fruit, and no longer shelter the beasts of the earth. The watcher further commanded that the stump should be bound with iron and bronze

bands. ... The king also reported that he heard the watcher say that the grass is to be wet with dew for grazing, and that he would graze with the beasts.

(<http://www.thesecondcomingofchrist.org/chapter4.html> (accessed 16 April 2018)

The “Anointed One” in Daniel 9:25-26 was a significant player in the affairs of his own time

One key passage [in *Daniel*] shows how, almost by accident, particular historical individuals gained a new significance in the universal scheme: [Daniel 9:25–26]. The Anointed One is, literally, a messiah, and he will be put to death. Not surprisingly, later believers have found here a ringing prophecy of the Crucifixion; the King James Bible even uses the words “Messiah, the Prince.” But the author of Daniel had no such messianic intentions. Rather, his retroactive prophecy concerns an individual who was a significant player in the affairs of his own time. (Jenkins, 121)

In Daniel, many of the righteous will be resurrected, some to everlasting life

The end-time upheavals are followed by the reign of God in which the faithful, through a resurrection of the just, will be released from suffering and rewarded: ‘And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt.’ (Daniel 12:2)

For those who had thrown their lot in with Antiochus and his corrupt regime an eternity of contempt and public humiliation awaits them. The martyrs, on the other hand, will be resurrected to enjoy a corporeal life on this earth in ageless and perfected bodies. (*Pearson*, 43)

THE CONTINUUM OF APOCALYPSES

(Charlesworth, in Boccaccini, 88-89)

- I) The first category is the apocalyptic writings and the one apocalypse in the Hebrew Scriptures:

Proto-apocalyptic

- Isaiah 24–27; 33; 34–35
- Jeremiah 33:14–26
- Ezekiel 38–39
- Joel 3:9–17
- Zechariah 12–14

Apocalypse in the Hebrew-Aramaic Scriptures

- Daniel 7–12

- II) The second category lists the early quasi-apocalypses and the full-blown apocalypses; these date from 300 BCE to the Mishnah (c. 200–225 CE). The list is impressive:

- *The Books of Enoch* (= 1 Enoch)
- *2 Enoch*
- *3 Enoch* (later with early traditions)
- *Sibylline Oracles*
- *Treatise of Shem*
- *Apocryphon of Ezekiel*
- *Apocalypse of Abraham*²⁶
- *Apocalypse of Adam*
- *2 Baruch* (Syriac)
- *3 Baruch* (Greek)
- *Apocalypse of Elchasai*
- *Apocalypse of Elijah*
- *4 Ezra*²⁷
- *Greek Apocalypse of Ezra* (second–ninth century CE)
- *Questions of Ezra* (date unclear)

THE CONTINUUM OF APOCALYPSES

(Charlesworth, in Boccaccini, 89-90)

- *Gabriel's Revelation*
- *Apocalypse of Lamech* (lost)
- *Apocalypse of Moses*
- *Apocalypse of Zephaniah*
- *Apocalypse of Zerubbabel* (Byzantine but with early traditions)
- *Apocalypse of Sedrach* (second–ninth century ce)
- 4QMessianic Apocalypse (= On Resurrection [4Q521])²⁸
- The Jewish apocalypses excerpted in the Cologne Mani Codex

III) The third category is devoted to the “Testaments”; these often contain visions, apocalypses, and apocalyptic sections; they date from the second century BCE (with interpolations [both by Jews and Christians]) to the fifth century ce. They are the following:

- *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs*
- *Testament of Job*
- *Testaments of the Three Patriarchs (Abraham, Isaac, Jacob)*
- *Testament of Moses*
- *Testament of Solomon*
- *Testament of Adam*

IV) The fourth category is the Jewish dimension of the Apocalypse of John in the New Testament.

Depending on the date of the traditions preserved in them, these apocalyptic compositions and “apocalypses” are fundamental to understanding the world of early Judaism (300 BCE to 200 ce) in which Paul lived and thought.

THE DEAD SEA SCROLLS (DSS)

The Dead Sea community numbered about 4,000

Although the Essene community was relatively small, it should not be underestimated. After all, according to Josephus (Ant. 18.20) and Philo (Good Person 75), their followers counted about four thousand nationwide. (Evans (2019), 197)

The Qumran community had no single, stable text

The Dead Sea Scrolls community considered authoritative a Bible of sorts, yet they did not have a single stable text for its books. That ancient desert community still proceeded to expound their texts—sometimes in versions that are quite different from those found in (what later crystallized as) the Masoretic text.

In fact, in at least one case, they seem to be interpreting two different versions of the same verse. In other words, just because they believed a certain work to be holy and inspired did not imply that it had to exist in a single version. (Brettler (2007), 277, underlining added)

Qumran had no list of sacred titles

The Community's attitude to the biblical canon, i.e. the list of books considered as Holy Writ, is less easy to define, as no such list of titles has survived. (Vermes (2011), 16, underlining added)

Extreme fluidity of the DSS texts

The Qumran finds have also substantially altered our views concerning the *text* and *canon of the Bible*. ... The Qumran scriptural scrolls, and especially the fragments, are characterized by extreme fluidity: they often differ not just from the customary wording but also, when the same book is attested by several manuscripts, among themselves.

In fact, some of the fragments echo what later became the Masoretic text; others resemble the Hebrew underlying the Greek Septuagint; yet others recall the Samaritan Torah or Pentateuch, the only part of the Bible which the Jews of Samaria accepted as Scripture. Some Qumran fragments represent a mixture of these, or something altogether different.

It should be noted, however, that none of these variations affects the scriptural message itself. In short, while largely echoing the contents of biblical books, Qumran has opened an entirely new era in the textual history of the Hebrew Scriptures. (Vermes (2011), 16, underlining added)

Qumran used various editions of several books

The text of Isaiah was known in a rather stable form and the Qumran text of Minor Prophets coincides substantially with that of the MT. On the other hand, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and the historical books were transmitted in various editions. 4QJosh^a, 4QJudg^a, 4QSam^a, 4QJer^{bd} and the Old Greek of these books and of Kings and Ezekiel (LXX⁹⁶⁷) attest editions which differ from the MT.

As for the Psalms, this book shows a remarkable textual homogeneity, all the more surprising since the Qumran manuscripts of the Psalms emphasize the complexity of its editorial history. If the stability of the text of a book indicates its antiquity and its recognition as canonical, the books of the Pentateuch, Isaiah, Minor Prophets, and Psalms comprise an older and recognized nucleus of the biblical canon. ...

The number of manuscripts preserved of each biblical book in the Qumran caves and their state of conservation tell us a great deal about how highly they were regarded in

the Qumran period. According to C. Perrot, “The scrolls of the Pentateuch, Minor Prophets and Psalms found at Qumran stand out easily from the other scrolls by their height or the carefulness of their script.” The book of Isaiah may be included among these. ... The best represented books are those of the Pentateuch, Isaiah, Minor Prophets, and Psalms, together with important sectarian writings as the book of *Jubilees* (4QJub^d and 4QpapJub^b), *Genesis Apocryphon*, and *Hodayot*, well kept in the important cave 1 (1QapGen and 1QH^a). (McDonald (2002), 136, 137, underlining added)

The Temple Scroll and the Book of Jubilees were cited as authoritative

Quite possibly a “largely closed” set of texts that comprised the Bible, mostly identical to our current Bible, also existed among a Jewish sect that lived in the Judean Desert, whose surviving library is what we now call the Dead Sea Scrolls. This community may not have had a notion of canon; at least, they had no special term for such a thing. However, in their interpretive literature they did tend to cite particular books. Furthermore, certain books are extant in many copies, indicating that they were especially important to the community.

Of the books that are part of the classical rabbis’ Bible, only the Book of Esther is missing among the Dead Sea Scrolls that we have today; thus, the community probably did not consider that book authoritative. In contrast, other Dead Sea Scroll texts cite the Temple Scroll and the Book of Jubilees as authoritative. Furthermore, the community kept a large number of manuscripts of both works.

Thus our term “canonical” Bible seems anachronistic for this group in the pre-rabbinic period. Nevertheless, it is safe to say that its set of authoritative books largely, but not completely, overlapped what would eventually become biblical for the rabbis. (Brettler (2007), 275, underlining added)

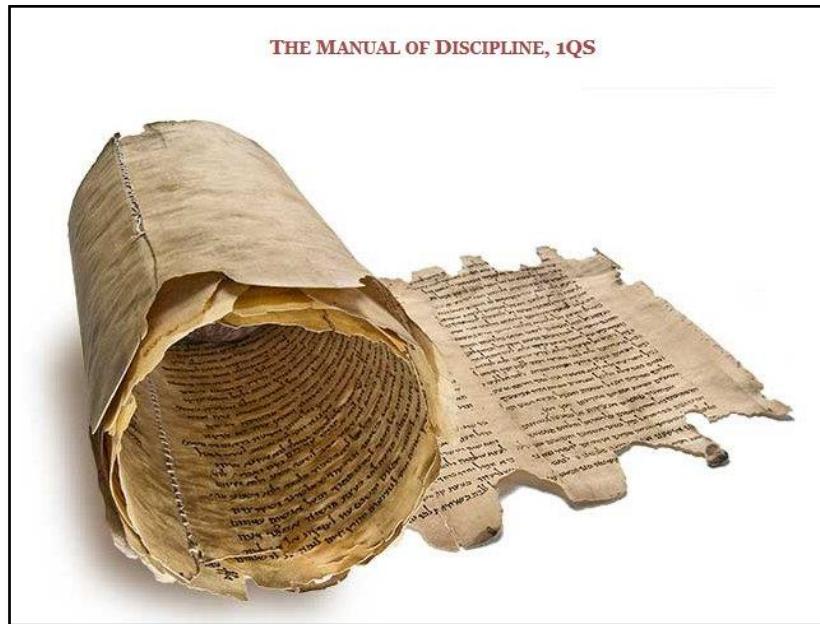


Figure 3: *The Manual of Discipline, Qumran*

Scrolls, but no book or codex

Longer compositions were written on scrolls, on one side of the sheets only, some of them numbered, which were subsequently sewn together. Papyrus documents were often reused, with a different text inscribed on the verso. Short works such as letters

were recorded on small pieces of writing material: leather, papyrus, wood or potsherd.

By contrast, no book or codex, with pages covered with script on both sides and bound together, has come to light at Qumran, or in any other Judaean Desert site. (Vermes (2011), 15, underlining added)

DSS and the NT reconstructed Israel's story

In [second temple Judaism] material we find various reconstructions of the story of Israel. This includes both the DSS and the NT, the former because they presented their community as true Jews who anticipated the restoration of the nation; the latter because, with the exception of Luke, its authors were also Jews retelling the story of Israel the way their master did. (Pate, 54, underlining added)

The Dead Sea Scrolls are important for understanding the New Testament's use of Old Testament Scripture

Not long after the publication of several texts, it became apparent that the Dead Sea Scrolls were important for understanding the New Testament's use of Old Testament Scripture. (Evans (2019), 97)

Essene and Christian use of the Hebrew Scriptures

Both the New Testament and the Community *Rule* (1QS) cite Isaiah chapters 28 and 40, but for very different purposes. According to Isaiah 28:16, God says: "Behold, I am laying in Zion a foundation a stone, a tested stone, a precious cornerstone, of a sure foundation." Isaiah 40:3 signals the end of the exile by a voice crying, "In the wilderness prepare the way of the LORD, make straight in the desert a highway for our God." The exhortation is for the people to construct a highway in the desert, and on that road to return to Jerusalem.

The Qumran text applies Isaiah 28:16 (paraphrased) and 40:3 to the Council of the Community and also to the community at large. According to 1QS (col. 8), the Council of the Community shall be "... that tried wall, that 'precious cornerstone,' whose foundations shall neither rock nor sway in their place" (Isaiah 28:16). ...

In contrast, the New Testament looks to Jesus as the rock and the new Exodus. The Gospel of Mark begins with a composite quotation from Malachi 3:1 and Isaiah 40:3 applied to John the Baptist and Jesus (Mark 1:2-3). ... The focus no longer is the return of the exiles, but is John the Baptist himself.

... In Romans 9:33 Paul changes the point of Isaiah 28:16 concerning a secure foundation and cornerstone for Zion by combining it with Psalm 118:22 concerning a stumbling stone. ... Isaiah 28:16 and Psalm 118:22 are also combined in 1 Peter 2:4-8. There, the stumbling stone is Jesus, and the metaphor explains his rejection by Israel. Psalm 118 is also used in the Synoptic Gospels (Mark 12:10; Matthew 21:42; Luke 20:17) and in Acts 4:11; in all cases it is an apologetic explanation for the rejection by most Jews of the proclamation of Jesus' messianic identity. (Chilton, 391)

Real relationship of the DSS and the NT

Turning to the real relationship between the Scrolls and the New Testament, this can be presented under a threefold heading.

(1) We note (a) fundamental similarities of language (both in the Scrolls and in the New Testament the faithful are called 'sons of light'); (b) ideology (both communities considered themselves as the true Israel, governed by twelve leaders, and expected the imminent arrival of the Kingdom of God); (c) attitude to the Bible (both considered their own history as a fulfilment of the words of the Prophets). However,

all correspondences such as these may be due to the Palestinian religious atmosphere of the epoch, without entailing any direct influence.

(2) More specific features, such as monarchic administration (i.e. single leaders, overseers at Qumran, bishops in Christian communities) and the practice of religious communism in the strict discipline of the sect and at least in the early days in the Jerusalem church (cf. Acts ii, 44-5), would suggest a direct causal connection. If so, it is likely that the young and inexperienced church modelled itself on the by then well-tried Essene society.

(3) In the study of the historical Jesus, the charismatic-eschatological aspects of the Scrolls have provided the richest gleanings for comparison. For example, the Prayer of Nabonidus, known since the mid-1950s, and concerned with the story of Nabonidus' cure by a Jewish exorcist who forgave his sins, provides the most telling parallel to the Gospel account of the healing of a paralytic in Capernaum whose sins Jesus declared forgiven.

The second example is the so-called Resurrection fragment (4Q521). In this poem, the age of the eschatological kingdom is characterized, with the help of Psalm cxvi, 7-8 and Isaiah lxi, 1, by the liberation of captives, the curing of the blind, the straightening of the bent, the healing of the wounded, the raising of the dead and the proclamation of the good news to the poor. Likewise, in the Gospels, victory over disease and the devil is viewed as the sure sign of the initial manifestation of God's reign (Luke xi, 20; Matt. xi, 4-5 cited). (Vermes (2011), 22-23, underlining added)

The Dead Sea Scrolls and the origins of Christianity

The Dead Sea Scrolls (hereafter DSS) have emerged as a key player in the question of the origins of Christianity. ... Both communities—Christian and Essene (most probably the people who wrote the Scrolls)—are rooted in Jewish apocalypticism and therefore share a common legacy of ideas. (Pate, 18, underlining added)

THE DEAD SEA SCROLLS AND DANIEL

Although Daniel was written about 165 BCE, it was quickly quoted in writings at Qumran

Was the book of Daniel quoted or referred to in other writings at Qumran? Since Daniel was not written until about 165 BCE it would be surprising to find it used in this way—yet this is precisely the case. 11QMelchizedek, for example, refers to the “Anointed of the Spirit, of whom Daniel spoke” (Dan 9:25-26). (Abegg, 484)

The Dead Sea Scrolls are nearer in time to the original Book of Daniel than any other surviving book in the Hebrew Bible

Because of the ravages of time, the elements and humans, none of these finds preserves a complete copy of the book of Daniel. However, between them they preserve a substantial amount of it. These scrolls occupy a special place among the Dead Sea Scrolls, because they are nearer in time to the original composition than any other surviving manuscript of a book in the Hebrew Bible. (Evans (1997), 42)

The copies of Daniel at Qumran are the closest to the time when it was written

Of all the biblical books found at Qumran, these copies of Daniel are closest in date to when the book itself was written. (Abegg, 482)

Since Daniel was compiled later than any other book in the Hebrew Bible (about 165 BCE), these scrolls show that it was becoming popular and, widely used at Qumran only forty years after being written. (Abegg, 482)

The Book of Daniel was read and copied at Qumran just a few decades after its composition

A few decades after its composition, the Book of Daniel was read and copied at Qumran. This can be seen from the preserved fragments of the book, the earliest of which is dated to the late second century BCE (*P. W. Flint, ‘The Daniel Tradition at Qumran’, in J. J. Collins and P. W. Flint (eds.), The Book of Daniel: Composition and Reception.*) (Hägerland, 154)

Daniel quickly achieved prominence in an apocalyptic community waiting in the desert for the imminent End of the Age

It is not difficult to understand why this late book had achieved such prominence in so short a time if we consider its contents and the outlook of the Qumran community. An apocalyptic community such as they were, waiting in the desert for the end of the age, would have found such a book very appealing and significant. With its focus on the end of history, the triumph of good over evil, God’s coming kingdom, and the vindication of those who remain righteous and faithful, Daniel was no doubt essential reading for many of the Qumran covenanters. (Abegg, 485)

The Qumran community apparently identified closely with Daniel’s story of perseverance under foreign rule

Writings attributed to or associated with Daniel are remarkably well attested among the Dead Sea Scrolls. ... Members of the Qumran community apparently identified closely with Daniel’s story of perseverance under the persecution of foreign rule. (Evans (1997), 2-3)

The community of the Dead Sea Scrolls held the Book of Daniel in high regard

Table 2: Contents of the Daniel Scrolls in Biblical Order

1:10-17	1QDan ^a	7:15-19, 21-23(?)	4QDan ^d
1:16-20	4QDan ^a	8:1-5	4QDan ^a
2:2-6	1QDan ^a	8:1-8, 13-16	4QDan ^b
2:9-11, 19-49	4QDan ^a	8:16-17(?), 20-21(?)	pap6QDan
3:1-2	4QDan ^a	9:12-14, 15-16(?), 17(?)	4QDan ^e
3:22-30	1QDan ^b	10:5-9, 11-16, 21	4QDan ^c
3:23-25	4QDan ^d	10:8-16	pap6QDan
4:5(?)-9, 12-14	4QDan ^d	10:16-20	4QDan ^a
4:29-30	4QDan ^a	11:1-2, 13-17, 25-29	4QDan ^c
5:5-7, 12-14, 16-19	4QDan ^a	11:13-16	4QDan ^a
5:10-12, 14-16, 19-22	4QDan ^b	11:33-36, 38	pap6QDan
6:8-22, 27-29	4QDan ^b	misc. fragments	4QDan ^a
7:1-6, 11(?), 26-28	4QDan ^b	one fragment	4QDan ^b
7:5-7, 25-28	4QDan ^a	misc. fragments	pap6QDan

Every chapter of Daniel is represented in these manuscripts, except for Daniel 12. However, this does not mean that the book lacked the final chapter at Qumran, since Dan 12:10 is quoted in the *Florilegium* (4Q174), which explicitly tells us that it is written in “the book of Daniel, the Prophet.”⁶

(Evans (1997), 43)

Eight manuscripts of Daniel have been found at Qumran

Eight Daniel manuscripts were found at Qumran: two in Cave 1, five in Cave 4, and one in Cave 6. Unfortunately, none is complete due to the ravages of time, but between them they preserve a substantial amount of the book of Daniel. All eight scrolls were copied in the space of 175 years, ranging from 125 BCE to 50 CE. (Abegg, 482)

Some related scrolls contain new stories surrounding Daniel that have only now come to light in the Dead Sea Scrolls. (Abegg, 482)

Some variants between Daniel scrolls are significant

To say that the Daniel scrolls contain a book like the one found in the Hebrew Bible does not mean that they contain exactly the same text. On the contrary, readings for individual words or groups of words frequently differ. ... Many of these readings are minor, with little or no effect on the meaning or interpretation of the book—but some are more significant. (Abegg, 483-484)

In Daniel 10:16, where the Hebrew Bible reads “one in the likeness of the sons of men,” but pap6QDan most likely agrees with the Septuagint’s “something in the likeness of a human hand.” In this case, the editors of the New International Version decided to retain the reading of the Masoretic Text (as do other English translations) but considered the variant reading important enough to merit an extensive footnote. (Abegg, 484)

Seven of the scrolls of Daniel are in the shorter form of the Jewish and Protestant Bibles

Seven of the Daniel scrolls contained the book in the shorter form found in Jewish and Protestant Bibles—not the longer form known from Roman Catholic and Orthodox Bibles. (Abegg, 482-483)

Jewish and Protestant Bibles contain Daniel in twelve chapters, whereas Roman Catholic and Orthodox Bibles have a longer version that includes the Prayer of Azariah, the Song of the Three Young Men, Susanna, and Bel and the Dragon. (Abegg, 482)

The Dead Sea Scrolls of Daniel have no *major* disagreements against the Masoretic Text, although they preserve interesting variants

Despite the fragmentary state of most of the Daniel scrolls, they reveal no major disagreements against the Masoretic Text, although individual readings differ on occasion. We may conclude that seven scrolls originally contained the entire book of Daniel in a form very much like that found in the received text. ... Even though the Daniel scrolls are similar to the Masoretic Text, do they contain any “interesting” readings — which for biblical scholars means variants, or readings that differ from the received text? Between them the eight scrolls preserve many variants, of which some are minor and others more important. (Evans (1997), 43)

SCRIPTURES RENDERED IN GREEK (THE SEPTUAGINT, LXX)

In the third century BCE, the Hebrew text began to be formally translated into Greek

An Italian proverb, “A translator, a traitor,” points to the difficulties inherent in translating material written in one language into another. The literature of ancient Israel is written in Hebrew, with a smattering of the related language Aramaic. In the third century BCE, the Hebrew text began to be formally translated into Greek, the predominant language of the Mediterranean cultures following the conquests of Alexander the Great in 333 BCE. The Greek translation of the Hebrew text, along with the deuterocanonical Greek texts, is called the Septuagint, from a Greek term meaning “seventy,” usually abbreviated LXX. (Knight, 48)

The Septuagint summarised a number of translations for the Diaspora

The Septuagint is the sum of a number of separate translations, arising out of the same cultural milieu, namely the Jewish diaspora in Egypt, and particularly in Alexandria. (Parker, 34)

The Septuagint was not the only early Greek translation

The Septuagint was not the only Greek translation to be made in antiquity. Six others are known from the great edition of the Greek Old Testament by the third-century Christian Alexandrian scholar Origen, the Hexapla (see below). Modern research has also found more than one version of the Septuagint text of some books. It would again be anachronistic to attribute to these different versions a fixed and unchanging wording. (Parker, 35)

The Greek translation appears to help the large numbers of Jews living in foreign countries

The Greek translation appears to have been, at least in the first instance, a sort of resource or tool intended to help the large numbers of Jews living in foreign countries gain access to the original Hebrew text.

The work was similarly not intended as a distinguished and artistic example of Greek literature. The average cultivated Greek would have been aware that the Septuagint was to a large extent “translation Greek”. (Lust, 214)

The Torah of the Septuagint (LXX) was translated as early as 250 BC while the remainder was translated some time before 132 BC

The most enduring monument to the Hellenizing tendencies of this era was the translation of the Hebrew OT into the Greek vernacular. ...

The language of the LXX is more like Egyptian Greek than it is like Jerusalemitic Greek, according to some. ...

The Torah was translated into Greek first as early as 250 BC, but the rest of the canonical books of the OT were likely translated sometime before 132 BC. This is because a Greek translation of the “Law, the Prophets, and the rest of the books”— a common designation of the Hebrew OT— is mentioned in the Prologue to Ecclesiasticus. (Kaiser, (2016), Kindle Locations 15854-15855, 15873-15874, 15876-15878)

Experts often have opposing views on when and how the Bible became a book

The origin of the writings in the Hebrew Bible is a controversial subject that has long fascinated and divided laypeople and academics. Even experts, including Hebraists and biblicalists, often have opposing views on when and how the Bible became a book,

and about the circumstances of its writing, revising, and copying by many people in different times and places. With the hope of arriving at more certain conclusions about the Bible's production, and persuading others that they are right, scholars have expended a lot of energy trying to establish the absolute and relative dates of the biblical writings using a variety of benchmarks. Language has figured prominently in those efforts, as have literary, conceptual, and other criteria. (Rezetko, 405)

The Septuagint canon and the Hebrew canon are different

The Septuagint has a quite different construction than the Hebrew canon and [it] contains more books. (Parker, 37)

THE SEPTUAGINT SHINES A LIGHT ON EARLY HEBREW TEXTS

The Septuagint provides evidence for the wording of the Hebrew

Because there was no point in antiquity at which the Hebrew texts became fixed, the Septuagint is important for two reasons. In the first place, it provides evidence for the wording of the Hebrew copies from which the translation was made. These copies were much older than any copies surviving today. The Septuagint is therefore important in understanding what the texts were like in the third to first centuries BCE. (Parker, 34)

The Septuagint preserved readings that are older and arguably more authentic

During the third century BCE, Jewish scholars translated biblical texts into the Greek version known as the Septuagint. Because it is a translation, one would assume that its readings are inferior to those of the Hebrew or Aramaic, but that is not always so. In many cases, the Septuagint preserved readings that are older and arguably more authentic. (Jenkins, ix)

The Septuagint provides evidence for the changing interpretation of the text

Not all the differences between the Septuagint and the Hebrew copies reflect differences between ancient and later Hebrew copies. Some reflect the second way in which the Septuagint is important, namely as evidence for the changing interpretation of the text. Of course a translation always betrays the translator's understanding of the text. But the Septuagint also contains thousands of significant changes, some of which are expansions, abbreviations or rearrangements, as well as a different canon of books, and many details throughout the text.

It is important to bear in mind that while the Septuagint as a *translation* was produced in the third century BCE, the *copies* which we have are not so old. A fourth-century CE copy such as Codex Sinaiticus will not always represent accurately the intentions of a translator of the book of Genesis, working five hundred years earlier. We can only access the Hebrew writing by means of the later copies, and we can only access the Septuagint by means of the later copies. That is all that we possess. That this is a serious issue. (Parker, 35)

EDITING OF THE SEPTUAGINT (LXX)

The Septuagint (LXX) actively interpreted the Hebrew text

The Septuagint does more than simply select Greek words that closely resemble the original Hebrew terms: It actively interprets the Hebrew text. (Simkovich, 209)

The Greek (LXX) text may reflect an earlier stage

One may observe a growing awareness of the possibility that the Greek witnesses may preserve an older stage of the textual development than the Masoretic text. (von Weissenberg, 3)

The Hebrew Scriptures, the Septuagint translation (Greek), and the targums (Aramaic) differ considerably

The Hebrew Scriptures differ considerably at times from the LXX or ancient Greek translation, and from the targums or Aramaic translations (most of which were made later than the LXX). There is evidence that Matthew and John may have known Aramaic and/or Hebrew, while Mark and Luke may have known only Greek. (Brown (1994), 5)

The Greek Septuagint and the Hebrew Masoretic Text exhibit substantial differences

Differences between the LXX/OG and the MT are not limited to individual variant readings, for the Greek and Hebrew texts of some books exhibit substantial differences in the content and sequence of the material. For instance, the Greek version of Jeremiah is significantly shorter than MT Jeremiah. Moreover, the contents of the Greek form of the book are found in a sequence different from the more familiar sequence of the Hebrew version. (Jobes, 188)

Differences in length and the sequence of content are found in the Greek versions of Joshua and Ezekiel and in one of the Greek versions of Esther. Certain chapters of other books show analogous patterns of shorter length and a different sequence of material in the Greek. For instance, the story of David and Goliath in 1 Samuel in Greek contains only thirty-nine of the eighty-eight verses found in the M[asoretic] T[ext]. (Jobes, 191)

Considerable textual variation in the transmission of Jewish Greek scriptures

It has long been acknowledged that considerable textual variation had developed in the transmission of Jewish Greek scriptures by the time Christianity emerged. (Kraft, *Christian Transmission*, 219)

The Septuagint included books called the Apocrypha (“hidden away”, or “esoteric”)

Over time, the Septuagint came to include a collection of books called the Apocrypha, a word derived from the Greek adjective apokryphos, which means something like “hidden away,” or “esoteric.” This term may allude to the fact that the books of the Apocrypha were not canonized in the Hebrew Bible, although some of them were popular and well circulated among Jews in the late Second Temple period. (Simkovich, 209)

The Hebrew and Greek texts of Jeremiah differ significantly

The Hebrew and Greek texts of the book [of Jeremiah] differ significantly. The LXX [Septuagint] text is one-seventh shorter than the MT [Masoretic Text] and also has the oracles against the nations in the middle (between 25:13 and 15) rather than at the end

(chs. 46-51). Evidence from Qumran suggests that LXX was translated from a short Hebrew original different from that behind MT.

Given how greatly LXX and MT diverge, the final book may once have existed in more than one form, or both MT and LXX may ultimately derive from a common Hebrew original. As for the order of the oracles, while most scholars favor the priority of the LXX arrangement, a good case can be made that the MT's order came first. In sum, the editorial and textual history which gave us the present book (and most OT books!) remains a mystery. (Lasor, 340-341)

At least four other Greek versions of the Hebrew Bible were circulating

The Septuagint was not the only Greek translation of the Hebrew Bible circulating in the Greco-Roman period. ... There were at least four other Greek versions as well. (Simkovich, 210)

LXX versions often preceded the proto-Masoretic Text

The LXX versions of biblical books often reflect recensions that precede the proto-MT. (Carr (2011), 170)

LXX recensions of biblical books experienced developments that post-date MT counterparts

This does not mean, it must be stressed, that the LXX (and/or Samaritan Pentateuch or non-MT Qumran manuscripts) in these and other cases always or even generally preserves the earlier text. On the contrary, we have ample evidence that the LXX recensions of biblical books (and other early textual traditions) experienced their own developments, often containing elements (e.g., the story of the three guards in Esd 3:1-5:6) that post-date their MT counterparts. (Carr (2011), 175)

The editing of Greek Esther

The Greek translation of Esther that is preserved in the Septuagint portrays Esther as being considerably more pious and sensitive to her Jewish identity than her character in the biblical version. (Simkovich, 247)

Greek Esther features five other additions to Hebrew Esther that add elements of adventure and divine provenance. ... The author of Greek Esther wanted to supplement Hebrew Esther by adding information that is lacking in the Hebrew version. (Simkovich, 249)

THE SEPTUAGINT IS NOT A LITERAL TRANSLATION

The books of the Septuagint are not equally literal translations

Not all of the books of the Septuagint are equally literal translations, nor are they necessarily based on the text we find printed in our contemporary Hebrew Bibles. The discoveries at Qumran have taught us that a variety of slightly variant versions of the biblical documents were in circulation at the time of Christ. Every translation, moreover, always represents an interpretation (Lust, 215)

The Septuagint (LXX) is at times a literal translation, at other times it is a commentary

The Septuagint is the ancient translation of the Hebrew Bible into Greek. ... The order of the books of the Bible is different in the Septuagint; the Greek Bible has been reorganized in more complicated categories, including sections for historical books, wisdom, and prophecy, as well as the Torah (first five books of Moses).

Although the translation sometimes is quite literal, in other places it is as much a commentary as a translation. Some scholars hold that the readings of the Septuagint reflect the actual meaning of the original Hebrew, while the received Jewish text, the so-called Masoretic Text (MT), is a departure from it. (Segal (2004), 363)

The Septuagint translation is not slavishly literal, and is best described as dynamic equivalence

Though the Septuagint translation tends to be literal by modern standards, it is not slavishly literal, and the relation to the *Vorlage* is often best described as dynamic equivalence. ... It is evident that the Hebrew *Vorlage* often differed from the standardized Hebrew text of MT. This makes the Septuagint an important source for the restoration of corrupt passages in MT. However, this can be a hazardous business, because, although retroversion of the Greek into Hebrew can often be regarded as certain, there are times when careful attention to the translator's style and translation habits is required to avoid false deductions. (Brooke, 5)

The Septuagint does not have a consistent viewpoint

The Septuagint version is not a unity and does not reflect a consistent viewpoint across all its books. (Jobes, 102)

Care is needed when approaching the Septuagint (LXX) for the theological developments

One must be fully aware of the complexities involved in approaching the LXX as a source for the development of theological ideas. (Jobes, 341)

The character of the LXX may minimize its usefulness as a window into Jewish thought at that time

The transmission, preservation, and development of theological concepts such as messianism and resurrection no doubt occurred during the Hellenistic period, but the character of the LXX may minimize its usefulness as a window into Jewish thought at that time. Although it may seem natural to expect the LXX to reflect theological perspectives, one must always remember that the people who produced the Greek texts were translators. They had the well-defined task of producing a translation of an existing text, the Hebrew Scriptures, not of writing a treatise on the eschatology of their day. ...

Commentaries and midrashim on the Greek Scriptures produced in the Hellenistic period would provide a better window into the development of theological ideas during that time. (Jobes, 343)

LATER APPLICATIONS OF THE SEPTUAGINT

There are differences between the Septuagint and English versions

The differences between the Septuagint and the English versions ... consist of differences in the number and order of the books and differences in wording. In addition, distinctive wording of the Septuagint in Codex Sinaiticus makes the reading of the Old Testament a very different experience from reading other forms of the Septuagint, let alone reading the Hebrew Massoretic Text.

Some of the distinctive features in Codex Sinaiticus are caused by the scribes, some are older. It is not always possible to tell how a particular wording arose, since we do not always know what the 'original' text of the Septuagint was. (Parker, 93-94)

The Septuagint ceased to exert any influence in Jewish circles

After 70 CE only [the Masoretic Text] was left in Jewish hands. The [Septuagint Translations] no longer exerted any influence in Jewish circles since it was now in Christian hands, [the Samaritan Pentateuch] was with the Samaritan community, and the Qumran scrolls were hidden in caves. Other scrolls may have been circulating in Palestine, the likes of those that were imported to Qumran. However, we do not hear about such scrolls. (Tov (2012), 179)

The Jews never formally fixed the LXX

From the beginning of the church, the LXX was the Christians' Bible, and the Jews never formally fixed what went into it. (McDonald (2007), 206)

SECOND-TEMPLE LITERATURE ATTRIBUTED TO PAUL

Strictly speaking, although the four Gospels of the New Testament were written in the shadow and aftermath—the context—of Second-Temple Judaism, the fact that they were selected in the following centuries from among any number of writings, speaks more of those latter centuries. The attribution of a Gospel (to “Mark”, “Matthew”; etc.) is a function of the latter Gentile centuries, not a commentary on the range of views present among the first-century Jewish sects that claimed allegiance to Yeshua.

There is no indication whether Paul was held in any regard during the first century. The overwhelming use of his writings in the Christian Scriptures is testimony to the dominance of the Paulines of later centuries. His correspondence makes it clear that he was faced by other voices who likewise spoke of The Christ. His views, his opinions, his interpretations were not the only expressions promoted during the latter days of the Second-Temple period and immediately following. The selection of Paul’s letters was based on whether they aligned with the views that had evolved in the latter centuries.

Gospels were written in the face of rising Rabbinic Judaism. The Gospel according to John is a fine example, where they used their Gospel to illustrate their community’s experiences at the hand of the religious authorities over their high Christology. Another example is the testing of Christ by “satan”, meaning thereby the Pharisees.

While putting forth their own communities’ arguments against their contemporary Rabbinic opponents onto Jesus’ lips, the Gospel writers retained their position that Jesus’ Coming and the eschatological consummation of the Ages was imminent, within the time of their own generation.

Much or the arguments over authorship necessarily involves possibilities and probabilities

Because our knowledge is so limited, much of the argumentation about authorship ... necessarily involves possibilities and probabilities. It is very difficult to be fully confident about very much. We are out of the realm of proof and are required instead to depend on cumulative arguments. (Hagner, 433)

Other letters in the NT possibly are pseudonymous. Indeed, in regard to the seven Catholic Epistles there is hardly a single book for which the question of authenticity does not arise, even if it can be confidently answered. The letter in the corpus that is almost universally challenged is 2 Peter, which many scholars regard as the last document of the NT to be written, as late as the middle of the second century. (Hagner 432-433)

There is no need to think that the acceptance of pseudonymity in the NT in any sense threatens or undermines the authority and canonicity of such writings. (Hagner, 433-434)

Paul wrote seven of the thirteen New Testament letters attributed to him

The thirteen Epistles/Letters that bear Paul’s name, divided into two batches: the undisputed seven most likely written by Paul himself, arranged in plausible chronological order; then the six deuteroPauline works possibly or probably written by Pauline disciples. (Brown (1997), Introduction, ix)

Paul’s seven letters chronologically: I Thessalonians, Galatians, Philippians, Philemon, I and II Corinthians, and Romans

Paul produced the earliest surviving Christian documents: I Thess, Gal, Phil, Phm, I and II Cor, and Rom. There is a somewhat different tone and emphasis to each, corresponding to what Paul perceived as the needs of the respective community at a particular time. This fact should make us cautious about generalizations in reference to Pauline theology. Paul was

not a systematic theologian but an evangelizing preacher, giving strong emphasis at a certain moment to one aspect of faith in Jesus, at another moment to another aspect—indeed to a degree that may seem to us inconsistent. (Brown (1997), 6)

Only seven letters attributed to Paul are widely accepted as authored by him

Only seven of the thirteen letters are widely accepted by scholars as authentic letters of Paul. Most seriously doubted are the Pastoral Epistles (1– 2 Timothy and Titus). Considerable doubt also exists, in descending order of degree, for Ephesians, Colossians, and 2 Thessalonians. The reasons for doubt concern not only the observable differences in the style of Greek but also the vocabulary and content, not only because of the presence of material not found in other Pauline Letters but also because of the lack of the usual Pauline language and emphases.

In general, most of these doubted letters seem to reflect a situation and perspective rather later than Paul's. Although the stylistic differences might well be accounted for by the use of different secretaries, the differences in content and especially perspective are more problematic. They seem to be too substantial to be attributed merely to secretaries, even secretaries with considerable freedom in putting the dictated material into final form.

The argument for pseudonymous Pauline Letters is a cumulative one. The non-Pauline authorship of these doubted letters is, of course, no more provable than Pauline authorship. As with the question of dates, we are never, or hardly ever, in the realm of what can be proved or demonstrated. At best, here as elsewhere, we deal with historical probabilities. Thus, plenty of room for disagreement should be allowed. (Hagner, 428)

The Pastorals and Ephesians may be grouped as Deutero-Pauline

In the case of the Pastoral Epistles and Ephesians, the challenges that have been mounted are of sufficient strength to warrant grouping them, at least tentatively, in a category known as Deutero-Pauline. We have very little to lose in allowing a category of Deutero-Pauline letters. If it happens that some other persons have written these four, or even six, documents in the name of Paul, we are not talking about forgery or deception. (Hagner, 428)

The deutero-letters represent Paul in their own way

The fact is that the Pauline corpus, with deutero-letters as well as without them, stands under the banner of the authoritative Paul. From a canonical perspective, the corpus as it stands represents Paul, even if the Deutero-Pauline letters require special awareness and care when they are used to speak of Paul himself. It is not unfair to say that the deutero-letters represent Paul in their own way as much as the authentic letters. But it is indeed Paul whom they represent, and therefore to that extent they involve no deception. (Hagner, 429)

Some of Paul's letters have not survived

Letters written by Paul or in his name to the Corinthians (II Cor 2:4) and to Laodicea (Col 4:16) have not survived. Moreover, some letters purporting to be by Paul were to be discounted according to II Thess 2:2, even if scholars today have no idea how such letters were distinct from the deuteroPauline letters. (Brown (1997), 10)

Paul cited the LXX, employing creative exegesis

Paul cites passages from the Greek Jewish Scriptures that differ from the [MT]. One is more likely to encounter a statement similar to that of Bauckham that the NT writers “developed their fresh understanding of the christological identity of God *through*

creative exegesis of the Hebrew Scriptures." (McDonald (2007), 236, underlining added)

Paul based his work on his spiritual visions

Paul, the earliest Christian writer, based his work on his spiritual visions. (Segal (2004), 441)

The authorship of the Pastoral Epistles is disputed

One of the most difficult problems of the NT is the question of the authorship of the Pastorals. ... At this point, and with the limited information available to us, no one is able to speak of proof. Here, as so often, we are at best in the realm of possibilities and probabilities, not certainties. It appears that good arguments can be put forward on both sides— Pauline or non-Pauline authorship— and judgments are therefore bound to differ. The arguments against Pauline authorship— the position that I [Donald Hagner] take as having the probabilities on its side— are cumulative. (Hagner, 614)

The authorship of the letter to the Ephesians is disputed

It seems natural and obvious to conclude that this glorious letter-treatise [to the Ephesians] was written by Paul— indeed, could only have been written by Paul, unless there was in the early church a greater writer and theologian than Paul himself. Yet there are a number of reasons why a majority of NT scholars have come to doubt, if not outright deny, the Pauline authorship of Ephesians. (Hagner, 585)

After the Pastoral Epistles, Ephesians is the most disputed letter in the Pauline corpus. ... The question of the author of Ephesians is one of the most difficult in NT scholarship. Good arguments can be mounted both for and against Pauline authorship. Often it is possible to explain the same data quite differently. And when one introduces the idea of a secretary involved in the writing of the letter, the options multiply. Again it needs to be emphasized that we cannot talk about proof or demonstration in a matter such as this. (Hagner, 589-590)

OTHER DISPUTED AUTHORSHIPS

After AD 70, letters appeared that were attributed to Peter, James, and Jude

In the view of many scholars, to this post-70 period also belong the epistles attributed by name to Peter, James, and Jude, i.e., letters in the name of the great apostles or members of Jesus' family addressing the problems of later Christian generations. Once again these letters often have a universal or permanent tone. (Brown (1997), 7)

Little is known about the origin of Hebrews

As distinctive among the writings of the NT as Hebrews is, we know very little about its origin, its author, and its first readers. The traditional and ancient designation of the book as "The Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Hebrews," found, for example, at the head of the book in the KJV, is not a part of the original document but rather is a later ecclesiastical opinion that first comes to expression in the Eastern church (Alexandria) late in the second century and in the Western church two centuries after that. (Hagner, 645)

2 Peter apparently depended on Jude

Jude and 2 Peter are among the most neglected books of the NT canon. ... As is the case with most of the other Catholic Epistles, we know next to nothing about the origin or life setting of these books. ... The two books share much common material—so much, in fact, that very probably we have to conclude literary dependence one way or the other. ... A number of factors point to the priority of Jude and to 2 Peter's dependence on Jude. (Hagner, 705, 706)

Nothing is known of the author of James

It is difficult to know who actually wrote this epistle [James]. ... Little can be said of the author, other than that he was a Hellenistically influenced Jew, and perhaps that he was a teacher. (Hagner, 682-683)

The authorship of 1 Peter and of 2 Peter are disputed

The question of who wrote 1 Peter is not easy to decide. ... We face a situation where important objections are raised against the authenticity of a NT document, but where at the same time the objections can be answered to some extent. Unlike the situation of the Pauline Epistles, where we have several uncontested documents to use for comparison, in the present case we have no body of genuine Petrine material to help us. (The document known as 2 Peter almost certainly is not by Peter.) Again we are in the realm of probabilities where dogmatic or overconfident assertions are unwarranted. The probabilities in this case do not tip one way or the other. (Hagner, 688, 691)

According to the opening words of the letter, 2 Peter was written by "Simeon Peter, a servant and apostle of Jesus Christ." But for several reasons many scholars have doubted this statement as being literally true. Several strong arguments oppose the authenticity of 2 Peter. (Hagner, 713)

The epistle of I John relates to a later stage of the Johannine community

[I John] may be seen as the application of Fourth Gospel themes to a situation in which the Johannine community is no longer racked by expulsion from the synagogue but by internal disagreement and schism. (Brown (1997), 9)

GOSPELS WERE WRITTEN LATER THAN PAUL

New Testament books were composed from about AD 50 to AD 150

Those who followed and proclaimed Christ existed for some twenty years before a single NT book was written (i.e., before AD 50). Even when the NT books were being composed (*ca.* AD 50-150), Christian communities existed in areas where no preserved book was authored; and surely they had ideas and beliefs not recorded in any NT book. (Indeed some who thought of themselves as followers of Christ probably had ideas rejected or condemned by NT writers.) Furthermore, during the last few decades in which NT books were being penned, Christians were producing other preserved writings (e.g., *Didache*, *I Clement*, Epistles of Ignatius of Antioch, *Gospel of Peter*, *Protevangelium of James*). (Brown (1997), Introduction, viii)

The Gospels were composed after Paul and several decades after the beginning of the Christian movement

The Gospels are commonly dated approximately A.D. 65-100, several decades after the beginning of the Christian movement. ... The undisputed letters of Paul are generally dated approximately A.D. 50-60. ... The Pauline corpus whose authorship is disputed or widely doubted among scholars (often called deutero-Pauline letters: Eph, Col, 2 Thess, 1 Tim, 2 Tim, Titus). (Reid, 142, 143)

The Gospels reflect the religious needs of a generation later than Paul's

The Gospels are later than Paul. They reflect the religious needs of a later generation of Christians. Inherent within them is not just the story of Jesus's life from several different believers' points of view but also a further generation's reflections on the issues of faith, religious authority, and the afterlife. And, more than anything else, the Gospels are devices for the mission of the church, a different and broader mission than envisioned by Paul. (Segal (2004), 441)

The Gospels were written several decades years after Jesus' birth, ministry, and death

The earliest preserved account of Jesus' life is the Gospel of Mark, which was written c. 65– 70 CE, thus roughly forty years after Jesus's death. (Wassén, Kindle Locations 421-422)

Since the birth narratives occur only in Matthew and Luke, which may have been written in the 80s, they were written down nearly ninety years after Jesus' birth (6– 4 BCE). (Wassén, Kindle Locations 422-424)

Allow a variation of dates of 50 to 100 years for post-Paul works, such as Mark, Acts, and 2 Peter

One almost always has to allow a margin of several decades for the suggested dating of the post-Pauline works. Indeed, in the instance of a few NT writings (Mark, Acts, II Pet[er]) the different dates suggested by well-informed scholars vary by fifty to one hundred years. (Brown (1997), 9)

The Gospels were composed 25 to 75 years after Jesus' activities by people who never saw him

The extant Gospels, i.e., portraits of the activities of Jesus written twenty-five to seventy years after Jesus' death by authors who may never have seen him. We do not have exact reports composed in Jesus' lifetime by those who knew him. Rather what we are given pertinent to the life and ministry of Jesus comes to us in a language other than the one that he regularly spoke and in the form of different distillations from years of proclamation and teaching about him. (Brown (1997), Introduction, viii-ix)

Gospels were written later than Paul

The Gospels are four *different* accounts written some 30 to 70 years later than when Jesus lived

Jesus did not write an account of his passion; nor did anyone who had been present write an eyewitness account. Available to us are four *different* accounts written some thirty to seventy years later in the Gospels of Mark, Matthew, Luke, and John, all of which were dependent on tradition that had come down from an intervening generation or generations. (Footnotes: It is likely that all four Gospels were written in the last half of the 1st cent. AD. The majority of scholars date Mark in the late 60s before the destruction of the Jerusalem Temple, but the number of those who would date it shortly after 70 is increasing (Ernst, Gnilka, Pesch, Schmithals). The dating of Luke-Acts is more disputed than the dating of Matt, but ca. 85 is the most often suggested date for both. John is customarily assigned to the 90s, with final redaction in 100-110. ... The common designations placed before the Gospels, e.g., "The Gospel according to Matthew," stem from the late 2d cent. and represent an educated estimate of authorship by church scholars of that period who were putting together traditions and guesses pertinent to attribution) ... (Brown (1994), 4)

The Gospels were written some 40 to 70 years after Jesus' public ministry

We must remember that forty to seventy years stand between the public career and death of Jesus of Nazareth and the probable dates of composition of the gospels. Jesus spoke Aramaic; his original early first century audience was, for the most part, Jewish, Palestinian, and rural. The evangelists' language was Greek, their communities predominantly if not exclusively Gentile, their location the cities of the Mediterranean Diaspora. (Fredriksen, 5)

The four Gospels are late first-century products with diminishing eschatological expectations

By perceiving and presenting these four gospels, largely the products of late first-century Gentile communities with progressively diminishing eschatological expectations, as the work of the apostolic generation, the church dispelled the otherness of its own history. (Fredriksen (2000), 8)

The Gospel of Mark was written about AD 70

Somewhere in the 60s or just after 70 the Gospel According to Mark was written, offering an account of Jesus' deeds and words remarkably absent from [Paul's] letters. (Brown (1997), 7)

Mark is dated to 65-72 CE

The earliest of the Synoptics, Mark, commonly dated to 65-72 CE. (Hurtado, (1999), 44)

Writing several decades later, Matthew drew on Mark's Gospel and other sources

The Gospel According to Mark, which most scholars judge to have been written earliest, calls itself majestically "the gospel [good news] of Jesus Christ (the Son of God)," without suggesting that there was another version of the proclamation. When the author of Matt wrote several decades after Mark, he incorporated other material, especially from the collection of sayings that scholars call Q, into a reshaped Mark, seemingly supposing that now there would be no need for readers to consult either of those two earlier sources. (Brown (1997), 13)

Matthew's and Luke's Gospels were probably written 10 to 20 years after Mark's

The Gospels According to Matthew and to Luke, probably written ten to twenty years after Mark, offer much more of the Jesus tradition, especially by way of sayings. ... Still another form of the Jesus tradition found expression in the Fourth Gospel (John), written around 90-

Gospels were written later than Paul

100—a form so different that scholars have labored extensively to reconstruct the peculiar community history behind this composition. ... None of the Gospels mentions an author's name, and it is quite possible that none was actually written by the one whose name was attached to it at the end of the 2d century. (Brown (1997), 7)

John's Gospel was formed over several decades, reaching its final form about 90 CE

The pre-gospel period of distinctive Johannine formation took several decades from the 50s to 80s, and the Gospel was probably written ca. A.D. 90. (Hendrickx, <http://archive.hsscol.org.hk/Archive/periodical/abstract/A012k.htm>)

Time from Jesus passed before John's Gospel was composed and first read

A distinction certainly has to be drawn between the time in which the story of Jesus took place and the time in which [John's] Gospel was composed and first read. (Ashton, (2014), 35)

GOSPELS ARE BY ANONYMOUS AUTHORS

Irenaeus' reason for the selection of four Gospels

8. It is not possible that the Gospels can be either more or fewer in number than they are. For, since there are four zones of the world in which we live, and four principal winds, while the Church is scattered throughout all the world, and the "pillar and ground" of the Church is the Gospel and the spirit of life; it is fitting that she should have four pillars, breathing out immortality on every side, and vivifying men afresh. From which fact, it is evident that the Word, the Artificer of all, He that sitteth upon the cherubim, and contains all things, He who was manifested to men, has given us the Gospel under four aspects, but bound together by one Spirit. As also David says, when entreating His manifestation, "Thou that sittest between the cherubim, shine forth." For the cherubim, too, were four-faced, and their faces were images of the dispensation of the Son of God. For, [as the Scripture] says, "The first living creature was like a lion," symbolizing His effectual working, His leadership, and royal power; the second [living creature] was like a calf, signifying [His] sacrificial and sacerdotal order; but "the third had, as it were, the face as of a man," an evident description of His advent as a human being; "the fourth was like a flying eagle," pointing out the gift of the Spirit hovering with His wings over the Church. And therefore the Gospels are in accord with these things, among which Christ Jesus is seated. ... For the living creatures are quadriform, and the Gospel is quadriform, as is also the course followed by the Lord. For this reason were four principal covenants given to the human race: one, prior to the deluge, under Adam; the second, that after the deluge, under Noah; the third, the giving of the law, under Moses; the fourth, that which renovates man, and sums up all things in itself by means of the Gospel.

(<http://www.earlychristianwritings.com/text/irenaeus-book3.html> accessed 19 January 2021)

Gospel authors are named only through tradition

The writers of all four of our canonical Gospels are anonymous. In each instance, however, there are strong patristic traditions concerning authorship. (Hagner, 426)

The *Gospel of Matthew* is an anonymous document

Matthew, like all the canonical Gospels, is an anonymous document. The title *kata Maththaion*, "according to Matthew," was affixed to the Gospel sometime in the second century. (Hagner, 215)

The *Gospel of Mark* is an anonymous document

The Gospel of Mark, like all the Gospels, is anonymous. The tradition of the church, however, has always identified this Gospel as "according to Mark." We began by looking at the testimony of Papias concerning the origin of this Gospel. (Hagner, 182-183)

GOSPELS ARE NOT LITERAL DOCUMENTARY VERBATIM RECORDS

The Gospels engaged in interpretation of the tradition

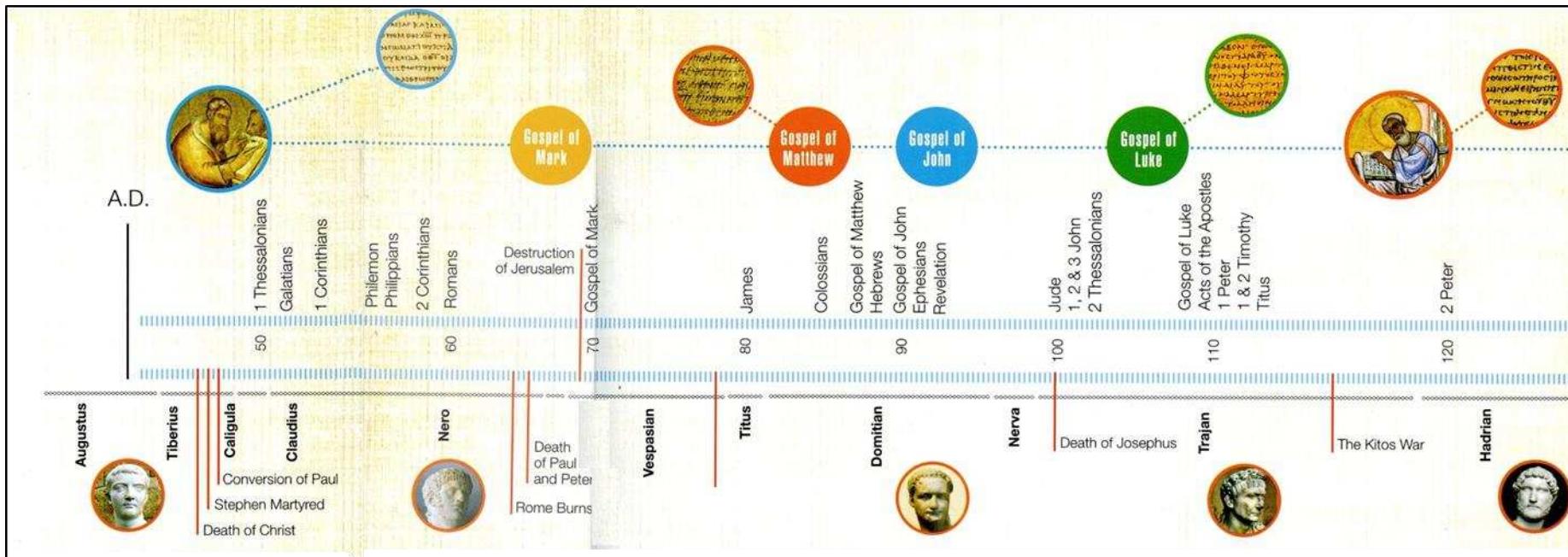
This does not mean that what we have in [the Gospel of] John is straightforward history or provides anything like a transcript of what Jesus said. If we do not doubt that both the Synoptics and John enshrine historical tradition and that both engage in interpretation of the tradition, then we must conclude that John also takes good advantage of his interpretive liberty and puts his own distinctive stamp on the material. When Jesus speaks in the Fourth Gospel, he does so in the idiom of the Evangelist. It is thus difficult sometimes to know where Jesus stops speaking and where the Evangelist provides further interpretation (e.g., 3:16– 21, 31–36 may be the Evangelist speaking rather than Jesus). (Hagner, 263-264)

The Gospels do not replicate Jesus' original utterances verbatim, with the Fourth Gospel providing a sense of his ideas

Almost never can we claim we have the *ipsissima verba* of Jesus, the very words themselves, either in the Greek text of the Synoptic Gospels or John. Peter Ensor has refined the notion of authenticity by speaking also of *ipsissima dicta*, sayings that "closely represent an original utterance of Jesus," and of *ipsissimae sententiae*, "ideas or notions inherent in" the other categories but "expressed in a different way." On this analysis, the Synoptics generally provide us with *ipsissima dicta*, while John, although containing that type of sayings, mainly contains *ipsissimae sententiae*. (Hagner, 264, underlining supplied)

The Gospel writers employed freedoms with their narratives

All the Gospel writers reveal considerable freedom in how they order their narratives and how they re-express the Jesus tradition. John has taken the furthest step in that liberty by being as explicit as he can in retelling the story. ... John's theological reflection reveals what was inherent or implicit in the historical tradition, and the historicity of that tradition remains of great importance to him. As he draws out the implications and full significance of Jesus in light of the entire Gospel story— in light of the words and deeds of Jesus, together with his resurrection— John does something that Jesus, given the constraints of the moment, could not have done. ... There is a sense in which John is not only true but also, because of its explicitness, *the truest of the Gospels.* (Hagner, 265)



(Borg, cover)

WRITINGS SPEAK ABOUT THE AUTHORS AND THEIR COMMUNITY

We have to know something about the time period in which a book was written and the people it was written for

Bible readers in the twenty-first-century AD need to understand and take into account that the book was written in antiquity and in a particular culture (Israelite) to a contemporary audience who had their own particular questions and concerns.

In order to rightly apply the book to our lives, we have to know something about the time period in which it was written and the people for whom it was written. We need to know both the historical context that lies behind the book and the particular historical context of the first audience. (Longman III, 17)

A literary work is primarily a source of information about the situation that caused it to be created

We must recognize that a literary work or a fragment of tradition is a primary source for the historical situation out of which it arose, and is only a secondary source for the historical details for which it gives information. (Ashton (2014), 45)

Meaning comes from understanding what a writer intended to convey to its immediate audience

The meaning that current audiences take from the Gospels must be related to (but not confined to or necessarily identical with) the meaning intended and conveyed by the evangelists to their audiences. (Brown (1994), 6)

The prophets speaks *primarily* to the men of his own time

Those who regard the prophets mainly as guides to the future are likely to be disappointed by this work. For me, "the prophets speaks *primarily* to the men of his own time, and his message springs out of the circumstances in which he lives" (*Men Spake from God*, Ellison, page 4). Hence we will best understand Ezekiel as we try to grasp what his own generation should have understood and only then reinterpret, if necessary, in the light of the New Testament. In dealing with the prophecies of the future. I have therefore been normally more concerned with what Ezekiel's contemporaries were to understand by them than what we may read into them from the standpoint of the New Testament. (Ellison, (1956), 11).

The Evangelists wrote to edify believers, not to preserve accurate records

The attempt to establish the historicity of the Gospel accounts was constantly foundering on the relative unconcern of the Gospels for historicity as such. The Evangelists were not interested in scientific history, but salvation. They wrote, not to preserve accurate records, but to create and to edify believers. Indeed, when the individual units of the Gospel tradition were analyzed according to the history of their transmission (form criticism), it became clear that scarcely a word of the Gospels is uncolored by the faith of the church. (Wink, x)

Religious texts address the particular needs of their respective communities and express special theological and soteriological positions

The Fourth Gospel [*The Gospel according to Saint John*] and the Gospel of Thomas, like other religious texts, address the particular needs of their respective communities and express special theological and soteriological positions. As community documents, each has its own Sitz im Leben: its own geographical location, its own community history, and its own religious traditions. Moreover, like other religious texts, both were written with the express purposes of polemicizing, persuading, and propagating a particular belief system. (DeConick, in Fortna, 303, underlining added.)

No NT writer intended to write an enduring message

No NT writer knew that what he wrote would be included in a collection of twenty-seven books and read as an enduring message centuries or even millennia later. Indeed, given their strong emphases on certain issues, some writers might not have been happy about having works of a different cast set alongside their own with similar authority.

In view of what he wrote in Gal 2:11-14 about Cephas (Peter) and certain men from James, Paul might have deemed it strange to find his letter in the same Testament as two epistles attributed to Peter and one attributed to James. Luke might be annoyed to find his second book (Acts) separated from his first (the Gospel) and placed as if it were of another genre. (Brown (1997), 42)

The first Christian letters (Paul's) addressed an imminent eschatology

Letters were the first Christian literature of which we know: Since they can be designed to answer immediate, pressing problems, they were consistent with an urgent eschatology. (Brown (1997), 5)

A Gospel belonged to a particular period with a particular situation in view, written for a particular purpose

While recognizing that the Gospel was actually addressed to the Christian community, Wrede insisted that “to achieve an historical understanding of the Gospel *we must see it as a writing born out of and written for conflict.*”

And further, that “what really allows us to discern the true lever of the Gospel is an acknowledgement of its polemical thrust. In a word, from being a timeless meditation, the Gospel becomes a writing that belongs to a particular period, has a particular situation in view, and is written for a particular purpose.” (Ashton (2014), 87)

The Evangelists' historical documents were entirely concerned with events in their own communities

The Gospels are not simply Lives of Christ. A Gospel (and by that I mean one of the four Gospels recognized by the Christian church) is a proclamation in narrative form of faith in Jesus as Messiah and Son of God. Ostensibly historical documents, entirely concerned with events that had occurred in the past, they are actually addressed to the evangelists' own communities and speak to their hopes and fears. Such, at least, is the hypothesis that underlies what is known as redaction criticism. (Ashton, (2014), 85)

Matthew, Mark, and Luke wrote for different audiences and sought to address specific issues within their respective communities. (Wray, 115)

The widespread but largely mistaken belief [is] that the Gospels are Lives of Christ. ... To call them biographers without further ado is to focus on what was for them a secondary aspect of their work. (Ashton (2007), 24, 27)

The Gospel writers reflect the understandings of their time

The Gospels reflect an understanding of reality typical for the first century, in which supernatural events were possible and evil spirits were driven out through exorcism. (Wassén, Kindle Locations 345-346)

Each evangelist addressed itself to its own contemporaries

The Gospels were written many years after the events that they record. Though narrating events that took place in the first half of the first century CE, the evangelists were addressing themselves to their own contemporaries in the second half of the same century. So we have to bear in mind the differences between the social and

political conditions prevailing during Jesus' lifetime and those of the time of the composition of the Gospels. (Ashton, (2014), 45)

The canonical gospels are creative traditions that provide a witness to the faith of their late first-century CE writers and communities

What then must be borne in mind when reading the canonical gospels for historical information about Jesus of Nazareth? First, the impression of orderliness conveyed by their connected narratives should not deceive us about their true nature: these are composite documents, the final products of long and creative traditions in which old material was reworked and new material interpolated. As they now stand, they are witness first of all to the faith of their individual writers and their late first-century, largely Gentile communities. Only at a distance do they relate to the people and the period they purport to describe. (Fredriksen (2000), 4)

The Gospels reflect the interpretation of Jesus as it had developed decades after his time

It was once fashionable to claim that Jesus could not be known as a figure of history and that even if he could be known in that way the result would not be of interest for faith. Both contentions have been laid to rest over the past twenty years. ...

Of course, the Jesus who is under investigation cannot simply be equated with whatever the Gospels say of him. The Gospels, composed in Greek a generation after Jesus' death, reflect the faith of early Christians who came to believe in him. Their belief included reference to historical data, but also included the interpretation of Jesus as it had developed after his time.

The critical tasks of coming to grips with the development of the New Testament, the nature of primitive Christian faith, and the historical profile of Jesus are all interrelated. (Bruce Chilton and Craig Evans in Taylor, Foreword: *Studying the Historical Jesus*)

A gospel is a theological presentation of the “Jesus” of the authors’ community

Fundamentally, the gospels are theological proclamation, not historical biography; and to the degree that they do present us with an image of Jesus, it is first of all the Jesus who “founded” the particular community behind each gospel. (Fredriksen (2000), 4)

The synoptic Gospels reflect their experiences with the Jewish responses to their Christological claims

It is widely accepted that the [synoptic] gospel accounts of Jewish authorities accusing Jesus of blasphemy are at least partially shaped by, and are reflections of, Jewish responses to (Jewish) Christian christological claims and devotional practice. (Hurtado (1999), 36)

Matthew

[Matthew's] Gospel reflects the experiences of opposition from Jewish authorities directed against Jewish Christians' Christ-devotion. (Hurtado (1999), 38)

Mark

There are several good indications that the whole of the Markan narrative of Jesus' trial before the Council, Peter's denials in the courtyard, and the interrogation before Pilate was intended to speak to the experiences and concerns of Mark's first readers.¹ Followers of Jesus are called to be prepared for execution as part of their discipleship to Jesus, and are warned about denying Jesus to save their lives (8:34-8). Also, it is, I think, well accepted that Mark 13 is

crucial material for characterizing the concerns of the author and the experiences and prospects of the intended readers. ...

The fervency and specificity of these passages suggest that the author was writing for readers who knew such experiences, either directly or indirectly, and were in danger of facing similar sufferings in their immediate future. This means that the narratives of Jesus' arrest and trials would have been intended and read with a practical, existential force. ...

The account [of Jesus' trial] reflects the conflict over Christ-devotion between Christian Jews and Jewish religious authorities, whatever one may think about the historicity of the events in the life of Jesus.

The account [of Jesus' trial] not only dramatizes the theological issue dividing Jews and Christians in the time of Mark and earlier, but also reflects the actual experiences of Jewish-Christians called to account before Jewish authorities for their devotion to Christ and charged with blasphemy. (Hurtado (1999), 45 – 48)

The Gospels are not biographies of the life of Jesus Christ

The widespread but largely mistaken belief [is] that the Gospels are Lives of Christ. ... To call them biographers without further ado is to focus on what was for them a secondary aspect of their work. (Ashton (2007), 24, 27)

A Gospel is not theological nor a biography

A gospel is not a theological treatise, certainly, but it is not a biography either; nor is it, properly speaking, a compromise between the two nor yet an amalgam of both; it is *sui generis*. (Ashton (2007), 332-333)

Controversies faced by the gospel writers were projected in a contrived fashion onto the ministry of Jesus

The only organized group to have survived the war reasonably intact was the Pharisees. Contemporary post-70 Gentile Christianity accordingly faced an adversarial or indifferent *Pharisaic* Jewish audience; and this is the situation projected, through the gospel narratives, onto the ministry of Jesus as well. These retrospective controversies are thus somewhat contrived. ... At the very least, the evangelists' image of a Jesus beleaguered by constant *Pharisaic* opposition draws more on the circumstances of their own day than on the Palestinian ministry of Jesus. (Fredriksen, (2000), 105-107)

Stories of conflict in the Gospels can be viewed as dramas that represent the actual dialogue between later religious communities

Actual conflicts between religious communities of the past were often fictionalized and recorded as dramas rather than related in terms of verbatim dialogue. This means that stories of conflict in the gospels can be viewed as dramas created to represent and record actual dialogue between later religious communities. ...

Given this situation, we must examine religious texts thoughtfully, recognizing that some portions may contain valuable information for understanding the development of the author's theology in relation to other contemporary religious texts. In other words, the characters and situations in the texts may reflect events from the author's own experience of ideological conflict rather than actual "historical" events involving those characters. (DeConick in Fortna, 305)

Proclamations and teachings in the literature show what earliest "Christians" created

The proclamations and teachings in the earliest Jesus communities in Palestine may reflect the use of something like a list of testimonies about the Messiah; but these do

not prove that Jews had a common messianology. They are evidence of what the earliest "Christians" created. (Charlesworth (1992), 6)

An evangelist's background may affect his message

The background of each evangelist may also affect what he was trying to communicate. (Brown (1994), 5)

Matthew updated events in Mark to reflect its own concerns

Matthew works within Mark's original framework, but updates events to reflect the concerns of his own time, a decade after Mark and after the cataclysmic events of the 70s. (Wray, 115)

Matthew's presentation of Jesus is vividly coloured by his local situation

Matt's portrayal of the Pharisees is surely based on the attitudes of some synagogue authorities of his time. Yet there is exaggerated hostility in his depiction. ...

Matt universalizes his perception by moving from the Pharisees of his acquaintance to Pharisees in general and to "the Jews" (28:15). Also, while there may be a historical connection between opposition to Jesus in the 20s and opposition to the Matthean Christians in the 70s, we must recognize that Matt's presentation of Jesus is vividly colored by the post-70 local situation. (Brown (1994), 526)

Luke's condemnations of the Jews are characteristic of a time later than Paul's, when Jews and Christians were more at loggerheads

Although Paul is distrustful of his Jewish brethren, Paul did not usually pile on anti-Jewish phrases like Luke: "whom you had killed" and "this Jesus whom you crucified." These are characteristics of a later time, when Jews and Christians are more at loggerheads. (Segal (2004), 462-463)

John's Gospel and Letters provide a picture of the Johannine Community

Within the pages of the Gospel and Letters [of John] is buried a surprising amount of positive data enabling us to piece together a picture of the nature and history of the community. Of course the piecing-together cannot be done without conjecture. As in all historical study, it is important to hold apart the factual evidence and the shaping hypothesis. (Ashton (2007), page 100)

John 9:22; 12:42; and 16:2, which speak of exclusion of Jesus' followers from the synagogue. (Scott, 367)

John's gospel reflects a bitter polemic between Jewish synagogues and Johannine Jewish Christians

It is commonly recognized today that the Gospel of John (c. 90 – 100 CE) gives us evidence of sharp conflict in the late first century between Johannine Christians and Jewish authorities over christological claims, although this conflict appears in John's narrative as one between 'the Jews' and Jesus over claims he makes for himself. Perhaps especially in light of J. L. Martyn's influential study, scholars today commonly see John's gospel as reflecting a bitter polemic between Jewish synagogues and Johannine Jewish Christians that led (at some point) to the expulsion of Johannine Jewish Christians from these synagogues. (Hurtado (1999), 35)

John's Gospel and Epistles reveal the struggles of the Johannine community

The gospel and epistles of John reveal the struggles of one particular Christian community whose beliefs and practices were in tension with other early Christian communities. (Bütz, 143)

CREATIVE USE OF THE HEBREW LITERATURE

NT writers saw continuity with the Hebrew Scriptures but they took many liberties

The NT writers saw continuity in what they were describing, presenting, or advocating with the ancient Jewish Scriptures. They fully accepted them as the authoritative word of God, but they also took many liberties in citing the OT, sometimes even altering the passages they cited (e.g., Ps 94:11 in 1 Cor 3:19-20; Ps 68:18 in Eph 4:8; and Ps 8:4 6 in Heb 2:6-8).

A study of the NT use of the OT clearly shows that the driving force behind the NT writers was not an exact interpretation or exegesis of the OT, but rather the word of and about the risen Lord. (McDonald (2007), 207, underlining added)

Christians regularly read Christ back into the Old Testament, sometimes by means of optimistic mistranslation

Christians have regularly read Christ back into the Old Testament, sometimes by means of optimistic mistranslation. In practice, such exegesis demands a great deal of special pleading, of varying degrees of plausibility, and many such conclusions would have baffled Hebrew writers of the First Temple era (ca. 950–587 BCE). (Jenkins, 2)

Christians read texts retroactively, seeking prophecies that could be applied to Jesus

Christians read such texts retroactively, seeking prophecies that could be applied to Jesus, while both Jews and Christians assimilated prophecies of coming times of peace and prosperity to a general messianic scheme. Read through the eyes of faith, these were understood to predict a coming individual messiah on the familiar pattern. Apart from Second Isaiah, appropriate texts were easily found in Psalms, Zechariah, and Ezekiel, Yet the fact that scriptures were read in this way does not mean that the writers of particular texts intended such End Times readings. (Jenkins, 169)

NT writers sought prophecies about Jesus rather than in exegesis

There is little evidence from the NT writers that they were interested in the original *contextual* message of the OT itself. ... The early Christians were far more interested in finding prophecies of the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus in the Jewish Scriptures than in doing exegesis of scriptural texts for the purpose of discovering the meaning of these texts.

This suggests that the *primary* authority of the early church was not so much the message of the OT, but rather the proclaimed words and deeds of Jesus that the OT Scriptures, it was believed, foretold. ...

The Christians believed that the whole story of God's plans and purposes for Israel developed in the OT Scriptures had reached its completion in the life and work of Jesus. (McDonald (2007), 206-207, underlining added)

The Gospels' Jesus reinterpreted Israel's Scriptures

Jesus assumed, as did most Jews in his time, that Israel's Scriptures were to be interpreted and appropriated in new ways, because the present was as much in God's hands as the past. Especially given the changed circumstances in which the land promised to Israel lay under Roman dominance, much Judaic interpretation turned on the issue of how the divine promises to Abraham and the patriarchs were to be realized.

In the tradition of the prophet Jeremiah, many Israelites awaited God's renewal of the covenant (Jeremiah 31:31-4). A basic question for them became, What is the essence of belonging to God's people? In postexilic Judaism, answers to that question varied widely.

The writings that came to be called the New Covenant (a more accurate rendering than "New Testament") need to be seen in the context of Jesus' distinctive attempt, along with those of his followers and successors, to understand, reclaim, and fulfill the covenantal tradition. (Chilton, 481)

Christians made highly selective use of the OT

Jesus' teachings likewise do not result from an exegesis of OT texts; rather, Jesus uses the OT to support *his* claims, not so much to elucidate meanings of the OT texts. Very seldom, Barr notes, do the NT writers interpret whole passages (e.g., Gen 1-3), mainly because the NT writers never set out to interpret the OT itself, but rather the new substance of the gospel.

Christian use of the OT was highly selective and designed especially to clarify or confirm Christian beliefs. According to Shires, the real moving force of the NT, then, is not the OT but rather the experiences of Jesus. (Footnote: Shires observes that Christians made the OT "their own special possession whose meaning relates directly to their situation." ...) The most important function of those Scriptures for the early church appears to have been their predictive witness to the Christ event (e.g., Luke 24:44; John 5:39; 2 Tim 3:15). (McDonald (2007), 208, 209, underlining added)

The Gospel's "little apocalypses" were a midrash on Daniel

The so-called Little Apocalypse of the Gospels—the passages in Matthew, Mark, and Luke where Jesus describes how the world will end—has been called "a very early Christian midrash, or expansion, on the Danielic account of last events." (Kirsch, 40)

Pesher means "this is that"

While there are a number of instances recorded in the Gospels of Jesus' use of *literalist* and *midrashic* exegesis, his most characteristic use of Scripture is portrayed as being a *pesher* type of interpretation. The "this is that" fulfillment motif, which is distinctive to pesher exegesis, repeatedly comes to the fore in the words of Jesus. According to Luke's Gospel, Jesus began to expound the Scriptures in terms of a fulfillment theme very early in his ministry. (Longenecker (1975), Kindle Locations 961-964. *Italics* added)

"Pesher" means looking for hidden meanings

PESHER: Hebrew for 'commentary' and particularly used for commentaries on the OT in the Dead Sea scrolls, which looked for hidden meanings in the text which were seen to apply to and to justify the community's way of life.

The NT use of OT texts has some similarity with this method: over and above the original sense, a passage is said to have a special meaning for the present time (e.g. 1 Cor. 10: 11). Another, similar, method of interpretation was *midrash* ('study'), which was essentially oral exposition in the synagogue to elucidate difficulties. (Oxford Biblical Studies Online, <http://www.oxfordbiblicalstudies.com/article/opr/t94/e1454> accessed 23 July 2020)

Since early times, Christians have found images of Jesus Christ throughout Daniel

In the canonical Bible itself, the best evidence for messianic beliefs comes from Daniel, in the sections dating from the 160s. Since early times, Christians have found images of Jesus Christ throughout Daniel, although it is doubtful that they are accurately reading the author's intentions. (Jenkins, 170)

Jesus and the Gospel writers read Daniel typologically

Neither Jesus nor the Gospel writers thought that the verses in Daniel about the abomination of desolation (Dan 9:27, 11:31, 12:11) directly predicted the Roman razing of the Jerusalem temple. They knew that the writer of Daniel was talking about the Antiochene crisis. Nevertheless, they read Daniel typologically and saw in their day a repetition of the pattern of unbelief and worldliness that the writer of Daniel had applied to Hellenistic Jews during the reign of Antiochus IV. In other words, they expected a replay of the Antiochene crisis. Desolation of God's temple would occur again at the hands of a Gentile army—this time, Rome. The Seleucids and Romans represented historically independent but typologically related administrations of divine judgment. It is this typology that Jesus and the Gospel writers want the reader of Daniel and the Gospels to understand. (Ulrich (2014), 1062-1063)

Forced fulfilments of Micah and Isaiah

The NT authors, who were writing several decades after Yeshua/Joshua/Jesus lived and died, used questionable methods to make it appear as if the Hebrew literature anticipated him.

After receiving oral communications about this person, they then searched their Scriptures to find support for the conclusions they had already arrived at. This is a clear case of "begging the question" (in the true sense of that expression). While some might use terms such as "pesher" or "midrash", I see this as "eisegesis", of reading meanings *into* Scripture rather than the proper process of allowing the literature speaks for itself.

The writers dropped Ephrathah and changed the clan's status

The writers of Matthew dropped Micah's reference to Bethlehem's ancestor Ephrathah and changed the status from a "little clan" to "by no means least".

But you, O Bethlehem of Ephrathah,
who are one of the little clans of Judah (Micah 5:1, NRSV, underlining added)

in Matthew becomes:

And you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah,
are by no means least among the rulers of Judah. (Matthew 2:6, NRSV, underlining added)

The writers of Matthew omitted any reference to the long and detailed ancestry of the promised ruler of Israel

For Bethlehem of Ephrathah's pedigree, see 1 Chronicles 2: 1-50.

Micah 5:2	Matthew 2:6
from you [Bethlehem of Ephrathah] shall come forth for me one who is to <u>rule</u> in Israel, <u>whose origin is from of old,</u> <u>from ancient days.</u>	from you [Bethlehem in Judah] shall come a ruler who is to <u>shepherd</u> my people Israel.

Luke's Gospel made no reference to Micah

Luke's Gospel provides the only other narrative related to the birth of Jesus. It was written some 10 years after the account of Matthew's Gospel.

Since many have undertaken to set down an orderly account of the events that have been fulfilled among us, just as they were handed on to us by those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and servants of the word, I too decided, after investigating everything carefully from the very first, to write an orderly account. (Luke 1:1-2, NRSV)

Despite making a number of citations from the Hebrew scriptures, Luke makes no reference to the account at Micah chapter 5.

Isaiah 7:14 has a clear near-term fulfilment with Kings Ahaz, Pekah, and Rezin

Many modern readers of Isaiah 7:14 ("Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign: The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel") will see that it has a clear near-term fulfillment. After all, in context Isaiah is speaking to King Ahaz, who is worried about a threat from two kings, Pekah of the Northern Kingdom and Rezin of Aram (Syria). Isaiah is telling him that he should not worry and either cave to their demands or ally himself with Assyria, which he eventually does because God will take care of him. The birth of the child to the virgin (or "young woman") is a sign that will indicate to Ahaz that God is indeed speaking through Isaiah. Therefore, it is something that will happen relatively soon since by the time this son "will be eating curds and honey when he knows enough to reject the wrong and choose the right, ... the land of the two kings you dread will be laid waste" (Is 7:15-16). The text couldn't be more obvious that even this famous verse, while having an intensified fulfillment in the birth of Jesus, found its original fulfillment in the years right after it was uttered. (Longman III, 10)

Isaiah 7:14: A young woman would become pregnant

Isaiah confronted Ahaz and urged him to put his trust in God for deliverance (7:3-16), giving him the sign of a child called "Immanuel" (meaning "God-with-us" in Hebrew). A young woman would become pregnant and give birth, the prophet said, and the land would be free from the two kings before the child could choose between good and evil (7:14-16).

Despite the prophetic warning, Ahaz turned to the Assyrian king Tiglath-pileser III for help (2 Kings 16:5-16), and that king attacked Syria and Israel, leaving to the latter only the rump of Samaria. (Chilton, 190)

Isaiah 9:2-7 is more likely an announcement rather than a prediction

Isa. 9:2-7: "For unto us a child is born." It is not at all clear from the form of the passage that it is intended to be a prediction, for it sounds like an announcement. As we compare it with the royal psalms it seems more and more likely that the setting of this text was either a coronation or the time of the birth of an heir to the throne.

The names to be given to the child: Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace, are not too exalted to be ascribed to an ordinary Israelite king, as has been argued, but are good examples of the kind of extravagant language typically used in the throne names of oriental potentates.

Furthermore, there are several possibilities for the translation of these names, so it is not as certain that the king is being called "Almighty God" as many English translations would suggest. If this reading of the passage is correct, Isa. 9:2-7 may then represent a prophetic affirmation of traditional kingship ideology. (Gowan (2000), 35)

Isaiah 9: “A child has been born for us”

Chapters 6-8 deal with Isaiah’s call (or perhaps his special commissioning) as prophet and describe the Syro-Ephraimite crisis. (These chapters have been inserted into the section consisting of chapters 5 and 9–10.)

Isaiah 9:1-7 (Hebrew Bible, 8:23-9:6) contains the words “For a child has been born for us.” Whether this passage and 11:1-9 represent Isaiah’s own prophecy or were produced at a later period remains disputed. (Chilton, 191-192)

Isaiah 14:13-14 is speaking of and to an arrogant Babylonian King

The portrait of the arrogant King of Babylon in Isa 14:13-14 who says, “I will mount the heavens . . . I will set up my throne on high . . . I will ascend above the tops of the clouds . . . I will make myself like the Most High.” (Brown (1994), 538)

Only Jesus’ followers used “the Suffering Servant Messiah” concept to portray their “Lord”

Jesus also set in motion a new movement. During his time and in the 30s and 40s, major creative developments emerged within Jesus’ group. Though the *Self-Glorification Hymn* is influenced by Isaiah 53 in describing one seated among the “divine beings,” only Jesus’ followers used “the Suffering Servant Messiah” concept to portray the life, death, and resurrection of their “Lord.” (Charlesworth, in Boccaccini, 93)

The identification of Jesus with the suffering servant of *Isaiah 53* seems to be an original creation

A third group of “Son of man” references allude to the suffering and death of Jesus, sometimes also mentioning his resurrection. These introduce the idea of a suffering messiah, which is not entirely unknown in Jewish messianism but is never linked with the Son of man. (If the latter is sometimes described in terms of the “servant of the Lord,” the chapter on the suffering servant, *Isaiah 53*, is never applied to him.) ... A new feature was introduced in New Testament messianism by the identification of Jesus with the suffering servant of *Isaiah 53*. ... It would seem that this identification is an original creation of Jesus (or, possibly, of the early church). (Jones, “Messianism”, 5973)

A RANGE OF RESOURCES WAS EMPLOYED

Matthew and Luke quoted a Dead Sea Scroll rather than the Scriptures

Among the most intriguing of the newly released Dead Sea Scrolls is a fragment that was originally called “On Resurrection.” ... The official editors have now changed the name of this text to the “Messianic Apocalypse.” It may be easier just to call it 4Q521—that is, document 521 from Qumran Cave 4. ... The text was written sometime between 200 B.C.E. and the fall of the Temple in 70 C E., probably after 100 B.C.E. It is difficult to be more precise.

THE MESSIAH TEXT	
4Q521 and a Line-by-Line Analysis*	
[c4]	דָשְׁמִים וְהָרִזְן יַשְׁמְעוּ לְמֶשְׁיחֵהוּ
[ח'ים וְכָל אֲשֶׁר בָם לֹא יִסְגַּנְתִּי מִמְצָאוֹת קָדוֹשִׁים vacat	(1) [...] The heavens and the earth will obey His Messiah, (2) [The sea and all th]at is in them. He will not turn aside from the commandment of the Holy Ones. (3) Take strength in His mighty work, all ye who seek the Lord.
הָלֹא בָוָאת הַמְצָאוֹת אֶת אָדָני כָל הַמִּזְהָלִים בְּלָבָם כִּי אָדָני חָסִידִים יִבְקַר וְצָדִיקִים בְּשֵם יְקָרָא	(4) Will you not find the Lord in this, all ye who wait (for Him) with hope in your hearts? (5) Surely the Lord will seek out the pious, and will call the righteous by name. (6) His spirit will hover over the poor; by His might will He restore the faithful. (7) He will glorify the pious on the throne of the eternal kingdom.
מַתִּיר אֲסּוּרִים פָּוֹקֵחַ עֲוֹרִים זָקֵף [כְּפִיפִסְמִים] לֹא שָׁלָם אֲדָבָק [כְּפִי עַל] מְשִׁילִים וּבְחַסְדוֹ [אֶבֶתָה] וְ[כְּפִי] לְעֵד מִשְׁחוֹת קָדְשָׁת לֹא יִחָדֵר [לְבוֹא] וְ[כְּפִי] גַּדְבָּהָת שְׁלֹא הַיְוֹ מִשְׁשָׁה אָדָני כַּאֲשֶׁר [בְּאָ]	(8) He will release the captives, make the blind see, raise up the do[wn]trodden.] (9) For[e]ver I will cleave {to Hirn aga]inst the [po]werful, and [I will trust] in His lovingkindness (10) a[nd in His] go[odness forever. His] holy [Messiah] will not be slow [in coming.] (11) And as for the wonders that are not the work of the Lord, when he (i.e., the Messiah) [come]s (12) then he will heal the sick, resurrect the dead, and to the poor announce glad tidings. (13) ... he will lead the [Ho]ly Ones, he will shepherd [th]em. He will do (14) ... and all of it ...
[c12]	[...]
[c16]	[...]

Three striking features of this text are significant: First, it speaks of a single messianic figure who will rule heaven and earth. Second, in the clearest possible language, it describes the resurrection of the dead expected to occur during the time of this Messiah. And third, it contains an exact verbal parallel with the Gospels of Matthew and Luke. ...

The Messiah of our text, 4Q521, controls heaven and earth, heals the wounded and raises the dead. He rules over nature. Even death, that old enemy, cannot stand before him (he will resurrect the dead). ...

The first references to the idea of the dead being raised occur only in late portions of the Hebrew Bible (e.g., Daniel 12:1-3). Belief in the resurrection of the dead emerged in certain Jewish circles from the second century B.C.E. down through the first century C.E. ...

In Matthew and Luke we read that while John the Baptist is in prison, he sends his disciples to ask Jesus, “Are you the coming one, or do we look for another?” In inquiring about Jesus’ messianic identity, John’s disciples want to know what the signs of the true Messiah will be. Jesus answers:

Go and report to John what you have seen and heard: the blind receive sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear, the dead are raised

up, the poor have the glad tidings preached to them (Matthew 11:4-5; Luke 7:22-23).

These then are the “signs of the messiah.” The language of our Dead Sea Scroll text is virtually identical to that in Matthew and Luke. The Christian signs of the messiah were, as it were, foreshadowed in the Jewish literature from Qumran.

The fact that parallels to our Dead Sea Scroll text appears in both Matthew and Luke almost word for word indicates that the passage from the Gospels comes from a very early Christian tradition. ...

Luke highlights it as the inauguration of the messianic mission of Jesus. According to Luke 4:18, it is this very verse from Isaiah that Jesus reads in his hometown synagogue at Nazareth. It is this very verse that Jesus there claims he fulfills (Luke 4:21)! Thus, both our text and Luke look back to the same Isaianic text as evidence of messianic fulfillment.

Isaiah 61:1 says nothing about this Anointed One “raising the dead,” however.

Indeed, in the entire Hebrew Bible there is nothing at all about a messianic figure raising the dead. Yet in both Luke and Matthew, we find the reference to raising the dead linked to glad tidings for the poor. The two phrases are linked as “signs of the messiah”: “The dead are raised up and the poor have glad tidings preached to them”—precisely as in our Dead Sea Scroll! ...

We may go one step further: The passage from Matthew/Luke is clearly connected with the movement of John the Baptist. It is he who sends the query to Jesus from his prison cell. The tradition we are dealing with here was shared by the community of John the Baptist and the early followers of Jesus. The strong connections between John the Baptist and the Dead Sea Scroll movement have often been noted. With our new text, we are in a better position to speak of the common expectations of a variety of interrelated apocalyptic and baptist groups that fled to the “wilderness” to prepare the “Way of the Lord” (Isaiah 40:3; Luke 3:4; IQS 8.9 [though this last passage seems to be allegorical]). They appear to have shared a specific set of expectations, and they draw in strikingly similar ways upon a common core of prophetic texts from the Hebrew Bible. This new Dead Sea Scroll text provides a direct and very significant example of a common messianic hope among the followers of John the Baptist, Jesus and (so it appears) the Dead Sea Scrolls’ Teacher of Righteousness. (Wise, 60, 61, 65; See also Evans (1997), 96-97)

Jesus’ reply to John the Baptist’s disciples is remarkably similar to the list in the *Messianic Apocalypse* from Qumran

To answer John [the Baptist]’s doubts and, at the same time, reaffirm Jesus’s identity as the Messiah (Luke 7:20-22). Jesus’s reply is remarkably similar to the list in the *Messianic Apocalypse* from Qumran. The first and last element in Jesus’s response, “to give sight to the blind” and “to proclaim good news to the poor,” are also found in the text from Qumran.

And there is a third element shared by both texts, the raising of the dead. There is no resurrection language in Isaiah 61. The *Messianic Apocalypse* and the *Gospel of Luke* draw heavily on the prophecies found in the book of Isaiah in their respective descriptions of the messiah, and yet, they both go a step further and add to their set of messianic expectations the hope for the resurrection of the dead.

Luke leaves no doubt that Jesus is the anointed of Isaiah. But he also makes clear that there is more. He adds the resurrection of the dead. That addition, we now know

from the *Messianic Apocalypse*, was not Luke's invention, but had become a fixed part of the messianic expectations in early Judaism by the time Luke wrote his Gospel. By including it in Jesus's response, Luke not only draws on the prophet Isaiah, he responds to the expectations expressed in the Messianic Apocalypse. (Henze (2017), page 77)

The need to study the Synoptic Gospels against the background of the Books of Enoch

We should by no means read Enoch as giving us an accurate cosmology, nor should consider it to be inspired or authoritative. It is nonetheless instructive to read it as background material for the New Testament, as it reflects the Second Temple context of the gospel writers. Of the influence of Enoch, Professor Norman Gold writes:

"The Aramaic *Book of Enoch* ... very considerably influenced the idiom of the New Testament and patristic literature, more so in fact than any other writing of the Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha."

F. Crawford Burkitt, English academic and theologian, makes the point that without understanding Enoch's rationale for the existence of evil, we will miss some of the nuances of the New Testament texts. ...

"It contains a serious attempt to account for the presence of Evil in human history. ... It is when you study Matthew, Mark and Luke against the background of the Books of Enoch that you see them in their true perspective."

F. Crawford Burkitt tells us that many of the sayings of Jesus can be regarded as "Midrash upon the words and concepts taken from Enoch." Burkitt claims a failure to understand the cultural context causes us to assume these are new teachings instead of references to what is "presupposed and assumed." Most tellingly, we see this in the Sermon on the Mount. (Carlson (2019), Kindle locations 6832-6850)

Is Luke trying to record a real incident in Jesus' ministry or is he using — or even creating — a story?

Consider Luke's account of Jesus reading in the synagogue in his home town:

[Luke 4:16-21 cited] ...

The passage purports to describe a first-century Sabbath synagogue service — but what is happening at it? Jesus is given the scroll of the prophet Isaiah, which he unrolls. ...

Isaiah belongs to the Prophets (the second main section of Jewish scripture), not the Law (or Torah — the first five books of the Jewish scripture): it is normal — at least today — for the main sabbath reading to be from the Torah. Are we to assume that Jesus is given the second lesson to read, or was it first-century Jewish practice to read equally from the Law and the Prophets? Does Jesus choose the passage from Isaiah, or was there a fixed lectionary that made it the set passage for the day? Jesus reads the passage and then makes a comment. Was this normal? Was he acting as the rabbi (the synagogue's teacher)? ...

When Jesus declares that Isaiah's prophecy is fulfilled, what does he mean? Is he referring to himself as the fulfilment of prophecy, or might he have intended a more general message of Jewish deliverance from the Romans? ...

When we examine the text of Isaiah 61, which Jesus reads, we encounter some problems. First, Luke's quotation is taken directly from the Septuagint, which is the Greek version of the Jewish scriptures. ... Jesus would hardly have been likely to read

A range of resources was employed

publicly in Greek — if indeed he could do so — to an Aramaic-speaking congregation. ...

Luke (or Jesus) is not quoting accurately: he inserts an extra line and omits another. Isaiah has, ‘He has sent me to bind up the broken-hearted’ after the word ‘poor’ (Isaiah 61:1), and ‘to release the oppressed’ is not part of this passage, but from another chapter (Isaiah 58:6). ...

All this raises the question of whether Luke is trying to record a real incident in Jesus’ ministry, or whether he is using — or even creating — a story, the purpose of which is to define the aim of Jesus’ ministry. ...

It poses a further salient question regarding the synagogue incident. How familiar would Luke be with synagogue worship? (Chryssides, 56-58)

New Testament citations of and allusions to Apocryphal and Pseudepigraphal writings

New Testament Citations of and Allusions to Apocryphal and Pseudepigraphal Writings¹

Matthew	4:4	Wisdom of Solomon	16:26
	4:15	1 Maccabees	5:15
	5:2–12	Sirach	25:7–12
	5:4	Sirach	48:24
	5:5	<i>1 Enoch</i>	5:7
	5:11	4 Esdras	7:14
	5:18	Baruch	4:1
	5:28	Sirach	9:8
	6:7	Sirach	7:14
	6:9	Sirach	23:1
	6:9	Sirach	23:4
	6:10	1 Maccabees	3:60
	6:12	Sirach	28:2
	6:13	Sirach	33:1
	6:20	4 Esdras	7:77
	6:20	Sirach	29:10–11
	6:23	Sirach	14:10
	6:26	<i>Psalms of Solomon</i>	5:9–19
	6:29	3 Esdras	1:4
	6:33	Wisdom of Solomon	7:11
	7:12	Tobit	4:15
	7:12	Sirach	31:15
	7:13	4 Esdras	7:6–14

¹Source: Adapted from *Novum Testamentum Graece* (27th ed.; ed. B. Aland, K. Aland, J. Karavidopoulos, C. M. Martini, and B. M. Metzger; Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1993), 800–806. A more complete listing is in C. A. Evans, *Ancient Texts for New Testament Studies*, Appendix Two, 342–409.

This page and those following are from *The Biblical Canon: Its Origin, Transmission, and Authority*, pages 452–464, Lee Martin McDonald, Baker Academic, 2007

7:16	Sirach	27:6
8:11	4 Maccabees	13:17
8:11	Baruch	4:37
8:21	Tobit	4:3
9:36	Judith	11:19
9:38	1 Maccabees	12:17
10:16	Sirach	13:17
10:22	4 Esdras	6:25
10:28	4 Maccabees	13:14
11:14	Sirach	48:10
11:22	Judith	16:17
11:23	<i>Psalms of Solomon</i>	1:5
11:25	Tobit	7:17
11:25	Sirach	51:1
11:28	Sirach	24:19
11:28	Sirach	51:23
11:29	Sirach	6:24–25
11:29	Sirach	6:28–29
11:29	Sirach	51:26–27
12:4	2 Maccabees	10:3
13:3	4 Esdras	8:41
13:3	4 Esdras	9:31–37
13:5	Sirach	40:15
13:6	<i>Psalms of Solomon</i>	18:6–7
13:39	3 Esdras	7:113
13:39	<i>1 Enoch</i>	16:1
13:44	Sirach	20:30–31
16:18	Wisdom of Solomon	16:13
16:22	1 Maccabees	2:21
16:27	Sirach	35:22
17:11	Sirach	48:10
18:10	Tobit	12:15
19:28	<i>Psalms of Solomon</i>	17:26
19:28	<i>Psalms of Solomon</i>	17:29
20:2	Tobit	5:15
21:12	<i>Psalms of Solomon</i>	17:30
22:13	Wisdom of Solomon	17:2
22:14	4 Esdras	8:3
22:14	4 Esdras	8:41
22:32	4 Maccabees	7:19
22:32	4 Maccabees	16:25
23:38	Tobit	14:4
24:15	1 Maccabees	1:54
24:15	2 Maccabees	8:17
24:16	1 Maccabees	2:28

Mark	25:31	<i>1 Enoch</i>	61:8
	25:31	<i>1 Enoch</i>	62:2–3
	25:31	<i>1 Enoch</i>	69:27
	25:35	Tobit	4:17
	25:36	Sirach	7:32–35
	26:13	<i>1 Enoch</i>	103:4
	26:24	<i>1 Enoch</i>	38:2
	26:38	Sirach	37:2
	26:64	<i>1 Enoch</i>	69:27
	27:24	Susanna	46
	27:43	Wisdom of Solomon	2:13
	27:43	Wisdom of Solomon	2:18–20
Mark	1:15	Tobit	14:5
	3:27	<i>Psalms of Solomon</i>	5:3
	4:5	Sirach	40:15
	4:11	Wisdom of Solomon	2:22
	4:14	4 Esdras	8:41
	4:14	4 Esdras	9:31–37
	5:34	Judith	8:35
	6:49	Wisdom of Solomon	17:15
	8:29	<i>1 Enoch</i>	48:10
	8:37	Sirach	26:14
	9:31	Sirach	2:18
	9:48	Judith	16:17
	10:19	Sirach	4:1
	12:25	<i>1 Enoch</i>	15:6–7
	12:25	<i>1 Enoch</i>	51:4
	13:8	4 Esdras	13:30–32
	13:13	4 Esdras	6:25
	14:34	Sirach	37:2
	15:29	Wisdom of Solomon	2:17–18
Luke	1:17	Sirach	48:10
	1:19	Tobit	12:15
	1:42	Judith	13:18
	1:42	2 Baruch	54:10
	1:52	Sirach	10:14
	2:11	<i>Psalms of Solomon</i>	17:32
	2:14	<i>Psalms of Solomon</i>	18:10
	2:29	Tobit	11:9
	2:37	Judith	8:6
	6:12	4 Maccabees	3:13–19
	6:24	<i>1 Enoch</i>	94:8
	6:35	Wisdom of Solomon	15:1
	7:22	Sirach	48:5
	9:8	Sirach	48:10

A range of resources employed

John	10:17	Tobit	7:17		6:35	Sirach	24:21		12:23	Sirach	48:21
	10:19	Sirach	11:19		7:38	Sirach	24:30–31		13:10	Sirach	1:30
	10:21	Sirach	51:1		7:42	<i>Psalms of Solomon</i>	11:21		13:17	Wisdom of Solomon	19:10
	12:19	Tobit	7:10		8:44	Wisdom of Solomon	2:24		14:14	Judith	14:16–17
	12:19	<i>1 Enoch</i>	97:8–10		8:53	Sirach	44:19		14:15	4 Maccabees	12:13
	12:20	Wisdom of Solomon	15:8		10:20	Wisdom of Solomon	5:4		14:15	Wisdom of Solomon	7:3
	13:27	1 Maccabees	3:6		10:22	1 Maccabees	4:59		15:4	Judith	8:26
	13:29	Baruch	4:37		12:26	4 Maccabees	17:20		15:29	4 Maccabees	5:2
	13:35	Tobit	14:4		14:15	Wisdom of Solomon	6:18		16:14	2 Maccabees	1:4
	14:13	Tobit	2:2		15:9–10	Wisdom of Solomon	3:9		16:23	<i>Testament of Joseph</i>	8:5
	15:12	1 Maccabees	10:29[30]		15:25	<i>Psalms of Solomon</i>	7:1		16:25	<i>Testament of Joseph</i>	8:5
	15:12	Tobit	3:17		17:3	Wisdom of Solomon	15:3		17:23	Wisdom of Solomon	14:20
	16:23	4 Maccabees	13:15		20:22	Wisdom of Solomon	15:11		17:23	Wisdom of Solomon	15:17
	16:9	<i>1 Enoch</i>	39:4		1:8	<i>Psalms of Solomon</i>	8:15		17:24	Tobit	7:17
	16:9	<i>1 Enoch</i>	63:10		1:10	2 Maccabees	3:26		17:24	Wisdom of Solomon	9:9
	16:26	4 Esdras	7:36		1:18	Wisdom of Solomon	4:19		17:24–25	Wisdom of Solomon	9:1
	16:26	<i>1 Enoch</i>	22:9–14		2:4	Sirach	48:12		17:26	Wisdom of Solomon	7:18
	18:7	Sirach	35:22		2:11	Sirach	36:7		17:27	Wisdom of Solomon	13:6
	19:44	Wisdom of Solomon	3:7		2:39	Sirach	24:32		17:29	Wisdom of Solomon	13:10
	20:37	4 Maccabees	7:19		4:24	Judith	9:12		17:30	Sirach	28:7
	20:37	4 Maccabees	16:25		5:2	2 Maccabees	4:32		19:27	Wisdom of Solomon	3:17
	21:24	Tobit	14:5		5:7	3 Maccabees	4:17		19:28	Bel and the Dragon	18
	21:24	Sirach	28:18		5:21	1 Maccabees	12:6		19:28	Bel and the Dragon	41
	21:24	<i>Psalms of Solomon</i>	17:25		5:21	2 Maccabees	1:10		20:26	Susanna	46
	21:25	Wisdom of Solomon	5:22		5:39	2 Maccabees	7:19		20:32	Wisdom of Solomon	5:5
	21:28	<i>1 Enoch</i>	51:2		7:36	<i>Assumption of Moses</i>	3:11		20:35	Sirach	4:31
	22:37	<i>Psalms of Solomon</i>	16:5		9:1–29	2 Maccabees	3:24–40		21:26	1 Maccabees	3:49
	24:4	2 Maccabees	3:26		9:1–29	4 Maccabees	4:1–14		22:9	Wisdom of Solomon	18:1
	24:31	2 Maccabees	3:34		9:2	1 Maccabees	15:21		24:2	2 Maccabees	4:6
	24:50	Sirach	50:20–21		9:7	Wisdom of Solomon	18:1		24:14	4 Maccabees	12:17
	24:53	Sirach	50:22		10:2	Tobit	12:8		26:18	Wisdom of Solomon	5:5
	1:3	Wisdom of Solomon	9:1		10:22	1 Maccabees	10:25		26:25	Judith	10:13
	1:14	<i>Psalms of Solomon</i>	7:6		10:22	1 Maccabees	11:30		1:4	<i>Testament of Levi</i>	18:7
	3:8	Sirach	16:21		10:22	1 Maccabees	11:33, etc.		1:18	<i>1 Enoch</i>	9:17
	3:12	Wisdom of Solomon	9:16		10:26	Wisdom of Solomon	7:1		1:19	2 Baruch	54:17–18
	3:12	Wisdom of Solomon	18:15–16		10:30	2 Maccabees	11:8		1:19–32	Wisdom of Solomon	13–15
	3:13	4 Esdras	4:8		10:34	Sirach	35:12–13		1:21	4 Esdras	8:60
	3:13	Baruch	3:29		10:36	Wisdom of Solomon	6:7		1:21	Wisdom of Solomon	13:1
	3:21	Tobit	4:6		10:36	Wisdom of Solomon	8:3, etc.		1:21	<i>1 Enoch</i>	99:8
	3:27	<i>Psalms of Solomon</i>	5:3–4		11:18	Wisdom of Solomon	12:19		1:23	Wisdom of Solomon	11:15
	3:29	1 Maccabees	9:39		12:5	Judith	4:9		1:23	Wisdom of Solomon	12:24
	4:9	Sirach	50:25–26		12:10	Sirach	19:26		1:25	<i>Assumption of Moses</i>	5:4
	4:48	Wisdom of Solomon	8:8		12:23	1 Maccabees	7:41		1:26	<i>Testament of Joseph</i>	7:8
	5:18	Wisdom of Solomon	2:16		12:23	2 Maccabees	9:9		1:28	2 Maccabees	6:4
	5:22	<i>1 Enoch</i>	69:27		12:23	Judith	16:17		1:28	3 Maccabees	4:16
Acts											
Romans											

A range of resources employed

1:29–31	4 Maccabees	1:26
1:29–31	4 Maccabees	2:15
2:3	<i>Psalms of Solomon</i>	15:8
2:4	Wisdom of Solomon	11:23
2:5	<i>Psalms of Solomon</i>	9:5
2:5	<i>Testament of Levi</i>	3:2
2:11	Sirach	35:12–13
2:15	Wisdom of Solomon	17:11
2:15	2 Baruch	57:2
2:15	<i>Testament of Reuben</i>	4:3
2:17	<i>Psalms of Solomon</i>	17:1
2:17	2 Baruch	48:22
2:22	<i>Testament of Levi</i>	14:4
2:29	<i>Jubilees</i>	1:23
3:3	<i>Psalms of Solomon</i>	8:28
4:13	Sirach	44:21
4:13	<i>Jubilees</i>	19:21, etc.
4:13	2 Baruch	14:13
4:13	2 Baruch	51:3
4:17	Sirach	44:19
4:17	2 Baruch	48:8
5:3	<i>Testament of Joseph</i>	10:1
5:5	Sirach	18:11
5:12	4 Esdras	3:21–22
5:12	4 Esdras	3:26
5:12	Wisdom of Solomon	2:24
5:12	2 Baruch	23:4
5:12	2 Baruch	54:15
5:16	4 Esdras	7:118–19
7:7	4 Maccabees	2:5–6
7:10	<i>Psalms of Solomon</i>	14:1
7:12	4 Esdras	9:37
7:23	4 Esdras	7:72
8:18	2 Baruch	15:8
8:18	2 Baruch	32:6
8:19	4 Esdras	7:11
8:19	4 Esdras	7:75
8:22	4 Esdras	10:9
8:28	<i>Psalms of Solomon</i>	4:25, etc.
9:4	2 Maccabees	6:23
9:4	Sirach	44:12
9:4	Sirach	44:18, etc.
9:16	<i>Assumption of Moses</i>	12:7
9:19	Wisdom of Solomon	12:12
9:21	Wisdom of Solomon	15:7

9:22	2 Baruch	59:6
9:24	<i>Jubilees</i>	2:19
9:31	Sirach	27:8
9:31	Wisdom of Solomon	2:11
10:6	4 Esdras	4:8
10:6	Baruch	3:29
10:7	Wisdom of Solomon	16:13
11:4	2 Maccabees	2:4
11:15	Sirach	10:20–21
11:25	4 Esdras	4:35–36
11:25	<i>Testament of Zebulun</i>	9–10
11:33	Wisdom of Solomon	17:1
11:33	2 Baruch	14:8–9
12:1	<i>Testament of Levi</i>	3:6
12:15	Sirach	7:34
12:21	<i>Testament of Benjamin</i>	4:3–4
13:1	Sirach	4:27
13:1	Wisdom of Solomon	6:3–4
13:9	4 Maccabees	2:6
13:10	Wisdom of Solomon	6:18
15:4	1 Maccabees	12:9
15:8	Sirach	36:20
15:16	4 Maccabees	7:8 variant
15:33	<i>Testament of Dan</i>	5:2
16:27	4 Maccabees	18:24
1:24	Wisdom of Solomon	7:24–25
2:9	Sirach	1:10
2:16	Wisdom of Solomon	9:13
4:13	Tobit	5:19
4:14	Wisdom of Solomon	11:10
4:17	<i>1 Enoch</i>	104:13
6:2	Wisdom of Solomon	3:8
6:12	Sirach	37:28
6:13	Sirach	36:18
6:18	Sirach	23:17
6:18	<i>Testament of Reuben</i>	5:5
7:19	Sirach	32:23
9:10	Sirach	6:19
9:25	Wisdom of Solomon	4:2
10:1	Wisdom of Solomon	19:7–8
10:20	Baruch	4:7
10:23	Sirach	37:28
11:7	Sirach	17:3
11:7	Wisdom of Solomon	2:23
11:24	Wisdom of Solomon	16:6

12:2	3 Maccabees	4:16
13:13	3 Esdras	4:38
15:19	<i>Apocalypse of Baruch</i>	21:13
15:29	2 Maccabees	12:43–44
15:32	Wisdom of Solomon	2:5–6
15:34	Wisdom of Solomon	13:1
2 Corinthians	5:1	9:15
5:4	Wisdom of Solomon	9:15
11:14	<i>Life of Adam and Eve</i>	9
12:2	<i>Testament of Levi</i>	2
12:12	Wisdom of Solomon	10:16
Galatians	1:5	18:24
2:6	Sirach	35:13
4:4	Tobit	14:5
4:10	<i>1 Enoch</i>	72–82
6:1	Wisdom of Solomon	17:17
6:17	3 Maccabees	2:29
Ephesians	1:6	45:1
1:6	Sirach	46:13
1:17	Wisdom of Solomon	7:7
3:9	3 Maccabees	2:3
4:14	Sirach	5:9
4:24	Wisdom of Solomon	9:3
6:13	Wisdom of Solomon	5:17
6:14	Wisdom of Solomon	5:18
6:16	Wisdom of Solomon	5:19
6:16	Wisdom of Solomon	5:21
6:24	<i>Psalms of Solomon</i>	4:25, etc.
Philippians	4:5	2:19
4:13	Wisdom of Solomon	7:23
4:18	Sirach	35:6
Colossians	1:22	102:5
2:3	Sirach	1:24–25
2:3	<i>1 Enoch</i>	46:3
1 Thessalonians	1:3	17:4
1:8	4 Maccabees	16:12
3:11	Judith	12:8
4:6	Sirach	5:3
4:13	Wisdom of Solomon	3:18
5:1	Wisdom of Solomon	8:8
5:2	Wisdom of Solomon	18:14–15
5:3	Wisdom of Solomon	17:14
5:3	<i>1 Enoch</i>	62:4
5:8	Wisdom of Solomon	5:18
2 Thessalonians	2:1	2:7

A range of resources employed

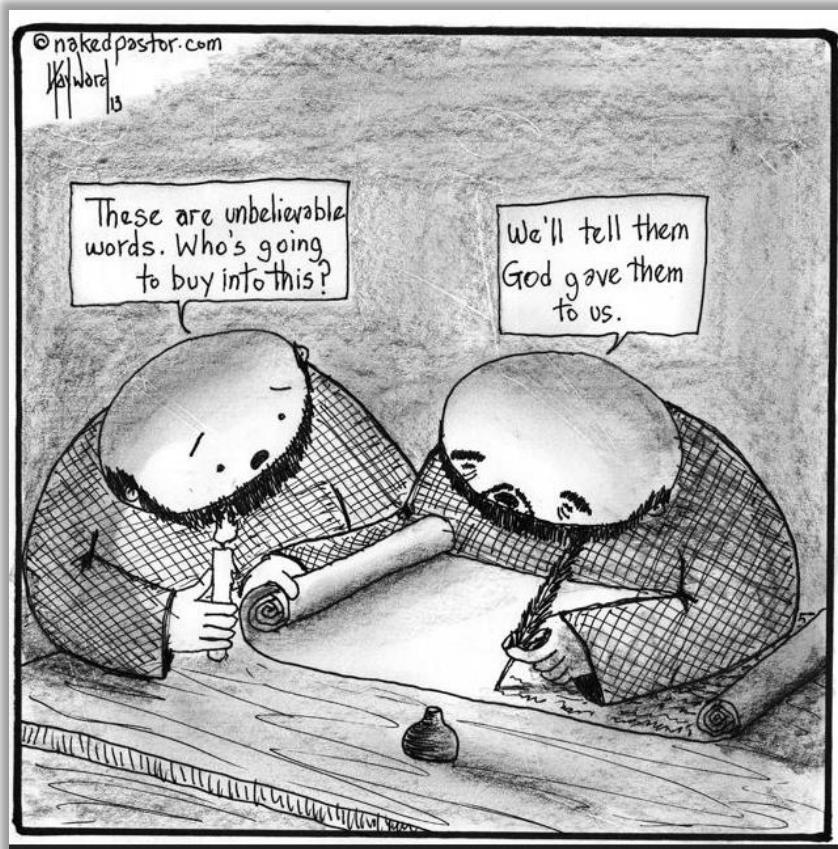
1 Timothy	1:17	Tobit	13:7
	1:17	Tobit	13:11
	2:2	2 Maccabees	3:11
	2:2	Baruch	1:11–12
	3:16	4 Maccabees	6:31
	3:16	4 Maccabees	7:16
	3:16	4 Maccabees	16:1
	6:15	2 Maccabees	12:15
	6:15	2 Maccabees	13:4
	6:15	3 Maccabees	5:35
2 Timothy	2:19	Sirach	46:5
	2:19	Sirach	17:26
			variant
	2:19	Sirach	35:3
	3:11	<i>Psalms of Solomon</i>	4:23
	4:8	Wisdom of Solomon	5:16
	4:17	1 Maccabees	2:60
Titus	2:11	2 Maccabees	3:30
	2:11	3 Maccabees	6:9
	3:4	Wisdom of Solomon	1:6
Hebrews	1:3	Wisdom of Solomon	7:25–26
	2:5	Sirach	17:17
	4:12	Wisdom of Solomon	7:22–30
	4:12	Wisdom of Solomon	18:15–16
	4:13	<i>1 Enoch</i>	9:5
	4:15	<i>Psalms of Solomon</i>	17:36
	5:6	1 Maccabees	14:41
	6:12	<i>Psalms of Solomon</i>	12:6
	7:22	Sirach	29:14–20
	9:26	<i>Testament of Levi</i>	18:9
	11:5	Sirach	44:16
	11:5	Wisdom of Solomon	4:10
	11:6	Wisdom of Solomon	10:17
	11:10	2 Maccabees	4:1
	11:10	Wisdom of Solomon	13:1
	11:17	Sirach	2:52
	11:17	1 Maccabees	44:20
	11:25	4 Maccabees	15:2
	11:25	4 Maccabees	15:8
	11:27	Sirach	2:2
	11:28	Wisdom of Solomon	18:25
	11:35	2 Maccabees	6:18–7:42
	11:37	<i>Martyrdom and Ascension of Isaiah</i>	5:11–14
	12:1	4 Maccabees	16:16

	12:1	4 Maccabees	17:10–15
	12:4	2 Maccabees	13:14
	12:7	<i>Psalms of Solomon</i>	10:2
	12:7	<i>Psalms of Solomon</i>	14:1
	12:9	2 Maccabees	3:24
	12:12	Sirach	25:23
	12:17	Wisdom of Solomon	12:10
	12:21	1 Maccabees	13:2
	12:23	<i>1 Enoch</i>	22:9
	13:7	Sirach	33:19
	13:7	Wisdom of Solomon	2:17
James	13:15	<i>Psalms of Solomon</i>	15:2–3
	1:1	2 Maccabees	1:27
	1:2	Sirach	2:1
	1:2	Wisdom of Solomon	3:4–5
	1:3	4 Maccabees	1:11
	1:3	<i>Testament of Joseph</i>	10:1
	1:4	4 Maccabees	15:7
	1:13	Sirach	15:11–20
	1:14	<i>1 Enoch</i>	98:4
	1:19	Sirach	5:11
	1:21	Sirach	3:17
	2:13	Tobit	4:10
	2:23	Wisdom of Solomon	7:27
	3:2	Sirach	14:1
	3:6	Sirach	5:13
	3:6	<i>1 Enoch</i>	48:7
	3:9	Sirach	23:1
	3:9	Sirach	23:4
	3:10	Sirach	5:13
	3:10	Sirach	28:12
	3:13	Sirach	3:17
	4:2	1 Maccabees	8:16
	4:7	<i>Testament of Naphtali</i>	8:4
	4:8	<i>Testament of Dan</i>	6:2
	4:11	Wisdom of Solomon	1:11
	4:13	<i>1 Enoch</i>	97:8–10
	5:1	<i>1 Enoch</i>	94:8
	5:3	Judith	16:17
	5:3	Sirach	29:10
	5:4	Tobit	4:14
	5:6	Wisdom of Solomon	2:10
	5:6	Wisdom of Solomon	2:12
	5:6	Wisdom of Solomon	2:19
	5:10	4 Maccabees	9:8

1 Peter	1:3	Sirach	16:12
	1:7	Sirach	2:5
	1:12	<i>1 Enoch</i>	1:2
	1:12	<i>1 Enoch</i>	16:3
	2:25	Wisdom of Solomon	1:6
	3:19	<i>1 Enoch</i>	9:10
	3:19	<i>1 Enoch</i>	10:11–15
	4:19	2 Maccabees	1:24, etc.
	5:7	Wisdom of Solomon	12:13
2 Peter	1:19	4 Esdras	12:42
	2:2	Wisdom of Solomon	5:6
	2:4	<i>1 Enoch</i>	10:4–5
	2:4	<i>1 Enoch</i>	10:11–14
	2:7	3 Maccabees	2:13
	2:7	Wisdom of Solomon	10:6
	3:6	<i>1 Enoch</i>	83:3–5
	3:9	Sirach	35:19
1 John	3:18	Sirach	18:10
	4:6	<i>Psalms of Solomon</i>	8:14
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“God said it, I believe it”



I [David Hayward] had a funny thought last night. I'm painfully aware that many people don't find funny what I find funny. At least I thought it was funny. I thought: what if the early councils where they canonized books of the bible were the same as, say, our Pulitzer Prize or National Book Award? It was their way of saying, "*Great book! In fact, we want to recommend this to everybody.*" And, because of their ancient worldview, they would add, "*And we not only believe God wants you to as well, but that he's actually behind this book! He not only blessed it, but begat it!*"

We are very superstitious people. And as we continue to modernize we don't seem to be getting any less so. We'll believe anything.

Once in a while a movie will come out and the creator will say God gave them the movie. A musician will say that she didn't write the song but that it was given to her. A writer will write a book and say that it was narrated to him by God. A preacher will say that the Spirit gave her this message and it is straight from God. I couldn't count how many times it has been said over me, "*Thus saith the Lord...*"

Many people will believe this and buy it. I mean, they will embrace what it says and lay their money down for it.

I love the bible. I have enormous respect for it. Because it points in its own unique way towards the Truth.

David Hayward, September 14, 2013
(<https://www.patheos.com/blogs/nakedpastor/2013/09/god-said-it-i-believe-it/>
accessed 23 January 2021)

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