



7-1-2007

Scholarly Books on the New Testament

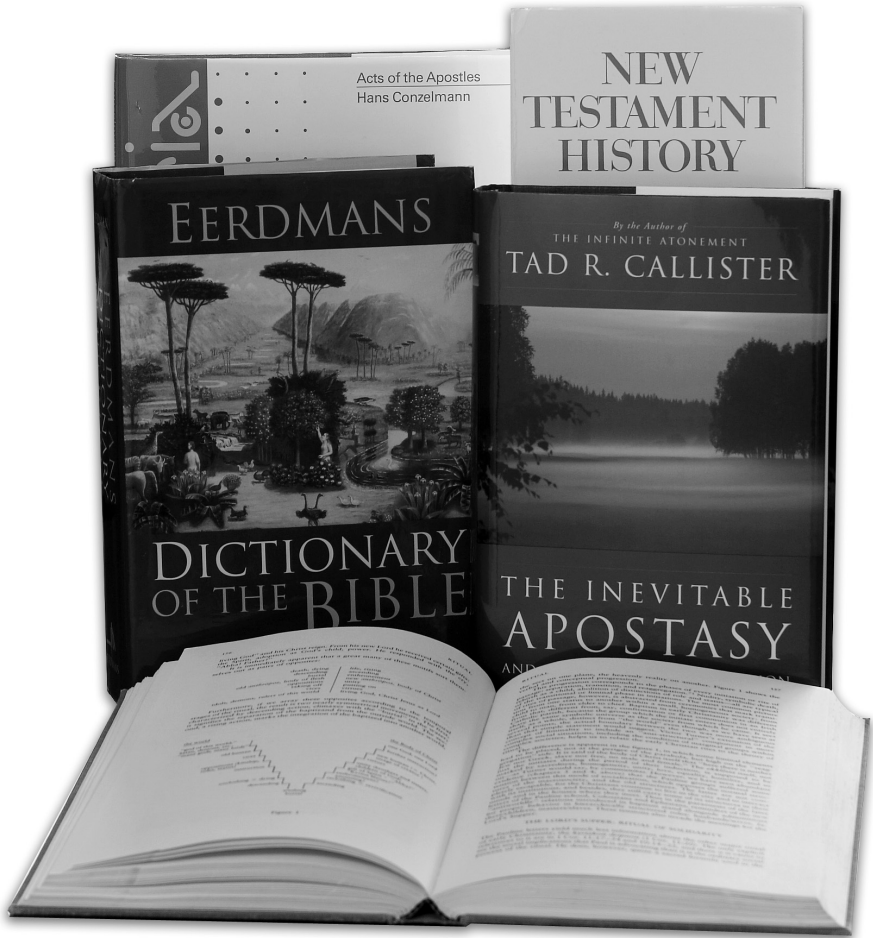
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Wayment, Thomas A. "Scholarly Books on the New Testament." *Religious Educator: Perspectives on the Restored Gospel* 8, no. 2 (2007). <https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/re/vol8/iss2/10>

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Teachers of the restored gospel can find valuable resources to enhance their study.

Courtesy of Richard Crookston

Scholarly Books on the New Testament

Thomas A. Wayment

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As a scholar of the New Testament, I am often asked which books on the New Testament are the best ones to study. The question sometimes baffles me because to answer such a question, I must first narrow the selection to a specific area of interest, understand the audience who will be reading the book, and know the purpose for which the book is being read. Reading for enjoyment, for example, is not always the same as reading to understand a subject. Moreover, when a person asks about the best books, does the adjective *best* imply the most important, the most influential, the most enjoyable, or the best of some other category?

Another important facet of this discussion is a general feeling of skepticism that pervades our impressions of modern biblical scholarship and scholars. The modern academy operates under the assumption that belief and faith have no place in academia.¹ Rather, the scholarly ideal is the detached historian who is uninfluenced (although this can never fully be achieved) in his or her conclusions and can present findings without appeal to emotion—outside the framework of an established religious tradition. This approach has attracted a backlash from believers who seek to defend their beliefs against what they feel are encroachments from secularism and atheism.

Interestingly, the two approaches—sometimes popularly referred to as faith-based versus academic—which seem to be at odds with one another, are actually fairly compatible. In both, the quest should ideally be for truth and an accurate understanding of who Jesus really was, what He taught His disciples, and the meaning of His death.

Scholars who seek for accurate answers to these questions must remain open to all hypotheses regardless of the scholars' religious attitudes. With their biases put aside, scholars must painstakingly explore all possible answers, whether popular or not. If they allow their religious beliefs to influence their findings, their findings become tainted and unusable by the larger scholarly and believing communities. This is not an argument for the postmodern scholarly ideal of absolute unbiased historicism; rather, it describes the direction and intent of the academic mindset, even though the academy invites those who believe and those who do not.

Some may feel that this approach encourages atheism or secularism, but consider for a moment the outcome if all scholars labored under a single religious tradition, whether it be Catholicism, Methodism, Anglicanism, or another religious tradition. The result would be a self-perpetuating system that dominates discussions of religion and could not tolerate diversity of opinion, such as our own unique understanding of history and faith. If our own tradition guided the scholarly enterprise, then perhaps we would feel more at ease; but again, this domination would ultimately limit the discussion for the millions who do not believe as we do. If the discussion is to be applicable to the widest possible audience, it must remain detached, unbiased, and guided by the quest for truth.

On the other hand, inspired prophetic direction, revelation, and counsel guide the scholarly enterprise that exists in our own faith. My own experience has taught me that I can refer to a vast body of scholarly research, remaining open to consider all possible answers, and evaluate it in light of the Restoration. This process should not be considered a buffet-style approach but rather a feast in which prophetic direction and inspiration have called our attention to specific eternal truths.

A pitfall of this approach may be that it could be interpreted as a distillation of scholarly materials into Latter-day Saint discussions and contexts. This, however, would be putting the cart before the horse. Scholarship functions on the rigid application of methodology and consensus opinion, neither of which can guarantee truth absolutely. Therefore, the scholar who relies on the distillation of current scholarship also builds upon a shifting foundation that will require each subsequent generation to reconsider the position of the academy and then redefine his or her current position. On the other hand, reliance on the inspired words of living prophets and apostles reveals a sure foundation and permits us to recognize the discovery of truth in any discipline or science.

In other words, each new generation of scholars recognizes an orthodox set of scholars from whose work the new generation can freely draw; and then when those scholarly works intersect with their own findings, the scholarly studies are cited in notes. Unfortunately, this approach will never achieve final results because as each new generation of scholars redefines the past, our own scholarship will shift and then shift again. Rather, the ideal would be to handle the original sources used by those scholars and then cite how those modern scholars use their sources. We can then question, establish, or alter their findings based on original sources and not enter into the scholarly debates inappropriately armed.

Interestingly, although the light of the Restoration has clarified many eternal truths, other areas of interest have been mentioned only in passing. When no prophetic counsel has been offered on a certain subject, Latter-day Saint scholars are left to navigate the field for themselves. If the tools of scholarship have never been fully cultivated, this endeavor will lead to less-than-desirable results.

With the light of the Restoration to guide us, we are in a position to draw upon the available primary, or original, sources and then the best available scholarship and use it in meaningful ways. In this spirit, I present what I feel are some of the most influential works on the New Testament today—publications that continue to have the greatest impact in our scholarly lives for the near future. These works have shaped the way we ask questions of the New Testament. Only by working with the same primary sources will we be able to enter into the arena of their discussions as well as acquire any valuable and enduring information from those discussions.

The Quest for the “Historical Jesus”

In the twentieth century, following the English translation of Albert Schweitzer’s *The Quest of the Historical Jesus*, a group of scholars began thinking about Jesus and His life in exciting new ways.² They recognized that public understanding of Jesus had been filtered through the larger institution of the church and that to really appreciate who Jesus was, they would have to peel away the layers of tradition to discover the “historical Jesus.” *The church* was initially loosely defined as any institution that altered or shaped the way the story of Jesus was presented, whether it be a first-century or a nineteenth-century institution. When these successive layers of tradition were peeled back, a more perfect picture of Jesus would thus emerge, defined by a more precise understanding of what He said, did, and experienced. The first so-called quest for the historical

Jesus concluded that He was an apocalyptic prophet who promised the dawning of a new millennial age.

The first quest was followed by a second quest, which of course has been followed by other tangential quests.³ Recognizing certain deficiencies in the first quest, such as a limited interpretation of history, inspired the efforts of the second-generation scholars. They felt that Jesus could not be understood or defined simply as the sum of His experiences and sayings (that is, by His historical setting alone); rather, He should be understood dynamically as a composite of His experiences and sayings and by how His peers—the church and early institutional leaders—defined Him. Interestingly, the new quest has been bogged down for some time as scholars have attempted to clarify the progression of leadership from Jesus’s death, to the Apostles, and to the late first-century bishops and elders. The new quest also attempts to develop a clearer understanding of the relationship of first-century sources to the life of Jesus.

A number of vitally important works have emerged from this quest. No single work has yet emerged as the defining monograph, but the majority of books about Jesus trace their ancestry to this quest in some way; in other words, modern studies of Jesus’s life are part of the dialogue of this quest. Being uninformed about how the quest has shaped the modern discussion can, in fact, lead us to interpret findings and then draw certain conclusions without seeing the implications of the larger picture. In essence, it is somewhat like our purchasing a new house because we like the front door.

My own experience has led me to esteem the following books as the best books on the quest. Albert Schweitzer’s *The Quest of the Historical Jesus* is still essential reading in the field as well as James M. Robinson’s *A New Quest of the Historical Jesus*. Still timely, but not as careful or comprehensive as Schweitzer or Robinson, is Bart D. Ehrman’s *Jesus: Apocalyptic Prophet of a New Millennium*.⁴ Ehrman’s work signals a call to return to the findings of Schweitzer and, in essence, is an attempt to reign in the more tangential quests. His work, however, demonstrates that scholars still consider Jesus an apocalyptic prophet who prophesied of a new age and asserts that titles such as *Savior* and *Redeemer* were later descriptions applied to Jesus by His second- and third-generation followers.

***Kyrios Christos* or Lord Jesus**

Perhaps more properly considered a subset of the quest for the “historical Jesus” is one of the most important and long-lasting works

ever written in the field: Wilhelm Bousset's *Kyrios Christos: A History of the Belief in Christ from the Beginnings of Christianity to Irenaeus*⁵ traced the development of changing perceptions about Jesus, which the first quest had posited would exist, through the first Christian century. This enormously successful monograph has defined the way many scholars present the life of Jesus and brought incredible scholarly acumen and breadth to New Testament studies.

In 1992, a group of scholars met at Princeton under the direction of the influential James H. Charlesworth to work out some of the categories emanating from Bousset's work. Although not instigated directly as a response to Bousset, the seminar participants felt that the recent publications of a wealth of primary materials—the Dead Sea Scrolls, the Nag Hammadi Codices, the Cologne Mani Codex, and other works—warranted a reinvestigation. The resulting publication of their discussions, *The Messiah: Developments in Earliest Judaism and Christianity*,⁶ continues to be a must-read for students of the New Testament and early Christianity.

Even more recently, Larry Hurtado's *Lord Jesus Christ: Devotion to Jesus in Earliest Christianity*⁷ has challenged the towering presence of Bousset in the field, presenting one of the most careful and thoughtful scholarly monographs to date. Hurtado's work, which rightly challenges the fundamentals and categories of the quest for the "historical Jesus," attempts to reconfigure the way we think about the transition between the living Jesus and the way early Christians interpreted His life. These studies could prove vitally important for the dynamics of late first-century Christianity and the developing ecclesiastical structure that arose out of this period.

These issues may at first appear tangential to our typical areas of interest. However, simple questions, such as whether the Apostasy was a result of internal corruption or external persecution, have not been answered by Latter-day Saint scholars. Moreover, we have not answered the fundamental question of whether the textual corruption induced the Apostasy or whether apostates altered canonical texts, which resulted in a corruption of practice and belief—implying that a few wayward Christians were able to bring down the whole.⁸

New Testament Textual Criticism

The growing discipline of New Testament textual criticism, once a subset of New Testament studies but now a burgeoning field in itself, has developed under careful scholarly scrutiny and is now on the verge of making some major breakthroughs, the equivalent of which has

not been seen for nearly a hundred years.⁹ The pioneers of the field, Karl Lachmann, Constantin von Tischendorf, Brooke Foss Westcott, Fenton John Anthony Hort, Eberhard Nestle, Irwin Nestle, Hermann Freiherr von Soden, and others, developed methodological approaches and categories that are still in place today.

More recently, however, a trend has developed that has caused scholars to rethink some of the older approaches in the field and reconfigure the way we discuss the text of the New Testament and how we reconstruct its text. Primary among the new approaches are two books that advocate more eclectic or reasoned approaches to recovering the original text of the New Testament as well as maintaining certain methodologies advanced by earlier New Testament textual critics. Kurt and Barbara Aland's *The Text of the New Testament* is foremost in this regard, with a particular emphasis on rewriting the categories of New Testament textual families.¹⁰ The fourth edition of Metzger's influential *Text of the New Testament*, revised and expanded by Bart D. Ehrman, is also exemplary.¹¹

The impact of textual criticism is only now beginning to be felt in scholarship today as the texts and manuscripts of the New Testament begin to reveal how Christianity grew out of and borrowed from Judaism. Those same texts also reveal a reverence for Jesus at an incredibly early stage in the history of the church.¹² These findings are, in fact, contradictory to the standard assumptions in the academy today. In more plain terminology, if early Christians did reverence Jesus as Lord and God by at least AD 100 (and we might assume earlier, but textual artifacts do not exist earlier than that), we can reasonably assume that the second-century church did not develop the belief that Jesus was God and Lord of Salvation. These ideas were already present in the period prior to the end of the first century! Perhaps these results are not startling to some scholars because these ideas are already found in the New Testament (a text that has been severely discounted as a historical source in the modern era), but they do show that the academy is generally heading in a favorable direction today.

Paul: The Author of Christianity?

Perhaps no other figure in the New Testament besides Jesus has garnered such attention and created such diversity of opinion as Paul the Apostle. In my opinion, the area of Pauline studies is the most difficult to navigate today, so the following ideas can only sweepingly describe the present state of the field and what books might be best.

In pre-World War II Germany, with the rise of the Religionsgeschichteschule (History of Religions School), which sought to describe

Christianity as a social phenomenon of the Greco-Roman world, Paul came to be seen as a product of Jewish apocalyptic anxiety and Christian liberalism. In other words, Jewish expectations of the coming of the Messiah and the associated frustration that the coming of the Messiah appeared to be delayed caused many Jews to feel disappointment and lack of confidence in God. Those same Jews, like Paul, purportedly began to look for other expressions of God's grace. According to the theory, Christianity opened new possibilities for these frustrated Jews.

With Paul at the helm of this reenvisioning of Judaism, which also came to be called Christianity, the early Christian church developed according to Paul's personal outlook and perspective.¹³ Early interactions among church leaders, therefore, began to be interpreted as competing forms of Christianity, seeking to imply their own forms of orthodoxy on the others. Of course, this less-than-flattering view of early Christianity places great emphasis on Paul's role in shaping the church. In these studies, the typical findings are that Paul is the most important figure in Christianity besides Jesus or that Paul, rather than Jesus, is responsible for making Christianity what it is today.

Hundreds, if not thousands, of books have been written on the life of Paul. But before anyone reads one of them, he or she would be wise to connect the particular study into the family tree of Pauline scholarship. Certain important questions should be asked. Is the book in question a reaction to the Religionsgeschichteschule, or does it advance their ideas? Further questions should follow—does Paul appear as a Jew trying to change Christianity, or is he a Christian trying to make sense of his Jewish heritage?

Some excellent works on Paul's life are Alan F. Segal's *Paul the Convert: The Apostolate and Apostasy of Saul the Pharisee*, and Jerome Murphy-O'Connor's *Paul: A Critical Life*.¹⁴ These two works are both carefully researched and provide the reader with cautiously constructed views of how Paul fits into the overall picture of developing Christianity. Segal sees Paul as a radical convert to Christianity whose divergent beliefs encouraged his conversion from Judaism to Christianity, whereas Murphy-O'Connor sees Paul as a humble convert of dynamic personality and boundless energy.

Another invaluable study of Paul can be found in Wayne A. Meeks's *The First Urban Christians: The Social World of the Apostle Paul*.¹⁵ This work provides the reader with the necessary Greco-Roman background for understanding Paul's life after conversion. Its major shortfall is that it omits Paul's early period prior to his conversion. For that time period, *Paul's Early Period* by Rainer Riesner is essential reading.¹⁶

Dictionaries

New Testament dictionaries are abundant today and approach the New Testament from a variety of different vantage points. Unfortunately, no single dictionary satisfies every need of the New Testament scholar. Although it unfortunately comes in a six-volume set, the *Anchor Bible Dictionary*, edited by David Noel Freedman, is perhaps the most comprehensive dictionary of the Bible today.¹⁷ Some of its entries are now outdated, and some important subjects receive only minor treatment when readers might expect otherwise. It is, however, an excellent starting point for biblical study. The *Eerdmans Dictionary of the Bible* is also a handy reference companion.¹⁸ Its brevity notwithstanding, the entries are very up to date and reflect the most recent scholarship in the field today.

For the more serious student of the New Testament, Gerhard Kittel and Gerhard Freidric's *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, translated by Geoffrey W. Bromily, is a standard in the field.¹⁹ Unfortunately, it is probably used to the exclusion of the equally important three-volume work by Celsas Spiqc, *Theological Lexicon of the New Testament*, edited by James D. Ernest.²⁰ These two works combined are an essential part of any New Testament library, particularly when readers are studying the meaning of New Testament terms in Greek and the implications of certain words in their larger Greco-Roman context.²¹

New Testament History: Greco-Roman or Jewish

In the academy today, two schools of thought prevail regarding the sociological background and historical development of Christianity in the first few centuries. Certainly this is a simplification to some degree, but the vast majority of studies in this area can be classified in one of two ways—either Christianity was a social phenomenon growing out of the larger Greco-Roman world or it was a small Jewish reformist movement that eventually broke from its Jewish moorings.

The essential question facing students of the New Testament is whether studying Classics or studying Judaism will be more helpful to understanding the New Testament world; in other words, is Latin or Hebrew more beneficial for New Testament study? The question is not easily resolved, and Latter-day Saint scholars have typically adopted both approaches. The obvious answer seems to be that both approaches have their merits; unfortunately, very few schools today approach the question from both viewpoints. It is essentially an either-or proposal.

For the student of the New Testament, the following works are still important and largely influential. Emil Schürer's *The History of the Jewish People in the Age of Jesus Christ (175 B.C.–A.D. 135)*, revised and edited by Geza Vermes and Fergus Millar, explores the theory that Christianity grew largely from Jewish origins.²² Although only available in German, Hermann Strack and Paul Billerbeck's six-volume *Kommentar zum Neuen Testament aus Talmud und Midrasch* is the best source to reference primary sources on the intersections between Judaism and Christianity.²³ Joachim Jeremias's *Jerusalem in the Time of Jesus: An Investigation into Economic and Social Condition during the New Testament Period* is also helpful and still contains insights that are pertinent today, even though the work is now dated.²⁴

On the Greco-Roman world, the revised edition of *The New Testament Background*, edited by Charles Kingsley Barrett, is careful and cautious in providing source materials for understanding the world of the New Testament.²⁵ F. F. Bruce's *New Testament History*, although dated, is still a favorite among Latter-day Saint scholars.²⁶ Bruce's work is not generally highly regarded among scholars today because its presentation is no longer on the cutting edge, but it is still a competent introduction to the subject. I personally like Luke Timothy Johnson's *The Writings of the New Testament*, although at times his religious views lead him to dismiss scholarly discussions unnecessarily.²⁷

Commentaries

The value of New Testament commentaries is that they provide a reference point for interpretation of selected passages. Today, various commentaries are aimed at teachers, preachers, academics, and lay students. Therefore, no single commentary can satisfy every need or answer every question. One important reason for readers to purchase New Testament commentaries is obvious because they typically provide the most up-to-date bibliographic information for a given book of scripture; moreover, they also often represent a summary of the various scholarly approaches to a specific book, which can help the reader understand simple facts such as why scholars often quote references to the Gospel of Mark first even when the same story is also found in Matthew and Luke.

One commentary series stands out as exemplary for beginning students of the New Testament: Black's New Testament Commentaries.²⁸ For the really serious student of the New Testament, the conservative Anchor Bible Commentary series, the liberal Hermeneia series, and the New International Greek Testament Commentaries are helpful and informative resources.²⁹

Development of the Canon

Although the history of the New Testament canon is a specialized subset of New Testament studies, it is an essential part of understanding how to use and interpret the text of the New Testament. Often, I am asked what the “original Greek” says in this or that passage. This question, however, cannot be answered today because we do not have the original and because we do not know for certain the relationship of the earliest surviving written texts (all of them in Greek) and their earlier Aramaic sources (the language of Jesus and the language of the first written and oral sources).

Another important reason for our studying the history of the New Testament canon is to avoid the reliance upon emotive arguments intended to demonstrate the superiority of one translation over another. Certainly some translations are better than others, but no single translation in English today is superior to the words of Jesus as He spoke them. Every translation, including the Greek, Latin, Syriac, English, Spanish, or any other language, can only approximate what Jesus said and what He meant. These translations will always remain secondary sources that report to the best of their ability what Jesus said. As far as we can tell today, we have only a very few words in the New Testament that actually represent the words as Jesus spoke them while everything else is preserved in translation. Those words are “Amen,” “talitha cumi,” “abba,” “mammon,” “Cephas,” “eloi eloi lama sabachthani,” and “raca.” Because the translations of His words are the only way we can access His words, it is important to understand the history of those translations. Bruce M. Metzger’s *The Canon of the New Testament: Its Origin, Development, and Significance* is still the standard in the field and is very accessible for the beginning student.³⁰

Conclusion

No single list of books on the New Testament can feasibly represent all the best books available today. Differences of opinion will always arise about which ones are best. Even Latter-day Saint scholars may have significant differences of opinion. On the other hand, a fairly wide consensus exists on which books should be considered best in the sense that they have been the most influential and should be required reading for anyone who wishes to pursue further study of the New Testament and early Christianity.

It would be strange indeed to walk into a car dealership today and purchase a car based on the bumper alone. The bumper is only

one small piece of equipment on a very complex machine that costs many thousands of dollars. Our study of the New Testament should be no different. If we purchase the bumper, we also purchase the car, and yet we often like the results of certain scholarly theories without realizing the larger implications for those studies. For example, one of the areas of intense scholarly interest today is the development of Christianity from a small community to a fractured institution in the second and third centuries or from a series of distinct communities that eventually developed into a single community under pressure from the orthodox movement. The issue has far-reaching ramifications for our understanding of Christianity and of Jesus. Latter-day Saint scholars ask whether the early church began as a unified body that eventually fell into disarray or whether only a small group of early Christians represented Jesus's true followers while all the others were apostate. It is an important question for our understanding of Gnosticism, the text of the Bible, the early Christian Fathers, and other areas of interest.

If, for example, Gnosticism represented the true, or most correct, form of Christianity, the New Testament itself was composed by apostate Christians. If, on the other hand, the church was already in apostasy in the mid-first century after the death of the Apostles and if the original unity of the church was already beginning to disintegrate, the church fathers cannot tell us anything about the Apostasy because they had always lived in an apostasy. Rather, their apostasy is the suppression of other forms of Christianity who were using their own apostate viewpoints to suppress others.

These and other questions are vital to our progress in the field of early Christian studies, but without our pausing to answer some of the more fundamental questions in the field, our own progress will soon falter. Our prophetic moorings will always provide balance to our study, but if we are to contribute to the larger discussion, our methodology and approach will need careful consideration. The books I've mentioned and many others like them can provide a starting point for these future discussions. **RE**

Notes

1. Michael V. Fox, "Bible Scholarship and Faith-Based Study: My View," SBL Forum, <http://www.sbl-site.org/Article.aspx?ArticleId=490>.

2. Albert Schweitzer, *The Quest of the Historical Jesus*, trans. John Bowden (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2001; originally published in 1906).

3. James M. Robinson, *A New Quest of the Historical Jesus and Other Essays* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1983; first published SCM Press, London, 1959).

4. Bart D. Ehrman, *Jesus: Apocalyptic Prophet of the New Millennium* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999).

5. Wilhelm Bousset, *Kyrios Christos: A History of the Belief in Christ from the Beginnings of Christianity to Irenaeus*, trans. John E. Steely (Nashville: Abingdon, 1970).

6. James H. Charlesworth, ed., *The Messiah: Developments in Earliest Judaism and Christianity: The First Princeton Symposium on Judaism and Christian Origins* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1992).

7. Larry W. Hurtado, *Lord Jesus Christ: Devotion to Jesus in Earliest Christianity* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003).

8. See the most recent scholarship on this issue: Tad R. Callister, *The Inevitable Apostasy and the Promised Restoration* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2006); Alexander B. Morrison, *Turning from Truth: A New Look at the Great Apostasy* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2005), and Noel B. Reynolds, ed., *Early Christians in Disarray: Contemporary LDS Perspectives on the Christian Apostasy* (Provo, Utah: ISPART, 2005).

9. The series *Textus Criticus Maior* promises to be the most comprehensive collection of textual variants of the New Testament ever assembled.

10. First published as *Der Text des Neuen Testaments* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1981); English translation by Erroll F. Rhodes (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987).

11. Bruce M. Metzger and Bart D. Ehrman, *The Text of the New Testament: Its Transmission, Corruption, and Restoration*, 4th ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005).

12. Larry W. Hurtado, *The Earliest Christian Artifacts: Manuscripts and Christian Origins* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006), 15–43.

13. My own study of Paul's life seeks to place him within the context of the larger ecclesiastical or church structure and to show how his personality developed according to the Spirit of God rather than how his personality shaped Christianity: see Thomas A. Wayment, *From Persecutor to Apostle: A Biography of Paul* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2006).

14. Alan F. Segal, *Paul the Convert: The Apostolate and Apostasy of Saul the Pharisee* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1990); Jerome Murphy-O'Connor, *Paul: A Critical Life* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996).

15. Wayne Meeks, *The First Urban Christians: The Social World of the Apostle Paul*, 2nd ed. (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2003).

16. Rainer Riesner, *Paul's Early Period: Chronology, Mission Strategy, Theology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998).

17. David Noel Freedman, ed., *Anchor Bible Dictionary*, 6 vols. (New York: Doubleday, 1992).

18. David Noel Freedman, Allen C. Myers, Astrid B. Beck, eds., *Eerdmans Dictionary of the Bible* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000).

19. Gerhard Kittel and Gerhard Freidric's, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, trans. Geoffrey W. Bromily (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1985).

20. Celsus Spiq, *Theological Lexicon of the New Testament*, ed. James D. Ernest, 3 vols. (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1994).

21. It is important to note that this does not imply that the Greco-Roman worldview approach is preferable but rather that the language of translation (Greek) is significantly informed by Greco-Roman usage of those same terms.

22. Emil Schürer, *The History of the Jewish People in the Age of Jesus Christ* (175 B.C.–A.D. 135), rev. and ed. by Geza Vermes and Fergus Millar, 3 vols. (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1973).
23. Hermann Strack and Paul Billerbeck, *Kommentar zum Neuen Testament aus Talmud und Midrasch*, 6 vols. (München: C. H. Beck, 1922–56).
24. Joachim Jeremias, *Jerusalem in the Time of Jesus: An Investigation into Economic and Social Condition during the New Testament Period* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1975).
25. Charles Kingsley Barrett, ed., *The New Testament Background*, rev. ed. (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1987).
26. F. F. Bruce, *New Testament History* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1980).
27. Luke Timothy Johnson, *The Writings of the New Testament*, rev. ed. (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1999).
28. Black's New Testament Commentaries (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson).
29. Anchor Bible Commentary (New York: Doubleday); Hermeneia (Philadelphia: Fortress); New International Greek Testament Commentaries (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans).
30. Bruce M. Metzger, *The Canon of the New Testament: Its Origin, Development, and Significance* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1987).