New Testament Theology

ECKHARD J. SCHNABEL

New Testament Theology

New Testament Theology

ECKHARD J. SCHNABEL

Baker Academic
a division of Baker Publishing Group
Grand Rapids, Michigan

Published by Baker Academic
a division of Baker Publishing Group
Grand Rapids, Michigan
www.bakeracademic.com

Printed in the United States of America

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data
Names: Schnabel, Eckhard J., author.
Title: New Testament theology / Eckhard J. Schnabel.
Description: Grand Rapids, Michigan : Baker Academic, a division of Baker Publishing Group, [2023] | Includes bibliographical references and index.
Identifiers: LCCN 2023008938 | ISBN 9781540963116 (cloth) | ISBN 9781493443062 (ebook) | ISBN 9781493443079 (pdf)
Subjects: LCSH: Bible. New Testament—Theology. | Theology—History—Early church, ca. 30–600.
Classification: LCC BS2397 .S348 2023 | DDC 230/.0415—dc23/eng/20230417
LC record available at https://lccn.loc.gov/2023008938

Baker Publishing Group publications use paper produced from sustainable forestry practices and post-consumer waste whenever possible.

23 24 25 26 27 28 29 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

Barbara

τῇ ἀγαπητῇ
καὶ συνεργάτιδι
προστάτιδι πολλῶν
μετὰ πάσης εὐχαριστίας

Contents

Part 5 | The Consolidation of the Apostolic Mission

Part 6 | The Message of the New Testament

Detailed Contents

Tables

Preface

It is a joy and a privilege to describe and interpret the convictions of Jesus and his earliest followers who were the earliest missionaries, pastors, and theologians of the church—John, Peter, and Matthew, Paul and Luke, Mark and the Preacher, James and Jude—and whose writings have shaped the faith and the life of congregations and individual believers for two millennia. The authors of New Testament theologies generally interact with the New Testament texts from the perspective of modern readers in the twentieth or twenty-first century. Many treat the New Testament texts as purely literary texts, describing the sources, the traditions, the redactional moves, and the allusions to other texts (usually Old Testament texts). It is my goal to describe the theology of the New Testament more consistently in the historical context of the ecclesial and missionary realities of the early congregations and their theologians, although constraints of space do not allow a detailed description of the missionary activities of the apostles or of the content of each book of the New Testament. I will develop profiles of Christian and non-Christian hearers and readers in the first century who were the intended audiences of the material in the New Testament, whether explicitly or implicitly, and explain the impact of the theology of the New Testament in dialogue with first-century hearers and readers.

A few comments about terminology. I avoid the transliteration "Christ" for the Greek term Χριστός, preferring "Messiah" as the transliteration of the Hebrew term מָשִׁיחַ; the reasons are laid out in §11.1.2. The phrase "Jesus Messiah" sounds strange to modern readers, who are used to English versions, which uniformly render Ἰησοῦς Χριστός as "Jesus Christ," suggesting that "Christ" is a second (personal) name. For Peter, Paul, and the other early missionaries and teachers among the followers of Jesus who spoke both Hebrew/Aramaic

and Greek, Χριστός was always the equivalent of מָשִׁיחַ: they proclaimed Jesus as Israel's Messiah to Jews and Gentiles. One should not forget that for Greek ears, the designation Χριστός for a person sounded strange as well and would have needed an explanation. I mostly avoid the term "Christians" as largely anachronistic for the first century, outside of Roman legal contexts. Instead I use the term "Jesus followers" or "believers in Jesus Messiah" in the sense of *Jesusbekenner*, people who have committed to faith in Jesus of Nazareth, whom they confess as crucified, risen, and exalted Messiah, Lord, and Savior. I refer to the Law (capital *L*) as a designation for the Mosaic Torah. I use the phrases "the Scriptures" and "the Hebrew Scriptures" interchangeably for what Christians call "Old Testament." The term "Greeks and Romans" (and "Syrians") will be used for people who were neither Jews nor proselytes. The term "non-Jew," which is sometimes used in exegetical literature, is negative and unsuited as a term for self-identification. The term "unbelievers" is sometimes used for Jews, Syrians, Greeks, and Romans who were not Jesus followers; this is not meant as a disparaging term—they obviously held many convictions in which they firmly believed, but they did not believe in Jesus Messiah, Lord and Savior; sometimes I use the term "Gentiles" or "polytheists."

When I refer to material that appears in the Synoptic Gospels, I usually cite the Gospel of Mark first since it is generally regarded as the first written Gospel, although my analysis does not presuppose a particular theory of Gospel relationships. Foundational New Testament passages are frequently quoted in full. Unless otherwise noted, I use the New Revised Standard Version (NRSV), and I indicate when it has been modified—for example, by rendering Ἰησοῦς Χριστός as "Jesus Messiah" instead of "Jesus Christ." The Greek text of the New Testament is taken from Nestle-Aland, *Novum Testamentum Graece*, 28th revised edition (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2012; 5th corrected printing, 2016). Word statistics are based on this edition and the text-critical decisions of its editors. Quotations from the Hebrew (and Aramaic) text of the Old Testament are taken from *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia*, edited by Karl Elliger and Wilhelm Rudolph, prepared by Adrian Schenker, 5th corrected edition (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1997). Quotations from Greek and Latin classical authors are taken from the Loeb Classical Library (LCL), unless otherwise noted.

I reproduce important Greek terms and phrases and occasionally Hebrew and Aramaic words in order to assist readers who know Hebrew and Greek to recognize and learn relevant terms and expressions used in the Old and New Testament texts. Since these are mostly in brackets, and always accompanied by English translations, readers who do not know the original languages should not be put off. The appearance of non-English characters on the page alerts

readers to the fact that we are describing the theological meaning of texts that are several thousand years old written in Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek.

While this might be ironic to say, given the long bibliography at the end of the volume, I have deliberately limited the references to secondary literature, which could be easily multiplied. I point readers to older titles that have been important in the history of New Testament research as well as to seminal recent publications. Given the limitations of space, I have generally refrained from explicit and detailed interaction with the secondary literature; there are some important exceptions. The standard apparatus of academic research certainly would help readers place the present work in the context of past and present research more easily, but it could double or triple the space needed to describe the theology of the New Testament. When I refer to commentaries, I do not specify page numbers unless I quote the author; references to the treatment of particular passages can be easily identified.

Over half of this book was written during the COVID-19 pandemic of 2020–22, which forced churches all around the world to close for weeks or months. Churches in Rome closed for the first time since the fourth century. Even when repressive (communist) regimes prohibited Christians from meeting in public spaces, believers continued to meet in private homes. Even this has not been possible in much of the Western world during the early phase of the pandemic. While congregations proceeded to "meet" online, it was always obvious, and became more obvious to more and more people, that the digital world is an artificial space generated by algorithms which cannot replace real, personal, face-to-face contact and community. The digital world is a space without a place. It allows for "meetings" without real people meeting real people. Algorithmically mediated presence is not real presence. The pandemic served as a reminder of the significance of the incarnation of Jesus as the reality of the eternal Word of God entering human flesh and blood to achieve what could not be achieved in any other way: the salvation of sinners from God's judgment, true life, eternal life, now and in the age to come, which will not be a disembodied state of algorithmic existence somewhere in the great Beyond but a redeemed bodily existence in God's new creation.

Allan Chapple, Honorary Research Fellow at Trinity Theological College in Perth, Western Australia, provided again immense encouragement and help with proofreading. I thank him with deep gratitude. Steve Siebert of Nota-Bene continued to respond to queries, always eager to adapt this magnificent software which is much more than a word processor to the specific needs of biblical scholars. It was a privilege to be part of the Friends of Nota Bene who participate in testing new versions of the program. I am grateful to the Board of Trustees at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary for providing a sabbatical

in the spring of 2020. I thank James Darlack, former director of the Goddard Library, for promptly providing digital resources. I thank Jim Kinney and Bryan Dyer from Baker Academic for their initiative and willingness to publish my New Testament theology, having brought out the New Testament theologies of Tom Schreiner (2008), Udo Schnelle (2009), and Greg Beale (2011), and James Korsmo, project editor at Baker Academic, for his superb editorial suggestions conveyed with unfailing kindness and acuity.

I dedicate this presumably last *long* project to Barbara, the love of my life, coworker in the gospel, and benefactor of many, with all thanksgiving.

As I have written before: the *fides quaerens intellectum*, the faith of the apostles of the early church seeking understanding, was always *fides quaerens conversionem hominorum*, faith seeking the conversion of people; their theology thus can and should be understood and described as *theologia missiologica ad maiorem Dei gloriam*, missionary theology for the glory of God. As John Chrystostom is reported to have said when he died on September 14, AD 407, at Comana Pontica: δόξα τῷ θεῷ πάντων ἕνεκεν, glory be to God for all things, and, as Johann Sebastian Bach signed his compositions after the final bar, including the Easter Oratorio (BWV 249), in which he entered minor changes in the months before he died on July 28, 1750: *S.D.G.*, *soli Deo gloria*, to the glory of God alone.

May 9, anno Domini 2022

Abbreviations

General

Aram.	Aramaic
ET	English Translation
EV	English versification
FS	Festschrift
Grk.	Greek
Heb.	Hebrew *or* Hebrews
Lat.	Latin
mg.	Marginal reading
MS(S)	Manuscript(s)
//	parallel(s)

Ancient Biblical Texts, Types, and Versions

LXX	Septuagint
MT	Masoretic Text

Modern Editions

NA^{28}	*Novum Testamentum Graece* (*Nestle-Aland*). 28th rev. ed. Edited by B. Aland, K. Aland, I. D. Karavidopoulos, C. M. Martini, B. M. Metzger, and H. Strutwolf. Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2012

Modern Versions

CSB	Christian Standard Bible
ESV	English Standard Version
GNB	Good News Bible
HCSB	Holman Christian Standard Bible
KJV	King James Version
NASB	New American Standard Bible
NCB	New Clarendon Bible
NEB	New English Bible
NET	The New English Translation Bible
NETS	New English Translation of the Septuagint
NIV	New International Version
NJB	New Jerusalem Bible
NLT	New Living Translation
NRSV	New Revised Standard Version
NRSVue	New Revised Standard Version Updated Edition
RNT	Regensburger Neues Testament
RSV	Revised Standard Version

Old Testament Pseudepigrapha and Deuterocanonical Works

Apoc. Ab.	Apocalypse of Abraham
Apoc. Mos.	Apocalypse of Moses

Apocr. Ezek.	Apocryphon of Ezekiel
As. Mos.	Assumption of Moses
2 Bar.	2 Baruch (Syriac Apocalypse)
1 En.	1 Enoch (Ethiopic Apocalypse)
Jos. Asen.	Joseph and Aseneth
Jub.	Jubilees
LAE	Life of Adam and Eve
Let. Aris.	Letter of Aristeas
2 Macc.	2 Maccabees
Mart. Ascen. Isa.	Martyrdom and Ascension of Isaiah
Ps.-Phoc.	Pseudo-Phocylides
Pss. Sol.	Psalms of Solomon
Sib. Or.	Sibylline Oracles
Sir.	Sirach/Ecclesiasticus
T. Benj.	Testament of Benjamin
T. Dan	Testament of Dan
T. Jud.	Testament of Judah
T. Levi	Testament of Levi
T. Mos.	Testament of Moses
T. Reu.	Testament of Reuben
T. Sol.	Testament of Solomon
Wis.	Wisdom of Solomon

Dead Sea Scrolls and Related Texts

Scrolls from Qumran are commonly identified by a cave number followed by a capital Q and a document number. Scrolls that deviate from that pattern are listed below.

1QapGen	Genesis Apocryphon
1QH[a]	Hodayot[a] *or* Thanksgiving Hymns[a]
1QM	Milḥamah *or* War Scroll
1QpHab	Pesher Habakkuk
1QS	Serek Hayaḥad *or* Rule of the Community
4QH[b]	Hodayot[b] *or* Thanksgiving Hymns[b]
4QpPs[a]	Psalm Pesher
8ḤevXIIgr	Greek Scroll of the Minor Prophets
CD	Cairo Genizah copy of the Damascus Document

Philo and Josephus

Philo

Agr.	*De agricultura*
Cher.	*De cherubim*
Conf.	*De confusione linguarum*
Contempl.	*De vita contemplativa*
Decal.	*De decalogo*
Det.	*Quod deterius potiori insidari soleat*
Ebr.	*De ebrietate*
Her.	*Quis rerum divinarum heres sit*
Hypoth.	*Hypothetica*
Leg. 1, 2, 3	*Legum allegoriae* I, II, III
Legat.	*Legatio ad Gaium*
Migr.	*De migratione Abrahami*
Mos. 1, 2	*De vita Mosis* I, II
Mut.	*De mutatione nominum*
Opif.	*De opificio mundi*
Praem.	*De praemiis et poenis*
Prob.	*Quod omnis probus liber sit*
QE 1, 2	*Quaestiones et solutiones in Exodum* I, II
QG 1, 2, 3, 4	*Quaestiones et solutiones in Genesin* I, II, III, IV
Sacr.	*De sacrificiis Abelis et Caini*
Somn. 1, 2	*De somniis* I, II
Spec.	*De specialibus legibus*
Virt.	*De virtutibus*

Josephus

A.J.	*Antiquitates judaicae*
B.J.	*Bellum judaicum*
C. Ap.	*Contra Apionem*

Mishnah, Talmud, and Related Literature

Avod. Zar.	Avodah Zarah
b.	tractate of the Babylonian Talmud
Ber.	Berakhot
Hag.	Hagigah

m.	tractate of the Mishnah
Menah.	Menahot
Ned.	Nedarim
Pesah.	Pesahim
Sanh.	Sanhedrin
Sem.	Semahot
Shabb.	Shabbath
t.	tractate of the Tosefta
Ta'an.	Ta'anit
y.	tractate of the Jerusalem Talmud
Yad.	Yadayim

Targumic Texts

Tg. Isa.	Targum Isaiah
Tg. Neof.	Targum Neofiti
Tg. Ps.	Targum Psalms
Tg. Ps.-J.	Targum Pseudo-Jonathan
Tg. Yer. I	Targum Yerushalmi I

Other Rabbinic Works

Midr. Exod. Rab.	Midrash Exodus Rabbah
Midr. Ps.	Midrash on the Psalms
Pirqe R. El.	Pirqe Rabbi Eliezer
Rab.	Rabbah (e.g., Exod. Rab. = Exodus Rabbah)

Apostolic Fathers

Barn.	Barnabas
1–2 Clem.	1–2 Clement
Did.	Didache
Herm. Vis.	Shepherd of Hermas, Vision(s)
Ign. *Eph.*	Ignatius, *To the Ephesians*
Ign. *Rom.*	Ignatius, *To the Romans*
Ign. *Smyrn.*	Ignatius, *To the Smyrnaeans*
Ign. *Trall.*	Ignatius, *To the Trallians*
Mart. Pol.	Martyrdom of Polycarp
Pol. *Phil.*	Polycarp, *To the Philippians*

New Testament Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha

Acts Justin	Acts of Justin and Companions
Acts Phil.	Acts of Philip
Apoc. Pet.	Apocalypse of Peter
Gos. Heb.	Gospel of the Hebrews
Gos. Thom.	Gospel of Thomas
Prot. Jas.	Protevangelium of James

Classical and Ancient Christian Writings

Aelius Aristides

Or.	*Orationes*

Aeschylus

Prom.	*Prometheus vinctus*

Antiphon

1 Tetr.	*1 Tetralogia*

Aristophanes

Eq.	*Equites*
Nub.	*Nubes*

Aristotle

Oec.	*Oeconomica*
Pol.	*Politica*
Resp.	*De respiratione*
Rhet.	*Rhetoric*

Arrian

Epict. diss.	*Epicteti dissertationes*

Athanasius

Inc.	*De incarnatione*

Augustine

C. du. ep. Pelag.	*Contra duas epistulas Pelagianorum ad Bonifatium*

Cicero

Div.	*De divinatione*

Fin. *De finibus*
Leg. man. *Pro Lege manilia*
Nat. d. *De natura deorum*
Off. *De officiis*
Phil. *Orationes philippicae*
Rab. Perd. *Pro Rabirio Perduellionis Reo*
Tusc. *Tusculanae disputationes*
Verr. *In Verrem*

Clement of Alexandria

Protr. *Protrepticus*
Quis div. *Quis dives salvetur*
Strom. *Stromateis*

Cyril of Jerusalem

Cat. *Catechesis*

Diocletian

Edict. *Edictum de pretiis rerum venalium*

Diodorus

Bib. hist. *Bibliotheca historica*

Dionysius of Halicarnassus

Ant. rom. *Antiquitates romanae*
Rhet. *Ars rhetorica*

Epictetus

Diatr. *Diatribai*

Epiphanius

Pan. *Panarion (Adversus haereses)*

Euripides

Alc. *Alcestis*

Eusebius

Chron. *Chronicon*
Hist. eccl. *Historia ecclesiastica*

Herodotus

Hist. *Historiae*

Hesiod

Op. *Opera et dies*
Theog. *Theogonia*

Homer

Il. *Iliad*
Od. *Odyssey*

Horace

Carm. *Carmina*

Irenaeus

Haer. *Adversus haereses*

Jerome

Comm. Matt. *Commentariorum in Matthaeum libri IV*
Helv. *Adversus Helvidium de Mariae virginitate perpetua*
Praef. in quat. ev. *Praefatio in Quattuor Evangeliorum*
Prol. in Matt. *Prologue to Commentariorum in Matthaeum libri IV*
Vir. ill. *De viris illustribus*

John Chrysostom

Hom. Eph. *Homiliae in epistulam ad Ephesios*
Hom. Jo. *Homiliae in Joannem*
Hom. Matt. *Homiliae in Matthaeum*
Hom. Rom. *Homiliae in epistulam ad Romanos*
Hom. 1 Thess. *Homiliae in epistulam i ad Thessalonicenses*

Justin Martyr

1 Apol. *Apologia i*
Dial. *Dialogus cum Tryphone*

Livy

Hist. Rom. *History of Rome*

Lucian

Hist. conscr. *Quomodo historia conscribenda sit*

Marcus Aurelius

Medit. *Meditationes*

Musonius Rufus

Diatr. *Diatribai*

Origen

Cels. *Contra Celsum*
Comm. Jo. *Commentarii in evangelium Joannis*
Comm. Rom. *Commentarii in epistulam ad Romanos*

Orosius

Hist. *Historiae adversus peganos*

Ovid

Metam. *Metamorphoses*

Paulus

Sent. *Sententiae*

Pausanias

Per. *Hellados Periegesis*

Philostratus

Vit. Apoll. *Vita Apollonii*

Pindar

Isthm. *Isthmionikai*

Plato

Phaed. *Phaedo*
Resp. *Respublica*

Plautus

Asin. *Asinaria*
Bacch. *Bacchides*

Pliny the Younger

Ep. *Epistulae*
Pan. *Panegyricus*

Plutarch

Amat. *Amatorius*
Am. prol. *De amore prolis*
Def. orac. *De defectu oraculorum*
Is. Os. *De Iside et Osiride*
Lyc. *Lycurgus*
Mor. *Moralia*
Oth. *Otho*
Pomp. *Pompeius*
Tranq. an. *De tranquillitate animi*
Virt. mor. *De virtute morali*

Polybius

Hist. *Historiae*

Pseudo-Apollodorus

Bibl. *Bibliotheca*

Pseudo-Aristotle

Mund. *De mundo*

Rufinus

Hist. *Eusebii Historia ecclesiastica a Rufino translata et continuata*

Seneca

Apocol. *Apocolocyntosis*
Ben. *De beneficiis*
Brev. vit. *De brevitate vitae*
Clem. *De clementia*
Dial. *Dialogi*
Ep. *Epistulae morales*
Frag. *Fragments*
Lucil. *Ad Lucilium*
Nat. *Naturales quaestiones*

Strabo

Geogr. *Geographica*

Suetonius

Aug. *Divus Augustus*
Claud. *Divus Claudius*
Tib. *Tiberius*

Tacitus

Ann.	*Annales*
Hist.	*Historiae*

Tertullian

Apol.	*Apologeticus*
Bapt.	*De baptismo*
Marc.	*Adversus Marcionem*
Praescr.	*De praescriptione haereticorum*
Scorp.	*Scorpiace*

Theon

Prog.	*Progymnasmata*

Theophilus

Autol.	*Ad Autolycum*

Vergil

Aen.	*Aeneid*
Ecl.	*Eclogae*

Secondary Sources

AB	Anchor Bible
ABD	*Anchor Bible Dictionary*. Edited by D. N. Freedman. 6 vols. New York: Doubleday, 1992
ABRL	Anchor Bible Reference Library
AcBib	Academia Biblica
AGJU	Arbeiten zur Geschichte des antiken Judentums und des Urchristentums
AJA	*American Journal of Archaeology*
AJEC	Ancient Judaism and Early Christianity
AnBib	Analecta Biblica
ANRW	*Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt: Geschichte und Kultur Roms im Spiegel der neueren Forschung.* Edited by H. Temporini and W. Haase. Berlin: de Gruyter, 1972–
ANTJ	Arbeiten zum Neuen Testament und Judentum
ATANT	Abhandlungen zur Theologie des Alten und Neuen Testaments
ATR	*Australasian Theological Review*
AYB	Anchor Yale Bible
BBB	Bonner biblische Beiträge
BBET	Beiträge zur biblischen Exegese und Theologie
BBR	*Bulletin for Biblical Research*
BDAG	Bauer, W., F. W. Danker, W. F. Arndt, and F. W. Gingrich. *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*. 3rd ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000
BECNT	Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament
BETL	Bibliotheca Ephemeridum Theologicarum Lovaniensium
BEvT	Beiträge zur evangelischen Theologie
BFCT	Beiträge zur Förderung christlicher Theologie
BGU	*Aegyptische Urkunden aus den Königlichen Staatlichten Museen zu Berlin, Griechische Urkunden*. 15 vols. Berlin: Weidmann, 1895–1995
BHT	Beiträge zur historischen Theologie
Bib	*Biblica*
BibInt	*Biblical Interpretation*
BibInt	Biblical Interpretation Series
BJRL	*Bulletin of the John Rylands University Library of Manchester*

BJS	Brown Judaic Studies
BKAT	Biblischer Kommentar, Altes Testament
BN	*Biblische Notizen*
BNP	*Brill's New Pauly: Encyclopaedia of the Ancient World*. Edited by H. Cancik and H. Schneider. 22 vols. Leiden: Brill, 2002–12
BNTC	Black's New Testament Commentaries
BSac	*Bibliotheca Sacra*
BTS	Biblical Tools and Studies
BU	Biblische Untersuchungen
BWANT	Beiträge zur Wissenschaft vom Alten und Neuen Testament
BZ	*Biblische Zeitschrift*
BZAW	Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft
BZNW	Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft
CBET	Contributions to Biblical Exegesis and Theology
CBQ	*Catholic Biblical Quarterly*
CBQMS	Catholic Biblical Quarterly Monograph Series
CCEL	Christian Classics Ethereal Library
CCSA	Corpus Christianorum: Series Apocryphorum. Turnhout: Brepols, 1983–
CCSL	Corpus Christianorum: Series Latina. Turnhout: Brepols, 1969–
CGTC	Cambridge Greek Testament Commentary
CIIP	*Corpus Inscriptionum Iudaeae/Palaestinae*. Edited by H. M. Cotton, L. Di Segni, W. Eck, B. Isaac, W. Ameling, J. Price, et al. 6 vols. Berlin: De Gruyter, 2010–18
CIJ	*Corpus Inscriptionum Judaicarum*. Edited by J.-B. Frey. 2 vols. Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1936–52
CIL	*Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum*. Berlin, 1862–
ConBNT	Coniectanea Biblica: New Testament Series
CSEL	Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum
CTJ	*Calvin Theological Journal*
DJD	Discoveries in the Judaean Desert [of Jordan]
DJG	*Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels*. 2nd ed. Edited by J. B. Green, J. K. Brown, and N. Perrin. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2013
DPL	*Dictionary of Paul and His Letters*. Edited by G. F. Hawthorne, R. P. Martin, and D. G. Reid. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1993
DSD	*Dead Sea Discoveries*
EA	Epigraphica Anatolica
EBib	*Etudes bibliques*
ECC	Eerdmans Critical Commentary
ECCA	Early Christianity in the Context of Antiquity. Edited by A.-C. Jacobsen, C. Shepardson, and P. Gemeinhardt. Frankfurt: Lang, 2006–
EdF	Erträge der Forschung
EDNT	*Exegetical Dictionary of the New Testament*. Edited by H. Balz and G. Schneider. 3 vols. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990–93
EEECAA	*The Eerdmans Encyclopedia of Early Christian Art and Archaeology*. Edited by P. C. Finney. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2016
EFN	Estudios de filología neotestamentaria
EHS	Europäische Hochschulschriften

EKKNT	Evangelisch-katholischer Kommentar zum Neuen Testament
EPRO	Études préliminaires aux religions orientales dans l'empire romain
EUS	European University Studies
EvQ	*Evangelical Quarterly*
EvT	*Evangelische Theologie*
ExpTim	*Expository Times*
FAT	Forschungen zum Alten Testament
FGH	*Die Fragmente der griechischen Historiker*. Edited by F. Jacoby. Leiden, 1954–64
FRLANT	Forschungen zur Religion und Literatur des Alten und Neuen Testaments
FzB	Forschung zur Bibel
GELS	*A Greek-English Lexicon of the Septuagint*. Edited by T. Muraoka. Leuven: Peeters, 2009
GNT	Grundrisse zum Neuen Testament
GTA	Göttinger theologische Arbeiten
HALOT	*The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament in English*. Edited by L. Koehler, W. Baumgartner, and J. J. Stamm. Translated and edited under the supervision of M. E. J. Richardson. 4 vols. Leiden: Brill, 1994–99
HBS	History of Biblical Studies
HCS	Hellenistic Culture and Society
HDR	Harvard Dissertations in Religion
HNT	Handbuch zum Neuen Testament
HTA	Historisch-theologische Auslegung
HThKNT	Herders Theologischer Kommentar zum Neuen Testament
HTLS	*Historical and Theological Lexicon of the Septuagint*. Edited by E. Bons. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2020–
HTR	*Harvard Theological Review*
HUCA	*Hebrew Union College Annual*
HUT	Hermeneutische Untersuchungen zur Theologie
HvS	Siebenthal, Heinrich von. *Ancient Greek Grammar for the Study of the New Testament*. Oxford: Lang, 2019
ICC	International Critical Commentary
I.Ephesos	*Die Inschriften von Ephesos*. Edited by H. Wankel, R. Merkelbach, et al. Bonn: Habelt, 1979–84
IG	*Inscriptiones Graecae: Editio Minor.* Berlin: de Gruyter, 1873–
IGUR	*Inscriptiones Graecae urbis Romanae*. Edited by Luigi Moretti. Rome: Istituto italiano per la storia antica, 1968–90
IJO	*Inscriptiones Judaicae Orientis*. Edited by D. Noy, A. Panayotov, H. Bloedhorn, and W. Ameling. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2004
I.Kyme	*Die Inschriften von Kyme*. Edited by H. Engelmann. Bonn: Habelt, 1976
I.Milet	*Die Inschriften von Milet*. Edited by A. Rehm, P. Herrmann, W. Günther, and N. Ehrhardt. Berlin: de Gruyter, 1997–2006
I.Priene	*Inschriften von Priene*. Edited by F. Hiller von Gärtringen. Berlin: G. Reimer, 1906
IVPNTC	IVP New Testament Commentaries

JAC	*Jahrbuch für Antike und Christentum*
JBL	*Journal of Biblical Literature*
JBTh	*Jahrbuch für biblische Theologie*
JET	*Jahrbuch für Evangelische Theologie*
JETS	*Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society*
JGRChJ	*Journal of Greco-Roman Christianity and Judaism*
JPT	*Journal of Pentecostal Theology*
JPTSup	Journal of Pentecostal Theology: Supplement Series
JRS	*Journal of Roman Studies*
JSHJ	*Journal for the Study of the Historical Jesus*
JSHRZ	Jüdische Schriften aus hellenistisch-römischer Zeit
JSJSup	Journal for the Study of Judaism Supplement Series
JSNT	*Journal for the Study of the New Testament*
JSNTSup	Journal for the Study of the New Testament Supplement Series
JSP	*Journal for the Study of the Pseudepigrapha*
JSPSup	Journal for the Study of the Pseudepigrapha Supplement Series
JTS	*Journal of Theological Studies*
KAT	Kommentar zum Alten Testament
KEK	Kritisch-exegetischer Kommentar über das Neue Testament (Meyer-Kommentar)
KfA	Kommentar zu frühchristlichen Apologeten
KNT	Kommentar zum Neuen Testament
LCL	Loeb Classical Library
LD	Lectio Divina
LEC	Library of Early Christianity
LGPN	*A Lexicon of Greek Personal Names*. Edited by P. M. Fraser et al. Oxford: Clarendon, 1987–2009
LNTS	The Library of New Testament Studies
LSJ	H. G. Liddell, R. Scott, and H. S. Jones. *A Greek-English Lexicon*. 9th ed. with revised supplement. Edited by Peter G. W. Glare. Oxford: Clarendon, 1996
MM	J. H. Moulton and G. Milligan. *The Vocabulary of the Greek Testament: Illustrated from the Papyri and Other Non-Literary Sources*. London, 1930. Reprint, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982
MTZ	*Münchener theologische Zeitschrift*
NAC	New American Commentary
NCBC	New Century Bible Commentary
NEchtB	Neue Echter Bibel
Neot	*Neotestamentica*
NICNT	New International Commentary on the New Testament
NICOT	New International Commentary on the Old Testament
NIDB	*New Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible*. Edited by K. D. Sakenfeld. 5 vols. Nashville: Abingdon, 2006–9
NIDNTT	*New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology*. Edited by C. Brown. 4 vols. Grand Rapids: Regency Reference Library, 1975–86
NIGTC	New International Greek Testament Commentary
NovT	*Novum Testamentum*

NovTSup	Supplements to Novum Testamentum
NSBT	New Studies in Biblical Theology
NTAbh	Neutestamentliche Abhandlungen
NTD	Das Neue Testament Deutsch
NTF	Neutestamentliche Forschungen
NTL	New Testament Library
NTOA	Novum Testamentum et Orbis Antiquus
NTS	*New Testament Studies*
NTTSD	New Testament Tools, Studies and Documents
NW	*Neuer Wettstein: Texte zum Neuen Testament aus Griechentum und Hellenismus*. Edited by G. Strecker and U. Schnelle. 5 vols. Berlin: de Gruyter, 1996–2022
OBO	Orbis Biblicus et Orientalis
OBT	Overtures to Biblical Theology
O.Claud.	*Mons Claudianus: Ostraca graeca et latina*. Edited by J. Bingen et al. Cairo: Institut Francais d'Archéologie Orientale, 1992–97
OGIS	*Orientis Graeci Inscriptiones Selectae*. Supplementum sylloges inscriptionum graecarum. Edited by W. Dittenberger. 2 vols. Leipzig: Hirzel, 1903–5
OLA	Orientalia Lovaniensia Analecta
ÖTK	Ökumenischer Taschenbuch-Kommentar
OTP	*Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*. Edited by J. H. Charlesworth. 2 vols. Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1983–85
PG	Patrologia Graeca [= Patrologiae Cursus Completus: Series Graeca]. Edited by Jacques-Paul Migne. 162 vols. Paris, 1857–86
PKNT	Papyrologische Kommentare zum Neuen Testament
PL	Patrologia Latina. Edited by J.-P. Migne. 217 vols. Paris, 1844–64
P.Lond.	*Greek Papyri in the British Museum.* Edited by F. G. Kenyon, H. I. Bell, W. E. Crum, and T. C. Skeat. London: British Museum, 1893–1974
PNTC	Pillar New Testament Commentary
P.Oxy.	*Oxyrhynchus Papyri.* Edited by B. P. Grenfell, A. S. Hunt et al. London: Egypt Exploration Society, 1898–
P.Tebt.	*The Tebtunis Papyri.* Edited by B. P. Grenfell, A. S. Hunt et al. London: Egypt Exploration Society, 1902–76
PTMS	Pittsburgh Theological Monograph Series
PTS	Patristische Texte und Studien
QD	Quaestiones Disputatae
RAC	*Reallexikon für Antike und Christentum*. Edited by T. Klauser et al. Stuttgart: Anton Hiersemann, 1950–2019
RB	*Revue biblique*
RNT	Regensburger Neues Testament
RTL	*Revue théologique de Louvain*
SAC	Studies in Antiquity and Christianity
SANT	Studien zum Alten und Neuen Testament
SAPERE	Scripta Antiquitatis Posterioris ad Ethicam REligionemque pertinentia
SB	*Sammelbuch griechischer Urkunden aus Ägypten*. Edited by F. Preisigke et al. 21 vols. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1915–2002

SBB	Stuttgarter biblische Beiträge
SBEC	Studies in the Bible and Early Christianity
SBL	Society of Biblical Literature
SBLDS	Society of Biblical Literature Dissertation Series
SBLMS	Society of Biblical Literature Monograph Series
SBLSBS	Society of Biblical Literature Sources for Biblical Study
SBLTT	Society of Biblical Literature Texts and Translations
SBM	Stuttgarter biblische Monographien
SBS	Stuttgarter Bibelstudien
SBT	Studies in Biblical Theology
SESJ	Suomen Eksegeettisen Seuran Julkaisuja
SFSHJ	South Florida Studies in the History of Judaism
SJLA	Studies in Judaism in Late Antiquity
SJT	*Scottish Journal of Theology*
SNT	Studien des Neuen Testament
SNTA	Studiorum Novi Testamenti Auxilia
SNTSMS	Society for New Testament Studies Monograph Series
SNTSU	*Studien zum Neuen Testament und seiner Umwelt*
SNTW	*Studies of the New Testament and Its World*
SP	Sacra Pagina
ST	*Studia Theologica*
STAC	Studien und Texte zu Antike und Christentum
STDJ	Studies on the Texts of the Desert of Judah
StPB	Studia Post-biblica
STRS	Studien und Texte zur Religionsgeschichtlichen Schule
SUNT	Studien zur Umwelt des Neuen Testaments
SVTP	Studia in Veteris Testamenti Pseudepigraphica
TANZ	Texte und Arbeiten zum neutestamentlichen Zeitalter
TBei	*Theologische Beiträge*
TDNT	*Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*. Edited by G. Kittel and G. Friedrich. Translated by G. Bromiley. 10 vols. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964–76
TDOT	*Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament*. Edited by G. J. Botterweck and H. Ringgren. Translated by J. T. Willis, G. W. Bromiley, and D. E. Green. 15 vols. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1974–2006
TF	Theologische Forschung
ThBLNT	*Theologisches Begriffslexikon zum Neuen Testament*. Rev. ed. Edited by L. Coenen and K. Haacker. 3 vols. Wuppertal: Brockhaus, 1997–2000
THKNT	Theologischer Handkommentar zum Neuen Testament
TJ	*Trinity Journal*
TK	Texte und Kommentare
TLNT	*Theological Lexicon of the New Testament*. Edited by C. Spicq. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1996
TLOT	*Theological Lexicon of the Old Testament.* Edited by Ernst Jenni, with assistance from Claus Westermann. Translated by Mark E. Biddle. 3 vols. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1997
TLZ	*Theologische Literaturzeitung*

TNTC	Tyndale New Testament Commentary
TRE	*Theologische Realenzyklopädie*. Edited by G. Krause and G. Müller. Berlin: de Gruyter, 1977–2007
TS	*Theological Studies*
TSAJ	Texte und Studien zum antiken Judentum
TSK	*Theologische Studien und Kritiken*
TU	Texte und Untersuchungen zur Geschichte der altchristlichen Literatur
TVG	Theologische Verlagsgemeinschaft
TWQ	*Theologisches Wörterbuch zu den Qumrantexten*. Edited by H.-J. Fabry and U. Dahmen. 3 vols. Stuttgart: Verlag W. Kohlhammer, 2011–13
TynBul	*Tyndale Bulletin*
TZ	*Theologische Zeitschrift*
UNT	Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament
UTB	Uni-Taschenbücher
VC	*Vigiliae Christianae*
VCSup	Vigiliae Christianae Supplement Series
VE	*Vox Evangelica*
VT	*Vetus Testamentum*
WA	*D. Martin Luthers Werke.* Complete critical ed. 60 vols. Weimar: Herman Böhlaus Nachfolger, 1883–1993
WA.DB	*D. Martin Luthers Werke: Deutsche Bibel.* 12 vols. Weimar: Böhlau, 1906–61
WA.TR	*D. Martin Luthers Werke: Tischreden.* 6 vols. Weimar: Böhlau, 1912–21
WBC	Word Biblical Commentary
WdF	Wege der Forschung
WMANT	Wissenschaftliche Monographien zum Alten und Neuen Testament
WTJ	*Westminster Theological Journal*
WUNT	Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament
ZBK	Zürcher Bibelkommentare
ZECNT	Zondervan Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament
ZEE	*Zeitschrift für evangelische Ethik*
ZNW	*Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft und die Kunde der älteren Kirche*
ZPE	*Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik*
ZTK	*Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche*

PART 1

History, Faith, and Theology

1

Introduction

The New Testament is the foundational document arising out of the movement initiated by Jesus of Nazareth which, together with the Old Testament Scriptures, became the normative text for the Christian believers. New Testament theology is the reflection on the proclamation of Jesus and the convictions of his earliest followers, who believed and proclaimed that the crucified and risen Jesus was Israel's Messiah and Savior of sinners. New Testament theology is thus the foundation of all Christian proclamation and theology. The task of writing a New Testament theology has been understood, described, and undertaken in essentially two ways: as a reconstruction of the theology of the New Testament authors and the traditions they used, or as a systematic reflection on the content of the New Testament (Frey 2007; for the following cf. Schnabel 2018n, 2019a).

1.1. The History of New Testament Theology

An independent theology of the New Testament did not exist before the eighteenth century. Since Origen, the biblical text was explained with respect to the historical meaning (*sensus historicus*), its doctrine (*sensus allegoricus*), its significance for Christian behavior (*sensus tropologicus* or *moralis*), and its significance for the future (*sensus anagogicus*). The ensuing superimposition and infiltration of all kinds of ecclesial concerns and convictions prompted Martin Luther to advocate for the primacy of the *sensus historicus*, arguing that it is the historical meaning of the text that separates right and wrong church tradition

and thus must be accepted as normative for all theological knowledge and for the proclamation of the church.

1.1.1. Early descriptions of biblical and New Testament theology. In the seventeenth century, the term "biblical theology" described attempts to demonstrate the foundation of Protestant dogmatics in Old and New Testament texts, according to the material principle of *sola scriptura*. Wolfgang Jacob Christmann is the first author to use the phrase "biblical theology" as a book title (1629). The work by Sebastian Schmidt (1671) is programmatic: he presents a biblical collection of Old and New Testament texts explicated in relation to the series of standard theological topics. The outline of "biblical theology" was determined by the loci method of medieval and post-Reformation systematic theology.

1.1.2. Critical developments: Gabler and Wrede. Following the critique of scholastic orthodox theology by Philipp Jakob Spener, some saw the advantages a biblical theology has over dogmatic theology. Johann Salomo Semler (1771–75) argued that the study of the texts of the Old and New Testament needed to become independent from dogmatic theology. Gotthilf Traugott Zachariä (1771–75) rearranged the biblical subjects in order to achieve a greater alignment with the material content of the Old and New Testaments. Johann Philipp Gabler (1831) argued in 1787 for the necessity of a proper distinction between biblical and dogmatic theology and the specific objectives of each. He emphasized the historical character of the biblical texts and beliefs and argued that they have to be explained from the style, idiom, and customs of the relevant historical period. He abandoned the assumed unity of the biblical teaching of the Old and the New Testaments, concluding that "biblical theology" has a historical character since it conveys what the biblical writers said about divine matters. Since Gabler does not abandon the conviction that the Old and New Testaments convey clear truths that are universally significant, irrespective of the time periods in which they were formulated, he advocates a "double biblical theology": a historically informed and controlled biblical theology and a "biblical theology in the stricter sense of the word," which is the sum of biblical truths that can be the foundation of a reasonable Christian dogmatic theology (Merk 1972, 139). Gabler's program was carried out by Georg Lorenz Bauer both for the Old Testament (1796) and for the New Testament (1800–1802). Soon individual New Testament authors were treated in separate theological analyses. Paul's theology was discussed by Gottlob Wilhelm Meyer (1801) and Johann Georg Friedrich Leun (1803). Ferdinand Christian Baur (1864, ET 2016) attempted to combine historical reconstruction and interpretation.

Several major New Testament theologies were written in the nineteenth century (B. Weiß 1868, ET 1882/1893; W. Beyschlag 1891–92; Holtzmann 1897). William Wrede (1897, ET 1973) criticized these efforts, arguing that the historical

descriptions of the theology of the New Testament, whether conservative or liberal, were too much influenced by their authors' theological interests. He demanded that the interpreter who analyzes the theology of the New Testament authors in terms of an academic, scientific project must be guided by a "pure" interest in knowledge, not guided by personal or theological interests or viewpoints, allowing the interpreter to perceive what really happened, following the evidence wherever it leads. Wrede's program has been revived, in modified forms, by several scholars (Räisänen 1990; Berger 1994; Schmithals 1994; Theißen 1999, 2003; cf. the assessment of Boers 1979). James Barr (1999) advocates a biblical theology that is characterized by the history of religion as a historical quantifier, criticizing traditional theologies of the New Testament for providing an insider's perspective for future pastors.

1.1.3. Historical descriptions of New Testament theology. Adolf Schlatter (1969b) disagreed both with the "statistical" inventories of New Testament thought in Protestant Orthodoxy and with the approach of the history-of-religions school because they separate the act of thinking from the act of living. He argues in his New Testament theology that the apostles do not present timeless truths independent of historical conditions; rather, their thoughts are the result of their experiences and actions and thus of their history (1909–10, 1:10–11; cf. 1923c, ET 1997; 1922; 1999). Rudolf Bultmann accepted many of the arguments and results of the history-of-religions school, but he did not follow Wrede when he wrote his *Theologie des Neuen Testaments* (1948–53, 1984; ET 1952–55). He acknowledges that since the New Testament is a document of history—specifically, the history of religion—its interpretation requires historical investigation; however, rather than analyzing the New Testament texts as the sources for a reconstruction of primitive Christianity as a phenomenon of the historical past, he opts for placing reconstruction at the service of the interpretation of the New Testament writings "under the presupposition that they have something to say to the present" (Bultmann 1952–55, 2:251; cf. 1984, 600). Bultmann focuses on theological interpretation, not on historical reconstruction. Still, the outline of his New Testament theology is decidedly historical, albeit in a nonchronological manner. After clarifying the presuppositions and the motifs of the theology of the New Testament, he presents an anthropological-soteriological analysis of the theologies of Paul and John before describing the development toward the ancient church. Bultmann holds the historical situation of the witnesses of the kerygma to be only tangentially significant since they share a common position in religion history (i.e., the relevance of the Gnostic redeemer myth), and he argues that Paul and John share deep relatedness in substance in spite of their differences in mode of thought and terminology.

Most New Testament theologies written by German scholars follow a basic historical outline, usually beginning with John the Baptist and the proclamation of Jesus before describing the theology of Paul and John (Feine 1910, 1951; Meinertz 1950; Conzelmann 1967, 1992, ET 1969; Kümmel 1969, ET 1973; Jeremias 1971a, ET 1971b, with a nearly exclusive focus on reconstructing the proclamation of Jesus, *pace* Bultmann; E. Lohse 1974, 1998; Goppelt 1975–76, ET 1981–82; Weiser 1993; Stuhlmacher 1992–99, ET 2018; Schnelle 2007, ET 2009). Similarly, historical outlines for their New Testament theologies are used by a number of scholars who abandon the notion of the unity of the theology of the New Testament as they assess mutual interdependences and influences without arriving at a theological evaluation (Gnilka 1994; Berger 1994; Strecker 1996b; cf. Frey 2007, 35). Historical chronological presentations of the theology of the New Testament have also been written outside of Germany (Bonsirven 1951, ET 1963; Hunter 1957; Ladd 1974; Neill 1976; Morris 1986, who begins with Paul; Eskola 2015, who focuses on the metanarrative of exile and restoration). Hans Hübner also adopts a fundamentally historical approach, which he combines with an existentialist interpretation of Paul's letters, Hebrews, the Gospels, and Revelation, focused on the theological use of the Old Testament, in particular the Septuagint, by the New Testament authors (1990–95). While not written as a New Testament theology, the multivolume works of James Dunn and N. T. Wright deserve to be mentioned here as well, as they are histories of earliest Christianity with a strong theological interest (Dunn 2003, 2009a, 2015; Wright 1992b, 1996, 2003, 2013b).

1.1.4. Thematic descriptions of New Testament theology. Several New Testament theologies follow the traditional loci method, with variegated emphases and organizing principles (Albertz 1947–57; F. C. Grant 1950; A. Richardson 1958; Schelkle 1968–76, ET 1971–78; D. Guthrie 1981; Caird 1994; Vouga 2001; Hahn 2002b; Esler 2005; T. Schreiner 2008; Dunn 2009b; Beale 2011), sometimes with a consistent christological focus (García Cordero 1972; Thüsing 1981–2001; cf. Hörster 2004, who follows a description of Jesus' mission and self-understanding with a thematic analysis of major themes in the Gospels, Paul, and John). The thematic approach is characteristic of many Old Testament theologies (Eichrodt 1933–39, ET 1961–67; W. Kaiser 1978; Zimmerli 1972, ET 1978; Westermann 1978, ET 1982; Preuß 1991–92; Goldingay 2003–9; Routledge 2008; J. Walton 2017). Some have claimed, incorrectly, that "the days of writing full-scale theologies of the New Testament seems [*sic*] to be waning," aiming instead at a "theological vision of the New Testament" (Jipp 2020, 17, presenting "the messianic convictions of the NT authors").

1.1.5. Descriptions of the theology of the New Testament authors. Several scholars present a theology of the New Testament in terms of a theological treatment

of its individual authors (Zuck 1994; I. H. Marshall 2004; Thielman 2005). Most New Testament writings and authors have received theological treatments. There are theologies of Matthew (France 1989; Luz 1995; Carter 1996), Mark (Telford 1999; Bayer 2012; Garland 2015), Luke (Conzelmann 1960; I. H. Marshall 1970; Stronstad 1984; Fitzmyer 1989b; J. Green 1995; O'Toole 2004; Bock 2015), John (Harrington 1990; D. M. Smith 1995; Bauckham 2007b; Köstenberger 2009; Rainbow 2014), and Paul (Schoeps 1959, ET 1961; R. Longenecker 1964; Whiteley 1964; Ridderbos 1966, ET 1975; Eichholz 1972; Schlier 1978; Beker 1980; Marrow 1986; J. Becker 1989, ET 1993; Segal 1990; Bassler 1991; Kertelge 1991; Hay 1993; Witherington 1994c; Hay and Johnson 1995; Dunn 1998; T. Schreiner 2001; Schnelle 2003b, ET 2005; Porter 2006; Wischmeyer 2006; Wolter 2011, ET 2015; Pate 2013; E. P. Sanders 2015; Porter 2016a; Moo 2021).

1.1.6. Combination of historical reconstruction and synthetic interpretation. Several authors have written New Testament theologies which combine a (reconstructive or descriptive) historical part with a (synthetic or systematic) theological presentation of the theology of the New Testament (Hahn 2002a; Wilckens 2002–9; Witherington 2009–10 = 2016; Blomberg 2018; cf. also the brief survey of Isaak 2011).

Hahn presents in the first volume the proclamation of Jesus and the reception of the Jesus tradition, the proclamation and theology of the oldest Christian churches, the theology of the apostle Paul, the theology of the Pauline school, the theological concepts of the Hellenistic-Jewish writings independent of Paul (James, 1 Peter, Hebrews, Revelation), the theological concepts of the Synoptic Gospels and Acts, Johannine theology, and the transition to the history of theology of the second century (Jude, 2 Peter, the Apostolic Fathers). In the second volume, subtitled *Die Einheit des Neuen Testaments: Thematische Darstellung* (The unity of the New Testament: A thematic presentation), he treats the Old Testament as the Bible of early Christianity; discusses God's revelatory activity in Jesus Christ, including a section on the work of the Holy Spirit and on the implicitly trinitarian structure of the New Testament witness; explains the soteriological dimension of God's revelatory activity, with a discussion of human beings as created beings and sinners, the problem of the law, salvation, and the gospel as proclamation and actualization of salvation; discusses the ecclesiological dimension of God's revelatory activity, including a discussion of New Testament ethics; and explains the eschatological dimension of God's revelatory activity.

Wilckens (2002–9), writing with the goal of helping the discipline of New Testament studies find its way out of its fundamental crisis and of renewing academic theological studies for the faith and life of the church, devotes his first four volumes to the "history of early Christian theology," analyzing the

life, proclamation, death, and resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth; the early church; Paul's ministry; the individual New Testament letters; and the theology of Q and of Mark, Matthew, Luke, Acts, John, the Johannine Epistles, and Revelation. Two systematic volumes discuss the theological significance of the canon for faith and for the life of the church; the one true God in the Old Testament; God's consummation of salvation in the person and life of Jesus; the death and resurrection of Jesus as the fundamental events of salvation in the proclamation and theology of the early church; the Holy Spirit; the gospel and its emissaries; baptism as the integral reality of the Christian life; the Lord's Supper as center of the life of the church; the nature of the church; the salvation-historical horizon of the church, with a discussion of unbelieving Israel; the meaning of the Law for Christians; the persistence of the church in the truth of the gospel, with a discussion of the offices of the church; the persistence of the church in prayer; creation and the world; eschatology; and the triune God.

Witherington (2009–10 = 2016) analyzes in his first volume the person, identity, and teaching of Jesus; Paul's theology; the epistles of Jude, James, and Peter; Hebrews, the Gospel of John and 1 John; the Synoptic Gospels and Acts; and Revelation and 2 Peter. In his second volume he presents the symbolic universe and the narrative thought world of Jesus before he describes the Christology, theology proper, pneumatology, soteriology, eschatology, and ethics of the New Testament.

Blomberg (2018) moves from a treatment of Jesus, the earliest church, and the early Jewish Christian letters (James, Jude) to a discussion of Paul's theology, prefaced by a letter-by-letter investigation of the centrality of the theme of fulfillment within salvation history. He then presents the theology of the Gospels of Mark and Matthew, Luke-Acts, the Pastoral Epistles, 1–2 Peter, and the Johannine literature.

1.1.7. Comprehensive biblical theologies. Authors who write comprehensive biblical theologies include treatments of the theology of the New Testament, sometimes in the context of a systematic or thematic outline (Burrows 1946; G. Vos 1948; VanGemeren 1988; H. Klein 1991; Childs 1992 [cf. Childs 2002]; Scobie 2003), often focused on a perceived overarching theme (Hamilton 2010; Gentry and Wellum 2012; Niehaus 2014–17; Goldingay 2016; Duvall and Hays 2019; cf. Goldsworthy 2012, for the necessity of focusing on Jesus Christ), sometimes in terms of the canonical sequence of the biblical books (T. Schreiner 2013).

1.1.8. Historical surveys of New Testament theology. Several authors have described the history of comprehensive treatments of New Testament theology (Merk 1972; Hasel 1978; Räisänen 1990; Balla 1997; Hafemann 2002; Via 2002; Yarbrough 2005; Mead 2007).

1.2. The Task of a Theology of the New Testament

The demand for a disinterested, "pure" historical investigation of the New Testament (Wrede 1897, ET 1973) is hermeneutically naive. All exploration of historical texts is shaped in one way or another by the historical context and the theological convictions of the exegete (Frey 2007, 28). It was not Wrede but, rather, the historical-critical investigation of the Old and New Testaments in the twentieth century which caused scholars to focus nearly exclusively on historical questions and on historical reconstructions. These reconstructions largely remained speculative (Childs 1970; G. Maier 1974; Stuhlmacher 1975, ET 1977). As a result of the increasingly diverse hypotheses concerning oral and literary sources, traditions, and redactions, the project of a consistent New Testament theology seems challenging, if not impossible. It is probably not a coincidence that it is scholars who are more concerned about the integrity of the church than about the purity of their reputations as academics who have written New Testament theologies. My own project is informed by the following characteristics deemed necessary for writing a New Testament theology.

1.2.1. The historical character of the New Testament texts is foundational for a New Testament theology. The texts of the New Testament are historical texts, in the sense of being texts written in the first century and in terms of genre (four biographies of Jesus; a treatise of the expansion of the church from Jerusalem to Roman provinces; letters written to specific audiences). It is thus a plausible requirement that a New Testament theology explore the theological convictions of the particular biblical authors who were shaped by their historical context. If we accept that God revealed himself "to our ancestors through the prophets at many times and in various ways, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son" (Heb. 1:1–2 NIV), then summary descriptions of the theological content of God's revelation as inscripturated in what we call the Old and the New Testaments must take into account the stages of salvation history, the historical character of the biblical writings, and the historical location and the actions of the authors of the biblical texts. The last element is important: for Jesus, Paul, and the other apostles and writers of the NT texts, theology and action, teaching and missionary outreach formed an indissoluble unity (Schlatter 1923b, 5, ET 1997, 21). Any New Testament theology that is true to the witness of the New Testament authors will acknowledge the events of the history of the earliest Jesus followers in their epoch-making and doctrine-creating significance (Zahn 1932, 2). The Old Testament theology of Goldingay, the New Testament theologies of Hahn, Wilckens, and Blomberg, and the biblical theology of Childs are good models for the integration of historical explorations into the theology of the biblical texts. At the same time, the multivolume publications of Goldingay,

Hahn, and Wilckens serve as a warning concerning the scope of combining historical reconstruction and synthetic interpretation. A narrative or canonical approach (e.g., Eskola) helps reduce or avoid the need to take into account hypothetical and diverse reconstructions of tradition history, but it is prone to skip over historical specificity.

In my own New Testament theology, I will describe the manifold witness to God's revelation in and through Jesus of Nazareth, who is Israel's Messiah and Savior of sinners, beginning with the proclamation of Jesus (part 2); continuing with a description of the proclamation of the Jerusalem apostles (part 3), the proclamation of Paul (part 4), and the consolidation of the apostolic mission in the writings of Mark, Matthew, Luke, John, and Hebrews (part 5); and ending with systematic presentation of the message of the New Testament (part 6).

1.2.2. The historical audiences of the New Testament texts must be taken into account. The composition of the original audiences must not be ignored, even though in some cases these may be difficult to establish. It should be noted that the historical audiences did not just consist of "Jewish Christians" and (or) "Gentile Christians," which is the default assumption in much New Testament research. The majority of the early congregations of Jesus followers were "mixed" congregations not only in terms of ethnicity (Jews/Gentiles) but also in terms of gender (men/women), social status (free/slave, elite/non-elite, wealthy/poor), marital status (married/single), philosophical commitment (Stoics, Epicureans, popular philosophy), and religious affiliation before conversion (worshipers of Israel's God or, in the case of Gentiles, of Zeus/Jupiter, Athena/Minerva, Aphrodite/Venus, Artemis/Diana, Demeter/Ceres, Isis, Men, Roma, the emperor). In the communication of a message from the source via a gatekeeper to the audience, there is a feedback loop from the audience to the source of the communication. The apostles who proclaim the gospel to unbelievers and teach the gospel to Jesus followers know the linguistic categories that their varied audiences can and cannot understand, and select, formulate, and interpret their message accordingly so that understanding and faith are facilitated—or rejection is provoked (Reck 1991; Schnabel 2004, 2:1321). We can and should read the Gospel of John and John's Revelation "in Ephesus" (Tilborg 1996; Witetschek 2008), as we read 1–2 Corinthians in the context of Roman Corinth, Galatians in the context of Pisidian Antioch and other cities in southern Galatia, and Romans in the context of Rome (or Pompeii; Oakes 2009). However, since most if not all the authors of the New Testament texts had served as teachers and leaders of local congregations, who, very probably without exception, had traveled and visited other congregations and who wrote their texts with many congregations in mind (cf. Bauckham 1998a), we assume that by the time the last New Testament text was written in the 90s of the first century, all New Testament

texts can and should be read in the context of any congregation, irrespective of the fact that the congregation is in Syrian Antioch, in Pisidian Antioch, in Pergamon, in Philippi, in Corinth, in Ephesus, or in Rome.

In my New Testament theology, I will develop a profile of the hearers of the content of the New Testament texts in the context of the congregations of Jesus followers (§2.2.6). This profile does not depend on a particular reader-response model but on general considerations of speakers and authors who take into account the experiences and the viewpoints of their actual audiences and of later hearers and readers beyond the immediate recipients of their texts as they formulate their theological convictions. It goes without saying that it will not be possible to circulate every New Testament statement, or every pericope, through these profiles of believers and unbelievers. When I relate texts, statements, and convictions of the authors of the New Testament to the hypothetical people described in these profiles, I want to provoke modern readers to understand the theology of the New Testament in its historical context, in the sense of the range of people who heard, read, and studied the New Testament documents in the house churches in the first century. To engage with the original hearers of the apostles' congregational teaching and proclamation should help modern readers—who attend the over five million local congregations worldwide (T. Johnson et al. 2016), themselves characterized by social, ethnic, and religious contexts—understand the New Testament texts in similarly diverse contexts.

1.2.3. The missionary audiences of the apostles must be acknowledged. Paul's theology was "mission theology" (Stuhlmacher 2018, 251), but so was, arguably, the theology of all authors of the New Testament: "It would be good if the concept of *mission* binding together the major New Testament traditions were further investigated" (821). What we today call "theology" the early Jesus followers regarded as proclamation of God's saving acts that leads Jews and Gentiles to faith in Jesus Messiah and Savior and that strengthens the faith of the followers of Jesus (Schnabel 2018n). The leading men and women of the early church were missionaries and evangelists: Peter in Jerusalem, Samaria, the cities of the coastal plain, and perhaps northern Anatolia and Rome; Stephen in Jerusalem; Philip in Jerusalem, Samaria, and in the cities of the coastal plain; Barnabas in Antioch and Cyprus; Paul in Nabatea, Syria, Cilicia, Galatia, Asia, Macedonia, Achaia, Illyria, Rome, and Spain; Priscilla in Corinth, Ephesus, and Rome; Timothy in Macedonia, Achaia, and Ephesus; Phoebe in Corinth and Rome; Apollos in Achaia, Ephesus, and Crete; Thomas probably in India; Matthew probably in Pontus, perhaps in Ethiopia, possibly in Syria; John Mark in Antioch, Cyprus, and Rome; Luke in Antioch and Macedonia; John in Jerusalem, Samaria, and Ephesus. This list of names includes all authors

of the books of the New Testament, with the exception of James, Jude, and the unknown author of the Letter to the Hebrews. It is not only Paul and the churches he established that were engaged in transregional missionary work and regional and local evangelism, exhorting people to convert to faith in Jesus Messiah and Savior (cf. Wolter 2010, who uses the term *Bekehrungsreligion*, conversion religion). Pliny the Younger, the governor of the province of Bithynia-Pontus in northern Asia Minor, documents the fact of a successful Christian mission in all sectors of society (Prostmeier 2017, 214). He complained in a letter to the emperor Trajan in AD 111/112 about the aggressive expansion of the "wretched" cult initiated by the crucifixion of Jesus, a superstition which, he writes, now reached a "great number of persons of every age and class," both men and women, and "not only the towns, but villages and rural districts too" are infected (Pliny, *Ep*. 10.96.8–10). While this cannot be empirically proven due to a lack of evidence for most local congregations in the first and second century, it seems beyond doubt that the leaders of the Jesus followers understood their task to be the proclamation of the gospel in missionary outreach, if only in the context of the assemblies of local congregations, which were open to unbelieving visitors (1 Cor. 14:23).

Situating the theology of the New Testament in a missionary context, I do not imply that the New Testament texts were written with the purpose of leading Jews and Gentiles to faith in Jesus. The New Testament texts are not missionary literature. Nor do I imply that the authors of the New Testament, who wrote their texts for the instruction of the Jesus followers worshiping in local congregations, intended to summarize their own missiological convictions. The New Testament texts are not missiological literature. However, in view of the consistent missionary reality of the life of the early churches, with their leaders on the move as missionaries and teachers, it is a plausible assumption that the New Testament texts reflect the reality of the missionary activity of the early church. This means that it should be possible to integrate the New Testament texts into the historical context of the early Christian mission. The Gospels and the letters that constitute the canon of the New Testament literature were not written by academics, professionals of the spoken and written word, delineating arguments, counterarguments, theories, and hypotheses. They were written by theologians who had missionary experience, who had led people to faith in Jesus, who had planted new churches, and who taught both new and mature believers in Jesus.

In my New Testament theology, I will develop a profile of unbelievers who might hear the gospel being proclaimed in publicly accessible venues in a town or city or in the setting of the assemblies of the congregations of Jesus followers to which they were invited.

1.2.4. The literary character of the New Testament texts is relevant for a New Testament theology. As New Testament theology is pursued in service to the church, which, historically, has accepted the authority of the Scriptures, literary analysis of the New Testament texts is relevant. Sapiential sayings, parables, or psalms of lament and praise on which New Testament authors draw have different types of implications for the life of the church than theological argument or ethical imperatives. To give just one, albeit an important, example: the Gospels are not narrative compositions modeled on fiction, or theological treatises addressing problems in a particular church, but biographies of Jesus Messiah; they must be read and interpreted with a primary focus on Jesus and his ministry, and only secondarily with a focus on the theology of their authors. Depending on ecclesial socialization, some present readers of Scripture may be tempted to read Scripture as law, as promise, or as (mere) example of Christian belief and behavior, a hermeneutical move that distorts and often falsifies the message of the New Testament witnesses.

In my New Testament theology, I will include (usually brief) comments on a proper understanding of biblical historiography, legal texts, poetry, wisdom literature, genealogy, metaphor, letters, household codes, and other text types.

1.2.5. The theological character of the New Testament texts is, obviously, the focus of a New Testament theology. The historical character of the texts of the New Testament does not exclude the possibility—indeed, the necessity—of asking whether, when, and how God, whom Jews and Christians believe to be the creator of the world, manifests himself in the historical process (Deines 2013a, who warns of the new trend in biblical studies to engage in "theological interpretation" without recourse to historical interpretation, which he correctly regards as "alarming because history-making is a characteristic of the biblical God who revealed himself to mankind by making himself accessible, knowable, identifiable, visible and audible within this world" [6]). In the context of the use of the term *theologos* by Plato, Aristotle, and others—the term is not used by the LXX translators and does not occur in the New Testament—to refer to the poets whose texts (*logos*) describe the actions and the behavior of a god (*theos*), including "the causal traits which they give to the world" (W. Löhr, *BNP* 14:489), and in the context of the use of *theologia* by Christian writers in the second and third centuries, I understand the term "theology" to refer to the understanding (and proclamation) of God and his dealings with the world and with human beings (Frey 2007, 44). If indeed "history is not without God and therefore the world is not without God," if God is not treated merely as an object but acknowledged as the subject—that is, "a major cause, disposed to manifest himself in the historical process from the outset" (Deines 2013a, 5, 20)—it is legitimate to write a New Testament theology that acknowledges

the truth of God's manifestation in history, the significance of God's revelation in Jesus of Nazareth, and the impact of the preexistent, crucified, and risen Jesus Messiah on the life and faith of the Jesus followers. The main focus of the authors of the New Testament texts is Jesus (chap. 3). Writing about Jesus is *theologia* because they realized in their encounter with Jesus, who called them to leave their nets and be trained for missionary outreach in the service of the kingdom of God (Mark 1:17), that Jesus of Nazareth was not simply a human being but the Word made flesh (John 1:14). Thus, "the intellectual and spiritual adventure of the first followers of Jesus, the New Testament writers and first authors of the Church, was to discover who this man of Galilee really was" (Deines 2013b, 444).

In my New Testament theology I take seriously the historical character of the New Testament texts and their authors and audiences, the literary character of texts, and the necessary simultaneous reality of the theological diversity of texts and authors and the theological unity of the New Testament as a whole.

1.2.6. The focus of the New Testament texts determines the outline of a theology of the New Testament. It is a challenge to provide a plausible outline of a New Testament theology. The audience of a project helps determine such an outline—popular audiences may benefit from a book-by-book treatment; students and scholars will appreciate an outline that focuses on major periods, such as the proclamation of Jesus, the Jerusalem church, and Paul; a combination of a historical outline with a theological synthesis will be of interest to all audiences, depending on the length of the project. The easiest approach to outlining a New Testament theology is a description of the theology of each New Testament text (cf. Marshall, Thielman). It is more challenging to synthesize the theological convictions of Jesus, the early church, Peter, John, and Paul (cf. Stuhlmacher, Schnelle). And it is most challenging to synthesize the theological themes of the New Testament as a whole (cf. Guthrie, Schreiner), as one would want to avoid the imposition of categories from systematic or dogmatic theology which might distort the description of the theology of the New Testament texts written in the first century. Using biblical categories as engines for the classification and outline of synthetic sections of a New Testament theology is not without potential pitfalls: while the concept of the "kingdom of God" is surely appropriate for writing a synthesis of the proclamation of Jesus, it is rarely used in Paul's letters (14 references, compared with 121 references in the Synoptic Gospels); the term "covenant" is frequent in the Old Testament (284 references) but not a controlling category in the New Testament (33 references). Descriptions that use "exodus" or "return from exile" as a controlling framework seem to rely more on reconstructions of tradition history than on the biblical material. Using categories such as "the unfolding

of the Old Testament in the New" or "the already and not-yet of creation and new creation" as the controlling thematic center of a New Testament theology might be helpful in highlighting the unity of the Old Testament and the New Testament. However, such thematic centers often marginalize a description of the diversity and contingency of God's revelation in specific historical contexts and, more seriously, eclipse the centrality of the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Messiah in the outline of a New Testament theology.

Writing a New Testament theology requires that we take at least three realities seriously: (1) The life, death, and resurrection of Jesus is central for all New Testament authors; without it, there would be no New Testament writings and no church and thus no audience for a New Testament theology. (2) The divine identity of Jesus, who is the crucified and risen Messiah and Lord, is a fundamental reality in a plausible description of the theology of the New Testament witnesses. (3) The fact that the New Testament canon begins with four biographies of Jesus firmly anchors a New Testament theology in the person, deeds, words, death, and resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth. Models for a fundamental focus on Jesus are the New Testament theologies of Goppelt, Stuhlmacher, Schnelle, Hahn, Wilckens, and Schreiner.

In my own New Testament theology, the foundational centrality of Jesus will be taken seriously, both in the general outline (part 2) and in the analysis and interpretation of the individual authors of New Testament texts.

1.2.7. The present readers of the New Testament texts require some attention. While it is not the task of a New Testament theology to interact with systematic theological questions and ethical conundrums which arise in the contemporary cultural contexts—New Testament theology is not dogmatic theology, nor Christian proclamation—it seems obvious that a description of the theology of the New Testament which seeks to be more than historical reconstruction and which thus makes truth claims must be meaningful not only for scholars and students but also for pastors, missionaries, evangelists, and even unbelievers who are looking for reasons to find the convictions of the biblical authors plausible (Frey 2007, 43–45). For an author and for readers who accept that the Old and New Testament Scriptures are the inspired and authoritative Word of God, the distance between the historical meaning of the biblical texts and the contemporary significance of the biblical texts should not be a deep crevasse on a glacier from which there is no escape. The description of the present significance of the biblical texts takes into account the salvation-historical "point in time" of various modes of faith, worship, and behavior. For example, while Israel was required to bring sin offerings, followers of Jesus are not required to do so since their faith unites them with the reality of Jesus' death on the cross as the atoning presence of God.

In my New Testament theology, I will explore the contemporary relevance of the theological convictions of the New Testament witnesses in part 6.

1.2.8. Writing a New Testament theology is an exercise in courageous humility. Writing a New Testament theology which includes historical, literary, audience, theological, and ethical analysis—that is, both reconstruction and interpretation—can easily become a massive undertaking. As I do not seek to write a multivolume work, it will not be possible to provide detailed exegetical justification for every point of my analysis. Comprehensive interpretations are not possible without simplifying reconstructions: we place texts and statements in a particular order, and we correct the emerging picture by a close reading of the texts (Theißen 2011). Theißen uses the metaphor of the cathedral for a New Testament theology, which suggests an order that, upon closer inspection, shows itself to be a building that has a history, interruptions, and inconsistencies. In response to skeptics who ask whether this metaphor does not obscure the dynamic and chaotic aspects of this "cathedral," and who suggest that the history of this building was a history of power, censorship, domination, he states, correctly, that this "cathedral" emerged in a time when the church had no central organizational structure—no synods, no bishops with recognized primacy, no emperor who was interested in a church that appears to be a monolithic entity. The cathedral opened up a space of life in which there was plurality, even if not everything was tolerated (but note that people joined voluntarily). And the author of a New Testament theology must have the courage to build a good part of the presentation on the historical, literary, and theological work done by other scholars, although I will attempt neither to provide continuous references to the history of research nor to interact with interpretations and proposals I deem problematic. The disagreements of exegetes and theologians are, if not endless, then surely legion. One is reminded of the aside in an academic text on dualism dating to the second century: "Philosophers agree about nothing—one of them even says that silver is black. You can hear more uproar from a household of philosophers than from a household of madmen" (P.Oxy. XLII 3008; P. Parsons). References to the work of other scholars point to characteristic positions. Writing a New Testament theology requires humility: I cannot say everything I want to say, I cannot mention every author who deserves to be mentioned, I cannot interact with every argument that could and perhaps needs to be discussed. It is comforting to know that humility is a biblical virtue, as the psalmist says ("The Lord sustains the humble but casts the wicked to the ground" [Ps. 147:6 NIV]) and as Jesus teaches ("Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light" [Matt. 11:29–30 NIV]). The description and analysis does not seek to meet the requirement expressed

in the dictum that "scholarship on the beginnings of Christianity is, like every scholarship, always aiming for innovation" (Grünstäudl 2020, 413). My goal is not innovation, but faithfulness to the sources that the church has regarded as the authoritative scriptural revelation of God, who procured salvation for sinners through the death and resurrection of Jesus Messiah.

1.3. The Authors of the New Testament Texts

For Jesus followers around AD 100, the New Testament texts were written by nine authors: Matthew (Gospel), Mark (Gospel), Luke (Gospel, Acts), John (Gospel, the three letters 1–3 John, and Revelation), Paul (thirteen letters), Peter (two letters), the Preacher (Hebrews), James (letter), and Jude (letter). Arguably, all authors of the New Testament had proclaimed the gospel of Jesus Christ as missionaries at some point during their ministry—Peter, Matthew, and John as disciples of Jesus and apostles commissioned by Jesus; Paul as commissioned by the risen Jesus; Mark as coworker of Paul and Peter; Luke as Paul's coworker; Jude and James as brothers of Jesus; the Preacher writes about conversion with intimate knowledge (Heb. 2:1–4; 6:1–5). And all can be presumed to have been teaching in local congregations as they wrote the texts that make up the New Testament. Which New Testament texts were written for Jewish believers, which for Gentile believers, and which for mixed congregations is a matter of debate.

1.3.1. The Gospels. Although Jesus did not write any of the texts collected in the New Testament canon, it should be beyond doubt that without his life and teaching, his death and resurrection, neither the four Gospels nor any of the letters would exist. No other person is quoted in direct speech in the New Testament as much as Jesus is quoted in the Gospels.

1. Jesus is the subject of 17.2% of the verbs in Matthew's Gospel and speaks a further 42.5% of the material in the first Gospel; in the Gospel of Mark the totals are 24.4% and 20.2%; in the Gospel of Luke 17.9% and 36.8%; in the Gospel of John 20.2% and 34.0% (Burridge 2004, 190, 216). When these figures are compared with Greco-Roman biographies (βίοι), they demonstrate that Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John write their Gospels as biographies which report the deeds, words, and sayings of Jesus. The Gospels are biographical texts (historical monographs) based on sources which their authors regarded as trustworthy, written with literary skill and a theological agenda (Keener 2019a; cf. Keener and Wright 2016). In their determination to write about Jesus, the authors of the Gospels could have produced a collection of Jesus' sayings, commentaries on Jesus' sayings, a description of Jesus' teaching, letters/epistles, community rules, or sermons/homilies—all genres readily available in

contemporary Judaism. The rabbinic tradition produced "massive and highly complex literature" with halakhic (legal and ethical) material for the communities and stories about rabbis whose interpretations of the Torah are cited and whose deeds are sometimes used as supportive arguments, but it "produced no religious biographies," which underlines the fact that "the substance of Matthew's faith was neither a dogmatic system nor a legal code but a human being whose life was, in outline and in detail, uniquely significant and therefore demanding of record" (Davies and Allison 1988–97, 3:709–10). This applies to Mark, Luke, and John as well.

2. The authors of the four Gospels have theological agendas, as the authors of Greek and Roman biographies had philosophical and/or political agendas. Note, for example, how Josephus approaches the movement of the early followers of Jesus with deliberate ostracism, a result of his apologia for his brand of Judaism: he knew certain details about James, the brother of Jesus, but remains largely silent about the Christian community in Jerusalem at a time when he was a resident in the city, as he is silent about the fire which burned central Rome and about Nero's accusation that the Christians were responsible, and about the subsequent persecution carried out by Nero and his prefect Tigellinus, even though he was almost certainly in Rome or nearby on a mission during which he became friendly with Nero's wife (Asiedu 2019). The theological agendas of the authors of the Gospels do not disqualify their texts from being treated as reliable historical sources for the life, the proclamation, and the convictions of Jesus, including extraordinary events whose a priori exclusion constitutes an uncritical postulate and which can be understood only through the firsthand testimony of eyewitnesses (Bauckham 2017b). When scholars question the possibility of the historical veracity of the Gospel writers on the basis of their personal involvement in the Jesus movement and on the basis of their theological convictions, one wonders whether they are willing to exclude the eyewitness testimony of Jewish survivors of the Nazis' death camps on the grounds that they cannot be objective since they were personally impacted; such a stance would render it essentially impossible to understand the full scope of the Holocaust as a historical event. Indeed, "all history that matters—of genocide, for instance, or of liberation from oppression—is necessarily perspectival, offering a point of view, a way of stringing together and only thus of beginning to make sense of the mass of brute facts" (Bockmuehl 2012, 7–8).

3. The Gospel of Mark, which can be described as Peter's Gospel due to its origins and its narrative perspective (Bauckham 2017b, 205–39; Bayer 2021), and the Gospel of Matthew, which has also been described as Peter's Gospel (Schenk 1983), were not published as "Gospel according to Peter" (ευαγγελιον κατα Πετρον), which would surely have been more successful than the

compositions by Mark and Matthew (Hengel 2010c, 31). Rather, they were published as "Gospel according to Mark" (ευαγγελιον κατα Μαρκον) and as "Gospel according to Matthew" (ευαγγελιον κατα Ματθθαιον); the first correctors of the great majuscule manuscripts ℵ (fourth century) and B (sixth century) have κατα Μαρκον and κατα Μαθθαιον. These attributions have historical significance.

4. It is hermeneutically and theologically significant that the four Gospels were published in single codex editions perhaps from AD 140–50 onwards. All four Gospels are witnesses to the one gospel (Stanton 1997), describing the ministry, the message, and the significance of Jesus of Nazareth. It was Irenaeus, around AD 174–89, who argued for the acceptance of all *four* Gospels as a criterion for orthodoxy (*Haer.* 3.11.8).

5. While the early churches knew who wrote each of the four Gospels, which were thus never "anonymous" in the sense that their authors were unknown, the fact that none of the Gospels mention the name of the author in the prologue is significant. This is in contrast to Greek and Roman historians, who, according to Josephus, write their histories "eager to display their literary skill and to win the fame therefrom expected" (*A.J.* 1.1). The authors of the Gospels probably adopted the literary device of anonymity because "they regarded themselves as comparatively insignificant mediators of a subject matter that deserved the full attention of the readers" (Baum 2008a, 23).

6. My synthesis of the proclamation of Jesus is based on the canonical Gospels, not on reconstructed sources (such as Proto-Mark, Deutero-Mark, or Q) or on later collections of sayings of Jesus (such as the Gospel of Thomas).

1.3.2. Matthew. The Gospel of Matthew was copied not later than AD 100 with the title κατα Ματθθαιον ("According to Matthew," attested in ℵ[1] and B[1]) or ευαγγελιον κατα Ματθθαιον ("Gospel according to Matthew," attested in W; Hengel 1985, 64–84; Jaroš 2009, 215–23: soon after AD 70, when more than one Gospel existed). A good case can be made that the attribution of authorship is original (Hengel 2000, 50; Gathercole 2018; the earliest manuscript evidence for the title dates to the late second or early third century; cf. Gathercole 2012).

1. Papias, writing around AD 100 in Hierapolis in the province of Asia, is the first Christian author to refer to Matthew as having put the words of Jesus in an ordered arrangement, surely referring to the Gospel of Matthew, taking for granted that Matthew wrote as an eyewitness (Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 3.39.16). There are only about thirty years between the Greek version of the Gospel of Matthew and Papias (Gathercole 2018, 475). Other Christian authors of the second century refer to Matthew, the disciple of Jesus, as the author of the Gospel: Irenaeus in Gallia (*Haer.* 3.1.1), Pantaenus in Alexandria (Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 5.10.3), and Clement of Alexandria (*Strom*. 1.21.147.5).

2. The name Matthew is mentioned in the call narrative (Matt. 9:9) and in the disciple list (10:3), where Matthew is described as a tax collector; the parallel call narratives in Mark 2:14–17 and Luke 5:27–32 use the name "Levi"; Mark calls him "Levi son of Alphaeus," who seems to have been the brother of James son of Alphaeus (Mark 3:18; Matt. 10:3; Luke 6:15; Acts 1:13), a plausible assumption given that Alphaeus was a very rare name. There is no compelling reason to discount the early patristic tradition and replace Matthew, the disciple of Jesus, with an unknown or fictitious Matthew as the author of the "First" Gospel (France 1989, 50–80; Evans 2012, 1–4). As a tax collector, he would have been bilingual (Aramaic, Greek) or trilingual (Hebrew, Aramaic, Greek), which can be demonstrated from Matthew's use of non-LXX text forms in his Old Testament quotations (Davies and Allison 1988–97, 1:32–58), and he would have had the requisite literary skills to take notes and write reports. The manner in which Matthew uses Old Testament texts suggests that he had scribal education.

3. The report of Papias on the Gospels states that "Matthew arranged the *logia* in the Hebrew language, but each person translated them as best he could" (Papias, according to Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 3.39.15–16; translation adapted from Baum 2017, 227; Baum 2001). The Hebrew original of Matthew's Gospel is also mentioned by Pantaenus, the teacher of Clement of Alexandria (ca. AD 150–215), who "went to India, and the tradition is that he there found his own arrival anticipated by some who were acquainted with the gospel according to Matthew; for Bartholomew, one of the apostles, had preached to them and left them the writing of Matthew in Hebrew letters, and this writing was preserved until the time mentioned" (Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 5.10.3). The tradition of a Hebrew Gospel of Matthew is also found in Irenaeus (*Haer.* 3.1.1), Origen (in Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 6.25; Origen, *Comm. Jo.* 1.4.22), Eusebius (*Hist. eccl.* 3.24.6), Cyril of Jerusalem (*Cat.* 14), Epiphanius (*Haer.* 2.1.51), Jerome (*Vir. ill.* 3; *Comm. Matt.* prologue; *Praef. in quat. ev.*), and John Chrysostom (*Hom. Matt.* 1:3). Attempts to confirm a Hebrew original from other sources or from the literary style of the first Gospel have not been successful. Its Semitic style may be due to oral or written sources. Most scholars hold that there was no Hebrew (or Aramaic) early version of the Gospel of Matthew (cf. Davies and Allison 1988–97, 1:9; 3:726: Papias may refer to the Nazoraean version or translation of Matthew's Gospel into Hebrew; France 1989, 62–66: Papias refers to another Gospel written in a Semitic language; Gundry 1994, 619–20: Papias refers to Matthew's literary style).

4. The report of Papias should not be dismissed as historically worthless (Hengel 2000; Hengel 2008d, 126–34; J. Edwards 2009; Baum 2017, 219–56). If indeed there was an original Gospel of Matthew written in Hebrew, it must have been translated into Greek rather quickly; the Greek version was known

in Asia Minor, Greece, and Rome around AD 100. Some suggest a Hebrew Proto-Matthew which was edited and translated into Greek and used by Matthew, Mark, and Luke (Baltes 2011; cf. Baum 2017, 243–56). Some suggest that what Papias refers to is notes and memoirs, written in Hebrew, which became the basis for the canonical Greek Matthew (Evans 2020). Jerome assumes a Hebrew version of canonical Greek Matthew, claiming to know that the Hebrew version "has been preserved until the present day in the library at Caesarea which Pamphilus so diligently gathered. I have also had the opportunity of having the volume described to me by the Nazarenes of Beroea, a city of Syria, who use it." He states that it is unknown who translated the Hebrew Gospel of Matthew into Greek (Jerome, *Vir. ill.* 3). Some have suggested that Matthew wrote both the Hebrew and the Greek version, or that Matthew himself may have translated the Hebrew Gospel into Greek (Bengel 1742). None of this can be verified. Many questions remain unanswered. There is no consensus as to what Papias exactly refers to. A good argument can be made that the Gospel of Matthew was written before AD 62 (Gundry 1994, 606–9; J. A. T. Robinson 1976: AD 50–60; Reicke 1972: AD 50–64; G. Maier 2015–17: ca. AD 60; most assume a later date: Davies and Allison 1988–97: between AD 70 and 100, probably AD 80–95; Luz 1985–2001, ET 2001–5: not long after AD 80).

5. The prominence of the Gospel of Matthew can be seen in the fact that of the thirty-six papyri manuscripts of the four Gospels, twelve are manuscripts of Matthew (sixteen of John, seven of Luke, and one of Mark; Hurtado 2006, 20), which roughly corresponds to the frequency of references to the Gospels in the patristic texts of the same period (Allenbach et al. 1975–2000, 223–93; cf. Gathercole 2018, 472–73).

6. Augustine and the church fathers and, more recently, other scholars argued that Matthew wrote his Gospel first, which was then used by Luke, and Mark used both Matthew and Luke (Griesbach 1794, 1825, ET 1979; Farmer 1964).

7. Most are convinced that Mark was the first Gospel, used independently by Matthew and Luke, which is the most expedient explanation of the evidence, although the term "used" should not be understood in terms of modern academic practices of quoting, redacting, and modifying texts on one's desk: the increasingly complex suggestions for the solution to the Synoptic problem in which Mark, Matthew, and Luke depend on two or more intermediate Gospels, which in turn depend on several postulated sources, highlight the significance of oral traditions and eyewitness testimony. Some think that Matthew used Mark and Luke as well as various *logia* sources when he wrote his Gospel (Hengel 2008d). Assuming that Matthew was one of the Twelve, the objection that a disciple of Jesus would not incorporate in his account of the deeds and words of Jesus the

narrative of John Mark, who was not a disciple, becomes less urgent when we take into account the tradition that Mark wrote down Peter's proclamation of Jesus, apart from the fact that the early Jesus followers were more concerned about Jesus than about literary reputations.

8. Note the complexity of several proposals: Boismard (1972) assumes the written sources Q, A, B, C, Q, Intermediate-Matthew (who used Q and A), Intermediate-Mark (who used A, B, and C), and Proto-Luke (who used C and Q), and he assumes the finalized Gospels of Matthew (who used Intermediate-Matthew and Intermediate-Mark), Mark (who used Intermediate-Matthew and Intermediate Mark), and Luke (who used Intermediate-Matthew, Intermediate Mark, and Proto-Luke). Riesner 2016, under the heading "The Orality and Memory Hypothesis," assumes five streams of oral tradition (Galilee: stories and sayings of Jesus; Twelve/Peter: passion of Jesus; Twelve/Peter: sayings of Jesus; Twelve/Peter: stories about Jesus; family of Jesus: Jerusalem, Damascus) which fed into Proto-Mark (Peter/Mark, Semitic Greek, Jerusalem/Caesarea). Proto-Mark, Riesner argued, was supplemented in Galilee and southern Syria (Jewish Christian communities) with other locally remembered Jesus traditions and combined in Antioch (Gentile-Christian communities: Mark, Paul) with a Greek tradition of the words of Jesus, resulting in the Gospel of Mark. The Gospel of Matthew used Galilean Jesus traditions, traditions of Hellenist Jewish-Christians (which in turn incorporated traditions of the Twelve/Peter and Proto-Mark), and traditions of Jewish-Christian communities (which incorporated Galilean Jesus traditions and Proto-Mark). The Gospel of Luke used the traditions of Hellenist Jewish-Christians and the traditions of Gentile-Christian communities (both of which incorporated Proto-Mark) as well as a Lukan special tradition (which incorporated traditions of the Twelve/Peter, the family of Jesus, and Proto-Mark). Also note Baum (2008b; 2017, 449–647), who also emphasizes the significance of oral tradition and memory and argues for the plausibility of the tradition hypothesis (Gieseler 1818; Westcott 1881): the three Synoptic Gospels incorporated differing versions of the oral tradition of Mark, independently of each other, with Matthew and Luke incorporating material or orally extant teaching of Jesus independently of each other. France (1989, 43) speaks of "the rather artificial simplicity of the classical hypotheses, which depend on the assumption of a literarily inactive church (and a relatively insignificant place for oral tradition) and of a method of gospel-composition by simple 'redaction' of one or at most two finished documents, in isolation from the currents of wider church life."

1.3.3. Mark. Many date the Gospel of Mark after AD 70, postulating that Mark must have written the Gospel after the destruction of Jerusalem described in Mark 13 (Pesch 1980, 1:14; Incigneri 2003, 202–7). The interpretation of Mark

13 as a description, after the event, of the Jewish War, which led to the destruction of Jerusalem (AD 66–70), is unconvincing. War, earthquakes, and famines are regularly mentioned in apocalyptic texts and thus cannot be relied upon for establishing the date of a composition; the reference to persecution (Mark 13:9–13) does not fit the history of the Jewish War, during which no persecution of the followers of Jesus is mentioned; and details of Josephus's account of the siege of Jerusalem by Roman troops—particularly the violent fighting among different Jewish factions, the crucifixion of thousands of Jews by the Romans outside the city walls, and the fire which incinerated the Temple and the city (Josephus, *B.J.* 6.164–434)—are not related in Mark 13, where neither the destruction of the Temple nor that of the city is actually described. Some date the Gospel of Mark to the mid-40s (Crossley 2004a: AD 35–45; Casey 1998: AD 40; J. Wenham 1991: AD 45), to the late 50s (Ellis 2002: AD 55–58), to the early 60s (Gundry 1993: AD 60–62), or the late 60s (Bayer 2021: AD 66–67; Hengel 2007a, ET 1985: between AD 68/69 and 69–70; Garland 2015, 82: prior to the destruction of Jerusalem). The evidence of Papias, who links Mark with Peter, could indicate that Mark wrote the Gospel in Rome before the death of Peter (ca. AD 64–67) and before the end of Paul's imprisonment (since Luke, who used Mark's Gospel, ends the book of Acts without reporting the outcome of Paul's trial, which is plausibly explained by the suggestion that the trial had not yet taken place). A date in the 50s is possible given the internal evidence; a date around AD 50–64 is plausible given the external evidence. The association of Peter and Mark explains why the early tradition identifies Rome, or more generally Italy, as the place of origin of Mark's Gospel (Irenaeus, *Haer.* 3.1.1; Clement of Alexandria; cf. Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 6.14.5–7), which may be seen as confirmed by the frequent Latinisms in Mark's text (e.g., κράβαττος, "mat," Mark 2:4, 9, 11–12). This does not mean that Mark wrote the Gospel exclusively for the church(es) in the city of Rome: the fact that Matthew and Luke based their accounts on Mark's Gospel indicates that it was highly valued in the congregations in other regions, and the constant communication of the communities of followers of Jesus by messengers, letters, and travels of missionaries and teachers confirms that Mark anticipated that his account of Jesus' life would be of interest to all Christians (Bauckham 1998a). The translation of Aramaic terms (e.g., Mark 5:41: "'*Talitha cum,*' which means, 'Little girl, get up!'") and the explanations of Jewish customs (e.g., 7:11: "'Corban' [that is, an offering to God]") suggest that Mark's primary audience probably were Gentile believers who did not speak Aramaic.

1. As in the case of Matthew's Gospel, the name Mark in the title "The Gospel according to Mark" (ευαγγελιον κατα Μαρκον) in most Greek manuscripts is very probably original (Hengel 2007b, ET 2000; the earliest attestation of a

Gospel *inscriptio* is attested for the Gospel of John in $\mathfrak{P}^{66}$ (copied ca. AD 200): ευαγγελιον κατα Ιωαννην, which presupposes such titles for manuscripts of all four Gospels at this time). Since Marcus was a common Latin name, the fact that early Christian authors could refer to a person called "Mark" without clarifying whom they have in mind attests to an identification with John Mark, the Christian leader mentioned in Acts 12:12, 25; 13:5, 13; 15:37–39; Col. 4:10; 2 Tim. 4:11; Philem. 24; 1 Pet. 5:13). Even more significant is the fact that in Palestine before AD 200, only five persons named Marcus are attested (including John Mark of Acts), from a total of two and a half thousand named male individuals (Ilan 2002–12, 1:334), which strongly suggests that the New Testament references refer not to two or three Marks but to the same Mark (Bauckham 2012; differently Furlong 2020).

2. Papias, the *episkopos* of Hierapolis, relates a tradition that he heard from the Elder that "Mark, having become Peter's interpreter, wrote down accurately everything he remembered, though not in order, of the things either said or done by Christ. For he neither heard the Lord nor followed him, but afterward, as I said, followed Peter" (Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 3.39.15). Since Peter was able to communicate in Greek and thus did not need a translator, the Elder (and Papias) could mean that Mark put Peter's words down in writing: "Peter might be content with his own rather rough Greek in his oral teaching, but when it came to having his words recorded he preferred to express himself in his native Aramaic and allow Mark to translate into more accurate and readable Greek" (Bauckham 2017b, 206). Justin Martyr calls Mark's Gospel "the memoirs" of Peter (*Dial.* 106.3). Christian authors from the second century state that Mark wrote a Gospel (Justin Martyr, Irenaeus, Clement of Alexandria, the anti-Marcionite prologue, Origen, Tertullian, Canon Muratori).

3. Some distinguish between the "memoirs" that the Elder (as cited by Papias) mentions from the written Gospel that Justin, Irenaeus, and other patristic authors refer to, suggesting that Mark produced unordered written notes in Greek on the basis of Peter's teaching, which were used by the authors of the canonical (Synoptic) Gospels when they composed their literary Gospels (some call these notes Proto-Mark; Kennedy 1978; Burkett 2018; Evans 2020, 1–26). This position has difficulties in explaining why Papias would describe this preliminary stage of the composition of the Gospels so emphatically, without then also referring to the Gospel of Mark that he knew (Bauckham 2017b, 228n88). Investigations of the Gospel of Mark that conclude that Mark was a disciple of Paul rather than of Peter (Pérez i Díaz 2020) demonstrate the substantial unity of early Christian theology rather than falsifying the opinion of Papias.

4. While some have argued that Mark used Matthew and Luke (Griesbach 1794, 1825, ET 1979; Farmer 1964; Mann 1986), it is almost universally accepted

that Mark's Gospel was the earliest of the four Gospels, a solution to the question of the relationship between the first three "synoptic" gospels that has been called "the priority of Mark" (Weisse 1838; Streeter 1924; Carson and Moo 2005, 85–103; Garland 2015, 82–84).

1.3.4. Luke. Granted that the description "Gospel according to Luke" in manuscripts of the text must have existed as soon as two Gospels circulated, the authorship of the Third Gospel as a Gospel written by Luke was attested in the second half of the second century by Irenaeus, who asserts that the Gospel of Luke was written by a companion of Paul (*Haer.* 3.1.1). The author of the Canon Muratori, written around AD 200 (Schnabel 2014b), explains in more detail: "The third book of the Gospel is that according to Luke. Luke, the well-known physician, after the ascension of Christ, when Paul had taken him with him as one zealous for the law, composed it in his own name, according to [the general] belief. Yet he himself had not seen the Lord in the flesh; and therefore, as he was able to ascertain events, so indeed he begins to tell the story from the birth of John" (lines 2–8; Schnabel 2014b). Greek manuscripts of the Gospel refer to Luke as author (attested since $\mathfrak{P}^{75}$, copied ca. AD 300, which has ευαγγελιον κατα Λουκαν as *subscriptio*).

1. These two texts establish the view of the early patristic tradition that both the Third Gospel and the book of Acts were written by Luke, Paul's coworker (2 Tim. 4:11; Philem. 24), who was a physician (Col. 4:14). The anti-Marcionite prologue to the Gospel of Luke (fourth century) asserts that Luke was a Syrian from Antioch, a physician, a disciple of the apostles, a companion of Paul who was with him until his martyrdom; he had neither a wife nor children and died at the age of seventy-four in Bithynia. How much of this is reliable information is impossible to know. That Luke was from Antioch (Syria) is attested in the fourth century also by Eusebius (*Hist. eccl.* 3.4.6) and Jerome (*Vir. ill.* 7; *Comm. Matt.* praef.35). The argument that the author of the book of Acts cannot be a coworker of Paul because of his distance from Paul's theology is not cogent (Porter 1999).

2. The Antiochene origins of Luke have been deduced from the "we passages" in Acts 16:10–17; 20:5–15; 21:1–18; 27:1–28:16—which begin, however, not in Antioch but in southern Galatia and Troas in the province of Asia (Acts 16:6, 8), although manuscript D and several Latin manuscripts presuppose the presence of Luke in the church in Antioch in Acts 11:26, the first "we passage" in the Western text. Some argue for Antioch as Luke's home city (Fitzmyer 1981–85), although some have argued for Philippi due to the detailed knowledge of the local setting (Pilhofer 1995).

3. Most think that Luke was a Gentile Christian, perhaps a God-fearer who attended the synagogue before coming to faith in Jesus (Keener 2012–15, 1:402–5).

The substantial influence of the Greek Old Testament on the language and style of Luke's Greek, the references to Israel as the people of God, and the emphasis on the fulfillment of God's promises given to Israel have prompted other scholars to regard Luke as a Jewish Christian (Jervell 1998; Alexander 2005; Wolter 2008, 9–10, ET 2016–17, 11). The dedication of both volumes of his work to the "most excellent Theophilus" (Luke 1:3; cf. Acts 1:1; κράτιστος, "most excellent," probably implies status) suggests that Theophilus was Luke's patron who sponsored his writing and the production and publication of his two-volume work (Keener 2012–15, 1:656–57; cf. Metzner 2008, 196–201, who speculates that Theophilus could have been a freedman who had become a member of the aristocratic equestrian order).

4. Luke bases his history of the life and ministry of Jesus on earlier written accounts and on eyewitnesses (Luke 1:1–4). The witnesses include the Twelve (cf. Acts 1:21–22) and other disciples (Luke 6:17; 8:1–3; 10:1; 19:37; 23:27; 24:9; Acts 1:15, 21–23). In the first volume of his work, Luke reports what Jesus began (ἤρξατο) to do and to teach, and in the second volume he reports what Jesus *continued* to do and teach through his witnesses whom he empowered with his Spirit (Acts 1:1).

5. The Gospel of Luke is a biography of the life of Jesus (see §1.3.1.1). An examination of the subjects of the verbs in Acts demonstrates that Luke's second volume has strong biographical credentials: Paul is the subject of 11.4% of the verbs (plus 11.2% for his speeches), which together is almost a fourth of the total), followed by the disciples as a group (18%), Peter (3.7% plus 6.8% for his speeches), Stephen (0.5% plus 4.6% for his speech), and James (0.1% plus 1% for his speech and the Apostolic Decree [Acts 15])—a total of 57.3% for the deeds and words of Peter, Paul, Stephen, James, and the disciples, which compares almost exactly with the figures for the Gospel of Luke (17.9% plus 36.8%, totaling 54.7% for Jesus' words and deeds; Burridge 2011, 13–16; he notes that the allocation of 32.3% of Acts to Paul's trials and transfer to Rome is close to John's allocation of 33% to Jesus' final week, death, and resurrection). Thus, Acts could be called a biography of the leaders of the early church (Burridge 2011, 28: "biographical monograph").

6. Luke ends his narrative with Paul's two-year imprisonment in Rome around AD 60–62 (Acts 28:30), which could be the terminus ad quem for the composition of Luke-Acts (for dating Luke-Acts in the early 60s cf. Hemer 2001, 365–410; Mittelstaedt 2006; Armstrong 2019; Seccombe 2020; Keener 2012–15, 1:400, suggests a date ca. AD 75, "with dates in the 80s and 60s still plausible, and a date in the 90s not impossible"). Some assume that Luke used Mark and Matthew when he wrote his Gospel (Farrer 1955; Goulder 1989; Goodacre 2002).

7. Luke writes for mixed congregations, providing extensive accounts of Paul's preaching in synagogues before Jewish audiences and his preaching before Gentile audiences. Suggested audiences for his two-volume work have been located in Rome, Corinth, Ephesus, and Philippi (Keener 2012–15, 1:429–34). This does not exclude the possibility—even probability, given Luke's origins in Antioch and his knowledge of eyewitnesses of the ministry of Jesus—that Jesus followers in Syria and in Judea would have wanted to read Luke's accounts of the life of Jesus and the early congregations led and founded by Peter and Paul as well.

1.3.5. John. The New Testament includes five texts attributed to an author with the name John, either in the early tradition (Gospel of John, the three letters 1–3 John) or explicitly (Revelation; cf. Rev. 1:1). In the second century we find "a surprisingly wide and authoritative use of the Fourth Gospel in particular, and of the Apocalypse and the First Epistle secondarily, and their habitual attribution to a common apostolic origin," which points "to a very early and seemingly instinctive recognition of authority which benefits some authoritative source" (C. E. Hill 2004, 475). Christian authors agreed early that the five Johannine texts (with less evidence for 2 John and 3 John) had a common apostolic origin, eventually identified unanimously with the eyewitness and disciple of Jesus named John (an exception was the Alogi, who argued ca. AD 200 that the Gospel of John was written by Cerinthus, who had been branded a heretic by the church at large). The linguistic (phraseological) and theological, especially christological, similarities and connection of the Gospel of John, Revelation, and the three letters support a common origin of these five texts (Frey 1993, who argues for the tradition-historical origin of the five texts in the assumed Johannine School and a later composition of Revelation).

1. As has been argued for the Gospels according to Matthew, Mark, and Luke, a case can be made that the attribution of authorship in the title "Gospel according to John" is original. The title occurs in two early papyri ($\mathfrak{P}^{66}$, late second century, and $\mathfrak{P}^{75}$, early third century; Aland 1986; Elliott and Parker 1995, 123).

i. Papias, whose fragments seem to depend on passages in the Gospel of John (e.g., the order of disciples is similar to John 1:35–45; 21:2), appears to have knowledge of John as an author (C. E. Hill 2010a). Several second-century authors and texts state or imply that the Gospel of John was written by John son of Zebedee, the apostle and disciple of Jesus: the *Epistula apostolorum* (AD 115–50), the Gnostic *Acts of John*, the Gnostics Ptolemaeus and Valentinianus, Irenaeus, Tertullian, and Hippolytus. The internal evidence of the Gospel, including historical notices, stylistic features, and theological emphases, does not contradict the external evidence. The Gospel of John is written as eyewitness testimony (Bauckham 2017b, 358–83; cf. Baum 2017, 655–864; Köstenberger

2009, 72–79; see the arguments for John son of Zebedee as the author of the Fourth Gospel in Blomberg 2001, 22–40; cf. P. Anderson 1996, 274–77; 2006, 598, who suggests that Acts 4:19–20 is a first-century clue to Johannine authorship). Suggestions that the author of the Fourth Gospel is not John son of Zebedee but John the Elder are based on a statement by Papias which Eusebius interpreted as referring to two distinct persons: the apostle John son of Zebedee and John the Elder (*Hist. eccl.* 3.39.5–6; Hengel 1993, ET 1989; Bauckham 2017b, 384–471, 550–89, who argues that the author of the Fourth Gospel is the Beloved Disciple, whom he identifies with John the Elder, interpreted as a disciple of Jesus in Jerusalem; differently, Charlesworth 2019, 375–98, argues that Thomas is the Beloved Disciple). The interpretation of Papias by Eusebius has been challenged (G. Maier 1981, 50–62; Keener 2003, 1:95–98). While the correct understanding of the Papias statement continues to be disputed, neither Papias nor Eusebius suggests that the Fourth Gospel was written by John the Elder. A plausible date for the publication of the Fourth Gospel seems to be AD 80–85 (Carson and Moo 2005, 264–67; cf. Köstenberger 2009, 83) or AD 85–95 (Blomberg 2001, 41–44), although a good case can be made for a pre-70 date (D. Wallace 1990; cf. Wahlde 2010, 1:51–55, who assumes a first edition ca. AD 55–65, a second edition ca. 60–65, and a third edition ca. 90–95; cf. Charlesworth 2019, 40–60, who dates a first edition to AD 68–70 and a second edition to AD 90–100).

ii. Interpreters accepted for a long time the assessment of Clement of Alexandria that John knew and approved of the other Gospels but sought to compose a "spiritual Gospel" (Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 6.14.7). This consensus was overturned when scholars concluded that the Gospel of John is independent of the other Gospels (Gardner-Smith 1938; C. H. Dodd 1965; D. M. Smith 2001, 195–241, with some doubt). Some scholars who date the Gospel of John early affirm the independence of John (J. A. T. Robinson 1985, arguing that John's witness, especially his historical information, should not be taken to be secondary to that of the Synoptic Gospels; Berger 1997: John was written prior to the Synoptic Gospels, between AD 68 and 70; similarly Hofrichter 1997). The consensus of John's independence is being questioned. Some argue that John knew Mark (Barrett 1978, 45) or Mark and Luke (Schnelle 2004, 17–18; Lang 1999: John is directly dependent on Mark and influenced by Luke), that John used Luke (Neirynck 1979; Thyen 1992b), or that John used all three Synoptic Gospels (Boismard and Lamouille 1977), perhaps not as direct sources but he knew them and completed and illuminated them (Solages 1979; Hengel 1993, 209, 245–46: John wants to correct and surpass the other Gospels; more cautious, Schnackenburg 1965–75, 1:15–32). When we recognize the intensive and widespread contacts among the earliest congregations between Jerusalem and Rome, Antioch and Ephesus, it is impossible to assume that John did *not* know

the Gospels of Mark, Matthew, and Luke, if he indeed wrote his Gospel at the time of the principate of Domitian.

2. The letters 1 John, 2 John, and 3 John are alluded to in several early patristic writings (e.g., 1 Clem. 49:5; Did. 10:5–6; Barn. 5:9–11; Pol. *Phil.* 7:1). The first explicit reference to 1 John is found in Papias (Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 3.39.17), and to 1 John and 2 John in Irenaeus (*Haer.* 3.16.5, 8; 1.16.3); Clement of Alexandria knows "the greater letter" written by John, implying other Johannine letters (*Strom.* 2.15.66); Origen is the first to mention all three letters (cf. Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 6.25.10). In the patristic tradition, the letters 1–3 John, when they are attributed to an author, are never attributed to any other author than John the son of Zebedee. The letters themselves do not point to a particular author or authors, besides the significant fact that the author of 1 John identifies himself as an eyewitness (1 John 1:1–4). However, the similarities in vocabulary, syntax, and themes between 1 John and the Gospel of John have often been noted (Brooke 1912), although it is also possible to point out differences. While many regard the Johannine letters as products of a community (Callahan 2005), the case for an author who is an eyewitness communicating authoritative testimony is stronger (Bauckham 2017b, 370–82). Some scholars continue to find the arguments for John son of Zebedee as author of 1–3 John convincing (Keener 2003, 1:81–114; Carson and Moo 2005; Yarbrough 2008; Köstenberger 2009, 86–93; as possibility I. H. Marshall 1978a; cf. C. E. Hill 2004). As the letters respond to secessionists who denied that Jesus is the divine Messiah come in the flesh, a date subsequent to the Gospel of John is plausible; the letters might have been written around AD 90–95. The sequence in which the letters were written cannot be determined with certainty; some think that 1 John is independent of 2 John and 3 John and written later (Strecker 1989, ET 1996a; I. H. Marshall 1978a); others, that all three letters were written by the same author at the same time and delivered as a package (L. T. Johnson 1999, 560–61); still others, that 1 John was written first, then sent to other churches with 2 John as cover letter and 3 John as a subsequent letter of introduction for Demetrius (Jobes 2014, 29); usually, the three letters are dated after the Gospel of John (Klauck 1991a, 46–47), but some date the letters before the Gospel (Schnelle 1994, 451–52).

3. The author of the book of Revelation, who calls himself John (Rev. 1:1), is identified as "one of the apostles of Christ" by Justin (*Dial.* 81.4); other second-century authors and sources make the same identification (Melito of Sardis, in a lost commentary; cf. Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 4.26.2; Irenaeus, *Haer.* 3.11.1; 4.20.11; 4.35.2; Canon Muratori; perhaps also Papias). Objections were raised by Dionysius of Alexandria (died ca. AD 264), who, in his critique of millennialism, argued that the Gospel of John and Revelation could not have been

written by the same person on account of differences in literary form, writing style, and theology (Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 7.24.1–7.25.27).

i. The Greek style of Revelation has often been characterized as the Greek an author thinking in Hebrew would write (R. Charles 1920; Mussies 1980). However, it has been shown that the grammatical solecisms in Revelation are not the result of Semitic influence: the text was written "in a Greek that made sense to non-Hebrew-speaking Jews and Gentile Christians alike" (Mot 2015, 230; cf. T. Paulsen 2015, 25: the author has sovereign mastery of the Greek language). At least some of the grammatical forms may be due to the fact that John wants to signal the presence of allusions to Old Testament texts (Beale 1997; Karrer 2017, 1:92–95, 100–1; critical is Fanning 2020, 56–57). Whether the same author could have written the Fourth Gospel and Revelation is a different matter; some have explained the difference in Greek style with the author of Revelation responding to the immediacy of his ecstatic visionary experience, as a deliberate protest against the upper classes, or with the different genre (Zahn 1917, 3:432–33; Yarbro Collins 1984, 47; Carson and Moo 2005, 705). The theological differences can be and have been explained in different ways.

ii. While both the arguments for and those against authorship by John son of Zebedee are weighty, the convictions of the fathers in the second century carry sufficient weight to surmise that John son of Zebedee might indeed have written Revelation (Carson and Moo 2005, 700–7; R. Mounce 1998, 27–35; Osborne 2002, 2–6). The fact that the author identifies himself as "John"—the eleventh-most-popular name of male Jews in the Western, non-Aramaic-speaking diaspora (Ilan 2002–12, 2:63, 105–8)—without any further characterization supports this conclusion: an otherwise unknown John would hardly have had the stature "to write a book of this sort, so different from anything else in the New Testament," simply under the name "John" (Carson and Moo 2005, 707; Karrer 2017, 49, calls the author an eminent person in the province of Asia, but rejects John son of Zebedee as author).

iii. Some argue for a first edition in the 60s and a final edition in the mid-90s (Aune 1997–98). Irenaeus dates Revelation toward the end of the reign of Emperor Domitian (*Haer.* 5.30.3; cf. Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 3.18.3; 5.8.6), which suggests a date around AD 95, which can be plausibly defended (Karrer 2017, 50–53: AD 90–95); some suggest a date in the final decades of the first century, around AD 80–100 (Koester 2014, 71–79), while some suggest an earlier date (Rojas-Flores 2004: AD 54–60; J. A. T. Robinson 1976, 243, 248; A. Bell 1978/1979; J. Wilson 1993: AD 68/69, the year of the four emperors; cf. Aune 1997–98: a first edition appeared in the 60s, the final edition in the mid-90s); others, implausibly, suggest a much later date (Witetschek 2012: AD 100–110; Witulski 2007: AD 117–38, under Hadrian).

4. The early patristic tradition agrees that the Gospel of John was written in Ephesus (Irenaeus, *Haer.* 3.1.1; cf. Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 5.8.4), composed after Matthew, Mark, and Luke had written their Gospels. Those who attribute the Gospel of John and 1–3 John to John the Elder retain Ephesus as the place of origin (Trebilco 2004, 263–67). The visions of Revelation are connected with the island of Patmos, where John was living in exile (Rev. 1:9), but the composition of the book is also linked with Ephesus. The evidence in Rev. 1:11; 2:1–3:22 indicates that John was in communication with churches in important urban centers in Asia Minor: Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamon, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, Laodicea. The evidence of Acts for Ephesus and the evidence in Rev. 2:9; 3:9 suggests that the churches had Jewish and Gentile members.

1.3.6. Paul. The New Testament contains thirteen texts ascribed to the apostle Paul, all letters. The earliest letter is probably Galatians (AD 48), written soon after the completion of the Galatia mission, followed by 1–2 Thessalonians (AD 50/51, written in Corinth); 1 Corinthians (AD 54, written in Ephesus); 2 Corinthians (AD 55, written perhaps in Philippi); Romans (AD 56, written in Corinth); and the prison letters, letters to the Philippians, Colossians, and Philemon and the circular letter called "Ephesians" (AD 60–62, most likely written in Rome). Assuming that Paul was released from his (first) imprisonment in Rome, he might have written 1 Timothy and Titus around AD 65, and 2 Timothy perhaps AD 67, shortly before his martyrdom. For arguments for the authenticity of the disputed letters (Ephesians, Colossians, 2 Thessalonians, 1–2 Timothy, Titus) see Carson and Moo 2005, Porter 2016a, and studies of Ephesians (e.g., Hoehner 2002, 2–61), Colossians (e.g., Moo 2008, 26–41), 2 Thessalonians (e.g., Weima 2014, 46–54), and 1–2 Timothy and Titus (e.g., W. Mounce 2000, xlvi–cxxix; L. T. Johnson 2001, 55–90; Schnabel 2012d; Yarbrough 2018, 67–78). Paul engaged in missionary work in Damascus (AD 32/33); Arabia/Nabatea (AD 32–33); Jerusalem (AD 33/34); Cilicia and Syria (AD 34–42); Antioch in Syria (AD 42–44); Cyprus, particularly in Salamis and Paphos (AD 45); southern Galatia, particularly in Pisidian Antioch, Iconium, Lystra, and Derbe (AD 45–47); Pamphylia, particularly in Perge (AD 47); Macedonia, particularly in Philippi, Thessalonica, and Beroea (AD 49–50); Achaia, particularly in Athens and Corinth (AD 50–51); the province of Asia, particularly in Ephesus (AD 52–55); Illyria (AD 56); during his imprisonment in Caesarea in Judea (AD 57–59) and in the city of Rome (AD 60–62); after his possible release probably in Spain (AD 63–64) and Crete (AD 64–65; cf. Schnabel 2004, 2008c).

1.3.7. Peter. Two letters are attributed to the apostle Peter (1 Pet. 1:1; 2 Pet. 1:1). Their authenticity is disputed by a majority of New Testament scholars (e.g., J. H. Elliott 2000; Frey 2015).

1. The arguments for Simon Peter, one of the Twelve, having written 1 Peter are strong (e.g., Goppelt 1993; I. H. Marshall 1991; T. Schreiner 2003, 21–36;

Jobes 2005; Keener 2021; pseudonymity is assumed by many—e.g., Brox 1979; Achtemeier 1996; J. H. Elliott 2000; Wagner and Vouga 2020). Some who accept the authenticity of the letter assume that it was composed with the help of a secretary, perhaps Silvanus/Silas (mentioned in 1 Pet. 5:12; Davids 1990; Keener 2021, 9–10, 393–402). The quality of the Greek, which has often been used as an argument against Petrine authorship, has been reassessed, with the result that the Semitic interference in the Greek of 1 Peter indicates an author who was not a native Greek speaker (Jobes 2005, 325–38). Simon Peter evidently wrote 1 Peter in the city of Rome (1 Pet. 5:13). A plausible date of composition is the years before the onset of the Neronian persecution, around AD 62–64.

2. The arguments against Simon Peter as the author of 2 Peter are regarded by many as convincing (Bauckham 1983; H. Paulsen 1992; Vögtle 1994; cf. Frey 2015, ET 2018b, who suggests Alexandria as the place of composition, as does Grünstäudl 2013). But a good defense of the prima facie evidence (2 Pet. 1:1) can be made (Houwelingen 1988; Carson and Moo 2005; T. Schreiner 2003; Davids 2006). The suggestion that 2 Peter belongs to the testament genre and that testaments were readily regarded as pseudonymous has been challenged (J. Charles 1997, 45–75; M. Matthews 2011; Richards and Boyle 2020). The letter could have been written around AD 65–67 (Ellis 2002, 306, dates 2 Peter before 1 Peter, assuming composition around AD 60–62 in Caesarea).

1.3.8. The Preacher. The text that most translations call "The Letter to the Hebrews" is more likely a homily, or a series of homilies, which the author calls "word of exhortation" (λόγος τῆς παρακλήσεως, Heb. 13:22), which was sent with final greetings (13:24) to the readers.

1. The recipients of the homily would have known who wrote the text. Later readers are left with Origen's comment that the identity of the author is known to God alone (Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 6.25.14; H. Braun 1984, 4). In the late second and early third centuries, Paul was widely regarded as the author (most recently defended by Linnemann 2002); Hebrews is included among Paul's letters (after Romans in $\mathfrak{P}^{46}$, after 2 Thessalonians and before 1 Timothy in ℵ, A, B, C, H, I, P, 0150, and 0151 and in over sixty minuscules; after Philemon in D, E, K, and L; cf. Athanasius's thirty-ninth Festal Letter of AD 367). Later, virtually all candidates that have been suggested as authors are coworkers of Paul: Luke (recently D. Allen 2010), Apollos (recently G. Guthrie 2001), Barnabas (B. Weiß 1888), Silas/Silvanus (Mynster 1825), Aquila (cf. Bleek 1828–40, 1:420–22), Priscilla (Harnack 1928; Hoppin 1969); other candidates are Stephen (cf. W. Manson 1951) and Clement of Rome (Origen; cf. Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 6.25.14) as well as Peter, Philip, Timothy, Judas, and Mary the mother of Jesus. The anonymity of the author cannot be penetrated (Gräßer 1990–97, 1:19–22; Koester 2001, 42–46). As is the case with Melchizedek, we do not know where

the author comes from nor where he is going (Delitzsch 1857, xii). Neither do we know the location where the homily was written. The greeting in Heb. 13:24 ("Those from Italy send you greetings") probably refers to believers who came from Italy but lived somewhere else (perhaps exiled Jewish Christians who had to leave Rome; see below).

2. As regards the destination of the homily, some have suggested Jerusalem before AD 70, or Palestine more generally (Ellis 2002, 287–88). The main argument of the homily involves the Levitical institutions, which ceased when the Temple was destroyed. However, the Temple of Jerusalem is never explicitly mentioned, and if Heb. 2:3 implies that the Preacher's readers did not include believers who had heard Jesus preach, this makes Jerusalem a less likely destination. Other suggestions are Alexandria in Egypt, Antioch in Syria, Caesarea or Samaria in Judea, Corinth in Achaia, Ephesus in Asia, and other cities. A more plausible suggestion is Rome. The greetings in Heb. 13:24 suggest that Italian believers living outside of Italy send greetings back to Rome; the title ἡγουμένος for "leader" (13:7, 17, 24) occurs in texts associated with Rome (1 Clem. 1:3; 21:6; Herm. Vis. 2.2.6; 3.9.7). The letter from Christians in Rome to believers in Corinth, known as 1 Clement, which incorporates material from Hebrews, was written in Rome. The warning that there is no restoration after apostasy is mentioned in the Shepherd of Hermas, who wrote in Rome. The church in Rome originated in the local synagogues, which fits the subject matter of the homily. Timothy is known to the congregations in Rome (Rom. 16:21; Heb. 13:23); many believers in the city of Rome probably came from the provinces and thus knew what it meant to be resident aliens in the earthly city (Heb. 11:8, 13–16; 13:14; Koester 2001, 49–50).

3. Many date the homily to around AD 95 (Ehrman 2003, 1:25; Holmes 2007, 35–36). Others have argued for a date before AD 70 (AD 55–56: Jewett 1971a; AD 55–70: T. Manson 1962; AD 60: W. Manson 1951; Strobel 1991; AD 66–67: Spicq 1952; J. A. T. Robinson 1976; shortly before AD 67: Bruce 1990; AD 64–68: W. Lane 1991; D. Peterson 2020; AD 66–70: Westcott 1892; cf. Ellingworth 1993: not long before AD 70, and if written in or to Rome, a date not long before AD 64 is possible), prompting some to suggest the years between AD 50 and 90 (Cockerill 2012), AD 60 and 90 (Koester 2001, 50–90), or AD 60 and 100 (Attridge 1989) as the date of composition. A date before the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70 is suggested by the reference to Jeremiah's promise of a new covenant (Jer. 31:31–34) in Heb. 8:7–12; the author concludes with the statement in 8:13 that "in speaking of 'a new covenant,' he has made the first one obsolete. And what is obsolete and growing old will soon disappear"; this is linked in 9:1–2 with the covenant regulations in the tent/temple, followed by the comment that the covenant of the law "can never, by the same sacrifices that are continually

offered year after year, make perfect those who approach. Otherwise, would they not have ceased being offered?" (Heb. 10:1–2; cf. Church 2020). This suggests that the sacrifices were still being offered in the Temple in Jerusalem. If indeed written to believers in Rome, the assertion in Heb. 12:4 ("In your struggle against sin you have not yet resisted to the point of shedding your blood") may indicate that none of the members of the congregation had experienced martyrdom (the Neronian persecution began in AD 64; cf. Tacitus, *Ann.* 15.44). The reference to Italian believers who evidently lived outside of Rome (Heb. 13:24) suggests, perhaps, that the hearers were among the Jews evicted from Rome by the second edict of the emperor Claudius issued in AD 49 (Suetonius, *Claud.* 25.4; Orosius, *Hist.* 7.6.15–16; Acts 18:2).

4. Similarities with the letters of Paul and Peter suggest that the Preacher was in contact with congregations who knew these apostles. The Preacher reminds the believers that they have "endured in a great conflict full of suffering" (Heb. 10:32 NIV), which is specified in Heb. 10:33–34: Some believers have been denounced by people who regard the Jesus followers as dangerous and who report them to the authorities, prompting four types of punishments, presumably after court cases in which Christians were found guilty. They were made a public spectacle in the theater; they suffered physical punishments, such as public flogging and beatings; they were incarcerated, awaiting trial and sentencing; they suffered the confiscation of their possessions. In Heb. 13:12–14 the believers are admonished to accept suffering "outside the city gate," suggesting the punishment of exile, which also involved the loss of citizenship and all property (Winter 2015, 268–72; Schnabel 2018j). A date around AD 49–64 seems most plausible.

5. Many argue that both the content and the title of the book in the manuscript tradition (Προς Ἑβραίους, "To the Hebrews"; $\mathfrak{P}^{46}$, ca. AD 200, and in ℵ A B) suggest a Jewish Christian audience (W. Lane 1991; O'Brien 2010, 11–13). A few argue that the homily was written for Gentile believers (Moffatt 1924; H. Weiß 1991, 70–72; Whitlark 2014, 12–16). The evidence seems to suggest that the author addresses the entire church, without distinguishing between Gentile Christians and Jewish Christians (Gräßer 1990–97, 1:24; Ellingworth 1993, 21–27; Koester 2001, 48). There are strong links with Jewish Christian themes, and equally strong connections with Pauline theology (Koester 2001, 54–58). This suggests that both Jewish and Gentile Christian readers would benefit from the Preacher's theological explanations and ethical exhortations.

6. The anonymity of the author makes comments on his missionary experience tenuous. However, the references to God's superior revelation in Jesus (Heb. 1:1–3), the profession of faith (4:14; 10:23), the new covenant (8:1–10:39), Jesus having dealt with sin once and for all (9:23–28; 10:16–17), the cloud of

witnesses (12:1), and Jesus as "the pioneer and perfecter of our faith" (12:2), all make sense in a context where Jews and Gentiles come to faith in Jesus through the preaching of the gospel.

1.3.9. James. The letter attributed to "James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ" (James 1:1), is most plausibly connected with James, the eldest of the four brothers of Jesus (Mark 6:3//Matt. 13:55). James (Ἰάκωβος, Jacob) was a very common Jewish name, and "only one James was so uniquely prominent in the early Christian movement that he could be identified purely by the phrase" in James 1:1 (Bauckham 1999a, 16; cf. 2007a, 66–77). Arguments that the letter of James is pseudepigraphical (e.g., D. Allison 2013, 3–29, who assumes a date after AD 100) have been convincingly answered (Moo 2000, 9–22; McKnight 2011, 13–38; cf. Dunn 2009a, 1123–27). A plausible date of the composition of the letter is the time before the Apostles' Council, between AD 40 and 48 (Moo 2000; Deines 2017, 25–59: between 45 and 50; McKnight 2011: the 50s). The audience of the letter, which was presumably written in Jerusalem, are Jewish believers in Jesus Messiah in the western and eastern diaspora (Bauckham 1999a, 14–23), perhaps specifically the Jewish believers who had to flee from Jerusalem due to the persecution initiated by Herod Agrippa I and who sought refuge in the Jewish diaspora communities (Zahn 1917, 1:83–101; Deines 2017, 258–59; cautiously Hengel and Schwemer 2019b, 465–66). Audiences in cities with Jewish populations in Europe, Asia Minor, Syria, and Mesopotamia have been suggested. At the same time, Jewish believers in diaspora communities would surely have had contact with Gentile believers, if such existed in the towns in which they lived, which means that Gentile believers should not be excluded as (perhaps unintended) readers of the letter (cf. McCartney 2009). See §7.4.1.

1.3.10. Jude. The brief letter attributed to "Jude, a servant of Jesus Christ and brother of James" (Jude 1), was written by Jude (Ἰούδας, Judas), the brother of Jesus (Mark 6:3; Matt. 13:55; cf. Hegesippus, in Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 3.19.1–3.20.6). Other candidates have been Judas, son of James, one of the Twelve (Luke 6:16; Acts 1:13), and Judas Barsabbas, a Jerusalem believer (Acts 15:22, 27, 32). Many argue that Judas, the brother of Jesus, cannot have written the letter (Kelly 1969; H. Paulsen 1992; Frey 2015), often pointing to the Greek style which is deemed to be impossible for a Galilean. Apart from the fact that the excellence of the Greek of the letter should not be overestimated, we do not know the linguistic capabilities of Judas in the Greek language, given that many Galileans grew up speaking Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek. The arguments for the authorship of Judas, the brother of Jesus, are strong and convincing (Bauckham 1983; 1990, 171–78). Jude has been dated in the 50s (Bauckham 1983, 13); if Jude used 2 Peter (rather than, as some assume, the reverse literary dependence), Jude would have to be dated around AD 64–65 (Carson and

Moo 2005, 692; for arguments regarding Jude's dependence on 2 Peter cf. Zahn 1917, 2:238–55; Bigg 1901, 216–24). This gives a range of AD 50–90. Audiences in Asia Minor and Egypt have been suggested. See §7.4.2.

1.3.11. Book production and publication. Since literacy in antiquity is estimated to be about 10 percent (W. Harris 1989, 323–37; Gamble 1995, 4–5), the reading aloud of the texts of the New Testament in the congregations was the usual manner of disseminating the content of the "books" and letters of the New Testament authors.

1. The authors of the Gospels probably had patrons who financed the production and publication of their work. We know that this was the case for Luke, who dedicates both volumes of his work—the Gospel of Luke and the book of Acts—to Theophilus (Luke 1:3; cf. Acts 1:1; Aune 1987, 77; Metzner 2008, 196–201). The length of a "book" was determined by how much one could read (and listen to) in a social setting—for example, at a banquet—in one sitting: the average length of each of the nine "books" of Herodotus's *Histories* is about twenty thousand words, which would take around two hours to read. Since an average scroll contained ten thousand to twenty-five thousand words, each of the Gospels could have been read in a single sitting (Burridge 1998, 141, using Morgenthaler 1982, 164, who derives his statistics from NA[21]; due to textual variations, precise figures are impossible: statistics based on NA[28] give slightly different figures): Matthew has 18,305 Greek words, Mark 11,242, Luke 19,438, John 15,461. The longer Gospels of Matthew and Luke are comparable to *Alexander* and *Antony*, Plutarch's longest biographies, while Mark is similar to the average length of a biography in Plutarch's *Lives*, which is between ten thousand and eleven thousand words (Burridge 2004, 194). Publication initially happened through public readings at banquets in the house of the patron, and in the case of the authors of the Gospels it happened in the meetings of the congregation to which the patron belonged (Keener 2012–15, 1:46, 656). Eventually copies were made and the work was disseminated more widely. The book of Acts (18,382 words; Morgenthaler 1982, 164) fits the same range. The next three longest texts—Revelation (9,834), Romans (7,105), and 1 Corinthians (6,811)—could be read in one hour or less; the shortest texts (Jude, 457; Philemon, 335) in several minutes.

2. As regards production costs, the author of a text would pay the standard rates for scribes; professional scribes who copied literary works charged more than local secretaries (for rates paid to scribes see P.Lond. inv. VII 2110; P.Mich. VIII 855; Diocletian, *Edict.* 7.41–43 [Lauffer 1971]; cf. E. Turner 1980; Skeat 1988; for the following figures one should keep in mind that an unskilled laborer in the first century earned a half-denarius per day, or perhaps fifty-five dollars in today's currency; cf. Richards 2004, 168). If one reckons on paying a scribe

for writing an initial draft, one revision, a copy to be dispatched, and a copy to be retained by the author, and if one includes the cost of papyrus for the dispatched copy and the retained copy, plausible calculations result in the following figures: the Letter to the Romans (979 *stichoi* or lines) would cost about 20.7 denarii (or $2,275 in today's money); Philemon (44 *stichoi*), about 1 denarius (or $101; Richards 2004, 168–69; for the following *stichoi* figures cf. Metzger 1981, 39; 1987, 298; not many New Testament manuscripts were copied in *stichoi*, which means that these calculations provide rough, if plausible, figures). The Gospel of Matthew (2,560 *stichoi*) would cost 54 denarii or about $6,000 to produce; Mark (1,616 *stichoi*), 34 denarii or $3,800; Luke (2,750 *stichoi*), 58 denarii or $6,400; John (2,024 *stichoi*), 43 denarii or $4,700; Acts (2,524 *stichoi*), 53 denarii or about $5,900; a collection of all thirteen letters of Paul (4,450 *stichoi*), 94 denarii or $10,300; Hebrews (243 *stichoi*), 5 denarii or $564; Revelation (1,800 *stichoi*), 38 denarii or $4,200. Single copies of texts were less expensive (Matthew: 6.5 denarii or $690; Mark: 4 denarii or $436; Luke: 6.9 denarii or $743; John: 5 denarii or $547; Acts: 6.3 denarii or $642; Paul's thirteen letters: 11.3 denarii or $1,200; the copying costs for a single copy of Isaiah, with 3,800 *stichoi*, would be 9.5 denarii or $1,000; of Psalms, with 5,100 *stichoi*, 12.75 denarii or $1,380). The earliest Jesus followers had daily experience with matters related to cost-of-living expenses and would have been aware of the cost of copying the writings of the apostles; only larger congregations, or congregations with some wealthy members, would have been able, at the end of the first century, to own a copy of a majority of the New Testament "books" and letters (and some Old Testament books). The early churches had to depend on the oral communication, and retention by memory, of the New Testament texts, even beyond the question of literacy.

1.3.12. Conclusions. My analysis of the authorship of the New Testament texts took the external evidence of attestation more seriously than is often the case. For scholars of the Greek and Latin classics the external attestation of texts and authors is often "their point of departure" (Davies and Allison 1988–97, 1:7). The readers of the Gospels around AD 100 would have thought that Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John wrote the Gospels attributed to them, and nobody in the first century disputed that Paul and Peter wrote the letters which mention them as authors. As I analyze the theology of the New Testament texts, not the theology of reconstructed texts and traditions, I will do the same. Table 1 lists the authors of the New Testament in the presumed chronological order, with the proposed suggestions of local origins and audiences.

All the authors of the New Testament texts had missionary experience, perhaps with the exception of the Preacher who wrote Hebrews, although the latter's apparent contact with Pauline congregations and theology would locate

him somewhere in Paul's mission to Jews and Gentiles. The New Testament authors wrote for Jewish and Gentile believers in mixed congregations, although James and Jude may have intended their letters for mostly Jewish Christians, without being incomprehensible for Gentile Christian readers.

Table 1. The Authors of the New Testament Texts

Author	Date	Book	Destination
James	45–48	James	Europe, Asia Minor, Syria, Mesopotamia
Mark	ca. 45–62	Mark	Galilee, Syria, Rome, Jerusalem, Antioch, Cyprus, Asia Minor
Paul	48–62/65	Galatians	Southern Galatia
		1–2 Thessalonians, Philippians	Macedonia
		1–2 Corinthians	Achaia
		Ephesians, Colossians, Philemon, 1–2 Timothy	Asia
		Romans	Rome
		Titus	Crete
the Preacher	ca. 50–64	Hebrews	City of Rome
Jude	ca. 50–90	Jude	Asia Minor, Egypt
Matthew	ca. 60–70	Matthew	Antioch, Jerusalem, Alexandria, Caesarea, Tyre/Sidon, Pella, Edessa
Luke	ca. 60–62	Luke, Acts	Rome, Corinth, Ephesus, Philippi; Syria, Judea, Jerusalem
Peter	ca. 62–67	1–2 Peter	Pontus-Bithynia, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia
John	ca. 80–95	John, 1–3 John, Revelation	Province of Asia: Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamon, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, Laodicea, and presumably other cities such as Troas, Tralles

2

Historical Contexts

The authors of the New Testament texts were theologians, missionaries, and pastors—theologians in that they reflected on the significance of God's eschatological revelation and on the significance of Jesus' life, death, resurrection, and glorification; missionaries in that most if not all of them were actively engaged in the missionary proclamation of the gospel before audiences of unbelievers; and pastors in that they established and/or led and taught local congregations, an activity which their writings extended beyond their responsibilities in local churches. They taught, counseled, debated, and evangelized in diverse ethnic and social contexts. We begin with the ministry of Jesus, whose life and teaching (to be treated in part 2) were foundational realities for the New Testament authors.

2.1. The Ministry of Jesus

2.1.1. The ministry in Galilee. The movement of Jesus followers who produced the New Testament texts began in Galilee, where Jesus lived for most of his life and where he taught from around AD 27 to 30. The year AD 27/28 seems to have been a Sabbath Year, the start of the decisive and final year of weeks according to Daniel 9:26 (cf. 11Q13 II, 7), the year which saw the appearance of John the Baptist with his messianic-apocalyptic message (Wacholder 1975). Jesus traveled throughout the Galilean countryside, visiting the villages, cities, and farms of the region (Mark 6:6, 56; cf. Matt. 9:35; Luke 8:1), seemingly with

the exception of Sepphoris and Tiberias, the largest cities in the tetrarchy of Herod Antipas. Jesus attracted people not only from Galilee but also from Judea, Idumea, and the regions east of the River Jordan, including the Decapolis, and around Tyre and Sidon (Mark 3:8; cf. Matt. 4:25; Luke 6:17), and he spent time in Samaritan towns (Luke 9:51–56; 17:11–19; John 4:1–42). Throughout his public ministry he taught in synagogues and in the open air, he healed the sick, and he exorcised demons (Mark 1:21–45). The message of Jesus focused on the fulfillment of God's promises, the arrival of the kingdom of God, repentance, and faith in the good news of God's present intervention (Mark 1:14–15//Matt. 4:13–17//Luke 4:14–15). Jesus' pronouncement that the sins of a paralyzed man had been forgiven, a banquet with tax collectors, and his healing activities on the Sabbath prompted controversies with religious leaders (Mark 2:1–3:6). People found it difficult to understand the dichotomy between the upbringing of Jesus as a carpenter's son and the unprecedented nature of his teaching and the reality of the miracles he performed (Mark 6:1–6//Matt. 13:53–58). The people in Galilee believed that Jesus was a prophet, Herod Antipas thought that he was John the Baptist raised from the dead, and Peter, speaking for the Twelve, declared that he was the Messiah (Mark 8:27–30//Matt. 16:13–20//Luke 9:18–20).

2.1.2. The teaching in Jerusalem. Jesus repeatedly visited Jerusalem (Matt. 23:37), always on the occasion of one of the festivals (John 2:13–3:21: Passover; 5:1–47: unnamed; 7:1–10:18: Sukkoth; 10:22–42: Hanukkah/Dedication), including his final visit on the occasion of the Passover festival (Mark 11:1–13:37; Matt. 21:1–25:46; Luke 19:28–21:38; John 11:55–12:50). According to John, the main themes of Jesus' teaching in Jerusalem concerned the Temple; the new birth of water and the Spirit as a precondition to understand his identity and his message; the authority to heal on the Sabbath; his authority as the authority of God the Father, who had sent him; the source of his teaching and his true identity; the messianic temple; his superiority over Abraham; and his identity as the true shepherd, who sacrifices his life for the sheep.

2.1.3. Audiences. Jesus interacted with crowds and individuals (for the latter cf. Mark 9:14–29; John 3:1–21; 4:1–38); with men and women (for the latter cf. Mark 1:29–31; 5:21–43; 7:24–30); with adults and children (for the latter cf. 10:13–16); with peasants in farms and villages (6:6, 56) planting and harvesting grain, olives, and grapes; fishermen fishing the Sea of Galilee (1:16, 19); with craftspeople working in the production of pottery, stoneware vessels, glass, and wool and in dyeing, in quarrying stones, and in carpentry/building (Fiensy 2014). He engaged with the pious Pharisees (Mark 2:16–17, 24–28; 7:1–13; 8:11–12; 10:2–9; 12:13–17), supporters of the Herodian dynasty (12:13–17), tax collectors (Mark 2:16; cf. Luke 5:27–29; 15:1; 19:1–10), the priestly elite of the Sadducees (Mark 12:18–27), the high priest (14:60–62), lay aristocrats

(Mark 11:27–33; cf. Joseph of Arimathea in Mark 15:43–46; Matt. 27:57–60; Luke 23:51–54; Nicodemus in John 3:1–21; 7:50–52; 19:39–42), and scribes (Mark 2:6–12, 16–17; 3:22–27; 7:1–13; 9:14–29; 11:27–33; 12:28–34). He engaged with a demon-possessed man in the non-Jewish region of the Gerasenes (5:1–20), a Syrophoenician woman (Mark 7:24–30; Matt. 15:21–28), a Gentile military official (Luke 7:1–10), and a deaf-mute man in the Gentile region of the Decapolis (Mark 7:32–37). Matthew, Luke, and in part also John, report these audiences in their Gospels as well.

2.1.4. Consequences for a New Testament theology. Most of the authors of the New Testament texts traveled to proclaim Jesus Messiah and Savior to Jews, Greeks, and Romans and to teach Jesus followers in their local congregations. As the teaching of Jesus was not exclusively focused on specific localities or directed to some specific groups of people but not to others, the proclamation, the teaching, and the writing of the New Testament authors must be understood as having an international, multiethnic focus, either explicitly or implicitly transcending specific localities and specific ethnicities.

2.2. Early Christian Churches: Jewish and Gentile Followers of Jesus

Jesus had called and trained the Twelve to "fish for people" (Mark 1:17//Matt. 4:19), and he had commissioned them to take the good news of the presence of the kingdom of God, revealed in his ministry, death, and resurrection, to all nations to the ends of the earth and to train disciples in the local congregations of followers (Matt. 28:16–20; Acts 1:8). In the book of Acts, Luke reports only the early missionary work of Peter between AD 30 and 41 before Peter leaves Jerusalem, and he reports only the second half of the missionary work of Paul, between around AD 42 and 62. Luke implies more missionary work than he details. For example, he does not explain the presence of Jesus followers in Damascus or in Rome (Acts 9:2, 10; 28:15), nor does he specify the cities, towns, or villages of Galilee, Judea, and Samaria in which churches existed (9:31) nor the cities, towns, or villages in the province of Asia (outside of Ephesus) in which the gospel was preached (19:10).

2.2.1. Geographical locations. At the end of the apostolic period, around AD 90–100, written and archaeological sources attest local congregations of Jesus followers in at least the cities and towns listed in table 2, from Jerusalem in a northern, then western direction, circling the Mediterranean (Schnabel 2004). Some towns—for example, those mentioned for Spain, Cyrene, Egypt, Ethiopia, Media, Elam, Mesopotamia, Parthia, and India—are plausible sites of Christian churches on account of the size of the towns, but the existence of such churches cannot be demonstrated from textual evidence for this early period. The list

of Jewish pilgrims in Jerusalem in Acts 2:9–11 refers to Jews who came from the Parthians, Medes, and Elamites and who lived in Mesopotamia; if some of these diaspora Jews were converted to faith in Jesus, as Luke seems to imply, they would have been the founders of local congregations upon their return to their home towns. For Egypt, Jewish communities are attested for Lower Egypt in Alexandria, Athribis, Leontopolis, Magdolos, Nitriai, Pelusion, Schedia, Tanis, Thmouis, and Xenephrys; for Middle Egypt in Arsinoë, Memphis, Oxyrhynchus, and Philadelphia; and for Upper Egypt in Apollonopolis Magna (Edfu), Elephantine, Syene, and Thebes—Jewish pilgrims to Jerusalem from these towns could have been converted to faith in Jesus on Pentecost.

Table 2. Local Congregations

Province/ Region	Cities	
	Attested locations	**Plausible locations**
Judea	Jerusalem, Caesarea, Joppa, Lydda, Ptolemais/Acco, Capernaum, Sebaste	Azotos/Ashdod, Bethsaida, Cana, Kochaba, Nazareth, Shechem/ Neapolis, Sychar
Nabatea		Kanatha, Pella, Petra, Shahba, Soada
Syria	Alexandreia, Antioch on the Orontes, Damascus, Sidon, Tyre, Tripolis	Apameia, Arethusa, Berytos, Byblos, Emesa, Laodikeia ad Libanum, Larissa, Seleukia
Cyprus	Paphos	Amathus, Kition, Kourion, Lapethos, Salamis
Cilicia	Tarsus	Anazarbos, Mallos, Soloi, Sebaste, Korykos, Seleukia, Olba
Cappadocia	Melitene	
Pamphylia	Attaleia, Perge	Myra
Galatia	Pisidian Antioch, Derbe, Iconium, Lystra	
Asia	Ephesus, Miletus, Magnesia, Philadelphia, Sardis, Smyrna, Thyatira, Tralles, Pergamon, Hierapolis, Colossae, Laodikeia, Alexandria Troas	
Pontus-Bithynia		Amisos, Nikomedia
Scythia		Chersonesos, Gorgippia, Neapolis, Olbia, Pantikapaion
Macedonia	Beroea, Philippi, Thessalonica	
Achaia	Corinth, Cenchreae, Athens	Megara, Patras

Province/ Region	Cities	
	Attested locations	Plausible locations
Illyria		Dyrrhachium
Epirus	Nikopolis	
Italia	Rome, Puteoli	Herculaneum, Pompeii
Hispania		Tarraco
Cyrene		Gortyn, Cyrene, Berenike, Ptolemais, Teucheira
Egypt		Alexandria, Leontopolis, Arsinoë, Oxyrhynchus, Elephantine
Ethiopia		Meroë
Media		Ecbatana
Elam		Susa
Mesopotamia		Babylon, Ctesiphon, Dura-Europos, Edessa, Nisibis, Seleuceia, Spasinou Charax
Parthia		Adiabene
India		Taxila, Muziris, Barbarikon, Poduke/Arikamedu

2.2.2. Networks of congregations. The earliest churches were in constant contact with each other (Bauckham 1998a). These contacts were mediated through the travels of the apostles and their envoys and other missionaries and teachers (2 Cor. 9:5; see the greeting lists in Paul's letters) as well as through letters (see the letters of Paul, Peter, James, John, Jude; in the second century see the letters of Clement, Ignatius, Polycarp). Some congregations were connected due to their relationship with a founding missionary (Paul's churches), their relative geographical proximity (Rev. 1:11), and efforts to maintain connections with the church in Jerusalem (Acts 11:27–30; 15:2; 18:22; 19:21; 21:17; Rom. 15:25–26; 1 Cor. 16:1–3; 2 Cor. 8–9; Gal. 1:18; 2:1).

2.2.3. Ethnic and linguistic identities. Both the members of the earliest congregations and the audiences of the missionaries were composed of Jews (Ἰουδαῖοι) and Greeks (Ἕλληνες)—that is, Gentiles (ἔθνη), or polytheists, people who worshiped other gods than the God of Israel (cf. Acts 11:20; 14:1; 17:4; 18:4; 19:10; 20:21; Rom. 1:14; 1 Cor. 1:24; 12:13; Gal. 3:28; Eph. 3:6; Col. 3:11). The Gentiles include "barbarians" (Rom. 1:14) such as Scythians (Col. 3:11) and Lycaonians (Acts 14:6, 11, 21; 16:1) who had not absorbed Greek culture. The term Ἰουδαῖοι transliterates the Hebrew term יְהוּדִים (Aram. יהודיא), a

term that refers in Old Testament texts to the tribe of Judah or to the ancestor of this tribe. After the division of the kingdom, Judah (יְהוּדָה) was the name of the Southern Kingdom (which included the tribe of Benjamin). After the destruction of Solomon's Temple, the term was used for the administrative area around Jerusalem, controlled in turn by the Persians, the Ptolemies, the Seleucids, and the Romans. During this time, the term "Jews" designated the descendants of Abraham, the members of the people of Israel, without reference to membership in a particular tribe and without regard for one's place of residence. Diaspora Jews referred to themselves as "Jews," using terms such as "Israel" (Ἰσραήλ) or "Israelite" (Ἰσραηλῖται) mostly in religious contexts, terms that Paul also uses (e.g., Rom. 9:4; 11:1; 2 Cor. 11:22).

1. The congregations of Jesus followers in the first century arguably all began in local synagogues as a result of the apostles' proclamation of the gospel, with converted Gentiles (proselytes), Gentile God-fearers, and polytheists being converted to faith in Jesus Messiah. This means that the texts of the New Testament were written with Jewish Christians in mind, either explicitly or implicitly. This is true for the letters written by Peter, Paul, John, James, and Jude, and for the homily of the Preacher (Hebrews). And, since the Gospels were not "closed texts" written for specific, local (either Jewish or Gentile Christian) communities, but "open texts" written in principle for all congregations (Bauckham 1998a), this is also true for the four biographies about Jesus.

2. In Judea, Samaria, and Galilee, the congregations of Jesus followers would have consisted of Jewish believers who spoke Hebrew, Aramaic, and also Greek. Outside of the Jewish heartland, most if not all congregations of Jesus followers would most likely consist of both Jewish and Gentile believers, at least by the time that the New Testament texts were written, read, and studied in the congregations. We cannot exclude the possibility that Jewish Christians in the eastern diaspora, if they existed around AD 100, met in congregations which had no Gentile members—perhaps in Edessa, Nisibis, Adiabene, Dura-Europos (northern Mesopotamia, Parthia), where descendents of the northern exiled tribes of Israel lived in sizable communities, perhaps in Ctesiphon, Seleuceia, and Babylon (southern Mesopotamia), where descendants of the southern exiled tribes lived. It seems that in Syria and the provinces to the west, most congregations were mixed, consisting of Jewish and Gentile believers. Christians spoke a multitude of languages: Hebrew and Aramaic (Acts 6), Greek (Acts 11), Latin (Acts 28; Rom. 16), and local languages spoken in the Roman provinces and in the eastern diaspora (Acts 2:8–11; Rev. 5:9; 7:9; 14:6), possibly Phrygian, Pamphylian, Lycaonian, Egyptian (Coptic), Libyan (Berber), Persian, Parthian, and Elamite.

*2.2.4. **Social identities.*** The Jesus followers seem to have represented a fair cross-section of society (Deissmann 1925, ET 1926; Malherbe 1983; Judge

2008; Theißen 1982). The house churches included men and women; free-born, freedmen, freedwomen, and slaves; husbands, wives, children, and the unmarried; and some members of the local elites. Most were craftsmen, skilled and unskilled workers, and peasants (in rural areas). Many were dependents, including slaves (Acts 21:5; 1 Cor. 1:26; 7:21; Eph. 5:22–6:9; Col. 3:11; 3:18–4:1; 1 Tim. 3:4, 12; Titus 1:6; 1 Pet. 2:18–3:7). Some argue that the highest or lowest strata of society were not represented (Meeks 1983) or that the congregations established by Paul were mostly composed of the urban poor, who lived near the subsistence level (Friesen 2004). The evidence of the New Testament suggests that some members of the elite had converted to faith in Jesus Messiah and had joined the congregations of Jesus followers. The problems Paul discusses in 1 Corinthians—for example, concerns about rhetorical competence or initiation of legal cases against others (1 Cor. 1:18–4:21; 6:1–11)—reflect the presence of some members of the educated elite in the congregations, at least in Corinth (Winter 2001; cf. Chow 1992; Clarke 1993). The critique of wealth in the Gospels and in the letter of James (e.g., Luke 6:24; 8:14; 12:13–21; 16:13, 19–31; 18:24; James 1:9–11; 2:1–7; 5:1–6) suggests the presence of some wealthy people in the congregations. I do not assume that every house church in every city included a member of the local elite or consisted of both Jewish and Gentile believers. It is plausible to assume that the churches in larger cities such as Antioch in Syria, Corinth, Ephesus, Pergamon, and Rome were attended by some members of the elite but that the majority of churches outside of the urban centers presumably did not include members of the elite. Some house churches were entirely Jewish (e.g., in Judea and in Galilee, perhaps in the city of Rome); some house churches might have had only Gentile members (e.g., in smaller towns in the hinterland of the urban centers or in the city of Rome). But most congregations had both Jewish and Gentile believers.

2.2.5. A social description of a model house church. The "house" of a house church in the middle of the first century, in an urban setting, was a section in a city block which had several rooms on the ground floor. House churches are attested in Rome, Corinth, and Colossae (Rom. 16:5; 1 Cor. 16:19; Col. 4:15; Philem. 1–2). If the believer with the largest house of the church members of an assumed congregation in Pompeii owned House 1 in the Insula of the Menander, located in Region I, Block 10, halfway between the forum and the amphitheater, which had a ground floor area of about 90 square meters (970 square ft.), and if most of Rooms 1 and 3 were used, up to twenty people could be hosted (Oakes 2016, 44). If the local congregation met in House 7 of the Insula of the Menander, the house of a cabinetmaker which had a ground-floor area of 310 square meters (3,336 square ft.), there would have been sufficient space

for forty people in the garden, portico, and rear-facing dining rooms (Oakes 2009, 15–33; cf. P. Allison 2006).

1. Given the type of houses excavated in Pompeii, indicative of the social status of its occupants, it is possible to describe a model house church of forty members, consisting of the following people: (i) a craftworker, with his wife, children, a few male slaves working in the cabinet business, a female domestic slave, and a dependent relative; (ii) several families who lived in smaller houses, including the family heads, spouses, children, slaves, and other dependents; (iii) some members of families whose householder is not a believer; (iv) some freeborn, freedmen, and freedwomen who are dependent on people who are not part of the house church; (v) some slaves whose owners are not believers; (vi) a couple of homeless people (Oakes 2009, 87).

2. If the owner of the House of Menander (House 4) had become a believer, the church would have met in his considerably larger house (1,800 square meters, around 20,000 square ft.) which had two gardens and a large dining hall, spaces where about 360 people could be served (Osiek and Balch 1997, 202; although this was a large house, other members of the elite in Pompeii had much larger houses: the House of the Citharist in Region I, Block 4, had a ground floor area of 2,318 square meters, ca. 25,000 square ft., which could accommodate 1,135 guests). A house church in an urban context would have included a member (or possibly several members) of the local elite, whose wealth would have differed depending on whether the congregation was in urban Ephesus or in provincial Pisidian Antioch. One should not forget the possibility that believers might have met in rented spaces such as shops, workshops, barns, warehouses, or dining rooms in guild halls, as well as in outdoor spaces (Adams 2013).

2.2.6. Profile of members of a typical urban house church. The following social description of hypothetical members of a house church will serve as a heuristic model for the original hearers and readers of the New Testament texts. The personal names, while taken from specific inscriptions, are not meant to describe historical persons; they are meant to facilitate later reference to the hearers and readers of New Testament texts.

1. *Manaseh, a Jewish believer, a goldsmith.* A Jewish goldsmith is attested at Aphrodisias (*IJO* II 14; Ameling 2004; for the name, which also occurs in this inscription, see Ilan 2002–12, 1:188–90). In the theater of Miletus, stone benches were reserved for four subgroupings of goldsmiths (e.g., "the place of the victorious goldsmiths" and "the emperor-loving goldsmiths" alongside the seats for "Judeans who are also God-fearers"; *I.Milet* 940; Herrmann 1998). As a goldsmith (χρυσοχόος, αὐράριος; Lat. *aurifex*), Manaseh would have belonged to the local guild of goldsmiths. I imagine that Manaseh lived in Antioch in Syria,

that he had a wife and children, that he employed several fellow Jews in his business, and that he had served as the leader of one of the local synagogues (ἀρχισυνάγωγος). He would have been familiar with the Jewish Scriptures, in particular the Pentateuch and the Prophets, which were regularly read in the synagogue. Being literate, and due to conversations with other craftsmen in the city, he would have had some knowledge of Hellenistic popular philosophy. Manaseh produced gold and silver anklets, headbands, crescents, pendants, bracelets, armlets, perfume boxes, amulets, signet rings, and nose rings (Isa. 3:18–21; m. Kelim 11:8; y. Shabbat 8b). He had a good income that put him well above subsistence level. People generally appreciated the expertise (*ars*) and the knowledge (*scientia*, *doctrina*) of skilled craftsmen (Tran 2017). We can imagine that Manaseh wanted to gain renown for his jewelry so that his skill would be acknowledged by the aristocratic families as *summa* and that perhaps his epitaph, if one would be erected, would call him "irreproachable in the practice of his art" (ἀμώμητον κατὰ τέχνην; thus the marble stele erected for the carpenter Maximus in Rome; *IGUR* III 1263). I imagine that Manaseh had heard about Jesus in the local synagogue when the followers of Jesus from Jerusalem, including Barnabas, and eventually Paul, proclaimed the gospel in the city (Acts 11:19–26).

2. *Nicholas, a Gentile believer, a former God-fearer, a carpenter*. Male persons with this name are attested in Athens, Ephesus, Miletus, and other cities (*LGPN*). I imagine that he worked for a builder in Corinth who was not a Jesus follower and that his father was a freedman (*libertus*). He had a wife and children. As an unskilled carpenter or builder (τέκτων; Lat. *tignuarius*), Nicholas would earn four sesterces (two denarii) per day, and thus belonged to the 55 percent of the population who lived around the subsistence level (Scheidel and Friesen 2009). I imagine that his literacy was minimal, limited to the demands of his craft. Nicholas had been a worshiper of Isis before he became interested in the God of the Jews, the worship of whom was mediated to him through a Jewish carpenter, and that he attended synagogue services. It was there that he heard a Christian missionary explain the significance of Jesus of Nazareth.

3. *Onesime, a Gentile believer, a black slave*. Slaves with the name Onesime are attested in Rome (Solin 1996, who lists the names of some 5,500 slaves and former slaves for the city of Rome). I imagine that Onesime's father had been enslaved in raids conducted by Roman troops based in Egypt in the kingdom of Meroë (Nubia, modern Sudan) and later taken to Rome. When she was young she was used by her master, sometimes by her master's wife, for sexual gratification. The painting of a banquet scene in the House of the Triclinium in Pompeii, a relatively modest house, depicts two of three dining couches, with the master having his arm around a black slave with a gesture that suggests that

the latter is one of the master's pet slaves (*deliciae*; cf. Edmondson 2011, 355). As an unskilled slave (δούλη; Lat. *serva*), she would have been worth perhaps two thousand sesterces (five hundred denarii). She was a θρεπτός, a person raised not by her own parents, who were slaves in another household, but in the household of her master. Onesime worked in the kitchen as an assistant (*coci*). She had been allowed to live in a quasi-marital union (as *contubernium*) with a male slave within the household of her master. Assuming that the house church she attended was in the city of Rome, her owner, accompanied by his family including the slaves, would decorate the shrines of the Lares Augusti, the Augustan household gods, at the festival of the Compitalia, celebrated in December or January, and he would offer male or female woolen puppets (*effigies*) for each freeborn member of the household and a woolen ball (*pilae*) for every slave, highlighting the importance of the latter despite being stripped of "any human or gendered identity" (Edmondson 2011, 338; cf. Flower 2017). Onesime would be provided with food, clothing, and adequate shelter, a fact that, assuming a "good" owner, just about saved her from a life below subsistence level, which was the fate of 10 to 20 percent of the population. Whether she would ever be rewarded for her service by manumission depended on the visibility of her tasks and thus the proximity to her owner. I imagine that neither her "husband" nor her owner was a believer. Onesime had worshiped the household gods at the *lararium* in the kitchen of her master's house, where she assisted in the preparation of food and where she slept. She had come into contact with Jesus followers when a slave who worked in the house of a Christian had invited her to attend one of their meetings (Bowersock 1994).

4. *Tiberius Claudius Polybius, a Gentile believer, a member of the urban elite*. A person with this name lived in Miletus in the first century, documented by a funerary inscription (*I.Milet* 1408). He was honored with a publicly erected inscription as per edict of the council and the people of the city, listing his benefactions. There is no indication that he was a believer in Jesus. I imagine that our Polybius was, at various points in his career, a magistrate with the right to wear a crown when in office (στεφανηφόρος), a cult official (προφήτης), the president of the city's games (ἀγωνοθήτης), the president of religious festivals (πανηγυριάρχης), a priest of Zeus (βουλαχεύς), the superintendent of the market who regulated buying and selling (ἀγορανόμος), the superintendent of grain purchase (σειτώνης), the executive officer of the city council (προστάτης γερουσίας), the supervisor of female public conduct (γυναικονόμος), and the head of the council of magistrates (ἀρχιπρύτανις; cf. Dmitriev 2005). These are the offices for which an unknown citizen of Miletus was honored (*I.Milet* 1151; the inscription dates to the third century; Herrmann, Günther, and Ehrhardt 2006). I imagine that Polybius held Roman citizenship, that he owned large

estates in the area, and that he had been an adherent of the philosophy of the Stoics. Since he was a member of the urban elite, his capital wealth would have been at least one hundred thousand sesterces (four hundred thousand denarii). He lived in a large house, reflecting his wealth derived from estates he owned in the territory of his city. He would have had a wife, children, and slaves who worked for him. His status derived from his ancestry, family, education, wealth, career, official positions in city administration, prestige, and personal behavior. I imagine that he had encountered Paul in the *agora* when the apostle explained the significance of the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus, the Jewish Messiah and Savior of the world (cf. Acts 17:17–18); he came to faith in Jesus several years later due to continuing contacts with Christians in Miletus.

2.3. Early Christian Mission: Jewish and Gentile Audiences

The early Christian missionaries proclaimed the gospel of Jesus Christ to Jews and Greeks—that is, Gentiles (Rom. 1:14, 16; 10:12; 1 Cor. 1:24; 10:32–33; 12:13; Gal. 3:28; Col. 3:11), to members of all tribes, languages, peoples, and nations (cf. Rev. 5:9; 7:9), and to audiences in the cities, towns, and villages they visited during their travels (Schnabel 2004). As we have seen, the authors of the New Testament texts had proclaimed the gospel as missionaries and taught in local congregations (§1.3). Some of the material in the New Testament texts would have been part of public proclamation, and Jewish and Gentile outsiders who attended the meetings of the Jesus followers would have heard many of the texts explained by a Christian teacher. In missionary proclamation, the difference between Jewish audiences and Gentile audiences was particularly noticeable: while there might be a few Gentile sympathizers and God-fearers, most of the listeners in local synagogues would be Jews and proselytes. It should be noted that the translation of the teaching of and about Jesus from Hebrew and Aramaic into Greek was a development that dates to the earliest period of the church in Jerusalem, which included Hebrew- and Aramaic-speaking believers, such as the Twelve, and Greek-speaking believers, such as the Seven (Acts 6:1–7). The bilingual reality of the Jerusalem church facilitated the expansion of the congregations into cities and regions outside Judea.

2.3.1. Jewish audiences. Jesus, Peter, Stephen, Philip, and Paul proclaimed the gospel of Jesus Messiah before Jewish audiences in synagogues, in open spaces such as the seashore of the Sea of Galilee or the plaza on the Temple Mount in Jerusalem, and before Jewish courts. Since Jesus, the Twelve, the apostle Paul, and the earliest missionaries and believers were all Jews, it was natural that the audience of their proclamation, and the explicit or implied audience of their writings, included Jews. Jewish audiences accepted the authority

of the Hebrew Scriptures, although not automatically accepting the Jesus followers' interpretations of particular texts that they took to be prophecies of the life, death, resurrection, exaltation, and rule of Jesus as Israel's Messiah and the Savior of the world. Despite the common traditions and beliefs, the message of a crucified, risen, and exalted Messiah was a stumbling block (1 Cor. 1:18–2:5).

1. Jesus spoke mostly before Jewish audiences, both in Galilee and in Jerusalem. He spoke before the inhabitants of the small towns and the villages employed in agriculture, fishing, and trades (e.g., manufacture of pottery wares). The majority of the rural population lived at subsistence level. Jesus also interacted with members of the local elite—a well-to-do family in Cana (John 2:1–12), a synagogue president presumably in Capernaum (Mark 5:22–43//Matt. 9:18–26//Luke 8:41–56), a wealthy official in a town in Perea (Luke 18:18–30; cf. Mark 10:17–30; Matt. 19:16–29). Jesus interacted with men and women, adults and children (for the latter cf. Matt. 15:38; 19:13–15; Mark 10:13–16; Luke 18:15–17), and presumably with slaves, a class that figured in his parables (e.g., Matt. 13:27; 18:23; 21:34; 22:3; 24:45; 25:14; Luke 12:35–38). Jesus interacted with the pious Pharisees, who were earnestly committed to the Law; with the Sadducees, the priestly aristocracy in Jerusalem, especially during his last week in Jerusalem; and with scribes, the trained experts of the Law. See §5.2.9.

2. The evidence in Acts indicates that Peter, Stephen, Philip, and Paul interacted with a very similar range of Jewish audiences. *Peter* explained Jesus to the Jews of Jerusalem (Acts 2:14–40; 3:12–26), Jewish pilgrims from the diaspora (2:14–40), the Jewish leaders in the Sanhedrin (4:5–12, 19–20; 5:27–32), and Jews in Judean towns (cf. 5:16; 8:1; 9:31; 11:1, 29; implied in 9:32–43); he engaged well-to-do Jews (5:1–11) and beggars (3:1–7). *Stephen* taught in the synagogues in Jerusalem (6:8–10) and spoke before the Jewish leaders in the Sanhedrin (7:1–56). *Philip*, one of the Seven, explained Jesus to Samaritans, the descendants of Israelite tribes (8:4–25), who can also be included in the term Ἰουδαῖοι (Josephus, *A.J.* 13.74–79; cf. Pummer 2009). *Paul* explained the gospel to officials of diaspora synagogues, to Jews meeting on the Sabbath, and to proselytes—that is, pagans who had converted to Judaism through commitment to the one true God of Israel, circumcision, and obedience to the Law (Acts 13:5, 15–41; 14:1; 17:1, 10, 17; 18:4, 8, 19; 19:8–10). In Jerusalem, he explained his convictions to crowds gathering on the Temple Mount, to the Jewish leaders, and, in Caesarea, to King Agrippa II (22:1–21; 23:1–6; 26:1–32).

3. The response of Jewish audiences to the proclamation of Jesus and his followers was varied. We find the same types of responses in the Gospels reported for the ministry of Jesus (I will focus here on Mark; the accounts of Matthew, Luke, and John are parallel) as we find in Acts for the ministry of the Twelve, Peter, and Paul, in the Letters, and in Revelation. The response to Jesus was

multifaceted. (i) Large numbers of Jews were amazed at Jesus' authoritative teaching and his miracles (Mark 1:22, 27; 2:12; 6:2; 11:18; 12:17), so much so that news about him spread quickly over the whole region, prompting people to travel to hear Jesus speak and to have their sick healed (1:28; 3:8; 6:55). (ii) Some were willing to become Jesus' permanent followers, giving up their professions, willing to be trained by him for a future activity of spreading the message that he proclaimed (1:16–20; 3:13–19). (iii) Some believed in Jesus, acknowledging the power revealed in his ministry as divine authority (5:25–34; 9:23–24, 42). (iv) Some Pharisees and law experts from Jerusalem traveled to Galilee to investigate Jesus (7:1). (v) Some law experts from Jerusalem concluded that the authority manifest in the miracles Jesus performed was demonic authority (3:22). (vi) Pharisees and supporters of the reconstitution of a Herodian kingdom (3:6) and, later, chief priests and scribes (11:18; 14:1) decided to eliminate Jesus, a plan that was carried out with the help of Pontius Pilate, the Roman prefect of Judea, who ordered the crucifixion of Jesus (14:43–15:37). See §5.2.9.

4. The response to Peter, one of the Twelve, and to Stephen, one of the Seven, as reported by Luke in Acts, was similarly varied. (i) Large numbers of Jews were amazed when they witnessed miraculous events connected with the Jesus followers (Acts 2:12; 3:10–11; 5:11). (ii) Many repented and believed in Jesus as the crucified and risen Messiah (2:41, 47; 4:4; 6:7; 9:31; 11:21; 21:20). (iii) Members of local synagogues challenged teachers who proclaimed Jesus as Israel's Messiah (6:9), eventually mobilizing fellow Jews as well as the authorities to take action against Jesus followers (6:12–14). (iv) The chief priests mobilized the members of the Sanhedrin, who issued a ban on public proclamation (4:1–22; 5:17–40; 6:12–15). (v) Some Jewish leaders wanted to kill the Twelve (5:33). (vi) Stephen, one of the Seven, was executed (7:54–60). (vii) The Jewish leaders forced many of the Jesus followers to leave Jerusalem and go into exile (8:1–3).

5. The variegated patterns of the reaction of Jews to the gospel reported in Acts cover the entire range from positive acceptance to neutral listening to emphatic rejection (Setzer 1994, 44–82; Schnabel 2004, 2:1348–51). (i) Synagogue officials asked Paul to return on the following Sabbath to explain his message further (Acts 13:42; 17:2, 11; 18:4; 19:8; cf. 28:17–23). (ii) The Jewish king Agrippa II acknowledged the persuasive power of Paul's missionary sermon and affirmed that Paul and his message were not politically dangerous (26:28, 32). (iii) Jews were affected by the miracles that happened in the ministry of the missionaries (19:17). (iv) Jews accepted the message that Paul preached and came to faith in Jesus the Messiah of Israel, including (sometimes) rulers of synagogues (13:43; 14:1, 21; 17:4, 12; 18:4, 8; 28:24). (v) Some joined Paul in his missionary endeavors (Acts 16:15, 40; cf. 1 Cor. 16:15–17). (vi) Jews were jealous

because of Paul's success, and they responded with zeal to protect the Law and the social and political privileges of the Jewish community (5:17; 13:45; 17:5). (vii) Jews contradicted Paul, initiating a controversy in the synagogue, where they articulated opposing viewpoints (13:45; 18:6; 19:9; 28:24). (viii) Jews uttered blasphemies, probably against Jesus, presumably pronouncing the curse of the Torah (Deut. 21:22–23) upon the crucified Jesus (Acts 13:45; 18:6; cf. Gal. 3:13; 1 Cor. 12:3). (ix) Jews in diaspora synagogues incited the Gentile population of the city, and sometimes officials of the magistrate, and initiated a persecution (13:50; 14:5, 19; 17:5–8, 13). (x) Jews in diaspora synagogues accused the missionaries, sometimes together with the Gentile citizens, of activities hostile to the state (17:6–7; 18:12–13). (xi) Jews punished Paul by flogging (2 Cor. 11:24) and stoning (2 Cor. 11:25; Acts 14:19); repeatedly the missionaries managed to escape punishment (13:50; 14:2, 5–6). (xii) Jews accused Paul before the tribunal of a Roman governor of inciting the citizenry to rebellion against the civil authorities (*seditio*) and of profaning temples (24:5–6; 25:7). (xiii) Jews wanted to kill Paul (22:22; 23:12–15; 25:3, 24).

2.3.2. Gentile audiences. Jesus himself had significant encounters with Gentiles, and he directed his disciples after his resurrection to proclaim the gospel to all nations, to the ends of the earth (Matt. 28:16–20; Acts 1:8). The evidence in Acts, in the New Testament letters, and in Revelation demonstrates that this is exactly what the Jesus followers did.

1. Jesus spoke occasionally before Gentile audiences. The encounters with the centurion in Capernaum (Matt. 8:5–13; Luke 7:1–10), the demon-possessed man in the region of Gadara (Matt. 8:28–34; Mark 5:1–17; Luke 8:26–38), the Syrophoenician woman in the region of Tyre and Sidon (Matt. 15:21–28; Mark 7:24–30), the deaf-mute in the Decapolis (Mark 7:32–37), and the crowd on the eastern side of the Sea of Galilee (Matt. 15:32–39; Mark 8:1–10), albeit significant events, were exceptions.

2. Gentile audiences—that is, listeners who worshiped various and many gods—would have found some convictions that the Jesus followers proclaimed to be on a "shared spectrum of religious thinking" (Morgan 2017, 213), with many points of contact, as Paul's address before the Areopagus Council in Athens demonstrates (Acts 17:22–31). Plutarch, expressing a conviction similar to those of Christians, asserted that it is important "to understand the names of things" so as not to misuse them; right understanding matters because "nothing a man has is more divine than reason, and especially reasoning about the gods," which is why he commanded people who visit the oracle at Delphi to "think holy thoughts and to avoid words of ill omen," since wrong beliefs lead to more wrong beliefs, to superstition, and to atheism (Plutarch, *Is. Os.* 71, 68). Cicero argued that we must hold some claims about the gods to be

true because if we do not, religious and social behavior becomes pointless; he argued that, granted that the gods are interested in us, we still need to think rightly about the rituals with which we worship the gods because if we do not, they will somehow be adversely affected (Cicero, *Nat. d.* 1.13). Among second-century theologians such as Irenaeus and Tertullian we see the self-definition of Christianity as a philosophy, with the implicit claim that Christianity as *philosophia* shared a particular rationality with post-Hellenistic philosophy, which was predominantly exegetical, unitary, and universalist; they shared some philosophers' claim that truth is transformative and tied to a way of life (*eudaimonia*), while at the same time understanding the Christian faith and life as the only true and truly transformative "philosophy"—indeed, as surpassing all other philosophies (W. Löhr 2017).

3. A close reading of Paul's Areopagus Council address in Athens reveals not only points of agreement but also points of contradiction (Schnabel 2012a), which were even more pronounced outside the circle of Epicurean and Stoic philosophers. Gentiles would not have known the content of the holy scriptures of the Jews, but they would have found the appeal to ancient scriptures appealing. They would have been familiar with the behavior of Jews in everyday life, but most would have found it to be intrusive to be told that religious belief and personal and communal ethics need to be closely integrated. The religious cults in which the Gentile population was active took the existence of the gods for granted; the cults stipulated the necessity of sacrifices and other ritual, without deeming it important to regulate the thinking of their adherents. Ultimately, for Gentiles, the message of a crucified Jewish man who rose from the dead to be the Savior of all people was nonsense (1 Cor. 1:18–2:5) and reason for ridicule (Acts 17:32).

4. Peter, prompted by a divinely inspired dream-vision, explained the gospel to a Gentile centurion in Caesarea (Acts 10:1–11:18). Jerusalem believers, diaspora Jews from Cyprus and Cyrene, preached the gospel in Antioch, the capital of the province of Syria, to Greeks, who responded in great numbers, coming to faith in Jesus (11:20). Paul proclaimed the gospel to God-fearers—that is, Gentiles who regularly attended meetings in the synagogues (13:16, 26; 17:4, 17); to sympathizers of the Jews, among them women of high standing (13:44, 48, 50; cf. Wander 1998); to Gentiles—that is, polytheists—in Paphos, Pisidian Antioch, Iconium, Lystra, Derbe, Perge, Philippi, Thessalonica, Beroea, Athens, Corinth, Ephesus, and Caesarea (13:46–49; 14:1, 8, 20, 21, 24–25; 16:12–40; 17:1–9, 10–15, 16–34; 18:1–22; 19:1–20:1), including some of the local magistrates (13:50) and Roman governors (13:7, 12; 24:1–26; 26:1–29). In Revelation, the reference to tribes, languages, peoples, and nations (Rev. 5:9; 7:9) implies the existence of many Gentile believers in the congregations

in Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, and Laodicea in the province of Asia.

5. The response of Gentile audiences was parallel to the response of Jewish audiences, a fact that is particularly obvious in the ministry of Paul (Schnabel 2004, 2:1351–54). (i) Sometimes people were amazed at miraculous events that happened in Paul's ministry (Acts 13:12; 14:11–13; 19:13–17). (ii) God-fearing Gentiles, who sympathized with the Jewish faith, listened willingly and attentively (16:14). (iii) Gentiles listened willingly to what Paul and his fellow missionaries had to say (13:7; 24:24). (iv) Gentile philosophers took the initiative to dialogue with Paul about his teaching (17:18–20, 32). (v) Gentile provincial administrators and Gentile city magistrates acknowledged that Paul did not teach any subversive doctrines (18:14–16; 19:35–40; 25:25, 27). (vi) Gentiles were deeply affected by miracles that happened in the ministry of the missionaries (13:12; 19:17). (vii) Gentiles were so impressed by the miracles that the missionaries did that they wanted to worship them and honor them as gods in human form (14:11–13). (viii) Gentiles were stunned on account of the content and the claims of the Christian message (24:25). (ix) Some Gentile God-fearers, who sympathized with the Jewish faith, came to faith in Jesus, including aristocratic women and men (13:43, 48–49; 14:1, 21; 16:14; 17:4, 12; 18:4, 7). (x) Gentiles came to faith in Jesus (Acts 14:21; 16:33–34; 18:8; 19:18; cf. 1 Cor. 1:18–2:5; Gal. 4:14; 1 Thess. 1:9; 2:1), including a Roman governor (Acts 13:12) and a member of the Areopagus Council in Athens (17:34). (xi) Gentiles who came to faith in Jesus rejoiced in the preaching of the missionaries and were filled with joy (13:48, 52; 16:34). (xii) Some Gentile God-fearers who attended the synagogue rejected the teaching of the missionaries and their offer of salvation (13:50). (xiii) Gentile philosophers made fun of the message that the missionaries proclaimed (17:32). (xiv) Gentiles regularly ridiculed and rejected the proclamation of Jesus, the crucified Savior (cf. 1 Cor. 1:23). (xv) Locals started a riot, targeting the missionaries and the new converts (Acts 17:5; 19:23–41; 1 Thess. 1:6; 2:2). (xvi) Gentiles initiated legal proceedings against Paul, accusing him of disturbing the peace and of illegal introduction of alien Jewish customs (Acts 16:20–21). (xvii) On some occasions Gentiles were motivated by the financial loss that the activities of the missionaries had caused (16:16–19; 19:23–27). (xviii) Gentiles organized a protest meeting against the missionaries (19:29–34). (xix) Praetors had Paul flogged by their lictors and thrown into prison (16:22–23; 2 Cor. 11:23).

6. For the Preacher, see §§1.3.8; 20.1.

*2.3.3. **Profile of missionary audiences.*** It is in the context of the variegated responses to the proclamation of Jesus Messiah by his followers that the theological content of the New Testament texts needs to be understood. As I have done with regard to the Jewish and Gentile Jesus followers (§2.2.6), I will use

a social description of representative Jews and Gentiles who heard Jesus, and then the apostles, explain their convictions, either in public, in synagogues, in the *agora*, or in local Christian congregations which Jesus and his missionaries visited. The personal names, again taken from specific inscriptions, are not meant to describe historical persons; they facilitate later reference to the hearers and readers of the proclamation of the apostles which is aligned with the texts of the New Testament.

1. *Ahi, a Jewish carpenter, a Pharisee*. The name is attested on pre-70 ossuaries in Jerusalem (Ilan 2002–12, 1:61–62; *CIIP* I 67, 78). Ahi (pronounced Ah-hee) would have learned his skills as carpenter/builder (τέκτων) from his father. As a τέκτων, he was a construction worker, a carpenter and mason who built houses (Batey 1984) and was also capable of making shelves for the library of the elite. Living in Tiberias, the second capital of the rule of Herod Antipas in Galilee, he may have belonged to a guild of carpenters/builders (cf. Rocca 2008, 233). He probably lived at subsistence level. The rabbis regarded builders as very clever people (Midr. Exod. Rab. 13:1). I imagine that Ahi heard Jesus preach in Capernaum, only fifteen kilometers (nine miles) to the north, and later encountered Jesus followers in Tiberias who invited him to meetings of the local assembly of Jesus followers, where he heard the material now extant in the Gospel and in the epistolary literature of the New Testament read and explained.

2. *Baruch, a Jewish purple dyer, with the Roman name Lucius Lollius Iustus*. A Jewish man with this Roman name is attested in Smyrna; he was a secretary of the synagogue community (*IJO* II 44). The Roman name attests to his Roman citizenship. I imagine that his Jewish name was Baruch (cf. Ilan 2002–12, 1:84) and that he was a synagogue official. As a purple dyer (πορφύρεος, κογχιστής; Lat. *purpurarius*), he probably belonged to a guild. I imagine that he had a wife and two children. He lived just above subsistence level. The purple industry, which produced garments, blankets, and carpets, played an important role in Lydia and Phrygia. Purple dyers and trade in purple cloth are attested for Thyatira and Miletus. In Laodicea specialists called ἁπλοῦργοι are documented, dyers of cloth dyed with only one color in contrast to other purple clothes (Corsten 1997, 104, who suggests "Schneckenpurpureinfachfärber" as a German translation; LSJ has "kind of textile worker"). Since most purple dyes, which came in different grades of quality and color variation, were readily available, especially the variety derived from the madder plant (*rubia*), their use was not restricted to the wealthy. I imagine that Baruch heard the gospel preached by a missionary in Smyrna's synagogue, perhaps by John.

3. *Bacchios, a fish trader*. The name "Bacchios son of Euphrosynos" occurs in a donors list inscribed on a stele that was set up by the association of fishermen

and fishmongers of the city who had underwritten the costs of a customs house built at the harbor of Ephesus (*I.Ephesos* Ia 20, dated AD 54–59; the stele is dedicated to Artemis Ephesia; cf. Horsley and Llewelyn 1981–2012, vol. 5, no. 5 [pp. 95–114]; G. Horsley 1992; Harland 2014, no. 127 [pp. 249–59]). Bacchios is listed in the inscription as having contributed fifteen denarii, which is, however, more than the five denarii that several men contributed who are mentioned at the end of the list. I imagine that Bacchios had learned his trade from his father and belonged to the association of fish dealers, and that he was not literate. He had a wife and children and lived at subsistence level. Cicero (*Off.* 1.150–51) regarded as base (*sordidi*) all wage earners (*mercennarii*), retail merchants (*negiatores*), craftsmen (*opifices*), and people who worked as fishmongers, butchers, cooks, poulterers, fishermen, and perfumers (on professions and occupations cf. Treggiari 1980; Joshel 1992; Broekaert and Zuiderhoek 2013). Such attitudes were the result of aristocratic snobbery. I imagine that Bacchios regularly worshiped Artemis Ephesia, not least because the fish traders at Ephesus seem to have leased the rights to fish the lakes and the stretches of the Kaystros River belonging to the estates of the Artemision. And I imagine that he also worshiped Isis, as did Cominia Junia, who, a hundred years later, fulfilled a vow to Artemis Ephesia dedicating a statue to the goddess Isis and an altar within, or adjacent to, the toll office (*I.Ephesos* V 1503).

4. *Gaius Caristanius Fronto Caisianus Iullus, a magistrate*. An inscription discovered near Pisidian Antioch (Christol, Drew-Bear, and Tahlialan 2001) explains the status of Caristanius as a member of the local elite (Mowery 2006; Schnabel 2008c). Caristanius had fulfilled a vow which he had made to one of the deities of the city, perhaps the deified Augustus, on behalf of the safety and victory of the emperor Claudius during the invasion of Britain (AD 43/44). Caristanius held the office of *duumvir* three times; he was a priest (*pontifex*) and an officer in the Roman army. He fulfilled his vow by providing money for four benefactions: a statue, probably a larger-than-life representation of Claudius; games—specifically, games involving the youth (*ludi iuvenales*); sacrifices (*hostias*), probably offered in the large temple located in the center of Antioch, dedicated to the worship of Augustus and Roma; and a *venatio*, an event involving wild animals, either a beast hunt or a fight with wild beasts. These benefactions were probably offered in AD 45/46. Paul arrived in Pisidian Antioch probably in AD 46. With this very large statue, with the Latin inscription on its base, Caristanius reminded the citizens of the power of the emperor and the power of Rome and, by implication, of "the pagan divine power that aided and protected Claudius and his legions" (Mowery 2006, 242). His name indicates that he held Roman citizenship. As a member of the local elite, he would have had the standard Greco-Roman education, prominently including

rhetoric. I imagine that he subscribed to an eclectic philosophy akin to what we find in Plutarch. I imagine that Caristanius heard of Paul's message both from his wife (Acts 13:50) and from a direct encounter in the course of Paul's public proclamation of the gospel in the city (implied in 13:46). As a "leading man of the city," he would have been involved in the expulsion of Paul and Barnabas from Antioch.

3

The Foundational Significance of Jesus

The authors of the New Testament texts express a rich multiplicity and diversity of convictions they deem important for the congregations of Jesus followers. Not a few scholars believe that this diversity involves contradictions that require the material criticism (*Sachkritik*) of some New Testament texts and convictions, accepting some as reflecting true, authentic biblical theology significant for the church while rejecting others as irrelevant or even dangerous. Some conclude that the contradictory inconsistency of the New Testament texts renders the proposition of writing a New Testament theology difficult if not impossible. Others have been looking for a center or *Mitte* of the New Testament which can hold together the diverse texts and theological convictions. This discussion will be taken up at the start of my systematic presentation of the theology of the New Testament (see chap. 21).

But what can be made clear at this point is that the foundation and heart of the New Testament texts, the basic conviction that unites all of its authors, is not a particular theme but a person: Jesus of Nazareth, acknowledged and worshiped as Israel's Messiah and Savior of sinners. This is true despite the significance of themes such as the fulfillment of God's promises, the quotations from and allusions to the Old Testament Scriptures, God's eschatological intervention, revelation, covenant, the justification of the godless, or reconciliation

with God—indeed, it is true precisely because of how these themes are framed and explained (Landmesser, Eckstein, and Lichtenberger 1997; Schnelle 2009).

The foundational significance of Jesus for the earliest Jesus followers is evident in the early confessions, the summaries in the Gospels and Acts, the speeches in Acts, the structure of the New Testament, and the early Christian manuscripts. For a fuller treatment for the Christology of the Jerusalem apostles see §8.2; for Paul see §§11.1–7; for the Gospels and the Johannine literature see chaps. 16–19; for the Preacher, chap. 20; for the New Testament, chap. 23.

3.1. The Early Confessions

The earliest confessional statements of the Jesus followers demonstrate both the centrality of Jesus and the commitment to Jesus by the Jews and Gentiles who met in the earliest congregations. While the efforts of form-analytical research (*Formgeschichte* or form criticism) have not led to universally accepted results, and while some of the texts mentioned below may not have circulated as independent confessions in the earliest congregations, they are of foundational importance as succinct statements which most Jesus followers in the first century would have been familiar with (cf. Riedl 2004).

3.1.1. Acclamations. An acclamation is the affirmative acknowledgment that expresses the appreciation, acceptance, or endorsement of a person (Klauser 1950; Berger 2005, 290). The acclamation is confessional and thus uses the present tense. While some early Christian acclamations acknowledge God (Luke 7:16; Rev. 4:8, 11), most acknowledge Jesus.

1. The earliest acclamation of the Jesus followers was "Jesus is the Messiah," expressed in Greek with the two words Ἰησοῦς Χριστός; the Hebrew equivalent would have been יֵשׁוּעַ הַמָּשִׁיחַ, in Aramaic יֵשׁוּעַ מְשִׁיחָא. The designation Ἰησοῦς Χριστός occurs 127 times in Paul's letters, Χριστὸς Ἰησοῦς 91 times. The designation Χριστός occurs 531 times in the New Testament, with 382 references in Paul's letters. The shouts of ὡσαννά from the crowd during Jesus' approach to Jerusalem expressed jubilation which was linked with the acclamation of Jesus as the Davidic Messiah: "Hosanna! Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord! Blessed is the coming kingdom of our ancestor David! Hosanna in the highest heaven!" (Mark 11:9–10; cf. Matt. 21:9; Luke 19:38; John 12:13). John warns the congregations concerning people who deny "that Jesus is the Messiah" (Ἰησοῦς ἔστιν ὁ χριστός; NRSV mg.; 1 John 2:22). Bona fide members of the church who have been "born of God" believe that Jesus is the Messiah. For the meaning of Χριστός, see §11.1.2.

2. A second foundational acclamation is "Jesus is the Son of God" (Heb. 4:14: Ἰησοῦν τὸν υἱὸν τοῦ θεοῦ; 1 John 4:15; 5:5: Ἰησοῦς ἐστιν ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ θεοῦ; cf.

Acts 9:20; Rom. 1:4; 2 Cor. 1:19). Mark opens his Gospel with the announcement, "The beginning of the good news of Jesus Christ, the Son of God" (Mark 1:1). The heavenly voice declared at the baptism of Jesus: "You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased" (Mark 1:11; cf. Matt. 3:17; Luke 3:22; John 1:34). And at the transfiguration of Jesus the voice instructed: "This is my Son, the Beloved; listen to him" (Mark 9:7; cf. Matt. 17:5; Luke 9:35). The unclean spirits who saw Jesus shouted, "You are the Son of God" (Mark 3:11; cf. 5:7; cf. Matt. 8:29; Luke 4:41; 8:28).

3. A third foundational acclamation is "Jesus is Lord" (κύριος Ἰησοῦς), which was used in the prayers of Jesus followers in the form μαράνα θά, Hebrew מָרַן אֲתָא or מָרַנָא תָא (1 Cor. 16:22; Rev. 22:20; cf. Did. 10:6). Paul affirms that to be a Jesus follower and enjoy the salvation that Jesus effected by his death and resurrection depends on the personal confession ("if you confess with your lips") that "Jesus is Lord" and on the personal acknowledgment ("and believe in your heart") that "God raised him from the dead" (Rom. 10:9). Paul affirms that the confession "Jesus is Lord" is the result of the supernatural prompting of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 12:3)—that is, of the power of God (2:4–5). The title "Lord" is used absolutely of the risen "Lord" (e.g., Rom. 10:9; 1 Cor. 2:8; 2 Cor. 3:16; Gal. 1:19; 1 Thess. 1:6); in the phrase ἐν κυρίῳ to express the union of the Jesus followers with Jesus Messiah (e.g., Rom. 16:8, 11, 12; 1 Cor. 7:22), including in exhortations (e.g., Eph. 6:1; Phil. 3:1; 4:1, 2, 4; Col. 3:19) and greetings (1 Cor. 16:19); and in combination with the name Jesus and the title Christ/Messiah (e.g., Rom. 1:4, 7; 4:24; 1 Cor. 1:2; 5:4; Gal. 1:3; Eph. 1:2; Phil. 1:2; 1 Thess. 1:1).

4. John includes other acclamations of Jesus in Revelation: "You are worthy to take the scroll and to open its seals" (5:9; the text continues with the reason for the acclamation); "Worthy is the Lamb that was slaughtered to receive power and wealth and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing!" (5:12).

3.1.2. Doxologies. Short praises of God, whose glory, might, and act(s) of salvation were acknowledged and extolled, were common in Judaism (Stuiber 1959; Güting 1993) and also occur frequently in the New Testament (Luke 2:14; Rom. 11:36; 16:27; Gal. 1:5; Phil. 4:20; Jude 25; Rev. 7:12; 19:1–2). John mentions both God and Jesus in doxologies ("To the one seated on the throne and to the Lamb be blessing and honor and glory and might forever and ever!" [Rev. 5:13]; "Salvation belongs to our God who is seated on the throne, and to the Lamb!" [7:10]). Paul, Peter, and John praise Jesus in doxologies ("To him be the glory forever and ever" [2 Tim. 4:18];"Grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be the glory both now and to the day of eternity. Amen" [2 Pet. 3:18]; "To him who loves us and freed us from our sins by his blood, and made us to be a kingdom, priests serving his God and Father, to him be glory and dominion forever and ever" [Rev. 1:5–6]; "Worthy is the

Lamb, who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and praise!" [5:12 NIV]). For John, Jesus the Lamb shares in the glory due to God (see also Rev. 1:5, 6; 5:9). One may also consider Heb. 13:21 and 1 Pet. 4:11.

3.1.3. Statements of faith. The statements of faith in New Testament texts have a multiplicity of forms, which suggests that rather than repeating carefully constructed formulas, the earliest theologians formulated the significance of Jesus in diverse, "live" contexts. Table 3 lists the diverse formulations of statements of faith in canonical sequence. Statements which formulate an action of God affecting Jesus will be written in terms of statements about God and about Jesus (the translations of the NRSV have been adapted and on occasion revised).

We find statements of faith focusing on God; God and Jesus; the life and mission of Jesus; the death of Jesus and its benefits; the death, resurrection, and/or exaltation of Jesus; and the resurrection of Jesus. Several passages consisting of longer descriptions praising Jesus (*encomia*; Berger 2005, 402) need to be mentioned here as well: Phil. 2:6–11; Col. 1:15–20; Heb. 1:1–4. These texts were classified as hymns but have been shown to be carefully formulated christological confessional texts (Kennel 1995, on Phil. 2:6–11) or epideictic passages in the sense of *epainos* or "praise" accorded to Jesus (Brucker 1997). (See table 3.)

Table 3. Statements of Faith

Statements of faith focusing on God	
Rom. 8:3–4	God has done what the law, weakened by the flesh, could not do: by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and to deal with sin, he condemned sin in the flesh, so that the just requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.
Statements of faith focusing on God and Jesus	
1 Cor. 8:6*	For us there is one God, the Father, from whom are all things and for whom we exist, and one Lord, Jesus Messiah, through whom are all things and through whom we exist.
1 Tim 2:5–6*	There is one God; there is also one mediator between God and humankind, Messiah Jesus, himself human, who gave himself a ransom for all.
1 Tim. 6:13*	. . . God, who gives life to all things, and of Messiah Jesus, who in his testimony before Pontius Pilate made the good confession . . .
2 Tim. 4:1*	. . . God and of Messiah Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and in view of his appearing and his kingdom . . .
Statements of faith focusing on the life and mission of Jesus	
Rom. 1:3–4*	. . . the Son of God, who was descended from David according to the flesh and was declared to be Son of God with power according to the Spirit of holiness by resurrection from the dead, Jesus Messiah, our Lord . . .

continued

Gal. 4:4–5*	Jesus, the Son of God, born of a woman, born under the law, came in order to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as children.
1 Tim. 3:16*	Jesus was revealed in flesh, vindicated by the Spirit, seen by angels, proclaimed among Gentiles, believed in throughout the world, taken up in glory.
Statements of faith focusing on the death of Jesus and its benefits	
John 3:16	For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life.
Rom. 3:24–25*	They are now justified by God's grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Messiah Jesus, whom God put forward as a sacrifice of atonement by his blood, effective through faith.
Rom. 5:8	God proves his love for us in that while we still were sinners Christ died for us.
Rom. 8:32*	He who did not withhold his own Son, but gave him up for all of us . . .
Gal. 1:3–5*	. . . the Lord Jesus Messiah who gave himself for our sins to set us free from the present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father, to whom be the glory forever and ever.
Statements of faith focusing on the death, resurrection, and/or exaltation of Jesus	
Acts 2:32–33	This Jesus God raised up, and of that all of us are witnesses. Being therefore exalted at the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, he has poured out this that you both see and hear.
Acts 4:10*	. . . Jesus Messiah of Nazareth, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead.
Acts 5:30–31*	The God of our ancestors raised up Jesus, whom you had killed by hanging him on a tree. God exalted him at his right hand as Leader and Savior that he might give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins.
Rom. 4:24–25*	We believe in him who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead, who was handed over to death for our trespasses and was raised for our justification.
Rom. 8:34*	Messiah Jesus died and was raised, and is at the right hand of God, and intercedes for us.
1 Cor. 15:3–5*	The Messiah died for our sins in accordance with the scriptures; he was buried; he was raised on the third day and he appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve.
Eph. 1:20–21*	God put this power to work in Messiah when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places, far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the age to come.
1 Thess. 4:14*	For since we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so, through Jesus, God will bring with him those who have died.
Heb. 1:3*	The Son is the reflection of God's glory and the exact imprint of God's very being, and he sustains all things by his powerful word. When he had made purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high.

1 Pet. 1:21*	Through him you have come to trust in God, who raised him from the dead and gave him glory, so that your faith and hope are set on God.
1 Pet. 3:18*	The Messiah also suffered for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, in order to bring you to God. He was put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit.
Statements of faith focusing on the resurrection of Jesus	
Acts 3:15*	. . . Jesus, the Author of life, whom God raised from the dead.
Acts 10:40*	God raised him on the third day and allowed him to appear.
Acts 13:30	God raised him from the dead; and for many days he appeared to those who came up with him from Galilee to Jerusalem.
Acts 13:37	He whom God raised up experienced no corruption.
Rom. 8:11*	He who raised the Messiah from the dead will give life to your mortal bodies also through his Spirit.
Rom. 10:9	If you confess with your lips that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.
1 Cor. 15:15*	We testified of God that he raised the Messiah.
2 Cor. 4:14	The one who raised the Lord Jesus will raise us also with Jesus, and will bring us with you into his presence.
Gal. 1:1	. . . God the Father who raised Jesus Messiah from the dead . . .
1 Thess. 1:10*	God's Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead—Jesus, who rescues us from the wrath that is coming
2 Tim. 2:8*	Remember Jesus Messiah, raised from the dead, a descendant of David.
Longer descriptions praising Jesus	
Phil. 2:6–11*	Messiah Jesus was in the form of God; he did not regard equality with God as something to be exploited, but emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, being born in human likeness; and being found in human form, he humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross; therefore God also highly exalted him and gave him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bend, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue should confess that Jesus Messiah is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.
Col. 1:15–20*	Jesus is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation, for in him all things in heaven and on earth were created, things visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or powers; all things have been created through him and for him; he himself is before all things, and in him all things hold together; he is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, so that he might come to have first place in everything; in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, and through him God was pleased to reconcile all things, whether on earth or in heaven, by making peace through the blood of his cross.

continued

Heb. 1:1–4	Long ago God spoke to our ancestors in many and various ways by the prophets, but in these last days he has spoken to us by a Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, through whom he also created the worlds. He is the reflection of God's glory and the exact imprint of God's very being, and he sustains all things by his powerful word. When he had made purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, having become as much superior to angels as the name he has inherited is more excellent than theirs.

* Indicates that the NRSV has been modified.

3.1.4. Confessions before Easter. The question that the disciples of Jesus asked after they had observed Jesus calming the storm—"Who is this?" (Mark 4:41; Matt. 21:10)—shows, on the one hand, that the earliest followers of Jesus were concerned to understand the identity of Jesus of Nazareth, and, on the other hand, that the accounts of the Gospel writers were not infused with the later explicit conviction that Jesus shared the identity of God. Peter, speaking for the disciples, answered the question of Jesus concerning his identity at a later point, when he responded to the question of Jesus, "Who do you say that I am?" with the statement "You are the Messiah" (σὺ εἶ ὁ χριστός; Mark 8:29; cf. Matt. 16:16; Luke 9:20; cf. John 6:69). Blind Bartimaeus in Jericho shouted: "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me" (Mark 10:47–48; cf. Matt. 20:30–31; Luke 18:38–39), acknowledging the messianic authority of Jesus. Jesus connected public acknowledgment (confession) of him with salvation on the day of judgment: "And I tell you, everyone who acknowledges me before others, the Son of Man also will acknowledge before the angels of God" (Luke 12:8). "Everyone therefore who acknowledges me before others, I also will acknowledge before my Father in heaven" (Matt. 10:32).

According to Matthew, the disciples prostrated themselves (προσεκύνησαν) before Jesus with the acclamation "Truly you are the Son of God" (ἀληθῶς θεοῦ υἱὸς εἶ; Matt. 14:33) after they had witnessed him walking on water. The same Greek verb, which describes obeisance, the act of prostrating oneself before a high authority figure, is used by Matthew to describe a leper's reverence for Jesus and the reaction to Jesus of Jairus and the Syrophoenician woman (8:2; 9:18; 15:25). The magi came to pay homage to the newborn Jesus (2:2, 11).

3.2. The Summaries

Summaries are texts which succinctly describe the successful work of Jesus (Onuki 1997), early Christian missionaries, and other groups. An alternative term for these texts is "foundational report" (*Basis-Bericht*) since they summarize the decisive focus on the activity of the person (or group of persons) and are thus form-analytically situated between the encomium and biography (Berger

2005, 388–91). Summaries describe the activities of John the Baptist (Mark 1:4–6; Matt. 3:1–2, 5–6; Luke 3:3; John 3:22–24), the disciples (Mark 6:12–13; Luke 9:6), the Jerusalem believers (Acts 5:12–16), Simon Magus (8:9–11), the evil beasts (Rev. 13:5, 11–14, 16–17), and the two witnesses (11:5–6) without reference to Jesus. However, the majority of summaries describe the activity of Jesus. Summaries describing the actions of other individuals often mention Jesus. The significance of Jesus for the authors of the New Testament texts and their readers is apparent.

3.2.1. Summaries describing the actions of Jesus. Summaries describing the actions of Jesus are found at the beginning of the accounts of the ministry of Jesus (Mark 1:14–15: "Now after John was arrested, Jesus came to Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God, and saying, 'The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near; repent, and believe in the good news'"; cf. Matt. 4:17; Luke 4:14–15) as well as later (Mark 1:32–34: "That evening, at sundown, they brought to him all who were sick or possessed with demons. And the whole city was gathered around the door. And he cured many who were sick with various diseases, and cast out many demons; and he would not permit the demons to speak, because they knew him"; also 1:39; 2:13; 3:7–12; 4:33–34; 6:5–6, 55–56; Matt. 4:23–25; 8:16–17; 9:35; 11:1, 5; 12:15–21; 13:34–36; 14:13–14; 15:29–31; Luke 4:40–41, 44; 6:17–19; 7:22; 8:1; John 2:23; 10:39–42; Acts 1:3). Summaries describing the actions of Jesus were part of early Christian missionary proclamation (Acts 10:37–38).

3.2.2. Summaries mentioning Jesus. Jesus is mentioned as the content of the missionary proclamation of Philip (Acts 8:5–8), Peter and John (8:25), the Jerusalem believers who fled north along the Phoenician coast (11:20–21), Barnabas (11:22–23), Barnabas and Saul/Paul (11:26; 13:49; 14:21–22), Apollos (18:24–28), and Paul (17:2–4, 12; 18:4–5, 8; 19:8, 10; 24:24; 28:31).

3.3. The Speeches in Acts

The speeches of the major characters in Acts all focus on Jesus, a fact that again demonstrates the foundational significance of Jesus for the earliest leaders of the Jerusalem church and the missionaries.

3.3.1. The speeches of Peter. In his speech on the occasion of the reconstitution of the Twelve, Peter formulated as requirements for the apostle replacing Judas Iscariot that he must have accompanied the eleven disciples "during all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us" and that he must have seen the risen Jesus (Acts 1:21–22). Peter's speech on the Day of Pentecost (2:14–36) sought to demonstrate that God's promise of the Holy Spirit had been fulfilled in Jesus of Nazareth, whose ministry, death, and resurrection were summarized (2:22–24)

and whose status as exalted Lord and Messiah was demonstrated from Scripture (2:25–36). In the missionary sermon, Peter called on the audience to repent and be baptized "in the name of Jesus Messiah for the forgiveness of sins" (2:37–40 NIV mod.). Jesus was prominently mentioned in Peter's words to the lame beggar at the temple courts (3:6), to the audience in Solomon's Portico (3:13–26), to Cornelius and his friends in Caesarea (10:34–43, with a summary of the ministry of Jesus in 10:37–38), to the Jerusalem believers (11:16–17), and to the audience at the Apostles' Council (15:11). For Peter's Christology see §§7.1; 8.2.

3.3.2. The speech of Stephen. The speech of Stephen in front of the members of the Sanhedrin (Acts 7:2–56) reviewed the history of Israel before indicting the Jewish people for not recognizing Jesus as the promised Messiah (7:51–53). The speech ended with Stephen seeing Jesus, the Son of Man, in the glory of heaven standing at the right hand of God (7:55–56). For the Christology of Stephen see §§7.3; 8.2.

3.3.3 The speeches of Paul. In his sermon in the synagogue of Pisidian Antioch (Acts 13:14–41), Paul reviewed salvation history beginning with the patriarchs before asserting the fulfillment of God's promises in Jesus (13:23), proclaiming the significance of Jesus (13:26–37), and calling the listeners to repentance and offering forgiveness of sins through Jesus (13:38–39). Paul mentioned Jesus in his address before the members of the Areopagus Council (17:31), the elders of the church in Ephesus (20:21, 24, 35), the crowd in the outer Temple courts (22:8–11, 18), the Roman prefect Felix (24:14; cf. 24:24), the Roman prefect Festus and King Agrippa (26:9), and Jews in the city of Rome (28:23). For Paul's Christology see §§9.1.2; 11.1–4.

3.3.4 The appellation Χριστιανοί. The central significance of Jesus is dramatically seen in the fact that the followers of Jesus were called Χριστιανοί—that is, partisans, adherents, followers of Jesus (Acts 11:26)—an official designation evidently coined by the Roman authorities in Antioch, who needed a term for this new group in some official context, perhaps in the context of legal efforts of the local synagogues to curb the activities of the followers of Jesus (Justin Taylor 1994). These officials recognized that the religious convictions, the meetings, and the outreach of this group of people led by Barnabas and Paul focused on Jesus, whom they believed to be the Messiah of the Jewish people and the Savior of the world.

3.4. The Structure of the New Testament and the Early Manuscripts

The foundational significance of Jesus is reflected in the structure of the canon of the New Testament, in Paul's letters, and in the early manuscripts of New Testament documents.

3.4.1 The structure of the New Testament. Four of the authors of the New Testament wrote biographical treatments of the life, ministry, death, and resurrection of Jesus (Matthew, Mark, Luke, John). The attempts to present one single Gospel (Marcion) or a Gospel harmony (Tatian) did not replace the four-Gospel canon. This acceptance of the diversity of the four witnesses to Jesus and the circulation of the four Gospels "with privileged significance" seem to have happened before around AD 120 (Hurtado 2003, 578–88). The basic conviction of the authors of the Gospels was that Jesus was the messianic king (Bird 2012; Jipp 2020, 21–147).

3.4.2. The letters of Paul. The foundational significance of Jesus is evident in the letters of the apostle Paul, the most prolific author of the New Testament canon after Luke. Paul refers to the name Jesus (Ἰησοῦς) 212 times, to the title Messiah (Χριστός) 383 times, and to the title Lord (κύριος) 275 times (compare this with 548 explicit references to God, θεός). See §9.1.

3.4.3. The **nomina sacra.** The significance of Jesus is evident in the development of the *nomina sacra*, the abbreviations of words in Greek New Testament manuscripts. The practice of abbreviating certain words seems to have developed from writing the name of Jesus—Greek Ἰησοῦς, in capital letters IHSOUS—as IH, with a horizontal stroke placed above the abbreviated form. This very early practice of writing the name of Jesus as IH appears to have originated in Jewish Christian circles as a gematria: IH represents the numerical value of eighteen (the letter ι has the numerical value ten, the letter η the numerical value of eight), possibly an allusion to the numerical value of the Hebrew word for life (חַי, with י having the numerical value of ten, the letter ח the numerical value of eight), based on the conviction that Jesus was acknowledged and worshiped as the life-giving Lord, the embodiment of resurrection life (Rom. 8:1–2, 10–11; 1 Cor. 15:20–23, 45; Phil. 3:20–21; John 1:3–4; 11:25; 14:6; 20:31; Hurtado 2006, 95–122).

PART 2

The Proclamation of Jesus

4

The Beginning: John the Baptist

The first appearance in public of Jesus of Nazareth took place in the context of the ministry of John the Baptist (Mark 1:9–11//Matt. 3:13–17//Luke 3:21–22// John 1:29–34), who called the Jewish people to repentance in view of the impending arrival of the One who would initiate the coming of God's Holy Spirit. The contemporaries of Jesus compared him with John the Baptist (Mark 2:18// Matt. 9:14//Luke 5:33; Mark 6:14–16//Matt. 14:1–2//Luke 6:7–9; Matt. 11:18–19// Luke 7:33–34; John 4:1–3; 10:40–42; cf. John 3:22–36; Acts 1:5; 11:16), and they compared the disciples of Jesus with the disciples of John (Mark 2:18//Luke 5:33; Matt. 9:14; cf. Acts 19:1–7**)**. The earliest followers of Jesus regarded the ministry of John as the beginning of God's revelation in the ministry of Jesus (Acts 1:22; 10:37; 13:24–25). A description of the theology of the New Testament must therefore begin with a description of the ministry and message of John the Baptist.

4.1. The Life of John the Baptist

The ministry of John the Baptist is placed at or close to the beginning of all four Gospels: Mark 1:2–8//Matt. 3:1–12//Luke 3:1–20; cf. Luke 1:5–25, 57–80 on his birth; John 1:19–34; 3:22–36. Only Luke describes the birth of John (Luke 1:5–25) and his arrest (Luke 3:19–20); only Mark and Matthew describe his death (Mark 6:17–29; Matt. 14:3–12).

4.1.1. The birth of John. According to Luke 1:5, John was the son of Zechariah, a priest in the priestly division of Abijah, and his wife Elizabeth, who was also a descendant of Aaron, living in a Judean town in the hill country (1:39). John's birth was announced by an angel of the Lord and accompanied by a sign, and John was celebrated by Zechariah as the end-time prophet who would prepare the way of the Lord (1:5–25, 57–80). According to Luke 1:36, John was six months older than Jesus. This places John's birth in the last years of the reign of Herod I, who died in 4 BC (Schwartz 1992). If we understand John's role to be that of a mediator between God and sinners, this can be connected with his priestly birth, with his presumed work as a priest before his public ministry, and with his self-understanding as God's spokesman and, given the immersions in water which he administered to people repenting of sins and seeking purification and forgiveness, as "ritual representative of God" (Stegemann 1998, 220).

4.1.2. The public appearance of John. According to the synchronism in Luke 3:1–2, John began his prophetic ministry "in the fifteenth year of the reign of Emperor Tiberius, when Pontius Pilate was governor of Judea, and Herod was ruler of Galilee, and his brother Philip ruler of the region of Ituraea and Trachonitis, and Lysanias ruler of Abilene, during the high priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas." The "reign" (ἡγεμονία) of Tiberius refers to the coregency of Tiberius with Augustus, which can be dated as having begun on October 23, AD 12, the day on which all territorial limitation of the proconsular *imperium* of Tiberius was removed (Levick 1999, 63), an event which was immediately relevant for Syria and Roman Judea; or perhaps AD 13 is in view, when Tiberius shared the consular *imperium* with Augustus. The fifteenth year of Tiberius was AD 26/27 (Strobel 1977). Luke's synchronism signals that the movement that started with John the Baptist and which continued with Jesus of Nazareth was significant not only for the incumbent high priests and the local Jewish rulers but for the Roman Empire. Luke will describe in the second volume of his work how the good news of Jesus, Israel's Messiah, was proclaimed and believed in Jerusalem, in many Roman provinces, and in the city of Rome.

1. John was active "in the wilderness" (ἐν τῇ ἐρήμῳ; Mark 1:4; cf. Luke 3:2)—more specifically, in the wilderness of Judea (Matt. 3:1), suggesting the area at the southern end of the Jordan Valley near the Dead Sea. The wilderness, or desert, was the place of Israel's sojourn during the exodus (Exod. 13; Jer. 2:1–2), a place of refuge (Exod. 2:15; 1 Sam. 24:1) but also a place of judgment (Exod. 32; Num. 14; 16; 21) and an important reference point of end-time expectations regarding the coming of the Lord for the salvation of his people (Isa. 40:3–4; 42:14–55:13; Ezek. 20:33–44; Hosea 2:14–15; 1QS VIII, 12–18). The bleak landscape was an appropriate topographical context in which to preach

judgment, not only because Sodom and Gomorrah were nearby but because Israel repeatedly had experienced God's judgment in the desert, most prominently after they had refused to acknowledge God's promises of a successful settlement in the promised land.

2. In the Fourth Gospel, John's activity is located more specifically still, "in Bethany across the Jordan" and also at "Aenon near Salim" (John 1:28; 3:23). Some suggest that "Bethany" should read "Batanea," referring to a region in the far northeast, east of Galilee, belonging to the tetrarchy of Herod Philip (Riesner 1987, 2002). Many defend the traditional localization of Bethany at a ford in the Jordan River near the Dead Sea; recent excavations at Wadi el-Kharrar on the east side of the Jordan in this area, not far from Jericho, confirm occupation in the first century (Wahlde 2006). Aenon near Salim is plausibly located at Tel Salim in the northern Jordan Valley, not far from Beth-Shan (Scythopolis), which has springs ("Aenon"). The location of John at Bethany "across the Jordan" has been understood to make a theological point: as the people of Israel entered the promised land from the east, crossing the Jordan near Jericho, John announced a new beginning which was predicated on repentance, confession and forgiveness of sins, a life of righteousness, and the expectation and acknowledgment of the Coming One. John's baptizing in the Jordan River is seen to signal the anticipated restoration of Israel (Evans 2002), requiring people to leave Israel and be baptized on the other side of the Jordan River, their return after baptism signaling their repentance (Riesner 2019, 91).

3. John's location in the desert was linked—by the Baptist himself, according to John 1:23—with Isa. 40:3: "I am the voice of the one crying out in the wilderness, 'Make straight the Way of the Lord,' as the prophet Isaiah said" (cf. Matt. 3:3; Luke 3:4–6; Mark 1:2–3; cf. Luke 1:17, 76). This passage was also used by the Qumran community to explain their existence in the desert (1QS VIII, 12–16), albeit in a very different manner (Frey 2019, 566–67). While the Essenes interpreted the passage in terms of the communal study of the Torah, John understood his task as being involved in the fulfillment of Isaiah's prophecy of one in the desert who would prepare Israel for the coming of God.

4. The description of John's diet—he ate no bread and drank no wine (Luke 7:33; cf. Matt. 11:18; Luke 1:15); he ate locusts and wild honey (Matt. 3:4)—may be not much more than a reminder that John lived in wilderness regions and thus did not have the regular diet of normal Jews, living an ascetic lifestyle by necessity. If the reference to bread and wine in the context of living in the desert is an allusion to Deut. 29:6, Luke would characterize John as experiencing God's blessing.

5. The description of John's appearance (his clothing was made from camel's hair, tied around his waist with a leather belt; Mark 1:6//Matt. 3:4) echoes

the description of Elijah (2 Kings 1:8), suggesting that John should be seen as a prophet—specifically, as a prophet like Elijah, who was expected as the "messenger of the covenant" who would come before "the great and terrible day of the Lord" (Mal. 3:1; 4:5; cf. Sir. 48:10). Jesus later affirmed that John the Baptist was a prophet (Matt. 11:7–9//Luke 7:24–26)—indeed, "more than a prophet" since he was the messenger prophesied in Mal. 3:1—that is, Elijah (Mark 9:13//Matt. 17:12; cf. Matt. 11:10–14; Luke 7:27), with the assumption that John prepared the way for Jesus Messiah. The identification of John with Elijah has a figurative sense that he held Elijah's office, coming "with the spirit and power of Elijah" to turn the disobedient to the wisdom of the righteous (Luke 1:17). According to John 1:21, the Baptist denied that he was Elijah, suggesting the tradition of Malachi and Sirach in which Elijah is the forerunner who prepares the way for the coming of the God of Israel: John denied that he was a messianic figure in his own right—he was neither Elijah nor the Messiah nor the eschatological prophet of Deut. 18:18 (John 1:20–21; Michaels 2010).

6. John had disciples: two are mentioned in the context of the first disciples joining Jesus, one of them being Andrew, the brother of Simon Peter (John 1:35–42); people in Galilee knew that John's disciples were fasting (Mark 2:18// Luke 5:33; Matt. 9:14); John sent his disciples to Jesus to inquire whether he, Jesus, was the one who was to come (Matt. 11:2–3//Luke 7:18–19); disciples of John retrieved John's body and buried him (Mark 6:29//Matt. 14:12); the "disciples" that Paul encountered in Ephesus who only knew John's baptism (Acts 19:3–4; cf. 18:25) may have been John's disciples, but this is not certain.

4.1.3. The death of John. When John criticized the illegitimate marriage (Lev. 18:16; 20:21) of Herod Antipas, tetrarch of Galilee, to Herodias, the wife of his half-brother, probably in AD 25, John was arrested (Mark 6:17–29//Matt. 14:3–12; cf. Luke 3:19–20), presumably in Perea, the region east of the Jordan River that belonged to the tetrarchy of Antipas. According to Josephus, John was taken to the fortress Machaerus, where he was eventually executed (Josephus, *A.J.* 18.116–19); Josephus suggests that Antipas feared that John's popularity might trigger a revolt and executed him preemptively. John's death is plausibly dated to AD 27/28. Mark interpolates his account of John's death between the beginning and the end of the missionary tour of the Twelve through Galilee. He thus suggests that the mission of Jesus' disciples is dangerous and that discipleship is costly: both take place in the midst of admiration and opposition, success and rejection, and the possibility of martyrdom. At the same time, the execution of John prefigured the execution of Jesus: the judges Herod Antipas and Pontius Pilate, respectively, acknowledged the innocence of the accused but gave in to political pressure.

4.2. The Proclamation of John the Baptist

The Gospels report the proclamation of John in dense summaries: John announced the imminent arrival of the kingdom of God, warned of God's judgment, announced the coming of the One who would pour out the Holy Spirit, called all Jews to repent and to bear fruit, offered forgiveness of sins, and immersed people in the Jordan River (Mark 1:4, 7–8; Matt. 3:7–10). One easily could get the impression that John's message "negatively" focused on God's imminent judgment. However, Luke summarizes John's message as "proclaim[ing] the good news to the people" (Luke 3:18), in fulfillment of the prophecy of John's father Zechariah that his son would "give knowledge of salvation to his people by the forgiveness of their sins" (Luke 1:77).

4.2.1. The announcement of the kingdom of God. According to Matt. 3:2, John's proclamation focused on the revelation of the kingdom of God, whose imminent arrival necessitated repentance: "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near" (μετανοεῖτε· ἤγγικεν γὰρ ἡ βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν). This focus can be explained with reference to the Targum (Aramaic translation) of Isa. 40 (J. E. Taylor 1997, 135–38). The central scriptural passage linked with John's ministry is Isa. 40:3–4 (see §4.1.2). The comparison of the wicked to chaff (Matt. 3:12) is found in Targum Pseudo-Jonathan Isa. 40:6: "A voice of one who says, 'Prophesy!' And he answered and said, 'What shall I prophesy?' All the wicked are grass, and all their strength like chaff of the field." (Isa. 40:6 MT has: "A voice says, 'Cry out!' And I said, 'What shall I cry?' All people are grass, their constancy is like the flower of the field.") In Targum Pseudo-Jonathan Isa. 40:9, God says, "Get you up to a high mountain, prophets who herald good tidings to Zion; lift up your voice with force, you who herald good tidings to Jerusalem, lift up, fear not; say to the cities of the house of Judah, 'The kingdom of God is revealed!'" (Chilton 1987; Isa. 40:9 MT reads at the end of the sentence: "Say to the cities of Judah, 'Here is your God!'"). Where the Hebrew text refers to God, the Targum refers to the kingdom of God (see also Isa. 52:7). John was not a prophet of doom but a prophet who announced the imminent coming of God, whose sovereign rule in heaven was about to be established on earth. This is made clear in Luke's citation of the LXX version of Isa. 40:1–5, which ends with the statement, "And all flesh shall see the salvation of God" (Luke 3:6; cf. Baltzer et al. 2011, 2646: the sentence καὶ ὄψεται πᾶσα σὰρξ τὸ σωτήριον τοῦ θεοῦ in Isa. 40:5 was probably added as a parallel to the phrase ἡ δόξα κυρίου at the beginning of the verse, or it is based on Heb. וחיו or יחיו "[and] they will live," as in Esther 4:11 LXX; Prov. 15:27 LXX; in connection with the verb "see," the sentence is reminiscent of Isa. 38:11; Ps. 97:3 [MT 98:3] and refers, with the noun σωτήριον, also to Zion; cf. Isa. 26:1; 33:20; 60:14, 18).

4.2.2. The announcement of the coming of God's agent. An integral part of John's proclamation was the announcement of a figure who would come after him.

1. The coming figure would be superior to John, who stated, "After me comes he who is mightier than I," symbolized in the statement that John was "not worthy to stoop down and untie the thong of his sandals" (Mark 1:7, author's translation; cf. Matt. 3:11; Luke 3:16; John 1:27). John declared that he was not worthy even to be the slave of the person whose coming he announced.

2. The coming figure would be God's agent who would carry out God's judgment: "His winnowing fork is in his hand, and he will clear his threshing floor and will gather his wheat into the granary; but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire" (Matt. 3:12; cf. Luke 3:17; see §4.2.3).

3. God's coming agent would immerse (βαπτίζειν) people "in the Holy Spirit" (Mark 1:8; cf. John 1:33; Acts 1:5), "in the Holy Spirit and fire" (Matt. 3:11; Luke 3:16). John contrasted his own activity of immersing repentant Jews in the water of the Jordan River with the activity of God's agent, who would immerse people in the Holy Spirit.

i. The Greek term βαπτίζειν does not mean "to baptize" (which is not a translation, but a transliteration, and thus does not express the meaning of the Greek term but the views of the interpreter concerning baptism). The verb βαπτίζειν designates, in physical contexts, "to put into a yielding substance (such as liquid, e.g., water in which a person drowns or a ship sinks, or dye into which a newly woven garment is immersed; or the body of an animal into which a knife is plunged, or a wound into which the physician puts his probing finger)," with glosses such as "to plunge, dip, immerse" and the extended meanings "to wash, purify, cleanse." Since the Holy Spirit is not a physical reality, the nonphysical, metaphorical meaning of βαπτίζειν—"to be overwhelmed by an abstract reality"—applies, with glosses such as "to be overwhelmed, to be immersed" (e.g., to be overwhelmed by arguments, by debt, by lawlessness, by taxation, by passions, by too many tasks, by worldly affairs, by people pouring into a city; steeped in ignorance, in justice; to be overwhelmed by wine; Schnabel 2018i). John announced that the coming agent of God would bring about the fulfillment of God's promises concerning the Spirit, whom he would "pour out" (ἐκχεῖν in LXX) on all people (Joel 2:28 [3:1 LXX]): he would immerse people in the reality of the Spirit of God, he would overwhelm them with the Spirit, and he would cleanse them with the Spirit (Schnabel 2018h, 280–81; see also §14.1.3.4).

ii. The Spirit of God is connected with judgment, and sometimes biblical writers employ the wordplay behind the Hebrew term רוּחַ (Grk. πνεῦμα), "wind/spirit" (Isa. 40:24: "Scarcely are they planted, scarcely sown, scarcely has their

stem taken root in the earth, when he blows upon them, and they wither, and the tempest carries them off like stubble"; see also 41:16; Jer. 4:11–16; 23:19; 30:23; Ezek. 13:11–13; 1Q28b V, 24–25).

iii. The metaphor of fire connotes judgment (Isa. 66:15–16: "For the Lord will come in fire. . . . For by fire will the Lord execute judgment"; Dan. 7:10: "A stream of fire issued and flowed out from his presence"; cf. Isa. 66:24; Jer. 6:27–30; Ezek. 22:17–22, 31; 30:16; Joel 2:3; Nah. 1:6; Zeph. 3:8; Mal. 4:1; Jub. 9:15; 1 En. 10:6; 54:1–2; 2 Bar. 37:1; 44:15). Water is often a metaphor for judgment (Gen. 6:17; Hosea 5:10; 1QH III, 12–28), but it also plays a key role in purification (Exod. 29:4; 30:17–21; Lev. 11:32; 14:8–9, 52; 15:5–18, 21–22; 16:4, 24, 26, 28; Num. 31:23). It should be noted, however, that lexically βαπτίζειν does not automatically connote water, especially when it is used metaphorically.

iv. The coming of God's Spirit can also be a blessing (Joel 2:28: "I will pour out my spirit on all flesh; your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, and your young men shall see visions"). And fire can have the positive effect of purification (Lev. 13:52; Num. 31:23 [with reference to both water and fire]; Prov. 17:3; Isa. 1:24; 6:6; Zech. 13:9; Mal. 3:2–4). God's appearing in theophanies is often depicted in terms of fire (Exod. 3:2; 19:16–18; Judg. 6:21); fire is the means by which God reveals his presence, and it represents the mystery of his glory (Exod. 24:17: "Now the appearance of the glory of the Lord was like a devouring fire on the top of the mountain in the sight of the people of Israel"; 13:21–22; 14:24; Num. 14:14; Ezek. 1:28; Dan. 7:9–10; F. Lang, *TDNT* 6:936). Several texts link the Spirit/wind with fire in prophecies of judgment of the unrighteous (Isa. 29:6; 30:27–28; 4 Ezra 13:8–11). The reference to Spirit/wind combined with fire can speak of both judgment of the unrighteous and the purification of the righteous: ". . . once the Lord has washed away the filth of the daughters of Zion and cleansed the bloodstains of Jerusalem from its midst by a spirit of judgment and by a spirit of burning" (Isa. 4:4). The combination of Spirit/wind and fire can also describe the presence of God: "As I looked, a stormy wind came out of the north: a great cloud with brightness around it and fire flashing forth continually, and in the middle of the fire, something like gleaming amber" (Ezek. 1:4).

v. John seems to have anticipated the immersion "in the Spirit and in fire" by the coming agent of God as a single event: the "fiery breath" of God would judge the unrepentant and purify the repentant (Dunn 2003, 366–68). As John prepared the coming of God in the wilderness (Isa. 40:3), he knew that the anticipated coming of God would mean judgment and destruction for the unrighteous and purification and redemption for the righteous. This dual outcome would be mediated by the agent of God who was about to appear.

4. The coming One whom John expected could be God himself (Mal. 3:1: the messenger goes before the Lord; note, however, the reference to the sandals), a heavenly figure such as the Son of Man (cf. Dan. 7:13–14; 1 En. 45–46; 48–49; 61–63), Elijah redivivus (cf. Mal. 4:5; note 1 Kings 18:38; 2 Kings 1:10, 12; confirmed by Matt. 11:14, but note the finality of the judgment that the coming One brings), or the Messiah (cf. John 1:29–30: "The next day he saw Jesus coming toward him and declared, 'Here is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world! This is he of whom I said, "After me comes a man who ranks ahead of me because he was before me"'"). John may have indeed thought of the messianic "Chosen One," the heavenly Son of Man who would be given the gifts of the Spirit, preside over the judgment of the world, and thus establish the kingdom of God (Stuhlmacher 2018, 75). John's later doubts (Matt. 11:3; Luke 7:19: "Are you the one who is to come, or are we to wait for another?") indicate that even though he might have thought that Jesus was the Davidic Messiah, he emphasized the divine nature of the coming judgment and purification without specifying the identity of the agent of God who would carry out God's judgment and who would purify the repentant (Webb 1991, 261–88).

5. According to the Fourth Gospel, John believed that Jesus, who came to him to be baptized, was the Lamb of God who would take away the sin of the world, the Son of God who would immerse in the Holy Spirit (John 1:29, 33–34). At the same time, the Fourth Gospel acknowledges that during the ministry of Jesus "there was no Spirit, because Jesus was not yet glorified" (John 7:39)—that is, because Jesus had not yet died and risen from the dead. Matthew's account agrees that John somehow recognized who Jesus was: "Then Jesus came from Galilee to John at the Jordan, to be baptized by him. John would have prevented him, saying, 'I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?'" (Matt. 3:13–14). Jesus was the Messiah who would be free of sin (Pss. Sol. 17:36: "And he himself (will be) free from sin, (in order) to rule a great people. He will expose officials and drive out sinners by the strength of his word"; 1Q28b V, 22: "walk before him perfectly in all the ways of God"; cf. T. Jud. 24:1; T. Levi 18:9).

6. The earliest followers of Jesus were convinced that John's prophecy of the coming agent of God was fulfilled by Jesus Messiah, who promised and conveyed the Holy Spirit: "While staying with them, he ordered them not to leave Jerusalem, but to wait there for the promise of the Father. 'This,' he said, 'is what you have heard from me; for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now'" (Acts 1:4–5); "Being therefore exalted at the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, he has poured out this that you both see and hear" (2:33); "Peter said to them, 'Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ so that your sins may be forgiven; and you will receive

the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is for you, for your children, and for all who are far away, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to him'" (2:38–39). The judgment of the unrepentant awaited the future coming of Jesus Messiah (Matt. 13:40–43; 25:41–46; Rev. 19; cf. Dunn 1970a, 20–21).

4.2.3. The announcement of God's impending judgment. John prophesied the coming judgment of God (McManigal 2019). This is seen in his announcement of the coming of God's agent who would immerse the people in God's Spirit (wind) and fire (see §4.2.2), in his call to repentance and the implied reference to the sins of his audience (see §4.2.4), and in his interaction with the people who came to him in the desert. According to Luke 3:7, John addressed "the crowds that came out to be baptized by him"; according to Matt. 3:7 he addressed "many Pharisees and Sadducees coming for baptism." The Pharisees and Sadducees may have been singled out because they were the religious and political leaders of the Jewish people, who came in great numbers from Judea and Jerusalem to hear John. The crowds and their leaders are described as "broods of vipers" (γεννήματα ἐχιδνῶν) who sought "to flee from the wrath to come" (φυγεῖν ἀπὸ τῆς μελλούσης ὀργῆς; Matt. 3:7; Luke 3:7).

1. The metaphor of vipers who flee from the fire speaks of sinners who face God's imminent judgment. The wrath of God which characterizes the day of the Lord destroys sinners (Isa. 13:9), brings darkness (Amos 5:18–20), drives sinners away like drifting chaff (Zeph. 2:2), and burns all arrogant evildoers like stubble (Mal. 4:1). God's enemies are sometimes compared to vipers (Isa. 59:5: Israel; Isa. 14:29: the Philistines; cf. 1QH III, 12–17: the sons of Belial). The metaphor of vipers speaks of repugnant people who deserve God's judgment; as the vipers seek to escape the fire, John suggested, sinners who deserve God's judgment can escape the wrath of God if they repent and change their lives. The image of vipers who scurry to safety to avoid being consumed by fire implies that the judgment of God prophesied by John is certain and imminent but still in the future. John announced that Israelites were not saved simply because they could say, "We have Abraham as our father"—the merit of physical descent from Abraham would not save from the wrath of God on the day of judgment.

2. The certainty of the future yet imminent judgment is also indicated in the metaphor of the ax which is about to fell a tree: "Even now the ax is lying at the root of the trees; every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire" (Matt. 3:10; Luke 3:9). The soil surrounding the tree that does not bear good fruit has already been removed, and the person felling the tree has placed the ax against the root so that the tree can be cut down. Leaders, righteous people, and rabbinic scholars were sometimes described as trees (Judg. 9:7–16; Ps. 1:3; Jer. 17:7–8; Dan. 4:20–22; 2 Bar. 39:1–8; m. Avot

3:18). That judgment was imminent is explicitly indicated by the adverb ἤδη (even now) placed at the beginning of the sentence (Matt. 3:10; Luke 3:9).

3. A third metaphor that signals the certainty and imminence of judgment uses the image of the winnowing fork and the burning of the chaff: "His winnowing fork is in his hand, and he will thoroughly cleanse the threshed grain and will gather his wheat into the granary; but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire" (Matt. 3:12; cf. Luke 3:17, mod.). The coming agent of God had the winnowing fork (πτύον) already in his hand: judgment would soon begin. He would thoroughly cleanse the threshed grain (ἅλων): the separation of the repentant and the unrepentant was about to begin. He would gather the sifted wheat (σῖτος) into the granary: people who repented and lived lives demonstrating their repentance would be not be affected by God's judgment. He would burn the chaff (ἄχυρον) with unquenchable fire: unrepentant people would suffer eternal punishment.

4.2.4. The call to repentance and the offer of forgiveness. The announcement of the imminent arrival of the kingdom of God, of the coming of God's agent, and of God's impending judgment is the reason for John's call on people to repent, confess their sins, and seek God's forgiveness. John proclaimed "a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins," better translated as "that people should be baptized to show that they had repented of their sins and turned to God to be forgiven" (Mark 1:4 NLT; Luke 3:3). He preached, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near" (Matt. 3:2). Repentance was connected with confessions of sins: people who were baptized by John were "confessing their sins" (Mark 1:5; Matt. 3:6). This could have been a communal confession, but it must have involved confession by individuals since the judgment of God and the purification by the Spirit and fire could be a reality "for Israel" only when individual Israelites, or Jews, repented and confessed their sins. It would have been a confession of specific sins, described in more or less detail (in public, or privately before John), since, while the Scriptures contained many examples of general confessions of sins, the law describes specific failures of personal behavior that must be addressed in the manner prescribed by God in order for the sinner to be ritually clean and morally pure.

1. The Greek term translated "repentance" (μετάνοια) means, if the prefix μετα is taken literally, "changing one's mind." This can mean changing intentions or plans or reconsidering an earlier opinion; it often involves changed feelings resulting from knowledge that one obtains after a certain action, including feelings of regret, sorrow, or shame concerning the former attitude, opinion, or action (cf. Plutarch, *Virt. mor.* 12). Israel's prophets use the Hebrew term שׁוּב, with the meaning "to turn back, return," in a theological sense "to turn back to God (Yahweh), be devoted to God (Yahweh)" (*HALOT*), to describe

"the return to the original relation with Yahweh," often with the notion of "a totally new beginning" (H. Wolff 1951; Fohrer 1967; cf. 1 Kings 8:33, 48; 2 Kings 23:25; Isa. 1:27; 9:12; Jer. 3:7, 14; 4:1; Hosea 14:2; Amos 4:6, 8, 11; cf. Deut. 4:30; 30:2). Isaiah uses the term to describe the return to Yahweh by individuals and the nation as an act that has repercussions for one's entire existence (Isa. 30:15: "For thus said the Lord God, the Holy One of Israel: In returning and rest you shall be saved; in quietness and in trust shall be your strength"). The term is also used in the sense of turning away from individual sins (Jer. 15:19; Ezek. 18:32). The LXX translates the Hebrew term שׁוב mostly with forms of the Greek verb στρέφειν, never with μετανοεῖν or μετάνοια; the latter terms are rarely used in Classical and Hellenistic Greek, and since they are noetic terms, they run contrary to שׁוב, which is a verb of motion (H.-J. Fabry, *TDOT* 14:514); however, in the Greek translation of Symmachus, שׁוב is translated with μετανοεῖν or μετάνοια when the text speaks of a "return to God" or "turning away from iniquity" (Schnabel 2018k; on repentance cf. Merklein 1987c; Crossley 2004b).

2. In Jewish thinking, repentance was a fundamental concept. The fifth of the Eighteen Benedictions says, "Lead us back, our Father, to your Torah; and bring us, our King, to your service, and cause us to return in perfect repentance to your presence. Blessed are you, Lord, who delights in repentance." As foundational as physical descent from "Abraham our father" was for Jews, assurance of salvation was grounded in repentance, which God demanded and granted, and in the good works which resulted from repentance. Many Jews discerned a twofold movement in the process of repentance: admission of one's personal sin, which leads to asking God for his forgiveness; then, praising God for his grace and forgiveness, accompanied by a personal commitment to a new and better obedience (Wis. 12:10, 19; 1QS XI, 11–17). People who entered the Qumran community entered "the covenant of those who have returned" (בְּרִית תְּשׁוּבָה, the "covenant of repentance" or "covenant of conversion"; CD XIX, 16), established by "those who have returned in Israel" (שָׁבֵי ישׂרָאֵל, "the converts of Israel"; CD VIII, 16), the founding fathers of the community, the "repentant of the desert" who will live for a thousand generations in salvation because "for them there is all the inheritance of Adam" (שָׁבֵי מִדְבָּר; 4QpPs^{a} III, 1), persecuted by those who preach against the Law and its proper interpretation, leading Israel astray. Here, repentance is seen in close connection with the Law and with obedience to the properly interpreted Law (H. Fabry, *TWQ* 3:871).

3. In Israel's Scriptures, the forgiveness of sins required the acknowledgment of wrong behavior as specified in the law, confession of sins, and the sacrifice of a sin offering as a penalty for the sin that was committed (Lev. 5:5–6; cf. 16:21; 26:40; Num. 5:5–7; Ezra 10:10–11; Neh. 1:5–7; Pss. 32:5; 38:18). The summary of John's preaching with the phrase "baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of

sins" should not be understood in the sense that it was John's baptism that led to repentance and hence to the forgiveness of sin. Israel's prophets and Jewish theologians emphasized that the ritual of a sacrifice was ineffective without repentance, a turning to God in confession and commitment to the will of God (Amos 4:4–6; Hosea 6:1–6; Zech. 7:1–7; cf. 1QS III, 3–12; V, 13–14; m. Ber. 2:1; Davies and Allison 1988–97, 1:301 [on Matt. 3:6]). It is repentance, accompanied by acknowledgment of wrongdoing and confession of sins, that leads to God's forgiveness. The purification that God grants upon repentance is then expressed in the cleansing experienced in the immersion in the Jordan River.

4. The motivation of people to respond to John's proclamation was his warning of impending judgment by God, and also his announcement of the kingdom of God and his prophecy of the coming of God's agent. John challenged his listeners not to rely on "Abraham as our father" for their covenant status because "God is able from these stones to raise up children to Abraham" (Matt. 3:9; Luke 3:8). The "stones" are not only an apt reference to the rocky desert in the Jordan Valley, where John preached; they also point to Isa. 51:1–2: "Listen to me, you that pursue righteousness, you that seek the Lord. Look to the rock from which you were hewn, and to the quarry from which you were dug. Look to Abraham your father and to Sarah who bore you; for he was but one when I called him, but I blessed him and made him many." The startling metaphor of stones being turned into people challenged John's visitors in the desert not to rely on Abraham, the infertile "rock" from whom the Israelites were hewn; individuals are not rescued by Abraham's merit—people need to repent and personally bear fruit in accordance with their repentance (D. Allison 2019).

5. Repentance and "fruit in keeping with repentance" can save sinners (Matt. 3:8–9; Luke 3:8 NIV). Not all trees are cut down, not all threshed grain will be burned: only the trees that do not bear good fruit, only the chaff separated from the grain will be destroyed. John called Israel to turn to God and to unreservedly commit to doing the will of God as they waited for the arrival of God's agent. The texts do not say this, but John may have linked the salvation that God grants to those who repent as a result of John's proclamation (Luke 1:77) with the coming agent of God, who would immerse people in the Spirit and in the (cleansing) fire of God.

6. According to Luke 3:10–14, John explained the "fruits worthy of repentance" (3:8) to people who understood that John did not call them to participate in a ritual that effectively would save them from God's judgment. Repentant individuals cared for the needs of their neighbors, especially the poor; tax collectors must adopt fair business practices; soldiers were told not to intimidate people, not to extort money, and to be content with their wages. People who had repented of their sins and who were determined to express the forgive-

ness which God had granted them in their everyday lives did not make life difficult for others: they sought to meet the needs of others, they were compassionate and content with what they had (Bock 1995–96). John's critique of the illegitimate marriage of Herod Antipas (Mark 6:18; Matt. 14:4; Luke 3:19) demonstrated John's commitment to calling all people, including the political leaders, to be obedient to God's commandments.

4.2.5. The baptism of John. The Jews who came to John and repented of their sins were immersed by him in the waters of the River Jordan. Understanding John's action in the River Jordan has been hampered by the transliteration of βαπτίζειν/βάπτισμα as "baptize/baptism" accompanied by imported notions of what "baptism" means, the latter usually drawn from Christian water baptism as understood in the postapostolic period. John's action of immersion was sufficiently characteristic that it earned him the nickname "John the immerser" (Ἰωάννης ὁ βαπτίζων in Mark 1:4; 6:14, 24; Ἰωάννης ὁ βαπτιστής in Mark 6:25; 8:28; Matt. 3:1; 11:11; 14:2; 16:14; 17:13; Luke 7:20, 33; 9:19; Josephus, *A.J.* 18.116).

1. John's baptism has been understood against the background of the mystery religions (Reitzenstein 1965); of proselyte baptism, with the suggestion that John treated Jews as Gentiles who needed to return to Yahweh (Jeremias 1929); and of the Qumran community's practice of immersing new members in an initiatory ceremony (Brownlee 1957), which, when linked with repentance, is seen to have had a sacramental efficacy (Beasley-Murray 1979, 15–18). None of these suggestions are convincing (Snyder 2019). Somewhat more plausible are inferences from the location of John's baptizing activity in the River Jordan: his baptism was a critique of the Temple cult and the priestly aristocracy (Hollenbach 1979) or an atonement ritual offered as an alternative to the Temple ritual (Kraeling 1951; Webb 1991, 203–5). However, the texts provide no explicit evidence for such interpretations. At best, John was indifferent with regard to the Jerusalem Temple (Avemarie 1999). In the context of his proclamation based on Isa. 40:1–4, John's baptism can be understood as ritual purification in preparation for the coming of God; in the context of messianic expectation and the coming judgment, it can be seen as analogous to the ministry of Moses, who prepared the people of Israel for God's coming at Sinai (Snyder 2019, 339–98, with reference to Exod. 19:10–15; however, it is only later rabbis who interpret the reference to the Israelites washing their clothes as implying immersion of the body for purification). The fact that John was perceived to be a prophet indicates that the repentance and the forgiveness of sins which he proclaimed were not limited to ritual impurity but included moral failings as well.

2. Immersion in water for purification was commanded in Israel's Scriptures (Lev. 11:32; 14:8–9; 15:5–12, 13, 16–18, 21–22, 27; 16:4, 24, 26, 28; 17:15–16)