

Chapter 1 : CATHOLIC ENCYCLOPEDIA: New Testament

The Book: The Bible (from biblos, Greek for 'book') is the basis of two great religions, Judaism in the Old Testament and Christianity in the New. blog.quintoapp.com each case it brings together a group of documents to tell the story of the founders and early followers of the religion.

Books of the New Testament What is the Bible? The Bible is the sacred Book, or collection of books, accepted by the Christian Church as uniquely inspired by God, and thus authoritative, providing guidelines for belief and behavior. But the Bible was not simply dictated word-for-word by God; it is also the work of its many different human authors. The different writing skills, writing styles, personalities, world views, and cultural backgrounds of the human authors can be seen in their works. Many of the New Testament books were originally written as letters rather than as Scripture. The Old Testament contains the sacred writings of the Jews. It was written over the period of roughly B. The Old Testament was originally written in the Hebrew language with a few sections written in the Aramaic language. There was no "official" list of accepted books of Jewish scripture until around A. This revision accounts for the fact that Protestant, Roman Catholic and Orthodox Christians use slightly different versions of the Old Testament. Jesus Christ, the central figure of Christianity, was born a Jew and practiced Judaism all His earthly life. Christianity began as a sect of Judaism and only emerged as a separate religion after large numbers of Gentiles had been converted. The Jewish Scripture had predicted the coming of a savior, the Messiah, and Jesus fulfilled that role. So it is natural that Christians would retain the Jewish Scripture as part of their Bible. What is the difference between Protestant and Catholic Bibles? Sometime around B. The first few of these descendants migrated to Egypt to escape a famine in their own land. After many generations they had greatly increased their numbers but had become enslaved to the Egyptians. God sent a great leader and prophet, Moses, to lead the Hebrews out of captivity and into the Promised Land of Israel. During this time God gave Moses the Ten Commandments which are still considered the basis for a moral life by both Jews and Christians. In addition to the Ten Commandments, the Old Testament lists many other laws about circumcision, dietary restrictions, blood sacrifices, Sabbath observance, tithing, social welfare, crimes, social behavior, armies, qualifications of leaders, etc. These laws regulated almost every aspect of Hebrew life. God intended for the Israelites to live according to His commandments and to show the truth of God to all the world Genesis However, time and again, the Israelites lost sight of their mission and lapsed into idolatry, sin or narrow-minded nationalism. On these occasions, God called prophets, such as Elijah, Samuel, Jonah, Isaiah and many others, to lead them back to the right path. The Old Testament writings make no attempt to hide the fact that the Israelites and their leaders had many failings and flaws. Yet, through these flawed people, God was able to accomplish His purposes in the world. The later Hebrew prophets foresaw the coming of a Messiah meaning "anointed one" , a king who would usher in a golden era of peace and prosperity. All the New Testament books were written in the Greek language over the period of about 50 to A. None of the New Testament books were originally written as part of a Christian Bible, but they were read at church services for instruction in the faith. The collection of books we know as the New Testament emerged in the late second century, A. The church leaders accepted books they believed were based on eyewitness accounts of the events narrated, while rejecting many other early Christian writings. Eventually, the 27 books which form the present New Testament, along with the Old Testament books, became the Christian Bible as we know it today. Jesus was born sometime between 6 and 4 B. He lived an ordinary life for 30 years, and then He began His ministry among the Jews. Jesus traveled from town to town, healing the sick and preaching about the coming kingdom of God. He promised a wonderful eternal life after death for those who put their trust in God and obey His commandments. He taught the way to victory is not through force and violence, but through love, humility, and service to mankind. Jesus was not the type of "Messiah" the Jews had expected, and many of them rejected Jesus and His teachings. The religious establishment of Israel saw Jesus as a threat. His claims of divine authority and His refusal to follow some of their religious rules were usurping their authority over the people. At the end of 40 days, He ascended to heaven, returning to God, His Father. Throughout the New Testament, Jesus is portrayed as the Son of God,

the fulfillment of the Old Testament prophecies of the Messiah, and as the means of our personal salvation from the power of sin and death. Jesus taught that love of God and love of other people are the two "Greatest Commandments" that should totally guide our lives. He taught obedience to God and love for all people, both Jews and Gentiles, and even for enemies! Jesus did not abolish the moral and ethical laws that had been in effect from the time of Moses. He affirmed and expanded upon those principles, but He said obedience must be from the heart attitudes and intentions rather than just technical observance of the letter of the law. Jesus and His apostles gave us a radically new understanding of the true intent of the Old Testament Law; they brought a new era of the rule of love for all people and spiritual truth instead of rule by law. The young Christian communities suffered much persecution from the Jewish religious establishment and from the Roman Empire. Saul, a member of the Jewish religious establishment, was one of the fiercest persecutors of Christians. One day, while on the road to Damascus, Saul saw a blinding light and Jesus spoke to him saying, "Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me? Now known as Paul, he became a zealous Christian missionary and extended Christianity outside Judaism, founding many Christian communities in the Gentile world. Paul wrote many letters to the people of the churches he had founded. He explained his beliefs about Jesus, instructed them in proper modes of worship, and sometimes chastised them for moral lapses. He taught that the way to salvation and eternal life is through faith in Jesus Christ and high moral standards, not through obedience to the Old Testament Law. The Jews of that time believed that holiness could be achieved by obeying about rules derived from the Old Testament Law. But the Gentile Christians did not share that tradition and disputes arose about whether or not it was necessary to follow those rules. Christian leaders, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, decided that the ceremonial and legal aspects of the Old Testament Law - circumcision, dietary restrictions, blood sacrifices, Sabbath observance and many other rules - are not binding on Christians

Unity of the Bible

Despite the diversity of the Bible books and their separation in time, there are several unifying themes that run through both the Old and New Testaments: There is only one true God. He created all that is the universe and takes an active, ongoing and loving role in its maintenance. God loves His people of all races, nationalities and religions, and seeks their love in return. God created men and women with the power to choose between good and evil. We are called to do good by serving God and respecting our fellow human beings of the world. Evil is a constant temptation that we must do our best to resist. God seeks the salvation of all people, individually and collectively, from the power of sin and evil. God has intervened directly in human affairs and has also sent the prophets and, finally, His Son Jesus, the Messiah or Christ, to help us with that salvation.

Bible Interpretation

The Bible never tells the details of exactly how God inspired the human authors of the Bible, and this has led to much debate and differences of opinion about interpretation.

Traditional Interpretation

Throughout most of the Christian era, Bible reading and Bible interpretation were confined to religious professionals. Until the fifteenth century, the Bible was available only in Latin. Even when the Bible was translated into other languages, the scarcity and high cost of Bibles kept them out of the hands of ordinary people. During this era, the Bible was interpreted according to church beliefs and traditions. There was little or no attempt made to determine the original meanings of the Scripture. Difficult passages "were interpreted as having a figurative meaning, so that they convey, through a kind of code, deeper truths about God, the spiritual life, or the church. At the same time, the Bible was often being studied and critiqued as ordinary literature rather than as the Word of God. Some Christians felt their faith was threatened by these apparent challenges to the authority of the Bible. In reaction, the fundamentalist movement asserted the inerrancy of Scripture: Everything in the Bible must be absolutely, literally, scientifically and historically true. Anything less would be unworthy of God. Any apparent conflict between the Bible and another source science, history, etc.

Modern Interpretation

The mainstream of Bible interpretation today is based on hermeneutics [her meh NEWT icks], the science and art of Bible interpretation. Hermeneutics attempts to determine what message the author intended to convey and how it would have been understood in its original historical and cultural setting. This involves a lot of specialized knowledge of the original Bible languages, literary styles and figures of speech, as well as the history, culture, and current events and issues of the time and place where it was written. Rather than forcing Bible interpretation to fit into a particular theological framework, such as church doctrine or strict literalism, hermeneutics attempts to draw out the true

meaning as it was originally intended. Once we know what a Bible passage originally meant, we can prayerfully apply that knowledge to our lives in the modern world. How to Study the Bible , Should the Bible be interpreted literally? Bible Translations During the first centuries A. In a Latin translation of the Old and New Testaments was completed. This version, known as the Vulgate, became the standard Bible of Christianity for many centuries. Several other English versions followed, and the beloved King James Version was published in 1611. None of the original manuscripts of the Old Testament or New Testament are known to exist; the best available sources are hand-made copies of copies. However, developments in archaeology and Biblical scholarship have made possible a number of modern, more accurate English translations of the scriptures. These newer versions are translated from the best available ancient Hebrew and Greek manuscripts, rather than from the King James Version or the Latin Vulgate. Books of the Old Testament The Pentateuch.

Chapter 2 : History of the Text of the New Testament

According to the Catholic Encyclopedia article on the Canon of the New Testament: "The idea of a complete and clear-cut canon of the New Testament existing from the beginning, that is from Apostolic times, has no foundation in history.

It is also the fulfillment of those events long anticipated by the Old Testament. Further, it is sacred history, which, unlike secular history, was written under the supernatural guidance of the Holy Spirit. This means it, like the Old Testament, is protected from human error and possesses divine authority for the church today and throughout human history until the Lord Himself returns. As such, it refers to a new arrangement made by one party into which others could enter if they accepted the covenant. On the other hand, the New Testament or Covenant anticipated in Jeremiah The old covenant revealed the holiness of God in the righteous standard of the law and promised a coming Redeemer; the new covenant shows the holiness of God in His righteous Son. The New Testament, then, contains those writings that reveal the content of this new covenant. The message of the New Testament centers on 1 the Person who gave Himself for the remission of sins Matt. Thus the central theme of the New Testament is salvation. Yet in a small town in Palestine, Bethlehem of Judea, was born one who would change the world. Several factors contributed to this preparation. The Jews were chosen of God from all the nations to be a treasured possession as a kingdom of priests, and a holy nation Ex. In that regard, beginning with the promises of God given to the patriarchs, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob Gen. The Old Testament, therefore, was full of Christ and anticipated His coming as a suffering and glorified Savior. Though four hundred years had passed after the writing of the last Old Testament book, and though the religious climate was one of Pharisaic externalism and hypocrisy, there was a spirit of Messianic anticipation in the air and a remnant was looking for the Messiah. Preparation Through the Greek Language It is highly significant that when Christ, the one who came to be the Savior of the world and the one who would send His disciples out to the ends of the earth to proclaim the gospel Matt. His desire was one world and one language. In the aftermath of his victories, he established the Greek language as the lingua franca, the common tongue, and the Greek culture as the pattern of thought and life. Though his empire was short lived, the result of spreading the Greek language endured. It is significant that the Greek speech becomes one instead of many dialects at the very time that the Roman rule sweeps over the world. It was the language not only of letters, but of commerce and every-day life. As a result, the books of the New Testament were written in the common language of the day, Koine Greek. It was not written in Hebrew or Aramaic, even though all the writers of the New Testament were Jews except for Luke, who was a Gentile. Koine Greek had become the second language of nearly everyone. Preparation Through the Romans But God was not finished preparing the world for the coming Savior of the world. When Christ was born in Palestine, Rome ruled the world. Palestine was under Roman rule. Above all else, Rome was noted for her insistence upon law and order. As a result, over years of civil war had been brought to rest and Rome had vastly extended her boundaries. Further, the Romans built a system of roads, which, with the protection provided by her army that often patrolled the roads, contributed greatly to the measure of ease and safety by which travelers could make their way back and forth across the Roman empire. Augustus was the first Roman to wear the imperial purple and crown as the sole ruler of the empire. He was a moderate, wise and considerate of his people, and he brought in a great time of peace and prosperity, making Rome a safe place to live and travel. Now, because of all that Augustus accomplished, many said that when he was born, a god was born. It was into these conditions One was born who was and is truly the source of true personal peace and lasting world peace, versus the temporary and false peace which men can give—no matter how wise or good or outstanding. He also was truly God, the God-Man, instead of a man called God. The presence of Roman rule and law helped to prepare the world for his life and ministry so the gospel could be preached. As you read the quote by Merrill Tenney, note the great similarity to our world today. The message of the Savior as revealed in the New Testament is like a breath of fresh air after being in a smoke filled room. The Christian church was born into a world filled with competing religions which may have differed widely among themselves but all of which possessed one common characteristic—the struggle

to reach a god or gods who remained essentially inaccessible. Apart from Judaism, which taught that God had voluntarily disclosed Himself to the patriarchs, to Moses, and to the prophets, there was no faith that could speak with certainty of divine revelation nor of any true concept of sin and salvation. The current ethical standards were superficial, despite the ideal and insights possessed by some philosophers, and when they discoursed on evil and on virtue, they had neither the remedy for the one nor the dynamic to produce the other. It retains many basic elements of truth but twists them into practical falsehood. Divine sovereignty becomes fatalism; grace becomes indulgence; righteousness becomes conformity to arbitrary rules; worship becomes empty ritual; prayer becomes selfish begging; the supernatural degenerates into superstition. The light of God is clouded by fanciful legend and by downright falsehood. The consequent confusion of beliefs and of values left men wandering in a maze of uncertainties. To some, expediency became the dominating philosophy of life; for if there can be no ultimate certainty, there can be no permanent principles by which to guide conduct; and if there are no permanent principles, one must live as well as he can by the advantage of the moment. Skepticism prevailed, for the old gods had lost their power and no new gods had appeared. Numerous novel cults invaded the empire from every quarter and became the fads of the dilettante rich or the refuge of the desperate poor. Men had largely lost the sense of joy and of destiny that made human life worthwhile. Based on their literary characteristics, they are often classified into three major groupsâ€” 1. The historical five books, the Gospels and Acts 2. The epistolary 21 books, Romans through Jude 3. The prophetic one book, Revelation. The following two charts illustrate the division and focus of this threefold classification of the New Testament books.

Chapter 3 : The New Testament World (Bible History Online)

The New Testament "God, after He spoke long ago to the fathers in the prophets in many portions and in many ways, in these last days has spoken to us in His Son, whom He appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the world.

It has been established that Herod died in 4 B. The year of the beginning of His ministry is taken from Luke 3: Acts 2 First Persecutions: Acts Paul on the Road to Damascus: Acts 9 Writing of the Book of Matthew: Execution of James brother of John: Nero Emperor of Rome: Writing of Book of Romans: Writing of Book of James: Writing of 1 Peter: Writing of Book of Mark: Writing of 2 Peter: Jerusalem falls to Rome: Execution of Thomas, possibly in India: Writing of Book of Revelation: The dates regarding the writings of the Gospels, especially, may be off by as much as 15 years. The dates of the deaths of the apostles are through church tradition, as the only death mentioned in the Bible is that of James the brother of the Apostle John in Acts 12:2. Acts 9 First Missionary Trip Begins: Acts Second Missionary Trip Begins: Third Missionary Trip Begins: Writing of Hebrews, 1 Timothy, Titus: Writing of 2 Timothy: Ignatius who served as the third Bishop of Antioch and likely knew Paul recorded around A. Since he was a Roman citizen, he was not crucified as tradition says Peter was, but beheaded.

Chapter 4 : Archaeology and the Historical Reliability of the New Testament - blog.quintoapp.com

3 The New Testament canon developed, or evolved, over the course of the first years of Christian history. If the New Testament had been delivered by an angel, or.

One must do a little historical detective work to sort out the biblical references. This is assisted by Luke who mentions certain personages whose history is known. First among these is Herod the Great, King of Judea. This corresponds to the year A. Jesus was therefore born prior to 4 BCE. The second person mentioned by Luke for this detective story is one "Cyrenius" who was Publius Sulpicius Quirinius, Roman soldier, senator and consul under Augustus. The registration and census of 6 CE is too late to be connected with the birth of Jesus. Additionally, the registration of 6 CE did not include the Galilee. In ,however, the discovery by W. Ramsey of a fragmentary inscription at Antioch of Pisidia arguably established Quirinius was in Syria on a previous occasion. This is confirmed by Tacitus. This means that Quirinius would have established a seat of government in Syria, including Palestine, from the years 10 to 7 BCE. In this position he would have been responsible for the census mentioned by Luke. This census of 7 BCE would therefore have been the "first" census taken when Cyrenius was governor Luke 2: There is further evidence of this first census of 7 BCE in the writings of Tertullian who records the census "taken in Judea by Sentius Saturninus. Another inscription, the Lapis Tiburtinus, was found in near Tivoli Tibur. Composed after 14 CE, the inscription names an unknown personage who was legate of Syria twice. The man is described as having been victorious in war. There is considerable dissension among scholars as to whether the unnamed person is Quirinius. I think it is more likely that it refers to the famous consul and soldier. Scholars have debated about the historicity of this first census since there is no record of it in the Roman archives. Their chief argument is that Augustus would not have imposed a census for the purpose of taxation in the kingdom of a client king like Herod. Herod had his own tax collectors and paid tribute to Rome from the proceeds. These are good arguments. As a layman, I am forced to go back to Luke and ask why he would record an event that never took place. Luke was well educated with diversified talents. He seems careful in his historicity and, although very young at the time, may very well have met Jesus. He knew and interviewed those who were closest to Jesus. Some scholars think that the story of the first census and the birth in Bethlehem is theologoumenon. This is a term scholars use for that which expresses an event or notion in language what may not be factual but supports, enhances, or is related to a matter of faith. In other words, a "white lie. There is no advantage to matters of faith in the invention of a census of 6 BCE. Some scholars argue that the early census was invented to support a mythological birth in Bethlehem in support of Messianic prophecy. I can think of a number of reasons based on the history of the time. Lack of records is not evidence for or against an historical event. Records are lost and destroyed, particularly those that are two millennia old. Rome burned in 64 CE and there have been numerous conflagrations and sackings of the city over the centuries. Of course he could. He was the Emperor. Herod the Great was ill and, by all accounts of the time, nuttier than a fruitcake. He who had once been an able and effective administrator and builder, was now paranoid and vicious. He had murdered most of his family, including his sons and the wife he loved most. When Herod died and Archelaus turned out to be crazier than his father, Augustus threw in the towel or Toga and made Palestine a prefecture. He sent Quirinius as Legatus a second time and Coponius as the first prefect. The census of 6 CE therefore becomes the first census under direct Roman rule and fell in schedule with the Roman census on a 14 year rotation. In this scenario, it would make sense to send Quirinius back as Legatus since he presided under the previous registration. Quirinius was no minor functionary. He had won an insignia of triumph for the Homanadensian war and had accompanied Caesar to Armenia in 3 CE. He died in 21 CE. The post was always given to the most respected and capable of Imperial functionaries chosen from the elite of Roman aristocracy. The Syrian Legatus was the commander-in-chief of the entire Roman East and responsible for the Parthian border. I must, therefore, be an audacious layman and disagree with the majority of New Testament scholars. I conclude that Luke is accurate. He was about 56 years of age at the birth of Jesus. December 25 was the Roman festival day of Natalis Invictus, the birth of the Sun. The emperor Constantine, contrary to tradition, was not a Christian but an advocate of the

cult of Sol Invictus. More for political expediency than for religious reasons, Constantine tolerated Jesus as an earthly manifestation of Sol Invictus, the son god. Since Christian doctrine was being promulgated by Rome, compromises were being made between Christianity, Sol Invictus and Mithraism. Constantine saw this as a way of maintaining harmony. An edict by Constantine in CE ordered the courts to be closed on the "venerable day of the sun" and Sunday was chosen as the day of observance rather than the traditional Saturday Sabbath. If not on Christmas day, therefore, on what day was Jesus born? The "Star of Bethlehem," Fact or Fiction? Astrology played an important role in the ancient Middle East, including the Jews. It would not be uncommon to correlate some celestial event with the birth of Jesus, just as the eclipse had been correlated to the death of Herod and a comet with the assassination of Julius Caesar in 44 BCE. Hence the source of the Star of Bethlehem remained a mystery or was considered myth. In Prague, in , shortly before Christmas, the astronomer and mathematician, Johannes Kepler, was making observations of the stars through his rudimentary telescope. He was observing the conjunction of Jupiter and Saturn in the constellation of Pisces. The two planets had converged to look like one larger and new "star. Jewish astrologers maintained that when there was a conjunction of Saturn and Jupiter in Pisces, the Messiah would come. In ancient Jewish astrology, the constellation of Pisces was known as the House of Israel, the sign of the Messiah. Kepler concluded that he had found the "star of Bethlehem" but his hypothesis was rejected. It was not until that the hypothesis was re-examined when references to this conjunction were found in the cuneiform inscriptions of the astrological archives of the ancient School of Astrology at Sippar in Babylonia. Sippar was an ancient Sumerian city lying on a canal which linked the Tigris and Euphrates rivers. It was a very important commercial and religious center. Excavations at the site of Abu-Habbah during the latter part of the 19th century unearthed the remains of a temple and ziggurat dedicated to Shamash and the ancient scribal School of Astrology. The most important discovery were tens of thousands of clay tablets from the school archives that dated from the Old Babylonian and Neo-Babylonian periods. In , the German Scholar P. Schnabel found, among the endless cuneiform records of dates and observations, a note on a conjunction of Jupiter and Saturn in the constellation of Pisces. The position of Jupiter and Saturn, converged in Pisces, had been recorded over a period of five months in 7 B. Calculations show that the conjunction was observable three times over the course of the year, May 29, October 3, and December 4. The conjunction in Pisces is observable in the southern sky over Judea and would sit directly over Bethlehem if one were observing along the road leading from Jerusalem to Bethlehem. The correlation of this celestial event with the first visit of Quirinius and a preliminary registration in Syria is too much of a coincidence for this layman to ignore. I must therefore humbly and respectfully disagree with the majority of New Testament scholars who again contend that the story of the Star of Bethlehem is another of those little "white lies. Accepting the Star of Bethlehem as an historical fact, our detective work gives us three possible dates for the birth of Jesus, May 29, October 3, and December 4 in the year 7 BCE. I would rule out May 29 as too early. Scholars also contend that the Gospel account of the three "Wise Men" is another of those theologoumenon white lies. If one were to accept the story of the three magi astrologers , or at least three visitors who came to Judea based on the astrological omen, as containing an element of fact, May 29 is too early. Christians are normally unaware that Babylon was as important a center for Judaism as Jerusalem in the ancient world. It is the center for the predominating Babylonian Talmud. It is very likely that the "wise men" were scholars of the School of Astrology in Sippar and likely of Jewish ancestry dating to the mass deportations of Jews to Babylon in the 7th century BCE. Steeped in their Jewish messianic hopes and in astrology, these men would have been convinced that the birth of the Messiah was imminent. Given their background, an expedition to the Homeland would seem the most likely course of action for validation of both their scholarly, astrological and religious prognostication. These astrologers would have observed the first conjunction on May 29 and then made preparations to travel to Judea, arriving for the time of a predicted second conjunction. October 3 intrigues me because it is within days of the time of other recorded Roman censuses. Including the one in 6 CE. December 4 would be too late for Shepherds to be tending their flocks. These were usually brought in around the first of November. I must therefore again, with all respect to the New Testament scholars, disagree that the Gospel story of the Wise Men from the East is fiction. In this historical detective story, correlating the Gospel accounts of the registration with the celestial

phenomenon, I choose Saturday, 10 Tishri, October 3, 7 BCE.

Chapter 5 : The Historical Context of the New Testament - ensign

The New Testament is a collection of early Christian literature, which together with the Old Testament forms the Holy Scriptures of the Christian churches. The origin of the New Testament was a multi-stage process. In its present form the NT comprises 27 books, the main part of which is comprised by.

What have you been thinking about? Williams examines the historical reliability of the New Testament in the light of the findings of archaeology. More than one archaeologist has found his respect for the Bible increased by the experience of excavation in Palestine. Archaeology has in many cases refuted the views of modern critics. For the great German exegetes of the era a voyage to Palestine was beside the point, as the life of the historical Jesus was for them solely a matter of interpreting texts. The excessive scepticism shown toward the Bible by important historical schools of the eighteenth-and-nineteenth centuries, certain phases of which still appear periodically, has been progressively discredited. Discovery after discovery has established the accuracy of innumerable details, and has brought increased recognition to the value of the Bible as a source of history. It can show that the names of certain characters in the Gospels are accurate, when we find inscriptional references to them elsewhere. Events and teachings ascribed to Jesus become intelligible and therefore plausible when read against everything we know about life in Palestine in the first third of the first century. In trying to determine if a witness is being truthful, journalists and lawyers will test all the elements of his or her testimony that can be tested. If this investigation reveals that the person was wrong in those details, this casts considerable doubt on the veracity of his or her entire story. However, if the minutiae check out, this is some indication not conclusive proof but some evidence that maybe the witness is being reliable in his or her overall account.

Crucifixion Victim In an ancient burial site was uncovered containing about 35 bodies. This find proves that a victim of crucifixion like Jesus could receive a proper Jewish burial. AD 41 by Emperor Claudius AD to the effect that no graves should be disturbed or bodies extracted, with offenders sentenced to death. This only makes it yet more unlikely that the already fearful disciples would have risked such an act. However, thanks to archaeology there is now dramatic evidence of its existence in the early first century. DNA testing confirmed that the man wrapped in the shroud was related to other members whose skeletal remains were recovered in the tomb. This DNA testing also revealed that the man has suffered from leprosy Under the direction of the Israeli Antiquities Authority, archaeologists began a race against time to carefully extract the boat from the mud before the waters returned. Eventually it was placed in a climate-controlled environment to protect it from aging. Pots and lamps found inside the boat dated it to the first century. Carbon testing further confirmed the dating. The design of the boat was typical of fishing boats used during that period on the Sea of Galilee. In the back of the boat was a raised section like the one where Jesus could have been sleeping, as indicated in the Gospel accounts. The boat could accommodate 15 people including crew. This archaeological discovery confirms the description given in the Bible. When Paul and his companions had passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they came to Thessalonica. Paul went into the synagogue, and on three Sabbath days he reasoned with them from the Scriptures, explaining and proving that the Messiah had to suffer and rise from the dead. Some of the Jews were persuaded and joined Paul and Silas, as did a large number of God-fearing Greeks and not a few prominent women. But other Jews were jealous; so they rounded up some bad characters from the marketplace, formed a mob and started a riot in the city. But when they did not find them, they dragged Jason and some other believers before the city officials, shouting: Then they made Jason and the others post bond and let them go. The inscription lists the officials of the town in the second century AD, beginning with six Politarchs and naming the city Treasurer and the Gymnasiarch Director of Higher Education. Equally, the names Secundus and Gaius were borne by a man from Thessalonica Acts These were not, of course, the same men, but simply demonstrate the currency of the personal names in the area in the century following the time of Paul. This palindrome appears at sites across the Roman Empire in later centuries. All sorts of ingenious explanations have been offered for this remarkable square. On the principle that the simplest explanation is the best, unravelling it as a Christian text gains first place. It shows a man standing by a crucifixion victim with the head of a donkey. The Greek

caption reads: Christian Church at Megiddo, c. This strategic trade city contains the remains of a Christian prayer hall dating to the third century. It contains three mosaic inscriptions pointing to its Christian use. The fish that adorn the centre of one of four mosaics in the hall are a Christian symbol – the word *ichthys* Greek for fish: Places Here is a selection of finds relating to places mentioned in the New Testament. Bethlehem In May the Israel Antiquities Authority announced the discovery of a bulla a small clay seal that mentions Bethlehem, the birthplace of Jesus cf. The first ancient artifact constituting tangible evidence of the existence of the city of Bethlehem, which is mentioned in the Bible, was recently discovered in Jerusalem. A bulla measuring c. The bulla was impressed with the seal of the person who sent the document or object, and its integrity was evidence the document or object was not opened by anyone unauthorized to do so. Three lines of ancient Hebrew script appear on the bulla: The tax could have been paid in the form of silver or agricultural produce such as wine or wheat. This is the Bethlehem next to Jerusalem referred to in the Bible. France describes Nazareth as: It was a small village, largely devoted to agriculture, bypassed by the main roads which ran to the near-by Hellenistic city of Sepphoris, the capital of Galilee. Its population has been estimated at between 200 and 400, and the remains of its buildings show no sign of wealth in the relevant period. No ancient historians or geographers mention Nazareth before the beginning of the fourth century. Questions as to its genuineness were resolved by this discovery. Two tombs contained objects such as pottery lamps, glass vessels, and vases from the first, third, or fourth centuries. Situated below the Annunciation Church and the Church of Saint Joseph to the north, some of these structures are connected by ancient tradition with the habitations of Joseph and Mary. According to excavation director Yardenna Alexandre: The discovery is of the utmost importance since it reveals for the very first time a house from the Jewish village of Nazareth and thereby sheds light on the way of life at the time of Jesus. The building that we found is small and modest and it is most likely typical of the dwellings in Nazareth in that period. The houses excavated at Capernaum were one-story buildings, with an outside staircase giving access to the flat roof. The roof was not of stone, but of wooden beams or branches thatched with rush and daubed with mud. The people encouraged Jesus to heal the slave because the Roman officer had built their synagogue. The black basalt foundations of this 1st century synagogue a dating confirmed by pottery finds beneath the floor can be seen today under the remains of the 4th century lime-stone synagogue in Capernaum. In 1968, archaeologists discovered the remains of an earlier church underneath it. This had been built around what was originally a private house, which was apparently used by Christians as a meeting-place during the second half of the first century. It was pointed out to early pilgrims such as Egeria, the mother of emperor Constantine, who recorded c. 385. It is where the Lord cured the paralytic. Until recently, this was considered to be the Pool of Siloam from the time of Christ. There is little question that this is in fact the pool of Siloam, to which Jesus sent the blind man in John 9. The town is on the south side of the Sea of Galilee in an area known as the Decapolis. This is the region to the south and east of the Jordan in which there were ten independent cities founded originally by Alexander the Great. At the time of Jesus these remained cosmopolitan communities where temples and synagogues would be found alongside each other. Jew and pagan would trade and mix – under the wider cultural umbrella of whatever colonial power was in the ascendancy. Recent excavations have uncovered the remains of a fourth-century church, which is so large that it must have been connected to a site of major importance. The church has no less than five aisles, which suggests that it was visited by large numbers of pilgrims. Digging down beneath the foundations, archaeologists have discovered a Roman tomb that has been dated to the year AD 25. The strange thing is that the church has a hole in the floor that looks right down on to the tomb. The tomb itself is in an easily identified spot; it is just under an archway that marks the western city boundary. They have neither destroyed it, replaced it, nor attempted to mark it with crosses or symbols of resurrection. For some reason, they wanted to preserve it as it was. It is a serious possibility that this was one of the tombs that provided a home for the Gadarene demoniac. It has been preserved under the church to mark the place of his exorcism. Certainly the traditional tomb that is now known as his tomb was in a cemetery in the first century other first-century tombs have been found just to the north. Herod the Great We have a bronze coin minted by Herod the Great. On the obverse side is the profile of Herod. In Israeli Professor of Archaeology Ehud Netzer discovered in Masada a piece of broken pottery with an inscription, called an ostrakon. Herodium is a man-made mountain in the

Judean wilderness rising over 2, feet above sea level. In 23 BC Herod the Great built a palace fortress here on top of a natural hill. Seven stories of living rooms, storage areas, cisterns, a bathhouse, and a courtyard filled with bushes and flowering plants were constructed. The whole complex was surrounded and partly buried by a sloping fill of earth and gravel. Before AD 50, an area 62 feet square was paved with stone at the northeast corner of the theatre in Corinth, Greece. But an inscription at Delphi notes this exact title for the man, and it dates him to the time Paul was in Corinth AD In the fifteenth year of the reign of [1] Tiberius Caesar " when [2] Pontius Pilate was governor of Judea, [3] Herod tetrarch [a governor of a quarter of a province] of Galilee, his brother [4] Philip tetrarch of Iturea and Traconitis [cf. Josephus, Jewish Antiquities The coin shows a portrait of Tiberius Caesar.

Chapter 6 : New Testament - Wikipedia

The History of the Bible offers you an introduction to key issues in the development of the New Testament. With their scholarly approach, these lectures provide a deeper understanding of the New Testament for both Christians and non-Christians alike.

E-mail Understanding the origins of this remarkable book of scripture can inspire our study. Each volume of sacred scripture has its own unique history and bears testimony to the gospel of salvation in its own distinct way. The New Testament has the distinction of being the volume of scripture that preserves the words of individuals who knew Jesus personally or who followed Him shortly after His Resurrection – making the New Testament an invaluable resource to help us come closer to the Savior and gain a glimpse of His mortal ministry. An understanding of the history of the New Testament, how it has been passed down to us, and who wrote it can increase our appreciation of this remarkable book of scripture and in turn give us greater spiritual strength as we, like the early followers of Jesus Christ, face our own trials. What Is the New Testament? The writings recorded in the Bible and referred to as the New Testament describe, document, and teach about that new covenant between the Lord and His people. The New Testament also contains a history of the first missionary efforts of the Church the book of Acts; letters from early leaders, such as Peter and Paul, that admonish the early Christians who were also called Saints to remain true to the faith; a testimony Hebrews; and an apocalypse Revelation that promises the return of the Lord in the latter days. Each of the writers has a different perspective to offer, and each wrote with a specific audience in mind rather than attempting to fill in perceived gaps in the historical record. In the middle of the fourth century A. From the larger group of disciples, Jesus called 12 men as Apostles. Those men followed Him throughout His ministry, suffered with Him, and also enjoyed triumphs and Spirit-filled experiences. After Jesus died, the Apostles, along with other faithful followers, began to record their experiences. Two events may have triggered their desire to preserve their records about the life of Jesus: Second, the forces of apostasy were already at work see Acts Therefore, many of the writings in the New Testament were recorded to help the faithful see their way through the calamity and controversy of their day. Looking back on their experiences, we can learn how they faced troubling times and how the good news of the gospel became a steadying power in the struggle against the forces of apostasy. Toward the end of the first century, all of the writings now preserved in the New Testament were completed and circulated widely among the branches of the Church. Scribes made copies of the texts on papyrus and then later on parchment, but there were relatively few copies available. Church members gathered the books that were available to them and read and studied the words of the Lord and the Apostles. One notable setback to the circulation of the scriptures was the persecution of Christians by the Roman emperor Diocletian in A. He ordered that the Christian scriptures be burned and forced Christians to offer sacrifices to pagan gods. Many faithful individuals hid the sacred texts during those years of persecution. Not long after Constantine had directed the New Testament to be copied and circulated anew, the books that compose our current Bible came to be organized in their present order. This order follows a pattern set by the Old Testament. The placement of these prophetic works also emphasizes a forward-looking hope of salvation and future revelation. Who Wrote the New Testament? Each author of the New Testament wrote with a distinct perspective on the saving mission of Jesus Christ. Two of the Gospels were written by Apostles: These apostolic witnesses provide an eyewitness testimony to the life of Jesus. Two later followers of the Lord also wrote Gospels: Mark and Luke, who testified to what they had felt and heard. Both of these men were at one time companions of Paul see Acts Instead, their accounts provide a vivid testimony of Him in whom they believed. His testimony was borne of experience as a missionary, from several powerful visions see Acts 9: He wrote largely to settle disputes within the branches, but at other times he wrote to his personal friends Timothy and Titus. In one letter Paul asks that a slave owner accept the return of a runaway slave whom Paul had met while they were in prison Philemon. Traditionally, the book of Hebrews is ascribed to Paul, although the usual introduction wherein he identifies himself as the author is not present. Regardless, the book testifies of how we can boldly come to the Lord through faith. Both urged Christians to be faithful; Peter in particular was

concerned about fidelity during times of trial. Jude is one of the latest books written in the New Testament. Jude wrote in an attempt to quell growing apostasy in the branches. That vision describes in vivid detail the struggle between good and evil. Most of the chapters deal with events that were in the future for John, including events in the latter days—our day. Because the New Testament is properly a new covenant between the Lord and those who have faith in Him, the books are intended for all those who seek to know Him, whether in this dispensation or in previous dispensations. Originally, the authors of the New Testament wrote texts that could be of immediate use in the branches of the Church in their day, with an understanding that they were recording the most important events in the history of humankind. John, for example, viewed his writings as a testimony: Others, such as Luke, wrote with the intent to document the history: Early Christians were diverse, some coming from Jewish families, while others had been raised in Gentile homes, while still others likely had very little formal religion in their lives prior to being baptized. Therefore, their struggles can reveal to us powerful lessons on how to overcome wickedness and remain faithful despite trial and temptation. They also show us how the branches struggled when they were very small and how there was safety in the words of the apostles and prophets. Most of all, I love its eyewitness accounts of the words and the example and the Atonement of our Savior Jesus Christ. I love the perspective and peace that come from reading the Bible. Many of the writings in the New Testament were recorded to help the faithful see their way through the calamities of their day. Paul writing an epistle from prison. Peter preaching to Cornelius and his household. Peter and John preaching and healing.

Chapter 7 : Historical background of the New Testament - Wikipedia

The New Testament, then, is a historical book of the Good News of the living God at work in human history, not just in the past, but in the living present and the future in light of the promises of God.

What is the story of the New Testament? Four hundred years after God spoke to the prophet Malachi, God spoke again. The message was that the prophecy of Malachi 3: The Messiah was on His way. That prophet was named John. The Messiah was named Jesus, born to a virgin named Mary. Jesus grew up as an observant Jew. When He was about thirty years old, He began His public ministry to Israel. John had been preaching of the coming Messianic Kingdom and baptizing those who believed his message and repented of their sins. When Jesus came to be baptized, God spoke audibly and the Holy Spirit came visibly upon Jesus, identifying Him as the promised Messiah. Jesus called twelve disciples from various walks of life, empowered them for service, and began training them. As Jesus traveled and preached, He healed the sick and performed many other miracles that authenticated His message. Vast crowds, awed by the miracles and amazed at His teaching, followed Him wherever He went Luke 9: Not everyone was enthralled by Jesus, however. They confronted Jesus many times, and Jesus openly spoke of them as hypocrites. The crowds who followed Jesus grew sparser, as it became apparent that Jesus had no intention of making Himself a king or of overthrowing the Roman oppressors. John was arrested and eventually executed in prison. Jesus began to focus more on His twelve disciples, most of whom acknowledged that He was the Son of God. Only one did not believe; his name was Judas, and he actively began to seek a way to betray Jesus to the authorities John 6: That night, during a time of prayer, Judas led an armed mob to Jesus. Jesus was arrested and dragged through a series of mock trials. He was condemned to death by crucifixion by the Roman governor, who nevertheless admitted that Jesus was an innocent man. At the moment of His death, there was a great earthquake. Jesus then appeared in the flesh to His disciples and spent time with them during the next forty days. At the end of that time, Jesus commissioned the apostles and ascended into heaven as they watched Luke On the Day of Pentecost , the Spirit filled the disciples, giving them the ability to speak in languages they had never learned. Peter and the others preached in the streets of Jerusalem, and 3,000 people believed the message that the Lord Jesus had died and risen again. The church had begun Acts 2. The Jerusalem church continued to grow as the apostles performed miracles and taught with great power. However, the new believers soon faced persecution, spearheaded by a young Pharisee named Saul. Many believers had to leave Jerusalem, and as they went, they spread the good news of Jesus to other cities. Gatherings of believers began to spring up in other communities Acts 2: One of the places that received the gospel was Samaria. The Jerusalem church sent Peter and John to Samaria to verify the reports they had heard concerning a church there. When Peter and John arrived, they witnessed the coming of the Holy Spirit on the Samaritans in the same way that He had come upon them. Without a doubt, the church had spread to Samaria. James, one of the twelve disciples, was martyred in Jerusalem. Saul had plans to take his hatred of Christians to Damascus, but on the way Jesus appeared to him in a vision. The former persecutor of the church was transformed into an ardent preacher of Christ. Paul and Barnabas suffered much persecution and difficulty on their journey, but many people were savedâ€”including a young man named Timothyâ€”and churches were established Acts 9: Back in Jerusalem, a question arose over the acceptance of Gentiles into the church. Were Gentile Christians former pagans to be given equal standing as Jewish Christians, who had kept the Law all their lives? More specifically, did Gentile believers have to be circumcised in order to be saved? A council met in Jerusalem to consider this question. Peter and Paul both gave testimony of how God had granted the Holy Spirit to the Gentile believers without the rite of circumcision. Paul went on another missionary journey , accompanied this time by Silas. Along the way, Timothy joined them, as did a doctor named Luke. At the behest of the Holy Spirit, Paul and company left Asia Minor and traveled to Greece, where even more churches were established in Philippi, Thessalonica, Corinth, Ephesus, and other cities. Later, Paul went on a third missionary journey. Usually, he was rejected in the synagogues, and he would take the message to the Gentiles instead Acts Against the warnings of friends, Paul made a trip to Jerusalem. There, he was attacked by a mob intent on killing him. He was rescued by a

Roman tribune and kept in protective custody in the barracks. Paul stood trial before the Sanhedrin in Jerusalem, but the court erupted in chaos, and Paul was taken to Caesarea to stand trial before a Roman judge. Paul was taken to Rome as a prisoner on a ship, and Luke accompanied him. On the way, a severe storm wrecked the ship, but everyone aboard made it safely to the island of Malta. There, Paul performed miracles that caught the attention of the governor of the island. Again, the gospel spread. When he arrived in Rome, Paul was put under house arrest. His friends could visit, and he had a certain amount of freedom to teach. While Paul was being held in Rome, the work of God continued around the Mediterranean world. Most of the apostles were martyred for their faith in Christ. The last apostle was John who, as an old man, was exiled to the island of Patmos. There, he received from the Lord Jesus messages for the churches and a vision of the end times that he recorded as the book of Revelation Revelation 1:

Chapter 8 : What is the basic timeline of the New Testament?

HISTORY AND THE NEW TESTAMENT By Jack Kilmon. Jesus is born. The date of Jesus' birth cannot be placed with certainty. One must do a little historical detective work to sort out the biblical references.

The Historical Books of the New Testament Introduction As previously mentioned, the New Testament falls into three categories based on their literary makeup—the historical, the epistolary, and the prophetic. The four Gospels make up about 46 percent and the book of Acts raises this to 60 percent. This means 60 percent of the New Testament is directly historical tracing the roots and historical development of Christianity. Christianity is based on historical facts. This is inherent in the very nature of the gospel. Christianity is the message of the gospel and what is a gospel? It is good news, information derived from the witness of others. It is history, the testimony of historical facts. What that something is is told us in Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. It is the life and death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. He was seen by them over a forty-day period and spoke about matters concerning the kingdom of God. Luke is volume one and Acts is volume two of Dr. This becomes crucial to our understanding of much of what we have in the epistles, which were historical letters written to living people in historical places. The New Testament, then, is a historical book of the Good News of the living God at work in human history, not just in the past, but in the living present and the future in light of the promises of God. The Synoptic Gospels Before beginning a survey of each of the Gospels, it might be well to say a bit about the use of the term, The Synoptic Gospels. Further, they also present the life of Christ in a way that complements the picture given in the Gospel of John. The following show a number of areas that are common to each of the first three Gospels: The announcement of the Messiah by John the Baptist Matt. The baptism of Jesus Matt. The temptation of Jesus Matt. The teaching and miracles of Jesus The major portion of each Gospel. The transfiguration of Jesus Matt. The trial, death, and burial of Jesus Matt. The resurrection of Jesus Matt. Only a few at first, a believing remnant, recognized Him for who He really was, the Son of God. Thus, under the inspiration of the Spirit, the Gospel writers set about to reveal just who Jesus really was as to His person and work. In a four-fold way, each with their own distinctive focus, but in accounts that are complementary, the four Gospels answer the questions posed by the Lord to the disciples. They declare just exactly who Jesus is. In Matthew we see the Messiah-King the lion. In Luke we see the Son of Man the man. In John we see the Son of God the eagle. It needs all four aspects to give the full truth. As Sovereign He comes to reign and rule. As Servant He comes to serve and suffer. As Son of man He comes to share and sympathise. As Son of God He comes to reveal and redeem. Wonderful fourfold blending—sovereignty and humility; humanity and deity! With the genealogy of Jesus, Matthew also uses ten fulfillment quotations by which he seeks to show that this Jesus, though rejected and crucified, is the long-awaited Messiah of the Old Testament Matt. But though rejected by the nation as a whole and crucified, the King left an empty tomb. Luke strongly stresses the true humanity of Christ while also declaring His deity. Some believe that Luke particularly had the Greeks in mind because of their keen interest in human philosophy. Five chapters record the farewell discourses of Jesus to His disciples to comfort them just a few hours before His death. In addition, seven miraculous signs of Jesus are set forth to demonstrate that Jesus is the Savior and to encourage people everywhere to believe in Him that they might have life John Matthew Author and Title: Each of the Gospels receives its name from the human author who wrote it. Matthew, who was one of the original disciples of Jesus, was a Jew writing to Jews about the One who was their own Messiah. His original name was Levi, the son of Alphaeus. Matthew worked as a publican collecting taxes in Palestine for the Romans until he was called by the Lord to follow Him Matt. His quick response may suggest his heart had already been stirred by the ministry of Jesus. Some feel that this was the first of the Gospels to be written about A. As evident in the questions Jesus asked His disciples in Jesus had plainly declared that He was their Messiah. Was He really the Old Testament Messiah predicted by the prophets? Will it ever be established, and if so, when? Thus, Matthew is addressed primarily to a Jewish audience to show them that this Jesus is the long-awaited Messiah. Key Words or Concept: Jesus, the Messiah, the King of the Jews. Chapter 1 is key in that it introduces the genealogy and birth of Jesus as son of David, son of Abraham, and as

one born by the miraculous work of the Spirit, with Joseph being the legal father by adoption, but not the physical father. Chapter 12 is key because in this chapter we see the turning point when the religious leaders formally reject Jesus as their Messiah by attributing His miraculous power to Satan. At this point Jesus began to speak in parables to hide truth from the unresponsive. From this point on more time is given to His disciples. Christ as Seen in Matthew: He is the son of Abraham and David. Thus He is the King who comes offering the kingdom. Further, to show that this Jesus fulfills expectations of the Old Testament, ten times he specifically stresses that what happened in the life of Jesus fulfills the Old Testament. Further, he uses more Old Testament quotations and allusions than any other book of the New Testament, some times. Matthew naturally falls into nine discernible sections: The Person and Presentation of the King 1: The Proclamation or Preaching of the King 5: The Power of the King 8: The Program and Progressive Rejection of the King The Presentation of the King The Predictions or Prophecies of the King The Passion or Rejection of the King The Proof of the King In addition, he was also a close associate of Paul. He had the rare privilege of accompanying Paul and Barnabas on the first missionary journey but failed to stay with them through the entire trip. Because of this, Paul refused to take him on the second journey, so he went with Barnabas to Cyprus Acts About a dozen years later he was again with Paul Col. His biography proves that one failure in life does not mean the end of usefulness. Unless one rejects the element of predictive prophecy, In fact, if Acts must be dated about A. This points to a date in the 50s for Mark. However, many scholars believe that Mark was not written until after Peter died; i. Mark is addressed primarily to the Roman or Gentile reader. As a result, the genealogy of Jesus is omitted along with the Sermon on the Mount and the condemnations by the religious leaders receive less attention. Also, since Mark presents Jesus as the Worker, the Servant of the Lord, the book focuses on the activity of Christ as a faithful Servant effectively going about His work. Its meaning varies from the sense of immediacy as in 1: Servant, Servant of the Lord. For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me and the gospel will save it. What advantage is it for someone to gain the whole world, yet forfeit his soul? What can a person give in exchange for his soul? But whoever wants to be great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first among you must be the slave of all. For even the Son of Man did not come to be served but to serve, and to give his life a ransom for many. Chapter 8 forms a key chapter in Mark, much like chapter 12 in Matthew, because here there is a change in both the content and course of the ministry of Jesus. This is followed immediately by a warning that they should tell no one, the revelation of His death, the call to discipleship, and the transfiguration. Until this point He has sought to validate His claims as Messiah. But now He begins to fortify His men for His forthcoming suffering and death at the hands of the religious leaders. The focus is clearly on His ministry to the physical and spiritual needs of others always putting them before His own needs.

Chapter 9 : What is the story of the New Testament?

Introduction: A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE NEW TESTAMENT. In the two thousand years since the birth of Jesus of Nazareth, the world of Christendom has seen incredible changes, including a split with the Eastern Orthodox Church and a Protestant Reformation, accompanied by a rejection of much core ideology.

According to the Jewish-Roman historian Flavius Josephus , the three parties in contemporary Judaism were the Pharisees , the Sadducees and the Essenes , the last of these three being apparently marginalized and in some cases retired to quasi-monastic communities. The ancient synagogue at Capernaum The Pharisees were a powerful force in 1st-century Judea. Early Christians shared several beliefs of the Pharisees, such as resurrection, retribution in the next world, angels, human freedom, and Divine Providence. Some scholars speculate that Jesus was himself a Pharisee. They accepted the written Law only, rejecting the traditional interpretations accepted by the Pharisees, such as belief in retribution in an afterlife, resurrection of the body, angels, and spirits. After the fall of Jerusalem, they disappeared from history. Among these scholars is Pope Benedict XVI , who supposes in his book on Jesus that "it appears that not only John the Baptist, but possibly Jesus and his family as well, were close to the Qumran community. Sadducees and Pharisees in the Roman period[edit] This section does not cite any sources. Please help improve this section by adding citations to reliable sources. Unsourced material may be challenged and removed. March Learn how and when to remove this template message During this period serious theological differences emerged between the Sadducees and Pharisees. Whereas Sadducees favored a limited interpretation of the Torah , Pharisees debated new applications of the law and devised ways for all Jews to incorporate purity practices hitherto limited to the Jerusalem Temple , see also Ministry of Jesus Ritual cleanliness in their everyday lives. Unlike the Sadducees, the Pharisees also believed in and introduced the concept of the Resurrection of the Dead in a future, Messianic Age or World to Come. New prophets[edit] During this time a variety of other religious movements and splinter groups developed. The Talmud provides two examples of such Jewish miracle workers around the time of Jesus. On one occasion when God did not answer his prayer, he drew a circle in the dust, stood inside it, and informed God that he would not move until it rained. When it began to drizzle, Honi told God that he was not satisfied and expected more rain; it then began to pour. He explained that he wanted a calm rain, at which point the rain calmed to a normal rain. A later story In the Babylonian Talmud , Berakot 33a tells of a lizard that used to injure passers-by. Hanina ben Dosa came and put his heel over the hole; the lizard bit him and died. Such men were respected for their relationship with God but not considered especially saintly; their abilities were seen as one more unknowable thing and not deemed a result of any ultra-strict observance of Jewish law. Messiah in Judaism and Jewish Messiah claimants The literal translation of the Hebrew word mashiach messiah is "anointed", which refers to a ritual of consecrating someone or something by putting holy anointing oil upon it. It is used throughout the Hebrew Bible in reference to a wide variety of individuals and objects; for example, a Jewish king, Jewish priests and prophets, the Jewish Temple and its utensils, unleavened bread, and a non-Jewish king Cyrus the Great. He is considered to be a great military and political leader descended from King David, well versed with the laws that are followed in Judaism. Most Jews believed that their history was governed by God, meaning that even the conquest of Judea by the Romans was a divine act. Pilate blocked their route and killed their leaders. Josephus, who elsewhere expressed the common Judean prejudice against Samaritans, suggested that they were armed. According to historian H. Another such prophet was Theudas , who, sometime between 44 and 46 led a large group of people to the Jordan river, which he claimed he could part. Cuspius Fadius , a procurator after Pilate, blocked their route and killed Theudas. An "Egyptian Prophet" led thirty thousand around the Mount of Olives and sought to enter Jerusalem until stopped by Antonius Felix , a procurator after Fadius. Zealots, Sicarii and bandits[edit] This section does not cite any sources. March Learn how and when to remove this template message Judean hills of Israel When Herod was still military governor in the Galilee, he spent a good deal of time fighting bandits under the leadership of Ezekias. These bandits are best understood as a peasant group whose targets were local elites both Hasmonean and Herodian rather than Rome. Ventidius Cumanus

procurator 48 to 52 CE often retaliated against brigandry by punishing peasant communities he believed to be their base of support. When a Galilean pilgrim on the way to Jerusalem was murdered by a Samaritan, the bandit chief Eliezar organized Galilleans for a counter-attack, and Cumanus moved against the Jews. The Emperor Claudius took the Jewish side, and had the Samaritan leaders executed and exiled, and turned one named Veler over to the Jews who beheaded him. Thus, widespread peasant unrest of this period was not exclusively directed against Rome but also expressed discontent against urban elites and other groups; Roman policy sought to contain the power of the bandits while cultivating Jewish support. He raised an army primarily of local bandits who pillaged nearby Greek and Roman cities including ones occupied by Jewish elites, including the administrative centers of Sepphoris, Tiberias, and Gabara sometimes Gadara. This suggests that they were concerned primarily with gain or social insurrection against local elites, rather than a political revolution against Roman occupation. When Roman legions arrived from Syria, the bandit army melted away. The Romans employed a scorched earth policy in its fight in the north, driving thousands of peasants southwards towards Jerusalem. Between 67 and 68, these peasants, perhaps led by bandits, formed a new political party called the Zealots, which believed that an independent kingdom should be restored immediately through force of arms. It is unclear whether their leaders made messianic claims. The Zealots imprisoned members of the Herodian family, killed the former high priests Ananus ben Artanus and Joshua ben Gamaliel, and put on trial the wealthiest citizens. It is possible that they believed they were purging elements whom they believed would have surrendered to the Romans. But these purges also reveal the great social divide between Jewish peasants and aristocrats at this time. They formed part of a social revolution:

Analysis of the gospels[edit] See also: Development of the New Testament canon Most historians view the gospels not as an objective account of Jesus, but as the product of men writing at a particular period, and grappling with particular theological as well as political issues. As these two documents circulated among Christians, other historical narratives were edited and organized. The four gospels ascribed to Matthew, Mark, Luke and John were regionally authoritative by proto-orthodoxy by the 2nd century. According to historian Paula Fredriksen Nevertheless, she argues, If something stands in the gospels that is clearly not in the interests of the late 1st-century church – disparaging remarks about Gentiles, for example, or explicit pronouncements about the imminent end of the world – then it has a stronger claim to authenticity than otherwise. Stated briefly, anything embarrassing is probably earlier. Even these criteria are not sufficient to recover "what really happened. According to Fredriksen, two events in the Gospels probably happened: These events are mentioned in all four gospels. Moreover, they do not conform to Jewish tradition in which there are no baptized and crucified messiahs. They are also embarrassing to the early Church. According to scholars such as Geza Vermes[citation needed] and E. Sanders,[citation needed] Jesus seems not to have belonged to any particular party or movement; Jesus was eclectic and perhaps unique in combining elements of many of these different – and for most Jews, opposing – positions. See Names and titles of Jesus Historians also often note that as Jesus was Jewish, his life, words, and teachings must be understood in the context of 1st century Judaism, his native culture, see for example Aramaic of Jesus. Moreover, they highlight 1st and 2nd century Judaism – especially after the destruction of the Temple – as being in a state of flux, consisting of a variety of sects. As the Gospel accounts are generally held to have been composed in the period immediately following the revolt of , it has been suggested that Christians had to refashion their theological and apocalyptic claims given that Jesus did not immediately return to restore the Jewish kingdom. Moreover, as Christianity emerged as a new religion seeking converts among the gentiles, and eventually as the religion of the emperor himself, it needed to assure both Roman authorities and prospective Gentile audiences that it neither threatened nor challenged imperial sovereignty. Split of early Christianity and Judaism As with many religions, no precise date of founding is agreed by all parties. Historians continue to debate the precise moment when Christianity established itself as a new religion, apart and distinct from Judaism. Some Christians were still part of the Jewish community up until the time of the Bar Kochba revolt in the s, see also Jewish Christians. As late as the 4th century, John Chrysostom strongly discouraged Christians from attending Jewish festivals in Antioch, which suggests at least some ongoing contact between the two groups in that city. Similarly for the Council of Laodicea around According to historian Shaye J. Cohen, The separation of

Christianity from Judaism was a process, not an event. The essential part of this process was that the church was becoming more and more gentile, and less and less Jewish, but the separation manifested itself in different ways in each local community where Jews and Christians dwelt together. In some places, the Jews expelled the Christians; in other, the Christians left of their own accord. By 66 CE, Jewish discontent with Rome had escalated. At first, the priests tried to suppress rebellion, even calling upon the Pharisees for help. After the Roman garrison failed to stop Hellenists from desecrating a synagogue in Caesarea, however, the high priest suspended payment of tribute, inaugurating the First Jewish-Roman War. In 70, the Temple was destroyed. The destruction of the Second Temple was a profoundly traumatic experience for the Jews, who were now confronted with difficult and far-reaching questions: How to explain the disastrous outcome of the rebellion? How to live in the post-Temple, Romanized world? How to connect present and past traditions? How people answered these questions depended largely on their position prior to the revolt. But the destruction of the Second Temple by the Romans not only put an end to the revolt, it marked the end of an era. Revolutionaries like the Zealots had been crushed by the Romans, and had little credibility the last Zealots died at Masada in The Sadducees, whose teachings were so closely connected to the Temple cult, disappeared. The Essenes also vanished, perhaps because their teachings so diverged from the issues of the times that the destruction of the Second Temple was of no consequence to them; precisely for this reason, they were of little consequence to the vast majority of Jews. Two organized groups remained: Some scholars, such as Daniel Boyarin and Paula Fredricksen, suggest that it was at this time, when Christians and Pharisees were competing for leadership of the Jewish people, that accounts of debates between Jesus and the apostles, debates with Pharisees, and anti-Pharisaic passages, were written and incorporated into the New Testament. Loss of records[edit] The siege of Jerusalem in 70 CE included a major fire at the Temple which destroyed all except the Western Wall ; what remained including the altar tablet was taken by Titus to Rome as trophies. March Learn how and when to remove this template message Following the destruction of the Temple, Rome governed Judea both through a Procurator at Caesarea, which had always been the Roman provincial capital, and through a Jewish Patriarch. A former leading Pharisee, Yohanan ben Zakkai, was appointed the first Patriarch the Hebrew word, Nasi, also means prince, or president, and he reestablished the Sanhedrin at Javneh under Pharisee control. Instead of giving tithes to the priests and sacrificing offerings at the Temple, the rabbis instructed Jews to give money to charities and study in local synagogues, as well as to pay the Fiscus Judaicus. In, the Emperor Hadrian threatened to rebuild Jerusalem as a pagan city dedicated to Jupiter, called Aelia Capitolina. Some of the leading sages of the Sanhedrin supported a rebellion and, for a short time, an independent state led by Simon bar Kochba; some, such as Rabbi Akiva, believed Bar Kochba to be messiah, or king. Up until this time, a number of Christians were still part of the Jewish community. However, they did not support or take part in the revolt. Whether because they had no wish to fight, or because they could not support a second messiah in addition to Jesus, or because of their harsh treatment by Bar Kochba during his brief reign, these Christians also left the Jewish community around this time.