



## NT Content—Language

Hebrew



Sacred Texts,  
Worship Liturgy

Aramaic



Exile: Babylonian,  
Persian Influence

Greek



Global  
Hellenization

Latin



Official  
Correspondence

- Original teachings of Jesus, oral traditions of disciples, glimmers in Mark's Gospel: "Eloi, Eloi, lema, sabachthani!" ("My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?"), Mark 15:34
- Septuagint translation (LXX), Alexandria Egypt, 3rd-2nd cent. BC = most quotes of OT in NT
- Cross titulus: "Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews" in Hebrew, Greek, Latin (John 19:19-20)

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## NT Content—Emergence

Jesus



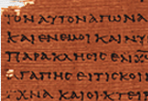
Ministry,  
Commission

Disciples



Kerygma,  
Expansion

Publication



Preservation,  
Instruction

Canonization



Collections,  
Authorization

- Oral culture, stories, collections (deeds, sayings), cf. Acts 20:35
- Spoken message (kingdom, repent, believe), preached message (passion kerygma), preserved tradition
- Pre-war Pauline letters, post-war apostolic Gospels, General Epistles (arguable), then Revelation
- Early collections (cf. 2 Pet 3:15-16), apostolic basis, liturgical use, universal value, inspiration

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## NT Content—Emergence

Jesus



Mainly Paul's mission  
according to Luke in Acts

Matt 4:17

Disciples



Kerygma,  
Expansion

Publication



Cf. Paul in 1 Cor 11:23-26 (Lord's  
Supper); 1 Cor 15:1-7 (Passion)

Canonization



- Oral culture, stories, collections (deeds, sayings), cf. Acts 20:35
- Spoken message (kingdom, repent, believe), preached message (passion kerygma), preserved tradition
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- Early collections (cf. 2 Pet 3:15-16), apostolic basis, liturgical use, universal value, inspiration

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## NT Context—Political (Rome)

Romans

Herod

Herodians

Jewish War



Vassal State,  
Client Dynasty

- Independence 167–63, Hasmonean Civil War 67–63, Roman Civil War (49–47), Empire

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## NT Context—Political (Rome)

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Vassal State,  
Client Dynasty

- Maccabean War becomes Hasmonean dynasty
- Queen Alexandra Salome's death destabilizes dynasty
- Antipater II shadow control behind Hyrcanus II

- Independence 167–63, Hasmonean Civil War 67–63, Roman Civil War (49–47), Empire

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## NT Context—Political (Rome)

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Vassal State,  
Client Dynasty

- Pompey vs. Caesar, crises in Egypt (murder, revolt)
- Antipater saves Caesar, gains privileges (Jewish ruler, citizenship, Jewish tax reduction, Judaism *religio licita*)

- Independence 167–63, Hasmonean Civil War 67–63, Roman Civil War (49–47), Empire

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Vassal State,  
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- Independence 167-63, Hasmonean Civil War 67-63, Roman Civil War (49-47), Empire

- Pompey's arrival, sides with Hyrcanus II (high priest) and Antipater II (Jerusalem governor)
- Sacrilege of Jewish temple (general's entrance)
- Judea made part of Syria administratively (cf. Luke 2:1)

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## NT Context—Political (Rome)

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Vassal State,  
Client Dynasty

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- The Caesars: three periods: (1) Julio-Claudian Dynasty (Augustus-Nero), (2) Flavian Dynasty (Vespasian-Domitian), and (3) Golden Age
- Let's explore these three periods of the first-century Caesars, beginning with Augustus, the empire builder

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## NT Context—Political (Rome: Caesars)

Roman Rulers

Augustus	30 BC-AD 14
Tiberius	14-37
Caligula	37-41
Claudius	41-54
Nero	54-68
Galba (Hispania)	68
Otho (Lusitania)	69
Vitellius (Germania Inf.)	69

Roman Rulers

Vespasian	69-79
Titus	79-81
Domitian	81-96
Nerva	96-98
Trajan	98-117
Hadrian	117-138

Julio-Claudian Dynasty: Augustus-Nero  
 Civil War: Galba-Vitellius  
 Flavian Dynasty: Vespasian-Domitian  
 Golden Age: Nerva-Marcus Aurelius

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## NT Context—Political (Rome: Caesars)

### I. Julio-Claudian Emperors

#### A. Augustus (30 BC–AD 14): Jesus's birth

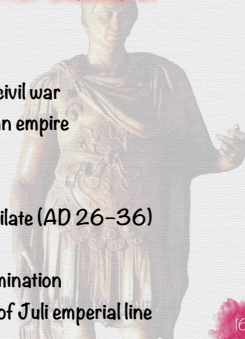
1. Ends Roman Republic and centuries of civil war
2. Political, administrative genius: creates an empire

#### B. Tiberius (AD 14–37): Jesus's life

1. Policies disliked, increasingly aloof
2. Jesus, JBapt, Paul, appointed Pontius Pilate (AD 26–36)

#### C. Caligula (AD 37–41): Early church

1. Advanced Agrippa I, Jewish temple abomination
2. Assassinated by Praetorian Guard, last of Juli imperial line



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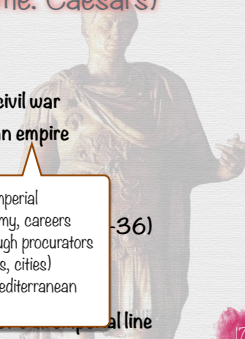
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1. Po
2. Je

#### C. Caligula

1. Ad
2. As

- Creates new provincial system: senatorial, imperial
- Creates new military system: reorganizes army, careers
- Creates new financial system: taxation through procurators
- Creates new infrastructure (roads, aqueducts, cities)
- Establishes governmental stability across Mediterranean
- Establishes *pax romana* ("peace of Rome")



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## NT Context—Political (Rome: Caesars)

### I. Julio-Claudian Emperors

#### D. Claudius (AD 41–54): early church, Paul's missionary journeys

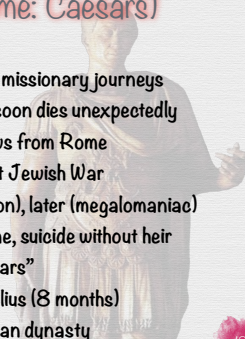
1. Appointed Agrippa I king, but Agrippa I soon dies unexpectedly
2. Edict of Claudius (AD 49) expelling Jews from Rome

#### E. Nero (AD 54–68): Paul's later years, First Jewish War

1. Two stage reign: early (wise administration), later (megalomaniac)
2. Fire of Rome, Jewish War, chaos in Rome, suicide without heir

#### F. Civil War (AD 68–69): "year of four Caesars"

1. Galba (7 months), Otho (3 months), Vitellius (8 months)
2. General Vespasian establishes new Roman dynasty



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Story told in Acts 12

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Reason Paul encounters Prisca and Aquilla in Corinth on 2MJ (Acts 18:2)

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Explains why Paul says positive things about Roman government in Rom 13:1–7, written c. AD 57

54–59

59–68

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## NT Context—Political (Rome: Caesars)

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    - 2. Edict of Claudius (AD 49) expelling Jews from Rome
  - E. Nero (AD April 64 until 66–70) First Jewish War
    - 1. Two stage reign: early (effective administration), late (megalomaniac)
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## NT Context—Political (Rome: Caesars)

- I. Fire of Rome—Historical Significance:
  - 1. The first time in history followers of Jesus are distinguished from synagogue Jews.
  - 2. The probable cause of the loss of Peter and Paul in the persecution that followed.
- 1. Galba (7 months), Otho (3 months), Vitellius (8 months)
- 2. General Vespasian establishes new Roman dynasty

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## NT Context—Political (Rome: Caesars)

- I. Nero's Suicide—Conspiracy Theories:
  - 1. Not really dead, so hidden in the east for future return to terrorize Rome once again.
  - 2. “Nero redivivus” myth: dead, but will rise, gather Asian army, invade, conquer Rome.
  - 3. Nero legends enter apocalyptic myths.
- 1. Galba (7 months), Otho (3 months), Vitellius (8 months)
- 2. General Vespasian establishes new Roman dynasty

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## NT Context—Political (Rome: Caesars)

- I. Julio-Claudian Emperors
- D. Caligula (AD 37-41): "And the beast that I saw was like a leopard, its feet were like a bear's, and its mouth was like a lion's mouth. And the dragon gave it his power and his throne and great authority. One of its heads seemed to have received a death-blow, but its mortal wound had been healed" (Rev. 13:2-3).
- E. Nero (AD 54-68):
- F. Civil War (AD 68-69): "year of four Caesars"
1. Galba (7 months), Otho (3 months), Vitellius (8 months)
  2. General Vespaian establishes new Roman dynasty

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## NT Context—Political (Rome: Caesars)

- II. Flavian Emperors
- A. Vespasian (AD 69-79): new dynasty, aftermath of Jewish War
1. New dynasty: able administrator, peace, prosperity
  2. Jewish War, Jewish dispersion, colosseum construction
- B. Titus (AD 79-81): Vesuvius, Colosseum
1. Consolidates Flavian power, stable reign
  2. Vesuvius eruption, grand opening of colosseum, fatal fever
- C. Domitian (AD 81-96): beginnings of emperor worship
1. Increasing tyranny, persecution, pretentious titles
  2. Likely setting for book of Revelation

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- III. Nerva (AD 96-98):
- Josephus, client of emperor, turns to writing history ("Flavius Josephus")
  - Bernice, consort to her brother, becomes consort to Titus
  - Agrippa II turns regent *in absentia* and is a probable Lukan historical source
  - Apostle John emigrates to Paul's old stomping grounds in Ephesus

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1. New dynasty: able administrator, peace, prosperity
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#### B. Titus (AD 79–81): Vesuvius, Colosseum

1. C. • Evidence of emperor worship being enforced in Asia Minor
2. V. • I Clement, Pliny's letter to Trajan, martyrdom of Ignatius of Antioch, Hegesippus

#### C. Domitian (AD 81–96): beginning of emperor worship

1. Increasing tyranny, persecution, pretentious titles
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## NT Context—Political (Rome: Caesars)

### III. Golden Age

#### A. Nerva (AD 96–98): solving imperial succession

1. New succession: Domitian murdered, senate appointment
2. Childless aristocrat, adoption policy, "Golden Age" (five emperors)

#### B. Trajan (AD 98–117): empire height, Christian persecution

1. Popular, great general, excellent administrator, empire height
2. Vigorous pursuit of emperor cult

#### C. Hadrian (AD 117–138): Christianity criminal

1. Christianity officially declared criminal (two centuries/persecution)
2. Second Jewish War (AD 132–135)

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## The Golden Age

### III.

Nerva	96–98
Trajan	98–117
Hadrian	117–138
Antoninus Pius	138–161
Marcus Aurelius	161–180

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## NT Context—Political (Rome: Caesars)

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## NT Context—Political (Rome: Caesars)

- III. Golden Age
- A. Nerva (AD 96–98): solving imperial succession
    - 1. Augustus: allowed, but did not encourage
    - 2. Caligula: Jerusalem temple episode
  - B. Trajan (AD 98–117): empire height, Christian persecution
    - 3. Nero: emperor cult, but in Rome only
    - 4. Domitian: persecution in Asia Minor
  - C. Hadrian (AD 117–138): Christianity official criminal
    - 5. Trajan: persecution official state policy
    - 2. Second Jewish War (AD 132–135)

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## NT Context—Political (Rome: Caesars)

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## NT Context—Political (Rome: Caesars)

### III. Golden Age

#### A. Nerva (AD 96–98): solving imperial succession

##### 1. New succession: Domitian murdered, senate appointment

- Provoked by Hadrian's plans for rebuilding a Roman Jerusalem
- Rabbi Akiba declares as messiah revolt leader Simon bar Kochba
- After initial successes, Jews totally destroyed by Roman legions
- Jews completely banned from living in Jerusalem
- Zealotism, messianism, apocalypticism finally flame out in Judaism

#### C. Hadrian (AD 117–138): Christianity criminal

1. Christianity officially declared criminal (two centuries/persecution)
2. Second Jewish War (AD 132–135)

emperors)

eight

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## NT Context—Political (Herod)

Romans

Herod

Herodians

Jewish War



Vassal State,  
Client Dynasty



New Dynasty,  
Buildings, Cruelty

- Independence 167–63, Hasmonean Civil War 67–63, Roman Civil War (49–47)
- Vassal king and expansion (40/37–4 BC), building projects, cruelty

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## NT Context—Political (Herod)

Romans

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Jewish War



- Roman senate declaration, 40 BC
- Quelling Jerusalem revolt, 37 BC
- Octavian (Augustus) adds all Palestine, 30 BC

Client Dynasty Buildings, Cruelty

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- Vassal king and expansion (40/37–4 BC), building projects, cruelty

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## NT Context—Political (Herod)

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Herod

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Jewish War



Vassal State,  
Client Dynasty

- Sebaste (Samaria)
- Caesarea Maritima (Strato's Tower)
- Jerusalem: royal palace, fortress Antonia, temple (20BC-AD 63)
- Fortresses: Machaerus (east of Dead Sea), Herodium (south of Bethlehem), Masada (Dead Sea)

- Independence 167-63, Hasmonean Civil War 67-63, Roman Civil War (49-47)
- Vassal king and expansion (40/37-4 BC), building projects, cruelty

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## NT Context—Political (Herod)

Romans

Herod

Herodians

Jewish War



Vassal State,  
Client Dynasty



New Dyn  
Buildings, Cruelty

- Executed queen Mariamne for alleged treason
- Executed family members similarly (uncle, etc.)
- Murdered multiple sons, suspicious of throne intrigue
- Context for killing of Bethlehem infants (Matt 2:16-18)

- Independence 167-63, Hasmonean Civil War 67-63, Roman Civil War (49-47)
- Vassal king and expansion (40/37-4 BC), building projects, cruelty

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## NT Context—Political (Herod)



“An assessment of Herod shows that economically and politically he achieved much for the land of Palestine. Herod's loyal support of Rome brought great benefits for the country, and his building projects restored work and industry. Yet because Herod's family originated from Edom or Idumaea, whose population had been forced to become Jews in 100 B.C.E., the Jewish populace considered him to be half-Jewish and resented his rule as that of a foreigner” (KH: 339).

- Vassal king and expansion (40/37-4 BC), building projects, cruelty

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## NT Context—Political (Herodians)

- I. Herod's Will (3rd will, 4 B.C.)
  - A. Archelaus (4 B.C.–A.D. 6)
    1. Ethnarch: Idumea, Judea, Samaria
    2. Banished to Gaul by Augustus
  - B. Philip (4 B.C.–A.D. 34)
    1. Tetrarch: Northern Transjordan
    2. Dies in office
  - C. Herod Antipas (4 B.C.–A.D. 39)
    1. Tetrarch: Galilee, Perea
    2. Banished to Gaul by Caligula

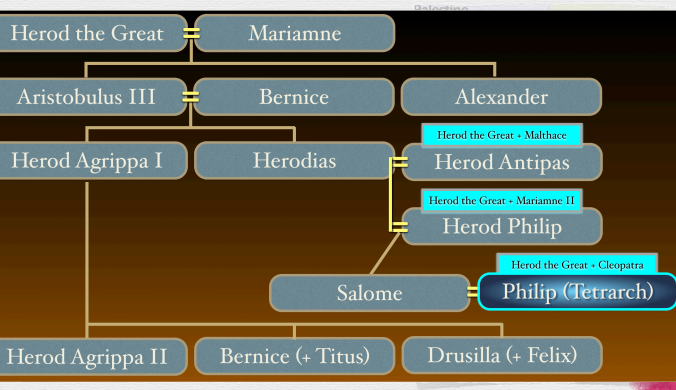
Archelaus 4 BC–AD 6	First Procuratorship 6–41	Agrippa I 41–44	Second Procuratorship 44–66
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## NT Context—Political (Herodians)

### I. Herod's Will (3rd will, 4 B.C.)

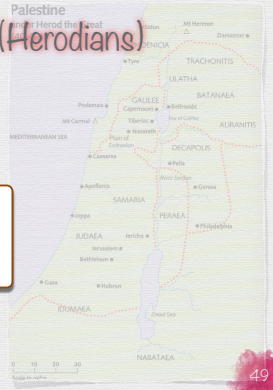
#### A. Archelaus (4 B.C.–A.D. 6)

1. Ethnarch: Idumea, Judea, Samaria
2. Banished to Gaul by Augustus

- Longest rule, but unpopular due to divorce, etc.
- Executed John the Baptist (Mark 6:14-29)
- Called the "fox" by Jesus (Luke 13:31-32)
- Participated in trial of Jesus (Luke 23:6-12)

#### C. Herod Antipas (4 B.C.–A.D. 39)

1. Tetrarch: Galilee, Perea
2. Banished to Gaul by Caligula



## NT Context—Political (Herodians)

Romans	Herod	Herodians	Jewish War
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Vassal State,  
Client Dynasty



New Dynasty,  
Buildings, Cruelty



Successors,  
Jesus, Disciples

- Second Generation: Archelaus, Antipas, Philip (Jesus, Disciples)
- Later Generations: Herod Agrippa I, Herod Agrippa II (Early Church, Paul)

## NT Context—Political (Herodians)

### II. Later Herodians

#### A. Herod Agrippa I (ruler 37–40, king 41–44)

1. Steady advance: Philip's (37), Antipas's (39), Judea, Samaria (41)
2. Caligula's temple episode
3. Persecution of Christians (Acts 12)
4. Unexpected death, Caesarea theater
5. Creates second procuratorship of Judea (44–66)

Archelaus 4 BC–AD 6	First Procuratorship 6–41	Agrippa I 41–44	Second Procuratorship 44–66
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## NT Context—Political (Herodians)

### II. Later Herodians

#### B. Herod Agrippa II (ca. 50–100)

1. Steady rise (Chalcis, Abilene, Philip's, Tiberias, Tarichaea, villages)
2. Paul's defense in Caesarea (ca. 60, Acts 26:1–24)
3. Pre war: loyalty to Rome, advised against war
4. Post war: futher territories, praetorian rank
5. Consulted by Josephus for **Jewish War**
6. Died without heirs ca. 100: "last of the Herods"

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## NT Context—Political (Herodians)

Romans

Herod

Herodians

Jewish War



Vassal State,  
Client Dynasty



New Dynasty,  
Buildings, Cruelty



Successors,  
Jesus, Disciples

- Second Generation: Archelaus, Antipas, Philip (Jesus, Disciples)
- Later Generations: Herod Agrippa I, Herod Agrippa II (Early Church, Paul)
- Judea: First Procuratorship (AD 6–41), Second Procuratorship (AD 44–66)

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## NT Context—Political (Jewish War)

Romans

Herod

Herodians

Jewish War



Vassal State,  
Client Dynasty



New Dynasty,  
Buildings, Cruelty



Successors,  
Jesus, Disciples



Procuratorship,  
Revolt

- Increasing Tumult: Nero's extravagance (taxes, assassinations), Judea's corruption (harsh rule)
- Church Tension: James, Paul: Felix (52–60, Acts 24), Festus (60–62, Acts 25)
- First War (66–73): Florus's slaughter, Josephus, Vespasian, Titus, Jerusalem, temple, Masada
- Second War (132–35): Hadrian's Plans, Bar Kochba's Revolt, Rabbi Akiba's Declaration

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## NT Context—Political (Jewish War)

Romans

Herod

Herodians

Jewish War



- Martyrdom of James, brother of Jesus
- Church abandons Jerusalem (Matt 24:15-16)
- Palestinian (Jewish) Christianity disappears
- Church defaults to Pauline congregations (gentile)

Vassal  
Client Dynast

Buildings, Cruelty

Jesus, Disciples

Procuratorship,  
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## NT Context—Political (Jewish War)

### First Jewish War's Consequences

- **Jewish nation:** Palestine depopulated, lost nationhood, lost political status, Roman colonies established
- **Jewish religion:** lost temple, lost high priesthood, lost sacrificial system; Sanhedrin vanishes; all Jewish sects vanish (except Pharisees, Zealots)
- **Jewish future:** Pharisees survive in Jamnia; Zealots live to fight another day; Jewish upper class goes pro-Roman, diaspora Judaism becomes mainstream

- First War (66-73): Florus's slaughter, Josephus, Vespasian, Titus, Jerusalem, temple, Masada
- Second War (132-35): Hadrian's Plans, Bar Kochba's Revolt, Rabbi Akiba's Declaration

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## NT Context—Political (Jewish War)

### Second Jewish War's Consequences

- **Jewish politics:** Jews abandon Zealotism, messianic movements, apocalyptic literature (survival of literature due to Christians)
- **Jewish religion:** rabbinic religion becomes normative Judaism, including absence of political involvement
- **Roman decrees:** circumcision forbidden, Jerusalem residency forbidden
- **City of Jerusalem:** rebuilt as Roman colony, renamed Aelia Capitolina, remained so until time of Constantine

- First War (66-73): Florus's slaughter, Josephus, Vespasian, Titus, Jerusalem, temple, Masada
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NT Context

Political

\* Social

Philosophical

Religious

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NT Context—Social

- Greco-Roman World
- Hellenization: impact of Alexander the Great
  - ~ Globalization of culture, language, art, architecture, literature, life
  - ~ Greek culture adopted and adapted by Romans and Jews
  - ~ Urban impact: agora, theaters, amphitheaters, aqueducts, temples, gymnasiums
- Social world: agrarian society of family units built on class
  - ~ Ruling class: emperor, senators, provincial aristocrats
  - ~ Retainer class: priests, tax collectors, bureaucrats serving elite
  - ~ Business class: merchants and artisans, some quite wealthy
  - ~ Peasants: farmers, tenant farmers, day laborers
  - ~ Slaves: from war or poverty, educated were teachers, accountants, secretaries

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Roman classes:

1. Senatorial: wealthy, landed, old status families
2. Equestrians: businessmen, new rich, new power base
3. Plebians: poor, unemployed masses
4. Freedmen: former slaves
5. Slaves: mostly war booty

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## NT Context—Philosophical

- Stoicism (Zeno, 335-263)
  - Monistic belief in the divine *Logos* (Divine Reason)
  - Virtue, tranquility as goal of life through self-control
  - Moral values help overcome emotions
  - Moral values include self-sufficiency, tranquility, human rights, detachment
- Epicurus (342-270)
  - Nature is atomic cycle of coalescence, disintegration, including human bodies
  - Eliminates fear: death is simply disintegration; chance, not gods, determines life
  - Ethics of pain avoidance and pleasure attainment
  - Values of friendship and caring for others (community formation)

### Famous followers:

- Chrysippus: popularized Zeno's teachings
- Aratus: quoted by Paul in Acts 17:28
- Seneca: advisor to Nero
- Marcus Aurelius: emperor, Golden Age

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## NT Context—Philosophical

### Stoicism—Christian Similarities:

- ▶ terminology: Spirit, conscience, *logos*, virtue, self-sufficiency, reasonable
- ▶ natural theology: (Wis. Sol. 13-14; Rom 1-2; Acts 17)
- ▶ human predicament: persistent evil, self-examination need, inner freedom
- ▶ ethics: house codes, vice lists

### Stoicism—Christian Distinctions:

- ▶ human predicament: depth, seriousness, pervasiveness of sin problem
- ▶ ethics: motivation for ethical decisions

- Values of friendship and caring for others (community formation)

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## NT Context—Philosophical

- Cynicism (Antisthenes, 446-366)
  - Itinerant preachers with message of self-control, not illusory fame, fortune, power
  - Ascetic lifestyle, begging food, distinctive dress (short cloak, purse, staff, sandals)
  - Developed literary device of "diatribe" (rhetorical questions, imaginary opponent)
  - Developed virtue and vice lists, similar to Stoics
- Gnosticism (1st-3rd cent.)
  - Gnostic library discovered at Nag Hammadi, Egypt
  - Narrative of human predicament reveals system of salvation through knowledge
  - Dualistic, pleroma cosmology, predicament of ignorance, solved through gnosis revelation, realized and pneumatic eschatology, and either libertine or ascetic ethics
  - Possible New Testament impact in incipient and proto forms

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Famously used by Paul in Romans

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## NT Context—Philosophical

- First Principle (good) generates successive aeons comprising the pleroma
  - Divine fall generates all matter (evil), from which comes world and humans
  - Divine spark entrapped in material body, asleep, unaware of predicament
  - Redeemer descends through aeons to earth with divine logos, knowledge (gnosis) that saves by awakening divine spark, revealing saving words
  - Gnosis allows divine spark to ascend with “passwords” to get past each archon in each layer of the pleroma back to pure spirit
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- Colossians: angelic mediators, pleroma terminology
- 1 Corinthians: perhaps behind the problems with resurrection
- 1–3 John: knowledge, denying incarnation (flesh), proto-Docetic thoughts
- Pastorals: “gnosis falsely so called” (1 Tim 6:20)

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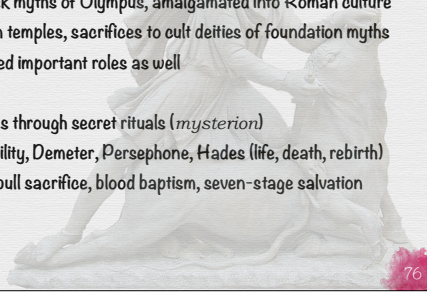




## NT Cont

Note calling Paul Hermes and Barnabas Zeus at Lystra (Acts 14:8-18)

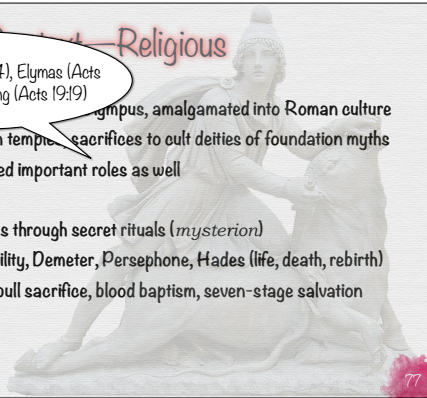
- Greco-Roman Religion
  - Polytheistic, driven by Greek myths of Olympus, amalgamated into Roman culture
  - Welfare of city depended on temples, sacrifices to cult deities of foundation myths
  - Fate, astrology, magic played important roles as well
- Mystery Religions
  - Experiencing life of the gods through secret rituals (*mysterion*)
  - Eleusinian: agricultural fertility, Demeter, Persephone, Hades (life, death, rebirth)
  - Mithras (Persia): sun-god, bull sacrifice, blood baptism, seven-stage salvation



## NT Context—Religious

Note Simon (Acts 8:9-24), Elymas (Acts 13:6-11), Ephesus burning (Acts 19:19)

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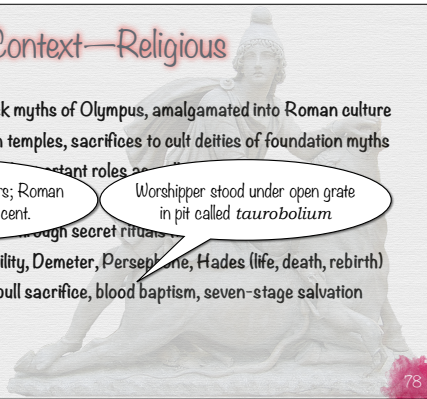


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Favorite of Roman soldiers; Roman state religion in 3rd cent.

Worshipper stood under open grate in pit called *taurobotium*



## NT Context—Religious

- Cults (Oriental and Greek)
  - Isis and Serapis Cult (from Egypt): very popular throughout Roman empire
  - Artemis (Cybele) in Asia Minor: cf. Ephesian riot against Paul (Acts 19:23–41)
  - Asklepios Cult in Athens, Pergamum
- Emperor Cult
  - Origins in Alexander the Great receiving divine honors from Eastern cities
  - Ptolemaic rulers (Egypt) worshipped as divine as king (3rd cent.)
  - Augustus refused divine honors, but after death given divinity and temples
  - Caligula ordered statues presenting him as divine throughout empire
  - Domitian named himself “lord and god”

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Featuring idea of death and rebirth

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Featuring ecstatic frenzy

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## NT Context—Religious

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## NT Context—Religious

- Jewish Religion
  - Judaism before the war is heterodox (sects), after the war, orthodox (rabbinic)
  - Understanding Judaism pre-war (pre-AD 70) is understanding Jewish sects
    - ~Minor groups: Samaritans, Zealots, Scribes, Sanhedrin
    - ~Main groups: Essenes, Sadducees, Pharisees
    - ~Focus is on main three groups

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## Jewish Religion

- I. *Main Groups: Essenes (200 BC–AD 70)*
  - A. History: Hasmonean period, vague Qumran scrolls inferences
  - B. Institution: covenanted, separatist community
  - C. Canon: Torah and Prophets
  - D. Teachings
    1. “Teacher of Righteousness” vs. “Wicked Priest”
    2. Jerusalem’s cult fatally corrupted: strict, rigorous community rules
    3. Intense scriptural study, prophetic last days, imminent final war
    4. Roman armies wiped them out in Jewish War



## Jewish Religion

### II. Main Groups: Sadducees (200 BC-AD 70)

- A. History: Hasmonean period, landed aristocrats
- B. Institution: temple
- C. Canon: Torah only
- D. Teachings
  - 1. Political pragmatists: aligned with Rome to preserve temple
  - 2. Opposed all things Pharisee: canon, doctrines, oral law
  - 3. Vanished from history after Jewish War

## Jewish Religion

### III. Main Groups: Pharisees (200 BC to present)

- A. History: Maccabean/Hasmonean appearance, lay movement
- B. Institution: synagogue
- C. Canon: Torah, Prophets, Writings, Oral Tradition
- D. Teachings
  - 1. Canon: Law, Prophets, Writings
  - 2. Twin Pillars: torah and tradition (oral law)
  - 3. Separatists: purity rituals
  - 4. Doctrinal development: post-exilic added angels, demons, resurrection, judgment, rewards/punishment, immortality
  - 5. Only sect surviving war: redefine Judaism with Mishnah, Talmud

NT Content

NT Context

NT Quest

NT Methodology

# Jesus Tradition

## I. The Jesus Quest

### A. Beginnings—Enlightenment (17–18th centuries)

1. New worldview overtakes philosophy
  - *Deism*: the God who does not intervene
  - *Rationalism*: where reason reigns supreme
2. Difficulties with Catholic dogma
  - *Reimarus*: miracles absurd, Jesus mistaken, body stolen, resurrection invented
  - *Paulus*: naturalistic explanations for miracles
  - *Strauss*: mythological explanations for miracles



Gospel Tradition—Jesus Tradition

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Gospel Tradition—Jesus Tradition

Invented the “Jesus of history” versus the “Christ of faith” antithesis that launched a “quest for the historical Jesus.”  
The real Jesus was a Jewish revolutionary who tried to overthrow the Roman government but instead was crucified.

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Gospel Tradition—Jesus Tradition

Must recognize that the texts we are interpreting embed an ancient worldview of “pre-scientific minds.”

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## Jesus Tradition

### I. The Jesus Quest

- B. First Quest—"Lives of Jesus": real Jesus buried under church dogma already embedded in Gospels. Find Gospel sources to peel away dogmatic layers to discover the "real" Jesus revealed in *source* documents (*source criticism*). Deemphasized angry, strange, apocalyptic Jesus for Jesus as a kind, itinerant teacher, God as loving father. Thus, **Renan**, *Life of Jesus* (1863) and **Harnack**, *The Essence of Christianity* (1899–1900). Ended by Albert **Schweitzer**, *The Quest of the Historical Jesus* (1910) by showing complete subjectivity. Jesus, instead, was a failed eschatological prophet.



Gospel Tradition—Jesus Tradition

## Jesus Tradition

### i. The Jesus Quest

- B. First Quest—"Lives of Jesus." Source criticism was deadend. What about oral stage behind written for real Jesus? Use *form criticism* to get to oral stage—but that left Gospels in bits and pieces. Then, Rudolph **Bultmann** insisted question of history *totally irrelevant*, since faith is *existential*. Still, he accepted Schweitzer's Jesus as eschatological prophet picture.
- C. Second Quest. Bultmann's students rejected his rejection of history as unsatisfactory. Used *redaction criticism* to treat Gospels wholistically searching for theologies of authors (**Bornkamm, Käsemann, Fuchs**).



Gospel Tradition—Jesus Tradition

## Jesus Tradition

### i. The Jesus Quest

- D. The "Jesus Seminar"—"Quest in the West." Mainly American scholars (**Crossan, Funk**, others). Now down to focus only on *authentic sayings* of Jesus using criteria of authenticity. Result was rejection of Schweitzer's apocalyptic Jesus for Jesus the Cynic teacher, reasonable, anti-establishment, but non-violent.
- E. The Third Quest—"Jesus the Jew." Post-holocaust impetus. Images of Jesus as charismatic wonder-worker, itinerant prophet, Jewish restorer-messianic consummation (**Vermes, Theissen, Sanders, Wright**)



Gospel Tradition—Jesus Tradition





# Jesus Tradition

## II. Perennial Issues

- A. Questions of presuppositions, subjectivity
- B. Questions of criteria and methodology
- C. Approach to miracles (rationalism, skepticism)
- D. Evaluation of sources (Q, Gospel of Thomas, etc.)
- E. Questions of religious contexts (Gospels, Jesus)



Gospel Tradition—Jesus Tradition

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NT Content

NT Context

NT Quest

NT Methodology



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# NT Methodology

## I. Gospel Methodology

- A. Main Fields of Research
  - 1. **Historical** (Textual, Source, Form, Redaction)
  - 2. **Literary** (Structural, Narrative, Rhetorical, Reader Response)
  - 3. **Social Scientific** (Sociology, Anthropology)
- B. Four Classic Historical Methodologies
  - 1. **Textual Criticism:** in the absence of originals, establishing from differing copies a critical text with footnotes notating issues
  - 2. **Source Criticism:** establishing Gospel writer sources, revealing "Synoptic Problem" (literary relationship of Matthew, Mark, Luke)

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# NT Methodology

## I. Gospel Methodology

### B. Four Classic Historical Methodologies

2. **Source Criticism:** establishing Gospel writer sources, revealing “Synoptic Problem” (literary relationship of Matthew, Mark, Luke)
  - patterns: agreements, ordered variations (wording, content, order)
  - redactions: improvements, specificity, additions, subtractions
  - solutions: Augustine (Matthew, Mark, Luke), Griesback (Mark last), Streeter (two-source/four-source)
3. **Form Criticism:** establishing individual oral forms (fixed shape) that predicate a specific “setting in life” but losing idea of whole

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#### AGREEMENTS IN SEQUENCE: AN EXAMPLE

Story	Matt.	Mark	Luke
Jesus' teaching in the synagogue in Capernaum		1:21f	4:31f
Jesus' healing of the demonized man in the synagogue		1:23-28	4:33-37
Jesus' healing of Peter's mother-in-law	8:14f	1:29-31	4:38f
Jesus healing and exorcizing in the evening: summary	8:16f	1:32-34	4:40f
Jesus leaves Capernaum		1:35-38	4:42f
Jesus preaching in Galilee: summary	4:23	1:39	4:44
The miraculous catch of fish			5:1-11
Jesus heals a leper	8:1-4	1:40-45	5:12-16
Jesus heals a paralysed man	9:1-8	2:1-12	5:17-26
Jesus calls Levi to follow him	9:9-13	2:13-17	5:27-32
A question about fasting	9:14-17	2:28-22	5:33-39
A question about plucking grain on the Sabbath	12:1-8	3:1-6	6:1-5
A question about healing on the Sabbath	12:9-14	3:1-6	6:6-11
Healing by the sea: summary	4:24f; 12:15f	3:7-12	6:17-19
Jesus chooses the twelve	10:1-4	3:13-19	6:12-16

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## NT Methodology

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### Specificity:

Olivet Discourse (Mk. 13:14; Lk. 21:20-21)

A. Mark: “When you see the abomination of desolation standing where it ought not—let the reader understand—then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains.”

B. Luke: “When you see Jerusalem being surrounded by armies, you will know that its desolation is near. Then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains.”

that predicate a specific “setting in life” but losing idea of whole

, revealing

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## NT Methodology

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### Improvements:

1. Bluntness about power (Mk. 6:5; Mt. 13:58)

A. Mark: “He could not do any miracles there”

B. Matt.: “He did not do many miracles there”

2. Disciples restraining children (Mk. 10:14; Mt. 19:14)

A. Mark: “When Jesus saw this he was indignant”

B. Matt.: “Let the little children come to me”

3. Peter’s confession (Mk. 8:33; Mt. 16:18)

A. Mark: “He rebuked Peter: Get behind me Satan!”

B. Matt.: “And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church.”

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## NT Methodology

### Streeter’s Four-Source Theory

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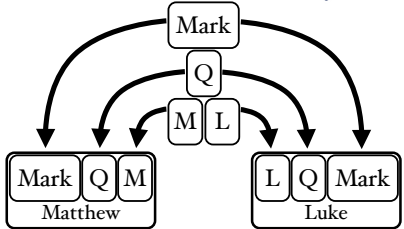
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# NT Methodology

## I. Gospel Methodology

### B. Four Classic Historical Methodologies

4. **Redaction Criticism:** establishing a Gospel author's theology through noting editorial redactions, treating writers as authors
- combining (wilderness temptation), expanding (walking on water), resetting (lament over Jerusalem), omitting parts (epileptic healing), explaining (Mark explaining "corban")
  - note distinctives, find patterns, establish Gospel themes
  - results: Mark's urgent call to discipleship, Matthew's manual for the church, Luke's vision of gentile mission

#### Matt. 8:23-27

<sup>23</sup>And when he got into the boat, his disciples followed him. <sup>24</sup>A windstorm arose on the sea, so great that the boat was being swamped by the waves; but he was asleep. <sup>25</sup>And they went and woke him up, saying, "Lord, save us! We are perishing!" <sup>26</sup>And he said to them, "Why are you afraid, you of little faith?" Then he got up and rebuked the winds and the sea; and there was a dead calm. <sup>27</sup>They were amazed, saying, "What sort of man is this, that even the winds and the sea obey him?"

- 1.Mt. eliminates Mk.'s details
- 2.Mt. emphasizes Jesus' deity
- 3.Mt. softens picture of disciples

#### Mark 4:35-41

<sup>35</sup>On that day, when evening had come, he said to them, "Let us go across to the other side." <sup>36</sup>And leaving the crowd behind, they took him with them in the boat, just as he was. Other boats were with him. <sup>37</sup>A great windstorm arose, and the waves beat into the boat, so that the boat was already being swamped. <sup>38</sup>But he was in the stern, asleep on the cushion; and they woke him up and said to him, "Teacher, do you not care that we are perishing?" <sup>39</sup>He woke up and rebuked the wind, and said to the sea, "Peace! Be still!" Then the wind ceased, and there was a dead calm. <sup>40</sup>He said to them, "Why are you afraid? Have you still no faith?" <sup>41</sup>And they were filled with great awe and said to one another, "Who then is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?"

# NT Methodology

## I. Gospel Methodology

### B. Four Classic Historical Methodologies

<p>Mark 15:38 Now when the centurion, who stood facing him, saw that in this way he breathed his last, he said, "Truly this man was God's Son!"</p> <p>Mark 15:40 ¶ There were also women looking on from a distance; among</p>	<p>Matt. 27:54 Now when the centurion and those with him, who were keeping watch over Jesus, saw the earthquake and what took place, they were terrified and said, "Truly this man was God's Son!"</p>	<p>Luke 23:47 When the centurion saw what had taken place, he praised God and said, "Certainly this man was innocent."</p> <p>Luke 23:48 And when all the crowds who had gathered there for this spectacle saw what had taken place, they</p>
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