

121:0, 121:1, 121:2, 121:6, 121:7
(“The Occident of the First Century after Christ,” “The Jewish People,”
“The Hebrew Religion,” “Jews and Gentiles”)

from

Paper 121 — The Times of Michael’s Bestowal

© 2014 Matthew Block

Sources for 121:0, 121:1, 121:2, 121:6, 121:7

- (1) Harris Franklin **Rall**, Ph.D., *New Testament History: A Study of the Beginnings of Christianity* (New York: Abingdon Press, 1914)
- (2) S. **Angus**, M.A., Ph.D., *The Environment of Early Christianity* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1915)
- (3) Rev. Alfred **Edersheim**, M.A.Oxon., D.D., Ph.D., *The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah*, Eighth Edition (Volume One) (New York: Longmans, Green and Co., 1907)
- (4) Benjamin Willard **Robinson**, Ph.D., *The Sayings of Jesus: Their Background and Interpretation* (New York: Harper & Brothers Publishers, 1930)
- (5) John A. **Scott**, *We Would Know Jesus* (New York: The Abingdon Press, 1936)
- (6) George A. **Barton**, Ph.D., LL.D., *Jesus of Nazareth: A Biography* (New York, The Macmillan Company, 1922)

Key

- (a) **Green** indicates where a source author first appears, or where he/she reappears.
- (b) **Yellow** highlights most parallelisms.
- (c) **Tan** highlights parallelisms not occurring on the same row, or parallelisms separated by yellowed parallelisms.

- (d) An underlined word or words indicates where the source and the UB writer pointedly differ from each other.
- (e) **Blue** indicates original (or “revealed”) information, or UB-specific terminology and concepts. (What to highlight in this regard is debatable; the highlights are tentative.)

Matthew Block
25 September 2014

Work-in-progress Version 15 Nov. 2013

© 2013, 2014 Matthew Block

Revised 8 Jan. 2014 and 25 Sept. 2014

PAPER 121 — THE TIMES OF MICHAEL'S BESTOWAL

121:0.1 Acting under the supervision of a commission of twelve members of the United Brotherhood of Urantia Midwayers, conjointly sponsored by the presiding head of our order and the Melchizedek of record, I am the secondary midwayer of onetime attachment to the Apostle Andrew, and I am authorized to place on record the narrative of the life transactions of Jesus of Nazareth as they were observed by my order of earth creatures, and as they were subsequently partially recorded by the human subject of my temporal guardianship. Knowing how his Master so scrupulously avoided leaving written records behind him, Andrew steadfastly refused to multiply copies of his written narrative. A similar attitude on the part of the other apostles of Jesus greatly delayed the writing of the Gospels.

1. THE OCCIDENT OF THE FIRST CENTURY AFTER CHRIST

I: THE ROMAN-GRECIAN WORLD

(**Rall** 13)

Christianity did not come to a world without faith, or to a time of religious decadence.

It was a period of the most active and eager religious thought and life (R 16).

121:1.1 Jesus did not come to this world during an age of spiritual decadence;

at the time of his birth Urantia was experiencing such a revival of spiritual thinking and religious living

as it had not known in all its previous post-Adamic history nor has experienced in any era since.

When Michael incarnated on Urantia, the world presented the most favorable condition for the Creator Son's bestowal that had ever previously prevailed or has since obtained.

In the centuries just prior to these times Greek culture and the Greek language had spread over Occident and near Orient,

[Lastly, the Jew of the Diaspora served as mediator between East and West: he was Oriental in his religion and Western in his culture, philosophy, language and enterprise. Through him an Oriental religion conquered the West (Angus 163).]

and the Jews, being a Levantine race, in nature part Occidental and part Oriental, were eminently fitted to utilize such cultural and linguistic settings for the effective spread of a new religion to both East and West.

These most favorable circumstances were further enhanced by the tolerant political rule of the Mediterranean world by the Romans.

121:1.2 This entire combination of world influences is well illustrated by the activities of

Paul's case is even more suggestive.

Paul,

He was a Hebrew of the Hebrews,

who, being in religious culture a Hebrew of the Hebrews,

and he bore the message of a Jewish Messiah; but he spoke in Greek,

proclaimed the gospel of a Jewish Messiah in the Greek tongue,

he himself was a Roman citizen, and his field was the Roman empire (R 13).

while he himself was a Roman citizen.

121:1.3 Nothing like the civilization of the times of Jesus has been seen in the Occident before or since those days.

European civilization was unified and co-ordinated under an extraordinary threefold influence:

[contd] These three worlds must be studied separately: (1) the Roman world, political and social;

(2) the Grecian world of language and culture and religion;

(3) the Jewish world which we study for its religion alone (R 13).

[contd] When Jesus was born, Rome had fully entered upon her great career as a world empire. The nations about the Mediterranean had been merged under her rule.

Great roads stretched everywhere for the Roman soldier.

The sea had been swept free of pirates. Everywhere was safety and quiet.

As a result trade and travel of all kinds increased enormously (R 13).

[The Mediterranean, cleared of pirates, was a safer highway of trade and travel than at any time up to the middle of last century (Angus 204-05).]

1. The Roman political and social systems.

2. The Grecian language and culture—

and philosophy to a certain extent.

3. The rapidly spreading influence of Jewish religious and moral teachings.

121:1.4 When Jesus was born, the entire Mediterranean world was a unified empire.

Good roads, for the first time in the world's history, interconnected many major centers.

The seas were cleared of pirates,

and a great era of trade and travel was rapidly advancing.

Europe did not again enjoy another such period of travel and trade until the nineteenth century after Christ.

SOURCE OR PARALLEL

But the peace and increase of wealth meant little to the common people (R 14).

Of the fifty millions or more in the Roman world the wealth and power belonged to but very few (R 14).

There was no great middle class, prosperous and intelligent, to form the strength of the nation, as with England or America (R 14).

[*Note:* Need source. The Roman governor Ventidius drove out the Parthians from Syria in 39 B.C.]

II: THE JEWISH WORLD (Rall 20)

The Jew was, first of all, a part of the larger Semitic world.

URANTIA PAPER 121

121:1.5 Notwithstanding the internal peace and superficial prosperity of the Greco-Roman world, a majority of the inhabitants of the empire languished in squalor and poverty.

The small upper class was rich;

a miserable and impoverished lower class embraced the rank and file of humanity.

There was no happy and prosperous middle class in those days;

it had just begun to make its appearance in Roman society.

121:1.6 The first struggles between the expanding Roman and Parthian states had been concluded in the then recent past, leaving Syria in the hands of the Romans.

In the times of Jesus, Palestine and Syria were enjoying a period of prosperity, relative peace, and extensive commercial intercourse with the lands to both the East and the West.

2. THE JEWISH PEOPLE

121:2.1 The Jews were a part of the older Semitic race,

Rome's old enemies, the Carthaginians, belonged to this race, as did the Phœnicians along the east coast of the Mediterranean; and other Semitic peoples extended as far east as Babylonia (R 20).

Palestine was the old home of the Jews. It is usually thought of as having been shut off from the rest of the world and from the great movements of history. As a matter of fact, it lay on the great highways that joined the nations of antiquity.

It was a meeting place for three continents.

Along these roads swept in turn the armies of the great conquering nations, Babylonia, Assyria, Egypt, Macedonia, Syria, Rome (R 20).

[The great caravan-route which led from Acco on the sea to Damascus divided at its commencement into three roads: ... Hence although the stream of commerce between Acco and the East was divided into three channels, yet, as one of these passed through Nazareth, the quiet little town was not a stagnant pool of rustic seclusion (Edersheim 147).]

which also included the Babylonians, the Phœnicians, and the more recent enemies of Rome, the Carthaginians.

During the fore part of the first century after Christ, the Jews were the most influential group of the Semitic peoples, and they happened to occupy a peculiarly strategic geographic position in the world as it was at that time ruled and organized for trade.

121:2.2 Many of the great highways joining the nations of antiquity passed through Palestine,

which thus became the meeting place, or crossroads, of three continents.

The travel, trade, and armies of Babylonia, Assyria, Egypt, Syria, Greece, Parthia, and Rome successively swept over Palestine.

From time immemorial, many caravan routes from the Orient passed through some part of this region to the few good seaports of the eastern end of the Mediterranean, whence ships carried their cargoes to all the maritime Occident.

And more than half of this caravan traffic passed through or near the little town of Nazareth in Galilee.

121:2.3 Although Palestine was the home of Jewish religious culture and the birthplace of Christianity,

But the Jew was not limited to Palestine then any more than he is now.... [B]efore the time of Christ he had begun the career of **tradesman**, in which we know him so well. Then, as now, he was scattered throughout the world (R 21).

the Jews were abroad in the world, dwelling in many nations and **trading** in every province of the Roman and Parthian states.

This **dispersion of the Jews** was of the greatest significance for Christianity. **Rome built roads** for the gospel, **Greece gave it a language**, but the Jews had prepared the approach to men's hearts and minds (R 22).

121:2.4 **Greece provided a language** and a culture, **Rome built the roads** and unified an empire,

but the **dispersion of the Jews**,

They usually formed in each city a special community with some measure of self-government. The **synagogue** was the center of the community, and over a hundred and fifty of these are known to have been scattered throughout the empire (R 22).

with their more than two hundred **synagogues** and well-organized religious communities scattered hither and yon throughout the Roman world,

Every Jewish synagogue was a **center** of religious influence.

provided the cultural **centers**

in which the new gospel of the kingdom of heaven found initial reception, and from which it subsequently spread to the uttermost parts of the world.

About it there was usually a **fringe** of converts, or proselytes, or at least a number of interested inquirers and attendants who were spoken of as “devout” or “God-fearing” (Acts 10.22; 17.4) (R 22).

Thus the leaven of the Old Testament moral and spiritual ideals was spread throughout the empire, and Paul’s first and best **converts** were among these Gentiles that had already been touched by Judaism (R 22).

I, VI: POLITICAL AND RELIGIOUS LIFE OF THE JEWISH DISPERSION IN THE WEST—THEIR UNION IN THE GREAT HOPE OF THE COMING DELIVERER. (**Edersheim** 73)

Even the circumstance that there was a ‘**Court of the Gentiles,**’ with marble screen beautifully ornamented, bearing tablets which, in Latin and Greek, warned Gentiles not to proceed further, proves that the Sanctuary was largely attended by others than Jews, or, in the words of Josephus, that ‘it was held in reverence by nations from the ends of the earth’ (E1 74).

The **connection** between **Jerusalem and Antioch** was very close. All that occurred in that city was eagerly watched in the Jewish capital (E1 74).

A fit place this great border-city, crowded by Hellenists, in close connection with Jerusalem, to be the birthplace of the name ‘**Christian,**’ to send forth a Paul on his mission to the Gentile world, and to obtain for it a charter of citizenship far nobler than that of which the record was graven on tablets of brass (E1 74).

121:2.5 Each Jewish synagogue tolerated a **fringe** of gentile believers, “devout” or “God-fearing” men,

and it was among this fringe of proselytes that Paul made the bulk of his early **converts** to Christianity.

Even the temple at Jerusalem possessed its ornate **court of the gentiles.**

There was very close **connection** between the culture, commerce, and worship of **Jerusalem and Antioch.**

In Antioch Paul’s disciples were first called “**Christians.**”

I, I: THE JEWISH WORLD IN THE DAYS OF CHRIST—THE JEWISH DISPERSION IN THE EAST (Edersheim 1 3)

[contd] Among the outward means by which the religion of Israel was preserved, one of the most important was the centralisation and localisation of its worship in Jerusalem.

If to some the ordinances of the Old Testament may in this respect seem narrow and exclusive, it is at least doubtful, whether without such a provision **Monotheism** itself could have continued as a creed or a worship (E1 3).

[The Jews had a very large measure of **self-government** in Judæa under their high priest and Sanhedrin, or Senate (Ral 21).]

121:2.6 The centralization of the Jewish temple worship at Jerusalem

constituted alike the secret of the survival of their **monotheism**

and the promise of the nurture and sending forth to the world of a new and enlarged concept of that one God of all nations and Father of all mortals.

The temple service at Jerusalem represented the survival of a religious cultural concept in the face of the downfall of a succession of gentile national overlords and racial persecutors.

121:2.7 The Jewish people of this time, although under Roman suzerainty,

enjoyed a considerable degree of **self-government**

and, remembering the then only recent heroic exploits of deliverance executed by

Only three years [after Antiochus Epiphanes, desecrated the Temple], and, after a series of brilliant victories by undisciplined men over the flower of the Syrian army, **Judas the Maccabee**—truly God’s Hammer—had purified the Temple, and restored its altar on the very same day on which the ‘abomination of desolation’ had been set up in its place (E1 5).

[The prophets’] sayings had been more than fulfilled as regarded the past. Would they not equally become true in reference to that far more glorious future for Zion and for Israel, which was to be ushered in by the coming of the **Messiah?** (E1 5)

II: GROWTH OF THE JEWISH STATE (**Robinson** 21)

SIMON (143-135 B.C.) (Robinson 28)

Here and in the subsequent history of the Jews, **Rome’s policy** must be understood (Ro 30).

She knew that Palestine was the only **highway** between **Syria and Egypt** (Ro 30).

Judas Maccabee and his immediate successors,

were vibrant with the expectation of the immediate appearance of a still greater deliverer,

the long-expected **Messiah.**

121:2.8 The secret of the survival of Palestine, the kingdom of the Jews, as a semi-independent state was wrapped up in

the foreign **policy of the Roman government,**

which desired to maintain control of

the Palestinian **highway** of travel between **Syria and Egypt**

as well as the western terminals of the caravan routes between the Orient and the Occident.

She did not wish any power to arise in the East which might threaten her plans for future expansion (Ro 30).

Rome did not wish any power to arise in the Levant which might curb her future expansion in these regions.

The policy of intrigue which had for its object

If Egypt and Syria were to be pitted against each other so that neither should become powerful,

the pitting of Seleucid Syria and Ptolemaic Egypt against each other

it was very important that the independence of Judea should be established and maintained.

necessitated fostering Palestine as a separate and independent state.

Roman policy, the degeneration of Egypt, and the progressive weakening of the Seleucids before the rising power of Parthia,

This accounts for the curious anomaly of a small group of people holding its independence

explain why it was that for several generations a small and unpowerful group of Jews was able to maintain its independence

against Egypt on the one hand and Syria on the other.

against both Seleucidae to the north and Ptolemies to the south.

This fortuitous liberty and independence of the political rule of surrounding and more powerful peoples the Jews attributed to the fact that they were the "chosen people," to the direct interposition of Yahweh.

Such an attitude of racial superiority

Their brief taste of political independence served only to make unpalatable the political subjection which later was certain to come.

made it all the harder for them to endure Roman suzerainty when it finally fell upon their land.

But even in that sad hour the Jews refused to learn that

It would seem that the “chosen” people had to learn the lesson of unworldliness in a peculiarly tragic way. The whole struggle of the Jewish people in these centuries was teaching them that their mission in the world was other than political independence or power (Ro 30-31).

IV: PALESTINE UNDER THE ROMANS (Robinson 48)

HEROD THE GREAT (40-4 B.C.) (Robinson 48)

The Pharisees were naturally opposed to the rule of a man who was an Idumean and an ally of Rome. But the Sadducean nobility who had supported Antigonus, were also his enemies (Ro 50).

[See Ro 48-50.]

[Again, as, despite his profession of Judaism,

he reared magnificent heathen temples in honour of Augustus at Sebaste and Cæsarea ... (Edersheim 88).]

Herod’s reign more than any other made travel secure for Jews (Ro 58).

their world mission was spiritual, not political.

121:2.9 The Jews were unusually apprehensive and suspicious during the times of Jesus because they were then ruled by an outsider,

Herod the Idumean,

who had seized the overlordship of Judea by cleverly ingratiating himself with the Roman rulers.

And though Herod professed loyalty to the Hebrew ceremonial observances,

he proceeded to build temples for many strange gods.

121:2.10 The friendly relations of Herod with the Roman rulers made the world safe for Jewish travel

and thus opened the way for increased Jewish penetration even of distant portions of the Roman Empire and of foreign treaty nations with the new gospel of the kingdom of heaven.

SOURCE OR PARALLEL

The reign of Herod is especially important for the student of early Christianity because of its **blending of Jewish and Hellenistic elements** (Ro 58).

His building of the **harbor at Cæsarea**

opened up Palestine to the world and the world to Palestine (Ro 58).

PALESTINE IN THE TIME OF JESUS (4 B.C. TO 44 A.D.) (Robinson 59)

Herod **Antipas** governed [Galilee and Perea] from 4 B.C. to 39 A.D., covering all the years of **Jesus' youth and ministry**.

He was more **like his father** than his brothers. He was fond of **building** and reconstructing.

He rebuilt the city of **Sepphoris**, an important center in Galilee.... Most important for our study is his reconstruction of the village on the shore of the sea of Galilee, which he named Tiberias, after the emperor Tiberius who was ruling at that time. [Etc.] (Ro 62)

[The Galileans] were looked down upon as neglecting traditionalism, unable to rise to its speculative heights, and preferring the attractions of the Haggadah to the logical subtleties of the Halakhah. There was a general contempt in Rabbinic circles for all that was Galilean (**Edersheim** 225).

URANTIA PAPER 121

Herod's reign also contributed much toward the further **blending of Hebrew and Hellenistic philosophies**.

121:2.11 Herod built the **harbor of Caesarea**,

which further aided in making Palestine the crossroads of the civilized world.

He died in **4 B.C.**,

and his son Herod **Antipas** governed Galilee and Perea during **Jesus' youth and ministry** to A.D.39.

Antipas, **like his father**, was a great **builder**.

He rebuilt many of the cities of Galilee,

including the important trade center of **Sepphoris**.

121:2.12 The Galileans were not regarded with full favor by the Jerusalem religious leaders and rabbinical teachers.

North of Samaria lay Galilee, where Jesus' home was. It had not long been settled by the Jews and was still half Gentile (Rall 21).

Galilee was more gentile than Jewish when Jesus was born.

6. THE HEBREW RELIGION

121:6.1 By the close of the first century before Christ the religious thought of Jerusalem had been tremendously influenced and somewhat modified by Greek cultural teachings and even by Greek philosophy. In the long contest between the views of the Eastern and Western schools of Hebrew thought, Jerusalem and the rest of the Occident and the Levant in general adopted the Western Jewish or modified Hellenistic viewpoint.

[?]

I, I: THE JEWISH WORLD IN THE DAYS OF CHRIST—THE JEWISH DISPERSION IN THE EAST. (Edersheim 1 3)

121:6.2 In the days of Jesus three languages prevailed in Palestine:

The language spoken by the Jews was no longer Hebrew, but Aramæan, both in Palestine and in Babylonia; in the former the Western, in the latter the Eastern dialect.

The common people spoke some dialect of Aramaic;

In fact, the common people were ignorant of pure Hebrew, which henceforth became the language of students and of the Synagogue. Even there a *Methurgeman*, or interpreter, had to be employed to translate into the vernacular the portions of Scripture read in the public services, and the addresses delivered by the Rabbis (E1 10).

the priests and rabbis spoke Hebrew;

SOURCE OR PARALLEL

URANTIA PAPER 121

[The higher classes spoke Greek and were familiar with Greek culture (Angus 217).]

the educated classes and the better strata of Jews in general spoke Greek.

I, II: THE JEWISH DISPERSION IN THE WEST—THE HELLENISTS—ORIGIN OF HELLENIST LITERATURE IN THE GREEK TRANSLATION OF THE BIBLE—CHARACTER OF THE SEPTUAGINT. (Edersheim1 17)

[See E1 23-25.]

The early translation of the Hebrew scriptures into Greek at Alexandria

was responsible in no small measure for the subsequent predominance of the Greek wing of Jewish culture and theology.

And the writings of the Christian teachers were soon to appear in the same language.

I, III: THE OLD FAITH PREPARING FOR THE NEW—DEVELOPMENT OF HELLENIST THEOLOGY: THE APOCRYPHA, ARISTEAS, ARISTOBOLUS, AND THE PSEUD- EPIGRAPHIC WRITINGS. (Edersheim1 31)

[contd] The translation of the Old Testament into Greek may be regarded as the starting-point of Hellenism. It rendered possible the hope that what in its original form had been confined to the few, might become accessible to the world at large (E1 31).

The renaissance of Judaism dates from the Greek translation of the Hebrew scriptures.

This was a vital influence which later determined the drift of Paul's Christian cult toward the West instead of toward the East.

121:6.3 Though the Hellenized Jewish beliefs were very little influenced by

Of course there could be no alliance with Epicureanism, which was at the opposite pole to the Old Testament.

the teachings of the Epicureans,

But the brilliancy of Plato's speculations would charm,

while the stern self-abnegation of Stoicism would prove almost equally attractive. The one would show why they believed, the other why they lived, as they did (E1 32).

Thus, without further details, it may be said that the Fourth Book of Maccabees is a Jewish Stoical treatise on the Stoical theme of 'the supremacy of reason'—the proposition, stated at the outset, that 'pious reason bears absolute sway over the passions,' being illustrated by the story of the martyrdom of Eleazar, and of the mother and her seven sons.

On the other hand, that sublime work, the 'Wisdom of Solomon,' contains Platonic and Stoic elements—chiefly perhaps the latter—the two occurring side by side (E1 32).

The Stoic philosophers had busied themselves in finding a deeper *allegorical* meaning, especially in the writings of Homer.... Such a process was peculiarly pleasing to the imagination, and the results alike astounding and satisfactory, since as they could not be proved, so neither could they be disproved. This allegorical method was the welcome key by which the Hellenists might unlock the hidden treasury of Scripture (E1 33-34).

they were very materially affected by

the philosophy of Plato

and the self-abnegation doctrines of the Stoics.

The great inroad of Stoicism is exemplified by the Fourth Book of the Maccabees;

the penetration of both Platonic philosophy and Stoic doctrines is exhibited in the Wisdom of Solomon.

The Hellenized Jews brought to the Hebrew scriptures such an allegorical interpretation

that they found no difficulty in

And in such manner could the whole system of Aristotle be found in the Bible. But how was this to be accounted for? Of course, the Bible had not learned from Aristotle, but he and all the other philosophers had learned from the Bible (E1 36).

[?]

It only remained to give fixedness to the allegorical method by reducing it to certain principles, or canons of criticism, and to form the heterogeneous mass of Grecian philosophemes and Jewish theologumena into a compact, if not homogeneous, system. This was the work of Philo of Alexandria, born about 20 B.C. (E1 36).

[?]

One step only remained to complete what Hellenism had already begun. That completion came through [Philo,] who, although himself untouched by the Gospel, perhaps more than any other prepared alike his co-religionists the Jews, and his countrymen the Greeks, for the new teaching, which, indeed, was presented by many of its early advocates in the forms which they had learned from him (E1 39).

conforming Hebrew theology with their revered Aristotelian philosophy.

But this all led to disastrous confusion until these problems were taken in hand by

Philo of Alexandria, who proceeded to harmonize and systemize Greek philosophy and Hebrew theology into a compact and fairly consistent system of religious belief and practice.

And it was this later teaching of combined Greek philosophy and Hebrew theology that prevailed in Palestine when Jesus lived and taught,

and which Paul utilized as the foundation on which to build his more advanced and enlightening cult of Christianity.

121:6.4 Philo was a great teacher; not since Moses had there lived a man who exerted such a profound influence on the ethical and religious thought of the Occidental world. In the matter of the combination of the better elements in contemporaneous systems of ethical and religious teachings, there have been seven outstanding human teachers: Sethard, Moses, Zoroaster, Lao-tse, Buddha, Philo, and Paul.

I, IV: PHILO OF ALEXANDRIA, THE RABBIS, AND THE GOSPELS—THE FINAL DEVELOPMENT OF HELLENISM IN ITS RELATION TO RABBINISM AND THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO ST. JOHN. (Edersheim 140)

121:6.5 Many, but not all, of Philo's inconsistencies resulting from an effort to combine Greek mystical philosophy and Roman Stoic doctrines with the legalistic theology of the Hebrews, Paul recognized and wisely eliminated from his pre-Christian basic theology.

[?]

Philo led the way for Paul more fully to restore the concept of the Paradise Trinity,

[See E 46-47, re the Targumim's unique teachings about the *Memra*, Logos, or 'Word.' Edersheim wonders whether the *Memra* represents an 'older tradition'. He writes: "Beyond this Rabbinic theology has not preserved to us the doctrine of personal distinctions in the Godhead" (E1 47).]

which had long been dormant in Jewish theology.

In only one matter did Paul fail to keep pace with Philo or to transcend the teachings of this wealthy and educated Jew of Alexandria, and that was

The Logos of Philo is shadowy, unreal, not a Person; there is no need of an **atonement**; the High-Priest intercedes, but has no sacrifice to offer as the basis of His intercession, least of all that of Himself;

the doctrine of the **atonement**;

Philo taught deliverance from

the Old Testament types are only typical ideas, not typical facts; they point to a Prototypal Idea in the eternal past, not to an Antitypal Person and Fact in history; there is no **cleansing of the soul by blood**, no sprinkling of the Mercy Seat, no access for all through the rent veil into the immediate Presence of God; not yet a quickening of the soul from dead works to serve the living God (E 49-50).

the doctrine of **forgiveness only by the shedding of blood**

[*Compare:* Before time began the soul was without body, an archetype, the 'heavenly man,' **pure spirit in Paradise** (virtue), yet even so longing after its ultimate archetype, God. Some of these pure spirits descended into bodies and so lost their purity. Etc. (E1 51-52)]

He also possibly glimpsed the reality and presence of the **Thought Adjusters** more clearly than did Paul.

This leads us to the great question of Original Sin. Here the views of Philo are those of the Eastern Rabbis. But both are entirely different from those on which the argument in the Epistle to the Romans turns. It was neither at the feet of Gamaliel, nor yet from Jewish Hellenism, that Saul of Tarsus learned the **doctrine of original sin**.

But Paul's **theory of original sin**,

The statement that as in Adam all spiritually died, so in Messiah all should be made alive, finds absolutely no parallel in Jewish writings. What may be called the starting point of Christian theology, the **doctrine of hereditary guilt** and sin, through the fall of Adam, and of the consequent entire helpless corruption of our nature,

the **doctrines of hereditary guilt** and innate evil and redemption therefrom,

is entirely unknown to Rabbinical Judaism (E1 52).

This Hellenistic and Hellenic world now stood in waiting to enter [the Church], though as it were by its northern porch, and to be baptized at its font. All this must have forced itself on the mind of St. John, residing in the midst of them at Ephesus ... And so the **fourth Gospel** became, not the supplement, but the complement, of the other three (E1 55-56).

There is **Alexandrian** form of thought not only in the whole conception, but in the Logos, and in His presentation as the Light, the Life, the Wellspring of the world. But these forms are filled in the fourth Gospel with quite other substance.... St. John strikes the pen through Alexandrianism when he lays it down as the fundamental fact of New Testament history 'the Logos was made flesh,' just as St. Paul does when he proclaims the great mystery of 'God manifest in the flesh' (E1 56-57).

was partially Mithraic in origin,

having little in common with Hebrew theology,

Philo's philosophy, or Jesus' teachings.

Some phases of Paul's teachings regarding original sin and the atonement were original with himself.

121:6.6 The **Gospel of John**, the last of the narratives of Jesus' earth life, was addressed to the Western peoples

and presents its story much in the light of

the viewpoint of the later **Alexandrian** Christians,

who were also disciples of the teachings of Philo.

OUR KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS FROM
NONBIBLICAL SOURCES (Scott 7)

121:6.7 At about the time of Christ a strange reversion of feeling toward the Jews

Here is the way Josephus describes the Jewish persecution in Alexandria early in the first century of our era: “The people in distress laid all their misfortunes to the Jews and at last determined to remove them. They rushed upon the parts of the city where the Jews lived and they slew them without mercy ...” (S 12).

occurred in Alexandria,

and from this former Jewish stronghold there went forth

This terrible persecution of the Jews extended from the Nile to the Euphrates, and Josephus paints a similar picture of what took place in Babylonia, in Caesarea, in Damascus, and in Antioch (S 13).

a virulent wave of persecution,

Even from Rome, the home of Roman law, the Jews were banished, and we read in the Acts that in Corinth Paul “found a certain Jew named Aquila, born in Pontus, lately come from Italy, with his wife Priscilla; (because that Claudius had commanded all Jews to depart from Rome)” (S 14).

extending even to Rome, from which many thousands were banished.

But such a campaign of misrepresentation was short-lived; very soon the imperial government fully restored the curtailed liberties of the Jews throughout the empire.

I, I: THE JEWISH WORLD IN THE DAYS OF CHRIST—THE JEWISH DISPERSION IN THE EAST. (Edersheim 3)

121:6.8 Throughout the whole wide world, no matter where the Jews found themselves dispersed by commerce or oppression,

[Philo describes his countrymen] as, wherever sojourning, having but one metropolis—not Alexandria, Antioch, or Rome—but the Holy City with its Temple, dedicated to the Most High God. A nation, the vast majority of which was dispersed over the whole inhabited earth, had ceased to be a special, and become a world-nation. Yet its heart beat in Jerusalem, and thence the lifeblood passed to its most distant members (E1 6).

all with one accord kept their hearts centered on the holy temple at Jerusalem.

Jewish theology did survive as it was interpreted and practiced at Jerusalem, notwithstanding that

However, therefore, the Palestinians in their pride or jealousy might sneer, that the Babylonians were stupid, proud, and poor ('they ate bread upon bread'), even they had to acknowledge that, 'when the Law had fallen into oblivion, it was restored by Ezra of Babylon; when it was a second time forgotten, Hillel the Babylonian came and recovered it; and when yet a third time it fell into oblivion, Rabbi Chija came from Babylon and gave it back once more' (E1 12).

it was several times saved from oblivion by the timely intervention of certain Babylonian teachers.

I, VI: POLITICAL AND RELIGIOUS LIFE OF THE JEWISH DISPERSION IN THE WEST—THEIR UNION IN THE GREAT HOPE OF THE COMING DELIVERER. (Edersheim 173)

Few, who could undertake or afford the journey, but had at some time or other gone up to the Holy City to attend one of the great feasts.... Views and feelings of this kind help us to understand, how, on some great feast, as Josephus states on sufficient authority, the population of Jerusalem—within its *ecclesiastical* boundaries—could have swelled to the enormous number of **nearly three millions** (E1 77-78).

For, deepest of all convictions was that of their common *centre*; strongest of all feelings was the love which bound them to Palestine and to Jerusalem, the city of God, the joy of all the earth, the glory of His people Israel.... **Hellenist** and **Eastern** equally realised this (E1 77).

No truth more firmly rooted in the consciousness of all, than that in **Jerusalem** alone men could truly **worship** (E1 77).

And still, there was an even stronger bond in their common *hope*. That hope pointed them all, wherever scattered, back to Palestine. To them the **coming of the Messiah** undoubtedly implied the restoration of Israel's kingdom, and, as a first part in it, the return of 'the dispersed' (E1 78).

121:6.9 As many as **two and one-half million** of these dispersed Jews used to come to Jerusalem for the celebration of their national religious festivals.

And no matter what the theologic or philosophic differences of the **Eastern** (Babylonian) and the Western (**Hellenic**) Jews,

they were all agreed on **Jerusalem** as the center of their **worship**

and in ever looking forward to the **coming of the Messiah**.

7. JEWS AND GENTILES

I, VII: IN PALESTINE—JEWS AND GENTILES IN ‘THE LAND’—THEIR MUTUAL RELATIONS AND FEELINGS—‘THE WALL OF SEPARATION’ (Edersheim 1 84)

121:7.1 By the times of Jesus the Jews had arrived at a settled concept of their origin, history, and destiny.

They had built up a rigid wall of separation between themselves and the gentile world;

It is necessary to transport oneself into this atmosphere to understand the views entertained at the time of Jesus, or to form any conception of their infinite contrast in spirit to the new doctrine. The abhorrence, not unmingled with contempt, of all Gentile ways, thoughts and associations;

they looked upon all gentile ways with utter contempt.

the worship of the letter of the Law;

They worshiped the letter of the law

the self-righteousness, and pride of descent, and still more of knowledge, become thus intelligible to us, and equally so, the absolute antagonism to the claims of a Messiah, so unlike themselves and their own ideal (E1 85).

and indulged a form of self-righteousness based upon the false pride of descent.

They had formed preconceived notions regarding the promised Messiah, and most of these expectations envisaged a Messiah who would come as a part of their national and racial history.

The past, the present, and the future, alike as regarded the Gentile world and Israel, were irrevocably fixed; or rather, it might almost be said, there were not such—all continuing as they had been from the creation of the world, nay, long before it (E1 85).

To the Hebrews of those days Jewish theology was irrevocably settled, forever fixed.

121:7.2 The teachings and practices of Jesus regarding tolerance and kindness ran counter to the long-standing attitude of the Jews toward other peoples whom they considered heathen. For generations the Jews had nourished an attitude toward the outside world which made it impossible for them to accept the Master's teachings about the spiritual brotherhood of man. They were unwilling to share Yahweh on equal terms with the gentiles and were likewise unwilling to accept as the Son of God one who taught such new and strange doctrines.

I, VIII: TRADITIONALISM, ITS ORIGIN, CHARACTER, AND LITERATURE—THE MISHNAH AND TALMUD—THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST—THE DAWN OF A NEW DAY. (Edersheim 193)

121:7.3 The scribes, the Pharisees, and the priesthood held the Jews in a terrible bondage of ritualism and legalism, a bondage far more real than that of the Roman political rule.

The Jews of Jesus' time were not only held in subjugation to the *law* but were equally bound by the slavish demands of

These traditional ordinances, as already stated, bear the general name of the *Halakhah*, as indicating alike the way in which the fathers had walked, and that which their children were bound to follow. These *Halakhoth* were either simply the laws laid down in Scripture; or else derived from, or traced to it by some ingenious and artificial method of exegesis; or added to it, by way of amplification and for safety's sake; or, finally, legalised customs.

the *traditions*,

They provided for every possible and impossible case, entered into every detail of private, family, and public life;

and with iron logic, unbending rigour, and most **minute** analysis **pursued and dominated** man, turn whither he might, laying on him a yoke which was truly unbearable (E1 98).

In describing the historical growth of the *Halakhah*, we may dismiss in a few sentences the legends of Jewish tradition about patriarchal times. They assure us, that there was an Academy and a Rabbinic tribunal of Shem, and they speak of traditions delivered by that Patriarch to Jacob; of diligent attendance by the latter on the Rabbinic College; of a tractate (in 400 sections) on idolatry by **Abraham**, and of his observance of the whole traditional law; ... (E1 98-99).

According to the Jewish view, God had given **Moses** on Mount Sinai alike the oral and the written Law, that is, the Law with all its interpretations and applications (E1 99).

which involved and invaded every domain of personal and social life.

These **minute** regulations of conduct **pursued and dominated** every loyal Jew,

and it is not strange that they promptly rejected one of their number who presumed to ignore their sacred traditions, and who dared to flout their long-honored regulations of social conduct.

They could hardly regard with favor the teachings of one who did not hesitate to clash with dogmas which they regarded as having been ordained by

Father **Abraham** himself.

Moses had given them their law

and they would not compromise.

121:7.4 By the time of the first century after Christ

But traditionalism went further, and placed the oral actually above the **written Law**. The expression, ‘After the tenor of these words I have made a covenant with thee and with Israel,’ was explained as meaning, that God’s covenant was founded on the **spoken**, in opposition to the written words (E1 100).

the **spoken** interpretation of the law by the recognized teachers, the scribes, had become a higher authority than the **written law** itself.

And all this made it easier for certain religious leaders of the Jews to array the people against the acceptance of a new gospel.

121:7.5 These circumstances rendered it impossible for the Jews to fulfill their divine destiny as messengers of the new gospel of religious freedom and spiritual liberty. They could not break the fetters of tradition.

Jeremiah had told of the

[After those days, saith the LORD, I will put my law in their inward parts, and **write it in their hearts**; and will be their God, and they shall be my people (Jer. 31:33).]

“**law to be written in men’s hearts,**”

Ezekiel had spoken of

[A new heart also will I give you, and a **new spirit** will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh (Ezek. 36:26).]

a “**new spirit to live in man’s soul,**”

and the Psalmist had prayed that God would

[Create in me a **clean heart**, O God; and renew a **right spirit** within me (Ps. 51:10).]

“**create a clean heart within and renew a right spirit.**”

But when the Jewish religion of good works and slavery to law fell victim to the stagnation of traditionalistic inertia, the motion of religious evolution passed westward to the European peoples.

121:7.6 And so a different people were called upon to carry an advancing theology to the world, a system of teaching embodying the philosophy of the Greeks, the law of the Romans, the morality of the Hebrews, and the gospel of personality sanctity and spiritual liberty formulated by Paul and based on the teachings of Jesus.

121:7.7 Paul's cult of Christianity exhibited its morality as a Jewish birthmark. The Jews viewed history as the providence of God—Yahweh at work. The Greeks brought to the new teaching clearer concepts of the eternal life. Paul's doctrines were influenced in theology and philosophy not only by Jesus' teachings but also by Plato and Philo. In ethics he was inspired not only by Christ but also by the Stoics.

121:7.8 The gospel of Jesus, as it was embodied in Paul's cult of Antioch Christianity, became blended with the following teachings:

1. The philosophic reasoning of the Greek proselytes to Judaism, including some of their concepts of the eternal life.

2. The appealing teachings of the prevailing mystery cults, especially the Mithraic doctrines of redemption, atonement, and salvation by the sacrifice made by some god.

3. The sturdy morality of the established Jewish religion.

V: WHAT PEOPLE THOUGHT OF
THE WORLD WHEN JESUS LIVED
(Barton 28)

The conception that the men of Jesus' time had of the phenomena of nature and of **disease** were even more different from those that prevail to-day than their ideas of the physical **world** were.

The world was believed to be full of spirits. **Every rock, tree,** and shrub had its spirit; the air was filled with invisible beings. Some of these were **good**, some **bad** (B 30).

In a word, the men of that time lived in an **enchanted world**. All things, they believed, were possible. Naturally stories of boundless marvels were told in all nations.

Men expected **miracles**; they lacked the scientific spirit; they easily credited stories of marvels (B 30).

121:7.9 The Mediterranean Roman Empire, the Parthian kingdom, and the adjacent peoples of Jesus' time all held crude and primitive ideas regarding the geography of the **world**, astronomy, health, and **disease**;

and naturally they were amazed by the new and startling pronouncements of the carpenter of Nazareth.

The ideas of spirit possession, **good** and **bad**, applied not merely to human beings,

but **every rock** and **tree** was viewed by many as being spirit possessed.

This was an **enchanted age**,

and everybody believed in **miracles** as commonplace occurrences.