

Paper 121 — The Times of Michael’s Bestowal

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Most endnotes and Urantia Book cross-references have been deleted to enhance readability.

Sources for Paper 121, in the order in which they appear

- (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)
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- (4) Benjamin Willard **Robinson**, Ph.D., *The Sayings of Jesus: Their Background and Interpretation* (New York: Harper & Brothers Publishers, 1930)
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- (6) Alban G. **Widgery**, M.A., *The Comparative Study of Religions: A Systematic Study* (London: Williams & Norgate, 1923)
- (7) John A. Scott, *We Would Know Jesus* (New York: The Abingdon Press, 1936)

Note: This source is coded **IAScott**.

- (8) George A. **Barton**, Ph.D., LL.D., *Jesus of Nazareth: A Biography* (New York, The Macmillan Company, 1922)
- (9) Ernest Dewitt **Burton** and Shailer **Mathews**, *Constructive Studies in the Life of Christ* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1900)
- (10) David Smith, M.A., D.D., *The Days of His Flesh: The Earthly Life of Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ*, Eighth Edition, Revised (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1910)

Note: This source is coded **Smith1**.

- (11) Ernest Findlay Scott, *The Literature of the New Testament* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1932, 1936)

Note: This source is coded **EFS**cott.

- (12) “Peter,” by David Smith, in *Hastings’ Dictionary of the Bible*, edited by James Hastings, D.D. (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1909)
- (13) “Luke (Evangelist),” by A. J. Maclean, in *Hastings’ Dictionary of the Bible*, edited by James Hastings, D.D. (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1909)

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.)

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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.

V: THE JEW (Angus 140)

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 (A 163).

I: THE ROMAN-GRECIAN WORLD (Ral 13)

Paul's case is even more suggestive.

He was a Hebrew of the Hebrews,

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

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

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,

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

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;

121:1.4 1. The Roman political and social systems.

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

121:1.5 2. The Grecian language and culture—

and philosophy to a certain extent.

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

121:1.6 3. The rapidly spreading influence of

Jewish religious and moral teachings.

[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.

121:1.7 When Jesus was born, the entire Mediterranean world was a unified empire.

Great roads stretched everywhere for the Roman soldier.

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

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

The seas were cleared of pirates,

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

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

[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).]

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:* The Roman governor Ventidius drove out the Parthians from Syria in 39/38 B.C. Robinson writes: "In the summer of 38, after the Roman defeat of the Parthians, Herod presented himself again to Antony ..." (R 49).]

II: THE JEWISH WORLD (Rall 20)

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

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121:1.8 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.

121:1.9 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).

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.

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.

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

It was a meeting place for three continents.

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

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

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

II, IV: THE ANNUNCIATION OF JESUS THE MESSIAH ... (Edersheim 1 144)

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.

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 (E1 147).

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

II: THE JEWISH WORLD (Rall 20)

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

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 ... (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).

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.

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 (Rall 21).]

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).

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 **Judas Maccabee** and his immediate successors,

[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).

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

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

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.

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

the pitting of Seleucid Syria and Ptolemaic Egypt against each other

SOURCE OR PARALLEL

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

necessitated fostering Palestine as a separate and **independent** state.

This

Roman policy,

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

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.

Their brief taste of political independence

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

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

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).

the Jews refused to learn that **their world mission** was spiritual, **not political.**

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).

It was [Herod's] plan to obtain Roman assistance in gaining for himself the Jewish regency, with Aristobulus as king.... But on his arrival [in Rome] ... Antony and Octavius decided that Herod was preëminently fitted to preserve peace and to maintain Roman authority in Palestine, so they conferred on him the title of "King of Judea" (Ro 48-49).

[Again, as, despite his **profession** of Judaism,

he reared magnificent heathen temples in honour of Augustus at Sebaste and Cæsarea ... (**Edersheim** 188).]

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

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

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.

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

His building of the harbor at Cæsarea

121:2.11 Herod built the harbor of Caesarea,

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

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

Herod's death in 4 B.C. was hailed as a blessing by all the people, even those of his own household (Ro 58).

He died in 4 B.C.,

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.

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

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

Antipas, like his father, was a great builder.

He rebuilt the city of Sepphoris, an important center in Galilee....

He rebuilt many of the cities of Galilee, including the important trade center of Sepphoris.

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)

II, IX: THE CHILD-LIFE IN NAZARETH (Edersheim 217)

[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 (E1 225).

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

II: THE JEWISH WORLD (Rall 20)

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

Galilee was more gentile than Jewish when Jesus was born.

3. AMONG THE GENTILES

121:3.1 Although the social and economic condition of the Roman state was not of the highest order, the widespread domestic peace and prosperity was propitious for the bestowal of Michael. In the first century after Christ the society of the Mediterranean world consisted of five well-defined strata:

121:3.2 1. *The aristocracy.* The upper classes with money and official power, the privileged and ruling groups.

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

121:3.3 2. *The business groups.*

[The Babylonian Jews'] caravans ... carried the rich carpets and woven stuffs of the East, as well as its precious spices, to the West: generally through Palestine to the Phœnician harbours, where a fleet of merchantmen belonging to Jewish bankers and shippers lay ready to convey them to every quarter of the world. These merchant princes were keenly alive to all that passed, not only in the financial, but in the political world (E1 14).

The merchant princes and the bankers,

the traders—the big importers and exporters—the international merchants.

III: SOCIAL AND MORAL
CONDITIONS OF THE GRAECO-
ROMAN WORLD (**Angus** 30)

Destruction of the Middle Classes (Angus 35)

[contd] Perhaps the most deplorable feature of this period was the destruction of the **middle classes**

who form the **backbone** of every nation.... The absence of the middle class deepened and widened the terrible social cleft in the ancient world (A 35-36).

[*Compare:* [B]efore the time of Christ, [the Jew] had begun the career of **tradesman**, in which we know him so well. Then, as now, he was scattered throughout the world (**Rail** 21).]

Increasing Number of Slaves (Angus 35)

[contd] One of the evil results of war was the augmentation of the numbers of slaves.... It affected the **free labouring population:**

forced labour, considered cheaper than free, entered into **competition** with it.

121:3.4 3. *The small **middle class.***

Although this group was indeed small, it was very influential

and provided the moral **backbone** of the early Christian church,

which encouraged these groups to continue in their various crafts and trades.

Among the Jews many of the Pharisees belonged to this class of **tradesmen.**

121:3.5 4. *The **free proletariat.***

This group had little or no social standing.

Though proud of their freedom, they were placed at great disadvantage because

they were forced to **compete** with slave labor.

But, strange to say, we hear of no complaints of the free against the slave, nor any problem of unemployment. The few freemen anxious to work apparently found work, and the others preferred to be on the roll of state-fed (A 35).

[contd] Work for wages and the winning of daily bread was distasteful, especially to the Greek and to the later Roman (A 35).

The upper classes regarded them disdainfully,

allowing that they were useless except for “breeding purposes.”

121:3.6 5. *The slaves.*

II, XI: IN THE FIFTEENTH YEAR OF TIBERIUS CÆSAR AND UNDER THE PONTIFICATE OF ANNAS AND CAIAPHAS ... (Edersheim 1 255)

Of a population of about two millions [in the city of Rome], well-nigh one half were slaves; and, of the rest, the greater part either freedmen and their descendants, or foreigners (E1 256).

Half the population of the Roman state were slaves;

many were superior individuals and quickly made their way up among the free proletariat and even among the tradesmen. The majority were either mediocre or very inferior.

I: THE ROMAN-GRECIAN WORLD (Ral 13)

Slavery is another side of this picture. Roman wars brought in captives by the scores of thousands. They were not necessarily of inferior race,

121:3.7 Slavery, even of superior peoples, was a feature of Roman military conquest.

and yet the power of the Roman master was absolute (R 14).

The power of the master over his slave was unqualified.

These common folks and slaves **composed** the mass of the members of the early church (R 15).

The early Christian church was largely **composed** of the lower classes and these slaves.

III: SOCIAL AND MORAL CONDITIONS OF THE GRAECO-ROMAN WORLD (**Angus** 30)

Amelioration of Slavery (Angus 52)

The slave was allowed to acquire a *peculium*, or private property, from which he frequently **purchased his freedom**.... A hard-working slave in the days of Cicero might expect freedom in six years (A 52-53).

121:3.8 Superior slaves often received wages and by saving their earnings were able to **purchase their freedom**.

Many slaves occupied **high positions** of trust as physicians, tutors, private secretaries, philosophic advisers (A 53).

Many such **emancipated** slaves rose to **high positions** in state, church, and the business world.

And it was just such possibilities that made the early Christian church so tolerant of this modified form of slavery.¹

121:3.9 There was no widespread social problem in the Roman Empire in the first century after Christ. The major portion of the populace regarded themselves as belonging in that group into which they chanced to be born.² There was always the open door through which talented and able individuals could ascend from the lower to the higher strata of Roman society, but the people were generally content with their social rank. They were not class conscious, neither did they look upon these class distinctions as being unjust or wrong. Christianity was in no sense an economic movement having for its purpose the **amelioration** of the miseries of the depressed classes.

Position of Women (Angus 44)

Woman [in Rome] gradually arose to a position of equality with her husband. The old form of marriage, 'in hand,' gave place to the free marriage of the later Republic and Empire, whereby the wife became independent of her husband (A 57).

121:3.10 Although woman enjoyed more freedom throughout the Roman Empire than in her restricted position in Palestine,

the family devotion and natural affection of the Jews far transcended that of the gentile world.

4. GENTILE PHILOSOPHY

121:4.1 The gentiles were, from a moral standpoint, somewhat inferior to the Jews, but there was present in the hearts of the nobler gentiles abundant soil of natural goodness and potential human affection in which it was possible for the seed of Christianity to sprout and bring forth an abundant harvest of moral character and spiritual achievement. The gentile world was then dominated by four great philosophies, all more or less derived from the earlier Platonism of the Greeks. These schools of philosophy were:

[?]

VI: THE GREEK (Angus 164)

GREEK THOUGHT (Angus 174)

Epicureanism (Angus 187)

[contd] Epicureanism, the first reasoned system of **happiness**, was atheistic or deistic in religion and utilitarian in morals. [*contd next pg.*]

121:4.2 1. *The Epicurean.*

This school of thought was dedicated to the **pursuit of happiness.**

‘Follow nature,’ but nature prompts to eschew pain and pursue pleasure; therefore pleasure is the *summum bonum* (A 187).

Epicureanism did not inculcate sensualism, though it easily conduced to it. Epicurus ... tried to regulate the abounding passion of his age for pleasure by applying Aristotelian moderation to crude Hedonism (A 188).

Even this system was a gospel for its day; it freed men from the tyranny of fatalism,

from the fear of the gods, of death and future punishment, and all the burdens of superstition (A 188).

STOICS. (*Hastings' DoB* 877)

The leading Stoic maxim is, ‘Live according to nature.’ Nature both in the world and in man is to be interpreted by its highest manifestation—Reason—which appears in the world as the all-pervading ethereal and in man as the soul.

[The Stoics were foremost in teaching resignation to what they spoke of as Fate, or Universal Law, or Providence, or the will of God (*Angus* 127).]

The better Epicureans were not given to sensual excesses.

At least this doctrine helped to deliver the Romans from a more deadly form of fatalism;

it taught that men could do something to improve their terrestrial status.

It did effectually combat ignorant superstition.

121:4.3 2. *The Stoic.*

Stoicism was the superior philosophy of the better classes.

The Stoics believed that

a controlling Reason-Fate dominated all nature.

[In the sphere of practical religion the Orphics were emphasising the distinction of soul and body; not merely by religious teachings but more through ascetic practices. The soul was regarded as divine: man is the kindred of God.

But the soul is imprisoned in the body, even more, the body is “the tomb of the soul”, and what men call life is really death (Widger 161).]

[Virtue is self-sufficing: we ought to do good though neither Gods nor men behold our action (Angus 187).] [*Note*: See next page, left column, for ‘virtue is its own reward’.]

This World-spirit occupies the place of God in the Stoic system. Thus we find St. Paul quoting the words of a Stoic writer, ‘We are also his offspring’ (Ac 17:28).

The approximation, however, is in language rather than in reality. The theology of the Stoics is pure pantheism. Their so-called God has no independent or personal existence (*HDB* 877).

[The *Apostle Paul*, when ... he gave expression to his philosophy of living, he uttered a characteristically Stoic sentiment, saying,

“I have learned in whatsoever state I am therewith to be content” (William S. Sadler, M.D., *Theory and Practice of Psychiatry* [1936], p. 1099).]

They taught that the soul of man was divine;

that it was imprisoned in the evil body of physical nature.³

Man’s soul achieved liberty by living in harmony with nature, with God;

thus virtue came to be its own reward.

Stoicism ascended to a sublime morality, ideals never since transcended by any purely human system of philosophy.

While the Stoics professed to be the “offspring of God,”

they failed to know him and therefore failed to find him.

Stoicism remained a philosophy; it never became a religion.⁴ Its followers sought to attune their minds to the harmony of the Universal Mind, but they failed to envisage themselves as the children of a loving Father.

Paul leaned heavily toward Stoicism when he wrote,

“I have learned in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content.”

121:4.4 3. *The Cynic.*

[*Note:* The Cynics traced their philosophy to Antisthenes, teacher of Diogenes. Diogenes, although he lived part of his life in Athens, was born in Sinope and is known as Diogenes of Sinope. See endnote 5.]

Although the Cynics traced their philosophy to Diogenes⁵ of Athens,

they derived much of their doctrine from the remnants of the teachings of Machiventa Melchizedek.

Cynicism had formerly been more of a religion than a philosophy.

IV: RELIGIOUS CONDITIONS OF THE GRAECO-ROMAN PERIOD (Angus 68)

II. RELIGIOUS AWAKENING (Angus 73)

Preaching (Angus 74)

Men went out from the lecture halls to preach self-examination and self-culture.

They insisted on man's inherent dignity and his ability to save himself by his will (A 75).

In the burden of their preaching were many commonplaces—counsel to cultivate a good conscience, to act as if conscious that God sees all; virtue is its own reward, and is attainable by all; sin is its own punishment (A 74-75).

Life should be a contemplation of death, so that men may die without fear (A 75).

At least the Cynics made their religio-philosophy democratic.

In the fields and in the market places they continually preached their doctrine that

“man could save himself if he would.”

They preached simplicity and virtue

and urged men to meet death fearlessly.

These wandering Cynic preachers did much to prepare the spiritually hungry populace for the later Christian missionaries.

SOURCE OR PARALLEL

So prevalent was preaching that there was a recognised form of sermon. Norden speaks of 'des festen Bestandes eines Typenschatzes religiöser Rede, zu dessen Prägung der Orient und Hellas in gleicher Weise beigetragen haben, und den die synkretistischen Religionen der Kaiserzeit, einschliesslich das Christentum übernahm.... —*Agnostos Theos*, pp. 277-278; cf. Pp. 129-134, also Bultmann, *Der Stil der Paulinischen Predigt* (A 74, fn).

VI: THE GREEK (Angus 164)

GREEK THOUGHT (Angus 174)

Sceptics (Angus 188)

[contd] The Sceptics likewise invited men to retire to the impregnable fortress of their inner being and rest in self. They **negated** the possibility of **knowledge**;

conviction is unattainable (A 188-89).

I: THE ROMAN-GRECIAN WORLD (**Rall** 13)

But Grecian philosophy

too failed to meet the needs of the day. It had nothing for the **common man**.

It was a religion **for the strong and the wise**.

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Their plan of popular preaching was much after the pattern, and in accordance with **the style, of Paul's Epistles**.⁶

121:4.5 4. *The Sceptic*.

Skepticism asserted that **knowledge** was fallacious,

and that **conviction** and assurance were impossible.

It was a purely **negative** attitude and never became widespread.

121:4.6 These philosophies

were semireligious; they were often invigorating, ethical, and ennobling

but were usually above the **common people**.

With the possible exception of Cynicism,

they were philosophies **for the strong and the wise**.

The common man needs more than a high ideal, he needs some power to help him reach it.... The world was waiting for a religion of redemption, a religion of hope and help (R 17-18).

not religions of salvation for even the poor and the weak.

5. THE GENTILE RELIGIONS

1. The National Religions. In ancient times religion was the concern primarily of the tribe or the state,

121:5.1 Throughout preceding ages religion had chiefly been an affair of the tribe or nation;

not of the individual (R 16).

it had not often been a matter of concern to the individual.

Gods were tribal or national, not personal.

But men were asking deeper questions, about deliverance from sorrow and sin and death, about the hope of a life to come. The time of individualism was coming; men wanted a life for themselves, and not simply as part of a city or nation. The old faiths had no answer for these questions (R 17).

Such religious systems afforded little satisfaction for the individual spiritual longings of the average person.

121:5.2 In the times of Jesus the religions of the Occident included:

121:5.3 1. *The pagan cults.* These were a combination of Hellenic and Latin mythology, patriotism, and tradition.

II, XI: IN THE FIFTEENTH YEAR OF TIBERIUS CÆSAR AND UNDER THE PONTIFICATE OF ANNAS AND CAIAPHAS ... (Edersheim 255)

The only religion on which the State insisted was the deification and worship of the Emperor (E 258).

121:5.4 2. *Emperor worship.* This deification of man as the symbol of the state

[contd] The only thorough resistance to this worship came from hated Judæa, and, we may add, from Britain (Döllinger, p. 611) (E 258, fn).

was very seriously resented by the Jews and the early Christians

and led directly to the bitter persecutions of both churches by the Roman government.

The personation of gods, oracles, divination, dreams, **astrology**, magic, necromancy, and theurgy, all contributed to the general decay (E1 258-59).

121:5.5 3. **Astrology.**

[See 95:1.7.]

This pseudo science of Babylon developed into a religion throughout the Greco-Roman Empire.

[Thousands of supposedly intelligent people still believe that ... the juxtaposition of the heavenly bodies determines the outcome of various terrestrial adventures (90:2.7).]

Even in the twentieth century man has not been fully delivered from this superstitious belief.

I, I: THE ROMAN-GRECIAN WORLD (**Rall** 13)

3. The **mystery religions** professed to meet this very need.

121:5.6 4. *The **mystery religions.***

We may call them the **new religions**, for about this time they began to pour into the Roman world **from the east** (R 18).

Upon such a spiritually hungry world a flood of mystery cults had broken, **new and strange religions from the Levant,**

which had enamored the common people and had promised them individual salvation.

Like Christianity, these were the religions of the **“lower classes.”** But the real religious life of the empire was in these faiths. These, and not the old polytheism or the noble philosophies, became the real **competitors of Christianity** (R 18).

These religions rapidly became the accepted belief of the **lower classes** of the Greco-Roman world.

And they did much to prepare the way for the rapid spread of the vastly superior Christian teachings, which presented a majestic concept of Deity, associated with an intriguing theology for the intelligent and a profound proffer of salvation for all, including the ignorant but spiritually hungry average man of those days.

121:5.7 The mystery religions spelled the end of national beliefs and resulted in the birth of the numerous personal cults.

[contd] Of these mystery religions there were many kinds, and yet they had certain aspects in common:

(1) They were usually founded upon some story, the **mystery**,

the tale of **some god** and of his **life and death and coming to life again**.

Such is the story of Osiris coming from Egypt, the story of **Mithra** brought from Persia, and that of Dionysius in Greece.

(2) These religions are **no longer national**.

They come to men individually

and unite them in **societies**, just as the believers were joined together in the Christian churches.

The mysteries were many but were all characterized by:

121:5.8 1. Some mythical legend, a **mystery**—

whence their name.

As a rule this mystery pertained to

the story of **some god's life and death and return to life**,

as illustrated by the teachings of **Mithraism**,

which, for a time, were contemporary with, and a **competitor of, Paul's rising cult of Christianity**.

121:5.9 2. The mysteries were **non-national** and interracial.

They were personal

and fraternal, giving rise to religious brotherhoods and numerous sectarian **societies**.

(3) These religions were marked by ceremonies and sacraments. The members were initiated into the myth, or secret story of the god.

There were sacred meals and washings and other rites, sometimes bloody and barbarous, sometimes involving gross excesses.

(4) The great thought was that of redemption.

The great end was deliverance from evil, especially death, by means of union with the god (R 18).

[contd] Looked at superficially, there is much here that suggests the new Christian religion,

and men have not been wanting who held that Paul, for example, was deeply influenced in his thought by these faiths (R 18).

121:5.10 3. They were, in their services, characterized by elaborate ceremonies of initiation and impressive sacraments of worship.

Their secret rites and rituals were sometimes gruesome and revolting.

121:5.11 4. But no matter what the nature of their ceremonies or the degree of their excesses,

these mysteries invariably promised their devotees salvation,

“deliverance from evil, survival after death,

and enduring life in blissful realms beyond this world of sorrow and slavery.”

121:5.12 But do not make the mistake of confusing the teachings of Jesus with the mysteries.

The popularity of the mysteries reveals man’s quest for survival, thus portraying a real hunger and thirst for personal religion and individual righteousness. Although the mysteries failed adequately to satisfy this longing, they did prepare the way for the subsequent appearance of Jesus, who truly brought to this world the bread of life and the water thereof.

121:5.13 Paul, in an effort to utilize the widespread adherence to the better types of the mystery religions, made certain adaptations of the teachings of Jesus so as to render them more acceptable to a larger number of prospective converts.

A very little study shows how deep the differences are. It is enough to point out two.

(1) The **salvation** which Christianity offered was **ethical**.

While these religions relied upon **rites** and **magic**, Christianity put at the center a new spirit and a **new life**.

It met the **final problem**:

not how to save men **from sorrow**, or even **from death**,

but how to save them **from sin**, to make **character**.

(2) These religions **built upon a myth**, a tale;

Christianity came with a great **historic fact**—

Christ as the revelation of the will of God, as the bearer of the mercy and help of God (R 19).

But even Paul's compromise of Jesus' teachings (Christianity) was superior to the best in the mysteries in that:

121:5.14 1. Paul taught a moral redemption, an **ethical salvation**.

Christianity pointed to a **new life** and proclaimed a new ideal.

Paul forsook **magic rites** and ceremonial enchantments.

121:5.15 2. Christianity presented a religion which grappled with **final solutions of the human problem**,

for it not only **offered** salvation **from sorrow** and even **from death**,

but it also promised deliverance **from sin** followed by the endowment of a righteous **character** of eternal survival qualities.

121:5.16 3. The mysteries were **built upon myths**.

Christianity, as Paul preached it, was founded upon a **historic fact**:

the **bestowal of Michael**, the Son of God, upon mankind.

III: SOCIAL AND MORAL CONDITIONS OF THE GRAECO-ROMAN WORLD (Angus 30)

Lack of Moral Enthusiasm in Pagan Religion
(Angus 60)

The student of pagan morality is impressed by the failure of pagan religions to exert any potent influence upon morals (A 60).

A religious man was not necessarily moral in his conduct ... Such incongruity would be felt in that era by the Jews but not by the Greeks or Romans, who possessed not the Jew's zeal for righteousness (A 60).

V: THE JEW (Angus 140)

Message of Israel (Angus 160)

Israel declared that God's righteousness demands moral living on the part of man: religion must go hand in hand with morality (A 161).

121:5.17 Morality among the gentiles was not necessarily related to either philosophy or religion.

Outside of Palestine it not always occurred to people that

a priest of religion was supposed to lead a moral life.

Jewish religion and subsequently the teachings of Jesus and later the evolving Christianity of Paul were the first European religions to lay one hand upon morals and the other upon ethics, insisting that religionists pay some attention to both.

121:5.18 Into such a generation of men, dominated by such incomplete systems of philosophy and perplexed by such complex cults of religion, Jesus was born in Palestine. And to this same generation he subsequently gave his gospel of personal religion—sonship with God.

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**. In fact, the **common people** were ignorant of pure **Hebrew**,

The **common people** spoke some **dialect** of **Aramaic**;

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**;

[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.]

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).

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

But the brilliancy of Plato's speculations would charm,

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.

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 the teachings of the Epicureans,

they were very materially affected by the philosophy of Plato

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.... This allegorical method was the welcome key by which the Hellenists might unlock the hidden treasury of Scripture (E1 33-34).

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).

[?]

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 conforming Hebrew theology with their revered Aristotelian philosophy.

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

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).

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.

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.

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)

[?]

[*Note:* 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).]

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; ...

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).

Philo led the way for Paul more fully to restore

the concept of the Paradise Trinity, 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 doctrine of the **atonement**;

Philo taught deliverance from

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

SOURCE OR PARALLEL

[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)]

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.

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,

[?]

is entirely unknown to Rabbinical Judaism (E1 52).

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

But Paul's theory of original sin,

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

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.

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).

OUR KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS FROM NONBIBLICAL SOURCES (**JAScott** 7)

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 ..." (JAS 12).

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.

121:6.7 At about the time of Christ

a strange reversion of feeling toward the Jews occurred in **Alexandria**,

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 (JAS 13).

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)” (JAS 14).

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

[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).

and from this former Jewish stronghold there went forth a virulent wave of **persecution**,

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.

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

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).

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)

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.... 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).

Hellenist and Eastern equally realised this....

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

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

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 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).

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;

To the orthodox Jew the mental and spiritual horizon was bounded by Palestine....

... 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 **worshipped 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 93)

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.

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).

[[T]he legends of Jewish tradition] 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).

the traditions,

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.

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).

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.

[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).]

Jeremiah had told of the “**law** to be **written in men’s hearts**,”

[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).]

Ezekiel had spoken of a “**new spirit** to live in man’s soul,”

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

and the Psalmist had prayed that God would “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:

121:7.9 1. The philosophic reasoning of the Greek proselytes to Judaism, including some of their concepts of the eternal life.

121:7.10 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.

121:7.11 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).

121:7.12 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.

8. PREVIOUS WRITTEN RECORDS

121:8.1 As far as possible, consistent with our mandate, we have endeavored to utilize and to some extent co-ordinate the existing records having to do with the life of Jesus on Urantia.⁷ Although we have enjoyed access to the lost record of the Apostle Andrew and have benefited from the collaboration of a vast host of celestial beings who were on earth during the times of Michael's bestowal (notably his now Personalized Adjuster), it has been our purpose also to make use of the so-called Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John.

121:8.2 These New Testament records had their origin in the following circumstances:

121:8.3 1. *The Gospel by Mark.*

I: THE SOURCES OF OUR KNOWLEDGE OF THE LIFE OF JESUS: THE ORIGIN AND PURPOSE OF THE GOSPELS. (Burton & Mathews 17)

¶10. **The Gospel of Mark.** (Burton & Mathews 20)

[contd] The gospel which stands second in order in our Bibles is the **shortest, simplest,** and probably also the **oldest** of the four.

It ... goes on to tell the story of Jesus' public **ministry,** dwelling here especially on his deeds and reporting his discourses much less fully than any of the other three.

John Mark wrote the **earliest** (excepting the notes of Andrew), **briefest,** and most **simple** record of Jesus' life.

He presented the Master as a **minister,**

It is the majestic figure of Jesus, as he walked and worked and taught **among men**, that has impressed the writer, and it is this that he seeks to bring before his readers (B&M 20).

as man **among men**.

II: PRESERVATION OF THE GOSPELS (JAScott 43)

A recent book on Saint Mark by the eminent scholar, James A. Kleist, S.J., was named *The Memoirs of Saint Peter*; this phrase is based on a passage from the writings of Justin Martyr, but even earlier than Justin Martyr, Papias quotes a still earlier authority who refers to Mark as "Peter's Interpreter" (JAS 50-51).

Although Mark was a lad lingering about many of the scenes which he depicts,

his record is in reality **the Gospel according to Simon Peter**.

Mark was not a disciple of the living Jesus, but he knew those who had been disciples, he had worked with **Paul**, with Barnabas, with **Peter**, and he enjoyed the confidence of the Church (JAS 50).

He was early associated with **Peter**; later with **Paul**.

INTRODUCTION: THE EVANGELIC RECORDS (Smith1 ix)

At the request of the believers at Rome, it is said, he wrote a short Gospel,

Mark wrote this record at the instigation of **Peter** and on the earnest petition of the church at Rome.

Knowing how consistently the Master refused to write out his teachings when on earth and in the flesh, Mark, like the apostles and other leading disciples, was hesitant to put them in writing. But Peter felt the church at Rome required the assistance of such a written narrative, and Mark consented to undertake its preparation.

[Compare: There are copious traditions about Peter... [H]e is said to have ... been crucified (cf. Jn 21:18,19) in the last year of Nero's reign (A.D. 68) ... ("Peter," in *Hastings' DB* 714).]

and when Peter heard it, he approved it and sanctioned the reading of it by the Church (S1 xviii).

[[T]he evidence is uncertain as to whether Peter actually supervised its production, or whether Mark got the facts from Peter and did not prepare it until after the death of that disciple (JAScott 51).]

I: THE SOURCES OF OUR KNOWLEDGE OF THE LIFE OF JESUS: THE ORIGIN AND PURPOSE OF THE GOSPELS. (Burton & Mathews 17)

¶10. The Gospel of Mark. (Burton & Mathews 20)

The gospel was probably written before, but not long before, 70 A.D. (B&M 20).

III: THE GOSPEL OF MARK (EFSScott 53)

4. *The Ending of Mark* (EFSScott 59)

The last twelve verses of our present Mark (16:9-20) are found in no early manuscript, and even in later manuscripts they appear in several diverse forms. They were certainly added by some editor in order to round off a work which was otherwise incomplete.

He made many notes before

Peter died in A.D. 67,

and in accordance with the outline approved by Peter and for the church at Rome,

he began his writing soon after Peter's death.

The Gospel was completed near the end of A.D. 68.

Mark wrote entirely from his own memory and Peter's memory.⁸

The record has since been considerably changed, numerous passages having been taken out

and some later matter added at the end to replace the latter one fifth of the original Gospel,

What became of the original ending of Mark? ... The most obvious solution of the problem is to assume that some accident happened to the last sheet of the Gospel, which would be that part of the roll most exposed to wear and tear.... If we assume an accident it must have happened early—at a time when only **one manuscript** of the Gospel existed; for if there had been a duplicate, the missing page would have been restored in later copies, such as were used by Matthew and Luke (EFS 59-60).

It may thus be inferred that although Mark's Gospel is the oldest, and supplies the **basis for the others,**

it is itself a combination of several earlier documents (EFS 58-59). [*See endnote 8.*]

I: THE SOURCES OF OUR KNOWLEDGE OF THE LIFE OF JESUS: THE ORIGIN AND PURPOSE OF THE GOSPELS. (**Burton & Mathews** 17)

¶11. **The Gospel of Matthew.** (Burton & Mathews 21)

It is evidently the purpose of the writer to **confirm the faith of his fellow Jewish Christians** in Jesus as the Messiah foretold in prophecy ... (B&M 21).

II: PRESERVATION OF THE GOSPELS (**JAScott** 43)

which was lost from the **first manuscript** before it was ever copied.

This record by Mark, in conjunction with **Andrew's** and Matthew's notes, was the **written basis of all subsequent Gospel narratives** which sought to portray the life and teachings of Jesus.

121:8.4 2. *The Gospel of Matthew.*

The so-called Gospel according to Matthew is the record of the Master's life which was written for the **edification of Jewish Christians.**

The author of this record constantly seeks to show in Jesus' life that

He wrote a Gospel for those who had Hebrew traditions and who knew the Old Testament, hence the common argument from the prophets: Jesus was taken into Egypt “that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, Out of Egypt have I called my son,” ... and again “he came and dwelt in a city called Nazareth: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, He shall be called a Nazarene” (JAS 53).

I: THE SOURCES OF OUR KNOWLEDGE OF THE LIFE OF JESUS: THE ORIGIN AND PURPOSE OF THE GOSPELS. (Burton & Mathews 17)

¶11. The Gospel of Matthew. (Burton & Mathews 21)

The book ... begins strictly within the circle of Jewish thought, setting forth Jesus as the son of David and the Christ of prophecy ... (B&M 21).

[This view of Matthew as the distinctively Jewish Gospel ... is supported by much in the Gospel itself. We think, for example, of the constant appeals to the Old Testament; the declaration that the Law is valid forever (5:17, 18) ... [Etc.] (EFScott 73).]

INTRODUCTION: THE EVANGELIC RECORDS (Smith 1 ix)

The First Gospel represents the tradition as it circulated in Judæa, and, though it was not written as it stands by Matthew, it was certainly derived from him and is stamped with his authority (S1 xvii).

much which he did was that “it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet.”

Matthew’s Gospel portrays Jesus as a son of David,

picturing him as showing great respect for the law and the prophets.

121:8.5 The Apostle Matthew did not write this Gospel.

It was written by Isador, one of his disciples, who had as a help in his work not only Matthew’s personal remembrance of these events

[contd] Mt.'s Gospel, according to ancient and credible testimony, was a Hebrew, *i.e.* Aramaic, book of *Logia*. It is probably the basis of our First Gospel (S1 xvii, fn).

but also a certain record which the latter had made of the **sayings** of Jesus directly after the crucifixion.

II: PRESERVATION OF THE GOSPELS (JAScott 43)

There was an early tradition that Matthew wrote the first draft of his Gospel in **Aramaic**, the language spoken by Jesus and his disciples,

This record by Matthew was written in **Aramaic**;

and there is nothing unreasonable in that tradition, but it has survived solely in the Greek ... Greek was the language of the Church when this book was written and **Greek** is likely to have been its original language, even if the speeches Matthew quotes were first spoken in Aramaic (JAS 56).

Isador wrote in **Greek**.

There was no intent to deceive in accrediting the production to Matthew. It was the custom in those days for pupils thus to honor their teachers.⁹

121:8.6 Matthew's original record was edited and added to in A.D. 40 just before he left Jerusalem to engage in evangelistic preaching. It was a private record, the last copy having been destroyed in the burning of a Syrian monastery in A.D. 416.

INTRODUCTION: THE EVANGELIC RECORDS (Smith 1 ix)

It is related by Eusebius that on the eve of the catastrophe the Christians, "in accordance with a certain oracle, forsook the doomed city

121:8.7 Isador escaped from Jerusalem

[... the destruction of Jerusalem, which was accomplished by the army of Titus in **A.D. 70** ... (S1 xxv).]

in **A.D. 70** after the investment of the city by the armies of Titus,

and took refuge in the Peræan town of Pella ... (S1 xxvii). [See 176:1.5.]

taking with him to Pella a copy of Matthew's notes.

In the year 71, while living at Pella, Isador wrote the Gospel according to Matthew.

II: PRESERVATION OF THE GOSPELS (JAScott 43)

Matthew clearly had Mark before him when he wrote ... (JAS 53).

He also had with him the first four fifths of Mark's narrative.

121:8.8 3. *The Gospel by Luke.*

INTRODUCTION: THE EVANGELIC RECORDS (Smith1 ix)

The Third Gospel, composed by Luke the physician of Antioch and the companion of Paul, ... is pervaded by the spirit of the Apostle of the Gentiles (S1 xv).

Luke, the physician of Antioch in Pisidia,¹⁰

[He may have been converted by St. Paul, possibly at Tarsus, where he could have studied medicine.... He was a Gentile (cf. Col 4:10f and v.14) ... ("Luke (Evangelist)," in *Hastings' DB* 557).]

was a gentile convert of Paul,

[Luke wrote for a different audience and cared little for the theory, so dear to Matthew, that Jesus was the fulfillment of Hebrew prophecy (JAScott 56).]

and he wrote quite a different story of the Master's life.

He began to follow Paul and learn of the life and teachings of Jesus in A.D. 47.

... Luke, in pursuance of his design to exhibit the Grace of Jesus, has transferred the Lord's visit to the Synagogue of Nazareth, when "they all marvelled at the precious words that proceeded out of His mouth," from its actual position well on in His ministry to the very commencement, setting it there as a sort of frontispiece to show his readers at the outset "the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ" ... (S1 xvi).

Luke preserves much of the "grace of the Lord Jesus Christ" in his record

as he gathered up these facts from Paul and others.

I: THE SOURCES OF OUR KNOWLEDGE OF THE LIFE OF JESUS: THE ORIGIN AND PURPOSE OF THE GOSPELS. (Burton & Mathews 17)

¶12. *The Gospel of Luke.* (Burton & Mathews 22)

The intimate relation of Jesus with mankind, in the family, in the Jewish church, and in the state; his subjection to the law, Jewish and Roman; his obedience to parents; his friendship for the publicans and sinners, for all however low or poor—these things appear in Luke as in no other gospel (B&M 22-23).

Luke presents the Master as “the friend of publicans and sinners.”

He did not formulate his many notes into the Gospel until after Paul’s death.

This gospel was probably put forth about the same time as Matthew’s, say in the vicinity of 80 A.D. (B&M 23)

Luke wrote in the year 82

[*Compare:* The Third Gospel, composed by Luke ... represents the tradition as it circulated in Asia Minor and Achaia (Smith 1 xviii).]

in Achaia.

V: THE GOSPEL OF LUKE (EFSScott 76)

1. *Connection with Acts* (EFSScott 76)

At present it need only be said that the Gospel ... may be assigned to a time not far removed from the year 90 A.D. It may be that [Luke] wrote Acts by an afterthought ... More likely, his intention from the first was to tell the whole story of Christianity, and perhaps he had planned to follow the book of Acts with a third volume, recording the death of Paul and the further extension of the church (EFS 76).

He planned three books dealing with the history of Christ and Christianity

but died in A.D. 90 just before he finished the second of these works, the “Acts of the Apostles.”

121:8.9 As material for the compilation of his Gospel, Luke first depended upon the story of Jesus’ life as Paul had related it to him. Luke’s Gospel is, therefore, in some ways the Gospel according to Paul.

II: PRESERVATION OF THE GOSPELS

(JAScott 43)

But Luke had other sources of information.

[W]hile Paul was in prison in Caesarea [Luke] was in Galilee interviewing those who had actually known the living Jesus. Since less than thirty years had elapsed after his ministry, many of the companions of Jesus were men still in the prime of life (JAS 57).

He not only interviewed scores of eyewitnesses to the numerous episodes of Jesus’ life which he records,

V: THE GOSPEL OF LUKE (EFSScott 76)

4. Sources (EFSScott 83)

Of the contents of the Gospel, nearly two-fifths may be assigned to Mark,

but he also had with him a copy of Mark’s Gospel, that is, the first four fifths,

one fifth to Q,

Isador’s narrative,¹¹

and over two-fifths to other sources (EFS 83).

and a brief record made in the year A.D. 78 at Antioch by a believer named Cedus.

Of that two-fifths which is peculiar to Luke, a large portion is homogeneous in character and there is good ground for supposing that Luke had access to a third document, comparative in extent and value to Mark and Q.

Luke also had a mutilated and much-edited copy of some notes purported to have been made by the Apostle Andrew.

This view is now so generally held that it is customary to speak of “L” or “Luke’s special source” (EFS 83).¹²

121:8.10 4. *The Gospel of John.*

INTRODUCTION: THE EVANGELIC RECORDS (Smith ix)

[The Synoptic Gospels] narrate with much fulness the Lord’s labours in Galilee, but He prosecuted also an important ministry in Judæa, principally in Jerusalem. This is unrecorded in the Synoptics, and to rescue it from oblivion was, according to ancient tradition, the special task to which John addressed himself (S1 xxx).

The Gospel according to John relates much of Jesus’ work in Judea and around Jerusalem which is not contained in the other records.

XXVI: THE FOURTH GOSPEL (EFScott 233)

3. *Modern Theories* (EFScott 234)

The chief theories [of the origin of the Gospel] may be indicated at the outset. (1) The evangelist was John, the Apostle, the son of Zebedee. (2) John, the Apostle, was only in a secondary sense the author. His teaching was worked up in literary form by one of his disciples, so that what we have is the Gospel “according to John,” though not by John himself. [Etc.] (EFS 234)

This is the so-called Gospel according to John the son of Zebedee,

5. *Early Testimonies* (EFScott 236)

If there is truth in those various testimonies that John in his old age lived in Ephesus, there is no good reason to doubt that he **wrote**, or at least **inspired**, the Ephesian Gospel which bears his name (EFS 236-37).

and though John did not **write** it, he did **inspire** it.

7. *The Beloved Disciple* (EFScott 239)

Reference has been made already to [the] closing chapter, added by the first **editors**, in which it is distinctly stated that the **beloved disciple wrote the Gospel**; but we have seen that the editors are vague as to the identity of this disciple, who appears in the Gospel itself a number of times but who is never named (EFS 239).

Since its first writing it has several times been **edited** to make it appear to have been **written by John himself**.

4. *Date* (EFScott 235)

[John, the author of the fourth Gospel, plainly had all the other three before him when he wrote ... (JAScott 59).]

When this record was made, John had the other Gospels,

and he saw that much had been omitted; accordingly,

Assuming that John at the time of his companionship with Jesus was a young man, it is conceivable that he survived until **100 A.D.**, and wrote the Gospel in his extreme old age (EFS 235).

in the year **A.D. 101**

XXV: THE JOHANNINE LITERATURE (EFScott 230)

3. *Place of Origin* (EFScott 231)

he encouraged his associate,

[T]here are many evidences that the writer was himself a Jew, well acquainted with Jewish ideas and customs and faithful to the Jewish outlook, even when thinking and writing as a Hellenist (EFS 232).

[Bishop Lightfoot suggests that the First Epistle of St. John's was written as a kind of covering letter in committing this Gospel to the Church ... (John Paterson Smith, *The Bible in the Making* [1914], pp. 189-90).] [*See endnote for more parallels.*]

III: THE GOSPEL OF MARK (EFSScott 53)

6. Purpose (EFSScott 62)

Some critics ... hold that while he seems to offer nothing but an unstudied narrative, Mark has written in the interest of certain theological ideas. As a member of the Gentile church, he was imbued with the Pauline doctrines, and has revised the Gospel history in such a manner as to enforce Paul's conception of Jesus as a heavenly being who had come to earth to secure man's redemption by his death (EFS 63).

Nathan, a Greek Jew from Caesarea, to begin the writing.

John supplied his material from memory and by reference to the three records already in existence. He had no written records of his own.

The Epistle known as "First John" was written by John himself as a covering letter for the work which Nathan executed under his direction.¹³

121:8.11 All these writers presented honest pictures of Jesus as they saw, remembered, or had learned of him,

and as their concepts of these distant events were affected by their subsequent espousal of Paul's theology of Christianity.

And these records, imperfect as they are, have been sufficient to change the course of the history of Urantia for almost two thousand years.

121:8.12 [*Acknowledgment*: In carrying out my commission to restate the teachings and retell the doings of Jesus of Nazareth, I have drawn freely upon all sources of record and planetary information.]

IV: THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW (EFSScott 65)

5. *Purpose and Teaching* (EFSScott 71)

Matthew's Gospel ... stands, not for any partial interpretation of Christianity, but for one in which all sincere opinions could find its place.

This, it would appear, is the governing motive of the Gospel (EFS 74).

My ruling motive has been to prepare a record which will not only be enlightening to the generation of men now living, but which may also be helpful to all future generations.

[Also: This desire [on the part of the author of the Gospel of Luke] to replace the miscellaneous records hitherto existing with something like a real biography is the primary motive of the book.... The object of the Gospel is to trace [the world-wide movement of Christianity] to its source (EFS 77).]

From the vast store of information made available to me, I have chosen that which is best suited to the accomplishment of this purpose. As far as possible I have derived my information from purely human sources. Only when such sources failed, have I resorted to those records which are superhuman. When ideas and concepts of Jesus' life and teachings have been acceptably expressed by a human mind, I invariably gave preference to such apparently human thought patterns.

Although I have sought to adjust the verbal expression the better to conform to our concept of the real meaning and the true import of the Master's life and teachings, as far as possible, I have adhered to the actual human concept and thought pattern in all my narratives. I well know that those concepts which have had origin in the human mind will prove more acceptable and helpful to all other human minds. When unable to find the necessary concepts in the human records or in human expressions, I have next resorted to the memory resources of my own order of earth creatures, the midwayers. And when that secondary source of information proved inadequate, I have unhesitatingly resorted to the super-planetary sources of information.

121:8.13 The memoranda which I have collected, and from which I have prepared this narrative of the life and teachings of Jesus—aside from the memory of the record of the Apostle Andrew—embrace thought gems and superior concepts of Jesus' teachings assembled from **more than two thousand human beings** who have lived on earth from the days of Jesus down to the time of the inditing of these revelations, more correctly restatements. The revelatory permission has been utilized only when the human record and human concepts failed to supply an adequate thought pattern. My revelatory commission forbade me to resort to extrahuman sources of either information or expression until such a time as I could testify that I had failed in my efforts to find the required conceptual expression in purely human sources.

121:8.14 While I, with the collaboration of my eleven associate fellow midwayers and under the supervision of the Melchizedek of record, have portrayed this narrative in accordance with my concept of its effective arrangement and in response to my choice of immediate expression, nevertheless, the majority of the ideas and even some of the effective expressions which I have thus utilized had their origin in the minds of the men of many races who have lived on earth during the intervening generations, right on down to those who are still alive at the time of this undertaking.

INTRODUCTION: THE EVANGELIC RECORDS (Smith 1 ix)

§ 6. The Evangelists were not so much authors as editors, and their task was one which required no little discrimination.

Since the oral tradition covered the whole of our Lord's ministry, they had before them a huge mass of material, and it was impossible for them to incorporate all of it in their books (*cf.* John xx. 30-1) (S1 xv).

In many ways I have served more as a collector and editor than as an original narrator.

I have unhesitatingly appropriated those ideas and concepts, preferably human, which would enable me to create the most effective portraiture of Jesus' life, and which would qualify me to restate his matchless teachings in the most strikingly helpful and universally uplifting phraseology. In behalf of the Brotherhood of the United Midwayers of Urantia, I most gratefully acknowledge our indebtedness to all sources of record and concept which have been hereinafter utilized in the further elaboration of our restatement of Jesus' life on earth.]

1. *Compare*: It was the wisdom and policy of early Christianity not to seek to exterminate slavery with one blow, but first regulate it while establishing the principles which were sure to end it (Angus 37-38).
2. *Contrast*: With every step in Roman history we find the class struggles accompanied with greater acrimony (Angus 37).
3. The passage from Widgery, on the Orphics' conception of the soul, appears to have been inserted between the statements derived from *Hastings' DB*. Why Sadler inserted it is a mystery—the Widgery book was relatively obscure and not used elsewhere in the Urantia Book, and Orphism's concept of the soul is patently different from Stoicism's. According to *Webster's New International Dictionary of the English Language, Second Edition Unabridged* (1957), the Stoics thought of the soul as "only a kind of sublimated matter doomed to eventual dissolution" ("Stoic," p. 2481). Why Sadler intentionally mischaracterized Stoicism, when knowledge about Stoicism was easily accessible, is also a mystery.

Angus describes the Orphic idea of the soul as follows:

The Orphics had introduced the conception that 'the body is a tomb' and prison of the soul (A 124).

4. In his 1936 textbook, *Theory and Practice of Psychiatry*, Sadler wrote, in Chapter 74, "Philosophies of Life":

The *early Stoics* had a *real religion* (p. 1100).

Sadler, in this chapter, borrowed heavily from William De Witt Hyde's 1911 book, *The Five Great Philosophies of Life*. Hyde had written: "The Stoics had a genuine religion" (p. 95). It would be interesting to know whether Sadler wrote 121:5 before or after writing "Philosophies of Life" and whether he realized the discrepancy between the two texts.

5. In writing the "Philosophies of Life" chapter in *Theory and Practice of Psychiatry* (1936), Sadler used Webster's definition of 'cynic', in which Antisthenes, not Diogenes, is named as the founder:

cyn'ic ... 1. [*cap.*] *Philos.* One of a school of philosophers founded by Antisthenes (born c. 444 B.C.), a pupil of Socrates, and teacher of Diogenes.

6. English translation of the German passage:

So prevalent was preaching that there was a recognised form of sermon. Norden speaks of 'a steadfast type of treasure trove of religious speech, to which the Orient and Hellas contributed in equal measure, and which the syncretistic religions of the imperial era, including Christianity, took over....'

7. E. F. Scott references attempts by writers and scholars, ancient and modern, to co-ordinate or harmonize the Gospel records:

[E]ver since the New Testament books were collected, they [the Four Gospels] have stood side by side. So much were they regarded as similar that towards the close of the second century an attempt was made to combine them in a single work, the *Diatessaron*, or *Four Gospels in One*. Down to our own times, there have been efforts of the same kind to **harmonize** the fourfold narrative (EFS 21).

The main object [among Bible scholars until the eighteenth century] was not to explain how the Gospels came to differ, but to prove that in spite of apparent conflict they always agree. Endless ingenuity was

displayed in that work of *harmonizing* to which reference has been made already (EFS 23).

He [the writer of the Gospel of Luke] mentions emphatically, as the chief merit of his work, that he writes “in sequence.” ... The meaning probably is that material gathered from various separate writings is now *coördinated*, each item receiving its proper place in a fuller narrative. Luke, in fact, has dealt with the early documents very much as the “harmonizers” were afterwards to deal with the Gospels themselves (EFS 32).

8. E. F. Scott maintains that Mark relied not only on his memories of Peter’s conversation but on several earlier documents:

The author did not conceive of himself as the pioneer in Gospel composition. His object, like that of Matthew and Luke, was to offer an inclusive record which would supersede the imperfect records hitherto in use. Besides the reminiscences of Peter and the Q collection [i.e. the sayings of Jesus as preserved in oral tradition], he appears to have had before him an extended account of the Passion (EFS 59).

9. *Compare*: The new book naturally retained the name of the old, and has borne that name from very early times till now (B&M 22).

10. ‘Antioch in Pisidia’ is mentioned in the Book of Acts (see quote below) but I have found no text that suggests or claims that Luke came from the Antioch in Pisidia rather than the Antioch in Syria.

But when they departed from Perga, they came to *Antioch in Pisidia*, and went into the synagogue on the sabbath day, and sat down (Acts 13:14).

Sadler may have deduced that Luke came from Pisidia from the following passage in *The Background of the Bible* (1928). In outlining Paul’s second missionary journey, source author Henry Kendall Booth writes:

(b) *The Second Journey* (50-53 A. D.)
(With Silas to Lystra, where Timothy joins them, then on to *Antioch in Pisidia, where Luke joins Paul.*) (B 157)

11. None of the sources suggest or claim that the author of Luke was familiar with the Gospel of Matthew. According to J. A. Scott:

He was very familiar with Mark, but he may never have seen the Gospel by Matthew. I can hardly believe that he had ever read the twenty-fifth chapter of Matthew, the chapter with the parable of the wise and foolish virgins, the parable of the talents, and the vision of the last Judgment with the great sentence: “Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me,” and would have omitted it from his Gospel, when he used so many of the lesser parables of Mark (JAS 56-57).

According to E. F. Scott:

The author is unacquainted with Matthew’s work, and may have written a little earlier, but more probably just about the same date (EFS 76).

As indicated in the parallel chart, E. F. Scott does say that the author of Luke had a version of Q, which Sadler identifies as the sayings of Jesus as assembled by Matthew. Scott maintains that the sayings of Jesus had been collected from oral tradition and that the Q collections thus varied in local Christian communities. He says that Matthew and Luke drew independently from the versions of Q available to them.

Burton & Mathews suggest (p. 23) that the author of Luke used sources which “must have been in part the same as Matthew’s.”

12. E. F. Scott attributes to the Lucan Source “a large amount of material ... which consists for the most part of parables and incidents akin to parables (e.g., the stories of Zacchæus and of Martha and Mary). The parables which every one knows by heart are almost all to be found in Luke, most of them clustered together in that middle portion of his Gospel in which he breaks away from Mark” (EFS 45).

13. Other examples:

It is therefore tempting to conclude that the epistle was intended to be what we should call a *covering letter* to the Fourth Gospel (Richard Henry Malden, *Problems of the New Testament To-day* [1923], p. 92).

It has been suggested that the Epistle was a covering letter introducing the Fourth Gospel to distant churches (Archibald Robertson, *The Origins of Christianity* [1932], p. 178).