

PAUL J. BROWN

Bodily Resurrection and Ethics in 1 Cor 15

*Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen
zum Neuen Testament 2. Reihe*

360

Mohr Siebeck

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Bodily Resurrection and Ethics in 1 Cor 15

Connecting Faith and Morality in the Context
of Greco-Roman Mythology

Mohr Siebeck

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For Susan

Preface

This monograph is a revision of my PhD dissertation, submitted to the faculty of Trinity Evangelical Divinity School. In preparing this manuscript for print, I welcomed the opportunity to refine my argument and include interaction with some studies that had been published since my dissertation defense in November 2012. My hope is that the resulting book will support further study of the varied themes discussed in the following pages. The Greek and Latin inscriptions are presented, when possible, in facsimile format, approximating their appearance in the *Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum* and other relevant authorities. Translations of Greek and Latin classical texts are taken from the Loeb Classical Library, unless otherwise noted. Hebrew Bible quotations follow the *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia*, Septuagint quotations follow Rahlfs, *Septuaginta*, and New Testament quotations are from the Nestle-Aland 28th edition.

The subject of this study is the fruit of my rumination spanning several decades. Interest in the future bodily resurrection was first kindled by the ministry of Dr. Eldon Wilson, who passionately asserted that the resurrection was the hope of the church. His words still ring in my ears. A number of years later, my interest was fed further by a passing comment of Dr. Gregory Beale to the effect that the resurrection of Jesus might be the epicenter of New Testament theology. The notion that the resurrection may be more central to Paul's theology than the cross was intriguing. It was my subsequent pastoral ministry, and particularly, thinking through the need to comfort those who lost friends and relatives to death, that pushed me to read and wrestle with how Paul saw the knowledge of a future resurrection as a comfort for the bereaved Thessalonians. My intent in doctoral studies was to explore some aspect of the resurrection, but it was not until I sat in an exegesis class on 1 Corinthians that I knew that a study of 1 Cor 15 needed to be the focus of a dissertation. My interest was aroused by Dr. Eckhard Schnabel's comment in class that the connection between Paul's ethical imperatives and theology of the resurrection had yet to be thoroughly explored. Following his personal encouragement, I embarked upon the research problem that would lead me down a number of dead-end roads before the way opened up before me. As it turned out, my initial inclination to seek the answer to the ethical significance of the resurrection in

Paul's new-creational thought-world was wrongheaded, at least in this instance. Although Paul argued theologically, and used Edenic themes to do so, I found the key to Paul's discursive logic in his missionary impulse. It was by exploring what Paul might have thought his Greco-Roman audience understood that ultimately yielded fruit. This study is a tribute to the scholars who have seeded and watered my thoughts through the years.

No book is completed without the aid and influence of others; I would be remiss not to acknowledge those who have supported me throughout my studies and the writing of this book. Along my academic journey, a number of professors have significantly shaped my research sensibilities. I owe a debt to Dr. Gregory Beale and Dr. Gordon Hugenberger for their inspiration during my years at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary. I gratefully acknowledge the influence and wise guidance of my dissertation mentor, Dr. Eckhard Schnabel. On numerous occasions, his incisive comments rescued me from the tangle of details in which I was ensnared.

Thanks are due as well to Dr. Robert Yarbrough and Dr. Richard Averbeck who served as readers for my dissertation. I also wish to thank Dr. Jörg Frey for accepting my manuscript for publication and Dr. James Kelhoffer for his insightful review and critique. The study is stronger because of the influence of these scholars. A number of people have assisted to me in bringing this book to completion. My friend, Dr. Jonathan Marshall, was kind enough to answer technical questions early in the formatting process. Dr. Henning Ziebritzki and the team at Mohr Siebeck were also instrumental in seeing the project to print.

My deepest gratitude is for my family and close friends. My church families, Christian Fellowship Center and CrossWay Community Church, have been a significant support throughout my graduate studies. Their friendships, prayer support, financial gifts, and constant encouragement have often been the wind in my sails when my progress was slow. My parents, siblings, and children, have shown a level of interest and support well beyond the duties of familial obligation; my eldest daughter, Abbi, read and commented on the early chapters of the manuscript. I lastly acknowledge the joyful and thoughtful support of my wife, Susan, who read the entire manuscript and probed the logic of my findings from an outsider's perspective. She has been a great help in eliminating many errors and ambiguities. More importantly, however, she has been a constant and loving companion. Her influence in shaping my thinking and conduct throughout our years of marriage and ministry is difficult to overstate. She is my greatest earthly treasure.

Paul J. Brown
October 2013

Table of Contents

Preface	VII
Abbreviations	XIII
1. Introduction and Research Setting	1
<i>1.1 The Problem</i>	2
<i>1.2 The Approach</i>	2
<i>1.3 The Methodology</i>	5
<i>1.4 The Structure of the Study</i>	6
<i>1.5 Significance of the Project</i>	7
<i>1.6 Review of Recent Research</i>	8
1.6.1 New Testament Ethics	9
1.6.2 Pauline Ethics	14
1.6.3 Further Studies.....	20
1.6.3.1 Sections within Studies	20
1.6.3.2 Pauline Theologies.....	20
1.6.3.3 Studies Addressing the Significance of the Future Bodily Resurrection for Ethics.....	22
<i>1.7 Conclusion</i>	26
2. Greco-Roman Afterlife Beliefs and Paul's Resurrection Convictions	28
<i>2.1 Greco-Roman Afterlife Beliefs</i>	28
2.1.1 Continued Existence in the Earth/Grave/Tomb	29
2.1.2 Continued Existence in the Underworld.....	34
2.1.3 Immortality of the Soul and Metempsychosis	36
2.1.4 Celestial Immortality.....	41
2.1.5 Fleshly Immortality.....	43
2.1.6 Afterlife Nihilism.....	49
2.1.6.1 Epicurean Materialistic Philosophy	50
2.1.6.2 Nihilistic Epitaphs	51
2.1.6.3 Practical Nihilism	53
2.1.7 Conclusion.....	55

2.2 <i>Paul's Convictions regarding the Resurrection</i>	56
2.2.1 The Jewish Influence.....	57
2.2.2 The Greco-Roman Influence.....	61
2.2.3 The Damascus Road Influence.....	63
2.3 <i>Conclusion</i>	65
3. The Deniers of the Resurrection	66
3.1 <i>Introduction</i>	66
3.2 <i>Three Main Positions for Identifying the Problem</i>	67
3.2.1 The Denial of a Future Resurrection.....	68
3.2.2 The Denial of an Embodied Afterlife.....	71
3.2.3 The Denial of an Afterlife.....	74
3.2.4 Summary.....	79
3.3 <i>A Proposal for Identifying the Problem</i>	79
3.3.1 The Demographic of the Corinthian Church.....	80
3.3.2 Popular Greco-Roman Religion and the Resurrection.....	81
3.3.3 Features of a Greek Myth Informed Eschatology.....	84
3.3.3.1 Afterlife Pessimism.....	85
3.3.3.2 Heroes.....	89
3.3.3.3 Ethics.....	94
3.3.4 Roman Religion and the Corinthian Problems.....	97
3.3.5 Summary.....	102
3.4 <i>Paul's Strategy for Addressing the Corinthians' Thinking and Behavior</i>	102
3.4.1 A Narrative Culture.....	102
3.4.2 Greek Mythological Norms.....	104
3.4.3 Status Consciousness.....	105
3.5 <i>Conclusion</i>	107
4. The Bodily Resurrection of Jesus (1 Cor 15:1–11)	108
4.1 <i>The Structure of 1 Cor 15</i>	108
4.2 <i>Overview and Introduction to 1 Cor 15:1–11</i>	112
4.3 <i>Paul's Introductory Considerations: 1 Cor 15:1–2</i>	112
4.4 <i>The Structure of Paul's Gospel: 1 Cor 15:3–11</i>	114
4.5 <i>The Gospel Summary: 1 Cor 15:3–5a</i>	118
4.5.1 The Unified Testimony of Jesus' Death and Resurrection....	118
4.5.2 According to the Scriptures.....	119
4.5.2.1 The Word Groups Being Modified.....	120
4.5.2.2 The Old Testament Referents.....	121
The Lexical Approach.....	121

The Narrative Approach.....	124
4.5.2.3 The Ethical Connotations	128
4.5.3 Conclusion.....	128
4.6 <i>Paul's List of Witnesses and Expansions: 1 Cor 15:5b–11</i>	129
4.6.1 The List of Witnesses	129
4.6.2 The Use and Significance of ὡφθῆ 130	130
4.6.3 The Appearance of Jesus to Paul.....	134
4.6.4 Paul's Concluding Remarks.....	137
4.7 <i>Conclusion</i>	138
5. The Veracity of the Bodily Resurrection and the Resulting Ethical Imperatives (1 Cor 15:12–34).....	139
5.1 <i>Introduction</i>	139
5.2 <i>The Consequences of Denying a Future Bodily Resurrection:</i> <i>1 Cor 15:12–19</i>	140
5.3 <i>The Cosmology and Eschatology of the Future Resurrection:</i> <i>1 Cor 15:20–28</i>	145
5.3.1 The Adam-Christ Typology: 1 Cor 15:20–22.....	145
5.3.2 The Triumph over Death: 1 Cor 15:23–28	147
5.4 <i>The Practical and Ethical Implications of the Resurrection:</i> <i>1 Cor 15:29–34</i>	149
5.4.1 The Practical Implications of the Resurrection: 1 Cor 15:29–32	152
5.4.1.1 The Baptism for the Dead: 1 Cor 15:29.....	152
5.4.1.2 Endangered Living: 1 Cor 15:30–32.....	161
5.4.1.3 Conclusion	169
5.4.2 The Moral Implications of the Resurrection: 1 Cor 15:33–34	170
5.4.2.1 Command regarding Bad Company: 1 Cor 15:33.....	170
5.4.2.2 Command regarding Sin: 1 Cor 15:34	172
5.5 <i>Conclusion</i>	173
6. The Nature of the Bodily Resurrection and Its Ethical Implications (1 Cor 15:35–58)	175
6.1 <i>Introduction</i>	175
6.2 <i>The Literary Structure of 1 Cor 15:35–58</i>	176
6.3 <i>The Nature of the Resurrection Body: 1 Cor 15:35–49</i>	177
6.3.1 The Corinthian Question: 1 Cor 15:35–36a.....	179
6.3.2 The Seed and the Creation Narrative: 1 Cor 15:36b–41	180
6.3.2.1 The Analogy of the Seed.....	181

6.3.2.2 The Allusion to the Creation Narrative	183
6.3.2.3 Defining <i>δόξα</i>	185
6.3.2.4 All the Glory of Adam	187
6.3.3 The Analogous Resurrection: 1 Cor 15:42–44a.....	195
6.3.3.1 The Sowing and Raising of the Body	197
6.3.3.2 The Contrasting Bodies	200
6.3.3.3 The <i>σῶμα ψυχικόν</i> and the <i>σῶμα πνευματικόν</i>	202
6.3.4 The Earthy Man and the Heavenly Man: 1 Cor 15:44b–49...207	
6.3.4.1 The Living Soul and the Life-giving Spirit	209
6.3.4.2 The First Adam and the Last Adam.....	211
6.3.4.3 The Image of the Earthy and Heavenly.....	214
6.3.5 Conclusion.....	219
6.4 <i>The Explanation of the Eschaton: 1 Cor 15:50–57</i>	220
6.4.1 The Mystery of the Bodily Transformation:	
1 Cor 15:50–53	220
6.4.2 The Effects of the Bodily Transformation:	
1 Cori 15:54–57	225
6.5 <i>The Ethical Implications of the Resurrection: 1 Cor 15:58</i>	227
6.6 <i>Conclusion</i>	231
7. Summary and Conclusion	232
7.1 <i>Summary</i>	232
7.2 <i>Conclusion</i>	234
Bibliography.....	237
Index of Ancient Sources	279
Index of Modern Authors	301
Index of Subjects	309

Abbreviations

Abbreviations follow *The SBL Handbook of Style* (ed. Patrick H. Alexander et al.). The following represents materials not included in the *SBL Handbook*'s list of abbreviations.

AAPS	Ashgate Ancient Philosophy Series
AAW	Approaching the Ancient World
ABA	Associazione Biblica Italiana
AF	Archäologische Forschungen
AGRL	Aspects of Greek and Roman Life
ARelM	Ancient Religion and Mythology
<i>AthMitt</i>	<i>Mitteilungen des deutschen archäologischen Instituts, Athenische Abteilung</i>
AYB	The Anchor Yale Bible
AYBRL	Anchor Yale Bible Reference Library
BAH	Bibliothèque archéologique et historique
BARel	Blackwell Ancient Religions
BARIS	BAR International Series
BCAW	Blackwell Companions to the Ancient World
BibIntS	Biblical Interpretation Series
<i>BNP</i>	<i>Brill's New Pauly</i>
BRLJ	Brill Reference Library of Judaism
BRS	The Biblical Resource Series
BSL	Biblical Studies Library
BU	Biblische Untersuchungen
BzAlt	Beiträge zur Altertumskunde
<i>CAF</i>	<i>Comicorum atticorum fragmenta</i>
CBR	Currents in Biblical Research
CCSS	Catholic Commentary of Sacred Scripture
CEC	The Context of Early Christianity
CEJL	Commentaries of Early Jewish Literature
CL	Collection Linguistique (Société de linguistique de Paris)
<i>CLE</i>	<i>Carmina Latina epigraphica conlegit Franciscus Buecheler</i>
ConC	Concordia Commentary
CPNIVC	College Press NIV Commentary
CREJ	Collection de la Revue des Études Juives
CSR	Contributions to the Study of Religion
DCDCN	The Development of Christian Doctrine before the Council of Nicaea
<i>DNTB</i>	<i>Dictionary of New Testament Background: A Compendium of Contemporary Biblical Scholarship</i>
Ekstasis	Ekstasis: Religious Experience from Antiquity to the Middle Ages

EPSC	Evangelical Press Study Commentary
ET	Études et commentaires
EzNT	Erläuterungen zum Neuen Testament
FCCGRW	First Century Christians in the Graeco-Roman World
FSC	Faith and Scholarship Colloquies Series
FzB	Forschung zur Bibel
GBSNT	Guides in Biblical Scholarship New Testament Series
GCRW	Greek Culture in the Roman World
GPP	Gorgias Précis Portfolios
HMT	Handbuch der Moraltheologie
HNTC	Harpers New Testament Commentary
HTANT	Historisch Theologische Auslegung Neues Testament
ICON	Image & Context
ILCK	The International Library of Christian Knowledge
<i>ILS</i>	<i>Inscriptiones Latinae selectae</i>
JSJSup	Supplements to the Journal for the Study of Judaism
KTAH	Key Themes in Ancient History
KTCH	Key Themes in Classical History
LPS	Library of Pauline Studies
MBib	Mellen Biblical Press Series
MNS	Mnemosyne Supplements
MNTS	MacMaster New Testament Studies
MR	Mythes et religions
MSÅAF	Meddelanden från Stiftelsens för Åbo Akademi Forskningsinstitut
MST	Millennium-Studien zu Kultur und Geschichte des ersten Jahrtausends n. Chr.
MThSt	Marburger Theologische Studien
NCBC	New Cambridge Bible Commentary
NTC	New Testament Commentary
ÖAW	Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften
OCM	Oxford Classical Monographs
OSAD	Oxford Studies in Ancient Documents
PAST	Pauline Studies
PCNT	Paideia Commentaries on the New Testament
PKNT	Papyrologische Kommentare zum Neuen Testament
PNTC	Pillar New Testament Commentary
RA	Revealing Antiquity
<i>RELat</i>	<i>Revista de Estudios Latinos</i>
<i>RevRJ</i>	<i>Review of Rabbinic Judaism</i>
RFCC	Religion in the First Christian Centuries
RivBib	Rivista biblica
RSAW	Routledge Sourcebooks for the Ancient World
RTNT	Reading the New Testament
SAS	Studien zur antiken Stadt
SBF	Studium Biblicum Franciscanum
SBLECL	Society of Biblical Literature Early Christianity and Its Literature
SBLAB	Society of Biblical Literature Academia Biblica
SciAnt	Sciences of Antiquity
SGLL	Studia Graeca et Latina Lundensia
SHBC	Smyth & Helwys Bible Commentary

SJSHRZ	Studien zu den jüdischen Schriften aus hellenistisch-römischer Zeit
SLG	<i>Supplementum lyricis Graecis</i>
SNTW	Studies of the New Testament and Its World
STB	Studien zu Theologie und Bibel
StudBibL	Studies in Biblical Literature
TBN	Themes in Biblical Narrative: Jewish and Christian Traditions
TGP	Theology in Global Perspective Series
TGST	Tesi Gregoriana Serie Teologia
TSAJ	Texts and Studies in Ancient Judaism
UBW	Understanding the Bible and Its World
UUÅ	Uppsala Universitets Årsskrift
VCSS	Variorum Collected Studies Series
WSC	Wisconsin Studies in Classics
XB	Xantener Berichte
ZGB	Zürcher Grundrisse zur Bibel
ZMiss	<i>Zeitschrift für Mission</i>
ZNT	<i>Zeitschrift für Neues Testament</i>

Chapter 1

Introduction and Research Setting

When Paul embarked upon his journeys, proclaiming to the Greco-Roman world the good news of salvation through Jesus the Messiah, his goal was broader than winning an audience to a set of convictions. He sought to establish a community of believers who conducted their lives in a way that imitated the life of Jesus. Paul was not alone in his missionary ideals. For all the early apostles, being a disciple of Jesus entailed believing and living in specific ways.

It comes as no surprise that the cumulative voice of the New Testament authors urges believers to be conformed in thought and deed to Jesus Christ. How the individual authors sought to exhort their audience is varied and a subject of both pastoral and scholarly interest. The interrelationship between the theological teachings of the New Testament and the moral expectations for the earliest believers in Jesus the Messiah has long attracted the attention of modern scholars. Pauline scholars in particular often note a causal relationship between Paul's theology and his ethical teaching.

In the twentieth century, the interrelationship between theology and ethics has been a fruitful field for research that points most famously to the work of R. Bultmann and M. Dibelius. On the one hand, M. Dibelius saw little connection between Paul's theology and his ethics.¹ On the other hand, however, R. Bultmann saw a tight causal connection.² These two approaches set the agenda for decades and even today they are discernable

¹ Cf. Martin Dibelius, *A Fresh Approach to the New Testament and Early Christian Literature* (ILCK; London: Ivor Nicholson and Watson, 1936), 142–49; 217–21; idem, *From Tradition to Gospel* (trans. Bertram Lee Woolf from the 2d rev. ed.; New York: Scribner's, 1935), 38.

² Cf., e.g., Rudolf Bultmann, *Theology of the New Testament* (trans. Kendrick Grobel; 2 vols.; New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1951–1955), 1:330–33. Cf. idem, "Das Problem der Ethik bei Paulus," *ZNW* 23 (1924): 123–40 (repr. in *Exegetica* [Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1967], 36–54); ET, idem, "The Problem of Ethics in Paul," in *Understanding Paul's Ethics: Twentieth Century Approaches* (ed. Brian S. Rosner; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995), 195–216. He is followed by many. V. P. Furnish sees this interrelationship between the indicative and the imperative to be "the crucial problem in interpreting the Pauline ethic" (*Theology and Ethics in Paul* [Nashville: Abingdon, 1968], 9).

in the work of scholars who take such divergent approaches as the ethnographic and theological.³ It is within the Bultmannian tradition that the research problem of this study is located.

1.1 The Problem

The research problem addressed in this study is an exploration of the relationship between Paul's theological convictions and moral instruction, both explicit and implied, as articulated in 1 Cor 15. The research is not primarily concerned with demonstrating that there is a real connection between Paul's resurrection convictions and his ethical instruction; the study explores how Paul argued for the veracity and nature of the future bodily resurrection in light of the Greco-Roman mores of those who denied the future resurrection, and also proposes how Paul's convictions called for moral obligation. This aim can be posed by the question: How did Paul seek to correct the convictions of the deniers of the resurrection so that they also felt a resulting weight of moral obligation?

1.2 The Approach

In arguing my thesis, I proceed with two presuppositions. First, I attempt to articulate Paul's logic with the understanding that he had every intention that the resurrection-denying Corinthians would embrace his convictions and, therefore, alter their behavior. This makes no statement about if Paul actually accurately assessed the situation at Corinth; he heard about the situation second hand. I argue my thesis taking Paul's understanding of the situation as a starting point since we have not other information to work with. I also make no statement regarding the efficacy of Paul's rhetoric. The degree to which the Corinthians were convinced by Paul is unknown. It is impossible to know how the Corinthians actually understood and felt about Paul's instruction.⁴ What is known about the reception of the letter

³ Examples could be multiplied, but compare for example the ethnographic work of Wayne Meeks to the theological work of Wolfgang Schrage: Wayne A. Meeks, *The Origins of Christian Morality: The First Two Centuries* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993); Wolfgang Schrage, *The Ethics of the New Testament* (trans. David E. Green; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1988).

⁴ In Paul's address at the Areopagus in Athens his strategy apparently yielded only partial results (Acts 17:22–34).

as a whole suggests that the problems were not entirely resolved, if at all.⁵ C. K. Barrett suggests that the matters specifically regarding the resurrection were cleared up since in 2 Corinthians we “hear of no more disputation about the resurrection.”⁶ Paul’s further discussion of the resurrection in 2 Cor 5:1–10, however, suggests that 1 Cor 15 may have been less definitive than originally intended. These unanswered questions underscore my approach in this study; the research focuses upon Paul’s intent and expectation of a positive result, not the actual results. Second, I understand Paul to be speaking to those who were ἐν Χριστῷ, to those who had received the gospel that Paul and the apostles preached (1 Cor 15:1, 3–5, 10). The research presented here proposes that the overarching thinking that instructed the afterlife convictions of the believers in 1 Cor 15 was derived from Greco-Roman religious afterlife paradigms. I argue that the Corinthians’ eschatology, which was informed by Greco-Roman mythology, was a significant contributing factor in causing them to believe and live in ways unbecoming for the community of believers (e.g., 1 Cor 15:12, 32–34). Paul’s intent was to instruct and convince the resurrection-denying Corinthians of the veracity and nature of a future resurrection in such a way as to appeal to their culturally-formed sensibilities so that they would embrace convictions consistent with Paul’s preached gospel. In so believing, he intended that they would feel a weight of moral obligation in his exhortation to recognize the corollaries of Jesus’ life, death, and resurrection for the life of the believer, and thereby live a life that imitates the risen Lord, the heavenly man, by enduring hardship, laboring tirelessly, and abstaining from sin.

With reference to definitions, a number of significant issues intersect with this study. First, it is not unusual to find in recent work in New Testament ethics a careful distinction between the terms *morals* and *ethics*, the former focusing on behavior and the latter on the theoretical framework. For the purpose of this study, I use the two synonymously, although I typically use the term *ethics*. Second, scholars have endeavored to discern the *identity* of the Christian community, the *ethical teaching* of that community, and the resultant *ethos* in order to discern the ethics of the community. The application of social-science terminology to New Testament ethics is instructive at one level and slippery at another. It is beneficial for understanding issues that were germane to the first-century church: What were the acceptable moral norms? This terminology is also helpful because it softens the problem of how to understand the relationship between the

⁵ Cf., e.g., 2 Cor 7:8. For further discussion, see C. K. Barrett, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians* (BNTC 8; Peabody: Hendrickson, 1973), 5–11; Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *First Corinthians* (AYB 32; New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008), 37–47.

⁶ Barrett, *Second Corinthians*, 6.

indicative and the imperative. The terminology is slippery, however, because there is no consensus how the terms should be defined. I will therefore use these terms only sparingly, and typically only when interacting with scholars who use the terms.⁷ Third, in both classical studies and modern New Testament studies there is ongoing discussion about how the term *myth* should be understood.⁸ As yet, no definition has won broad approval and the most general definition of *myth*, as traditional stories of significance, is inadequate.⁹ Despite the conspicuous ambiguities, *myth* and *mythology* are universally used among classicists when referring to the Greco-Roman stories of the gods and heroes. No such unanimity exists, however, among biblical scholars when referring to the Scriptures, Paul's gospel, or the convictions of the early Christ followers, although many scholars use the terminology.¹⁰ For clarity I restrict the terms *myth* and *mythology* to the

⁷ For further discussion regarding social-science terminology and theory, see Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Culture: Selected Essays* (New York: Basic Books, 2000); Wayne Meeks, *The Moral World of the First Christians* (LEC 6; Philadelphia: Westminster, 1986), 14–15; idem, *Origins*, 3–11; Henri Tajfel, *Human Groups and Social Categories: Studies in Social Psychology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981); Jan G. van der Watt, ed., *Identity, Ethics, and Ethos in the New Testament* (BZNW 141; Berlin: de Gruyter, 2006). For appropriations and adaptations of Tajfel's social identity theory by biblical scholars, see Atsuhiko Asano, *Community-Identity Construction in Galatians: Exegetical, Social-Anthropological and Socio-Historical Studies* (JSNTSup 285; London: T&T Clark, 2005); Bengt Homberg, ed., *Exploring Early Christian Identity* (WUNT 226; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008); Judith Lieu, *Christian Identity in the Jewish and Graeco-Roman World* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004); V. Henry T. Nguyen, *Christian Identity in Corinth: A Comparative Study of 2 Corinthians, Epictetus and Valerius Maximus* (WUNT 2/243; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008); Michael Wolter, "Die ethische Identität christlicher Gemeinden in neustamentlicher Zeit," in *Woran orientiert sich Ethik?* (MTS 67; Marburg: Elwert, 2001), 61–90.

⁸ Cf., e.g., the discussion by classicists Ken Dowden, *The Uses of Greek Mythology* (AAW; London: Routledge, 1992), 2–5; Ken Dowden and Niall Livingstone, "Thinking through Myth, Thinking Myth Through," in *A Companion to Greek Mythology* (ed. Ken Dowden and Niall Livingstone; BCAW; Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011), 3–23; Fritz Graf, *Greek Mythology: An Introduction* (trans. Thomas Marier; Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993), 1–8; and Paul Veyne, *Did the Greeks Believe in Their Myths?: An Essay on the Constitutive Imagination* (trans. Paula Wissing; Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988), 1–26. For biblical scholars on *myth*, cf., e.g., Rudolf Bultmann, *New Testament and Mythology and Other Basic Writings* (translated and edited by Schubert Miles Ogden; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1984), 1–44; Burton L. Mack, *The Christian Myth: Origins, Logic, and Legacy* (New York: Continuum, 2001).

⁹ F. Graf notes, "Despite many attempts, it has proven impossible to arrive at a definition of myth (Gr. μῦθος/*mýthos*; Lat. *mythos*) that would satisfy all disciplines" (*BNP* 9:444). See also in Dowden, "Myth," 3; Graf, *Mythology*, 1–2.

¹⁰ Cf., e.g., the collection of essays generated from the Society of Biblical Literature's Seminar on Ancient Myths and Modern Theories of Christian Origins, Ron Cameron and Merrill P. Miller, eds., *Redescribing Paul and the Corinthians* (SBLECL 5; Atlanta: SBL, 2011).

Greco-Roman narratives of gods and heroes. I typically apply the term *Scripture* to the canonical writings of the Jews and Christians and *gospel* to what Paul preached to the Corinthians. Although what Paul expounds to the Corinthians is spoken of as *myth* by a number of scholars,¹¹ I avoid this terminology when possible to make a clear distinction between the Greco-Roman influenced convictions of the believers at Corinth and Paul's gospel, which he received and proclaimed to the Corinthians and intends for them to believe (1 Cor 15:1–3).

1.3 The Methodology

The methodological approach used in this study seeks to understand the historical and cultural setting of 1 Cor 15 and how Paul's logic was relevant and reasonable for his largely Gentile audience. As such, my approach concerns only what R. Hays designates as "the descriptive task" in studying Pauline ethics.¹² I am not concerned with the "synthetic," "hermeneutic," or "pragmatic" tasks.¹³ My exegetical goal is to understand Pauline ethics in the first-century Corinthian setting via the window of one chapter in his first letter to the church. Therefore, I will only be examining a small portion of Pauline ethical teaching: i.e., the ethical significance of the future bodily resurrection. Broader historical concerns, theological foundations, sources, motives, and criteria for Paul's ethical teaching within the corpus, and even the letter, will only be addressed as they contribute to a fuller understanding of the connection between the eschatological convictions and the ethical implications in 1 Cor 15. I locate my exploration of the ethical significance of the bodily resurrection within the larger fields of New Testament ethics and, more narrowly, Pauline ethics.

This study seeks to understand Paul's communication through both exegetical and comparative methodologies, since the aim is primarily to trace Paul's logic and to posit what his audience might have reasonably understood. First, the exegetical analysis of 1 Cor 15 includes textual criticism, lexical studies, and syntactical, rhetorical, and discourse analyses, each considered within the Greco-Roman historical setting and occasion of 1

¹¹ Burton L. Mack, "Rereading the Christ Myth: Paul's Gospel and the Christ Cult Question," in *Redescribing Paul and the Corinthians* (ed. Ron Cameron and Merrill P. Miller; SBLCL 5; Atlanta: SBL, 2011), 35–73; Ken Dowden, "The Myth that Saves: Mysteries and Mysteriosophies," in *A Companion to Greek Mythology* (ed. Ken Dowden and Niall Livingstone; BCAW; Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011), 283.

¹² Richard B. Hays, *The Moral Vision of the New Testament: Community, Cross, New Creation; A Contemporary Introduction to New Testament Ethics* (New York: Harper-Collins, 1996), 3–4.

¹³ Hays, *Vision*, 4–7.

Corinthians. Also considered is the greater textual and theological context of 1 Corinthians within the Pauline corpus.¹⁴ Second, the study also engages in comparative religion and tradition criticism to further illuminate or qualify the ways in which Paul's Jewish background and Greco-Roman context provided for the expression of his convictions and arguments regarding the nature of the bodily resurrection and its significance for ethics. The primary sources for these methodologies include the Old Testament, Second Temple Jewish writings, Greco-Roman texts, Greek and Latin inscriptions, tombs and epitaphs, archeological data, Acts, and the Pauline corpus.

1.4 The Structure of the Study

This study is divided into seven chapters beginning with a review of literature and a consideration of the Corinthian setting, proceeding exegetically through 1 Cor 15, and ending with a summary and conclusion. The following provides an overview for each chapter.

Chapter One includes an introduction to the aims and methods, and then locates the present research within the field of current New Testament ethics. I trace the major recent contributions in three areas that impinge upon the research problem: New Testament ethics, Pauline ethics, and research that directly addresses the problem of this study – the eschatological dimension of Pauline ethics and especially the significance of the resurrection for ethics in 1 Cor 15. The section will not attempt to trace the history of New Testament or Pauline ethics thoroughly. The aim is to establish the context of this study, raise issues relevant for the following sections, and demonstrate a need for a full-length study of the significance of the resurrection for ethics.

Chapter Two focuses upon the afterlife beliefs extant in the Greco-Roman cultural milieu during the first century and addresses Paul's afterlife convictions. The survey of the Greco-Roman afterlife beliefs seeks primarily to identify the breadth of convictions that were held by those

¹⁴ I take the thirteen letters in the Pauline corpus to be written by Paul. I also recognize that there is a discernable shift in content and emphasis between the earlier letters and the later letters. I understand this not as proof for various authors, but as evidence of differing occasions and maturing concerns. As such, I distinguish to some degree between Paul's early and later writings for proposing what Paul had and had not clearly taught at the different stages of his missionary labor. E.g., the opening clause of 1 Thess 4:13 suggests that Paul had not taught them about the future resurrection of the dead: *οὐ θέλομεν δὲ ὑμᾶς ἀγνοεῖν, ἀδελφοί, περὶ τῶν κοιμωμένων*. This apparent ignorance is also discernable in 1 Cor 15. By Phil 3:20–21, Paul can talk of the future bodily resurrection with very little further explanation.

outside the Corinthian believing community. I then turn to Paul's resurrection beliefs, tracing the possible origins of his thinking.

Chapter Three seeks to understand the problem at Corinth regarding the denial of the resurrection of the dead (1 Cor 15:12). What did the erring believers at Corinth embrace regarding afterlife expectations? In this section, I interact with three categorical positions in recent research including an over-realized eschatology, the immortality of the soul, and afterlife nihilism. I conclude the chapter by proposing a reconstruction of the situation at Corinth that identifies the errant beliefs with a Greco-Roman religious background. I argue that the denial of a future bodily resurrection and resulting ethical problems that Paul addressed in 1 Cor 15 were caused in part by an eschatology influenced by Greco-Roman mythology. This proposed reconstruction becomes a hermeneutical key for tracing Paul's logical argument in the subsequent chapters of this study. I further support the proposed reconstruction by observing how beliefs influenced by Greco-Roman myths may have allowed for other moral failures in 1 Corinthians. Lastly, I propose Paul's strategy for correcting the errant convictions.

Chapters Four through Six constitute the exegetical portion of the study. Chapter Four explores Paul's understanding of the historicity of Jesus' bodily resurrection (1 Cor 15:1–11). The goal of the chapter is to confirm Paul's conviction that the Messiah rose from the dead and to identify what Paul understood to be the nature of Jesus' resurrection body. This section lays the foundation for Paul's argument for the veracity and nature of the future resurrection and the moral obligation that he intended to flow from these beliefs. Chapter Five aims to demonstrate the consequences and reality of a future resurrection exegetically, as well as identify the ethical implications of the same (1 Cor 15:13–34). Chapter Six explores the nature of the resurrection body (1 Cor 15:35–58). The burden of the exegesis in this chapter answers a question that Paul anticipates: What will the resurrection body be like and how might this influence the moral behavior of the Corinthian believers?

Chapter Seven summarizes the findings of the previous chapters. The study concludes with a reiteration of Paul's main lines of argumentation for grounding ethical injunctions in the veracity and nature of the future resurrection for those who are in the Messiah.

1.5 The Significance of the Project

For decades, scholars have observed the possible connection between resurrection and ethics in passing, but a fuller exploration of Paul's understanding of the future resurrection of the dead in relation to his ethical teaching has received little sustained attention. Thus far, no monograph-

length study covering this specific aspect of Pauline ethics has been written. This study seeks to fill the gap in current scholarship by a full-length study of 1 Cor 15 focusing on the issues that contribute to Paul's understanding of the future bodily resurrection and its significance for ethics.

This study demonstrates an advance within the larger fields of Pauline theology and ethics in three areas. (1) Although a small number of scholars have recently suggested that the problem at Corinth arose from Greco-Roman thinking, this study contributes to a fuller understanding of the historical situation that gave rise to the denial of the resurrection among the Corinthian believers. (2) It posits how the Corinthian eschatological beliefs influenced by Greco-Roman myths about heroes and gods adversely affected their behavior. (3) Lastly, it contributes to Pauline ethics by proposing how he leveraged their cultural mores with the intent of making Pauline thinking about the future resurrection a convincing motivation for moral living among the first-century believers at Corinth.

1.6 Review of Recent Research

The purpose of this section is to establish the current state of scholarly research regarding Pauline ethics and, specifically, how Paul's belief in the bodily resurrection was significant for ethics.¹⁵ The material with which I interact in this section is primarily descriptive: that is to say, there is no sustained attempt to apply the ethical teaching of the New Testament to a twenty-first century setting.¹⁶ I engage with scholars who employ the de-

¹⁵ Richard B. Hays ("Mapping the Field: Approaches to New Testament Ethics," in *Identity, Ethics, and Ethos in the New Testament* [ed. Jan G. van der Watt; BZNW 141; Berlin: de Gruyter, 2006], 3–19) describes six approaches that, in reality, are but two basic ways of addressing New Testament ethics – a descriptive approach and an approach that attempts to apply the findings to the present era.

¹⁶ Scholars who endeavor to apply New Testament ethics to the modern and postmodern setting do so with differing assumptions and agendas. Cf., e.g., the moral principle approach of Reinhold Niebuhr (*An Interpretation of Christian Ethics* [New York: Harper, 1935], esp. 37–61). Many have played a variation on this same theme; see, e.g., Richard A. Burridge, *Imitating Jesus: An Inclusive Approach to New Testament Ethics* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007); Eduard Lohse, *Theological Ethics of the New Testament* (trans. M. Eugene Boring; Minneapolis: Fortress, 1991); Frank J. Matera, *New Testament Ethics: The Legacies of Jesus and Paul* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1996); and Russell Pregeant, *Knowing Truth, Doing Good: Engaging New Testament Ethics* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2008). More radical postmodern methodologies include Brian K. Blount, *Then the Whisper Put on Flesh: New Testament Ethics in an African American Context* (Nashville: Abingdon, 2001), Willi Marxsen, *New Testament Foundations for Christian Ethics* (trans. O. C. Dean; Minneapolis: Fortress, 1993), and Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, *In Memory of Her: A Feminist Theological Reconstruction of Christian Origins* (New York: Crossroad, 1984). For those who apply New Testament ethical

scriptive approach and with the descriptive work of those who include modern applications.¹⁷ Although scholars give some attention to the ethical significance of the future resurrection in the Pauline corpus, this section demonstrates that no scholar has attempted a sustained study of the correspondence between the future resurrection and ethics in 1 Cor 15. I first survey recent New Testament ethical studies, move thereafter to Pauline ethics,¹⁸ and lastly interact with studies that address the connection between the future bodily resurrection and ethics.

1.6.1 New Testament Ethics

W. Schrage's monograph on New Testament ethics begins with Jesus and his teaching, and then moves through the New Testament canon in a roughly chronological order.¹⁹ He understands Jesus' ethical teaching as grounded in his kingdom proclamation, which Schrage takes to be eschatological rather than apocalyptic or sapiential. The will of God for a person is focused upon the eschaton. When Schrage turns to Paul, the focus is still eschatological, but he employs different terminology – using language of gospel and new creation rather than kingdom. As such, Paul's ethical teaching is described by Schrage as christological, in that the death and resurrection of Jesus are understood to inaugurate a new creation.²⁰ Paul's ethic is thus motivated and shaped by the transformative and ongoing christological event, Jesus' death and resurrection, which is only to be completed at the final day.²¹ The balance of the monograph views the particularities of the later canonical books through the same eschatological

teaching with a concern for narrative continuity, cf. Stanley Hauerwas, *Character and the Christian Life: A Study in Theological Ethics* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1994); idem, *The Community of Character: Toward a Constructive Christian Social Ethic* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1981); and Hays, *Vision*.

¹⁷ E.g., Hays, *Vision*. Less significant studies include J. L. Houlden, *Ethics and the New Testament* (Baltimore: Penguin, 1973); Jack T. Sanders, *Ethics in the New Testament: Change and Development* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1975); and Ceslas Spicq, *Théologie morale du Nouveau Testament* (Paris: Gabalda, 1970).

¹⁸ A survey of works on Pauline ethics in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries can be found in Victor Paul Furnish, *Theology and Ethics in Paul* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1968), 242–79. A survey of major works in the recent past, both New Testament and Pauline ethics, appears in Wendell L. Willis, "Bibliography: Pauline Ethics, 1964–1994," in *Theology and Ethics in Paul and His Interpreters: Essays in Honor of Victor Paul Furnish* (ed. Eugene H. Lovering and Jerry L. Sumney; Nashville: Abingdon, 1996), 306–19; Werner Zager, "Neutestamentliche Ethik im Spiegel der Forschung," *ZNT* 11 (2003): 3–13.

¹⁹ Schrage, *Ethics*; see also his *Die konkreten Einzelgebote in der paulinischen Paränese: Ein Beitrag zur neutestamentlichen Ethik* (Gütersloh: Mohn, 1961).

²⁰ Schrage, *Ethics*, 163–241.

²¹ Schrage, *Ethics*, 181.

lenses. Regrettably, Schrage's eschatological outlook is not as helpful for addressing the specific issue of the ethical significance of the resurrection since his discussion focuses upon the transformative effect of Jesus' death and resurrection, which is completed at the final day, rather than upon the motivation of the believer's own resurrection for pre-parousia living. What he does offer for Pauline ethics is a new-creation framework that places all behavior in a forward-looking context and affirms the fact of a future resurrection. He does not, however, touch upon the importance of the nature of the resurrection for ethical behavior.

S. Schulz covers much of the same ground as other scholars.²² His most significant contribution is his discussion of the norms, criteria, and motivations in Paul's early teaching. The work of Christ is both the ground and defining factor in the lifestyle of the Christian. More precisely, the participatory nature of the life in Christ and the inaugurated eschatological dimension of living both suggest that the Spirit-empowered life in Christ is defined and motivated by the past events of Christ's death and resurrection. The future resurrection is but the culmination of what is already true of the believer. The christological emphasis therefore dominates his discussion and the specific issue of the significance of the future resurrection upon ethics remains largely unaddressed.²³

R. Schnackenburg's original 1962 study on the moral teaching of the New Testament became an important text and was translated into English shortly thereafter.²⁴ An updated edition followed the original monograph, in which Schnackenburg revised his opinions and structure (e.g., the division of Paul's letters into authentic and deutero-Pauline, the additional treatment of Jude and 2 Peter, and the consideration of the Synoptics after the Pauline corpus). He also added a significant amount of new material (e.g., what was a one-volume work is now two).²⁵ Schnackenburg begins his study with Jesus, moves to the primitive church, and finishes with the church in the canonical period. His treatment of the Pauline and deutero-Pauline letters places the ethical teaching of the corpus squarely upon the foundation of Christology. It is the saving work of God through Jesus Christ and the subsequent gift of the Spirit that empowers the Christian in

²² Siegfried Schulz, *Neutestamentliche Ethik* (ZGB; Zürich: Theologischer Verlag, 1987).

²³ Schulz, *Ethik*, 5, 311–19; 333–402.

²⁴ Rudolf Schnackenburg, *The Moral Teaching of the New Testament* (trans. J. Holland-Smith and W. J. O'Hara; New York: Herder & Herder, 1965). Cf. the original German edition, Rudolf Schnackenburg, *Die sittliche Botschaft des Neuen Testaments* (HMT 6; Munich: H. Hueber, 1962).

²⁵ Rudolf Schnackenburg, *Die sittliche Botschaft des Neuen Testaments* (HTKNT Supplementband 1/2; Freiburg: Herder, 1986–1988).

Index of Ancient Sources

1 Old Testament

Genesis

1–3	124, 194
1:1–2:3	183
1:7	11
1:9	132
1:11	183
1:15–16	184
1:16	184
1:26–27	190, 212, 217
2:4–7	214
2:4–24	183
2:7	11, 183, 187, 208, 209, 212, 215
2:17	194
2:19	194
2:25	182
3:7	182
5:1–3	209, 216, 217
5:3	216
12:7	132
18	133
18:1–19:28	132, 133
18:8	133
22	125–128
22:4 LXX	127
22:12	127
22:12b	127
22:14	132
22:16 LXX	127
22:16b LXX	127

Exodus

16:10	132
34	185
34:29	190
34:35	190

Numbers

12:12	136
-------	-----

Deuteronomy

4:32	192
18:10–11	57
24:14	57

Judges

19:30	132
-------	-----

1 Samuel

3–25	57
5:2–4	101

2 Samuel

22:11	132
-------	-----

1 Kings

2:10	142
14:31	142
15:8	142
15:24	142

2 Kings

13:21	181
14:16	142
14:22	142
14:29	142
15:7	142
15:22	142
15:38	142

Job

3:16	136
------	-----

Psalms

8:6	148
-----	-----

9:7–8	106	53:6b	122
16:8–11	122	53:8b	122
19:2	184	53:9a	122
19:6	184	53:10b	122
91:13	166	53:11a	122
96:13	106	53:11b	122
98:9	106	53:12b	122
102:4 LXX	200	53:12c	122
103 LXX	183	56:12	168
103:1–2 LXX	188	60:1	188
104	183	65:17–25	194, 199
104:1–2	188		
109:1 LXX	148	<i>Jeremiah</i>	
110:1	148	23:5	124
139:5	192	31:31	15
148:3	184	33:15	124
<i>Ecclesiastes</i>		<i>Ezekiel</i>	
3:17	106	1:1–28	188
6:3	132	1:27	188
8:15	168	1:28	188
9:5–10	168	31:2–9	124
10:9 LXX	162	36:27	15–16
11:9	106	37	181
12:14	106	37:1–14	94
		43:3	188
<i>Song of Solomon</i>		<i>Daniel</i>	
2:12	132	1:10 LXX	162
		4:7b–9	124
<i>Isaiah</i>		4:8 LXX	132
4:2	124	4:10b–12 LXX	124
9:6–7	194, 199	7:3–12	166
11:1	124	8:1 (Theod)	132
11:10	124	12:1–3	64, 189, 207
22:13 LXX	167, 168	12:2	142, 143, 189
25:8	225	12:2–3	59, 121, 186
27:13	224	12:3	186, 189
28:12–15 LXX	162		
34:14	166	<i>Hosea</i>	
40:26	184	6:2	122
45:12	184	13:14	225
51:3	194, 199	14:5–9 LXX	124
52:2	124	14:6–10	124
52:13	122		
52:13–53:12	121–23, 126, 128	<i>Joel</i>	
52:15b	122	2:15	224
53	126	3:1–4:1	194, 199
53:1	122	4:18	194, 199
53:4a	122		
53:5	122		

<i>Amos</i>		<i>Habakkuk</i>	
9:11–14	194, 199	2:17	165
<i>Jonah</i>		<i>Zechariah</i>	
1:4 LXX	162	3:8	124
2:1–2 LXX	122	6:18	124
2:7 LXX	200	9:14	224

2 New Testament

<i>Matthew</i>		16:23	181
3:7	76	17:24	188
3:17	127	20:27	75
11:23	181	20:27–38	60
13:43	189, 207	20:37	207
16:1	76	20:42–43	148
16:17	221	22:43	133
16:18	181	24:15–31	133
16:27	106	24:25–27	124
17:2	188	24:27	123
17:3	133	24:31	132, 133
17:5	127	24:34	133
22:23–28	75	24:44–45	124
22:23–32	60		
22:30	207	<i>John</i>	
22:44	148	1:9	127
24:31	224	3:13	215
25:31	106	3:16	127
28:5–9	130	3:31	215
		11:39	94
<i>Mark</i>		13:5	219
1:11	127	20:11–18	130
9:4	133		
9:7	127	<i>Acts</i>	
12:18–23	75	2:27	181
12:18–27	60	2:31	181
12:25	207	2:43	105
12:36	148	3:17–26	124
16:9	130	3:25–26	127
		4:1–2	60, 75
<i>Luke</i>		4:30	105
1:11	133	5:12	105
2:9	188	6:15	190
8:17	106	7:2	133
9:29	188	7:2–27	124
9:29–31	189	7:26	133
10:15	181	7:30	133
12:19	168	8:3	137

9:1	137	2:24	208
9:3–5	188, 202, 207	3:4	208
10:36–38	94	3:6	106
10:38	105	3:10	208
10:42	106	3:20	226
12:7	188	4:17	208
12:21–23	193	5:8–19	146
13:16–26	124	5:10	114
13:28–31	133	5:12	146, 226
13:31	133	5:12–21	211
14:8–18	48, 96, 98	5:15	197
14:11–12	98	5:15–21	197
14:13	105	5:18–21	197
15:1–21	130	5:22	113
15:12	105	6:4	197
16:9	133	6:11	197
17:16	100	6:23	146
17:18–19	76	7:7	226
17:22–32	102	7:13	226
17:22–34	2	8:21	200
18:5–8	167	8:23–25	114
18:12–15	56	8:32	127
18:24–19:1	72	8:32a	127
19:11	105	8:36	162, 208
19:18–19	166	8:38	166
19:22	80	9:3	208
19:23–40	164	9:27–29	114
19:30–34	56	9:33	208
21:39	62	10:6	215
22:1	188, 202	10:9–13	114
22:3	62	10:15	208
22:4–5	137	11:1	62
22:6–8	207	11:8	208
22:25–29	164	11:11–32	114
23:6	56, 61	11:26	208
23:6–8	60, 75	11:31	197
23:27	164	12:10	76
26:5	56	12:19	208
26:9–11	137	13:8–10	103
26:13	188, 202	13:11	114
26:13–15	207	14:10–12	106
28:1–8	98	14:11	208
28:1–10	165	15:3	208
		15:9	208
<i>Romans</i>		15:10	124
1:16	114	15:17	163
1:17	208	15:19	105
2:5	106	15:21	208
2:16	106	16:23	80, 81

1 Corinthians

		5:7	126, 127
1-4	98, 109	5:8	228
1:9	24	5:9	171
1:10-14	98	6	99
1:10-15:57	227	6:1-8	229
1:11-13	229	6:1-11	80, 129
1:12	72, 130	6:2	18
1:13	173	6:9	171
1:13-16	99	6:9-10	222
1:13-17	157	6:12-18	80
1:14-15	155	6:12-20	99, 171
1:19	208	6:13	99
1:22	173	6:14	99, 108, 157, 171
1:26	80	6:15	99, 171
1:31	208	6:15-20	171
2-5	80	6:16	99
2:4-5	98	7:12	147
2:9	208	7:29	221
2:11	197	7:29-31	11
2:13	204	7:37	113
2:13-14	203	8:1-3	112
2:13-15	202	8:4	100, 116
3:1	203, 204	8:4-5	104
3:4-5	98	8:5	100
3:5	98	8:7	101, 141
3:6	72	8:10	80, 99
3:9	98	8:11	162
3:10-15	223	9:1	135, 136
3:12-15	106, 144	9:5	130
3:13-15	229	9:8	103, 225
3:19	208	9:9	208, 225
3:21	228	9:14	197
3:22	72, 130	9:15	162
4	109	9:15-16	163
4:1	98	9:19-23	102
4:5	106, 228	9:20	225
4:6	72, 219	9:25	200, 201
4:6b	99	10:1-23	113
4:8	68-70	10:7	141, 208
4:8-13	162	10:8	171
4:10	201	10:8-10	141
4:16	99	10:12	113, 228
4:16-18	140	10:19	221
4:18	140	10:31	100
4:20	98	11	201
5-7	99	11-14	101
5-14	18	11:1	163, 219
5:1-5	171	11:3-16	101
5:4	98	11:4	80
5:6	163	11:7-8	194

11:7–34	101	15:3b–5a	103, 115, 116, 118, 121, 122, 125, 126
11:12	197	15:3b–8	116, 117
11:14–15	200	15:3b–10	115
11:17–34	81, 229	15:4	58, 127
11:21	172	15:4–5	130
11:33	228	15:4–11	226
12:1–3	101	15:4b	116, 119
12:1–14:40	173	15:5	115
12:11	101	15:5–7	129
12:12	197	15:5–8	116, 117, 132, 176
12:13	173	15:5–10	116
12:18	183	15:5a	117, 131
13:10–12	108	15:5a–8	115, 117
14:1–40	101	15:5b	115
14:9	197	15:5b–8	116
14:12	197	15:5b–10	116
14:18	98	15:5b–11	118, 131
14:20–33	229	15:6	131, 141
14:21	225	15:6b	115, 117
14:34	103, 225	15:7	115, 131
14:39	228	15:8	115, 117, 131, 134, 135, 136
15	2, 3, 5–9, 12, 17–19, 22–24, 26, 27, 67, 69, 71, 73, 76, 79, 99, 103, 108–10, 118, 128, 137, 151, 159–61, 166, 167, 179, 183, 185, 195, 200, 201, 203, 204, 209, 215, 218, 223, 227, 230, 232	15:8–10	115, 134
15:1	3, 113	15:8b	131
15:1–2	78, 105, 113, 228	15:9	135
15:1–3	5, 137	15:9–10	135, 137
15:1–11	7, 77, 97, 104, 110, 111, 112, 115, 123, 139, 145, 152, 173, 233	15:9–11	116, 117, 137
15:1–19	70, 145	15:10	3, 17, 106, 115, 137, 138, 228
15:1–34	110, 111, 170, 196, 235	15:11	118, 131, 133, 137, 139, 140
15:2	104, 113, 114, 138	15:12	3, 7, 56, 66, 69, 74–75, 78, 97, 108, 139, 140, 144, 172
15:2–5	173	15:12–19	77, 140, 156, 233
15:3	135, 162	15:12–28	226, 231, 233, 234
15:3–5	3, 105, 114, 132	15:12–34	110, 111, 114, 137, 139, 176, 179, 228
15:3–7	139	15:13	134, 139, 141
15:3–11	112, 113, 117	15:13–19	140, 141, 145, 152, 173
15:3–32	164	15:13–34	7
15:3a	114, 117, 118	15:14	138, 141, 228
15:3b	116, 119	15:14–18	141
15:3b–4	116	15:15	139, 141, 148
15:3b–5	122	15:15–18	141
		15:16	78
		15:16–18	143
		15:17	138, 141

15:17–19	67	15:34c	173
15:18	143	15:35	66, 73, 109, 176, 177, 179, 197, 214, 224
15:18–19	141	15:35–36	151, 226
15:19	75, 111, 140, 143, 144, 161	15:35–41	231
15:20	64, 103, 111, 139, 143, 145, 146, 187	15:35–44	146
15:20–22	145, 152	15:35–49	111, 185, 187
15:20–23	99, 160, 176, 211	15:35–57	70, 228
15:20–28	70, 78, 105, 140–43, 145, 147, 152, 160, 174, 225, 233	15:35–58	7, 78, 110, 111, 129, 134, 137, 159, 176, 179, 228, 235
15:21	111, 139, 146	15:36	152, 162, 179, 180, 182, 198, 200
15:21–22	99, 146, 216	15:36–37	197
15:22	105, 128, 143, 146, 162, 197, 216	15:36–41	214
15:22–34	67	15:36–44	104, 176
15:23	64, 147, 149, 198	15:36–49	216, 226
15:23–28	145, 147, 149, 152	15:36–50	128
15:24	147, 166	15:36b	181
15:24–25a	148	15:37	179, 182, 198
15:25	148	15:38	179
15:25–28	226	15:38–41	110
15:25b	148	15:38a	182
15:25b–27	148	15:38b	183
15:26	146, 220	15:39	183
15:28	21, 148	15:39–41	99, 183, 199
15:29	79, 149, 156, 159, 160, 179, 180	15:39–49	183
15:29–30	151	15:40	179, 184–86
15:29–32	152, 169, 170	15:40–41	181, 186, 194, 199, 202, 224
15:29–34	14, 22, 78, 140, 149, 150–53, 156, 160, 174, 233	15:41	111, 183, 186
15:29–36	110	15:42	111, 139, 151, 180, 197, 200
15:29b	151	15:42–43	206
15:30	160, 161, 162	15:42–44	183, 198, 209, 222, 231, 234
15:30–32	106, 119, 144, 151, 161, 170, 172, 231	15:42–44a	195
15:30–34	97, 219	15:42–45	182, 214
15:31	134, 151, 162	15:42–46	133
15:32	111, 149, 151, 160, 163	15:42–49	222
15:32–34	3, 26, 74, 228	15:43	186, 201, 202
15:32b	76, 96, 167, 168	15:44	111, 130, 179, 184, 197, 202, 204, 214–15
15:33	110–12, 151, 170–72, 201	15:44–48	119
15:33–34	19, 69, 160, 170, 231	15:44–49	103
15:34	99, 109, 112, 151, 170, 173, 177, 180, 183	15:44a	111
		15:44b	111
		15:44b–49	206–7
		15:45	111, 135, 183, 185, 187, 197, 208, 209,

	211, 214, 226, 231	3:7–18	190
15:45–49	105, 128, 176, 197, 199, 234	3:7–4:18	195
15:45a	99	4:6b	195
15:45b	99, 209	4:7–11	162
15:45b–49	209	5	67
15:46	212, 214	5:1–5	224
15:47	211, 214, 215	5:1–10	3
15:47–49	185	5:2	182
15:48	216	5:7	204–5
15:48–49	211	5:10	106
15:49	99, 106, 111, 151, 180, 211, 217	6:1–10	162
15:50	111, 200, 220, 221	6:8	201
15:50–53	220	7:4	163
15:50–57	176, 221, 225	7:8	3
15:50–58	111	7:14	163, 197
15:50b	222	8:6	197
15:51	71, 143, 198, 222	8:11	197
15:51–52	142, 143	8:15	208
15:51–53	99	8:24	163
15:51–54	182	9:3	163
15:51–56	222	9:9	208
15:52	76, 77, 223, 224	10:7	197
15:53	111, 200, 224	11:10	163
15:54	111, 133, 183, 200, 225, 226	11:17	163
15:54–55	146, 226	11:22	62
15:54–57	220	11:23	229
15:54a	225	11:23–28	164
15:55	225	11:23–29	162
15:56	146, 225	11:27	229
15:57	111, 134, 226	12:9	202
15:58	19, 26, 97, 98, 111, 138, 170, 176, 227, 228	12:12	105
16:1	197	12:13	147
16:8–9	164, 166	13:4	202
16:10	229	13:10	136
16:12	72		
16:13	113		
		<i>Galatians</i>	
		1:1	136
		1:8	200
		1:10–12	136
		1:13–23	137
		1:16	221
		1:18	130
		2:9	130
		2:11	130
		2:14	130
		3:10	208
		3:13	208
		3:13–18	127
		3:19	226
		4:3	197
<i>2 Corinthians</i>			
1:3–7	162		
1:7	197		
1:12	163		
1:14	163		
2:7	130		
2:8	130		
2:15	114		

4:22	208	4:16–17	215
4:27	208		
4:29	197	<i>2 Thessalonians</i>	
5:11	162	1:7	215
5:14	103	2:1–2	71
5:15	166	2:10	114
5:21	222	3:7–9	219
6:8	200	3:8	229
6:17	162, 229		
<i>Ephesians</i>		<i>1 Timothy</i>	
1:20–23	149	1:13–14	137
1:21	166	2:2	76
2:5–9	114	2:13–14	114
3:10	166	3:16	131
4:4	230	4:12	219
5:24	197	<i>2 Timothy</i>	
6:12	166, 221	1:9	114
<i>Philippians</i>		2:17b–18	70, 71
2:7–9	201	3:8	197
2:12–13	17	4:1	106
3:5	56, 62	4:8	106, 114
3:6	137	4:16–17	166
3:20–21	6, 104, 215	4:17	163
3:20b–21a	228	4:20	80
3:21a	201	<i>Titus</i>	
4:1	227, 228	1:12	166
4:9	219	2:7	219
<i>Colossians</i>		3:5	114
1:13	127	<i>Hebrews</i>	
1:27	230	1:3	149
2:15	166	2:8	149
2:21–22	200	2:14	221
3:13	197	4:17–19	125
<i>1 Thessalonians</i>		6:13–14	127
1:6–7	219	9:27	106
1:10	215	11:17–19	127
2:9	229	13:7	219
2:16	114	<i>James</i>	
2:19	163	4:4	11
3:8	113	<i>1 Peter</i>	
4	67	1:1	130
4:11	76	3:21b–22	149
4:13	6	4:5	106
4:13–18	140	5:3	219
4:14	143, 197	5:8–9	166
4:16	224		

<i>2 Peter</i>		8:13	224
2:10–13	223	11:7	166
2:21	219	11:15	224
		11:19	133
<i>1 John</i>		12:1	133
2:15–17	11	12:3	133
		13:1–19	166
<i>Jude</i>		13:14–15	101
19	202	18:1	188
		20:5	147
<i>Revelation</i>		21:11	188
8:2	224	21:23	188, 189
8:6	224		

3 Apocrypha and Septuagint

<i>Baruch</i>		<i>4 Maccabees</i>	
3:22	132	16:20	127
3:34	184		
		<i>Sirach</i>	
<i>Epistle of Jeremiah</i>		14:18	221
59	184	17:29–30	222
		17:30	221
<i>1 Maccabees</i>		34:9–10	184
4:6	132	34:12	162
4:19	132	43:1–10	185
9:27	132		
		<i>Tob</i>	
<i>2 Maccabees</i>		7:10–11	168
3:25	132		
7:22–23	59	<i>Wisdom</i>	
12:43–45	59, 156	2:1–9	168
15:7	162	3:1–4	72
		3:7	189, 207
<i>3 Maccabees</i>		9:15	72, 73
5:41	162		

4 Old Testament Pseudepigrapha

<i>Apoc. Mos.</i>		39:2	194, 199
14:2	216		
20:1–2	189	<i>Apoc. Sedr.</i>	
20:2	191	4:4	214
21:6	191		
28:4	194, 199	<i>Apoc. Zeph.</i>	
36:1–3	156	A	188, 189

<i>Aristob.</i>		<i>Hist. Jos.</i>	
2:12	200	3:6	200
<i>As. Mos.</i>		<i>Hist. Rech.</i>	
10:9	189	11:1a-2a	189
33:2	191	11:5a-5b	189
		12:3-3a	189
<i>2 Bar.</i>		<i>Jos. Asen.</i>	
39:7	124	12:9-11	166
51:3-10	189	14:9-10	188
51:3-12	189, 207		
51:10	186	<i>Jub.</i>	
<i>Dem.</i>		3:1	214
2:9	200	17:15	125
		17:15-18:13	125
<i>1 En.</i>		17:15-18:19	127
14:14-24	188	18:3	125, 126
14:18-21	188	23:31	72
15:4	221	<i>L.A.E.</i>	
15:4-6	222	12:1	217
18:13-16	184	13:2-15:3	217
21:3	184	37:1-3	166
41:5	184	39:1-2	166
45:4-5	194, 199	<i>Mart. Ascen. Isa.</i>	
58:1-6	194, 199	4:16	189
61:11-62:16	194, 199	7:32-35	188
62:15	186	8:14-15	189
62:15-16	189, 224	9:6	189
85:3	213	9:9-10	189
90:37	213	<i>Odes Sol.</i>	
103:2-3	72	21:3	189, 207
104:2	189	<i>Ps.-Phoc.</i>	
105:11-12	186	103-104	189
106:5	190	<i>Pss. Sol.</i>	
106:17-18	200	3:11-12	59
<i>2 En.</i>		4:6	200
22:8-10	189, 207, 224	<i>Sib. Or.</i>	
<i>4 Ezra</i>		2:9	200
2:39	189	3:282-283	189, 207
2:45	189	3:336	200
6:23	224	4:174	224
7:75-79	189, 207	8:445	215
7:79	189	<i>Gk. Apoc. Ezra</i>	
		2:10	214

<i>T. Ab. rec. A</i>		<i>T. Job</i>	
2:4	188	3:1	188
8:9	146, 216	4:1	188
11:8–9	189, 207	4:6–10	106
11:9–11	214	40:3	189
12:1–18	189, 207	<i>T. Jos.</i>	
12:5	188	17:1–3	106
13:2	214	<i>T. Jud.</i>	
14:3–4	106	24:4–6	124
16:8	188	<i>T. Lev.</i>	
20:15	106	2:8–9	189
<i>T. Ash.</i>		18:2	188
5:2	106	18:2–11	194, 199
<i>T. Dan.</i>		18:3	188
5:11–12	106	18:4	188
6:9	106	<i>T. Reu.</i>	
<i>T. Iss.</i>		5:5	106
7:9	142		

5 Philo

<i>Abr.</i>		2.13	214
56	214	3.52	106
77	132	<i>Opif.</i>	
80	132	36	184
258	72	73	184
<i>Ebr.</i>		136	212
99–101	72	138	212
154	172	140	212
<i>Fug.</i>		142	212
58	72	145	212
<i>Gig.</i>		148	212
8	184	151	212
53	72	<i>Plant.</i>	
<i>Her.</i>		12	184
57	221	14	90
231	215	34	214
<i>Leg.</i>		<i>Praem.</i>	
1.31	212, 215	152	106
2.5	212	<i>Prob.</i>	
		105–106	90

<i>Somn.</i>		<i>Spec.</i>	
1.181	72	3.207	215

6 Josephus

<i>Ag. Ap.</i>		13.297	75
2.50	162	17.309	201
		18.16	60
<i>Ant.</i>		18.16–17	75
1.34	214	19.344–345	194
1.96	162	20.199	75
1.222–236	127		
1.339	201	<i>J.W.</i>	
2.125	162	1.379	162
2.223	162	2.155	36
4.12	162	2.164–165	60
4.188	162	2.164–166	75
4.219	129	4.601	162
4.251–252	201		
7.333	127	<i>Life</i>	
13.173	75	1.14	162
13.293	75	1.20	162

7 Dead Sea Scrolls

<i>CD-A</i>		IV, 22–23	189
III, 19–20	195		
III, 20	106, 189, 192	<i>1Q5b (1Q28b)</i>	
		IV, 3–27	190
<i>1QH^a</i>			
IV, 14–15	195	<i>1QpHab</i>	
VII, 19–20	106	XII, 2–5	165
XIV, 15–17	124		
XIV, 18	106	<i>4QBer^a (4Q286)</i>	
XVI, 4–14	194	1 II, 1–4	189
XIX, 10–14	106		
		<i>4QDibHam^a (4Q504)</i>	
<i>1QM</i>		6, 11–12	190
I, 8–9	189	8 r, 4	190
VII, 13–15	224		
		<i>4QpPs^a (4Q171)</i>	
<i>1QS</i>		III, 1	195
IV, 6–8	106	III, 1–2	195
IV, 9–13	106		
IV, 20–23	106, 195	<i>4QShir^b (4Q511)</i>	
		frag. 35, 1–5	189

<i>4QshirSabb^f</i> (4Q405)		<i>11QPs^a</i>	
frag. 20–22,	189	XXVII, 2	190
8–11			

8 Mishnah, Talmud, Targums and Other Rabbinic Literature

<i>b. B. Bat.</i>		18:2	192
58a	212		
		<i>Deut. Rab.</i>	
<i>b. Hag.</i>		11:3	190
12a	192, 212		
		<i>Midr. Tanh.</i>	
<i>b. Sanh.</i>		on Ps. 139:5	212
38b	192		
		<i>Pesiq. Rab.</i>	
<i>Gen. Rab.</i>		48.2	212
8:1	192, 212		
8:9–10	192	<i>Tg. Job</i>	
12:6	194	3:18	126
14:2–5	212	3:19	126
20:12	190, 224		
24:2	192	<i>Tg. Neof.</i>	
		Gen 3:21	224
<i>Lev. Rab.</i>			
14:1	212		

9 Early Christian, Gnostic, and Other Literature

Athangoras		3.36.1–3	164
<i>Res.</i>		3.36.7–9	164
20–23	25	5.1.37–41	164
<i>The Book of the Cave of Treasures</i>		Hippolytus	
fol. 5a, col. 1		<i>Comm. Dan.</i>	
–fol. 5b, col. 1	217	3.29.3–4	164
Clement of Alesandria		Ignatius	
<i>Exc.</i>		<i>Eph.</i>	
22.1–7	154	1:2	164
<i>Didache</i>		<i>Rom.</i>	
11:3–6	134	4–5	164
		5:1	164
Eusebius		9:1	137
<i>Hist. eccl.</i>			
1.7.4	130		
2.25.8	130		

<i>Smyrn.</i>			<i>Novation</i>	
4:2	164		<i>The Trinity</i>	
			10	222
<i>Trall.</i>			<i>Origen</i>	
9–10	164		<i>Cels.</i>	
10	164		3.22	45
<i>Ireneaus</i>			6.30	166
<i>Haer.</i>			<i>Tertullian</i>	
5.9.1–3	222		<i>Marc.</i>	
<i>John Chrysostom</i>			5.10	222
<i>Hom. 1 Cor.</i>			5.10.1	159
40	154		5.10.1–3	154
42:2	222		5.10.2	155, 159
<i>Mart. Pol.</i>			<i>Res.</i>	
11	164		56	25
<i>Nicephorus Callist.</i>			<i>Treat. Res.</i>	
<i>Eccl. Hist.</i>			48.30–49.35	71
2.25	164			

10 New Testament Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha

<i>Acts Paul</i>		<i>Inf. Gos. Jas.</i>	
7	163–64	8.3	224
<i>Acts Tit.</i>	164	<i>Mart. Perpet.</i>	
		10.14	164
		18.3	164

11 Greco-Roman Literature

<i>Aeschylus</i>		<i>Alexander of Aphrodisias</i>	
<i>Eum.</i>		<i>De an.</i>	
254–275	50	3.1	95
258–275	39	<i>Apollodorus</i>	
647–648	50	<i>Epitome</i>	
648	50	5.3–5	47
<i>Pers.</i>		5.5	47
840–842	36	<i>Library</i>	
<i>Sept.</i>		3.10.3	45
599	171		

Apollonius of Rhodes		<i>Resp.</i>	
<i>Argon.</i>		6.15–16	43
811–816	47	6.16	42
Aratus		Dio Cass.	
<i>Phaen.</i>		54.7.3	101
451–461	184	56.41.9	91
		75.5.5	46
Aristophanes		78.18.4	91
<i>Lys.</i>		Dio Chrysostom	
655	161	<i>Regn.</i>	
Aristotle		1.12–26	105
<i>Ath. pol.</i>		Diodorus Siculus	
53.2	129	<i>Bib. Hist.</i>	
<i>Hist. an.</i>		3.43.7	164
582a26	171	13.52.6	161
		20.100.3–4	104, 114
Arrian		Diogenes Laertius	
<i>Anab.</i>		<i>Vit.</i>	
151	49	8.1.4	40
Athenaeus		10.11	76
<i>Deipn.</i>		10.38–39	50
8.336a–c	169	10.63–67	51
12.529d–530c	169	10.76–77	50
		10.123	50
Catullus		10.124	51
5.5–6	142	10.124–125	51
64	47	10.125	76
		10.135	51
Celsus		10.139	50
<i>De Med.</i>		Euripides	
prooem. 2	45	<i>Alc.</i>	
Cicero		782–789	169
<i>Arch.</i>		<i>Frag.</i>	
8.19	91	1024	171
<i>Fin.</i>		<i>Hec.</i>	
1.5–2.35	76	35–44	47
2.23–37	168	59–97	47
<i>Leg.</i>		109–115	47
2.8.19	45	470–473	142
<i>Nat. d.</i>		<i>Hel.</i>	
3.18.45	45	1400	171

<i>Heracl.</i>		11.240–241	142
1040	32	11.396–398	48
		11.456–458	48
<i>Meleager</i>		13.191	48
frag. 532	50	13.435–436	193
		13.440	48
<i>Phoen.</i>		13.575–576	48
1408	171	13.640	48
		14.161–172	48
<i>Rhes.</i>		14.231	146
668–669	142	14.235–236	142
		15.187–194	39
<i>Tro.</i>		15.316–317	48
51	171	16.502–505	48
593–594	142	16.667–675	146
634–640	50	23	34
		23.50–51	32
<i>Greek Anthology</i>		23.65–76	35
7.173.3–4	142	23.99–107	35
7.219.3–4	142		
7.419.1–2	142	<i>Od.</i>	
9.223.6–7	142	4.561–569	36
		11	34
Herodotus		11.13–22	35
<i>Hist.</i>		11.23–36	35
1.182	171	11.93–94	36
4.14–15	44	11.204–222	85
4.14.1–3	44	11.207–208	35
4.15.1–3	44	11.207–222	129
4.77	171	11.218–222	35, 85
4.174	171	11.475	36
7.16	171	11.486–491	47, 100
		11.488–491	36
Hesiod		11.576–600	38
<i>Op.</i>		11.601–604	46
106–107	44	18.354–355	193
156–171	36, 44, 90		
		<i>Homeric Hymns</i>	
<i>Theog.</i>		2.184–189	193
211–222	146	2.188–189	46
758–766	146	2.275–280	193
		5.170–175	193
Homer		5.173–175	46
<i>Il.</i>			
4.127–140	48	Horace	
5.7–10	193	<i>Carm.</i>	
5.342	48	1.24.5–6	142
5.337–339	48	3.11.38–39	142
5.855–869	48		
6.263–311	101		

Hyginus		Ovid	
<i>Fabulae</i>		<i>Fast.</i>	
224.4	45, 94	2.547–556	32
Isocrates		<i>Metam.</i>	
<i>Paneg.</i>		2.629	45
4.133	161	2.647–648	45
Justinian		8.611–724	48
<i>Digest</i>		9.239–258	47
11.7.2.6	54	14.805–851	90
28.1.8.4	164	Pausanias	
Juvenal		<i>Descr.</i>	
<i>Sat.</i>		1.8.9	104, 114
3.259–267	32	2.26.4–7	45
Lucretius		2.26.6	45
1.146–159	50	2.10.2–3	45
1.146–264	50	4.32.4	37
1.330–368	50	6.6.4	49
2.180	50	6.9.6–8	44, 91
2.646–652	50	6.9.8	44
3.136–166	205	6.11.2–9	91
3.161–167	51	10.4.10	32
3.262–280	205	Philodemus	
3.321–322	51	<i>Sign.</i>	
3.417–440	205	9.8–36	184
3.421–446	51	Philostratus	
3.624–712	51	<i>Vit. Apoll.</i>	
3.830–842	51	4.31	91
3.972–977	51	Pindar	
5.146–159	51	<i>Ol.</i>	
Lysias		2.56–80	37
18.27	161	<i>Pyth.</i>	
Maximus		3.1–58	45
<i>Orr.</i>		3.15	45
33.7	95	3.40–45	45
Menander		3.43–44	45
<i>Thais</i>		3.45–53	45
frag. 218	171	3.55–58	45
Minucius Felix		Plato	
<i>Octavius</i>		<i>Apol.</i>	
23.7	45	26d	184
		26d1–3	42

<i>Crat.</i>		<i>Symp.</i>	
400c	37	203a	171
		220d3–5	42
<i>Geog.</i>		<i>Tim.</i>	
523a–523b	38	42b	42
524d	40		
525d–525e	38	Pliny the Elder	
526a–526d	41	<i>Nat.</i>	
<i>Leg.</i>		2.24	43
887e	42	Pliny the Younger	
959a–b	37	<i>Ep.</i>	
<i>Meno</i>		3.21.6	54
81a–e	37	Plutarch	
81b	37, 40	<i>Adv. Col.</i>	76
<i>Phaed.</i>		<i>Alex. fort.</i>	
64c	37	330f	169
66c–70d	37	336c	169
69c–69e	38	<i>Amat.</i>	
69e–70a	86	8	161
80a–83a	37	<i>Arat.</i>	
82d–83b	73, 74	53.5–6	104, 114
113d–114c	37	<i>Cam.</i>	
<i>Phaedr.</i>		6.1–3	101
245c	37, 40	<i>Cleom.</i>	
245c–247c	37	39.1–2	33
245c–249d	40	<i>Mor. (Cons. Apoll.)</i>	
245d	37	109a	169
249a–249d	40	<i>Pomp.</i>	
250c	37	14.3	42
<i>Pol.</i>		<i>Rom.</i>	
301b	161	27.7	90
<i>Resp.</i>		27.8	90
1.334e	161	28.4	44
3.386a–386b	37	28.4–5	44
3.386a–387a	35	28.4–6	44
10.608d	37	28.7	73
10.614a–621d	39, 106	28.7–8	72
10.619d	40		
10.620a	40		
<i>Soph.</i>			
250c	161		

<i>Vit. pub.</i>		Suetonius	
10	161	<i>Aug.</i>	
		2.1–4.2	216
Proclus		89.1–3	83
<i>The Epic Cycle</i>		90.1–97.3	83
2	47	<i>Claud.</i>	
		1.1–6	216
Quintus of Smyrnaeus		25.4	56
3.24–113	47	<i>Nero</i>	
		1.1–5.2	216
Seneca		16.2	56
<i>Ben.</i>	105	52	83
<i>Ep.</i>		<i>Tib.</i>	
54.5	41	1.1–3:1	216
57.8–9	41	11.3	83
65.16	71, 72, 74	<i>Vesp.</i>	
65.23	41	1	54
65.24	41	Tacitus	
76.9–10	95	<i>Ann.</i>	
<i>Herc. Ot.</i>		15.44	164
1963–1976	47, 94	15.44.2–5	56
1965–1971	182, 223	Thucydides	
Sophocles		5.11.1	91
<i>Aj.</i>		Virgil	
831–832	142	<i>Aen.</i>	
<i>El.</i>		6.756–885	35
508–509	142	Xenophon	
<i>Phil.</i>		<i>Mem.</i>	
70	171	3.11.14	171
<i>Trach.</i>		<i>Symp.</i>	
764–771	46	8.22	171
1193–1203	46	Strabo	
		<i>Geogr.</i>	
Strabo		14.5.9	169
<i>Geogr.</i>			
14.5.9	169		

12 Papyri, Inscriptions, Excavations, and Reliefs

<i>CIG</i>		<i>CIL</i>	
6298	52	1.2997	94
		1.30552	94

2.415	31	6.17430	142
2.558	31	6.17768	31
2.1200	31	6.17790	142
2.1434	51, 86, 87, 96, 169	6.17985a	53
2.1877	95, 169	6.18378	142
2.5241	31	6.18579	31
2.5975	31	6.18850	142
2.8121	31	6.19683	51, 53, 86
3.4483	53	6.20297	142
5.532	106	6.20370	31
5.1813	51, 86	6.20446	142
5.1939	51, 86, 87	6.21521	42
5.2893	51, 86	6.21617	142
5.3403	53, 86	6.21934	142
5.3415	51	6.22215	51, 86
5.6586	142	6.23391	51, 86
5.6730	142	6.24517	142
5.6732	142	6.26003	51, 53, 86
5.6735	142	6.27383	43
5.6736	142	6.27923	142
5.6741	142	6.28054	142
5.6745	142	6.28875	142
5.6748	142	6.29273a	142
5.6750a	142	6.29338	142
5.8974	51, 86	6.29884	51, 86
6.142	95, 169	6.36707	142
6.537	42	8.1900	142
6.1779	42	8.2885	51, 86
6.4532	51, 86, 87	8.3463	51, 53, 86, 87
6.9077	142	8.4504	31
6.9240	94	8.9473	31
6.9258	51, 86	8.9496	31
6.9280	142	8.18010	142
6.9583	34	8.27736	52, 86
6.10693	142	9.3184	30
6.10707a	142	9.4840	52, 86
6.10764	42	10.2070	52, 86
6.11082	142	10.2311	52, 86
6.11951	142	10.2506	53
6.12087	42	10.5469	31
6.12123	142	10.7426	31
6.12450	142	11.856	52, 86
6.12951	31	11.6753	49
6.12989	142	12.5102	33
6.13073	142	13.488	52, 86
6.13241	142	13.530	52, 86, 87
6.13528	42, 51, 86		
6.14418	142	<i>CLE</i>	
6.14672	51, 52, 86	111	42
6.16472	142	188	33

544b	42	14.1389	92, 93
611	42	14.1746	52
975	94		
1004	53	<i>IGUR</i>	
1039	31	3.1155	92, 93
1061	42		
1082	53	<i>ILS</i>	
1109	42	1259	42
1135	31	3961	95, 169
1153	31	6680	106
1231	53	8154	33
1313	30	8341	34
1315	31		
1317	95, 169	<i>National Archaeological Museum,</i>	
1326	49	<i>Athens</i>	
1451	31	3369	46
1452	31		
1453	31	<i>Oxyrhynchus Papyri</i>	
1455	31	2303	101
1456	31		
1457	31	<i>P.Colon.</i>	
1495	53	2021 col. I	101
1500	95, 169		
1530	42	<i>PGM</i>	
1535	42	IV.2548–51	166
1544	31		
1559	42	<i>Pompeii Excavations</i>	
1582	53	IV, 7, 8–11	97
1997	142		
<i>Elephantine Papyri (CAP)</i>		<i>SEG</i>	
71.15	57	29.999	92, 93
<i>IG</i>		<i>SLG</i>	
2 ² .1339	92, 94	S 262	101
12/3.330	91		

Index of Modern Authors

- Aaron, D. 190
Achtemeier, P. 82
Ådna, J. 119
Albl, M. 119–21, 123
Aletti, J.-N. 109, 110
Alexander, T. 58
Alison, F. 164
Anderson, G. 190, 217, 224
Ando, C. 96
Arzt-Grabner, P. 162, 171
Asano, A. 4
Ascough, R. S. 92, 94, 104
Asher, J. 152, 179, 180, 195–96, 199, 221
Aune, D. 61, 101, 145, 151, 179, 180
- Bailey, K. 71, 110, 111, 155, 177, 186
Balz, H. 215
Barker, M. 217
Barnett, P. 63
Barrett, C. K. 3, 66, 67, 111, 120, 136, 144, 149, 157, 176, 179, 203, 215, 223
Barthélemy, D. 208, 225
Bauckham, R. 25, 28, 57
Baumgarten, J. 129
Beard, M. 31, 53
Beardslee, W. 115
Beasley-Murray, G. 155, 159
Behm, J. 221
Beker, J. C. 21, 61
Betz, H. 108
Black, M. 190
Bloch-Smith, E. 32, 88
Blomberg, C. 121
Blount, B. 8
Bockmuehl, M. 222
Boer, M. de 148–49
Bolt, P. 37, 86
Bonora, A. 59, 121
- Borchert, G. 117, 123
Braaten, C. 25
Brandenburger, E. 211
Bremmer, J. 37, 86
Broudeur, S. 206, 209, 213
Brown, W. 125
Bruce, F. F. 56, 71, 131, 177, 199
Brucia, M. 96
Bullmore, M. 109
Bultmann, R. 1, 4, 67, 151
Bünker, M. 109, 110
Buren, P. 119, 123
Burgess, J. 36, 46, 47, 94, 178, 223
Burkert, W. 45, 86
Burrige, R. 8
- Cadbury, H. 81
Cameron, R. 4
Campbell, C. 143, 146
Campbell, R. 153
Carone, G. 95
Carroll, M. 32, 34, 54, 55, 87, 88, 96
Cavallin, H. C. C. 59, 60
Chantraine, P. 206
Charlesworth, J. 59, 122
Chester, S. 63, 159
Chilton, B. 61, 126
Chow, J. 80, 98, 99
Christensen, J. 124–25
Ciampa, R. 99, 100, 110, 111, 148, 151, 154, 164, 180, 215, 217, 221, 227, 229
Clarke, A. 81
Clarke, J. 31, 54, 55, 88, 96, 97
Clarke, M. 36, 85, 86
Clark-Soles, J. 23–24, 161
Coenen, L. 143
Collard, C. 50
Collins, A. Y. 157
Collins, J. J. 61, 189, 207

- Collins, R. 60, 68, 108, 111, 227, 155,
162, 165, 200, 203, 221, 227, 228
- Conzelmann, H. 114, 145, 150, 199,
209, 213, 215, 221, 223, 227
- Cook, J. 164
- Cooper, J. S. 28
- Cooper, J. W. 60
- Coppins, W. 113
- Cory, N.C. 76
- Costa, J. 60
- Cotter, W. 84, 94, 101, 105, 181
- Cresson, B. 59
- Crook, Z. 105, 137
- Cropp, M. 50
- Cumont, F. 29, 32, 54, 87–88
- Currie, B. 89, 91, 178
- Dahood, M. 58
- Daly, R. 126
- Daniélou, J. 187
- Daugherty, G. 96
- Davies, G. 88
- Davies, J. 29
- Davies, P. 126, 127
- Davis, S. 131
- Deer, D. 162–63
- Deidun, T. 15–16
- Delobel, J. 68
- DeMaris, R. 84, 158
- Denis, A.-M. 190
- DeWitt, N. 52, 75–77, 223
- Dibelius, M. 1, 18
- Dimock, G. 35, 85
- Dines, J. 208
- Dodd, C. H. 119, 121, 123
- Dowden, K. 4, 5, 104, 219
- Downey, J. 157
- Duff, N. 25
- Dunn, J. D. G. 21–22, 56, 63, 68, 69,
103, 119, 127, 143, 155, 203, 209,
210
- Dutch, R. 167
- Eck, W. 31, 54, 88
- Edelstein, E. 45, 101
- Edelstein, L. 45, 101
- Elledge, C. 59
- Ellingworth, P. 227
- Elsner, J. 100
- Elston, R. 63
- Endsjø, D. Ø. 43, 59, 82, 86, 91, 94,
178
- Engberg-Pedersen, T. 26, 61–62, 178,
181, 204, 205
- Engels, D. 80, 95
- English, A. 153
- Escolà Tuset, J. 55
- Esler, P. 62
- Evans, C. 60, 181
- Ewald, B. 88
- Fabricius, J. 33
- Fee, G. 68, 112, 144, 148, 150, 155,
157, 160–64, 173, 197, 199, 201–3,
209, 210, 213, 217, 221–23
- Feldman, L. 194
- Fejfer, J. 32, 82, 100, 106, 163, 218–
19
- Fenske, W. 18
- Ferguson, E. 52, 157
- Ferguson, J. 52, 75–77, 83, 86, 223
- Fernández, M. 126, 127
- Fisk, B. 127
- Fitch, J. 182
- Fitzmyer, J. 3, 99, 100, 108, 111, 112,
114, 115, 137, 144, 150, 151, 163,
171, 176, 177, 180, 185, 197, 215,
221, 225, 229
- Fletcher-Louis, C. 187–88, 190, 217
- Foerster, W. 114, 184
- Fohrer, G. 104, 114
- Forbis, E. 82, 106, 163, 219
- Foschini B. 153, 155
- Foster, E. 188
- Fotopoulos, J. 100, 104
- Foulkes, I. 134
- Fowler, H. 37, 86
- Freed, E. 18–19
- Frerichs, W. 59
- Friesen, S. 81, 82
- Fuller, R. 115
- Furnish, V. P. 1, 9, 15, 16, 24, 112, 114
- Gamble, H. 82, 167
- Garcilazo, A. V. 67, 68, 71
- Garland, D. 67, 69, 70, 71, 98, 100,
111, 114, 115, 121, 134, 135, 137,
144, 149, 153, 154, 162–64, 166,
171–73, 177, 195, 203, 215, 221,
223, 226, 228, 229

- Garland, R. 29, 33
 Garnsey, P. 82
 Gee, R. 31
 Geetz, C. 4
 Genovesi, V. J. 25, 230
 Gerhardsson, B. 129
 Gill, D. 72, 80, 81
 Gillman, J. 215, 221
 Gladd B. 195, 209, 213, 217, 222
 Gleason, M. 93
 Godley, A. 168
 Gordon, R. 100
 Gottstein, A. 190
 Gradel, I. 89
 Graf, F. 4, 37, 39, 41, 86, 95
 Greenspoon, L. 58
 Grosheide, F. 227
 Gummere, R. 41
 Grundmann, W. 113
 Gundry, R. 67, 203
- Hachlili, R. 32
 Hahn, S. 126
 Hallote, R. 57
 Hamilton, V. 133
 Hansen, G. W. 22–24, 161, 171
 Harder, G. 200
 Harrington, D. 59
 Harris, W. 167
 Hart, G. 79, 101
 Hart, T. 25
 Hatton, H. 227
 Hauwerwas, S. 9
 Hay, D. 148
 Hays, R. 5, 8, 9, 11–12, 15, 22, 71, 98,
 115, 151, 177, 203, 227
 Hengel, M. 56, 132, 207
 Héring, J. 165
 Hermann, P. 92
 Hezser, C. 167
 Hicks, R. 40, 51
 Hill, C. 147
 Hofius, O. 122–23
 Hollander, H. 136, 151
 Holleman, J. 67, 156, 180
 Homberg, B. 4, 118
 Hope, V. 29, 30, 32, 33, 52, 53, 55, 87
 Horbury, W. 84
 Horsley, R. 69, 72, 227
 Horst, P. 146
- Houghton, H. 218
 Houlden, J. 9
 Hout, G. 136
 Howard, J. 155
 Howard, W. 206
 Huizenga, L. 127
 Hull, M. 153, 213
 Hultgren, S. 211–13
 Hurtado, L. 127, 131, 217
- Isaac, E. 189, 190
- Jackson, P. 142, 143
 James, O. 124
 Jellicoe, S. 208
 Jeremias, J. 221
 Jewett, R. 173
 Jobes, K. 123
 Johnson, A. F. 71, 98, 121, 177, 201,
 227
 Johnson, L. T. 83, 95, 101, 103, 104
 Johnson, M. 191
 Johnston, P. 58
 Johnston, S. 37, 40, 84, 86, 103
 Jones, C. 33, 44, 46, 88–92, 105, 163,
 178
 Jones, H. 169
 Jones, P. 134, 135
 Jonge, H. 115
- Kearney, P. 130
 Keener, C. 70, 151, 202, 206
 Kelly, A. 25
 Kelly, G. 135
 Kent, J. 80, 81
 Kim, J. 224
 Kim, S. 63, 64, 195, 213
 Kim, V. 25
 Kistemaker, S. 198
 Kister, M. 212
 Kittel, G. 187, 188
 Klauck, H.-J. 34, 48, 52, 86
 Klawans, J. 75
 Kloppenborg, J. 92, 94
 Knight, W. 29
 Knittel, T. 191
 Koortbojian, M. 88
 Kooten, G. van 212
 Kovacs, D. 169
 Kreitzer, L. 147

- Lamb, W. 38
 Lambrecht, J. 77, 78, 134, 140, 148
 Lang, M. 45
 Lapatin, K. 101
 Larson, J. 33, 89
 Lattimore, R. 29, 34, 35, 52, 74, 83, 94
 Le Bon, P. 142
 Le Déaut, R. 126, 127
 Le Moyle, J. 75
 Legarreta Castillo, F. 68, 211
 Lehmann, K. 119
 Lehtipuu, O. 82, 85
 Lendon, J. 173
 Levenson, J. 58, 127, 128
 Levison, J. 213
 Lewis, J. 24, 112
 Lewis, S. 57, 147
 Lewis, T. 57
 Lichtenberger, H. 60
 Leibers, R. 119–22
 Lieu, J. 4, 57, 118
 Lightfoot, J. B. 61
 Lightstone, J. 75
 Lincoln, A. 68, 113, 186, 213, 216
 Lindemann, A. 69, 70, 111, 114, 148, 150, 152, 156, 225
 Litfin, D. 109
 Litwa, M. D. 178, 181
 Livingstone, N. 4
 Lockwood, G. 68, 227
 Lohse, E. 8
 Longenecker, R. 63
 Lorenzen, S. 184–86

 MacDonald, D. 150, 162, 163
 MacGregor, K. 132
 Mach, M. 189
 Mack, B. 4, 5, 109–11
 Madigan, K. 58, 127
 Malherbe, A. 62, 151, 152, 165–66, 168
 Malina, B. 150
 Mangan, C. 126
 Marcos, N. 208, 225
 Margerie, B. 125
 Marshall, J. 105
 Martin, D. 12, 122, 178, 181, 186, 203, 205
 Martínez, F. G. 165, 190, 192, 195
 Martyn, J. L. 62, 204

 Marxsen, W. 8, 134
 Matera, F. 8, 11, 14
 Mathews, K. 126
 McArthur, H. 120, 122
 McCrorie, E. 35, 36
 Meeks, M. D. 25
 Meeks, W. 2, 4, 13–14, 61, 94
 Meggit, J. 73, 81, 82
 Mendenhall, G. 57
 Merkelbach, R. 35
 Merk, O. 14–15
 Mettinger, T. N. D. 59, 62
 Metzger, B. 120, 218
 Meyers, E. 60
 Meynet, R. 125
 Michaelis, W. 13, 132
 Mieder, W. 168
 Miller, M. 4
 Millis, B. 80
 Mitchell, M. M. 32, 109
 Mitchell, M. W. 136
 Möbius, H. 32, 90
 Moffit, D. 115, 117
 Moltmann, J. 25
 Montague, G. 122, 227
 Morris, I. 32
 Morris, L. 145, 184, 227
 Moulton, J. 206
 Murnane, W. 28
 Murphy-O'Connor, J. 45, 56, 80, 116, 117, 119, 150, 153
 Murray, A. 35, 48, 85

 Nash, R. 110, 149, 150, 153, 161, 163, 176, 203, 217
 Naylor, P. 112, 114
 Newby, Z. 88, 96, 106, 219
 Newman, H. 75, 76
 Nguyen, V. H. T. 4, 118
 Nickelsburg, G. W. E. 56, 59, 60, 136
 Niebuhr, K.-W. 56
 Niebuhr, R. 8
 Nielsen, H. 55
 Nielsen, T. 83
 Nock, A. D. 54, 88, 104, 114
 Noort, E. 127
 Nutton, V. 45, 101, 178, 205

 O'Brien, P. 63, 222
 Oepke, A. 143

- Ogle, M. 142
 Oliver, G. 83
 O'Neill, J. 153, 154
 Orlov, A. 191
 Orr, W. 155, 198
 Osborne, R. 165
 Oster, R. 111
- Padgett, A. 181, 203
 Page, D. 101
 Park, J. 60, 72, 86, 87, 142
 Parker, D. 218
 Parry, R. 184
 Paschke, B. 164
 Pate, C. M. 61
 Patrick, J. 153–55, 160
 Patton, C. 217
 Pearson, B. 68, 211
 Peek, W. 92
 Penna, R. 213
 Perkins, P. 82, 98, 155, 227
 Perriman, A. 223
 Perrin, B. 33
 Perrin, N. 59, 62
 Pervo, R. 164
 Petersen, L. 54, 55
 Peterson, E. 150
 Pfuhl, E. 32, 90
 Phillips, T. 62
 Pilch, J. 150
 Platt, V. 46, 48, 88, 100
 Plevnik, J. 61, 134
 Plummer, A. 150, 177
 Pogoloff, S. 109
 Polatkan, K. 92
 Porter, S. 43, 59, 62, 73, 109
 Postell, S. 194
 Pregeant, R. 8
 Prescendi, F. 86
 Price, R. 108, 131
 Price, S. 83
 Probst, H. 109
 Puech, É. 58
- Rabens, V. 204–5
 Rad, G. von. 185, 188
 Raeder, M. 153, 155
 Rahamani, L. 60
 Raphael, S. 58, 60
 Rawson, B. 42
- Reaume, J. 153
 Regev, E. 75
 Richardson, N. 37, 86
 Ridderbos, H. 20–21
 Rissi, M. 153, 156
 Rist, J. 76
 Rives, J. 34, 83, 84, 91, 95, 96, 103
 Robertson, A. T. 150, 155, 177, 198,
 206, 215
 Robinson, T. 37
 Röhser, G. 146
 Roitti, R. 119
 Rosner, B. 62–64, 110, 111, 148, 180,
 229
 Rougier, L. 42
 Runesson, A. 57, 119
- Saint-Arnaud, G.-R. 122
 Saldarni, A. 75
 Sampley, J. P. 16–18, 68
 Sandelin, K.-G. 211
 Sanders, J. 9
 Sandnes, K. 76, 77, 168, 169
 Saw, I. 109
 Schaefer, M. 136
 Schaller, B. 211
 Schep, J. 203
 Schlatter, A. 163
 Schmeller, T. 77, 78, 94, 151, 156,
 179, 180
 Schmithals, W. 67, 68, 211
 Schnabel, E. 56, 63, 69, 70, 72, 98,
 108, 110, 114, 131, 137, 149, 152–
 54, 162, 177, 186, 199, 221
 Schnackenburg, R. 10–11
 Schnelle, U. 21
 Schoeps, H. 126
 Schrage, W. 2, 9–10, 11, 68, 116, 150,
 162, 163, 211
 Schuller, E. 60
 Schulz, S. 10
 Schüssler Fiorenza, E. 8
 Schütz, J. 135
 Schwartz, H. 191
 Schweizer, E. 203, 222
 Schwemer, A. 132, 207
 Scott, A. 42
 Scroggs, R. 20, 187, 205
 Segal, A. 28, 52, 57, 59, 60, 61, 62, 72,
 75, 122, 127

- Seifrid, M. 143
 Sellin, G. 72, 122, 155, 211
 Selter, B. 42
 Setzer, C. 60, 119
 Sharpes, R. 76
 Sibinga, J. 115
 Sider, R. 72, 73, 78, 140, 177
 Skenteri, F. 92
 Slager, D. 133
 Soards, M. 72, 177
 Sommerstein, A. 39, 50
 Songe-Møller, V. 81, 178
 Spicq, C. 9, 188
 Spörlein, B. 94
 Spronk, K. 59, 84
 Staden, H. 205
 Stanley, C. 82, 167, 208–10
 Stauber, J. 35
 Steiner, D. 46, 48, 101
 Stemberger, G. 59, 75, 156
 Stendahl, K. 63
 Stowers, S. 150–2
 Striker, G. 76
 Strobel, A. 77
 Strüder, C. 119
 Stuckenbruck, L. 190
 Sturm, R. 61
 Sumney, J. 178, 203, 205
- Tajfel, H. 4
 Talbert, C. 68, 154
 Taylor, N. 159
 Teilhard de Chardin, P. 25
 Theissen, G. 73, 80
 Thiessen, J. 131, 132
 Thiselton, A. 68–70, 108–10, 112, 114,
 117, 121, 135, 145, 149, 151, 153,
 155, 162, 163, 183, 185–86, 195,
 200, 201, 203–4, 211, 221–23, 225,
 227
 Thompson, K. 153, 155
 Thönges-Stringaris, R. 33
 Thorne, M. 49
 Thrall, M. 161, 195
 Thür, G. 129, 130
 Tigchelaar, E. 127, 190, 192
 Toner, J. 52, 82, 86
 Toynbee, J. 31, 32, 55, 87
 Trapp, M. 95
 Trites, A. 129
- Tromp, N. 58
 Tuckett, C. 68, 70, 151
- Uchelen, N. 57
 Ulrichsen, J. 72, 177
- Vanderkam, J. 125–27
 Verburg, W. 109, 110, 115, 136
 Verdenius, W. 44, 89
 Vermes, G. 126
 Vernant, J.-P. 43, 48, 192
 Versnel, H. 48, 100–101, 192
 Veyne, P. 4
 Vidal, S. 60
 Vincent, J.-M. 179
 Vlachos, C. 111, 225, 226
 Völkel, M. 143
 Vos, J. 71, 77–79, 141, 156
- Wächter, L. 58
 Walbank, M. 87
 Walker, W. 108, 150, 153
 Wallace, D. 165
 Wallis, E. 217
 Wallis, W. 147
 Walther, J. 155, 198
 Warrior, V. 96
 Watson, D. 109, 110
 Watt, J. van der 4, 12–13
 Watt, W. 48
 Webber, R. 115
 Wedderburn, A. J. M. 67, 68, 71, 73,
 76, 143, 212
 Weidemann, H.-U. 150
 Weinfeld, M. 185, 187
 Weiss, J. 136, 147, 165, 198, 225
 Wenham, G. 133
 West, A. 80
 West, M. 193
 Wettstein, J. 163
 Wheaton, B. 59, 123, 124
 White, J. 145, 153–55, 160
 White, S. 133
 Wickkiser, B. 45, 101
 Widengren, G. 124
 Wilamowitz-Moellendorff, W. 92
 Wilkens, U. 134
 Williams, G. 166
 Williams, H. 148, 167
 Willinghöfer, H. 146

- Willis, W. 9
Wilson, G. 221
Wilson, J. 68
Winter, B. 73, 80, 81, 98, 150, 165,
171–72, 212
Witherington, B. 63, 69, 103, 109, 134,
147, 151, 173
Wolter, M. 4, 113
Wood, E. 126
Wright, J. 34
Wright, N. T. 24–26, 60, 62, 64, 72, 73,
75, 84, 85, 103, 108, 117, 121, 129,
135, 136, 142, 150, 161, 164, 167,
171–72, 177, 182, 203, 205–6, 210,
216, 230
Wypustek, A. 41, 46, 49, 52, 74, 83,
89, 91
Zager, W. 9
Zanker, P. 88, 97
Zeller, D. 81, 98, 156, 158, 216
Zimmer, G. 54, 82, 88

Index of Subjects

- Abraham 125–26, 132–33
Achilles 35–36, 44, 47, 94, 118, 178, 220
Adam
– death because of 146
– glory of. *See under* Glory
– prelapasarian 20, 187–220
– worship of. *See under* Worship
Adam-Christ typology 111, 145–46, 207–19
Aeneas 48, 92–93
Afterlife beliefs 3, 6
– Greco-Roman 27, 28–56, 84–97, 177–9
– Hades. *See* Hades
– Homeric 34–36. *See also* Elysium Fields
– Immortality. *See* Immortality
– Jewish 57–60, 72, 121–22
– nihilistic 49–55, 74–79
– Pauline 56–64
– Sadducees 60–61, 75–76
Akedah. *See* Aqedah
Angelomorphism 187–95, 207
Aphrodite 46, 48, 92–93, 193
Apollo 44–45, 49–50, 101
Apollon 72, 212
Apotheosis 45–46, 48, 90, 94, 104, 178, 183, 197, 199, 220–24
Aqedah 125–27
Architecture, tomb 29–33
Aristeas 44
Asclepius 44–47, 101, 104
Astral immortality. *See under* Immortality
Atomic theory 50–51, 79, 223

Babbus Philinus 80
Baptism for the dead 74, 78–79, 152–61

Body, mortal
– as first Adam 211–14. *See also* First Adam
– as seed 181–83
– dishonorable 201–2
– corruptible 170–72, 200–201, 182, 221–22
– earthy 207–9, 214–16
– perishable 200–201
– physical 202–7
– shamed 201–2
– weak 202
Body, resurrection. *See also* Resurrection
– angelomorphic 206–7, 220
– honorable 201–2
– immortal 224
– imperishable 200–201, 206, 224
– incorruptible 200–201
– material 132–34
– able 202, 206
– spiritual 21, 60–62, 64, 134–35, 180–81, 197, 202–7, 220

Christology 9–11, 16–17, 21, 149
Coin (for Charon). *See under* Grave depositions
Creation
– narrative 102–4, 124–28, 180–220,
– new. *See* new creation
Corinthian church
– composition of 80–81
– problems at 97–102
– resurrection-deniers 2, 8, 28, 79–97

Damascus road experience 63–64, 134–37, 214
Damnatio ad bestias 164–65
Demeter 92–94, 104, 192–93
Diatribes 150–52, 179–80

- Diophantos of Nacrosos 92
Dying and rising gods 59, 62
- Edenic narrative 99, 124–25, 180–95, 208–9, 222, 225. *See also* Creation
- Elysium Fields 34–49, 89–93
- Epicureanism 50–52, 74–79, 83, 168–69, 178, 223
- Erastus 81–82
- Eschatology. *See also* Afterlife beliefs
– as motivation for ethics 14, 15, 20
– order of 147–49, 223–24
- Ethics
– criteria for 10, 20
– descriptive 5, 8–9
– New Testament 1, 5–6, 9–14
– motivation for 9, 11, 14, 15, 20–22
– norms for 10, 17, 20–22, 25
– Pauline 14–26
– pragmatic 1, 5, 8–9, 18–19
– philosophical 94–95
- Ethnography 2, 13–14
- Eurysaces tomb 54–55
- Exemplum*. *See under* Patronage
- First Adam
– as earthy 207–16
– origins of 211–14
- Firstfruits (ἀπαρχή) 64, 145–48, 210
- Garments
– eschatological 189–90
– of Adam (and Eve) 190–91, 194
– of Yahweh 188–89
– imagery 189–90, 224
- Ghost. *See* Shade
- Glory
– definition of 183–86
– of Adam 187–95
– of angels 189
– of God 15, 188–89
– of resurrected body 15, 24
- Gnosticism 68, 71, 74, 211
- Gospel
– summary 115–28
– Paul’s 2–5, 102–5, 112–38
- Grave depositions
– coin (for Charon) 32
– interpretation of 30–33, 54, 60, 87–88
- ornaments 32
– tools 32, 87
– vessels 32, 53
– weapons 32
- Hades 34–40, 43–52, 84–86, 117, 129, 167, 170, 181
– location of 35
- Heavenly man. *See under* Image
- Heracles 44, 46–47, 94, 168–69, 178
- Hermes 40, 45, 48, 98
- Hero
– afterlife fate of 43–49, 89–94
– apostles (and Paul) as 98, 104–5, 154, 161–63, 169–70, 178
– definition of 89–94
– Jesus as 84–85, 93–94, 97–98, 104–5, 112–14, 128–29, 199
– new 84, 91–94, 104–6, 163, 178, 218–20, 234–35
– veneration of 33, 49, 84, 91, 94, 99–100, 104–5
- Herod Agrippa 193–94
- Herodes Atticus 92–93
- Herodotus 44, 168
- Heroization 46, 49, 89–94, 98, 105, 159–60, 178, 236
- Hesiod 44, 89–90
- Homer (Homeric eschatology) 34–39, 47–49, 84–89, 91, 100–104, 124, 128, 146, 181, 212, 231, 234
- Hope
– of the resurrection 15, 23–26
– theology of 24–25
- Identity, Christian 3, 12–13
- Imitation
– as Greco-Roman social norm 106, 138
– of Jesus (the Messiah) 1, 11, 23–24, 106, 119, 163, 230–31
– of Paul (and apostles) 140, 163
– of new creation order 21
- Immortality
– celestial (astral) 41–43, 178, 186, 189, 215
– of the soul 30, 36–43, 49, 71–74, 85, 205
– fleshly 43–49, 199
- Inaugurated eschatology 9–10, 15–17,

- 20, 22, 64, 124–25, 147–49, 217
- Inscriptions, interpretation of 87–89
- Image (*Imago, εἰκῶν*) 100–101, 106, 217–9
- of a god 39, 45–46, 88, 100–101
- of God 11, 187, 190–94, 209, 211–12, 217
- of heavenly man 216–19, 231
- Imperatives 11, 14, 16, 19, 23, 111, 134, 139–73, 227–31
- relation to indicative 1, 2, 3–4, 7–8, 15, 22, 227–28
- Isaac, binding of. *See Aqedah*
- Isles of the Blessed. *See Elysium Fields*
- Judgment, of God (gods) 17–18, 22–24, 26, 38–39
- Last Adam 209–14
- Law
- Greco-Roman court of 129–30, 229
- Jewish (Torah) 13, 94–95, 103, 164, 190, 225–26
- Literacy 29, 167–68
- Love, as ethical motivation 11, 15–17, 21, 32
- Material spirit. *See under Spirit*
- Metempsychosis 39–41
- Missionary endeavor, Paul's 1, 8, 28, 76, 102
- Mystery religions 95. *See also*
Orphism
- Myth, definition of 4–5
- Mythology
- definition of 4–5
- Greco-Roman 3, 7, 81–97
- New creation 9–10, 12, 24–26, 124–25, 204–5, 223, 230
- New hero. *See under Hero*
- Non-elite 80–84
- Odysseus 35–36, 38–39, 47, 104, 129, 193
- Ornaments. *See under Grave*
depositions
- Orphism 37, 39–40, 86
- Over-realized eschatology 7, 68–71, 99, 197
- Paintings
- tomb 31, 46, 54–55, 87–88
- wall 32, 96–97, 231
- Patronage 82, 99, 105–7, 137, 163, 218–19, 230–35
- benefactors 80–81, 105–6, 218–19
- *exemplum* 104–7, 163, 171–72, 218–20, 230–31, 234–35
- Pausanias 37
- Philosophically educated elite 44, 47, 55–56, 80–86
- Plato 37–42, 85–86
- Platonism 36–41
- Platonism, Middle 72–72
- Plutarch 33, 44, 90, 101
- Polarity and change 195–96
- Popular Greco-Roman Religion. *See under* Religion, Roman
- Portraiture. *See also Image and Statuary*
- horse 32, 46
- of gods 88, 100, 218–19
- of heroes 32–33, 46, 219
- of occupation 54–55
- snake 32, 45–46
- life activities 32–33, 44, 54
- Pythagoras 39–40
- Pythagoreans 41–42
- Ritual
- Criticism 157–8
- funerary 32, 158–59
- dining 31, 80, 99–100, 168–69
- offering 35
- Reincarnation. *See Metempsychosis*
- Religion, Roman
- popular Greco-Roman religion 81–86, 94–102
- of the elite 82–83
- Resurrection
- Jewish understanding of 57–61
- Greco-Roman understanding of 43–49, 159, 177–79. *See also*
Apotheosis
- Paul's understanding of 63–64
- of Jesus (Christ) 23, 129–34
- of body. *See Body, resurrection*
- Resurrection-deniers. *See under*
Corinthian church
- Rhetorical Criticism 11, 18, 108–10
- Romulus 90

- Sardanapallus 169
- Septuagint, Paul's use of 110, 132–33, 161–62, 207–9, 225
- Shade 34–36, 41–50, 85–89, 100, 175, 182, 199, 226
- Jesus not 112, 117, 129–30
- Shadow. *See* Shade
- Sheol 57–58, 181
- Sleep 46, 193
- metaphor for death 33, 117, 141–45, 154, 189
- Greco-Roman god 146, 226
- Social status 55, 69, 80–84, 105–7, 218
- Social-science theory 3–4, 12–13, 18
- Soul
- material 41, 177–78
- disembodied 36–39, 71–74
- immortality of. *See under* Immortality
- Spirit
- Holy 10, 13, 15–17, 21, 26, 69, 101, 202–4, 209–10
- material 26, 42–43, 177–78, 180–81, 204
- Statuary 41, 46, 53, 89, 99–102, 106, 192–94, 218–19, 231. *See also* Image and Portraiture
- Stoicism 26, 41–43, 61–63, 71–74, 76, 177–78, 204–5
- Third day, raised on 121–28
- Tools. *See under* Grave depositions
- Tomb
- decoration 54–55
- for memory making 53–55, 87–88
- for communicating a message 29–30, 54–55
- Tombside dining. *See under* Ritual
- Torah. *See also under* Law
- Totenmahl reliefs 32–33, 44, 54
- Tree of Life 124
- Two Adams 211–13
- Vessels. *See under* Grave depositions
- Wall paintings. *See under* Paintings
- Weapons. *See under* Grave depositions
- White Island. *See* Elysium Fields
- Worship
- of Adam 217
- of dead 57, 159
- of gods 45–46, 51, 90, 96–97, 99–100, 104
- of heroes 33, 49, 84, 91, 94, 99–100, 104–5
- of humans 98–99, 217
- of Jesus (Christ) 84, 94, 104
- Zeus 45–48, 92–93, 98, 192–93, 220