

The Mission of the Early Church to Jews and Gentiles

Edited by
JOSTEIN ÅDNA and HANS KVALBEIN

*Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen
zum Neuen Testament
127*

Mohr Siebeck

Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament

Herausgegeben von
Martin Hengel und Otfried Hofius

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Preface

This book has its origin in the “Symposium on the Mission of the Early Church to Jews and Gentiles”, which took place on April 28–29, 1998, at the *School of Mission and Theology* in Stavanger, Norway. As conveners of the conference and as editors of this book it is our duty and privilege to extend our thanks to the *School of Mission and Theology* for hosting the symposium and for providing the necessary facilities at its campus in Stavanger. The responsibility for the conference was shared by the *Norwegian Lutheran School of Theology* in Oslo, and we also wish to thank this institution for the financial and personal resources that it invested.

During the symposium in Stavanger eight papers were read. All of them are included in this volume in enlarged versions. We are very grateful to our colleagues Prof. Dr. Dr.h.c. PETER STUHLMACHER (University of Tübingen, Germany), Prof. Dr. OSKAR SKARSAUNE (Norwegian Lutheran School of Theology), Prof. Dr. JAMES M. SCOTT (Trinity Western University, Langley, British Columbia, Canada), Prof. Dr. SCOTT HAFEMANN (Wheaton College, Wheaton, Illinois, USA), Prof. Dr. I. HOWARD MARSHALL (University of Aberdeen, Scotland) and Associate Prof. Dr. REIDAR HVALVIK (Norwegian Lutheran School of Theology) for their stimulating contributions to the symposium and to the present volume.

We also want to express our deep gratitude to the publisher, Mr. Georg Siebeck, and to the series editors, Prof. Dr. Drs.h.c. Martin Hengel DD and Prof. Dr. Otfried Hofius, for accepting this volume for publication in the series “*Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament*, 1. Reihe”. Production manager Mr. Matthias Spitzner has followed the whole process of preparing the volume for publication, and we thank him for his patience and for the excellent cooperation that has considerably facilitated our editorial work.

Encouraged by the support and advice of Prof. Martin Hengel and Prof. Peter Stuhlmacher we decided to invite three new contributors who had not participated at the symposium in Stavanger. All three of them, Prof. Dr. ULRICH LUZ (University of Bern, Switzerland), Dr. HANNA STETTLER (Tübingen, Germany) and Prof. Dr. RAINER RIESNER (University of Dortmund, Germany), responded positively to the invitation, and we heartily thank them for their enrichments to the contents of this volume.

Three Norwegian institutions have supported the publication with financial grants, i.e., the *Research Council of Norway*, *Areopagos* (formerly *Christian*

Mission to Buddhists) and the *Egede Institute*. We extend our thanks to all of them for sponsoring the project. Thanks to these grants we were able to employ some additional persons to assist in different operations involved in the preparation of the book. In particular we want to thank stud.theol. GEIR SKÅRLAND, Stavanger, for his excellent work in proof-reading, translating portions of texts from German to English and in preparing the indices.

We hope that this book will stimulate debate and further research among biblical scholars, and that it will also be of some relevance and help for defining missionary challenges and responsibilities in the world-wide church of today.

Jostein Ådna
Hans Kvalbein

Stavanger and Oslo, July 2000

Table of Contents

Preface	V
Abbreviations	IX

HANS KVALBEIN and JOSTEIN ÅDNA

Introduction	1
--------------------	---

I. The Gospel of Matthew and the Great Commission

PETER STUHLMACHER

Matt 28:16–20 and the Course of Mission in the Apostolic and Postapostolic Age	17
---	----

HANS KVALBEIN

Has Matthew abandoned the Jews?	45
---------------------------------------	----

ULRICH LUZ

Has Matthew abandoned the Jews?	63
---------------------------------------	----

OSKAR SKARSAUNE

The mission to the Jews – a closed chapter?	69
---	----

II. The Acts of the Apostles

JAMES M. SCOTT

Acts 2:9–11 As an Anticipation of the Mission to the Nations	87
--	----

JOSTEIN ÅDNA

James' Position at the Summit Meeting of the Apostles and the Elders in Jerusalem (Acts 15)	125
--	-----

III. Paul on Mission and Suffering

SCOTT HAFEMANN

The Role of Suffering in the Mission of Paul 165

HANNA STETTLER

An Interpretation of Colossians 1:24 in the Framework
of Paul's Mission Theology 185

IV. Historical Contributions

RAINER RIESNER

A Pre-Christian Jewish Mission? 211

I. HOWARD MARSHALL

Who were the evangelists? 251

REIDAR HVALVIK

In Word and Deed: The Expansion of the Church
in the pre-Constantinian Era 265

Indices

Index of Authors 289

Index of Sources 294

Index of Subjects and Names 308

Abbreviations

Abbreviations, of the names of biblical books and other ancient sources as well as of modern periodicals, reference works and serials, follow the rules recommended by the Society of Biblical Literature, see *Journal of Biblical Literature* 117 (1998) 555–579.

Additional abbreviations of further periodicals, reference works and serials are taken from *Theologische Realenzyklopädie. Abkürzungsverzeichnis* (2., überarbeitete und erweiterte Auflage, zusammengestellt von S.M. Schwertner; Berlin/New York: de Gruyter, 1994).

Introduction

by

HANS KVALBEIN and JOSTEIN ÅDNA

In April 1998 a symposium with the same title as this volume, “The Mission of the Early Church to Jews and Gentiles”, took place in Stavanger, Norway. During two days eight papers were read in intensive sessions of discussion. Some of the lectures were open to the public, but most of the discussions took place within the group of 25–30 regular participants, among whom were biblical scholars, patristic scholars and missiologists.

On behalf of the institutions responsible for the symposium, the Norwegian Lutheran School of Theology in Oslo (Kvalbein) and the School of Mission and Theology in Stavanger (Ådna), the editors of this volume had the privilege of chairing the symposium. As for the original initiative for the symposium we were, however, deeply indebted to Prof. Dr. Dr. h. c. Peter Stuhlmacher, Tübingen. In the summer of 1997 he approached us with the idea of arranging a workshop on issues related to the beginnings of Christian missions. Stuhlmacher had recently been involved in discussions on various historical and theological aspects of the mission of the Early Church, and he knew that some of the potential participants had similar concerns. We were immediately convinced that it was a good idea to bring a group of people together for a scholarly exchange on these matters. Peter Stuhlmacher proposed the School of Mission and Theology in Stavanger as an appropriate place for a symposium of this kind, and the Norwegian Lutheran School of Theology in Oslo supported the initiative with financial and personal resources. The preparations were made during the autumn of 1997 and the following winter. It was a special encouragement that Prof. I. Howard Marshall in Aberdeen, which is Stavanger’s neighbour city across the North Sea, immediately responded positively when we asked him to contribute a paper, and we took this as a welcome confirmation that the program would be of broad interest and good quality.

In the symposium’s concluding session there was consent that the papers should be published. As chairmen we were asked to be the editors, and the result is presented in this book. All the speakers at the symposium have carefully and painstakingly reworked their papers, enlarging them with footnotes

and often also with new material. We are particularly pleased that we have been able to enrich the volume with three new contributions written by Prof. Dr. Ulrich Luz, Dr. Hanna Stettler and Prof. Dr. Rainer Riesner. Their essays supplement those presented in the symposium. We are especially grateful to Ulrich Luz, who in the midst of finishing the fourth volume of his great commentary to Matthew took time to respond to the contributions of Stuhlmacher and Kvalbein on this Gospel. Hanna Stettler's contribution deepens the treatment of Paul on mission and suffering. Rainer Riesner discusses a central historical theme missing in the program of the symposium, the question whether there was a Jewish mission preceding the mission of the Early Church.

Presentation of the Essays

1. The end of the Gospel of Matthew is of eminent importance for the understanding of the Gospel as a whole and the mission of the Early Church. PETER STUHLMACHER starts his article with a presentation of the main problems of the text: its linguistic problems, the question of its genre and the question of its provenience. His own analysis takes as its point of departure a suggestion by Hartmut Gese in a doctoral seminar on the Psalms in the New Testament. The text must be seen as a Jewish-Christian tradition nourished by the Jewish Holy Scriptures and influenced by Jewish religious life. Its genre may be defined in line with the OT narratives of the callings of Moses, Gideon and Jeremiah. Their three basic, structural elements can be found also in Matt 28:16–20: 1) a vision of God or his angel and a commission, 2) objections from the person involved, 3) a repeated commission reaffirmed with the promise "I am with you".

The riddle of the location on a mountain in Galilee may be solved from the background of Zech 13:7, quoted in connection with Jesus' last prophecy of his death and his first indication of Galilee as the place of his appearance in Matt 26:31–32. According to Zech 13:7 the messianic shepherd will be slain and his flock dispersed until the purified remnant is gathered again as the people of God. Jesus' going to Galilee is a parabolic act of the divine shepherd. He re-establishes Israel and unites them with the sheep from the many nations (cf. John 10 and Zech 2:14–15 [ET: 2:10–11]). Galilee is not primarily pointing to the mission to the Gentiles, but to the "eschatological restoration of greater Israel". At his parousia Jesus intends to unite the believing Jews with the elect from the nations in the eschatological banquet on Mount Zion (cf. Zech 2:10–16 [ET: 2:6–12]). The restoration of Israel and the pilgrimage of the nations to Zion were celebrated every year in the Feast of Tabernacles in Jerusalem. Matt 28:16–20 portrays a christological variant of the Zion traditions celebrated at this festival as expressed in Deut 32:8–9; Ps 82:8; 87; 96.

In this OT perspective the Great Commission is not a late tradition of a particular Galilean Christendom or a Matthean redactional work, but an early Jewish-Christian record of the apostolic mission to the world. It is firmly integrated into the Gospel of Matthew and presupposes a separation between the synagogue and the church. It points to a community of disciples practising baptism and teaching obedience to the message of Jesus as summarized in the Sermon on the Mount. Matthew seems, in this text, to summarize the tradition of those apostles in Jerusalem who were called the “pillars”. The command to make disciples and to baptize formed the basis for the decisions of the Apostolic Council (Gal 2:6–10).

This reconstruction of the Jewish-Christian tradition behind the Great Commission sheds new light on the earliest history of Christian mission. Controversial was not the evangelization of the Gentiles as such, but only the question of the relationship of the Gentile converts to the Mosaic law. A commission of the Risen Christ gives a better explanation of the development of the Early Church as it is portrayed by Luke in Acts, beginning with the mission to the Jewish pilgrims at the first Pentecost after Jesus’ death and followed by the building of the ἐκκλησία in Jerusalem and the mission of Stephen, Peter and Philip until the baptism of Cornelius in Acts 10.

Similarly, Paul’s theology of mission may be seen to have a firmer basis in sayings of Jesus in the synoptic tradition than generally supposed in critical scholarship. Paul, too, was rooted in a Zion-centered understanding of his world mission, and, in accordance with the Jerusalem apostles, his ministry to the Gentiles was a mission to the nations for the sake of Israel. His loyalty to the mother church in Jerusalem caused him to lose his freedom and in the end also his life.

Stuhlmacher’s broad picture of mission in the Early Church is summed up in a challenge to the church today: “A church, which on the basis of the Reformation is defined by the apostolic testimony of the Holy Scriptures, cannot, for Christological reasons, separate herself from the missionary Commission attested to in Matt 28:16–20. A non-committal dialogue with other religions is out of question for her. Rather, she must all the more remain obedient to the Commission of the exalted Christ.” – The old Jerusalem tradition on the missionary Commission was important for Matthew. “It remains binding for the Church of Jesus Christ of all ages.”

2. The article by HANS KVALBEIN centers around the question “Has Matthew abandoned the Jews?” Ulrich Luz and other scholars have interpreted Matthew as an “anti-Jewish” Gospel, and Kvalbein starts with an analysis of Matt 27:24–25, a text which has played a terrible role in the dark history of anti-Semitism in western history. After Pilate had washed his hands and declared himself innocent of the death of Jesus, “all the people” declared: “Let his blood be on us

and our children!” Many scholars read this as a self-curse, implying a definitive rejection of Jesus by the Jews resulting in an everlasting guilt on their people. Kvalbein first points to the fact that in Matthew’s view Pilate can by his hand-washing in no way escape the responsibility for his decision. He further points to the legal background in the OT for the participation of “all the people” in a capital punishment. The law required such a reaction when someone was found guilty of blasphemy. Matthew’s text is no self-curse imposed on the crowd by an author intending to increase their guilt. The question of “guilt” in the death of Jesus must be seen in a wider perspective, especially from the story of his agony in Gethsemane. Here Jesus’ death is seen as his voluntary obedience to the will of God. His Heavenly Father and Jesus himself are responsible for his death on the cross, and humanly speaking the Jewish crowd in Pilate’s courtyard is hardly more guilty than the Romans responsible for the death sentence and the crucifixion, the disciples who fled in the garden or Judas, who betrayed him.

Further, Kvalbein asks if the Great Commission is exclusively directed to the Gentiles and implies an abandonment of the mission to the Jews. This seems impossible from the close context, where the universal power of the Risen Christ is emphasized in a way which points to an inclusive mission to Jews as well as to Gentiles. This inclusive interpretation is also supported by the broader context of the Gospel and by the fact that we have no clear evidence for an abandonment of the Jews from the first two centuries. The strong words of judgement to the Jews from this period must be seen as reflections of the prophetic sayings urging repentance. They do not exclude a new start for Israel or for the faithful remnant of Israel.

Finally, Kvalbein looks at the miracles of Jesus and argues against the view that they are recounted in order to increase the guilt of the unrepentant Israel. In accordance with Birger Gerhardsson’s analysis, he stresses the positive function of the healings as a fulfilment of the promises which put Jesus in God’s role as the healer of Israel. The adversaries do not have a central part in these narratives.

In conclusion: To accuse Matthew of anti-Semitism or even anti-Judaism would be an anachronism. He is conscious of Jesus’ role as Abraham’s son and as Israel’s Messiah, bringing the good tidings to Israel as well as to all nations.

3. In his response to the articles by Stuhlmacher and Kvalbein, ULRICH LUZ expresses his unease at being portrayed as the protagonist for an anti-Jewish interpretation of the Gospel of Matthew. His former works on this Gospel were not intended to express settled results, and the forthcoming fourth volume of his commentary will give a broader and more balanced view of some of the issues in question. Luz now supports an inclusive interpretation of “all nations” in Matt 28:19, not excluding the Jews from the mission of the church, even if

Matthew hardly has great hopes of success for the mission to Israel. The mission to the Gentiles has full priority in his own church. As a response to Kvalbein's interpretation of the healing miracles he points to a basic difference in approach: Kvalbein stresses the positive reactions in the narratives themselves, whereas Luz wants to read the story as a whole and the individual miracle stories from their end-point where the people react negatively to the ministry of Jesus.

In response to Stuhlmacher's interpretation of Matt 28:16–20, Luz raises the question of whether texts from the OT can be used as a determining frame of interpretation of a text which can be sufficiently and coherently understood from the macrotext of the Gospel itself. As Stuhlmacher he finds an allusion to Dan 7:13–14 in Matt 28:18, but he rejects the probability of a conscious use of the OT texts linked to the Feast of Tabernacles and to the eschatological gathering of the nations at Mount Zion. These texts may be a possible horizon of the Great Commission for a modern reader, who reads the Bible as a whole, but Luz does not find evidence for these texts as sub-texts in the mind of Matthew. He also objects to the location in Galilee as a sign of the restitution of greater Israel or of the eschatological gathering of the nations, and he is not convinced by Stuhlmacher's early dating of the tradition behind Matt 28:16–20 to the time of the pillar apostles in Jerusalem before the Apostolic Council.

4. OSKAR SKARSAUNE starts his patristic contribution by commenting on two of Stuhlmacher's observations to the Great Commission. His interpretation of the disciples' journey to Galilee as the messianic shepherd going before his scattered sheep in order to restore the greater Israel, based on Mark 14:27f and Zech 13:7–9, seems to be confirmed by the *Epistula Apostolorum* from the mid-second century. The suggestion of a background in OT calling stories to the disciples' doubt also corresponds to early adaptations of the Great Commission in the *Epistula Apostolorum* and the *Acts of Thomas*. The objection from the doubting disciples are there, too, met with a promise of the Lord's presence.

Contrary to modern applications, the oldest interpretations do not regard the Great Commission as a permanent mandate for the church but only as a personal commission to the first apostles. The Commission was given to them and had already been fulfilled by them. They had brought the gospel to Israel as well as to the Gentiles. Bluntly spoken: not only was the mission to the Jews a closed chapter, but also the mission to the Gentiles. This can be seen in second century sources like the *Kerygma Petrou*, *Apology of Aristides*, *Hermas* and *Justin Martyr*. However, their reverence for the great work of the apostles does not exclude a concern for a permanent and ongoing witness to Jews and Gentiles. The church still has a double mission. Evidence for a continuing ministry and prayer for the Jews can be found in Justin Martyr's *Dialogue with Trypho*. In the Syriac *Didascalia* (ca. 250 AD) we find an extensive exhortation espe-

cially directed to Gentile Christians who had been in the “shadow of death” but had experienced the light of Jesus Christ: “Wherefore, do you pray and intercede for them, and especially in the days of the Pascha, that by your prayers they may be found worthy of forgiveness, and may return to our Lord Jesus Christ.”

5. According to Luke-Acts the gift of the Spirit at Pentecost is no doubt a decisive event for the mission of the church. But what is the function of the elaborate list of nations in Acts 2:9–11? Is it exclusively a historical list of the diaspora Jews present in Jerusalem, or is it also a programmatic anticipation of the mission to the Gentile nations? JAMES M. SCOTT gives an extensive argument for an inclusive interpretation. The list of nations from which the Diaspora Jews had come to Jerusalem does indeed point forward to the subsequent mission to the nations as told in the Book of Acts.

Scott finds his point of departure in Luke’s Gospel. He argues that the original table of Christ’s ancestors in Luke 3:23–38 contained 72 names representing the 72 nations of the world, as evidenced by Irenaeus. This corresponds to the mission of the seventy (-two) in Luke 10:1–24, where the number must be interpreted in light of the traditional number of nations in the world rather than the seventy elders in Num 11:16–17. The mission to all nations in Luke 24:46–47 can therefore be seen as a continuation of the mission of the seventy (-two). The double mission to Israel and to the nations is indicated by the double mission of the twelve and the seventy (-two) in Luke 9 and Luke 10 and is confirmed in Acts by the reestablishment of the twelve in Acts 1:15–26 and by the presence of people from “every nation under heaven” in Acts 2:5.

Acts 1:1–11 links the second volume of Luke’s work neatly to the first one. The programmatic statement in 1:8 puts the mission of the church in a geographical perspective with Jerusalem as “the navel of the earth”. The movement of the story is not only centrifugal, away from Jerusalem, but also centripetal, back to Jerusalem. Only when Paul finally comes to Rome does Jerusalem fade away from the horizon. The narrative structure corresponds to the division of the earth according to the three sons of Noah: Acts 2:1–8:25 records the mission to Shem, represented by Judea and Samaria, 8:26–40 gives a glimpse of the mission to Ham, and the rest of the book unfolds the rapid expansion to Japhet in Asia Minor and Greece and finally to Rome. This geographical movement starts with the gift of the Spirit at Pentecost. In the Jewish tradition the Feast of Pentecost was not only linked to the Sinai covenant, but also to the covenant with Noah with its universal horizon to all nations. The miracle of tongues is a counterpart to the division of languages at the Tower of Babel in Gen 11, and the coming of the Spirit fulfills the OT promises for the salvation and restoration of Israel. The list of nations in 2:9–11 has a similar background in the table of nations in Gen 10 and indicates symbolically the gathering both

of the dispersed tribes of Israel and of the nations for the eschatological worship in Jerusalem. Scott gives a penetrating analysis of the roots and the structure of this list and shows how it anticipates the entire mission to the nations. It contains “both the centripetal and centrifugal movements which are characteristic of the Book of Acts as a whole and of traditional expectations of the restoration of Israel.”

6. The summit meeting of the apostles and the elders in Jerusalem, the so-called Apostolic Council (probably in 48 AD), was apparently of crucial importance for clarifying the conditions for the mission to Gentiles. According to Acts 15, the speech by James, the brother of the Lord, was decisive for the outcome. JOSTEIN ÅDNA raises the question of the historical reliability of the position attributed to James at this meeting. According to the independent evidence in Paul, all the leaders in the first generation of the Church, including James, agreed on the basic elements of the Christian message (cf. 1 Cor 15:11 with the preceding v. 7). James accepted the fundamental principles of Paul’s Gentile mission, that circumcision and observance of the Law were not required of Gentiles before they could be included in the people of God (cf. Gal 2:6–9). Does the Lukan presentation of James’ speech in Acts 15:13–21 recount how James really argued in favour of such a position?

A quotation from the prophets (vv. 16–18), in which Amos 9:11–12 forms the nucleus, is central to the argument of James’ speech. This oracle corresponds with the Septuagint in stating that God will reestablish the fallen booth of David “in order that those men who are left, and all the nations over whom my name has been invoked, may seek the Lord”. Since it is precisely this phrase that makes the quotation a suitable scriptural warrant for the position advocated by James, many suspect that Luke, writing in Greek and citing the Scriptures from the LXX and not in accordance with the Masoretic Hebrew text, invented the whole speech. However, on the basis of a detailed linguistic and traditio-historical analysis Ådna concludes that the quotation does not in fact depend on the LXX.

Once it is realised that dependence on the LXX cannot be taken for granted, the probability that Acts 15 presents a historically reliable account of James’ argument must be seriously reconsidered. Ådna maintains that the scriptural quotation in Acts 15:16–18 is probably based on an independent, midrashic Hebrew version of Amos 9:11f to which James probably had access. The exegetical analysis of the speech further supports its authenticity. Hence, there is an impressive correspondence between James’ opening statement in Acts 15:14 and the scriptural quotation in vv. 16–18. In v. 14 James states that “God first looked favourably on the Gentiles, to take from among them a people for his name”. In the Old Testament the term used for “people” (Greek: *laos* = Hebrew: *am*) is reserved for Israel. However, the claim that God had long intended to take from among the Gentiles a people for his name finds scriptural vindication

in the version of Amos 9:11f quoted by James. Obviously, in the context of the Apostolic Council the fulfilment of the prophecy concerning the nations seeking the Lord is identified with the mission to the Gentiles. As an expression of the gracious acceptance of these Gentiles qua Gentiles, the prophetic oracle states that the Lord's name has been invoked over them. As a result, since the fulfilment of this oracle has now come, there is no need for the circumcision of the Gentiles. But according to Amos 9:11f, the turning of the Gentiles to the God of Israel must be preceded by the reestablishment of the fallen booth of David. Ådna discusses the traditio-historical background of this metaphor and concludes that, whether or not the "booth" is referring to the temple, in the context of James' speech it is now applied to the church, conceived of as a building (cf. Jer 12:15f, alluded to in the scriptural quotation, and Matt 16:18). Because God has rebuilt the fallen booth of David by raising up his *ekklesia*, the time has come for gathering in those Gentiles over whom God's name has been invoked, in order that they may join Israel in seeking and serving the Lord. In James' opinion, the mission to the Gentiles, particularly represented by Paul and Barnabas, is the current fulfilment of the prophecy in Amos 9:11f. Finally, when one acknowledges that in the conclusion of James' speech (v. 20) a direct exegetical link, in the form of a *gezera shawa*, also exists between Jer 12:15f, as part of the scriptural citation, and the so-called Apostolic decree, based on Leviticus 17–18, the accumulated evidence in favour of authenticity is considerable.

7. "Because of weakness I preached to you the first time." (Gal 4:13) This somewhat obscure explanation of why Paul brought the Gospel to the Galatians is the focus of SCOTT HAFEMANN's article on the role of suffering in the mission of Paul. Hafemann argues against the common view that Paul's weakness was merely the occasion by which Paul was forced to stay longer in the region than originally planned. The apologetic function ascribed to his sufferings in other letters indicates that the reference to his weakness does not only point to the providential circumstances of his activity in Galatia.

Normally, his weakness would pose a cultural barrier to the gospel. In the Graeco-Roman cults health, wealth and prosperity were seen as signs of the favour of the gods. In the Holy Scriptures of the Jews, God's curse could result in disease and death. Such ideas could explain why Paul's weakness could be a "temptation" for the Galatians. However, they overcame the temptation and received him "as Christ Jesus", as if he were Jesus himself. On the cross Jesus had been put under the "curse" (3:10–13). Suffering was part of the mission of Jesus and therefore also of his apostle's ministry. The offense caused by the apostle's suffering as well as by the cross of Christ had to be turned to acceptance and confidence. Paul's suffering was the instrument by which he publicly portrayed the crucified Christ. His weakness had a central and positive part to play in his mission.

This idea is confirmed in other texts. Hafemann points to the metaphor in 2 Cor 2:14 where Paul is being led in a Roman triumphal procession. He is not led in a personal triumph of his own. Paul is here pictured as a captured slave of Christ whom God is leading to death or suffering in Christ. A similar idea is found in 1 Cor 4:9, and, in another metaphor, in 2 Cor 4:11, where his sick body and his persecuted person is seen as a “jar of clay”. It is Paul’s call as an apostle to share the sufferings of Christ in order that the “treasure”, the gift of life in Christ, can be given to his churches. Paul could speak of the “thorn in the flesh” as a heavy burden he wanted to get rid of, but his suffering and weakness had a positive function as a model of God’s power and grace at work in human beings.

At the end of his article, Hafemann indicates that this idea of suffering as “death with Christ” may give a meaningful interpretation of the enigmatic saying in 1 Cor 15:29 on “those who are being baptized on account of the dead.” Here “the dead” might be the apostles who suffer for the sake of Christ and whose sufferings are accepted by those who are baptized in order to share both the sufferings, the death and the resurrection of Christ. Paul’s suffering is constitutive of his preaching the gospel of the cross.

8. Mission and suffering is also the topic of the next article. How can Paul complete “what is lacking in Christ’s afflictions”? HANNA STETTLER’s article gives a detailed philological elaboration of Col 1:24, where the close connection between the sufferings of Paul and the sufferings of Christ has always been a *crux interpretum*. According to this verse, Paul by his bodily sufferings is filling up to their full measure what is lacking in Christ’s afflictions. This means that the church will suffer less. The background for this is Paul’s sense of having a universal mission to the Gentiles. When he wrote the letter to the Romans he had brought the gospel from Jerusalem to Illyricum and planned to continue to Rome and even to Spain. In performing this universal mission Paul is not only a messenger of the cross of Christ, but also a bearer of Christ’s sufferings. Jesus, the Messiah, inaugurated the eschatological time of tribulation leading up to the fulfilment at his *parousia*. This idea of a period of messianic birth-pangs had been prepared in OT texts and in Judaism and is also found in Matt 24:8, and in Pauline texts like Romans 8 and 2 Thessalonians 2. Together with Paul’s sense of a universal mission, this creates a pattern where mission and suffering belong closely together. Worldwide preaching involves the church in worldwide persecution leading up to Christ’s *parousia*. In this way Paul’s suffering is part of his mission from Jerusalem to the end of the world. The church wants the *parousia* to come as quickly as possible so that its tribulations may end. But God still grants time for mission and repentance. In this way the afflictions of Paul and of the church are part and parcel of their commission to bring the gospel to all nations.

9. Was there a pre-Christian Jewish mission, or did the Jews actively proselytize Gentiles? The contribution of RAINER RIESNER starts with a brief look at the history of research of this question. An impressive number of influential scholars have answered this question in the affirmative and talked about a great period of Jewish mission in the first century AD. A few Scandinavian scholars (Sundkler, Fridrichsen, Aalen and Munck) had objections to the prevailing opinion, but not until the early nineties the old consensus that Early Judaism was a missionary religion was independently refuted by a number of Jewish and Christian scholars.

Riesner gives a definition of "mission" as "activity intended to win converts" as distinct from passive attraction to a religion or a religious group. Judaism no doubt exerted a considerable attraction to foreigners in the Graeco-Roman world. In the liberal and open-minded pluralistic culture of the Roman Empire its monotheism, its ethical commitment and its ancient sacred books impressed people from other nations and traditions. This attraction was met open-mindedly by the Jews, who allowed Gentiles to attend their synagogues as "God-fearers" and eventually to become proselytes. A careful examination of the evidence, however, does not support the idea of Jewish missionary activity. Riesner investigates Jewish apologetic literature and other Jewish sources, and he examines descriptions of Jews in pagan writings. Matt 23:15 is the only clear reference to Jewish missionary activity, but this text should rather be seen as a description of exceptional single cases than of regular behaviour by the Pharisees. Also, some texts in Philo may seem to represent a kind of Jewish mission theology. However, Philo's conviction of the superiority of Judaism and of the Jews' calling to point to the worship of the one true God was not followed up by a call to convert others. Philo believed that the light of reason would lead men to the truth revealed to Moses. The Sibylline Oracles contain invitations to join the right way, but generally the expectation of a conversion of Gentiles to observance of the law and to participation in the pilgrimage to Zion is linked to the eschatological fulfilment when the Messiah comes, not to present Jewish activity.

The evidence, therefore, does not support the existence of a pre-Christian Jewish mission. The mission of the Early Church cannot be derived from Jewish predecessors, but has its roots in Jesus' claim to be the Messiah and in his message of the Kingdom of God. The vast amount of literature from the Talmudic period does not support the idea of an active Jewish mission in the first centuries AD, even if it can describe Abraham as a missionary and other OT figures as active proselytizers.

10. Who were involved in the mission of the church? Was evangelism a responsibility for every Christian, for the local churches, or only for individuals with a special commission from Christ, as for example the apostle Paul? The book's two last essays are dedicated to these questions.

Index of Authors

- Aalen, Sverre 216f, 240f, 244
 Abegg Jr., Martin 140–142
 Abusch, R. 226
 Ackroyd, P.R. 58
 Ådna, Jostein 1, 7f, 17, 39f, 125–161,
 128, 156–158
 Aland, Barbara 94
 Aland, Kurt 94
 Aletti, J.-N. 187
 Alexander, Loveday 100f, 113
 Alexander, P.S. 122
 Allen, W.C. 233
 Allison, D. 67, 233, 235
 Axenfeld, K. 214

 Baasland, Ernst 37, 128, 135, 150–152,
 154–156, 166, 171f
 Bagatti, B. 233
 Balch, D.L. 282
 Balz, Heinrich 21
 Bamberger, B.J. 214f, 249
 Banks, R. 261f
 Barnard, L.W. 246
 Barrett, Charles Kingsley 105, 113–115,
 127, 132, 145, 149, 151, 165, 246
 Basnage, J. 213, 233, 235
 Bauckham, Richard J. 90–93, 96, 99f,
 108f, 111, 115f, 126, 128, 131f, 134,
 137, 139, 143–150, 155–159, 186, 187,
 202, 204–206, 244
 Bauer, Adolf 95, 118
 Bauer, Walter 69
 Bauernfeind, Otto 106, 116, 120
 Baumbach, Günther 42
 Baumgarten, A.I. 226
 Beasley-Murray, G.R. 235
 Beckwith, Roger T. 92
 Bengel, A. 191
 Bertholet, A. 213
 Bertram, G. 203f
 Bescow, P. 274
 Best, E. 198–201, 205f
 Betz, Hans Dieter 166
 Betz, Otto 22, 40, 198, 202, 245

 Bialoblocki, S. 215
 Billerbeck, P. 201, 203, 205, 215f, 244
 Black, David Alan 166, 168, 170, 183
 Bloedhorn, Hanswulf 113
 Blue, B. 261
 Boccaccini, G. 245
 Borgen, Peder 100, 250
 Bornkamm, Günther 20, 34, 215
 Bosch, D.J. 254, 259
 Botermann, H. 218, 232
 Bovon, François 88, 98
 Bowers, W.P. 253f, 256, 259f, 262
 Bowersock, G.W. 111
 Braude, W.G. 214
 Braun, Michael A. 131, 135, 137, 139,
 152
 Braun, Roddy 97
 Brawley, Robert L. 101
 Brinkman, J.A. 114
 Brodersen, Kai 100
 Brown, P. 282
 Brown, Raymond E. 49f, 107
 Brownlee, William Hugh 135
 Brox, Norbert 75, 277, 279
 Bruce, F.F. 239
 Burchard, Christoph 34f, 227
 Bühner, J.-A. 197
 Byrskog, Samuel 32

 Cahill, M. 190, 205f
 Calvin, J. 213
 Campenhausen, H. von 23, 281
 Cancik, Hubert 119f
 Caquot, A. 245
 Cargal, T.B. 52
 Carleton Paget, James 217–227, 229, 231,
 233–236, 239f, 242, 245–248
 Clark, Andrew C. 97
 Clarke, J. 281
 Cohen, S.J.D. 214, 218, 222, 226, 232, 236
 Collins, J.J. 203f
 Congar, Y. 80, 277
 Conzelmann, Hans 114, 132, 139
 Cullmann, Oscar 192, 198–202, 254

- Cummins, S.A. 166f, 169, 173f, 183
- Dalbert, P. 225
- Dam, R. van 272
- Danz, J.A. 212
- Daube, D. 215
- Davids, P.H. 122
- Davies, W.D. 67, 215, 233, 235
- Dean, James Elmer 120
- Deines, Roland 213
- Dérenbourg, J. 211
- Derwacter, F.M. 214
- Dibelius, Martin 112
- Dimant, Devorah 92
- Dobschütz, Ernst von 69, 74, 202
- Donovan, Mary Ann 95
- Dunn, James D.G. 49, 65, 186f, 190, 195
208
- Dupont, Jacques 105, 113, 130, 132–134,
136
- Ego, Beate 100
- Ehrlich, Ernst Ludwig 28
- Eiss, Werner 104
- Ellis, Edward Earle 131, 137, 246
- Esler, P.F. 109
- Evans, Craig A. 28, 97
- Ewald, H.A.G. 211f
- Ewald, P. 187
- Fee, Gordon D. 96, 179f, 266
- Feldman, L.H. 217–221, 223, 226, 236,
239f, 247–249
- Ferguson, E. 284
- Figueras, P. 237
- Fitzmyer, Joseph A. 89f, 93f, 107, 109
- Flint, Peter 140–142
- Flusser, David 47
- Fornberg, Tord 50, 65
- Foster, J. 269
- Fox, R. Lane 272, 282, 284
- Fredriksen, Paula 218, 239
- Frend, W.H.C. 272
- Frey, Jörg 91f
- Freyne, S. 47
- Fridrichsen, Anton 216
- Friedrich, Gerhard 20
- Gager, J.C. 243
- Georgi, D. 215, 224, 229
- Gerhardsson, Birger 52f, 59–61
- Gese, Hartmut 24, 26, 29f
- Gnilka, Joachim 19
- Goddard, A.J. 166f, 169, 173f, 183
- Goldenberg, R. 219, 225, 246
- Goldstein, Jonathan A. 100, 228
- Goodman, Martin 217–224, 226–229,
231, 233, 237, 241–244, 246, 248
- Goppelt, Leonhard 217
- Gorman, M.J. 221
- Goulder, M.D. 116
- Graetz, H. 234
- Green, J.B. 101
- Green, Michael 255, 265, 275, 277
- Gruen, Erich S. 112, 242
- Grundmann, Walter 20
- Gundel, W. 114
- Gundry, Robert H. 19, 21f, 233, 235
- Güting, E. 114, 116
- Güttgemanns, E. 178, 190, 197
- Görg, M. 114
- Haenchen, Ernst 87, 127, 130, 143, 145, 151
- Hafemann, Scott 8f, 37, 39, 125, 165–184,
166, 174, 206f
- Hagner, Donald A. 18–20, 22, 27, 52
- Hahn, Ferdinand 21, 34, 214, 255
- Hall Harris III, W. 104
- Hare, D. 47
- Harnack, Adolf von 41, 214, 279f, 282
- Harrington, D. 47
- Harris, W.V. 226
- Harvey, A.E. 172f
- Hasel, Gerhard F. 152
- Heckel, Ulrich 170, 173, 196
- Heer, Joseph M. 94
- Helm, Rudolf 95, 118
- Hemer, Colin J. 109
- Hengel, Martin 24, 29, 36–38, 41f, 100,
111, 126, 144, 193, 208, 234, 238, 245,
250, 266
- Henten, J.W. van 226
- Hills, Julian 72
- Hinson, E.G. 215
- Hirschberg, Peter 27
- Hock, R. 274
- Hoffman, E. 245
- Hofius, Otfried 246
- Holl, K. 273, 284
- Holler, Knut 147
- Holtz, Traugott 132, 138, 194, 196
- Holzmann, H.J. 116
- Horbury, William 98
- Horst, P.W. van der 114
- Hubbard, Benjamin J. 20, 25, 71
- Hvalvik, Reidar 12f, 72, 80, 217, 219,
223f, 232, 235–237, 244, 247f, 254,
265–287

- Jellicoe, Sidney 120
 Jeremias, Joachim 34, 215, 220, 227, 233–235
 Jeremias, Jörg 40, 146, 152, 154
 Jervell, Jacob 56, 81, 108, 132, 139, 145, 148–151, 158
 Johnson, Luke Timothy 114
 Jones, F. Stanley 118
 Juster, J. 214
- Kaestli, Jean-Daniel 72
 Kartveit, Magnar 101
 Käsemann, Ernst 195f
 Kasher, A. 221
 Kasting, Heinrich 21, 214
 Kautt, James Louis 17
 Kelly, J.N.D. 75
 Kim, Seyoon 244
 Kimelman, R. 233
 Kingsbury, Jack Dean 21
 Kjær-Hansen, Kai 222, 245
 Kleinknecht, K. Th. 188, 196–198
 Knorr, U.W. 273
 Koch, Klaus 91
 Kohler, K. 220
 Kraft, Heinrich 28
 Kraus, Hans Joachim 28
 Kremer, J. 185f, 189, 191
 Kretschmar, Georg 23, 79f
 Kronholm, Tryggve 98, 105
 Kraabel, A.T. 217
 Kuhli, H. 214
 Kuhn, K.G. 215, 237
 Kurz, William S. 89f
 Kuttner, Ann L. 120
 Kvalbein, Hans 1, 3f, 17, 19, 22f, 31, 41, 45–62, 45, 60, 63–66
- Lake, Kirsopp 87
 Lambrecht, J. 178
 Lampe, Peter 273
 Lane, E.N. 231
 Lane, Thomas 98
 Larsson, Edvin 56
 Latourette, Kenneth Scott 275
 Lavater, J.C. 213
 Legrand, Lucien 113
 Lerle, E. 214
 Lévi, I. 214
 Levinskaya, Irina 112, 237
 Levy, Reuben 118
 Lewis, Naphtali 111
 Lichtenberger, Hermann 100
 Lieberman, S. 225
- Lieu, Judith 79
 Lightfoot, J.B. 182, 188, 190, 212f
 Lohfink, Gerhard 32, 40, 138f, 151, 201
 Lohmeyer, Ernst 23, 30, 190
 Lohse, Eduard 73
 Longenecker, R.N. 239
 Ludin Jansen, H. 220
 Luz, Ulrich 4f, 17, 19, 21–23, 27, 41, 45–47, 50, 56, 58f, 63–68, 64f, 203
 Lüdemann, Gerd 114
 Löhr, M. 211, 216
- MacMullen, R. 275, 280, 282, 284
 Maiburg, Ursula 120
 Marshall, I. Howard 1, 11, 40, 98, 139, 144f, 148, 151, 161, 198, 202f, 251–263
 Martin, Troy W. 66, 168–172
 Matthews, S. 238
 Mayer, R. 245
 McEleney, N.J. 237
 McKnight, Scot 47, 49, 61, 216, 218–224, 230, 236, 239
 Meier, John P. 97
 Mendelsohn, M. 213
 Merrill, Eugene H. 108
 Merz, Annette 17, 24
 Metzger, Bruce M. 94, 97, 107, 112, 114
 Meyer, E. 214
 Meyer, H.A.W. 212
 Meyer, Rudolf 131, 135
 Michel, Otto 17, 19f
 Milik, Józef T. 140, 142
 Millar, Fergus 111, 217
 Moe, Olaf 282
 Moessner, David P. 109
 Molland, Einar 80, 267, 270, 284
 Mommsen, T. 211
 Moore, G.F. 216
 Morris, L. 273
 Moule, C.F.D. 186–188
 Moutsoula, Elia D. 120
 Muchowski, Piotr 111
 Munck, J. 217, 233, 254
 Müller, Mogens 144
- Nägele, Sabine 40, 128–132, 134–138, 146, 152–154, 156, 158
 Neymeyr, U. 267
 Niebuhr, Karl-Wilhelm 39
 Noack, Bent 242
 Nock, A.D. 215, 280
 Nolland, J. 229, 237

- O'Brien, Peter T. 165, 168, 186f, 190, 203
206, 255
Ollrog, W.-H. 246, 252, 257, 274
Orrieux, C. 211f, 214, 216, 218, 232, 243,
247
Osiek, C. 282
Overman, J.A. 48, 65
- Parsons, M.C. 88
Paton, G.G. 215
Patte, Daniel 50, 58
Paul, A. 214
Pedersen, Sigfred 56
Percy, E. 189
Perelmutter, H.G. 219
Peretti, A. 242
Perriman, Andrew 181
Pervo, R.I. 88
Pesch, Rudolf 31, 34, 132, 145, 150f
Philonenko, M. 245
Podossinov, A.V. 111
Pokorný, Petr 185, 189, 191, 205
Poorthuis, M. 100
Przybylski, P. 47
- Rabinowitz, Louis I. 108
Rahmani, L.Y. 233
Räsänen, Heikki 108
Rajak, T. 237
Rappaport, U. 214
Reiser, M. 249
Renan, E. 214
Richard, Earl J. 127, 132–134, 136, 259
Riesner, Rainer 10, 24, 29, 39, 135, 137,
144f, 194, 207, 211–250, 223, 229f,
234, 243f, 246
Robinson, J.A.T. 235
Rokeah, D. 217–220, 247, 249
Rolloff, Jürgen 40, 127, 132, 145, 151
Rook, John T. 90
Roper, C.D. 214
Royse, James R. 94
Rudolph, Wilhelm 130f, 146
Rutgers, L.V. 221, 231
- Safrai, Ch. 100
Saldarini, A.J. 48
Sandmel, S. 47
Sandnes, Karl Olav 244, 274
Sandt, Huub van de 127, 132f, 136
Savage, Timothy B. 171, 176f
Schäfer, Peter 233
Schelkle, K.H. 51
Scheurer, Erich 24, 243
- Schiffman, L.H. 237, 249
Schlatter, Adolf 203, 234
Schlier, H. 173, 196f, 203
Schmidt, Carl 70f, 75
Schmidt, Erich F. 119
Schnabel, E.J. 122
Schneider, Gerhard 132, 139, 151
Schöttgen, C. 213
Schröter, Jens 175
Schultz, Joseph P. 100
Schürer, Emil 113, 213f, 217
Schürmann, Heinz 98
Schweizer, Eduard 19, 188f, 192, 233
Schwemer, Anna Maria 29, 37, 111, 206,
238, 245
Scott, James M. 6f, 39, 87–123, 88,
96, 100, 108, 111, 114f, 118f, 175,
193–195, 207, 246
Seccombe, David 108
Segal, A.F. 217
Sim, David C. 47, 65
Simon, M. 246
Skårland, Geir 63, 125
Skarsaune, Oskar 5f, 23, 69–83, 75, 79,
81, 247, 254, 277
Skjøtt, Bodil F. 222
Slingerland, H.D. 231
Smith, David 105
Smith, R.R.R. 119
Stanton, Graham N. 58, 233
Stark, R. 279, 282
Stegemann, H. 100, 215
Stemberger, G. 203, 233
Sterling, Gregory E. 88
Stern, M. 214, 229, 231
Stettler, Hanna 9, 185–208
Steyn, Gert J. 89
Stowers, S.K. 270
Strack, H.L. 203, 244
Strahtmann, Hermann 149
Strobel, August 200
Stuart, Douglas 131
Stuehnenberg, P.F. 230
Stuhlmacher, Peter 1, 2f, 17–43, 47, 53,
63, 65–68, 70f, 73, 99, 158, 194–196,
198, 200, 202, 207
Stuhlmacher, R. 204–206, 208, 245
Sundkler, Bengt 216
Swanson, Reuben J. 93
- Talmon, Shemaryahu 99
Tannehill, Robert C. 98
Taylor, N. 257f
Tcherikover, V. 225

- Theissen, Gerd 17, 24
Tiede, D.L. 109
Tov, Emanuel 131, 140–142
Trebilco, P. 238
Trilling, W. 200
Trudinger, L. 186
Tuilier, A. 271
Turner, Max 104f, 108

Uehlinger, C. 122
Uhlig, S. 244
Ulrich, Eugene 140–142
Unnik, W.C. 286
Urbach, E.E. 249

VanderKam, James G. 91f
Verbrugghe, Gerald P. 118
Vögtle, Anton 19
Volz, P. 203f

Walker, Peter W.L. 108
Wall, Robert 104
Wedderburn, A.J.M. 105–107, 113f, 116
Weidner, Ernst 114
Weinfeld, Moshe 104
Weinstock, S. 114

Wellhausen, Julius 213
Wenham, David 198–200
Westermann, Claus 117
Wette, W.M.L. de 211
Wettstein, J.J. 212, 230
Wevers, John W. 90
White, Joel 187
Wickersham, John M. 118
Wiefel, W. 233
Wilckens, Ulrich 188, 207
Wilken, R.L. 249
Will, E. 211f, 214, 216, 218, 232, 243, 247
Williams, M.H. 231
Wilson, Steven G. 87f
Winter, Bruce W. 238
Witakowski, Witold 95
Witherington III, Ben 132, 144f, 148, 161
Wuellner, W.H. 277
Wyatt, Nicolas 99
Waard, Jan de 135, 139

Yates, Roy 181, 186
Younger, K. Lawson 115, 123

Zahn, T. 212
Ziegler, Joseph 121

Index of Sources

I. Old Testament

<i>Genesis</i>		4:20	149
1:10	234	4:29	137
4:24	94	7:6	149
5:1–32	89	14:2,21	149
8:20–22	103	25:1–3	172
9:8–17	103	27:14–26	51
10	89, 116f, 119, 193	27:26	172
10 (LXX)	95	28:10	146
10:5	117	28:15	172
10:24 (LXX)	90	30:4–5 (LXX)	107
11:1–9	105, 116	32:8	96
11:10–32	89	<i>Ruth</i>	
11:12 (LXX)	90	4:18–19	97
12:1–3	147	<i>2 Samuel</i>	
12:2–3	57	7:12–16	156
17:12–13	236	7:12	135
41:45	227	7:13	136, 156f
46:27	96	8	146
<i>Exodus</i>		12:26–28	146
15:17	35, 156f	<i>1 Kings</i>	
19:5–6	149f	8:43	146
<i>Leviticus</i>		<i>2 Kings</i>	
17–18	159f	5:1–18	228
17:8–9	160	<i>1 Chronicles</i>	
17:8	159	1–9	89
17:10	159f	1:1–2:2	117
17:11	53	1	89, 101, 104, 119
17:12	159f	2:5	97
17:13	159f	2:9–24	97
18:6–23	160	2:9	97
18:26	159f	17:12	136, 156
24:10–16	51, 65	<i>Nehemiah</i>	
<i>Numbers</i>		1:8–9	108
15:30–31	50, 65	<i>Esther</i>	
24:17 (LXX)	250	3:8	107
<i>Deuteronomy</i>			
2:25	106f		
4:19	106f, 114		

Psalms

14:2	137
19:4 [ET]	278
19:5	278
22:7	137
27:5	153, 155
30:13 (LXX)	176
31:1–2 (LXX)	182
31:21	153
34:5	137
42:5	153
54:20 (LXX)	139
55:20	139
72	121
73:12 (LXX)	139
74:12	139
76:3	153
80	26
87	29, 39
87:5	39
96	29
96:2–3	29
96:10	76
103:3	61

Proverbs

9	226
---	-----

Isaiah

1:8	153f
2:1–5	109
2:2–4	147, 226
2:2–3	100, 195
2:3	242
7:14	33
8:23–9:1	24, 27, 70
9:1–2 [ET]	24, 27, 70
11:4	203
11:10–12	115, 121
11:11–12	111
11:12	100
16:5	153
29:18–19	60
29:23–24	248
35:5–6	60
40:3–5	88
42:6–7	247
42:6	243f, 248
42:7	60
42:18	60
43:5–6	100
44:3	105
45:18–25	147
45:21	132, 136, 138, 161

45:22	147, 241
49:1	194
49:6	38, 88, 109, 192, 194, 243f, 248
49:8	194
49:12	100
52:5	286
52:7	194
52:13–53:8	224
52:15	194
53:1	194
56:7	35, 195
60:3–16	100
61:1–3	60
63:19	146
65:1	194
66:18ff	147
66:18–23	38
66:18–20	115, 117, 119f
66:19	207

Jeremiah

7:10,11,14,30	146
12:15–16	132–134, 158f, 161
12:16	160
14:9	146
23:5	135
25:29	146
30:1–31:40	26
38:8	108

Lamentations

2:6	153
4:2	176

Ezekiel

5:5	99, 102, 193
34:23	135
36:25–27	31, 106
37	106
38–39	117, 204
38:12	99f, 193
39:25–29	106

Daniel

4:31–34	228
4:34–37 [ET]	228
7:13–14	19, 27, 54, 67
7:13	244
9:18–19	146
9:26	204
11	117
12:3	259

Hosea

3:4	133f
3:5	132–134, 150, 161
10:12	137

Joel

2:28 [ET]	106
3:1	106
3:1 [ET]	106
4:1	106

Amos

1:3	141
1:11–12	146
2:16	141
4:1	141
5:4–6	137
5:15	141
9:7	147
9:11–15	152, 154
9:11–12	40, 128–139, 161
9:11–12 (MT)	128–139, 128f
9:11–12 (LXX)	128–139, 128–131
9:11	35, 152–154, 156
9:13	153
9:14	134

Jonah

1:9	234
-----	-----

Micah

2:12–13	26, 109
4:1–5	109
4:1–3	147
4:2	195, 242

Haggai

2:6	234
-----	-----

Zechariah

1:16	132
2:6–12 [ET]	28, 30
2:10–16	28, 30
2:10–11 [ET]	26
2:14–15	26
2:11 [ET]	148
2:15	148
6:12–13	156f
8:20–23	100, 147
8:22	137f
8:23	226
12:10–12	80f
13:7	25
13:8–9	25, 67
14:4	100
14:16–19	104

II. Old Testament Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha

Tobit

13:11–13	100
13:11	156, 242

1 Maccabees

8:23,32	234
---------	-----

2 Maccabees

2:18	106, 108
3:24	228
9:17	228

Wisdom

13–15	225
-------	-----

Sirach

36:11–17	242
51:23–24	226

4 Ezra

4:35–37	195, 204
---------	----------

6:26	226, 242
10:55	157

Apocalypse of Abraham

29.11	245
-------	-----

Syriac Apocalypse of Baruch (2 Apoc. Bar.)

1.4	224
32.4	157
68.5	226, 242

Ethiopic Enoch (1 Enoch)

10.12	93
26.1	99
48.2	244
48.4	242, 244
90.29	156f
90.30–33	226
91.11–17	91
93.3–10	91
93.4–5	90, 92

105.1–2	242	3.545 ff	241
105.1	226, 242	3.545–549	225
		3.564–570	241
<i>Epistle of Aristaeas</i>		3.601–607	225
138–139	225	3.603 ff	241
		3.624–629	241
<i>Joseph and Aseneth</i>		3.635 ff	241
14–17	227	3.652–656	242
		3.710–731	242
<i>Jubilees</i>		3.772–776	242
1:15–17	156	5.414–433	156
2:23	90	5.422–425	157
6:11	104		
6:15–19	103	<i>Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs</i>	
6:20 ff	104		81, 244 f
8–9	88–97, 99, 102	<i>Benjamin</i>	
8:1	90	9.2	195
8:19	99	10.10	244 f
12:12	225	<i>Dan</i>	
22:1	103	5.11	244
<i>Psalms of Solomon</i>		<i>Judah</i>	
17:30	156	24.6	242, 244
17:31	195	25.5	242
<i>Sibylline Oracles</i>		<i>Levi</i>	
3.4–11	241	18.2–9	242, 244
3.5	221	<i>Simeon</i>	
3.190–195	242	7.2	226, 242, 244
3.195	226, 242	<i>Zebulon</i>	
3.295 ff	241	9.8	244
3.489 ff	241		

III. Qumran Writings

<i>Damascus Document (CD)</i>		<i>4Q174 (4Q Florilegium)</i>	
1:4–10	225	1:1–13	156
2:6–7	225	1:4	237
7:16	135	1:12–13	40
9:1	237	1:12	135
11:15	237	<i>5Q4</i>	140 f
12:6–11	237	<i>Temple Scroll (11Q19)</i>	
12:10–11	236	29:9–10	156
<i>War Scroll (1QM)</i>			
	241		
<i>Rule of the Community (1QS)</i>			
4:14	225		
5:6	234		

IV. Jewish Hellenistic Writings

Josephus

Antiquitates Judaicae (Jewish Antiquities)

7.45	224
13.257	221
13.319	221
14.403	237
18.81–84	231, 237
19.338–341	233
20.2	234
20.17–53	212
20.34–48	245
20.34,38,39	237
20.40–42	229, 234, 237
20.43–46	238
20.44	238
20.47	237
20.51–53	234
20.139	233, 236
20.145	236
20.195	237
20.200	126
20.252	237

De bello Judaico (The Jewish War)

1.110	238
2.142	234
2.560	228
6.181	234
7.45	229

Contra Apionem (Against Apion)

2.123	226, 228
2.151–152	226
2.209–210	226
2.210	229
2.261	226
2.281	228
2.282–286	226
2.282–283	228

Vita Josephi (The Life)

16	237
191	238

Philo

De Abrahamo

98	240
----	-----

De Cherubim

127	241
-----	-----

De Decalogo

52–56	225
76–77	225

Legatio ad Gaium

211	237
-----	-----

Legum Allegoriae

3.45	241
------	-----

Quod Omnis Probus Liber Sit

74	240
----	-----

De Specialibus Legibus

1.52	237, 241
1.54	241
1.168,190	240
1.319–320	240
1.320–323	240
1.321,323	240
2.61	240
2.62–63	224
2.62	240
2.162	240
4.178	241

De Virtutibus

102–103	236
175	241

De Vita Mosis

1.147	237
1.290	250
2.25–27	239
2.27	226, 239, 241
2.44	226, 242
2.232	220

V. New Testament

Matthew

1:21	53
1:23	33
3:7–10	225
3:15	53

4:15–16	24, 27, 70
4:17	202
4:19	277
5–7	285
7:6	276

8:5–13	59	26:36–46	52
8:11–12	46	26:42	53
8:11	100	26:65	50f
10	55f, 66, 69, 81	26:68	32
10:2	266	27:3–10	52
10:5ff	267	27:24–25	46
10:5–6	22, 30, 55, 65, 220, 234	27:25	30, 32, 47, 49–54, 64
10:6	53f	27:63	17
10:7–8	60	28:7	23
10:15	56	28:10	23
10:17–18	55	28:15	30, 45, 64
10:17	31	28:16–20	17–43, 30–41, 45, 63–68, 69–83, 122
10:19–20	197	28:16	25f, 70
10:23	55, 65	28:18–20	277
11:20–24	59, 235	28:18	19
11:24	56	28:19–20	65f, 69f, 76, 201
12:40	17	28:19	19, 21f, 27, 64, 249
13:11–15	46	28:20	17, 19
13:39–41	20		
13:53–58	59	<i>Mark</i>	
15:21–28	59	6:7–13	267
15:24	53	9:1	243
16:18	158	10:45	245
18:22	94	11:15–17	157
20:28	53	11:17	35
21:9	57	13	198
21:43–44	46	13:5–22	199f
21:43	64	13:8	202
22:7	32	13:10	38, 194f, 200
22:8–10	64	13:11	197
23	46, 58	13:19	202
23:15	211–213, 219f, 232–234, 248	13:20	205, 208
23:29–39	64	14:22–25	245
23:34–38	64	14:26–31	25
23:34–36	51	14:28	23, 70
23:34	31	14:58	35, 157f
23:39	30, 58, 64f	16:7	23
24	198	16:14–15	201
24:2	32	16:15–16	31
24:3	20	16:15	249
24:4–25	199f		
24:8	202f	<i>Luke</i>	
24:9	27, 64	2:25–38	99, 101
24:14	19, 22, 27, 38, 64, 73, 194, 200, 207	2:25–35	145
24:21–22	202	2:29–32	244
24:22	205, 208	2:30–32	88
24:24	199	2:31–32	109
24:29–31	30	3:2	225
25:32	27, 64	3:6	88
26:28	53	3:7–9	225
26:30–35	25	3:23–38	89–97, 116
26:32	23	3:33	97
		3:34–38	89

3:34	89	6:1	126f
3:36	89, 104	6:5	237
4:16–30	88	7:43	154
6:13	266	7:44	154f
10:1ff	267	8:1–3	274
10:1–24	96, 97–99	8:1	127, 266
10:9	98	10	266
10:10–11	98	10:1–11:18	150
10:13–15	235	10:2	237
10:17–20	98	10:22	237
13:28–29	88	11–12	266
13:29	100	11:19ff	127
13:34–35	58	11:19–21	143
14:16–24	196	11:19–20	274
17:11–19	88	11:20–21	243
22:14	266	11:21	229
24:21	27	11:26	243
24:34	35	11:30	161
24:44–49	22	12:17	37
24:46–47	99, 101	12:25	101, 161
24:47	22, 193	13:1–2	257
<i>John</i>		13:2–4	266
2:19–21	158	13:4–14:26	150
4:23	235	13:13–52	249
7:32–34	235	13:16	237
7:35–36	235	13:26	237
7:35	220	13:43	237
10:1–18	25	13:44	224
10:16	26	13:47	88, 109, 244
12:12	235	13:48	224
19:11	53	13:50	237f
21	36	13:51	98
21:20–23	243	14:1	224, 266
<i>Acts</i>		14:14	266
1:1–11	99–101	15:1–2	38
1:6–8	201	15:2	101, 266
1:6	27, 40, 109	15:4	266
1:8	99, 109	15:5	238
1:15	35	15:6–22	125
2:1–47	87	15:7–11	148, 150
2:1–4	104–106	15:12	143, 150, 283
2:1	103	15:13–21	126, 145, 160f, 244
2:2	105	15:14	148f
2:3	105, 116	15:15–17	35
2:5	106–110	15:15	133, 135
2:6	105	15:16–18	40, 126–144, 128f, 132–139
2:9–11	87–123, 110–121, 106, 122f	15:16–17	40
2:11	237	15:16	154–159
2:38	36	15:19	150
3:21	27, 40	15:20	104, 159f
5:28	41	15:21	160
		15:29	104, 159f
		15:38	252

15:40 257
 16:14 237
 17:4–7 238
 17:4 237
 17:12 224
 17:17 237
 17:18–21 238
 17:22–29 241
 18:3 274
 18:4 224
 18:6 98
 18:7 237, 270
 18:11 270
 18:18–19 274
 18:22 101, 258
 18:26 274
 19:8–10 270
 19:9 270
 19:10 257
 19:13–17 238
 19:21 101
 20:16 101
 20:31 270
 21:8 268
 21:13 101
 21:16 144
 21:25 104, 159f
 23:6–9 238
 25:1 101
 28:28 88

Romans

1:1–17 255
 1:1–2 243
 1:3 57
 1:5 37
 1:8 253
 1:13 258
 1:15 261
 1:16 55, 207
 1:18–19 225
 1:19–21 241
 2:4 202
 2:9 55
 2:17–20 242
 2:17–18 226, 242
 4:6–9 182
 8:22 204
 9–11 58
 9:1–5 57
 10:15 194
 10:18 73, 278
 10:20 194
 11:11–20 56

11:11–15 195f
 11:13–32 37f, 194
 11:13 37
 11:25–32 80, 195
 11:25 205, 207f
 11:28 207
 12:13 267
 13:11–12 243
 15:1 37
 15:15–28 243
 15:15–16 261
 15:16–17 193
 15:16 207
 15:18–21 38, 194
 15:18–19 283
 15:19–21 193
 15:19 39
 15:21 194
 15:23–24 194, 207
 16 263
 16:3–5 274

1 Corinthians

1:12 266
 1:17–18 180
 1:24 242
 1:30 242
 3:21 266
 4:6–16 174
 4:9–13 37
 4:9 174f, 178
 4:12–13 178
 7:16 260, 286
 7:26–28 197
 9:1–11:1 253
 9:1–2, 5 266
 10:31–11:1 260
 12 253
 14:23–25 261
 14:24–25 282
 15:3 53
 15:5 35
 15:10 194
 15:29 184
 15:31, 32 179
 16:10 252
 16:17–18 181
 16:19 274

2 Corinthians

1:3–11 174
 1:4–5 37
 1:5–7 197
 1:5 198

1:8–10	177	<i>Ephesians</i>	
2:4–17	174	2:20	267
2:11	175	3:8–9	192f
2:14–16	180	3:13	37, 192
2:14	174–176, 178	4:11	268
4:7–12	174	4:12	261
4:7	176		
4:8–9	176	<i>Philippians</i>	
4:9	177	1:14–18	259
4:10–11	176	2:14–17	259
4:10	177	2:15–16	253
4:11	174, 177–179	2:27	181
4:12	179	2:30	181, 188, 252
5:18–6:2	253, 260		
5:20	197	<i>Colossians</i>	
6:2	194	1:6	278
7:9–10	202	1:23	73, 106
11:14	173	1:24	37, 181, 185–208, 185–192, 205–208
11:24	172	4:5–6	253
12:1–10	175		
12:7–10	171	<i>1 Thessalonians</i>	
12:7–8	37	1:6–8	253
12:7	169f, 173	1:8	259
12:9–10	170	1:9–10	202, 243
12:12	283	2:13–16	57
<i>Galatians</i>		2:16	243
1:11–17	168	4:13–5:4	243
1:15–16	37, 193f, 243f	4:15–17	207
1:19	266	5:3	202f
1:23	167f		
2:1ff	239	<i>2 Thessalonians</i>	
2:1–10	125, 161, 207	2:1–12	199f
2:6–10	38	2:3–12	38, 194
2:6–9	126	2:6–7	198, 254
2:7–9	207	2:7	207
2:7–8	252	2:8	201, 203
2:9	113, 125	2:9–10	199
2:11–21	40	2:9	274
2:15–16	168	2:10–12	208
2:20	167		
3:1	174	<i>2 Timothy</i>	
3:10	172	4:5	261, 268
4:12–20	166–174, 181–183		
4:12	166f, 172	<i>Titus</i>	
4:13–14	166, 170, 182	2:10	260
4:13	37, 167–171, 173, 176		
4:14	169, 171–174	<i>Hebrews</i>	
4:15	172, 182f	13:1–2	267
4:17	183		
5:5–6, 13	183	<i>James</i>	
6:11	169, 183	2:7	148
6:13	171		

1 Peter

2:12	286
3:1–2	260, 286
5:13	266

2 Peter

1:1	145
-----	-----

Revelation

5:9–10	149
6:9–11	195
7:4–8	27
21:9–22:5	27
21:14	267

VI. Early Christian Writings

Acts of John

38–42	283
-------	-----

Acts of Paul and Thecla

7	270
11	270
41	270
42	270

Acts of Peter

5	69
---	----

Acts of Thomas

1	72
1.1	278

*Aristides**Apology*

2 (Syriac version)	74
17.2	277

Apostolic Constitutions

2.2.6	273
8.10.16f	277

*Athenagoras**Legatio*

11–12	285
11.4	284
32–35	285

*Augustine**De Civitate Dei*

6.11	229f
------	------

Barnabas

8.3	268
14.9	268

1. Clement

5.7	194
42.1,3	268
59.2	195

59.4	277
------	-----

2. Clement

13.1–3	286
--------	-----

*Clement of Alexandria**Stromateis*

1.12.55	276
6.5.43	69, 73, 74
6.6.48	73

Codex Theodosianus

16.5.11	249
---------	-----

*Cyprian**Ad Demetrianum*

1.1	276
-----	-----

De dominica oratione

17	277
----	-----

Epistles

69.15.2	283
75.10.4	283

Didache

11–13	266
13.1	267
15.1	267

Didascalia Apostolorum

11/ii.56	277
15/iii.6	81
21/v.14–16	82
21/v.14	81

Diognetus

5.4	286
-----	-----

Epistula Apostolorum

19	71f
30	70, 71
31	71

*Eusebius**Chronicon*

179	232
-----	-----

Commentary on Isaiah

63 121

Historia Ecclesiastica

1.13.1–22 246

1.13.4 268

1.13.11 268

2.1.6–7 246

2.1.6 268

2.14.6 232

2.16.1 268

3.5.2 278

3.37.1 ff 268f

3.37.3 283

5.10–11 246

5.10.2f 269, 271

5.18.13 69

5.43.14 283

6.3.1 271

6.3.13 271

6.43.11 270, 283, 285

7.22 285

Gospel according to Mary

72

*Hermas (The Shepherd)**Mandates*

VIII:10 267

Similitudes

IX:17.1–4 74f

IX:25.2 75

IX:27.2 267

*Hippolytus**Traditio apostolica*

16.1–3 276

*Ignatius**Ephesians*

10.1f 287

10.1 277

Polycarp

1.2 272

Trallians

8.2 286

*Irenaeus**Adversus haereses*

2.32.4 283

3.1.1 278

3.22.3 95

*Justin**1. Apology*

14–15 285

16.4 285

16.8 285

31.7 75f

39 278

39.1–3 76

40.1–4 76

40.1 78

42.3f 76

42.4 78

45.1–5 76

45.5 78

49.1–5 76

50.10–12 80f

50.12 76

2. Apology

2.2 275

2.9 272

6 283

12.1 281

Dialogue with Trypho

23.3 78

28.2f 78

28.2 233

30.3 283

32.2 78

35.8 79, 277

39.1f 23, 56, 78

42.1 76f, 278

44.4 79

53.5 77

64.2f 80

64.2 271

72 81

76.6 283

83.4 76

85.2 283

96.3 79

108.3 79, 277

109.1 77, 78

110 281

110.2 77

120.5f 79

121.4–123.9 247

122.1 247

122.3–4 248

122.5 233

133.6 79

*Kerygma Petrou*frg. 3 = Clem. Alex. *Strom.* 6.5.43frg. 4 = Clem. Alex. *Strom.* 6.6.48

Martyrdom of Apollonius

24 281

Martyrdom of the Holy Apostle Paul

1 271

Martyrdom of Justin

rec. A 3.3 271

rec. A 4.5 271

rec. B 3.2 271

Martyrdom of Pionius

19.12 276

Martyrdom of Polycarp

12.2 246, 272

*Martyrdom of Saints Perpetua and**Felicitas*

9.1 281

16.4 281

17.3 281

*Minucius Felix**Octavius*

8.4 280

10.2 280

*Origen**Commentary on Matthew*

[Matt 23:15] 248

[Matt 24:14] 279

De Principiis

4.1.2 272, 281

Contra Celsum

1.46 283

1.55 224

3.9 267

3.39 280

3.50f 275f

*Polycarp**Philippians*

6.3 268

10.3 286

*Pseudo-Clement**Ad virginem*

2.6 276

Recognitiones

1.27–71 92, 118

2.3.5 276

3.1 276

*Tertullian**Adversus Iudaeos*

7 278f

7.4 122

Adversus Marcionem

4.43.9 278

5.19.1–2 278

Apology

23 283

39 284

50.13 281

50.14 284

De praescriptione haereticorum

20 277f

41 276

*Theophilus**Ad Autolycum*

2.8 283

2.31 105

13–15 285

VII. Greek and Roman Authors

Cicero		Pliny the Younger	
<i>Pro Flacco</i>		<i>Epistles</i>	
28	229	10.96	283
Dio Cassius		Seneca	
<i>Historia Romana</i>		<i>De Superstitione</i>	229
57.18.5	231		
66.6.6	232	Strabo	
Horace		<i>Geographica</i>	
<i>Satires</i>		16.2.34	221
1.4.142–143	229	Suetonius	
Januarius Nepotianus		<i>De vita Caesarum</i>	
231		Tiberius 36	231
Julian		Tacitus	
<i>Epistles</i>		<i>Annales</i>	
22	285	2.85.4	231
Julius Paris		2.87.1	231
230f		<i>Histories</i>	
Juvenal		5.5	220, 225, 236
<i>Satires</i>		Valerius Maximus	
6.542–547	229	230f	
14.96–106	230	Vitruvius	
14.99	230	<i>De architectura</i>	
14.102	230	6.5.1	281f
14.103–104	230		
Lucian			
<i>De Morte Peregrini</i>			
12–13	285		

VIII. Rabbinic Writings

<i>Amidah prayer</i>		Babylonian Talmud	
Benediction 13	237	<i>Baba Batra</i>	
Mishnah		11a	237
<i>Abot</i>		<i>Hagiga</i>	
1.1	248	13a	248
		<i>Niddah</i>	
		13b	212, 249

<i>Pesahim</i>		Other Rabbinic Works	
87b	224	<i>Canticum Rabbah</i>	
<i>Qiddushin</i>		1.15.2	248
70b	213, 249	<i>Ecclesiastes Rabbah</i>	
<i>Sanhedrin</i>		8.10	248
97b	201	<i>Genesis Rabbah</i>	
<i>Shabbat</i>		39.16	248
31a	224	90.6	248
118a	204	<i>Leviticus Rabbah</i>	
<i>Sukkah</i>		9	156
2b	237	<i>Midrash Canticum</i>	
<i>Yebamot</i>			156
47b	248	<i>Midrash Ruth</i>	
109b	213, 248	1,11 (127b)	215
Jerusalem Talmud		<i>Numbers Rabbah</i>	
<i>Shebiit</i>		14.11	248
4.10 [35c]	244	<i>Pesiqta Rabbati</i>	
<i>Taanit</i>		43	248
1:64a	201	<i>Sifre Numbers</i>	
Targums		80	248
<i>Isaiah</i> 53:5	156	<i>Sifre Deuteronomy</i>	
<i>Amos</i> 9:11f	152	32	248
<i>Amos</i> 9:11	129f		
<i>Zechariah</i>			
6:12–13	156		

Index of Subjects and Names

- Abgar legend 246, 268
- abortion 220
- Abraham 62
 - as a missionary 248
- Acmonia 238
- Acts of the Apostles 257, 261
 - structure *101f*
 - dating 109
- Adam 104
- Addai 246, 268
- Adiabene, the royal house of 237
- adversaries of Jesus 61, 66, 157
- Against Apion, see *Josephus*
- ‘*al tigre*’-midrash 131, 147
- Alexandria 140, 269, 271
- ambassadors 253, 260
- Amos, the book of 135, 139–142, 152
- Ananias, the merchant 237
- Anna, daughter of Phanuel 99, 101, 115, 123
- anti-Jewish 46–49, 61f, 246
 - see also *anti-Semitism*
- Antioch 229, 249
 - congregation / community 127f, 143, 257f, 266
- “Antiochene clash” 39f, 126
- Antiochus IV. Epiphanes 228
- antiquity of the Jewish religion 223
- anti-Semitism 47f, 61
 - see also *anti-Jewish*
- Aphrodisias 119f, 237
- Apollonius 69
- apologetic literature 226, 249
- apostle(s) 32, 125, 220, 266f, 269, 278
- apostolic council 38, 40, 125–161
- apostolic decree 104, 143, 159–161
- Aquila 274
- Arabia 111
- Aristeas, Epistle of 120, 140, 144
- ascending middle class 224
- atonement 53, 189
- attraction of Judaism 223f, 228, 230f, 250
- Augustine 229f
- Babel, see *Tower of Babel*
- ban of Yavnea 232
- baptism 31–33, 36, 68, 148
 - formula 21, 32
 - on behalf of the dead 184
 - proselyte 227
- Bar Kochba 141f
- Barabbas 40
- Barnabas 126, 143, 150, 161, 266
- Beelzebul 59
- benefactor 236
- bishop 272
- blasphemy 50f
- blood
 - atoning function 53
 - guilt in Jesus’ 49, 51, 54, 65
 - of the covenant 53
- Boaz 248
- body of Christ 253
- booth of David 146, 151–159
- calling narrative 20, 25, 59, 71
- capital punishment 50f
- cathecumens 276
- centrifugal movement 101, 109, 117, 121, 248
- centripetal movement 101, 109, 117, 121, 216, 248
- church 42, 158
- circumcision 20, 142f, 148, 150, 161, 167, 221, 230, 236
- Claudius 218, 232
- collection to Jerusalem 39
- commission 256
 - see also *Great Commission*
- commission story 20, 25, 71
- conduct of Christians, see *non-verbal evangelism*
- conflict between Jesus and the Jews 59f, 66
- conversion 215, 227, 237, 284
 - of Gentiles to the Law 242
- Corinth 270
- Cornelius 150, 285
- corporate personality 186

- covenant
 - with Abraham 57
 - with Noah 103, 116
- cross of Christ 167
- crowd at the Praetorium 50, 52, 60, 65
- curse, see *Deuteronomic curse tradition*
- Damascus 228
- David 146f, 152–154, 158
 - Son of David 57–59
- Davidic dynasty 152, 154f
- Davidic kingdom 152, 154
- death, as a metonymy 177–179, 184
- Deuteronomic curse tradition 172
- Diaspora 144, 160, 217, 220, 235
- Diaspora Jews 106f
 - return of the 100, 109
- Diaspora synagogues 249
- Dionysos of Alexandria 285
- doctrine of indulgences 189
- domus* 281
- Dura-Europos 100
- Edessa 246, 268
- Edom 130f, 146
- Egypt 140, 153
- Elamites 114, 119
- Eleazar the Galilean 234, 238, 245
- elders 98, 125
- election, see *Israel, election*
- Enoch 242
- Enochic circles 244
- Epaphroditus 181
- Ephorus 96
- Ephrem the Syrian 98, 105
- Epistle of Aristeas, see *Aristeas, Epistle of*
- Epistle of Barnabas 219, 247
- Ephesus 270
- Eretz Israel*, polluted by idolatry 224f
- Essenes 225, 237
- Eucharist 253
 - see also *Lord's Supper*
- Eusebius 121
- evangelism 251–263, 265, 275–277, 278, 280, 284
 - see also *mission, in the Early Church*
- evangelist 253, 261, 268f
- “every nation under heaven” 107f
- exorcism 283f
- expulsions of the Jews 230f
 - see also *Claudius; Roman anti-Jewish politics*
- family of Jesus 244
- Feast of Tabernacles 24, 28f, 67
- Feast of Weeks, see *Pentecost*
- forgive 60
- Fulvia 231, 237
- Galilee 23, 26, 30, 68
- genealogy of Jesus 89–97, 116, 122
- Gentile Christianity 218
 - see also *Hellenists*
- Gentiles 22, 29f, 148–150, 159, 195, 215, 217f, 224f, 242, 248, 280, 285f
 - eschatological salvation 244
 - see also *salvation for the Gentiles*
- Gentile mission, see *mission to the Gentiles*
- Gentile nations 130
- Gentile sympathizers of Judaism 228f, 237, 247, 249
- Gethsemane 52f
- gezera shawa* 137, 159
- glory 216
- God-fearers 237
- God's name 148–150
- guilt 50–52, 54
 - of Israel 58
 - see also *blood*
- Great Commission 22, 31–83, 54–57, 194, 250, 266
 - patristic reception 69–83, 265, 277–279
 - see also *Matt 28:16–20* in the Index of Sources
- Greek 144
- Greek philosophers 228
- Gregory Thaumaturgus 272
- Hadrian 246
- Ham 102, 117–119, 207
- Hasidism
 - non-Qumranic 245
 - pre-Qumranic 245
- Hasmoneans 221
- healing miracles, see *miracles, healings*
- heathens, see *Gentiles*
- Hebraioi* 126, 144
- Helena, mother of Ananias 237
- Heliodorus 227
- Hellenists 34, 36, 127, 144, 229
- Hippolytus' Chronicon 94, 97, 118
- Holy Spirit 105f
- hospitality 267
- house meeting 261f, 281f

- Idumeans 221, 229, 237
 implicit midrash 131, 137
 India 269
 infanticide 220f
 insulae 282
 intertexts 67
 invocation of the Lord's Name 145–148
 Irenaeus 95
 Isaac 248
 Islam 211
 Israel
 – centrality 117
 – election 65f, 149
 – eschatological 27, 66, 68
 – exclusive position 146, 241
 – hope for conversion 39, 65, 80f, 196
 – relationship to Gentiles 159, 218
 – salvation 152, 195f
 see also *restoration of Israel*; *βασιλεία τῶ Ἰσραήλ*
 Itureans 221, 229
 Izates 237, 238
- James, the Lord's brother 40f, 125–161, 125f, 266
 Japheth 102, 117–119, 207
 jar of clay 176
 Jerusalem 35, 39, 99–102, 108, 144, 153, 156, 193, 257f
 – fall of 50
 Jerusalem church 125f, 127, 144, 158
 Jesus
 – as the incarnation of Wisdom 242
 – as the Messiah 157f, 245
 – choice of name 177
 – death 50–54, 158
 – resurrection 151, 155, 158
 Jethro 248
 Jewish apologists 249
 Jewish Christians 41, 46, 56, 78–80, 238, 244, 249
 Jewish leaders 52
 Jewish missionaries 211–250, 220, 246
 Johannine irony 235
 Johannine literature 255
 John the Baptist 48, 62, 225
 John Chrysostom 249
 Joseph 248
 Joseph and Aseneth 227
 Josephus 118, 226, 228
 – Against Apion 226
 Joshua 248
 Judah the Prince 248
 Judaizers 167, 169, 172, 183, 233
 – Gentile Christian 247
 Judas 52
 judgement 48
 – against the Jews 49, 56f, 61, 57
 Julia Severa 238
 Jupiter Sabazius 230
 Justin Martyr 75–81, 281
- Kainam, son of Arpachshad 89–92
 king of the Jews 57
 kingdom of God 27–30, 35, 157f, 245
 – eschatological 27, 66, 68
 see also *βασιλεία*
- law, see *observance of the Law*
 lawlessness 199
 light of the nations 248
 literacy 225
 “little people” 59
 local church 251–263
 Lord's Prayer, the
 see *prayer, the Lord's Prayer*
 Lord's Supper, the 53
 see also *Eucharist*
 love of neighbours 284f
 Lubavitcher Rebbe 245
 Lukan composition 127, 143, 161
 Lukan origin 132
 Lukan redaction 132, 134, 136, 138
 Luke 58, 127
 – and the nations 88–123
 – as a historian 160f, 238
 – dating of gospel 109
 – special traditions 244
 see also *Lukan composition*;
 Lukan origin; *Lukan redaction*
- martyr 280f
 Masoretic text 140
 see also *proto-Masoretic text*
 Matthean community 45–48, 65
 Matthew, the gospel of 33
 Medes 113–115, 121
 Mesopotamia 153
 messenger 190, 197
 Messiah 31, 156–158, 201, 204, 242–245, 249
 see also *Jesus, as the Messiah*
 messianic fulfilment 249
 messianic woes 186, 202–205
metuens 230
 midrash 131
 miracles
 – healings 49, 58–61, 66

- miracle stories 58
- significance for missions 283–287
- mirror 45f
- mission
 - apostolic completion 72, 74–76, 254, 257, 278
 - definition 221–223, 265
 - history 21
 - importance 42
 - in the Early Church 77, 243, 245, 262f, 278, 280, 283–286
 - Jewish 211–250, 278
 - Jewish-Christian 33
 - of the Manichees 249
 - OT background 245
 - to all nations 87–123, 88, 99, 102, 107, 109, 117, 119, 205
 - to the Gentiles 18, 22, 33f, 36f, 40, 46–48, 54f, 73, 76, 80, 126, 142, 144–161, 151, 193–196, 205–207, 244, 249
 - to Jews / Israel 18, 22, 33, 36, 38, 41, 46f, 54–58, 64f, 69–83, 245
 - duration 73
- mission theology 239, 243
 - in the Old Testament 243
- missionary, -ies 267f
 - in the Early Church 77f, 252, 259, 265–273, 270f, 273
- mission literature
 - Hellenistic 217
 - Jewish 225
- missionary religion 221–223
- Mnason of Cyprus 144
- monotheism 223, 241
- Moses 223f, 241
- Mount of Olives 100
- mystery religions 240

- Naaman 228
- Naḥal Hever 141f
- nations
 - all 35, 54
 - list of 110–121
 - astrological 114f
 - number of 95f, 98, 114, 195
 - see also *people*, -s;
 - *Table of Nations tradition*
- navel of the earth 99f
- Nazareth 59
- Nebuchadnezzar 228
- Noah, see *covenant, with Noah; Noachic Decree*
- Noachic Decree 104

- non-professional missionaries 273f
 - see also *travelling Christians*
- non-verbal evangelism 280, 283–286
 - see also *evangelism*;
 - *mission, in the Early Church*

- observance of the Law 126, 142f, 148, 150, 161, 250
- omphalos*, see *navel of the earth*
- Origen 271
- overpopulation of Judea 220

- Pantaenus 246, 269, 271
- parousia 195, 198, 200–203, 206, 243, 254
- particularism 152, 214
- Pascha 81f
- Passover, see *Pascha*
- patronage 238
- Paul 37, 39, 71, 125f, 143, 150, 160, 192–208, 217f, 223, 240–242, 244–246, 258, 263, 270
 - apostle to the Gentiles 193, 205, 244, 262
 - apostolate 193, 266
 - conflict with Jews 238
 - identification with Christ 197
 - meditorial role 180f
 - mission theology 246, 254
 - missionary or theologian 165, 183
 - missionary practice 37, 192, 196, 205, 240, 244, 246, 259, 274
 - suffering 169, 185f, 188, 190f, 196f
 - weakness 37, 166–171, 173–175, 176–178, 180f, 190
- Paul's associates 252, 254
- Paulus Alexandrinus 114
- Pentecost 103f, 105f, 122
- people, -s
 - an elect 148–150
 - all 27, 40
 - see also *πάντα τὰ ἔθνη*; *nations*
- persecution 56f, 68, 79, 280f
- Peter 35–38, 74, 125f, 145, 148, 150, 232, 266
- Pharisees 213, 215, 232f, 238
- Philo 237, 239–241
- philosophical schools 243
- Pilate 46, 49f, 65
 - hand washing 49, 51
 - wife of 49
- pilgrimage of the nations to Zion 34, 67f, 104, 109, 117, 147, 195, 242
 - see also *Feast of Tabernacles; restoration of Israel*
- pillars 33–35, 68, 125

- Polycarp 246, 272
 polytheism 241
 Poppaea, wife of Nero 237
 power of God 176f, 180, 183
 power of the Gospel, see *miracles, significance for missions; exorcism*
 prayer, -s 52, 277
 – for Gentiles 287
 – for Jews 80–82, 277
 – the Lord's prayer 53
 preachers, itinerant 266f, 269, 272
 see also *missionary, -ies*,
 in the Early Church
 Prisca 274
 privacy 282
 prophet 245
 proselytes 148, 150, 213, 219f, 225, 227,
 229–231, 233, 236f, 241f, 248, 262
 – number of 229, 237
 proselytization 145, 150
 proto-Masoretic text 140, 142
 purity, ritual 227
- Qumran 48, 131, 158, 242
 – biblical texts 140f
 quota of eschatological suffering 204, 206
- rejection
 – of Jesus 46
 – of the Jews 47, 49
 repentance 49, 201f
 restoration of Israel 26–28, 67, 70, 80,
 105f, 108f, 152
 resurrection of Christ, see *Jesus, resurrection*
 Roman anti-Jewish politics 246
 see also *Claudius; expulsions of the Jews*
 Rome 48, 107, 229, 232, 243, 271, 273
- Sabbath 240
 salvation 137
 – for the Gentiles 133, 145
 Samaritan(s) 235
 Sanhedrin 50f
 Schneerson, Menachem 245
 self-curse (cf. Matt 27:25) 49–54
 Seneca 229f
 Septuagint 127f, 140, 142–144, 239
 Servant of the Lord 194, 196, 243, 245
 Seventy-two nations of the world,
 see *nations, number of*
 Shem 102, 117–119, 207
 shepherd 26, 70
 Sibylline Oracles 241
- Simeon 99, 101, 145
 sin-exile-restoration 58, 81
 social networks 282
 Sodom and Gomorrah 59
 Solomon 153
 Son of Abraham 57
 Son of David 57–59
 Son of Man 28, 30, 32, 67f, 244f
 spiritual armour 255
 Stephen 36, 127, 144, 154
 suffering 185f, 188, 190f, 196f, 205f, 208
 see also *Paul, suffering;*
 quota of eschatological suffering
 summaries 60f
 summit meeting of the apostles
 and elders in Jerusalem, see *apostolic council*
 symbolic numbers 89–99
 sympathizers, see *Gentile sympathizers of Judaism*
 synagogue 224, 230, 240
 Syria 47
- tabernacle 154
 table fellowship 126
 Table of Nations tradition 89–97, 98f,
 101f, 104, 116f, 122, 193, 195
 teacher 266, 270f
 temple
 – eschatological 154–159
 – of Jerusalem 153f
 temple logion 157
 tentmaker 274
testimonia 139
 Thaddeus 268
 Therapeutic circles 242
 Thessalonica 259
 Thomas 72, 268
 thorn in the flesh 170
 time of tribulation 203–208
 see also *messianic woes*
 tongues, miracle of 104–106
 Tower of Babel 105
 travelling Christians 273f
 tribulation, see *suffering*
 triumphal procession 174–176, 178
 Twelve, the 125
- Wadi Murabba'at 141f
 will of God 53
 wisdom literature 226
 works of the Law 167, 171
 Yavnea 232f

Greek words and phrases

ἀναπληροῦν 181
ἀνταναπληροῦν 187
ἀσθένεια τῆς σαρκός 168f
βασιλεία
– τοῦ θεοῦ 27–31, 35
– τῷ Ἰσραήλ 27, 66, 68
δόξα 216
ἔθνη 22, 29, 30, 64, 149f
θεοσεβεῖς 237

θλίψις 189, 196, 202
κατέχον, -ων 198–200
λαός 149f
οἰκουμένη 88
ὄχλος 50, 60
πάντα τὰ ἔθνη 19, 27, 40, 54f, 64, 145, 149
προσήλυτος 233
ὑστέρημα 181, 189
ὠδὶν 202

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