

“Judean Insurrections: Implications for Interpreting Hebrews”¹

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Jerusalem tends to have a special place in the hearts of most conservative Bible believing Evangelicals because they understand the strategic nature of the city to God and to his people. It’s the place Abraham brought Isaac to test his faith (Gen. 22:1–18). It’s the city where David centralized his kingdom and made it the hub of worship (2 Sam. 5:6–16; 1 Kings 2:11). It’s the city where Solomon built the Temple, a symbolic place where God dwelt (1 Kings 6:1–37; 8:22–61; 2 Chron. 6:1—7:3). It’s the city Isaiah envisioned as the world’s center of peace (Isa. 2:1–4). It’s the city for which Jesus wept and foretold Gentile dominion until his return (Matt. 23:37–39; Luke 19:41–44). Due to this strong biblical and historical connection with Jerusalem, Bible believing Christians enjoy reading about Jerusalem, they want to visit Jerusalem, and they tend to stay tuned with current events concerning Jerusalem.

For instance, on July 30, 1980 when the Knesset declared Jerusalem to be the undivided capital of the State of Israel, a group of Bible based Christians did not shy away from expressing their support of Israel’s decision. Despite the Arab rejection of Israel’s declaration, Christians expressed their zeal for Israel and the city of Jerusalem by way of establishing an International Christian Embassy in Jerusalem.² Why? Because millions of Christians around the world

¹ This paper is a summation and further argument for Herbert W. Bateman IV’s perspective in his commentary on Hebrews. *Hebrews: A Commentary for Biblical Preaching and Teaching* in Kerux Commentaries, co-author with Steven W. Smith (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2021). It draws support from Herbert W. Bateman IV, *Early Jewish Hermeneutics and Hebrews 1:5–13: The Impact of Early Jewish Exegesis on the Interpretation of a Significant New Testament Passage* in American University Studies (New York, NY: Peter Lang, 1997); idem *Jude* in *The Evangelical Exegetical Commentary*, edited by Hall Harris (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, digital 2015; print 2017); and Herbert W. Bateman IV, Darrell L. Bock, and Gordon H. Johnston *Jesus the Messiah: Tracing the Promises, Expectations, and Coming of Israel’s King* (Grand Rapids, Kregel, 2012).

² Susan Michael, “Why is Jerusalem So Controversial” (February 10, 2017) *Israel Answers*, viewed October 26, 2021 at <https://www.israelanswers.com/blog/why-jerusalem-so-controversial>. The history and purpose of the “International

considered Jerusalem God’s strategic city for his people. Similarly on December 6, 2017, when Trump decided to relocate the United States Embassy in Tel Aviv to Jerusalem,³ many Bible believing Evangelicals here in the United States were elated. So, I ask this question? If millions of today’s Christians around the world feel emotionally and perhaps even spiritually attached to Jerusalem, regardless of the Palestinian political controversies, how much more fervently attached would first century Jewish followers of Jesus, living in Rome, feel about Jerusalem despite the sociopolitical happenings during the early–mid A.D. 60s,⁴ especially for those who may have visited the city yearly and who were expected to pay an annual temple tax?⁵

In the opening remarks of her book on Jude’s letter, Reese rightly criticizes commentators for their judicious discussions of authorship, place of writing, original readers, date of writing, occasion for writing, theological themes, and other topics about which are prudently decided; and yet, they “*often become background issues that fail to play a significant role when it comes to the*

Christian Embassy Jerusalem” may be accessed via their website: <https://app.kehila.org/international-christian-embassy-jerusalem>.

³ Alex Pappas, “Trump officially recognized Jerusalem as Israel’s capital, orders embassy move for US,” *White House* (December 6, 2017) viewed October 26, 2021 at <https://www.foxnews.com/politics/trump-officially-recognizes-jerusalem-as-israels-capital-orders-embassy-move-for-us>. Paul Kattupalli, “Trump & Jerusalem in Bible Prophecy,” *Defender’s Voice: Where Faith meets Facts* (December 8, 2017) viewed October 26, 2021 at <https://doctorpaul.org/2017/12/08/trump-jerusalem-in-bible-prophecy/>. “End Times: Trump and Jerusalem” *The Truth Source* (December 18, 2017) view October 26, 2021 at <https://thetruthsource.org/end-times-trump-and-jerusalem/>.

⁴ This is a typical *qal wahomer* argument of logic employed throughout Hebrews (e.g., 2:1–4; 9:13–14; 10:28–30; 12:25; etc.). It’s an argument that begins with a less significant situation and progresses to something more significant. Thus, what applies in a less important case will certainly apply in a more important case. For other forms of early Jewish exegesis in Hebrews, see Herbert W. Bateman IV, *Charts on the Book of Hebrews* in Kregel Charts of the Bible (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2012), 165–66; idem “Second Temple Exegetical Practices: Extra-biblical Examples of Exegesis Compared with Those in the Book of Hebrews” in the Dead Sea Scrolls issue of *Southwestern Journal of Theology* 53.1 (Fall 2010): 26–54.

⁵ Many Mediterranean cities had Jewish communities. In them, many Jews would traveled to Jerusalem to celebrated Passover and all of whom faithfully sent a temple tax to Jerusalem. J. M. Barclay. *Jews in the Mediterranean Diaspora: From Alexander to Trajan* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, J. M. 1996), 292–95, cf. 76–77, 238, 267–68, 310, 414–18. Furthermore, Barnabas, along with Paul, was sent from Antioch of Syria with monies to assist the Jewish Christians in Judea (cf. Acts 11:27–30). Later, other Jewish–Gentile churches sent money to Judeans to meet their needs (1 Cor. 16:1–4; 2 Cor. 8:1–5; 10–12; 9:1–5). So, there can be little doubt that the followers of Jesus living throughout the Roman Empire were attuned to their kinsman.

actual interpretation of specific passages.”⁶ This is particularly true for but not limited to three New Testament writings: the Gospel of Mark (A.D. 60–65), Jude’s letter (A.D. 62–66), and the homiletic-like letter of Hebrews (A.D. 63–66).⁷ Each were composed for and addressed to Christians when political unrest existed in Jerusalem and religious leaders were wreaking havoc throughout Judea, an unrest that would eventually erupt into Judea’s war with Rome (A.D. 66–70). With the exception of Jude where the “godless” are identified as Judean Zealots who were instigating insurrections against Rome⁸ and about whom God would condemn,⁹ Hengel insinuates that when interpreting Mark’s Gospel *more* should be made of the connection between the Neronian persecution in Rome and the Judean revolt.¹⁰ The same can be said about Hebrews. Bruce

⁶ Ruth Anne Reese, *2 Peter & Jude* in The Two Horizons New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007), 7.

⁷ For the dating of Mark see James R. Edwards, *The Gospel According to Mark* in The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002), 6–9. For the dating of Jude, see Herbert W. Bateman IV, *Jude* in the Evangelical Exegetical Commentary, edited by H. Harris (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, digital edition, 2015 and hardcopy edition, 2017), 51–59. While some introductions for Hebrews tend to be ambiguous about background issues for Hebrews (Carson/Moo, 2005, 604-09), I’ve argued that Hebrews is a sermonic-midrashic-like letter addressed to a group of Jewish Christians living in Rome sometime between Nero’s persecution in A.D. 63 and the eventual outbreak of the Judean war with Rome in A.D. 66. Bateman et al., *Hebrews*, 46–57.

⁸ Josephus uses the term “godless” (ἀσεβείς) some sixty times in *Jewish War* and *Antiquities of the Jews*, mostly to depict the sort of tyrannical leadership over Israel and Judah, which is in keeping with the overall purpose of his work, particularly *Jewish War*. The essential thesis of the *Jewish War* (1.4 § 9-12) is that the Judean revolt against Rome “was caused by only a few troublemakers among the Jews – power-hungry tyrants and marauders who drove the people to rebel against their will” (Steve Mason, *Josephus, Judea, and Christian Origins: Methods and Categories* [Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2009], 60). Furthermore, the sectarian group typically associated with Qumran expected all members to confess, “*We have committed evil* (הרשענו or ἀσεβείς; “ungodliness”) — we and our fathers before us” (1QS 21-25; cf. 1QS 4:10). So, Jude’s referencing of the Judean people of his day as godless is of no surprise. The term “without God” (ἀσεβείς), according to Richard Bauckham “may be almost said to give the keynote to the Epistle (cf. vv. 15, 18) as it does to the Book of Enoch” (*2 Peter, Jude* in Word Biblical Commentary Series, vol. 50 [Waco, TX: Word, 1983], 37).⁸ Thus, it should come as no surprise that Jude would label Judean Zealots as godless. For further discussion about the Zealots as well as Jude 4, see (Bateman, *Jude*, 50–80, 139–56.

⁹ “Jude most and foremost fears the consequences for Judean Zealots who are rebelling and wreaking havoc throughout Judea (vv. 3, 11, 17). Thus, the theological emphasis of Jude is threefold: First, followers of Jesus are not to shy away from defending or promoting the truth concerning Jesus’ messiahship (v. 4). Second, followers of Jesus are to remember that though rebellion occurs, God does not like it, he punishes it, and his punishments of it are impartial (vv. 5-16).⁹ Finally, Jude’s combat strategy is simply this: *anticipate* people who reject the messiahship of Jesus but don’t be like them (vv. 17–19), *remain* in God’s love while waiting for the return of Jesus (v 21), *extend covenantal mercy* to fellow believers who waver (v. 22a), *reach out and rescue* from God’s judgment people who do not know Jesus (v. 22b), and finally *extend covenantal mercy* even to the rebellious with fear (v. 23).” Bateman, *Jude*, 91.

¹⁰ Martin Hengel, *Studies in the Gospel of Mark*, translated by J. Bowden (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1985), 30.

advocates that something *more* than just a relapse into orthodox Judaism was creating doubts among the Jewish Christians living in Rome.¹¹ Addressing Bruce’s insinuation about Hebrews, this paper asks “Why.” Why were Jewish Christians, who lived in Rome, reconsidering orthodox Judaism (Heb. 2:1–4)? What was happening historically that was generating doubts about their confession of faith (Heb. 3:1–2)? It seems reasonable to propose that whatever occasion is offered for Hebrews, consideration should be given to the sociopolitical insurrections in Judea and the subsequent implications for understanding and interpreting at least three central themes in Hebrews: God’s spokesman, the Levitical priesthood, and Jesus as royal-priest.

God’s Spokesman

Hebrews opens with “God, long ago in various parts and in various ways,¹² spoke to the fathers in the prophets, but in these last days he has spoken to us through a son” (1:1–2a).¹³ Why? Why did Barnabas¹⁴ emphasize Jesus as God’s final spokesman over “the prophets”? Similarly, why did

¹¹ F. F. Bruce, *The Epistle to the Hebrews* in *New International Commentary on the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990), 376.

¹² The rendering “Long ago in various parts and in various ways” (BDAG, s.v. “πολυμερῶς,” p. 847; s.v. “πολυτρόπως,” p. 850) is placed at the beginning of the sentence for emphasis. My translation for the New Tyndale Version of the Bible forthcoming 2026.

¹³ “Translating the prepositional phrase as “through a son” or “by a son” (ἐν υἱῷ) rightly reflects the absence of the Greek article (NET NRSV), which is contrary to many translations that suggest “his son” (KJV ASV NASB ESV NIV NLT WEB). The lack of the article underscores the fact that Barnabas has a single person in mind and not an entire group, as might be the case when speaking of the “sons of God” (Job 1:6, 2:1, 38:7; Pss. 29:1 [LXX 28:1]; 89:7 [LXX 88:7]; cf. 11Q13 2.14).” Bateman et al., *Hebrews*, 72.

¹⁴ For advocates and arguments for Barnabas as the author see Tertullian, *De pudicitia*, 20; *On Purity* in *Ancient Christian Writers* volume 28, trans. William P. Le Saint (New York, NY: Newman Press, 1959), 115, 277; Gregory of Elvira, *Tractatus Origenis*, ed. Pierre Batiffol and André Wilmart (Paris: A. Picard, 1900), 108; Philastrius (or Filaster), *De Haeresibus* (Basileae: Apud Henricum Petrum, 1939); Karl G. Wieseler, *Chronologie des apostolische Zeitalters bis zum Tode der Apostel Paulus und Petrus: Ein Versuch* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1848), 504; Albrecht Ritschl, “Über die Leser des Hebräerbriefes,” *Theologische Studien und Kritiken* 39 (1866): 89–102; George Salmon, *Introduction to the New Testament* 3rd ed. (London: John Murray, 1888), 425; Bernhard Weiss, *Der Brief an die Hebräer* (Göttingen: Vandenoek & Ruprecht), 18; cf. *Manual of Introduction to the New Testament*, trans. A.J.K. Davidson in 2 Vols. (New York, NY: Funk & Wagnalls, 1889), 2:16–17; J. V. Bartlet, “Barnabas and His Genuine Epistle,” *Expositor Sixth Series*, 5 (1902): 409–27; Caspar René Gregory, *Canon and Text of the New Testament* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1907), 223ff; K. Endemann, “Ueber den Verfasser des Hebräerbriefes” *Neue Kirchliche Zeitschrift* 21 (1910): 102–216, esp. 121–22; E. C. Wickham, *The Epistle to the Hebrews* (London: Methuen, 1910), xii; George Edmundson, *The Church in Rome in the First Century* (London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1913), 102–26; Eduard Riggenbach, *Der Brief an die Hebräer*, *Kommentar zum Neuen Testament* 14 (2nd ed. Leizig: Deichert, 1922), xl–xli; Karl B. Bornhäuser, “The Early Christian Church in Egypt,” *Expository Times*, 33

Barnabas draw specific attention to Jesus being *over* God's house as opposed to Moses who was a leader *within* God's house in Hebrews 3:1–6?

On the one hand (μὲν), Barnabas recognized the utmost respect his readers had, like all Jewish people of the period, for Moses. His *notoriety* as Law giver (CD; 1Q28), spokesman (Jub. 1:1–29), and prophetic voice (T. Mos.) permeated non-biblical Jewish literature of the second temple period.¹⁵ His intercessions on behalf of God's people were not only *respected*, they were presented as a model for prayers of confession (Jub. 1:19–21¹⁶; 4Q493). Finally, Josephus, in his comments about the Essenes, revealed their *veneration* of Moses: "After God, they hold in awe the name of their lawgiver, any blasphemer of whom is punished with death."¹⁷ And though he was never "anointed" or called "anointed one" in Hebrew scriptures, Moses was called "anointed one" in at least one non-biblical Jewish text: "Cursed be the man who fails to preserve and carry out all the commandments of the Lord as spoken by Moses His anointed ..." (4Q377 2.2).¹⁸

(1922): 536–39; F. J. Badcock, *The Pauline Epistles and the Epistle to the Hebrews in their Historical Setting* (New York, NY: Macmillan, 1937), 198–99; Hermann Strathmann, *Der Brief an die Hebräer*, Das Neue Testament Deutsch 9 (Gütersloh: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1937, repr. 1963), 75ff; Anthony Snell, *New and Living Way: An Exposition of the Epistle to the Hebrews* (London: Faith, 1959), 17; J. A. T. Robinson, *Redating the New Testament* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1976), 200–20; Philip E. Hughes, *A Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews* (Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 1977), 25–29; Bargil Pixner, "The Jerusalem Essenes, Barnabas and the Letter to the Hebrews," in *Intertestamental Essays in honour of Józef Tadeusz Milik*, Qumranica Mogilanensia, vol. 6; ed. Zdzislaw J. Kapera (Kraków: Enigma Press, 1992), 177–78; Albert Vanhoye, *The Letter to the Hebrews: A New Commentary*, trans. Leo Arnold, S. J. (New York, NY: Paulist Press, 2015), 9–10, 12; Bateman et al., *Hebrews*, 39–43.

¹⁵ D. K. Falk, "Moses" in *Encyclopedia of the Dead Sea Scrolls*, 2 volumes edited by L. H. Schiffman and J. C. VanderKam (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 1:576–77.

¹⁶ "And Moses fell upon his face, and he prayed and said, 'O Lord, my God, do not abandon your people and your inheritance to walk in the error of their heart. And do not deliver them into the hand of their enemy, the gentiles, lest they rule over them and cause them to sin against you. 'O Lord, let your mercy be lifted up upon your people, and create for them an upright spirit. And do not let the spirit of Beliar rule over them to accuse them before you and ensnare them from every path of righteousness so that they might be destroyed from before your face. But they are your people and your inheritance, whom you saved by your rat might from the hand of the Egyptians. Create a pure heart and a holy spirit for them. And do not let them be ensnared by their sin henceforth and forevermore.'" Translation by O. S. Wintermute, "Jubilees: A New Translation and Introduction" in *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, 2 volumes edited by J. H. Charlesworth (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1985), 2:35–142.

¹⁷ Josephus, *The Jewish Wars, Books I-III*, Volume 2 translated by H. St. J. Thackeray. Loeb Classical Library. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1982), 2.8.9 §145.

¹⁸ Michael Wise, Martin Abegg Jr., and Edward Cook, *The Dead Sea Scrolls: A New Translation* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1996), 338.

Furthermore, it seems more than reasonable to assume that the original readers of Hebrews in Rome were aware of Moses’s appearance at the transfiguration of Jesus because of Mark’s Gospel (9:2–5), a work based upon Peter’s sermons to and later scripted for Christians in Rome.¹⁹ Yet, Barnabas underscored Jesus as having “more *honor* than Moses” (πλείονος . . . δόξης παρὰ Μωϋσῆν) by way of a proverbial statement: “the one who establishes the house has greater honor (τιμῆν) than the house” (3:3b). According to Cockerill, the proverb served “to describe a parallel relationship: The messianic Son of promise is to Moses as the builder of a house is to the house.”²⁰ Thus, in comparison (καθ’) to the esteem or honor Moses received, the preeminence of the messianic Son of promise over Moses was analogous to the predominance of a builder who built a house. Or as Barnabas said, “Moses was faithful *in* God’s house as a servant” while Jesus “was faithful as a Son *over* God’s²¹ house—whose house we are, if we hold fast our confidence and the boast of our hope firm.”²²

¹⁹ Based on the apostolic eyewitnesses preserved in Eusebius’s *Ecclesiastical History*, the source of Mark’s Gospel was Peter and a literarily composed record of his sermons preached in Rome. Eusebius’s testimony is that “a great light of religion shone on the minds of the [Roman] hearers of Peter, so that they were not satisfied with a single hearing or with the unwritten teaching of the divine proclamation, but with every kind of exhortation besought Mark, whose Gospel is extant, seeing that he was Peter’s follower, to leave them a written statement of the teaching given them verbally, nor did they cease until they had persuaded him, and so became the cause of the Scripture called the Gospel according to Mark. And they say that the Apostle, knowing by the revelation of the spirit to him what had been done, was pleased at their zeal and ratified the scripture for study in the churches” (2.15.1–2). Eusebius further says, “Tradition says that he [Mark] came to Rome in the time of Claudius to speak to Peter, who was at that time preaching to those there” (2.17.1). See the comments of Bishop of Hieropolis in Phrygia (A.D. 135–140) and Clement of Alexandria (ca. A.D. 150–215) in Eusebius *Ecclesiastical History* (3.39.15–16; 6.14.5–7). Quotations are from *The Ecclesiastical History*, 2 vols. in Loeb Classical Library, edited by E. Capps, T. E. Page, W. H. D. Rouse; trans. by Kirsopp Lake (New York, NY: G. P. Putnam’s Sons, 1926).

²⁰ Gareth L. Cockerill, *The Epistle to the Hebrews* in New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2012), 165.

²¹The pronoun “his” (αὐτοῦ) in Greek phrase “in his house” (ἐν τῷ οἴκῳ αὐτοῦ) is a reference to God and has been rendered “God” in the translation for clarity. My translation for the New Tyndale Version of the Bible forthcoming 2026.

²² Although the NASB reads: “if we hold fast the confidence and the pride of hope until the end” (ἐὰν τὴν παρρησίαν καὶ τὸ καύχημα τῆς ἐλπίδος μέχρι τέλους βέβαίαν κατάσχωμεν) based upon a majority of manuscript readings (⋈ A B C D K P 044 0243 0278 33 81 629 1739 1881 Byz), it appears reasonable to suspect a scribe inserted “until the end” (μέχρι τέλους βέβαίαν) to imitate Hebrews 3:14. The lack of concord between βέβαίαν and καύχημα may further support the preferred text. rendering (p¹³ p⁴⁶ B): “if we hold fast the confidence and the pride of hope” (ἐὰν τὴν παρρησίαν καὶ τὸ καύχημα τῆς ἐλπίδος κατάσχωμεν) (ASV ESV KJV NET NIV NRSV). Bateman et al., *Hebrews*, 137.

On the other hand (δέ), Barnabas’s opening declaration in Hebrews 1:1–2a was far broader in scope. It was “through the prophets” (ἐν τοῖς προφήταις) that God proclaimed “to the fathers” (τοῖς πατέρας) a monotheistic system of faith, the cultic expectations for worship, and a divine plan for the nation. Moses appears to be the first biblical prophet who heard directly from God, embraced what God said, and proclaimed what God had spoken. God’s revelations to Moses through a burning bush (Exod. 3:4–4:17, 28–31) and from the mountain (Exod. 19:1–24:4) were given to the people of Israel. Later, God “spoke” (λαλήσας) through other prophets by means of dreams (Dan. 2–4, 7–8), visions (1 Sam. 3:10–15), and celestial beings (Zech. 1:9–15) who then conveyed their messages to God’s people. The prophets of Hebrew scriptures like Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, Amos and others were valued, carefully reproduced, and preserved among the numerous scrolls and scroll fragments discovered at Qumran (e.g., 1QIsa^a, 1QIsa^b [1Q8], 1QDan^{a–b} [1Q71–72], 2QJer [2Q13], 3QEzek [3Q1], 4QDan^{a–c} [4Q112–116], 5QAmos [5Q4], 11QEzek [11Q4], etc.).²³ Similarly, the respect for the prophets is evident in Peshar texts,²⁴ also discovered and preserved at Qumran, whereby the prophets were not only copied but interjected with eschatological like interpretations (e.g., 1QpHab, 1QpMic [1Q14], 1QpZeph [1Q15], 1QpPs [1Q16], 3QpIsa^a [3Q4], 4QpIsa^a [4Q161], 4QpHos^{a–b} [4Q166–167], 4QpMic [4Q168], 4QpNah [4Q169], etc.).²⁵ Finally, non-biblical texts were found at Qumran whereby first century Jewish authors took verses from the prophets and linked them together with other verses²⁶ from Hebrew

²³ É. Puech, *Qumran Cave 4 XVII* in *Discoveries in the Judaean Desert 22* (Oxford: Clarendon (1996).

²⁴ Peshar texts present themselves to be divine interpretations of prophetic mysteries concerning the last days. Horgan identifies mystery (*raz*) as a Persian loan-word found only in the Aramaic section of Daniel 2:18, 19, 27, 28, 30, 47 (twice); 4:6 (English 4:9). M. P. Horgan, *Pesharim: Qumran Interpretations of Biblical Books*, The Catholic Biblical Quarterly Monograph Series, vol. 8 (Washington: Catholic Biblical Association, 1979), 237; Bateman, *Early Jewish Hermeneutics and Hebrews 1:5–13*, 79–116; Idem “Second Temple Exegetical Practices,” 38–42.

²⁵ Horgan, *Pesharim*, 237; Puech, *Qumran Cave 4 XVII*; Allegro J. M. “Commentary on Isaiah (A),” in *Qumran Cave 4.I* in *Discoveries in the Judaean Desert 5*, 11–15 (Oxford: Clarendon, 1968).

²⁶ This practice of linking verses together is referred to as *gezerah shavah*. It is essentially a verbal analogy that serves to join one verse of the Old Testament to another. Even though words may be from two different contexts in the Old Testament, they still serve to join two verses together and thereby applied to a new situation. For examples of *gezerah*

scriptures in order to combine and thereby shape new theological themes. These sort of texts are today referred to as Midrashic texts²⁷ (e.g., 1QapGen [1Q20],²⁸ 4QFlor [4Q174], 4QTest [4Q175], 4QCommGen^a [4Q252]²⁹, 11QTemple^a [11Q19]). Consequently, these Jewish literary works and countless others reflect many Jewish voices heard and to which many Jewish people in Judea and subsequently throughout the Roman world listened. Added to these voices were those who spewed religiously based propaganda to revolt against Gentile powers imposing control over Judea. While

shavah in Hebrews (e.g., 1:5, 6–7; 4:3–4; 7:1, 17, 22; etc.). See Bateman, *Charts on the Book of Hebrews*, 165–66; idem "Second Temple Exegetical Practices," 29–32.

²⁷ "The term midrash designates an exegesis which moves beyond the simple and literal sense in order to penetrate into the spirit of Scripture; to scrutinize the text more deeply, and draw from it interpretations about which are not always immediately obvious (the opinion given by Rabba in b. Yev. 24a proves the midrash and pesat were clearly distinguished). In a more special sense, midrash (plural: midrashim) designates something written for the purpose of interpreting the Bible, usually homiletical, like the Midrash Rabbah, which is a commentary on the Pentateuch (and the five Megillot)." R. Bloch, "Midrash," trans. M. H. Callaway, in *Approaches to Ancient Judaism: Theory and Practice*, ed. W. S. Green (Missoula: Scholars, 1978), 31. For R. Bloch's original article see, *Dictionnaire de la Bible, Supplément*, vol. 5, 1957 ed., s.v. "Midrash," 5:1264–65. This understanding naturally counters A. G. Wright, "The Literary Genre Midrash: Part One," *CBQ* 28 (1966): 105–38; "The Literary Genre Midrash: Part Two," *CBQ* 28 (1966): 417–57; *The Literary Genre Midrash* (New York: Society of St. Paul, 1967). Yet, Midrashic texts among the Dead Sea Scrolls may be considered proto-Midrashim as a means to distinguish them from later Rabbinic Midrashim. Perhaps five Qumran scrolls may fall into this category: the Genesis Apocryphon (1Q20), the theologically thematic Testimonia (4Q174) and 4QFlorilegium (4Q175), the exegetical commentary 4QpGenesis^a (4Q252), and the Temple scroll (11Q19). Edited from Bateman, *Early Jewish Hermeneutics*, 50 and chp. 3 n. 12, 270.

²⁸ Although various genre suggestions are offered for 1Q20 (1QGenesis Apocryphon), it is "a sort of apocryphal version of the stories from *Genesis*" [N. Avigad and Y. Yadin, *A Genesis Apocryphon: A Scroll from the Wilderness of Judea* (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1956), 38. Yet, Vermes insisted that "Genesis Apocryphon occupied a privileged position in midrashic literature in that it is the most ancient midrash of all. With its discovery the lost link between the biblical and the Rabbinic midrash has been found." G. Vermes, *Scripture and Tradition* (Leiden: Brill, 2nd ed., 1973), 124. Fitzmyer, however, insists that "it is not simply a *midrash*, just as it is not simply a *targum*." But he says, "there are elements in it which may justify its being regarded as the *prototype of midrash* (as this genre is known to us from rabbinic literature) . . ." Nevertheless, he restrains himself, and does not categorize the Scroll's genre. Instead, he stresses the composition's "independent character." J. A. Fitzmyer, *The Genesis Apocryphon of Qumran Cave I: A Commentary* (Rome: Biblical Institute Press, 1971), 9–11. However, embellishments like the one concerning Sarah in 1QapGen 20:1–8a seem to support a proto-Midrash classification. Edited from Bateman, *Early Jewish Hermeneutics*, chp. 3 n. 30, 273–74.

²⁹ 4Q252 often referenced as 4QpGenesis^a admittedly suffers from an identity crisis. It was initially referred to as 4QpGn 49 until Allegro designated the fragment as 4Q Patriarchal Blessings (4QP Bless), though George Brooke gave the fragment its current designation 4Q252. J. M. Allegro, "Further Messianic References in Qumran Literature," *JBL* 75 (1956): 174–87, esp. 174–76; G. Brooke, "The Thematic Content of 4Q252," *JQR* 85 (1994): 33–59. Although 4QpGenesis^a has a pesher designation ("p"), many Qumran scholars recognize the differences between the pesher texts and 4Q252. H. Stegemann, "Weitere Stücke von 4 Q p Psalm 37, von 4 Q Patriarchal Blessings und Hinweis auf eine unedierte Handschrift aus Höhle 4 Q mit Exzerpten aus dem Deuteronomium," *RdQ* 6 (1967–1969): 193–227, esp. 213; M. J. Bernstein, "4Q252: From Re-Written Bible to Biblical Commentary," *JJS* 45 (1994): 1–27, esp. 4; "4Q252: Method and Context, Genre and Sources," *JQR* 85 (1994): 61–79. Edited from Bateman, *Early Jewish Hermeneutics*, chp. 3 n. 31, 274–75.

the first revolt was against the Greeks from 167–160 B.C. (1 Macc, 2 Macc), the second was against Rome from A.D. 66–70 (Josephus, *Jewish War*).³⁰ The later revolt was likened to the first except unsuccessful. Nevertheless, insurrections prior to Judea’s war with Rome were gaining momentum throughout Judea from A.D. 60–65 when Barnabas wrote to the Jewish Christians living in Rome.

So, from the pre-formation, formation, and exilic period of the nation of Israel (ca. 1445–586 B.C.) to the post-exilic period of Judea (539 B.C. – A.D. 70); leaders and the people of Israel have heard from God by way of many spokesmen as well as the various second temple interpretations about Moses, the prophets, and other Jewish voices. Barnabas’s implicit contrast in Hebrews 1:2 suggests that God’s most recent revelation “through *a son*” (ἐν υἱῷ), namely Jesus, was superior to that given previously “through *the prophets*” (ἐν τοῖς προφήταις).³¹ “The force of the expression in Hebrews,” according to Lane, “is to characterize the son as the one through whom God spoke his final and decisive word.”³² Thus, there was one final and ultimate spokesman, Jesus. Yet, why? Why did Barnabas emphasize Jesus as God’s final spokesman? It’s safe to say that Barnabas knew that the prophets never presented a complete picture of God’s restoration of the

³⁰ The first century Jewish historian Josephus was born in 37 B.C. (*Life*, 1 §5), educated in all the Judean sects (*Life* 2 §§7–8, 12), honored with Roman citizenship (*Life*, 76 §423), and wrote several works at the close of the second temple period (ca. 90–100 B.C.) before he died (ca. 100 B.C.). On the one hand, two of his four works were written to dispel misinformation. Whereas *Jewish Antiquities* combatted the ridicule and misinformation that was characteristic of Roman portrayals of the Jews (*Antiquities*, 1.1–2 §§1–6), *Life* combatted allegations against Josephus himself and his involvement in the war effort against Rome (*Life*, 65 §§ 336–367). On the other hand, *Jewish Wars* was a rationale for the Jewish revolt of 66–70 B.C. (*War*, 1.9–12 §1–30), and *Against Apion* was a religious apologetic against a well-known Egyptian scholar, Apion (*Apion*, 1.1 §2; cf. 1.11 §§57–58). Apion had moved to Rome to teach rhetoric during the thirties of the first century and was an outspoken adversary of Jewish people. For other descriptions, see Steve Mason, *Josephus and the New Testament* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2nd edition, 1992); idem *Josephus, Judea, and Christian Origins: Methods and Categories* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 2009).

³¹ Similar pictures of Jesus as God’s spokesman exist in the Gospel of John. Jesus is sent by the Father (5:23–24, 36–38; 6:29, 44, 57; 7:27–29; 8:16, 18, 26, 29, 42; 9:4; 11:42; 12:44–45; 20:21; 13:20; 14:24; 15:21; 16:5, 17:3, 8, 18, 21, 25; 20:21; cf. 16:27–28; cf. Heb. 3:1). As one who is Spirit-led without measure (3:34), Jesus knows things that others do not (1:48; 2:24–25; 5:52; 6:6, 61, 64; 7:29; 8:14, 55; 11:42; 12:50). Jesus’ authority and power (5:17–23, 10:37–38, 14:10–11, 17:4–8) over temporal or physical needs (2:1–11, 6:3–15), nature (6:16–20), sickness (4:46–54, 6:1–2, 9:1–34), and death (11:1–47) serve to testify of or witness to Jesus’ having been sent by the Father. As one sent by the Father, it is Jesus that the Father has given authority to judge all things (5:22–23, 26–27, 30; 8:14–18, 26; 12:47–48). Together, these pictures serve to testify of or witness to his oneness of mission with the Father (5:16–23; 10:30, 38; cf. 14:10–11, 20; perhaps 8:19).

³² William L. Lane, *Hebrews 1–8*. Word Biblical Commentary. Dallas: Word Books, 1991), 1, 10.

kingdom of Israel by way of a messianic figure and that the subsequent revelations Jesus presented in his teachings were often misunderstood. For instance, missing was the concept of a suffering Messiah whose kingdom and rule would extend over the seen and unseen of all creation whereby he would be resurrected and would return to consummate his already inaugurated kingdom over which he would rule (Heb. 2:5–10; cf. Mark 1:15; 4:10–34; 8:31–33; 9:30–32; 10:32–34; 12:35–37; 13:24–27; 14:60–65).³³ Missing was the idea of a Messiah who would be a divine Davidic regal priest (Heb. 1:2b–3, 5–13).³⁴ So, with the coming and teachings of the historical Jesus, God had revealed several significant pieces of his messianic program that were missing in the prophets.³⁵ Unfortunately, many Jewish religious leaders, who had rejected Jesus, were operating on incomplete information about the Messiah and subsequently upon the Jewish understandings, interpretations, and applications like those evident in ancient Jewish scrolls and other non-biblical Jewish texts.³⁶ Yet, it was many of those same religious leaders, more specifically the Zealots, who were instigating insurrections throughout Judea by way of speeches based upon a deficient messianic and kingdom theology. Nevertheless, the attachments Jewish Christians in Rome had

³³ For Mark's audience, he appears to answer two questions: who is this man Jesus and what type of Messiah is he? While Jesus is the one defining his messiahship, Mark's portrait guides the readers first by means of his various Messianic titles for Jesus (1:1; 8:29) along with three predicted rejections and emphasis on Jesus's suffering (8:31; 9:31; 10:33–34). Mark's portrait appears to correct a flawed Christology whereby Jesus is some sort of messianic Jennie ready to grant followers their every wish (cf. 1:32–34; 40; 2:2; 5:21–24, 28–29, etc.) and thereby perhaps to protect them from Nero's persecution. Mark's movement from numerous miraculous provisions in the first half of the Gospel (1:14–8:21) is corrected in the second half of the Gospel with Mark's presentation of Jesus as a suffering messiah whereby only one miracle event, the healing of blind Bartimaeus (10:46–52) is mentioned. Mark's emphasis appears to be that like Jesus, who is a suffering Messiah, his followers are called to suffer (8:32–34; 9:32–37; 10:43–45; 14:1–2, 10–11). A call to discipleship, then, is a call to suffering and not a right to happiness. Herbert W. Bateman IV, "Defining the Titles 'Christ' and 'Son of God' in Mark's Narrative Presentation of Jesus," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 50.3 (September 2007): 537–59.

³⁴ Bateman, *Early Jewish Hermeneutics and Hebrews 1:5–13*, 207–37; idem "Psalm 45:6–7 and Its Christological Contributions to Hebrews," *Trinity Journal* 22NS (2001): 3–21; *Hebrews* et al., 70–96.

³⁵ Herbert W. Bateman IV, "Introduction" in *Jesus the Messiah: Tracing the Promises, Expectations, and Coming of Israel's King* by H. W. Bateman IV, D. L. Bock, and G. H. Johnston (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2012), 17–36.

³⁶ Herbert W. Bateman IV, "Expectations of a King" in *Jesus the Messiah: Tracing the Promises, Expectations, and Coming of Israel's King* by H. W. Bateman IV, D. L. Bock, and G. H. Johnston (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2012), 211–329.

with Jerusalem and the prophetic teachings awakened for Barnabas an apparent need to check any doubts his readers may have had about Jesus's teachings and to remind them that Jesus was God's ultimate spokesman who was greater than Moses and other prophets despite the propaganda and subsequent uprisings occurring in Judea at the time. Thus, relapsing into orthodox Judaism was a bad idea. Why? Because historically, Jesus and his teachings provided a more complete picture of God's messianic and kingdom program that was missing in the prophets, in the interpretations of prophets, and in the theological thematic developments from the prophets.

The Levitical Priesthood

Barnabas also drew attention to the Levitical priesthood. He especially knew of the attachment Jewish non-believers and believers had with Jerusalem's high priest. He stressed to the Jewish followers of Jesus in Rome that "we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have a high priest³⁷ who has been tempted in all things just as we are, yet without sin" (4:15) after which Barnabas highlighted that "every high priest, chosen from among men, is appointed on behalf of people in things pertaining to God, to offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins," and that "no one takes the honor to himself, but he receives the honor when God calls him, even as Aaron was" (5:1, 4). Why? Why did Barnabas emphasize a "divinely chosen" high priest's ability to sympathize with God's people as well as draw attention to a basic assumption about the divine honor of a high priest given by God and not men?

On the one hand (μὲν), the Levitical high priest position during the first century was no longer a "divinely chosen" or a divinely appointed position. It had become a position politically procured for a price. This practice of purchasing the position of the high priest began prior to the

³⁷ While the Greek reads "but one who has been tempted" (πεπειρασμένον δέ), the italic rendering "*we have a high priest who has been tempted*" was added in the translation for clarity. My translation for the New Tyndale Version of the Bible forthcoming 2026.

Maccabean revolt with Jason (175 B.C.) and Menelaus (172 B.C.).³⁸ Yet, while they purchased the office from the Seleucid king Antiochus IV, the practice was resumed years later after Rome secured Judea for itself in 63 B.C. Eventually, a select number of Levitical priests paid a considerable price for the high priest position — first to Roman governors (ca. A.D. 15–41), then to Agrippa I (ca. A.D. 43–48), then to Herod of Chacis (ca. A.D. 48), and finally to Agrippa II (ca. A.D. 59–66).³⁹ Such payments for the position of the high priest, who controlled Jerusalem’s cultic system of religion, served as a continual source of revenue for Judea’s political figures. Eventually, three priestly families monopolized the high priesthood (i.e., Ananus, Boethus, and Phiabi) because they alone had the financial means to pay the purchasing price.⁴⁰ Needless to say, their position as high priest provided them with significant economic advantages. Consequently, the

³⁸ Antiochus IV accepted money (a bribe) from Jason, the brother of Onias III, in order to secure the High Priesthood for himself. Jason then proceeded to transform Jerusalem from a Jewish temple-state into a Greek city-state complete with a council, citizen list, gymnasium, and new name, “the city of Antioch” (2 Macc 4:7–17). Some Jews underwent surgery to mask their circumcision (1 Macc 1:13–15, 2 Macc 4:10–17), while others offered sacrifices to Hercules before participating in the quadrennial games at Tyre (2 Macc 4:18–20). Antiochus accepted another bribe from Menelaus. Unlike Jason, Menelaus was an unrelated member of the Oniad family of high priests. Thus, he was not of the High Priestly family who were appointed to govern the temple. Menelaus plundered the temple, stole money from the temple for Antiochus’ war efforts in Egypt, and eventually changed the temple service from the worship of Yahweh to the worship of Zeus. James C. VanderKam, *From Joshua to Caiaphas: High Priests after the Exile* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2004), 197–226; Bateman, et al., *Jesus the Messiah*, 235.

³⁹ Later Herodian Priests: Roman governor Gratus appointed Ishmael, son of Phiabi (A.D. 15–16), Eleazar, son of Ananus (A.D. 16–17), Simon, son of Camith (A.D. 17–18), and Joseph Caiaphas (A.D. 18–37). Roman governor Vitellius appointed Jonathan, son of Ananus (A.D. 37) and Theophilus, son of Ananus (A.D. 37–41). Agrippa I appointed three high priests: Matthias son of Ananus (A.D. 42–43), Elionaeus, son of Cantheras (A.D. 43–45). Herod of Chalcis appointed Joseph, son of Camei (A.D. 45–48), and Ananias, son of Nedebaeus (A.D. 48–59). Agrippa II appointed Ishmael, son of Phiabi (A.D. 59–61), Joseph, son of Simon (A.D. 61–62), Ananus, son of Ananus (A.D. 62), Jesus, son of Damnaeus (A.D. 62–63), Jesus, son of Gamaliel (A.D. 63–64), Matthias, son of Theophilus (A.D. 64–66). VanderKam, *From Joshua to Caiaphas*, 424–90.

⁴⁰ For instance, Ananus, son of Seth was the first appointed high priest by a governor of Syria (Quirinius in A.D. 6) and the first to be removed by a Roman governor over Judea and Samaria (Gratus in A.D. 15). He was also the first family member to hold the high priesthood. Five sons (Eleazar, A.D. 16–17; Johathan, A.D. 37; Theolphilus, A.D. 37–41; Matthias, A.D. 42–43; and Ananus, A.D. 62) also followed him into the high priesthood as well as his son-in-law, Caiaphas (A.D. 18–36). Unfortunately, their family corruption was later featured in a series of woes pronounced on priests who took by force what did not belong to them (*Tosefta Menahot* 2.1467–68). See VanderKam, *From Joshua to Caiaphas* (2004), 420–24. Hengel, however, believes the high priesthood was limited to four families; Ananus, Boethus, Phiabi, and Kamithos (Josephus, *Jewish War* 4.3.6 § 148). Martin Hengel, *The Zealots: Investigations into the Jewish Freedom Movement in the Period from Herod I until A.D. 70*, translated by David Smith (Edinburgh, England: T & T Clark, 1989), 211–12. For a list of high priests from the Ananus, Boethus, and Phiabi families who supplied the high priests during the Herodian Age, see VanderKam, *From Joshua to Caiaphas*, 493.

office of the high priest in Jerusalem during the early–mid A.D. 60s was no longer held by divinely chosen men but by fiscally clever families who were able to pay the going price for the position.

On the other hand (δέ), the Levitical high priest position of honor was no longer held by religious leaders who could or would sympathize with people. Many had commandeered priestly positions for self-glorification, self-influence, and self-fortune and thereby lacked scruples. Judeans residing at Qumran had already distanced themselves from the temple high priests long before the early-mid A.D. 60s. Unfortunately, pinpointing the temple corruption that caused the break remains a mystery. Yet, some have argued it was because of Menelaus's audacious and dishonest usurpation of the high priesthood (ca. 171–161 B.C.).⁴¹ Many more have argued it was due to Judas Maccabee's brothers, Jonathon and later Simon, who had presumed their appointments to the high priesthood, appointments that were subsequently approved by Gentile rulers (ca. 152 B.C. and 134 B.C.).⁴² Still others have argued the catalyst for the split was due to the Hasmonean tyrant Alexander Janneus (ca. 103–76 B.C.).⁴³ Whatever the issue and whoever

⁴¹ Menelaus Advocates: Bo Reicke, "Die Ta'amire-Schriften und die Damaskus-Fragmente," *ST* 2 (1949), 45–70, esp. 62. H. H. Rowley, *The Zadokite Fragments and the Dead Sea Scrolls* (1952; reprint, Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1956), 66–72; idem "4QpNahum and the Teacher of Righteousness," *JBL* 75 (September 1956): 188–93; "The History of the Qumran Sect," *BJRL* 49 (1963): 203–32.

⁴² Jonathon and Simon Advocates: G. Vermes, "Où en est la question des manuscrits de la Mer Morte?," *CSion* 7 (1953): 63–76; *The Dead Sea Scrolls: Qumran in Perspective* (Cleveland: Collins World, 1978), 137–56, esp. 151; "The Essenes and History," *JJS* 32 (1981): 18–31 esp. 27. F. M. Cross, *The Ancient Library of Qumran and Modern Biblical Studies* (Garden City: Doubleday, 1958), 95–119; idem *Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic* (Cambridge: Harvard, 1973), 337–40. J. T. Milik, *Dix ans de découvertes dans le Désert de Juda*, (Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf, 1957): 56–58. P. Winter, "Two non-Allegorical Expressions in the Dead Sea Scrolls," *PEQ* 91 (1959): 38–46. J. Jeremias, *Der Lehrer der Gerechtigkeit*, Studien zur Umwelt des Neuen Testaments 2 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1963), 36–78. H. Stegemann, *Die Entstehung der Qumrangemeinde* (Bonn: published privately, 1971). de Vaux, *Archaeology and the Dead Sea Scrolls*, 111–26, esp. 115–17. J. M. Hengel, *Judaism and Hellenism*, 2 vols. (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1976), 1:224–27; G. W. E. Nickelsburg, "Simon—A Priest with a Reputation for Faithfulness," *BASOR* 223 (1976): 67–78; J. Murphy-O'Connor, "The Essenes and their History," *RB* 81 (1974): 215–44, esp. 224–33, 238–39; idem "The Essenes in Palestine," *BA* 40 (1977), 100–24.

⁴³ Alexander Janneus Advocates: M. Delcor, *Essai sur le midrash d'Habacuc* (Paris: Les Éditions du cerf, 1951), 56–70; idem, "Où en est le problème du Midrash d'Habacuc?" *RHR* 142 (1952): 129–46. J. M. Allegro, "Further Light on the History of the Qumran Sect," *JBL* 75 (1956): 89–95, esp. 92–93; idem, "THRAKIDAN, The 'Lion of Wrath' and Alexander Jannaeus," *PEQ* 91 (1959): 47–51; idem, *The Dead Sea Scrolls and the Christian Myth* (Newton Abbott: Westbridge, 1979), 196; J. P. M. van der Ploeg, *The Excavations at Qumran: A Survey of the Judean Brotherhood and its Ideas*, trans. Kevin Smyth (1958; reprint, New York: Longmans, 1959), 53–89, esp. 60–62; J. Carmignac, "Interprétations de Prophètes et de Psaumes," in *Les textes de Qumran: traduites et annotés*, 2 vols. ed. by J. Carmignac, E. Cothenet, H. Lignée (Paris: Éditions Letouzey et ané, 1963), 2:48–55; idem, "Notes sur les

the high priest, a perceived perversion existed within the temple precincts that caused a group of Judeans to disassociate with Jerusalem's Levitical priesthood, namely, those who were ultimately responsible for regulating temple activities.

Even more unfortunate was the corruption among Levitical high priests that became more pronounced during the Roman occupation of Judea. The dishonest undertakings of the Levitical priesthood were underscored in Peter's sermons as arranged and documented in Mark's Gospel. During the time of Jesus's ministry (ca. A.D. 30–33), Jesus expressed concerns about the many scrupulously orchestrated activities of temple priests. He spoke out against moneychangers within the temple precincts (11:15–19), the established practice of *Corban* to evade family obligations (7:1–13), and the ostentatious givers in the temple (12:41–44). Furthermore, the sleazy manner in which Jesus's trial (14:53–65) and subsequent crucifixion was conducted became a distinctive stain on the Levitical priesthood (15:1–15; cf. Heb. 6:3–6). Yet, there's more. The greedy nature of the high priest and priests in general was pervasive after the famine of A.D. 48 (during the reign of Claudius). Incomes of ordinary priests from temple tithes were cut, corn tithes of common priests were stolen, and the poverty of average priests continually increased. For instance, servants of the wealthy high priest, Ananias, son of Nedebaeus (A.D. 48–59), would enter the threshing floors and forcefully steal the tithes of the priests or beat those who refused to hand over their rightful portion.⁴⁴ Other high priests were guilty of the same practices. Frustrations of lower-class priests were increasing during the early A.D. 60s. Josephus at one point explains how "priests who

pescharim," *RdQ* 3 (1962): 505–10; Dupont–Sommer, *Les Ecrits Esseniens*, 280, n. 3; 281, nn. 1, 2; *Essene Writings*, 351–68; E. Schürer, *The History of the Jewish People in the Age of Jesus Christ*, 3 vols. (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1979), 1:224–25, n. 22. Phillip R. Callaway, *The History of the Qumran Community: An Investigation*. In *Journal for the Study of the Pseudepigrapha Supplement Series*, vol. 3 (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1988), 170–71. M. A. Knibb, *The Qumran Community* (Cambridge, MA: University Press, 1987), 209–46.

⁴⁴ Josephus, *Jewish Antiquities, Books XVIII–XX*, volume 9 in Loeb Classical Library, trans. by Louis H. Feldman (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1965). 20.5.2 §103; 20.5.8 §179. VanderKam, *From Joshua to Caiaphas*, 255–63.

in olden days were maintained by the tithes now starved to death."⁴⁵ These sort of events eventually led lower class Levitical priests (the "have nots") to be pitted against Jerusalem's wealthy class of Levitical priests (the "haves"). Whereas high priests and priests extorted wealth from the Jewish populists from A.D. 30–59, later priests, like those of the Zealots continued to do so during the early-mid A.D. 60s. In time, they would pillage both Jew and Gentile villas to bribe Roman officials and vie for political advantage. Consequently, the position of the high priest and the Levitical priesthood in general were no longer perceived as positions of divine honor given by God but taken by self-serving men who apparently lacked any "genuine" sympathy for others.

At the time when Mark, Barnabas, and Jude wrote their respective contributions to the New Testament (ca. A.D. 60–65), Judea was a country controlled by avaricious Roman governors,⁴⁶ greedy Jewish high priests that created a "have" and a "have not" society, and a multiplicity of

⁴⁵ Josephus, *Antiquities*, 20.9.2 §205–07. See VanderKam, *From Joshua to Caiaphas* (2004), 458–59. Elsewhere, Josephus explains how it was that priests had a monopoly over the temple. In his response to Apion's allegation that Antiochus Epiphanes' was found in the inner part of the temple, reclining at a table, eating a feast fit for a king, Josephus engages Apion's anti-Jewish slander. Josephus sets out to describe the temple and its restrictions, the daily duties of the priests, the objects in the temple (2 §105), and the priestly temple responsibilities (2 §§107–08). Richard Bauckham, "Josephus' Account of the Temple in *Contra Apionem* 2.102–109," in *Contra Apionem: Studies in its Character and Context with a Latin Concordance to the Portion Missing in Greek*, ed. by Louis H. Feldman and John R. Levison, AGAJU 34 (Leiden: Brill, 1996), 327–47. For a complete list of Second Temple priests as mentioned in Josephus, a visual comparison of the tabernacle and temple, and listing of Josephus texts on the temple in comparison with the Old Testament texts and the book of Hebrews, see Bateman, *Charts on the Book of Hebrews*, 78–91.

⁴⁶ Roman governors were responsible to combat the attacks of "robbers" or revolutionaries so as to maintain the *Pax Romana*, exercise judiciary functions, and administrate the financial affairs of foreign territories under Roman jurisdiction. Unfortunately, the political ambitions, incompetence in dealing with Jewish cultural concerns, and personal greed were factors that escalated Judea's war with Rome. While the Roman historian, Tacitus, attributes the war to two cruel and irresponsible Roman governors: Felix and Festus (*Hist* 5.9.3-5; 5.10.1), Albinus (A.D. 62–64) and Florus (A.D. 64–66) were governors in power when Barnabas and Jude wrote their respective letters and when Mark wrote his Gospel. Albinus was incorrigible when it came to money. He plundered monies, accepted bribes, and practiced extortion. He triangulated one Judean faction against another for money and in the end escalated the Judean - Roman animosity. When Nero recalled Albanus to Rome, Albanus, before leaving Judea, executed major criminals and released the remaining prisoners — many of whom were revolutionaries. Although all prisons were empty, the task of Gessius Florus (A.D. 64–66) was made more difficult (Josephus, *Jewish War*, 2.14.1 §§272–73; 4.5.3 §§300–09; *Antiquities* 20.9.1-5 §§197–215). Yet when it came to greed, Florus was worse than Albanus. His plundering escalated from robbing individuals to plundering entire villages, towns, and cities (Josephus, *Jewish War*, 2.14.2 §§277; *Antiquities* 20.11.1 §§252–53). See VanderKam, *From Joshua to Caiaphas* (2004), 476–90; Hengel, *The Zealots*, 353–58; Schürer, *History of the Jewish People*, 1:468–70, 485.

divisive and greedy Jewish factions of Levitical priests, like the Zealots (or *Sicarii*).⁴⁷ The *Tosefta Menahot*, a rabbinic supplement to the Mishnah, described Judea during A.D. 60s as a place of social hostility, a place without scruples, and a place driven by greed that at times erupted into hostile behavior (13:22; *Babylonian Gittin* 55b–56a). In fact, it attributes the Judean war with the Romans to (1) Judea’s social hostility not just toward the Romans but to one another creating a Judean civil war,⁴⁸ (2) the collapse of Judea’s moral values that manifested itself in various forms of murder, kidnapping, bribery, stealing, adultery, and incest, and finally (3) Judean’s greed for acquiring more and more material wealth at the expense of others. These forms of social decay evident among the Levitical high priests, the Levitical priesthood, and the Jewish people generated numerous sociopolitical insurrections that fueled the rise of Judea’s war with Rome in A.D. 66–70. “Josephus was convinced,” says Hengel, “that God himself had ordained the downfall of Jerusalem and the Temple, because of the sins that had been committed in it — particularly by the Zealots.”⁴⁹ Nevertheless, the attachments Jewish followers of Jesus in Rome had with the Levitical priesthood, headquartered in Jerusalem, were obviously being given a very favorable benefit of the doubt. However, the self-serving and corrupt practices within the Levitical priesthood had progressively worsened during the A.D. 60s. So, Barnabas underscored for the household family

⁴⁷ On the one hand, the nomenclature “Zealots” (ζηλωται) was a self-imposed and preferred designation, and several competing groups of Judeans also claimed the title for themselves (e.g., John of Gischala). On the other hand, *Sicarii* (σικαριοι) was Rome’s designation for the group because of their aggressive, ruthless, and gruesome use of a dagger for assassinations, killing without discrimination Romans and Jews alike (Josephus, *Jewish War* 2.7.9 §447 and 7.8.1 §253). Consequently, the sons of Judas the Galilean continued his Zealot methods of rebellion that he initiated in A.D. 6 until Menaham changed those military tactics during the mid-60s that earned the Zealots a new name: *Sicarii*. The movement ended with Eleazar, the grandson of Judas at Masada with massive suicide rather than surrender (A.D. 73).

⁴⁸ Social hostility to Rome was recorded in several pieces of Jewish literature written prior to the Jewish war (Pss Sol 17:21–32; 4Q161 f8 10.1–8, 11–21; 4Q285 5:1–6 [frag. 7,1–6]). According to Hengel, “the fundamental tendency of the *War Scroll* can therefore be seen – despite its Essene origin as completely Zealot.” Hengel, *Zealots*, 281. Hengel’s discussion links the *War Scroll* with the tradition of Holy War (pp 278–81). He says, “As an eschatological portrait, it on the one hand contains the Old Testament tradition of war in its full dimension and, on the other, it also has a deep dualistic and metaphysical background. It’s remarkable blend of military realism and apocalyptic fantasy is an impressive example of the way in which the strictest and most active religious group in late Judaism present the cooperation between God, his angels and the army of pious believers in the course of the eschatological events.”

⁴⁹ Hengel, *The Zealots*, 10.

of faith in Rome that God’s Levitical priesthood, initially institutionalized with Aaron, was no longer held by divinely chosen men of honor who could or would sympathize with them. Thus, relapsing into orthodox Judaism was a bad idea. Why? Because historically, the Levitical priesthood was by-and-large held by extremely less than perfect characters who were overwhelmingly corrupt, self-serving, and unsympathetic to the everyday spiritual weaknesses of people (7:11–16, 23–24).

Jesus as Royal Priest

Closely tied to the previous two themes, is Barnabas’s well developed and central royal priest theme. He introduced the royal priest theme by underscoring the fact that Jesus was “appointed heir of all things” and that “after he had made purification of sins,⁵⁰ he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high” (1:2b–3), a perspective validated in 1:5–14 whereby Barnabas created the theological theme that stressed “a son” (ἐν υἱῷ), namely Jesus, as a divine Davidic king. Similarly, Barnabas’s royal priest theme about Jesus was expanded in his rebuke of his readers (5:5–12) as well as his subsequent description of Jesus as royal high priest after the order of Melchizedek and thereby not after the imperfect Levitical priesthood and Aaron’s order (7:11–28). Why? Why did Barnabas emphasize Jesus as God’s appointed royal high priest?

On the one hand (μὲν), there was a vibrant expectation during the first century for a coming messianic figure.⁵¹ Subsequently, there were several messianic movements in Judea *during* and

⁵⁰ Although the KJV reads “through himself he made purification for sins” (δι’ ἑαυτοῦ καθαρισμόν τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν ποιησάμενος), the phrase “through himself” (δι’ ἑαυτοῦ or δι’ αὐτοῦ) appears to have been added to clarify the meaning of the ambiguous middle voice “he made for himself” (ποιησάμενος). Consequently, the preferred reading is “he made purification for sins” (καθαρισμόν τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν ποιησάμενος) (ASV, ESV, NASB, NET, NIV, NRSV). Bruce M. Metzger and Roland Murphy editors, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament* (2nd ed. New York: United Bible Society, 1992), 592; Bateman et al., *Hebrews*, 75. My translation for the New Tyndale Version of the Bible forthcoming 2026.

⁵¹ There are at least three features about the messiah in second temple Jewish literature. First, he is most often human. Excluding 4Q382, 4Q423, and 4Q496, fifteen texts anticipate a human personality, four of which expected the royal Messiah to have offspring. Only one, 1 Enoch presents us with a heavenly figure (perhaps 11QMelch is another). Second, he is a descendant of David, a Davidic scion by way of direct citations from Hebrew Scriptures (Gen. 49; 2 Sam. 7; Pss. 2, 89; Isa. 11; Jer. 33; Zech. 6; Ezek. 37, 45), conceptual links to Davidic symbols (star of Jacob, scepter

after the life of Jesus. During Jesus's early childhood (4 B.C. to A.D. 6), several messianic pretenders announced their messiahship, took up arms, and were defeated by Rome. For instance, just after Herod's death in 4 B.C., while baby Jesus was still in Egypt with Mary and Joseph (cf. Matt. 2:13–23), Josephus tells of a shepherd named Athronges who set himself up as king, placed a diadem on his head, organized a governing council, and slew a great number of Romans. Within a short period of time, however, Rome along with Herod's son, Archelaus, defeated him.⁵² Another messianic pretender arose when Jesus was around twelve years old. Judas the Galilean, who Josephus considered the founder of a "fourth philosophical sect"⁵³ (commonly known as the Zealots), rebelled against Rome to reestablish a free nation. He and his followers were a group of religious Jews who resurrected the ideology of freedom that existed during the time of the Maccabees. Thus in A.D. 6, Judas's intention for plundering an armory in Sepphoris was to fulfill his own ambitious desire for "royal honor" (βασιλείου τιμᾶς).⁵⁴ In time, "the Zealots formed a relatively exclusive and unified movement with its own distinctive religious views," according to Hengel, "and that they had a crucial influence on the history of Palestinian Judaism in the decisive period between 6 and 70 A.D."⁵⁵ Needless to say, Jesus is presented in Mark and other Gospels as being very careful in how they explained and framed Jesus's messiahship.⁵⁶ Yet, cries of rebellion

of Judah), or by appellations (Jesse's stock, son of Jacob). The final common and unwavering element was that he would be a royal warrior, a military leader. Not only would banners serve as visual signs announcing his leadership, there is nothing secret about his arrival. He would be extremely successful in ridding Israel of her enemies, namely, a victorious royal warrior in all his military pursuits, particularly as they concern the thwarting of Rome and restoring David's dynasty and the kingdom of Israel (cp. 1QM, Pss. Sol.). Bateman, et al. *Jesus the Messiah*, 316–19.

⁵² Josephus, *Jewish War*, 2.4.3 §§60–64; Josephus, *Jewish Antiquities*, Books XV–XVII, volume 8 in Loeb Classical Library, translated by Ralph Marcus (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1963), 17.10.7 §§278–284.

⁵³ Josephus, *Jewish War*, 2.8.1 §§117–19. See Schürer, *History of the Jewish People*, 1:456; Hengel, *The Zealots* (1989), 229–30. Later, Eliazer, his grandson, would echo Judas (Josephus, *Jewish War*, 7.8.6 §323).

⁵⁴ Josephus, *Antiquities*, 17.10.5 §271–72; Acts 5:37. Bateman et al. *Jesus the Messiah*, 441–58.

⁵⁵ Hengel, *The Zealots* (1989), 5.

⁵⁶ Hebert W. Bateman IV, "Defining the Titles 'Christ' and 'Son of God' in Mark's Narrative Presentation of Jesus," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 50.3 (September 2007): 537–59. Darrell L. Bock, "Coming of Israel's King" in *Jesus the Messiah: Tracing the Promises, Expectations, and Coming of Israel's King* by Herbert W. Bateman

against Rome were somewhat quieted during Jesus’s ministry. Gamaliel (ca. mid A.D. 30s) would later refer to the failure of Judas of Galilee as a reason to leave the followers of Jesus alone (Acts 5:33–42).

Nevertheless, after Jesus’s death and resurrection, other messianic pretenders arose. There was a noteworthy skirmish against Rome led by Theudas (ca. A.D. 44–46), a magician and self-proclaimed prophet (προφήτεσγὰρ ἔλεγεν εἶναι) who revolted against Rome shortly after the death of Herod Agrippa I. As a Jewish false prophet and perhaps messianic pretender, Theudas persuaded a large number of people to follow him to the Jordan River, promised to part the river, and would then cross over into Judea. According to Josephus, “he *deceived* many” (πολλοὺς ἠπάτησεν) Judeans. Taking no chances, the Roman Governor, Cuspus Fadus (ca. A.D. 44–46), killed numerous followers of Theudas, decapitated Theudas, and had the head of Theudas brought to Jerusalem.⁵⁷ Around the same time, the previous efforts of Judas the Galilean were continued through his sons, James and Simon (A.D. 46–48).⁵⁸ One might assume that James and Simon were carrying on revolutionary tactics not only after but perhaps even during the time of Theudas.

The final clash with Rome, prior to the Judean revolt, was led by an unknown Egyptian (A.D. 52–58). He too claimed to be a prophet (προφήτεσεῖναι λέγων), gathered a following on the Mount of Olives, and promised he would destroy the walls of Jerusalem with a command from his mouth.⁵⁹ The Roman governor Felix (A.D. 52–60), however, sent troops against the group, but the

IV, Darrell L. Bock, and Gordon H. Johnston (Grand Rapids, Kregel, 2012), 442–58.

⁵⁷ Josephus, *Antiquities*, 20.5.1 §§97–98. The high priests at the time of Theudas’s revolt were Elionaeus, son of Cantheras (A.D. 43–45) and Joseph, son of Camei (A.D. 45–48). The latter high priest was in office when Judas of Galilee’s sons, James and Simon were crucified at the orders of Tiberius Iulius Alexander (Josephus, *Antiquities*, 20.5.1 §§97–99). Compare VanderKam, *From Joshua to Caiaphas*, 449–55 with Schürer, *History of the Jewish People*, 1:456–57.

⁵⁸ The Roman governor Tiberius Julius Alexander eventually brought to trial James and Simon, sons of Judas the Galilean, and had them sentenced to crucifixion (ca. A.D. 46–48; Josephus, *Antiquities*, 20.5.2 §102).

⁵⁹ Josephus, *Jewish War* 2.13.5 §§61–63; *Antiquities* 20.8.6 §§169–71. The apostle Paul was thought to be this revolutionary leader (Acts 21:37–38). The high priest at the time of the Egyptian was Ananias, son of Nedebeaus (A.D. 48–59). See VanderKam, *From Joshua to Caiaphas*, 455–63.

Egyptian escaped. His group of renegades were often referred to as *Sicarii* and linked with the Zealot revolutionaries.⁶⁰ Yet, the Egyptian and his followers were *not directly* associated with the Zealot movement. Nevertheless, their ruthless tactics were similar. Later, Menahem as well as Eleazar, son of Jairus (= son of Ari) a grandson of Judas the Galilean would become major revolutionary figures of the A.D. 66 revolt against Rome.⁶¹

Naturally, there were no shortages of *local* skirmishes against Rome prior to the Judean revolt of A.D. 66–70. There were others. Yet, what separated these earlier *geographically localized* revolts of Athronges (4 B.C.), Judas the Galilean (A.D. 6), Theudas (A.D. 44–46), Simon and James (A.D. 46–48), and the Egyptian (A.D. 52–58) from the one that eventually erupted in A.D. 66 was the overwhelming number of Judeans throughout the *entire country* who were involved. The A.D. 66 revolt was truly *a national revolt*, perhaps due to the fanatical religious and political activities of the Zealots in seducing and threatening Judeans to join their cause during the early–mid A.D. 60s.⁶² Consequently, the times in which Mark, Barnabas, and Jude wrote (ca. A.D. 60–65) were rather chaotic, disparaging, and life threatening for all Jews living in Judea. There is no doubt a

⁶⁰ The Greek noun τῶν σικαρίων in Acts 21:38 has been translated a number of ways: “murderers” (KJV), “terrorists” (NIV), and “assassins” (ASV NRSV NASB95 ESVS NET NLTSE). It is, however, a loanword from the Latin *Sicarii*, meaning “dagger-men,” a term used of the violent nationalistic anti-Roman extremists who removed opponents (Roman and Jew) by assassination with a short dagger [Latin *sica*], and who contributed to the revolt against Rome in A.D. 66–70. Schürer, *History of the Jewish People*, 1:456; Hengel, *The Zealots*, 232.

⁶¹ Menahem, another son of Judas and founder of the *Sicarii* movement (Josephus, *Antiquities*, 20.5.2 §102; idem *Jewish War*, 2.8.3 §254) as well as Eleazar son of Jairus, a grandson of Judas and a subsequent leader of the *Sicarii* who took up residence at Masada (*Jewish War*, 2.7.9 § 447; 7.8.1 §253) played key roles in the A.D. 66 revolt. Menahem leader of the *Sicarii* (Zealots) first seized Masada from the Romans, confiscated a large amount of weapons, and used Masada as a base of operations. When Menahem made his entrance into Jerusalem like a veritable king fully armed, he assumed charge of the revolution in Jerusalem until he was murdered (*Jewish War*, 2.7.9 §§442–48) at which point in time the *Sicarii* (Zealots), under the leadership of Eleazar, son of Jairus, retreated to Masada and remained there until they faced their suicidal demise in A.D. 73 (*Jewish War*, 7.9.1–2 §389–406). Yet, Hengel appears to identify Eleazar, son of Ari, as the grandson of Judas, the one about whom Josephus calls Eleazar, son of Jarius. Compare Josephus, *Jewish War*, 2.7.9 §447 and 7.8.1 §253 with Hengel, *The Zealots*, 110, 263.

⁶² For an eyewitness account about the cause or factors that precipitated the A.D. 66 Judean revolt, see Josephus, *The Jewish Wars, Books I-III*, volume 2 in Loeb Classical Library, translated by H. St. J. Thackeray (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1989); idem *The Jewish Wars, Books IV-VII*, volume 3 in Loeb Classical Library, translated by H. St. J. Thackeray (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1990). See also, Bateman, et al. *Hebrews*, 52–54, Bateman, *Jude*, 51–80.

concern for family and friends in Judea existed among the Jewish followers of Jesus who were living in Rome. Furthermore, Nero (A.D. 54–68) had been appointing and replacing several incompetent governors in Judea,⁶³ persecuting Jewish believers in Rome (Heb. 10:32–39; cf. Mark 1:13 with Tacitus, *Annals* 15.44),⁶⁴ and would eventually be ordering Vespasian to march to Judea to subdue the insurrections that had been disrupting the “Peace of Rome” (*Pax Romana*) during the early-mid A.D. 60s.⁶⁵

On the other hand (δέ), there was a misunderstanding of Jesus messiahship that was in need of explanation. During the early stages of the second temple period, when Jewish exiles returned to Judah to rebuild the temple (539 B.C.), the functions of an anticipated Davidic heir became blurred. Confusion surfaced in Hebrew Scriptures when a Levitical high priest was granted royal authority and built the temple (Zech. 6:12–13).⁶⁶ Later descendants of Judas Maccabee, a Levite, eventually merged these two roles together. This merger began when the role of ruler was added to the role of the high priesthood (1 Macc 14:41–49; ca. 141 B.C.). In time, the Judean ruler was

⁶³ Four incompetent Roman governors over Judea during Nero’s reign are Felix (A.D. 52–60), Porcius Festus (A.D. 60–62), Albinus (A.D. 62–64), and Gessius Florus (A.D. 64–66). They all contributed to the growing hostility against Rome. For a narrative presentation for each governor, see Schürer, *History of the Jewish People*, 1:455-70; cf. Bateman, *Jude*, 66–68.

⁶⁴ Bateman et al., *Hebrews*, 287–92; James R. Edwards, *The Gospel According to Mark*, PNTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002), 8. In all fairness, however, Nero was notoriously known for cruelty. He was responsible for the death of Agrippina his mother, Octavia his wife, his aunt as well as for the rape then murder of a family member — just to name a few (Suetonius, *Nero* 38–39). Yet, Nero is best known for the burning of Rome, though the fire may have been an accident (Tacitus, *Annals* 15.38–39). Nevertheless, Suetonius accuses Nero as having “brazenly set fire to the city,” watched its burning, and “sang *The Fall of Troy* from beginning to end” (*Nero* 38). Stephen Dando-Collins, *The Great Fire of Rome: The Fall of the Emperor Nero and the City of Rome* (Cambridge, MA: De Capo, 2010).

⁶⁵ As the insurrections in Judea increased and the “Peace of Rome” disrupted, Nero ordered Vespasian to Judea with two Roman legions to restore order (Josephus, *Jewish War* 3.1.1–3 §§1–8). His son Titus eventually joined him with another Roman legion whereby together they systematically worked their way through Judea, conquering one city at a time, until the uprising was crushed and Jerusalem’s temple destroyed. For a summary presentation of Judean War with Rome, see Y. Aharoni and M. Avi-Yonah, *The MacMillan Bible Atlas*, (New York, NY: Macmillan Publishing, 1968, rev. ed. 1977), 157; Hengel, *The Zealots*, 330–76; L.I. Levine “Jewish War” in *ABD* (New York, NY: Doubleday, 1992), 3:839–45.

⁶⁶ Gordon H. Johnston, “Zechariah 6:9–15” in *Jesus the Messiah: Tracing the Promises, Expectations, and Coming of Israel’s King* by H. W. Bateman IV, Darrell L. Bock, G. H. Johnston (Grand Rapids, Kregel, 2012), 196–201;

elevated to a king and fused together with the high priest position thereby creating a Levitical royal-priesthood that ruled over the Jewish kingdom of Judea.⁶⁷ Some, however, stood against this seemingly less than biblical union of a Levitical royal priest. They argued for the coming of two Messiahs: A Messiah King and a Messiah Priest (CD 12:23-13:1; 14:19; 19:10-11; 20:1). Yet, there was a wide range of competing messianic portraits present in non-canonical Jewish literature. Nevertheless, the various portraits of a forthcoming messianic figure tended to share several common features: his humanity (lineage), his authority (leadership), his relationship with God (chosen), and his being a royal warrior (military).⁶⁸

Jesus, however, was not a royal warrior but a royal priest (Heb. 1:2–3, 5, 13; 5:5–6; 7:1, 17). Nor was he a Levitical high priest or even eligible for such a position (Heb. 8:4), but he was a royal priest from the tribe of Judah who had fulfilled God's promise (Heb 1:5; 6:13–20; 7:11, 15). Nevertheless, due to the attachments Jewish Christians in Rome had with Jerusalem, the relatively new phenomenon of Jesus as a "royal priest" was in need of explaining (Heb. 5:5–12). So historically, the awareness Jewish believers in Rome would have had about the messianic and kingdom insurrections in Judea warranted Barnabas to challenge any of his reader's doubts about Jesus's messiahship by way of several warnings (Heb. 2:1–4; 3:7–4:13; 5:11–6:20; 10:19–39; 12:25–29).⁶⁹ Thus, relapsing into orthodox Judaism was a bad idea. Why? Because historically,

⁶⁷ Josephus, *Antiquities*, 13.11.1 §301.

⁶⁸ "Prior to the discovery of the Qumran Scrolls, very little extra-biblical material addressed the coming of a 'messianic king' figure. Even with the Scrolls, it seems that less than six percent of the extra-biblical literature actually speaks of an expected royal Messiah figure. Old Testament Apocryphal documents⁶⁸ and the Jewish author Josephus appear to ignore the issue. Furthermore, of the sixty-five Old Testament Pseudepigrapha texts, there are only seven Jewish writings, four Christian writings, and two lengthy re-workings of earlier Jewish traditions that speak clearly of expected Messiah figures. And though the Qumran scrolls have escalated our awareness of Second Temple messianism, only twenty out of eight hundred Qumran documents actually speak of regal messiah figures." Bateman et al., *Jesus the Messiah*, 213–15.

⁶⁹ Herbert W. Bateman IV, "The Dangers of Apostasy in Hebrews," "Concerns of Apostasy in the Warning Passages," and "Identifying the Warning Passages in Hebrews" in *Charts on the Book of Hebrews*, 145–50; idem editor, *Four Views on the Warning Passages in Hebrews* (Grand Rapids, Kregel, 2007). The *Four Views* presents a point counter point discussion that attempts to fit the warning passages into the respective yet too often ridged Arminian and Calvinistic theological systems.

Jesus was God's chosen and eternal royal high priest after the order of Melchizedek.

Conclusion

Bruce's insinuation that something was generating doubts in the hearts and minds of Jewish believers in Rome about their confession of faith whereby they were reconsidering orthodox Judaism was point on. Historically, the highly regarded prophets of orthodox Judaism were not only copied and preserved, they were interpreted and interjected with eschatological thoughts and themes many of which were speculative. The apparent permanence of the Levitical priesthood, however corrupt, was the core or hub of orthodox Judaism. The anticipated warring "messiah" to defeat Judea's enemies whereby a Jewish kingdom would be reestablished permeated orthodox Jewish thought and had escalated during the early-mid A.D. 60s. Yet, due to the incompleteness of the prophets, the corruption of the Levitical priesthood, and the misunderstandings about a forthcoming messianic figure and earthly Jewish kingdom; Barnabas made it clear that relapsing to orthodox Judaism was not a good idea. Regardless of what was happening in Judea and the threefold residual results on those who followed Jesus in Rome, namely, their misunderstanding, their doubt, and their subsequent forms of persecution; Barnabas warned his readers, rather sharply, about the dangers of relapsing to orthodox Judaism (2:1-4; 3:7-4:13; 5:11-6:20; 10:19-39; 12:25-29). Moreover, Barnabas, in his "word of exhortation" "written in a few words" (13:22), sanctioned a total break with orthodox Judaism of the early-mid A.D. 60s. He made it perfectly clear that the old covenant upon which orthodox Judaism's cultic system was governed by way of Jerusalem's Levitical priesthood was flawed, obsolete, and passing away (7:18; 8:13). Thus, relapsing into orthodox Judaism was a bad idea. Why? Because historically, Jesus was now the one through whom God had spoken (1:1-2a), the one who fulfilled God's promises (1:5; 6:13-20; 7:11, 15), and the one through whom God had replaced orthodox Judaism's Levitical priesthood with an eternal royal priest confirmed by way of an oath and new covenant (1:2-3, 5, 13; 5:5-6; 7:1, 17).

Naturally, these historical interpretations of Hebrews have parallels for us today. First, like the followers of Jesus in Rome during the early–mid A.D. 60s, many Bible believing Evangelicals feel emotionally and perhaps even spiritually attached to Jerusalem, regardless of the political controversies that appear in the news today about Israeli policies. Second, like Judea’s diversity and multiplicity of orthodox Judaism’s scribes and their interpretations and subsequent applications of scripture, the array of Bible believing Evangelical theologians also interjects a variety of interpretations about scripture and Jesus’s prophetic teachings about the kingdom and his second coming even though a complete picture of God’s intention remains a mystery yet to be revealed. Third, like the blind eye turned concerning the hub of orthodox Judaism’s corrupt Levitical priesthood, too many Bible believing Evangelicals today spin Israel’s breach of human rights and the subsequent atrocities against Palestinians as though it’s okay because Israel is somehow God’s special nation and above approach. Finally, like orthodox Judaism’s religious leaders whose misunderstandings of God’s messianic kingdom were employed to manipulate crowds to violence against Rome, Bible believing Evangelical pastors and theologians scrutinize political events with Christian predispositions and thereby are too quick and often incorrect in labeling some people as “an antichrist” or worse perceive others as though they are some sort of “messianic-like” figure thereby creating an unnecessary hostile existence within our pluralistic world and more recently within the United States. As it was during the time of Barnabas, Jerusalem today is not a city of peace (Gen. 14:18 and Heb. 7:2). We wait for “the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem” (12:22) when Jesus, our true Messiah returns to rule over God’s perfected kingdom when we will take part “in a Sabbath celebration for the people of God” (2:5–9; 4:9).