

BIBLIOGRAPHY

This is not a bibliography as in an academic book. It is a list of suggested readings. It is not complete. I suggest only books that are available; I do not give journal articles or obscure books. I single out some authors. It is better here to give multiple works by some authors than to give many single works by many authors. Some topics are too big to be covered here. Some works are appropriate to more than one topic so I repeat citations. This list cannot be comprehensive or fully up to date. Search for titles from this list on the Internet, and then look at other books that come up.

New Testament.

The New Testament (NT) is short. You can read it in a few days at an hour per day. Read at least two versions. Start with a NT that is not in your original tradition; if you are Roman Catholic, read a Protestant NT first, and vice versa. Then read a NT in your original tradition, in modern English, such as the New English Bible. Then read "The Five Gospels" cited below. All the material from the Jesus Seminar is worthwhile but beware that Conservatives dislike it. President Thomas Jefferson re-told Jesus' story-and-message by cutting out bits from the NT. It is well worth reading. The original writers of the Gospels did much the same. Jefferson did to them what they had done to their predecessors. Most preachers do the same thing as Jefferson when they select from the NT to suit their biases.

Right after reading the NT and "The Five Gospels", and before reading anything more from the list below, see the work of E.P. Sanders. Choose from him what you consider relevant, and then return to the remaining works in this section.

After you have read enough NT and some Sanders, you need a first dose of NT scholarship. Pelikan gives a simple history of the Bible. Rogerson gives a readable scholarly view. Riches and Thusesen explain modern scholarship, what it implies for the NT, and its relation to churches. They are not stereotypical Liberals. Mack is too often a postmodern estranged ironic Liberal but he gives the facts. Brown is a revered Conservative. His work is aimed at scholars but you can follow him. He gives good modern argument for reading the NT in support of Jesus' divinity and his identity as savior. Do not read Mack and Brown alone; if you read one, read the other. Below, I give suggestions for more scholarship on the Bible including Conservative arguments about reading the NT.

Funk, Robert, Roy W. Hoover, and the Jesus Seminar. 1993. *The Five Gospels: The Search for the Authentic Words of Jesus*. New York and Santa Clara, CA: Polebridge Press, Macmillan, and Harper Collins

Funk, Robert W. and the Jesus Seminar. 1998. *The Acts of Jesus: The Search for the Authentic Deeds of Jesus*. New York and Santa Clara, CA: Polebridge Press, Macmillan, and Harper Collins

Funk, Robert W., Bernard Brandon Scot, James R. Butt, and the Jesus Seminar. 1988. *The Parables of Jesus*. New York and Santa Clara, CA: Polebridge Press, Macmillan, and Harper Collins.

Funk, Robert W. and the Jesus Seminar. 1999. *The Gospel of Jesus According to the Jesus Seminar*.

Santa Rosa, CA: Polebridge Press
Jefferson, Thomas. 1983. Jefferson's Extracts from the Gospels. The Papers of Thomas Jefferson, Second Series. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press

Pelikan, Jaroslav. 2005. Whose Bible Is It? A History of the Scriptures through the Ages. New York: Viking

Rogerson, J.W. 1999. An Introduction to the Bible. London: Penguin

Riches, John K. 1993. A Century of New Testament Study. Valley Forge, PA: Trinity Press International

Thusesen, Peter J. 1999. In Discordance with the Scriptures: American Protestant Battles Over Translating the Bible. Oxford: Oxford University Press

Mack, Burton. 1996. Who Wrote the New Testament? The Making of the Christian Myth. San Francisco: Harper One

Brown, Raymond E. 1994. An Introduction to New Testament Christology. New York: Paulist Press

Tanakh (Old Testament).

You can get a sense of the Tanakh from selected stories. Baker and Meron, together with Frankel, are a joy. The stories in those books are edited paraphrases so you do have to go back to the original eventually. Still the best starter book for understanding the Tanakh is Friedman. Heller is a novelist. His book is an account of David and David's family. It brings the histories to life, makes clear what a relation to God is, and shows what it means to lose a relation to God. The first time you read the Tanakh, do not read all the lists and genealogies. Read any version of the Tanakh from the Jewish Publication Society. See their website. The comments and background in them are excellent. Buber's book is a classic for all religions that I could not resist including here.

Baker, Alon (editor) with Illustrations by Michal Meron (sometimes listed under Michal Meron). 2000. The Illustrated Torah. Illustrated Sidarot and Haftarat. Philadelphia, PA: Jewish Publication Society, and Jerusalem: The Studio in Old Jaffa.

Frankel, Ellen (editor and adaptor). No date. The Illustrated Hebrew Bible. 75 Selected Stories. New York: Stewart, Tabori, and Chang.

Kirsch, Jonathan. 1997. The Harlot by the Side of the Road: Forbidden Tales of the Bible. New York: Ballantine Books

Friedman, Richard Elliott. 1997. Who Wrote the Bible? San Francisco: Harper One

Heller, Joseph. 1984. God Knows. New York: Dell

Buber, Martin. 1970 (original date unclear). I and Thou. New York: Touchstone, Simon and Schuster

E.P. Sanders.

After you have a sense of Jesus, the most important single author is E.P. Sanders. You should read his work even if you read nothing else from this bibliography. Each book is worthwhile. He did not write multiple versions of the same book. He did write two popular books that include many of his main points, "The Historical Figure of Jesus" and "Paul". Still, his scholarly books are not hard to read and are worth the effort. Sanders and Davies is technical but I include it for completeness and in case you want to go deeper.

Sanders, E.P. 1977. Paul and Palestinian Judaism: A Comparison of Patterns of Religion. Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press

Sanders, E.P. 1983. Paul, the Law, and the Jewish People. Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press

Sanders, E.P. 1985. Jesus and Judaism. Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press

Sanders, E.P. and Margaret Davies. 1989. Studying the Synoptic Gospels. Philadelphia, PA: Trinity Press International

Sanders, E.P. 1992. Judaism: Practice and Belief: 63 BCE – 66 CE. Philadelphia, PA; Trinity Press International

Sanders, E.P. 1991. Paul. New York, Oxford University Press. (small popular book)

Sanders, E.P. 1993. The Historical Figure of Jesus. New York: Penguin (moderately sized popular book)

Israel and Middle Eastern Religion.

This material is optional but you will enjoy everything else more if you read it. The items are in suggested order of reading. While Hebrew religion stands out among early religions, it still had roots in general Middle Eastern religion. It did not spring full blown with Abraham or Moses but developed over about 2000 years before Jesus (4000 BCE onwards). The Epic of Gilgamesh is one of the great hero adventures of all time. "Inanna" or "Ilananna" became "Diana" and "Diane". She is the prototype for all the feisty women of the Middle East, Greece, Rome, and now, through movies, the world. Smith's work is excellent. Wolfe adds opinion to scholarship but I agree with him. Budge is quite dated now but I include it because it is a joy to read; was scholarly for its time; addresses frankly issues that people are interested in such as the origin of monotheism and the problem of evil; includes a good description of the family of Horus, Isis, Osiris, and Set; and might be in an inexpensive Dover edition. See a section below for the Devil.

Kramer, Samuel Noah. 1981. History Begins at Sumer: Thirty-nine Firsts in Man's Recorded History. Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press

Von Soden, Wolfram. 1985. The Ancient Orient: An Introduction to the Study of the Ancient Near East. Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company

Sandars, N.K. (translator). 1972. *The Epic of Gilgamesh*. London: Penguin

Wolkstein, Diane and Samuel Noah Kramer. 1983. *Inanna: Queen of Heaven and Earth: Her Stories and Hymns from Sumer*. New York: Harper and Row
Redford, Donald B. 1992. *Egypt, Canaan, and Israel in Ancient Times*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press

Budge, E. A. Wallis. 1972 (originally 1934). *From Fetish to God in Ancient Egypt*. New York: Benjamin Blom.

Jacobsen, Thorkild. 1976. *Treasures of Darkness: A History of Mesopotamian Religion*. New Haven, CN: Yale University Press
Cross, Frank Moore. 1973. *Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic: Essays in the History of the Religion of Israel*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard U. Press

Day, John. 1989. *Molech: A god of human sacrifice in the Old Testament*. University of Cambridge Oriental Publications No. 41. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

Levenson, Jon D. 1988. *Creation and the Persistence of Evil*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press
Smith, Mark S. 1990. *The Early History of God: Yahweh and the Other Deities in Ancient Israel*. San Francisco, CA: Harper & Row

Smith, Mark S. 2001. *The Origins of Biblical Monotheism: Israel's Polytheistic Background and the Ugaritic Texts*. New York: Oxford University Press
Forsyth, Neil. 1987. *The Old Enemy: Satan and the Combat Myth*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press

Wolfe, Rolland Emerson. 1982. *The Twelve Religions of the Bible. Studies in the Bible and Early Christianity, Volume 2*. New York: Edwin Mellen Press

Wolfe, Rolland Emerson. 1951. *Men of Prophetic Fire*. Boston: Beacon Press

Pagels, Elaine. 1988. *Adam, Eve, and the Serpent*. New York: Vintage Books and Random House

Pagels, Elaine. 1995. *The Origin of Satan*. New York: Vintage Random House

Armstrong, Karen. 1993. *A History of God: The 4,000-Year Quest of Judaism, Christianity and Islam*. New York: Ballantine Books

Miles, Jack. 1995. *God: A Biography*. New York: Vintage

Israel and the Classical World in the Time of Jesus and the Early Church.

Books on Jesus often include material on John the Baptist; I got most of my ideas from Sanders and Crossan. Pagels' work is listed below. This topic should include the ideas and institutions that the Jews have given the world but space prevents a good list; see Cahill below. See "Scholarly Works About Jesus" and "The Early Church" below. See Geza Vermes below. Lane Fox is a non-believer historian.

“The Unauthorized Version” is his translation of the NT, in which he gives historical background to the story. Rodney Stark and his co-workers are an industry, in a good way. He is a sociologist with a keen religious feeling.

Sanders, E.P. 1985. *Jesus and Judaism*. Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press

Sanders, E.P. 1992. *Judaism: Practice and Belief: 63 BCE – 66 CE*. Philadelphia, PA; Trinity Press International

Cahill, Thomas. 1998. *The Gifts of the Jews*. New York: Anchor Books

Gillman, N. 1997. *The Death of Death: Resurrection and Immortality in Jewish Thought*. Woodstock, VT: Jewish Lights Publishing

Hengel, Martin. 1980. *Jews, Greeks, and Barbarians: Aspects of the Hellenization of Judaism in the Pre-Christian Period*. London: SCM Press Ltd.

Lane Fox, Robin. 1986. *Pagans and Christians*. New York: Alfred Knopf

Lane Fox, Robin. 1992. *The Unauthorized Version: Truth and Fiction in the Bible*. New York: Alfred Knopf

Lohfink, Gerhard. 1982 (translated 1984). *Jesus and Community: The Social Dimensions of Christian Faith*. Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press, New York: Paulist Press

Neyrey, Jerome H. (editor). 1991. *The Social World of Luke-Acts*. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers

Oakman, Douglas. 1986. *Jesus and the Economic Questions of His Day*. *Studies in the Bible and Early Christianity* Volume 8. Lewiston, ID: Edwin Mellen Press

Stark, Rodney. 1996. *The Rise of Christianity: A Sociologist Reconsiders History*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press

Taylor, Joan E. 1997. *The Immerser: John the Baptist within Second Temple Judaism*. Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company

Thiessen, Gerd. 1991. *The Gospels in Context. Social and Political History in the Synoptic Tradition*. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press

Textual Biblical Criticism and the History of the New Testament.

See Friedman above for the Tanakh. The books here are listed in order of recommended reading. Textual critics do not necessarily deny the Bible is the inspired word of God but they take seriously that it was written by mere people with a point of view and finite skills, and that it is a constructed document with a history. Conservatives often dislike textual criticism. Later sections give the Conservative view. Books on the life of Jesus are given below. Bart Ehrman started as a Conservative scholar and then

became skeptical. Kloppenborg is for specialists but not so much that you cannot get the sense of the situation from him. The gaudy titles of some of the books do not reflect their good content.

Throckmorton, Burton Jr. 1992. *Gospel Parallels: A Comparison of the Synoptic Gospels*. Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers

Riches, John K. 1993. *A Century of New Testament Study*. Valley Forge, PA: Trinity Press International

Pelikan, Jaroslav. 2005. *Whose Bible Is It? A History of the Scriptures through the Ages*. New York: Viking

Mack, Burton. 1996. *Who Wrote the New Testament? The Making of the Christian Myth*. San Francisco: Harper One

Thusesen, Peter J. 1999. *In Discordance with the Scriptures: American Protestant Battles Over Translating the Bible*. Oxford: Oxford University Press

Ehrman, Bart D. 2003. *Lost Scriptures: Books that Did Not Make It into the New Testament*. Oxford: Oxford University Press

Ehrman, Bart D. 2005. *Misquoting Jesus: The Story Behind Who Changed the Bible and Why*. San Francisco: Harper San Francisco (Harper Collins)

Kloppenborg, John S. 2000. *Excavating Q: The History and Setting of the Sayings Gospel*. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press

Borg, Marcus, Thomas Moore, Mark Powelson, and Ray Riegert (editors). 1996. *The Lost Gospel Q: The Original Sayings of Jesus*. Berkeley, CA: Ulysses Press

Mack, Burton L. 1993. *The Lost Gospel: The Book of Q and Christian Origins*. San Francisco: Harper San Francisco, Harper Collins

Dart, John and Ray Riegert. 1998. *Unearthing the Lost Words of Jesus: The Discovery and Text of the Gospel of Thomas*. Berkeley, CA: Seastone, Ulysses Press

Mayer, Marvin W. 1984. *The Secret Teachings of Jesus: Four Gnostic Gospels*. New York: Vintage

Vermes, Geza. 1977. *The Dead Sea Scrolls: Qumran in Perspective*. New York: Collins

O'Connor, Kathleen M. 1988. *The Wisdom Literature*. Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, A Michael Glazier Book

Books about Jesus, Mostly Liberal.

Liberal scholarship came from the need to understand Jesus apart from any dogmatic bias. Liberals do not believe that dogma is necessarily wrong. They simply want to understand Jesus free from preconceptions, according to the best evidence. Modern textual scholarship on the Bible and related

Christian materials came along with a movement to find the “historical Jesus”. Good scholars, Conservative and Liberal, are honest about the limits of our knowledge of the historical Jesus. Our knowledge is less than we want but more than we might have expected. The search for the historical Jesus naturally led to looking at Jesus as a Jew, in the context of the Judaism of Jesus’ time. The modern quest began in the 1700s. I do not cite from before about 1975 because to do so would open a door that I could not close. Crossan is a key figure. He can assemble huge amounts of material, present it gracefully, and aim it at lay readers, but scholars have to consider it.

Crossan, John Dominic. 1991. *The Historical Jesus: The Life of a Mediterranean Jewish Peasant*. San Francisco: Harper Collins

Crossan, John Dominic. 1994. *Jesus: A Revolutionary Biography*. San Francisco: Harper Collins

Crossan, John Dominic and Richard G. Watts. 1996. *Who is Jesus? Answers to Your Questions About the Historical Jesus*. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press

Betz, Otto. 1968. *What Do We Know About Jesus*. Philadelphia, PA: Westminster Press.

Brandon, S.G.F. 1967. *Jesus and the Zealots: A Study of the Political Factor in Primitive Christianity*. New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons.

Borg, Marcus. 1984. *Conflict, Holiness and Politics in the Teachings of Jesus*. Studies in the Bible and Early Christianity Volume 5. New York: Edwin Mellen Press

Borg, Marcus. 1987. *Jesus: A New Vision*. San Francisco, CA: Harper and Row

Borg, Marcus. 1994a. *Jesus in Contemporary Scholarship*. Valley Forge, PA: Trinity Press International.

Borg, Marcus. 1994b. *Meeting Jesus Again for the First Time: The Historical Jesus and the Heart of Contemporary Faith*. New York: Harper Collins

Borg, Marcus. 1997. *Jesus and Buddha: The Parallel Sayings*. Berkeley, CA: Seastone Ulysses Press

Fredriksen, Paula. 1988. *From Jesus to Christ: The Origins of the New Testament Images of Jesus*. New Haven, CN: Yale University Press

Horsley, Richard. 1987. *Jesus and the Spiral of Violence: Popular Jewish Resistance in Roman Palestine*. San Francisco: Harper and Row.

Oakman, Douglas E. *Jesus and the Economic Questions of His Day*. Studies in the Bible and Early Christianity Volume 8. Lewiston: The Edwin Mellen Press

Pelikan, Jaroslav. 2005. *Jesus Through the Centuries, and Mary Through the Centuries* (two volumes in one). New York: History Book Club

Prothero, Stephen. 2003. *American Jesus: How the Son of God Became a National Icon*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux

Riley, Gregory J. 1989. *One Jesus, Many Christs: How Jesus Inspired Not One True Christianity but Many: The Truth About Christian Origins*. San Francisco: Harper San Francisco

Riley, Gregory J. 2001. *The River of God: A New History of Christian Origins*. San Francisco, CA: Harper San Francisco

Spong, John Shelby. 1991. *Rescuing the Bible from Fundamentalism*. San Francisco: Harper Collins

Spong, John Shelby. 1994. *Resurrection, Myth or Reality? A Bishop's Search for the Origins of Christianity*. San Francisco: Harper Collins

Spong, John Shelby. 1996. *Liberating the Gospels: Reading the Bible with Jewish Eyes: Freeing Jesus from 2000 Years of Misunderstanding*. San Francisco, CA: Harper Collins, Harper San Francisco

Spong, John Shelby. 2001. *A New Christianity for a New World: Why Traditional Faith is Dying And How a New Faith is Being Born*. San Francisco: Harper Collins

Spong, John Shelby. 2005. *The Sins of Scripture: Exposing the Bible's Texts of Hate to Reveal the God of Love*. San Francisco: Harper Collins

White, L. Michael. 2004. *From Jesus to Christianity: How Four Generations of Visionaries and Storytellers Created the New Testament and Christian Faith*. San Francisco: Harper Collins

Books about Jesus, Mostly Conservative.

Tens of thousands support the standard orthodox picture of Jesus. These few books only sample them. These books also are relevant to the early Church. Begin with Brown. Thiessen's "The Shadow of the Galilean" is a novelized account of Jesus; it is fun. C.S. Lewis (Clive Staples) is in a class by himself. I recommend anything he wrote so I do not cite particulars here.

Brown, Raymond E. 1994. *An Introduction to New Testament Christology*. New York: Paulist Press

Meier, John P. 1991. *A Marginal Jew: Rethinking the Historical Jesus: Volume One: The Roots of the Problem and the Person*. New York: Doubleday

Meier, John P. 1994. *A Marginal Jew: Rethinking the Historical Jesus: Volume Two: Mentor, Message, and Miracles*. New York: Doubleday

Meier, John P. 2001. *A Marginal Jew: Rethinking the Historical Jesus: Volume Three: Companions and Competitors*. New York: Doubleday

Chilton, Bruce (editor). 1984a. *The Kingdom of God in the Teachings of Jesus*. *Issues in Religion and*

Theology Volume 5. Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press

Chilton, Bruce. 1984b. *A Galilean Rabbi and His Bible: Jesus' Own Interpretation of Isaiah*. London: SPCK

Chilton, Bruce. 1992. *The Temple of Jesus: His Sacrificial Program within a Cultural History of Sacrifice*. University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press

De Jong, Marinus. 1991. *Jesus, the Servant-Messiah*. New Haven, CN: Yale University Press

Hengel, Martin. 1973. *Victory over Violence: Jesus and the Revolutionists*. Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press

Hengel, Martin. 1981a (1968). *The Charismatic Leader and His Followers*. New York: Crossroads

Hurtado, Larry. 1988. *One God, One Lord: Early Christian Devotion and Ancient Jewish Monotheism*. Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press

Hurtado, Larry. 2003. *Lord Jesus Christ: Devotion to Jesus in Earliest Christianity*. Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company

Jeremias, Joachim. 1963. *The Sermon on the Mount*. Facet Books Biblical Series 2. Philadelphia: Fortress Press

Jeremias, Joachim. 1966. *Rediscovering the Parables*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons

Jeremias, Joachim. 1971. *New Testament Theology: the Proclamation of Jesus*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons

Jeremias, Joachim. 1981. *The Central Message of the New Testament*. Philadelphia: Fortress Press

Johnson, Luke Timothy. 1981. *Sharing Possessions: Mandate and Symbol of Faith*. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press

Johnson, Luke Timothy. 1996. *The Real Jesus: The Misguided Quest for the Historical Jesus and the Truth of the Traditional Gospels*. San Francisco, CA: Harper San Francisco

Johnson, Luke Timothy. 1998. *Religious Experience in Earliest Christianity: A Missing Dimension in New Testament Studies*. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press

Meyer, Ben. 1979. *The Aims of Jesus*. London: SCM Press

Riches, John. 1980. *Jesus and the Transformation of Judaism*. New York: Seabury Press

Thiessen, Gerd. 1983. *Miracles Stories of the Early Christian Tradition*. Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press

Thiessen, Gerd. 1991. *The Open Door: Variations on Biblical Themes*. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press

Thiessen, Gerd. 1987. *The Shadow of the Galilean: The Quest of the Historical Jesus in Narrative Form*. London: SCM Press

Witherington, Ben III. 1990. *The Christology of Jesus*. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press

Witherington, Ben III. 1994. *Jesus the Sage: The Pilgrimage of Wisdom*. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press

Witherington, Ben III. 1995. *The Jesus Quest: The Third Search for the Jew of Nazareth*. Downer's Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press

Wright, N.T. (Nicholas Thomas). 1992. *Christian Origins and the Question of God: Volume One: The New Testament and the People of God*. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press

Wright, N.T. (Nicholas Thomas). 1996. *Christian Origins and the Question of God: Volume Two: Jesus and the Victory of God*. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press

Wright, N.T. (Nicholas Thomas). 2003. *Christian Origins and the Question of God: Volume Three: The Resurrection of the Son of God*. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press

Geza Vermes: Jesus the Jew.

The general public probably became aware of the Jewish roots of Jesus with the book "Jesus the Jew" by Geza Vermes. He also did work on the Dead Sea Scrolls and Qumran. Although Vermes' books repeat a bit, each is different enough that it is worth reading at least two. "The Changing Faces of Jesus" presents various "mostly-is". "The Authentic Gospel of Jesus" seems like Vermes' attempt to distill the "all-about". He explores questions such as what Jesus meant when he used the phrase "Son of Man".

Vermes, Geza. 1973. *Jesus the Jew: A Historian's Reading of the Gospels*. London: Collins

Vermes, Geza. 1983. *Jesus and the World of Judaism*. Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press

Vermes, Geza. 1993. *The Religion of Jesus the Jew*. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press

Vermes, Geza. 2000. *The Changing Faces of Jesus*. New York: Penguin

Vermes, Geza. 2003. *The Authentic Gospel of Jesus*. London: Allen Lane, Penguin Books

The Early Church, and Paul.

Liberals and Conservatives are mixed here. Church historians now tend to borrow ideas from sociology, anthropology, history, etc; usually they borrow badly. To most readers, church histories are boring. I include some of the more readable standard histories. As a sociologist, Stark does not suffer from the

problem of borrowed ideas and he works with basic material well. Start with Sanders, Crossan, Stark, and Meeks, in that order. Aquilina's popular book asserts that the early mass reflected ideas from Jesus and/or his early followers that Jesus was divine. Fredriksen explains how Jesus' identity was constructed by particular groups for their reasons. Jaroslav Pelikan wrote about early Church history and edited many books on the subject. The book edited and translated by Stanforth and Louth contains large portions of the "Didache", from about 90-120 CE (AD). The Didache was a manual for daily Christian life. It could still be the manual for many a small church today. Peter Brown writes mostly about the Church in later Antiquity, from 150 to about 600 CE.

Aquilina, Mike. 2001. *The Mass of the Early Christians*. Huntington, IN: Our Sunday Visitor Publishing

Brown, Peter. 1988. *Body and Society: Men, Women, and Sexual Renunciation in Early Christianity*. New York: Columbia University Press

Brown, Peter. 2002. *Poverty and Leadership in the Later Roman Empire*. Hanover, NH: University Press of New England

Brown, Peter. 1995. *Authority and the Sacred: Aspects of the Christianization of the Roman World*. New York: Cambridge University Press

Brown, Peter. 1978. *Making of Late Antiquity*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press

Brown, Peter. 1967. *Augustine of Hippo*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press

Brown, Raymond E. and John P. Meier. 1983. *Antioch and Rome*. New York: Paulist Press

Brown, Raymond E. 1984. *The Churches the Apostles Left Behind*. New York: Paulist Press

Brown, Raymond E. 1979. *The Community of the Beloved Disciple: The Life, Loves, and Hates of an Individual Church in New Testament Times*. New York: Paulist Press

Brown, Raymond E. 1994. *An Introduction to New Testament Christology*. New York: Paulist Press

Crossan, John Dominic. 1998. *The Birth of Christianity: Discovering What Happened in the Years Immediately After the Execution of Jesus*. San Francisco: Harper San Francisco, Harper Collins

Crossan, John Dominic and Jonathan L. Reed. 2004. *In Search of Paul: How Jesus' Apostle Opposed Rome's Empire with God's Kingdom: A New Vision of Paul's Words and World*. San Francisco: Harper San Francisco, Harper Collins

Fredriksen, Paula. 1988. *From Jesus to Christ: The Origins of the New Testament Images of Jesus*. New Haven, CN: Yale University Press

Hengel, Martin. 1979. *Earliest Christianity, containing two books: Acts and History of Earliest Christianity, and Property and Riches in the Early Church*. London: SCM Press Ltd.

Hengel, Martin. 1980. *Jews, Greeks, and Barbarians: Aspects of the Hellenization of Judaism in the Pre-Christian Period*. London: SCM Press Ltd.

Hengel, Martin. 1981a (1968). *The Charismatic Leader and His Followers*. New York: Crossroads

Hengel, Martin. 1981b. *The Atonement: The Origins of the Doctrine in the New Testament*. Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press

Hengel, Martin. 1983. *Between Jesus and Paul: Studies in the Earliest History of Christianity*. London: SCM Press Ltd.

Jurgens, William A. (editor and translator). 1970. *The Faith of the Early Fathers, Volume 1*. Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press

Jurgens, William A. (editor and translator). 1979a. *The Faith of the Early Fathers, Volume 2*. Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press

Jurgens, William A. (editor and translator). 1979b. *The Faith of the Early Fathers, Volume 3*. Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press

Lane Fox, Robin. 1986. *Pagans and Christians*. New York: Alfred Knopf

Lohfink, Gerhard. 1982. *Jesus and Community: The Social Dimensions of Christian Faith*. Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press

Maccoby, Hyam. 1986. *The Mythmaker: Paul and the Invention of Christianity*. London: Weidenfeld and Nicholson

Meeks, Wayne A. 1983. *The First Urban Christians: The Social World of the Apostle Paul*. New Haven, CN: Yale University Press

Meeks, Wayne A. 1986. *The Moral World of the First Christians*. Philadelphia: Westminster Press

Meeks, Wayne A. 1993. *The Origins of Christian Morality: The First Two Centuries*. New Haven, CN: Yale University Press

Neyrey, Jerome H. (editor). 1991. *The Social World of Luke-Acts*. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers

Pagels, Elaine. 1975. *The Gnostic Paul: Gnostic Exegesis of the Pauline Letters*. Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International

Sanders, E.P. 1977. *Paul and Palestinian Judaism: A Comparison of Patterns of Religion*. Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press

Sanders, E.P. 1983. Paul, the Law, and the Jewish People. Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press

Sanders, E.P. 1991. Paul. New York, Oxford University Press. (small popular book)

Stanforth, Maxwell and Andrew Louth (editors and translators). 1968 (1987). Early Christian Writings: The Apostolic Fathers. London: Penguin

Stark, Rodney. 1996. The Rise of Christianity: A Sociologist Reconsiders History. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press

Thiessen, Gerd. 1978. Sociology of Early Palestinian Christianity. Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Pr

Thiessen, Gerd. 1983. Miracles Stories of the Early Christian Tradition. Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press

Thiessen, Gerd. 1991a. The Gospels in Context: Social and Political History in the Synoptic Tradition. Minneapolis: Fortress Press

Thiessen, Gerd. 1991b. The Open Door: Variations on Biblical Themes. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press

Verhey, Allen. 1984. The Great Reversal: Ethics and the New Testament. Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company

Elaine Pagels and Elizabeth Schussler Fiorenza.

Pagels and Schussler Fiorenza advance an idea with which I have sympathy but I do not agree with their apparent solution. The vision of Jesus in standard Orthodox Christianity is not the only possible vision of Jesus. It is not the only vision of Jesus that was current during his time, and is not the only vision now. The dominant vision that we know now was inherited from one group that gained control of the early Church after Jesus. It was not completed until the 400s CE (AD). The vision from that one group of Jesus' followers had rivals for hundreds of years afterwards, and it has rivals now. The Church constructed the standard vision in part to serve the needs of institutions and men (not women). The Church suppressed other versions, even reasonable alternatives such as that Jesus was a prophet and that Jesus is not the same as God the Father. If we appreciate this situation by knowing some rival visions, then we are not trapped in the standard Orthodox vision. We can search for the truth. No one version necessarily offers the whole truth by itself. To open our minds, Pagels offers Gnostic visions while Schussler Fiorenza offers Wisdom visions. Wisdom refers to Emanation wherein Jesus is the agent of Wisdom, a close aspect of the highest God. Wisdom is often personified as a woman so thus Jesus is the agent of a female high deity. Gnosticism features women who could grasp the secret true message of Jesus.

Like other writers, conservative and liberal, Pagels and Schussler Fiorenza offer their work as scholarly work but they also offer it as theology, seemingly pop theology. They use their work to present their idea of Jesus. It is hard to draw the line and know what to conclude. I think the early Church adopted the standard version of Jesus because it was superior to most – but not all – of the alternatives, including Gnosticism and Wisdom. Pagels and Schussler Fiorenza show we need not accept the standard vision

of Jesus but I am not sure if they encourage us to accept an alternative. I am not sure if they encourage us to accept Gnosticism or Wisdom. I hope not, because those are worse than the standard vision. Even if Gnosticism and Wisdom sometimes extol women and so are politically correct right now, they are still wrong, we can do better, and should. The Church was wrong to suppress reasonable alternatives; but that is in the past. If we cannot accept the standard vision, we have to offer better alternative visions, and we should do it plainly. If Pagels and Schussler Fiorenza support Gnosticism and Wisdom, I wish they would say so plainly, and say why. If they reject the standard vision but do not offer Gnosticism or Wisdom as an alternative, then they have to offer some clear vision of Jesus to replace the standard vision, including descriptions of Jesus' intent, mostly-is, and all-about.

Pagels, Elaine. 1975. *The Gnostic Paul: Gnostic Exegesis of the Pauline Letters*. Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International

Pagels, Elaine. 1979. *The Gnostic Gospels*. New York: Vintage Books and Random House

Pagels, Elaine. 1988. *Adam, Eve, and the Serpent*. New York: Vintage Books and Random House

Pagels, Elaine. 1995. *The Origin of Satan*. New York: Vintage Random House

Schussler Fiorenza, Elizabeth. 1994 (1983). *In Memory of Her: A Feminist Theological Reconstruction of Christian Origins*. New York: Crossroad

Schussler Fiorenza, Elisabeth. 1995 (1994). *Jesus: Miriam's Child, Sophia's Prophet: Critical Issues in Feminist Christology*. New York: Continuum

Schussler Fiorenza, Elisabeth. 1998. *The Book of Revelation: Justice and Judgment*. Philadelphia: Fortress Press

Pomeroy, Sarah B. 1975. *Goddesses, Whores, Wives, and Slaves: Women in Classical Antiquity*. New York: Schocken Books

Warner, Marina. 1976. *Alone of All Her Sex: The Myth and the Cult of the Virgin Mary*. New York: Vintage Random House

O'Connor, Kathleen M. 1988. *The Wisdom Literature*. Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, A Michael Glazier Book

Slight Apology for Roman Catholicism.

Here are items from Roman Catholic apologetics. Although C.S. Lewis was not a Roman Catholic, his theology approaches Roman Catholic theology. Chesterton was Roman Catholic, and just about as much fun to read as Lewis. A website offers many of his works for free. Search his name. The Roman Catholic Church of North America maintains a TV station, with call letters EWTV, or "Eternal Wisdom Television". I could only get it through cable. One show offered testimonials from people who had converted to Roman Catholicism from non-belief or another religion. Pay attention to the mutual role of

tradition and the Bible in Roman Catholicism.

Aquilina, Mike. 2001. *The Mass of the Early Christians*. Huntington, IN: Our Sunday Visitor Publishing

Chesterton, G.K. 1933 (1965). *Saint Thomas Aquinas: "The Dumb Ox"*. New York: Image Books, Doubleday

Currie, David B. 1996. *Born Fundamentalist, Born Catholic Again*. San Francisco: Ignatius Press

Keating, Karl. 1992. *What Catholics Really Believe – Setting the Record Straight: 52 Answers to Common Misconceptions About the Catholic Faith*. San Francisco: Ignatius Press

Keating, Karl. 1988. *Catholicism and Fundamentalism: The Attack on "Romanism" by "Bible Christians"*. San Francisco: Ignatius Press

Madrid, Patrick. 1994. *Surprised by Truth: Eleven Converts Give the Biblical and Historical Reasons for Becoming Catholic*. San Diego, CA: Basilica Press

Madrid, Patrick. 2001. *Where is That in the Bible?* Huntington, IN: Our Sunday Visitor Publishing

Another Suggestion from Television.

I cannot watch most televangelists for more than ten minutes at a time, with one exception. Joyce Meyer wants to help people lead better lives in the modern world. She has a good sense of what is important to normal people. She uses her experiences, the experiences of friends and acquaintances, and references from the Bible to help people understand what is going on and to find a workable response. She does not tolerate nonsense. She is not a theologian and is not much interested in putting other people down. You meet strong women like her in the working world. I cannot vouch for her projects, charities, and promotions. Watch several complete shows before dismissing her.

Even with her references to the Bible, and her obvious piety, the advice she gives is not particularly and only Christian. An open-minded and slightly Conservative Jew, Hindu, Muslim, Buddhist, and Confucian would have no trouble with her. All they need do is ignore any demands to believe in Jesus as the one-and-only-God. Her advice is based on old ideas of family, civic responsibility, personal responsibility, and helping other people; these ideas run through all religions. She is solidly in the modern moderate family values camp. This observation does not lessen her Christian devotion. It merely points out what religion is all about for most people and the good role that all religion can play sometimes.

Sympathy for the Devil.

People not only interpret the mostly-is of Jesus to suit their needs, they also interpret evil and the Devil to suit their needs. The Devil seems more important in some versions of Christianity than Jesus. The Devil plays almost no role in the Tanakh. Ideas about him developed only a few hundred years before Jesus, long after the major books of the Tanakh were written. Ideas about the Devil continued to develop throughout history. Jesus did not see the Devil

Morality and Ethics. as modern people see him. Modern ideas of evil and the Devil take many forms depending on the people who see him, dwell on him, or deny him. The following works, primarily by Russell, summarize the ideas and their history. See early Middle Eastern religion above.

Pagels, Elaine. 1988. *Adam, Eve, and the Serpent*. New York: Vintage Books and Random House

Pagels, Elaine. 1995. *The Origin of Satan*. New York: Vintage Random House

Russell, Jeffrey Barton. 1977. *The Devil: Perceptions of Evil from Antiquity to Primitive Christianity*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press

Russell, Jeffrey Barton. 1981. *Satan: The Early Christian Tradition*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press

Russell, Jeffrey Barton. 1984. *Lucifer: The Devil in the Middle Ages*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press

Russell, Jeffrey Barton. 1986. *Mephistopheles: The Devil in the Modern World*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press

It is not worthwhile suggesting any particular readings. It is better to be familiar with the important authors. The basic authors are often collected. Most anthologies present the same authors, ideas, and readings, and particular anthologies rapidly go out of print, so it is not worthwhile to suggest any. Look for them at thrift stores, used book stores, and on the Internet. Get more than one anthology. Get at least one that includes foundation texts such as the Code of Hammurabi and selections from the Tanakh, and includes foundation authors such as Plato and Aristotle. Get at least one that includes Hume, Kant, Bentham, John Stuart Mill, G.E. Moore, and John Rawls. Get at least one that focuses on modern issues such as poverty, abortion, and torture. Get an anthology that focuses on Medieval authors such as St. Thomas Aquinas. I learned much from non-Western traditions such as the Indian shastras, Buddhist sutras, or in Confucianism, but anthologies of those works are not as available and can be more expensive. Sometimes publishers develop series of small focused books on particular topics in ethics, philosophy, and religion.

Modern Atheists.

Atheism is a large topic on the Internet. The following few works are only some modern militant atheists, in particular those who understand Darwinism or who have a view of human nature that might be compatible with Darwinism. Dawkins' "The Ancestor's Tale" gives a synopsis of evolution on Earth and shows how evolution can account for any trait. He wrote several similar books but each is distinct enough to be worthwhile; some are famous. Sadly, Christopher Hitchens died just before I revised this book.

Buckman, R. 2000. *Can We Be Good Without God?* Toronto: Viking

Cupitt, Don. 1997. *After God: The Future of Religion*. New York: Basic Books, Harper Collins

Dawkins, Richard. 2004. *The Ancestor's Tale: A Pilgrimage to the Dawn of Evolution*. With additional

research by Yan Wong. New York: Houghton Mifflin

Dawkins, Richard. 2006. *The God Delusion*. New York: Houghton Mifflin

Dennet, Daniel C. 1995. *Darwin's Dangerous Idea: Evolution and the Meanings of Life*. New York: Simon and Schuster

Dennett, Daniel C. 2006. *Breaking the Spell: Religion as a Natural Phenomenon*. New York: Viking (Penguin)

Harris, Sam. 2004. *The End of Faith: Religion, Terror, and the Future of Reason*. New York: W.W. Norton and Company

Hitchens, Christopher. 1995. *The Missionary Position: Mother Teresa in Theory and Practice*. New York: Verso

Hitchens, Christopher (editor). 2007. *The Portable Atheist: Essential Readings for the Nonbeliever*. New York: Da Capo Press

Hitchens, Christopher. 2009. *God is Not Great: How Religion Poisons Everything*. New York: Twelve

Kennedy, L. 1999. *All in the Mind: A Farewell to God*. London: Hodder and Stroughton

Maher, Bill. 2008. The movie "Religulously".

Mills, D. 2006. *Atheist Universe: The Thinking Person's Answer to Christian Fundamentalism*. Berkeley: Ulysses Books

Background to Evolution.

I take evolution for granted. It is not useful to read about the evolution of the capacities for religion and morality until you have decent background in modern biological ideas and human biology. You can get that from the books in the first subsection without feeling as if you are back in school. This section does not include scientists and philosophers who take facts seriously but still believe in God – see the next section. Although Wilson's pioneering text on Sociobiology is old now, it is fun to read and still a good introduction. Trivers is a good textbook by a pioneer, dated but still useful. Lee is not about evolution as such. Instead, it is a classic ethnography that gives one of the best glimpses of what human life might have been like while we evolved and gives an honest view of real human character. I omit books on the emotions, and on the intelligence and moral abilities of non-human animals.

Background.

Dawkins (2004) and Dennett (1995) provide some background. See above and below.

Wilson, E.O. 1975. *Sociobiology*. Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press

Trivers, R.L. 1985. *Social Evolution*. Menlo Park, CA: Benjamin / Cummings

Ridley, Matt. 1994. *The Red Queen: Sex and the Evolution of Human Nature*. New York: Macmillan Publishing Company

Game Theory.

Williams, J.D. 1986 (1966). *The Compleat Strategyst: Being a Primer on the Theory of Games of Strategy*. New York: Dover

Axelrod, Robert. 1984. *The Evolution of Cooperation*. New York: Basic Books

Maynard Smith, John. 1982. *Evolution and the Theory of Games*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

Frank, Robert. 1988. *Passions Within Reason: The Strategic Role of the Emotions*. New York: Norton

Human Evolution.

Dunbar, Robin. 2004. *The Human Story: A New History of Mankind's Evolution*. London: Faber and Faber

Lee, Richard B. 2003. *The Dobe Ju/'Hoansi (Third Edition, not all editions have the same name)*. New York: Wadsworth

Argument from Design.

The "argument from design" far predates modern ideas of Darwinian evolution. Modern Christian "Intelligent Design" is a bad corruption of the idea; avoid it. Not all supporters of the argument from design support a personal God; Einstein believed in God but not a stereotypical personal God. I do not sort out various flavors of the argument. The items here focus on modern versions. I do not cite works against the argument; see modern atheists above. Polkinghorne and Rees are respected natural scientists. Once you find any of these books on the Internet, you will be led to many dozens more.

Breuer, Reinhard. 1991. *The Anthropic Principle: Man as the Focal Point of Nature*. Boston: Birkhauser

Davies, Paul. 1993. *The Mind of God: The Scientific Basis for a Rational World*. New York: Touchstone

Davies, Paul. 2008. *The Goldilocks Enigma: Why is the Universe Just Right for Life? (Originally published as "The Cosmic Jackpot")*. New York: Mariner Book Reprints

Ferris, Timothy. 1998. *The Whole Shebang: A State-of-the-Universe(s) Report*. New York: Simon and Schuster

Glynn, P. 1999. *God - the Evidence: The Reconciliation of Faith and Reason in a Postsecular World*.

Rocklin, CA: Prima Publishing

Polkinghorne, J. 1998. *Belief in God in an Age of Science*. New Haven, CN: Yale U. Press

Rees, Martin. 1999. *Just Six Numbers*. London: Weidenfeld and Nicholson

Rees, M. 2000. *Our Cosmic Habitat*. London: Weidenfeld and Nicholson

Evolution of the Capacities for Religion and Morality.

Some of these books also explain the general ideas of evolution, such as Miller (2000). The literature on this topic is now quite large. I stick to a few mostly popular books that summarize the ideas. I suggest starting with Ridley (1996). Then go to Hinde; his work is aimed at scholars but is engaging and gives balanced descriptions. Pascal Boyer's work is aimed at scholars but is easy to read and he is a pioneer in merging ideas about human perception with ideas about religion. Hamer is not about genetic determinism; it is about some of the biological roots of religious vision; the title is sensationalist while the material inside is sound. For emotions, see Frank above. The edited books by Voland, Schiefenovel, and Feierman, are collections of recent essays on various topics. They serve both to sum up and to introduce the most recent thinking. The section ends with Rodney Stark so that you can decide for yourself about the role of human nature in the spread and maintenance of religion. Ridley and Hinde are good introductions to Stark.

Boyer, Pascal. 1994. *The Naturalness of Religious Ideas: A Cognitive Theory of Religion*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press

Boyer, Pascal. 2001. *Religion Explained: The Evolutionary Origins of Religious Thought*. New York: Basic Books

Broom, Donald M. 2003. *The Evolution of Morality and Religion*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

Hamer, Dean. 2004. *The God Gene: How Faith is Hardwired Into Our Genes*. New York: Doubleday

Hinde, Robert A. 1999. *Why Gods Persist: A Scientific Approach to Religion*. London: Routledge

Hinde, R.A. 2002. *Why Good Is Good: The Sources of Morality*. London: Routledge

Joyce, Richard. 2006. *The Evolution of Morality*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press

McClenon, James. 2002. *Wondrous Healing: Shamanism, Human Evolution and the Origin of Religion*. DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press

Miller, Geoffrey. 2000. *The Mating Mind: How Sexual Choice Shaped the Evolution of Human Nature*. New York: Doubleday

Ridley, Matt. 1996. *The Origins of Virtue*. New York: Viking Press / Penguin Books

Rue, Loyal. 2005. Religion is Not about God. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press

Wright, Robin. 1994. The Moral Animal: The New Science of Evolutionary Psychology. New York: Pantheon

Voland, Eckert and Wulf Schiefenovel (editors). 2009. The Biological Evolution of Religious Mind and Behavior. Berlin: Springer-Verlag Feierman,

Jay R. (editor). 2009. The Biology of Religious Behavior: The Evolutionary Origins of Faith and Religion. Santa Barbara, CA: Praeger

Stark, Rodney. 1996. The Rise of Christianity: A Sociologist Reconsiders History. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press

Stark, Rodney and Roger Finke. 2000. Acts of Faith: Explaining the Human Side of Religion. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press

Stark, Rodney. 2001. One True God: Historical Consequences of Monotheism. Princeton: Princeton University Press