

WHAT GLASSES ARE YOU WEARING? READING HEBREW NARRATIVES THROUGH SECOND TEMPLE LENSES

PETER H. DAVIDS*

The Catholic Epistles are variegated works of rhetorical and theological art that call upon various types of *Vorlage*.¹ James, for example, has been repeatedly shown to be very dependent upon the Jesus tradition, particularly the Matthean form of the “Q” tradition, which he cites using the rhetorical technique of *aemulatio*.² This means that the author of James expects that his ideal reader will recognize the source and view the restructuring of the source as an honoring of the source and at the same time a skilled use of the source. First Peter has also been linked to this same tradition, although his dependence is less extensive than that of James.³ Furthermore, it is clear that James and 1 Peter also cite a Greek translation of the Hebrew Scriptures;⁴ both of them, for example, cite Prov 3:34. James makes reference to the Decalogue in James 2, and 1 Peter, who is quite explicit about his Christological hermeneutic (i.e. 1 Pet 1:11), makes use of a collection of texts from the prophets and the Torah in 1 Pet 2:4–10; most significantly, he applies Exod 19:5–6 to his largely Gentile readers. All of this intertextuality⁵ is quite interesting and raises issues about the respective author’s hermeneutic (especially 1 Peter’s hermeneutic), his use of intermediary sources (such as collections of *testimonia* rather than the LXX itself), and his rhetorical strategy. However, so far we have mentioned intertextuality only with materials that would become part of the Christian canon, that is, the LXX and the Gospel tradition.⁶ The same would be true if we

* Peter Davids is visiting professor in Christianity at Houston Baptist University, 7502 Fondren Road, Houston, TX 77074.

¹ This article is an expansion and development of two previously published works: “The Use of Second Temple Traditions in 1 and 2 Peter and Jude,” in *The Catholic Epistles and the Tradition* (ed. Jacques Schlosser; BETL; Leuven: Peeters, 2004) 409–31; and “Tradition and Citation in the Epistle of James,” in *Scripture, Tradition, and Interpretation* (ed. W. Ward Gasque; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1978) 113–39.

² For a further description of this see John S. Kloppenborg. “The Emulation of the Jesus Tradition in the Letter of James,” in *Reading James with New Eyes: Methodological Reassessments of the Letter of James* (ed. John S. Kloppenborg; London/New York: Continuum, 2007).

³ E.g. Rainer Metzner, *Die Rezeption des Matthäusevangeliums im 1. Petrusbrief* (WUNT 2/74; Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1995). Of course, Metzner argues that 1 Peter knows the finished Gospel of Matthew and so is part of Matthew’s reception history, and that stretches his evidence too far.

⁴ While “Septuagint” is historically inaccurate for what James and 1 Peter would have used, it is the form in which we know these Greek translations, so this paper will refer to them as the LXX.

⁵ Of course, the “text” in the case of the Jesus tradition may well be oral, unless, as Kloppenborg argues, it is in fact Q.

⁶ Given the fact that James has often been viewed as wisdom literature and that it appears to use Sirach and probably Wisdom, it is the LXX with which it has an intertextual relationship, not just in the fact that the LXX is a Greek translation, but also in the fact that it preserved literature used by the church that was not preserved in the Hebrew manuscripts (until the DSS gave us a Hebrew manuscripts of some of this literature).

discussed possible intertextuality between Jas 2:14–21 and Pauline texts.⁷ What we have not mentioned is the intertextuality between Second Temple Jewish literature and the Catholic Epistles, and it is this relationship to which the rest of this paper is devoted, for when it comes to the *narrative material* of the Hebrew Scriptures, it is Second Temple literature's version that forms the basis for the teaching in the non-Johannine Catholic Epistles. In fact, there is little evidence of direct contact with the original narratives themselves, either in their Hebrew or in their Greek versions. In other words, Second Temple literature becomes the glasses through which the older narratives are viewed and conceivably, at least in some cases, the only version in which they are known. We shall examine the evidence for this thesis letter by letter.

I. JAMES AND JOB

As the first letter in the Catholic Epistles collection, James⁸ uses narrative material sparingly. He refers to only four characters found in the Hebrew Scriptures: Abraham, Rahab, Job, and Elijah (in that order), but in each case he does so allusively, citing them as an example rather than discussing them in detail. One has to be able to “fill in the blanks” if one is to understand what the use of the narrative means. Given what was noted above about James's use of *aemulatio*, including the fact that it was part of basic rhetorical education, one would expect that James thought that his ideal reader would in fact “fill in the blanks,” recognizing the full story in the form that James knew it. It is clear that this ability is generally lacking in the contemporary church.

When it comes to Abraham, what James explicitly cites is the *'Aqedah*, a narrative that Paul does not mention at all. However, it is often not recognized that James has already made a statement in 1:13 that shows how he is reading Genesis 22. Namely, in 1:13 he writes, *πειράζει δὲ αὐτὸς [ὁ θεὸς] οὐδένα*. However, the *'Aqedah* narrative in the LXX begins in Gen 22:1 with *ὁ θεὸς ἐπείραξεν τὸν Ἀβραάμ*. Either James has not “connected the dots” between his theology and Gen 22:1, or else he is reading the *'Aqedah* narrative through other lenses.⁹ One version of those lenses is found in *Jubilees* 17–18. While *Jubilees* 18 seems to follow the Genesis 22 narrative, 17:15–18 and 18:9, 12 reframe the narrative in terms of Job: there is a

⁷ It would take us far to far afield to discuss what so many take to be an obvious intertextuality and which we, along with Klaus Haaker, among others, find full of problems. See Haaker, “Justification, salut et foi: Étude sur les rapports entre Paul, Jacques et Pierre,” *ETR* 73 (1998) 177–88. The author comes to similar conclusions in Davids, *The Epistle of James: A Commentary on the Greek Text* (NIGTC; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982) 126–30.

⁸ It neither suits the purposes of this article nor is there room here to discuss in what sense James son of Joseph, brother of Jesus, could be the author of this letter. It is clear that he is the implied author; I have discussed my view on actual authorship in Davids, *Epistle of James* 7–22. For the purposes of this article “James” is simply a way of referring to the author.

⁹ It is possible that Heb 11:17 is using similar lenses in that a passive participle is used with no explicit agent. One could supply “by God” with Gen 22:1, but one could, as we shall see, just as easily supply with *Jubilees* “by Satan” or “by Mastema.” In fact, the passive form invites us to do the latter, for it suggests that the author does not wish to make God the agent.

discussion in heaven about Abraham's virtues in which the "Prince Mastema came and he said before God, 'Behold, Abraham loves Isaac, his son Tell him to offer him ... and you will know whether he is faithful in everything' The end result, of course, is, "And the Prince Mastema was shamed."¹⁰ In a sense, *Jubilees* is more explicit than Job in that it clearly states that the figure who originates the test is shamed. Furthermore, since God has made assertions about Abraham, the test is an honor challenge directed towards God, and in that sense it is a test of God. Abraham vindicates God and so is honored, not because God only now knows that he is faithful, since this is the culmination of a number of events that proved his faithfulness, but because God himself has been vindicated. The narrative has been reframed, not by significantly altering the words of the narrative itself (although the Gen 22:1 framework "Then God tested Abraham" is absent), but by putting the narrative into a larger framework that gives it a different meaning. God does not test, Mastema or Satan does.¹¹

We shall move on to Job, only noting briefly that there is evidence that James used both the Abraham and the Rahab examples because some Jewish traditions connected these characters to charity (in the form of hospitality), which is the broader topic of Jas 2:14–26.¹² When it comes to Job, the discussion in James revolves around ὑπομονή in both its nominal and verbal forms. The problem is that neither the verb nor the noun appears in the LXX of Job. Nor would one necessarily attribute this virtue to the Job of canonical Job (cf., e.g., Job 7:11–16; 10:18; 23:3; 30:20–23). This Job does not curse God, but he certainly argues loudly that God has made a mistake. Faithful he is, but patient endurance does not come to mind in reading the text. All this changes, however, when one reads the *Testament of Job*, for the whole work revolves around ὑπομονή (e.g. 1:2; 4:5–4:6; 27:3–27:10; 39:11–39:13). Gone are Job's complaints (it is his wife who complains); present is the hostility of Satan due to Job's great charity. Through it all Job remains so patient that he will not even let a maggot drop prematurely from its burrow in his skin, for Job is sure that God will vindicate him and will himself destroy the maggots. This is the reading of the Job narrative that makes sense of James's reference.¹³

Finally, we have the example of Elijah, who is cited as an example of a person "like us" who prayed. The only problem is that in the canonical text the only time he prays is when the son of the widow of Zarephath dies (1 Kgs 17:20–21). The drought and its end are attributed to his "word." It is a later development in the Elijah legend that adds the "three years and six months" as the period of the drought and that prayer was instrumental in the drought and its end (e.g. 2 Esdr

¹⁰ The translation is that of O. S. Wintermute in James H. Charlesworth, ed., *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha* (Vol. 2; Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1985).

¹¹ Although in Jas 1:13–15 he follows Stoic and perhaps rabbinic tradition and argues that human desire is what makes a situation into a test. However, in 4:7 James reveals that he does see the devil behind the testing.

¹² See R. B. Ward, "The Works of Abraham: James 2:14–26," *HTR* 61 (1968) 283–90.

¹³ Indeed, given what he says about Job, there is no evidence that James has ever read canonical Job.

7:109, not to mention numerous rabbinic passages),¹⁴ and it was this developing legend that made Elijah a familiar figure to James's implied readers.¹⁵

In each of these cases one must be familiar with the Second Temple literature that James is re-presenting if one is to understand why and how he is using the narrative figure originally found in the Hebrew Scriptures. In at least two of these situations the central characteristic in which James is interested is not found in the narrative account in the Hebrew Scriptures. Thus it is clear that James is reading the narrative through the lenses of Second Temple literature; it is not clear that he has read the narratives in the Hebrew Scriptures themselves in either their Hebrew¹⁶ or Greek versions, although in the case of Abraham he does cite Gen 15:6 (but not with the sense that Paul gives to it). This citation may or may not be due to the verse being part of a *testimonia* collection.

II. 1 PETER

First Peter is the next work in the canonical order of the Catholic Epistles. While relatively full of references to the LXX in some ways, it is remarkably free of references to the narratives of the Hebrew Scriptures. This is even true when one comes to 1 Pet 3:6, Sarah calling Abraham "lord." While it is true that she does refer to him as "my lord" in Gen 18:12 (NRSV rightly understanding the meaning as "my husband"), most commentators have found this an unsatisfactory reference in that she says this while she is laughing at YHWH and in turn receives a rebuke from YHWH. The narrative is hardly an example to emulate.¹⁷ Thus some argue that the reference is general and includes Sarah's following Abraham in difficult situations, such as when Abraham called her his sister and allowed her to be taken in Pharaoh's harem in Gen 12:10–15.¹⁸ Yet, while it is true that at least one of the verbs in 1 Peter could be read as indicating a general attitude, there is absolutely no indication in the text of Genesis about her behavior or attitude in any of these situations. She is a textually silent victim, for the text is not interested in her. One might be left with reluctantly saying that at least she did apparently and/or eventually go along with whatever Abraham was doing, so perhaps that could somehow be what 1 Peter says, were it not that there are other far better options. It was Dorothy Sly who noted a decade ago that Sarah was an embarrassment to Hellenistic readers of Genesis, for she was not submissive enough and she even made demands of Abraham, to which he spinelessly (in their eyes) submitted. As a result, Josephus and Philo both reshape the Sarah narrative, either by making it clear that

¹⁴ See Davids, "Tradition and Citation in the Epistle of James" 119–21.

¹⁵ On traditions about Elijah, see Joachim Jeremias, "Ἠλιεὶς," *TDNT* 2:929–30.

¹⁶ We do not know that James can read (or speak) Hebrew at all, for the Semitisms in the text could well be Septuagintalisms.

¹⁷ Although some do see this as the reference, such as E. G. Selwyn, *The First Epistle of St. Peter* (New York: Macmillan, 1969) 185; J. N. D. Kelly, *The Epistles of Peter and of Jude* (London: Adam & Charles Black 1976) 131, and even Lewis R. Donelson, *I and II Peter and Jude: A Commentary* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2010) 92.

¹⁸ E.g. Wayne Grudem, *1 Peter* (TNTC; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988) 141–42.

her demands actually came from God, not from her, or by omitting the offensive narratives.¹⁹ But this reforming of Sarah into a good Hellenistic wife did not end with editing the narratives. As Troy Martin has shown,²⁰ there is a first-century work that has indeed made Sarah into the *ideal* Hellenistic wife, that is, the *Testament of Abraham*. In that work, Sarah (who, like a good Hellenistic wife, remains very much in the background) always addresses Abraham as “my lord,” even though the angel who is the occasion for the dinner she is serving has come for Abraham’s soul. This narrative sounds very much like 1 Peter; that is, he is not referring to the Sarah of Genesis at all, but rather to the Sarah of later Hellenistic reconstruction, all non-Hellenistic warts removed.²¹ In this case, the glasses are all that is significant, for there really is no text in the Hebrew Scriptures at all.

First Peter does mention Noah briefly in 3:20. The reference is so brief that it is difficult to determine which version(s) of the narrative 1 Peter knew. However, it is clear that the reference to the disobedient spirits that precedes the reference to Noah is drawn from parts of *1 Enoch*,²² while the language applied to Noah fits most closely with Josephus (*Ant.* 1.72–75).²³ So the 1 Peter version has language and story elements that come from Second Temple literature rather than the Hebrew Scriptures. It may be, in fact, that Peter is combining more than one telling of the story in Second Temple literature.²⁴

III. JUDE AND 2 PETER

The greatest concentration of references to characters from the narratives of the Hebrew Scriptures is found in 2 Peter and Jude, and it is also these works that illustrate most comprehensively the reading of the Hebrew Scriptures’ narratives through Second Temple lenses.

It is clear that Jude knows Second Temple literature in that his only quotation from any Scripture is a quotation of *1 Enoch* 1:9 in Jude 14–15, but it is the narrative references that capture our interest. In Jude 5, we start a trio of the generation of the Exodus (Exodus and Numbers), the fallen angels of Genesis 6, and Sodom (cf. Genesis 18–19), after which we find a reference to a dispute between the Arch-

¹⁹ Dorothy I. Sly, “1 Peter 3:6b in the light of Philo and Josephus,” *JBL* 110 (1991) 126–29.

²⁰ Troy Martin, “The TestAbr and the Background of 1 Pet 3,6,” *ZNW* 90 (1999) 139–46.

²¹ See further Peter Davids. “A Silent Witness in Marriage: 1 Peter 3:1–7,” in *Discovering Biblical Equality: Complementarity without Hierarchy* (ed. Ronald W. Pierce and Rebecca Merrill Groothuis; Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2004) 224–38.

²² The relatively heavy dependence of 1 Peter on *1 Enoch* has been demonstrated by Robert L. Webb, “The Apocalyptic Perspective of First Peter?” (unpublished Th.M. thesis; Vancouver, BC: Regent College, 1986), but of course it was W. J. Dalton, *Christ’s Proclamation to the Spirits: A Study of 1 Peter 3:18–4:6* (AnBib 23; Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1965; 2d ed. 1989), who provided us with the classic work on the relationship in this particular passage. The most recent work on this passage, Chad T. Pierce, *Spirits and the Proclamation of Christ* (WUNT 2/305; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2011), argues for a more general dependence on Second Temple traditions, but still points out the Second Temple background for the text.

²³ *Jubilees* 5 is also very similar, but not as linguistically similar to 1 Peter as Josephus.

²⁴ See the more detailed discussion in Davids, “Use of Second Temple Traditions” 413–15.

angel Michael and the Devil that probably comes from the *Testament of Moses*.²⁵ Then, in Jude 11, we start another trio consisting of Cain (Genesis 4), Balaam (Numbers 22), Korah (Numbers 16), after which we get the words of Enoch referred to above. While, as indicated, there is some basis in the Hebrew Scriptures for each of the references in the two “triplets,” there is also evidence that each came to Jude through Second Temple traditions. First, each set of names appears in a similar list in Second Temple literature, the first in Sir 16:7–10 and *T. Naphtali* 3:4–5, among other places, and the second starts the list in *t. Sotah* 4:19. Thus there is reason to believe that the selection of names came to Jude pre-formed. Second, while the reference to the generation of the exodus does not differ materially from the Hebrew Scriptures (or the LXX),²⁶ the reference to the fallen angels has elements and emphases that appear in the Enochian tradition and not in the Hebrew Scriptures. The sin of Sodom likewise is interpreted, not as the Hebrew Scriptures do, but as *Jubilees* 16.5–6 and Philo (*de Abrahamo* 135–136) do. It is likely, then, that the source of the triad is Second Temple literature rather than direct mining of the Hebrew Scriptures. The same can be said about the second triad in that Cain is characterized in Jude as he is in Josephus (*Antiquities* 1.52–62) and Philo (*de Posteritate Caini* 38–39) rather than as characterized in the Hebrew Scriptures, Balaam’s motives fit Philo (*de Vita Mosis* I.268, 292–299), *b. Sanhedrin* 105b–106b, and the Targums *Neofiti* and *Ps.-Jonathan* rather than Hebrew Scriptures, and Korah’s rebellion as described in *Ps.-Philo* 16 and *Targ. Ps.-Jonathan* fits the context in Jude better than the description in the Hebrew Scriptures. It is not that Jude used any of these sources, although some predate his writing and could have been his sources, but that they all demonstrate how these traditions were circulating in his world (which we know was an oral-mnemonic rather than a textually oriented world) and therefore why he used them. That is, it was these later traditions rather than the Hebrew Scriptures that appear to have been his impetus.²⁷

Finally, we come to 2 Peter. It is virtually a scholarly consensus that 2 Peter depends upon Jude for all of 2 Peter 2 and at least the first part of 2 Peter 3. And once one understands the rhetorical technique of *aemulatio*, which was noted previously with respect to James, this relationship is strengthened, for it explains both the similarities (e.g. the discussing of the same topics in the same order) and the differences (i.e. while one has significant verbal overlap, one does not have whole verses of Jude quoted verbatim in 2 Peter; sometimes where there is verbal overlap

²⁵ While rooted in the Deut 34:5–8, the account of Moses’ death, the conflict narrative is not even alluded to in the Hebrew Scriptures. Indeed, it is only the Church fathers that identify the *Testament of Moses* as its source, since the ending of that work, which should include it, is lost. However, scholarly literature is basically unanimous on this point.

²⁶ It also does not have anything in it that is unique to the Hebrew Scriptures, including the LXX.

²⁷ There is no convincing evidence that Jude knew Hebrew (see the discussion in Davids, “Second Temple Traditions in 1 and 2 Peter and Jude” 420, n. 27); since all parts of the Jesus movement that we know about used the Hebrew Scriptures, at least in the form that we know now as the LXX, it is likely that Jude’s community did, too. What we are claiming is that his choice of narratives, his interpretation of the narratives, and in some cases details in the narratives depend upon how they are presented in Second Temple traditions.

the root is the same, but the form of the word is different). It is not just that 2 Peter was adapting Jude to a different context and purpose, but that he was making an appropriate use of rhetorical skill in saying the same thing in a way that is recognizable in terms of source but at the same time different in terms of many grammatical constructions.

Furthermore, 2 Peter is conscious of intertextuality. He refers to the misuse of Hebrew prophecy in 1:19–21, he joints the apostles of Jude 17 to these Hebrew prophets in 3:2, and he points to the possible misuse of such Scripture in 3:16. In 1:16–18 he also makes reference to one event in the life of Jesus, being the only NT letter writer to do so if one exempts references to Jesus' passion and resurrection.²⁸ And he knows of Paul's writings and their misuse (3:15–16), although he does not indicate that he has ever heard Paul's oral message.

With all of this reference to intertextuality it is surprising that other than in his eschatological section in chapter 3 and where he overlaps with Jude there is no evidence of his actually citing or alluding to the Hebrew Scriptures.²⁹ In fact, in some ways 2 Peter has less reference to Hebrew prophecy than Jude in that he does not carry over either the narrative Jude takes from the *Testament of Moses* or the quotation of *1 Enoch* 1:9, which Jude explicitly calls prophecy.

Second Peter draws such references as he has to the narratives of the Hebrew Scriptures from Jude, but he often augments Jude with related material drawn from Second Temple literature, showing that he does know that literature independently of Jude. For instance, he adds the idea of Tartarus to Jude's description of the fate of the rebellious angels, he adds to the Deluge account the idea that Noah was a "preacher of righteousness," which idea is only found in Josephus (*Ant.* 1.74) and the *Sibylline Oracles* (1.125–198); he adds the idea of Lot's righteousness, which is first found in Wis 10:6, to the Sodom narrative; and he amplifies the donkey's rebuke of Balaam in his reference to that prophet, drawing from material that we know of from *Targ. Ps-Jonathan* and *Targ. Neofiti*. These are, of course, later than 2 Peter, but appear to record earlier haggadic traditions alluded to in Josephus and Philo. In other words, 2 Peter does not show any awareness of the narratives other than in the form in which they were circulating in the first century. Likewise, his portrayal of the Creation–Deluge³⁰–Judgment by fire–New Creation structure ap-

²⁸ This is intertextual in the general sense that (1) the Gospel narratives have been transmitted textually; (2) this narrative appears to be a pre-formed unit (see following footnote); and (3) this tradition at least reduces an oral text to script.

²⁹ See, e.g., the margins of *Nestle-Aland²⁷*. There are, of course, citations of the Hebrew Scriptures in 1:16–18, the Transfiguration narrative, but, while this account appears to be independent of the Synoptics (unless it is a free adaptation), it also appears to be a pre-formed tradition. Furthermore, the texts cited in that narrative (Ps 2:7 and Isa 42:1) were already in circulation together before the Transfiguration narratives arose, as witnessed to by 4QFlor 1.8–2.1. Thus this is a citation of early Christian tradition rather than an independent citation of the Hebrew Scriptures. Likewise, the proverb in 2 Pet 2:21 does stem in part from Prov 26:11, but it appears in combination with a saying that seems to stem from *Abiqar* 8,18, and I have argued (Davids, "Second Temple Traditions in 1 and 2 Peter and Jude" 425) that the combined proverbs came to 2 Peter as a unit.

³⁰ The reference to water in connection with Creation and the Deluge fits Sir 39:17 to a greater degree than it fits Genesis.

pears to parallel that in *1 Enoch* 10–11, *Sibylline Oracles*, Josephus (*Ant.* 1.70), and *Life of Adam and Eve* (49:3).³¹ In other words, we have not been able to find a passage in which 2 Peter can be demonstrated to be drawing upon the Hebrew Scriptures independently of Second Temple literature.

III. CONCLUSION

It is time to draw this material together and come to our conclusions. First, we do not know of any community of the Jesus movement in the pre-Marcion period that did not value the Hebrew Scriptures (usually in Greek translation), although direct access to such Scriptures was surely limited due to the limited literacy of most community members, including leaders, the financial ability of the community, and other such factors.

Second, the knowledge that individual leaders had of those Scriptures varied from that of James and 1 Peter, who seem to have had significant knowledge, although some of it may have been mediated to them in the form of *testimonia*, to that of 2 Peter and Jude who do not give any clear evidence of having looked at a copy of those Scriptures.

Third, when it comes to narrative material, none of these authors directly cite the Hebrew Scriptures, but rather the narratives have been mediated to our authors through the oral and written traditions of Second Temple Judaism. These traditions become the glasses through which they see these texts, whether or not they knew the same written sources from which we know these traditions and whether or not they learned these traditions within a pre-Jesus Jewish community or within the developing Jesus movement.³² Fourth, several of the authors have a particular fondness for *1 Enoch*, and for one author, Jude, the first part of this work is the only Scripture to which we can demonstrate that he has access. Finally, all of this evidence points to the complex situation that existed in the oral-mnemonic societies in which these authors lived in which texts were often expensive and their availability at least somewhat limited, in which scribal literacy was limited to those in or sponsored by the upper classes,³³ and in which canon consciousness in the

³¹ Richard Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter* (WBC 50; Waco, TX: Word, 1983) 296–301, argues that an unknown Jewish apocalypse underlies 2 Pet 3:4, 10–12, 1 Clem 23.3, and 2 Clem 11.2; 16.2–3. I have argued (“Second Temple Traditions in 1 and 2 Peter and Jude” 426–27), that this is possibly correct, but not yet totally established.

³² In other words, we do not think that they had Charlesworth, *Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, on their shelves, but they may either have had contact with these traditions in the synagogue before they committed themselves to following Jesus or else come in contact with this literature as it circulated orally or textually within the Jesus movement.

³³ It is clear that the writers of our documents are educated to the secondary level, and so were either part of the middle to upper classes or sponsored by them, rather than peasants functioning at the subsistence level, that is, above Longenecker’s ES6 and probably above his ES5 level (see Bruce Longenecker, “Exposing the Economic Middle: A Revised Economy Scale for the Study of Early Christianity,” *JNT* 31 [2009] 243–78). It is also clear that none of our implied authors came from the upper classes or even Longenecker’s ES4 level (moderate surplus of resources) and that the existing information that we have on Simon Peter (e.g. that from Acts 4:13 [ἄνθρωποι ἀγγματοὶ εἰσιν καὶ ἰδιῶται] or Papias [Lightfoot’s *FPapias* 6:17 “And the presbyter said this. Mark having become the inter-

modern sense had yet to develop. It is this situation that must be taken into account in interpreting these documents and their contemporary literature, for while we may not walk in their shoes (or sandals, if they had them) we do need to at least try to read with their glasses if we wish to understand their thought.

preter [ἔρμηνευτής] of Peter, wrote down accurately whatsoever he remembered” = Eusebius *HE* 3.39.15]) or even the comments of later Church fathers about his and other apostles’ education) indicates that he was illiterate, as we would expect. But this does not mean require that none of these writers had been sponsored by someone in the upper classes and so that none could read and write. Nor does this mean one had to be able to read to absorb the teaching of Second Temple literature, for it would be “in the air” wherever such narratives were discussed and could be picked up orally. On scribal literacy in first-century Palestine, see Chris Keith, *Jesus’ Literacy: Scribal Culture and the Teacher from Galilee* (Library of Historical Jesus Studies 8/LNTS 413; London: T&T Clark, 2011).