

# Preface

When I wrote the first edition of this book twenty-four years ago, serious scholarly engagement with the history and literature of Second Temple Judaism was a luxury limited almost exclusively to persons working on the Dead Sea Scrolls. In the past two and a half decades the situation has changed dramatically, as is attested by the thousands of articles and monographs that have appeared not only on the Scrolls but on the “Apocrypha” and “Pseudepigrapha,” as well as on Philo and Josephus and numerous topics about the history and sociology of the period. Scholars and publishers have initiated new periodicals and monograph series, commentaries are beginning to appear, universities have established chairs in Judaic studies, and courses are finding their way into curricula that were almost the exclusive domain of the canonical Scriptures. With this geometric increase in the scholarship and now the complete publication of the Dead Sea Scrolls, a new edition of this book is not only desirable but necessary.

My revisions are threefold. First, I have broadened my treatment of the literature. With the addition of *The Story of Darius’s Bodyguards* from 1 Esdras, *The Prayer of Manasseh*, and *Psalms 151*, my coverage of the Apocrypha is complete. To my discussion of the Dead Sea Scrolls I have added nine texts: *The War Scroll*; *A Halakic Letter (4QMMT)*; *The Rule of the Congregation (1QSa)*; *Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice (Angelic Liturgy)*; *The Temple Scroll*; *The Aramaic Levi Document*; *The Psalms Scroll*; *Instruction for a Student (Sapiential Work A)*; and *The New Jerusalem*. Together with the other Dead Sea texts that I previously discussed, they are now gathered in a chapter of their own, where I present them as a representative sampling of the range of sectarian and nonsectarian texts found in the Qumran caves. To round out my treatment of Second Temple texts, I have also provided introductions to *Philo of Alexandria* and *Flavius Josephus* and sketched some of the issues relating to the *Greek Jewish Scriptures* (the so-called Septuagint).

In my second type of revision, I have consulted hundreds of articles and monographs and updated my discussion of texts previously treated. I have documented scholarship that both agrees and disagrees with opinions that I still consider valid, and I have revised my interpretations where it seemed warranted. The results of this can be found both in the notes and in the bibliographies, to which I have added hundreds of new entries.

Third, I have made one revision in the structure of the book, dropping my chapter “The Exposition of Israel’s Scriptures,” and moving most of its texts into a final chapter “Texts of Disputed Provenance.” Here I have included works whose date and place of origin are debated and whose Jewish or Christian origin is a lively topic of discussion.

The last change in the book is a CD-ROM that contains the full, searchable text of the book, a library of nearly one hundred images that help bring the texts and the locations to life, along with a Study Guide that includes chapter summaries, study questions, and links to important web sites. Inserting the CD-ROM will prompt you to install the Libronix software, and you will be asked for the serial number, which appears on the outside of the CD envelope. A link at the head of each chapter takes you to the corresponding study materials. Asterisks throughout the text of the book are linked to related images.

As in the first edition, I have structured the book chronologically, following a sequence that runs from the beginning of the Hellenistic period to the Jewish War (ca. 325 B.C.E.–100 C.E.). The prologue provides background for the whole book and a context for chapter 1, which treats early texts of the dispersion. In chapters 2–5 and 7–8, the history of the Jews in Palestine is the organizing principle for discussing texts that appear to have been written between roughly 325 B.C.E. and 100 C.E. In chapter 6 I treat texts of Egyptian origin composed between 150 B.C.E. and 70 C.E. The last chapter, as I have noted, includes texts that I did not feel comfortable including in the other chapters. While there is some risk in organizing texts in such a historical sequence (rather than, e.g., by genres), my conviction that texts are historical artifacts and not timeless entities leads me to run the risk, indicating where the judgments are more or less certain and where the issues are fuzzy.

Seven of the chapters begin with a capsule history that provides context for the texts to be discussed. These short introductions touch only on matters necessary for a basic understanding of the literature. Bibliographies at the ends of the chapters provide resources for a more detailed study of the historical data.

I am pleased to acknowledge and thank friends and colleagues for their help and encouragement. Over two and a half decades I have learned much from my graduate students and from my colleagues in the Society of Biblical Literature Pseudepigrapha Group and the Society’s group on Wisdom and Apocalypticism in Early Judaism and Early Christianity, as well as from the members of the Taskforce on Apocalypticism of the *Wissenschaftliche Gesellschaft für Theologie*, who adopted me as an honorary member of their group. As always I have profited from discussions with Birger Pearson and Norman Petersen, my perennial roommates at the SBL Annual Meetings. As an emeritus professor I have made prolific use of the extensive collection of The University of Iowa Main Library, and I have been especially well served by the prompt and courteous help of the staff of the Library’s Interlibrary Loan office. Without these resources, I could not have completed this revision.

With the massive proliferation and specialization of the literature, I am indebted to those colleagues and friends who have read various parts of the manuscript and made

suggestions and offered corrections. They include Mordechai Aviam, Roland Deines, Esther Eshel, Hanan Eshel, Erich Gruen, Daniel Harrington, Charlotte Hempel, Adam Kamesar, Steve Mason, Sarianna Metso, Carol Newsom, Birger Pearson, Andrei Orlov, Lawrence Schiffman, Gregory Sterling, Michael Stone, Eugene Ulrich, Sidnie White Crawford, James VanderKam, and Benjamin Wright. Though responsibility for the contents is my own, they have in many ways made this a better book.

At Fortress Press, Harold Rast, John Hollar, K. C. Hanson, and Michael West encouraged me to revise the book. James Korsmo worked closely and patiently with me in the editing of the book and the creation of the CD. Gary Lee attended to the copy-editing with great care. At the H. K. Scriptorium Maurya Horgan, Paul Kobelski, and Jeska Horgan-Kobelski went out of their way to expedite the design and typesetting of the volume. To facilitate the revision, Robert Kraft at the University of Pennsylvania supervised the scanning of the text of the first edition.

My special thanks go to Marilyn, who after twenty-five years waited and watched for the second time as the scroll unrolled to its end. I dedicated the first edition of the book to our young children, Jeanne and Michael. This time around Jeanne edited the scanned copy, and now I am delighted to dedicate the book to our four grandsons, whose interest I hope will someday be aroused by its contents.

G. W. E. N.  
Iowa City, Iowa  
June 2005