"For those of us who love and teach the Gospels, this is a welcome collection of essays written by friends and colleagues of Dr. Darrell Bock as their expression of honor for what he has contributed to their lives, ministries, and scholarship. May this book help us understand and proclaim the glory of the story of our Savior even better."

—Mark L. Bailey, President,
Dallas Theological Seminary

"*Understanding the Gospels: A Guide for Teaching and Preaching*, edited by Herbert W. Bateman IV and Benjamin I. Simpson, is a *Festschrift* produced to honor Professor Darrell Bock. Most, but not all, of the essays included are written by former students and past or present colleagues of Darrell Bock. As the title suggests, this collection is intended to enhance the work of those who teach and preach the Gospels, and not to replace more technical works or New Testament Introductions.

The essays are grouped into four parts: (i) Interpreting and Communicating the Gospels; (ii) Understanding the Gospels, which includes essays treating each Gospel in turn; (iii) Applying the Gospels, noting how this was done in the early church and then in the twenty-first century; (iv) Discovery Studies in the Gospels, which address some controversial issues related to interpreting the Gospels. The essays reflect the scholarly expertise of the authors, and also their awareness of the importance of the work of those who expound the Gospels for the edification of Christian people today."

—Dr. Colin G Kruse, Senior Lecturer in New Testament,
Melbourne School of Theology

"*Understanding the Gospels* is a wonderful and appropriate tribute to Dr. Darrell Bock. The book highlights Darrell Bock's passions: that people would know Jesus the Messiah, that they would study the Gospels deeply, and that they would proclaim the message of God's Word. What I loved about the approach of the book is that it does not offer a shortcut for deep study, but rather provides the tools so the serious exegete can accurately and clearly discern the meaning of the Gospels. In a world of shortcuts and "quick and easy" solutions, the contributors provide a depth of knowledge that is not normally easily accessible to preachers and teachers. This information is invaluable as we prepare to pass God's truth in the Gospels on to our sheep. It is with great gratitude to the editors and contributors and with the highest regard for my professor, Dr. Darrell Bock, that I highly recommend this work."

—Matthew McAlack, Professor in the School of Divinity and
Director of Youth and Family Ministry Programs,
Cairn University

"Darrell Bock has been a tireless, joy-filled leader of Christian thought, bridging rigorous biblical scholarship and some of the central questions of mission and society. This collection of studies by leading scholars fittingly honors Darrell while making its own contributions. The editors have managed to orchestrate the expertise of the separately authored chapters in a way that provides a self-standing, unified resource for students and communicators. This is a reliable, meaty, and useful book for all who wish to study and teach from the Gospels."

—Jon C. Laansma,
Associate Professor of Ancient Languages and New Testament,
Wheaton College and Graduate School

"Bateman and Simpson have assembled a volume of insightful essays by leading evangelical scholars. Want to know how to preach and teach faithfully from the Gospels? Read *Understanding the Gospels: A Guide for Preaching and Teaching*! This *Festschrift* provides a fitting honor to Gospels scholar Darrell L. Bock."

—Robert L. Plummer, Professor of New Testament Interpretation,
The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary,
Host and Founder, Daily Dose of Greek

"I went to Dallas Seminary with a goal of improving my ability to read and interpret the Gospels, something I felt was a personal weakness. While at Dallas, I had the great privilege to study Luke and Acts under Darrell Bock and am so thankful for what I learned. His passion for the Gospels was infectious! This collection of essays is a worthy tribute to someone who has devoted his life to the study of the biblical text and to serving the church. Pastors and others interested in understanding and teaching the Gospels will find many helpful insights in this volume."

—Carl Sanders, Professor, Capital Seminary and Graduate School

"*Understanding the Gospels* is a fitting tribute for Darrell Bock, an outstanding scholar and effective public advocate for biblical Christianity. Whether pastors and teachers read the book from cover to cover or consult chapters on specific topics, they will find a wide range of instructive perspectives and useful tools for appreciating and communicating the truths of the Gospels more faithfully and powerfully."

—Gregory S. MaGee, Associate Professor of Biblical Studies,
Taylor University

"This book would be a very helpful resource for anyone preparing to preach a series through any of the Gospels. It provides key facts and suggestions in areas such as historical backgrounds, theology, and literary conventions, as well as creative ideas for how to effectively communicate and apply the Gospels. A very substantive yet concise work that will be a go-to resource for pastors. Well done!"

—Michael Hontz, Senior Pastor,
Pleasant View Bible Church in Warsaw, IN

Understanding *the* Gospels

A Guide for Preaching and Teaching

Herbert W. Bateman IV and
Benjamin I. Simpson

EDITORS

Kregel Academic

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This book is dedicated to Darrell L. Bock
for his service to his students,
with his colleagues,
and for his King.

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Part Four: Discovery Studies in the Gospels

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Preface: Honoring Darrell L. Bock

M. Daniel Carroll R.

Some might think it an oddity that an Old Testament professor has been invited to write the preface for a volume of essays on the teaching and preaching of the Gospels that is dedicated to a New Testament scholar. This anomaly, however, is not as strange as it might seem at first glance.

Darrell Bock and I have known each other since childhood. We have been best friends since second grade (oh, so many years ago!), shared all kinds of experiences growing up, and participated in each other's weddings. Even more significant for this occasion, Darrell was the first person to share the Good News with me. He and his girlfriend (now wife) Sally came to visit me one weekend during our second year of college to tell me about how Jesus had changed his life. Not too long afterward, I too gave my life to the Lord. Both of us would attend seminary, but Darrell pursued New Testament studies, while I turned my attention to the Old. After completing his Ph.D. at the University of Aberdeen under renowned British evangelical scholar I. Howard Marshall,[1] Darrell went to teach at Dallas Theological Seminary, where he has served ever since. My family and I would make our way to the University of Sheffield during our time teaching at El Seminario Teológico Centroamericano (in Guatemala City, Guatemala), before moving to Denver Seminary and now to the Graduate School at Wheaton College. During all this time and across great distances, we have continued to engage each other biblically, theologically, and ethically—two lifelong friends committed to edifying one another, as iron sharpens iron (Prov. 27:17).

Since Darrell came to faith at the University of Texas, four clusters of interests have dominated his research and writing, as well as defined his travels around the world to teach in an impressive array of institutions in many, many countries. The first is his passion for the academic study of the person

1. Dr. Marshall had planned to co-author this preface but unfortunately passed away in December 2015.

of Jesus. His doctoral thesis dealt with the use of the Old Testament in Luke's presentation of the Messiah (*Proclamation from Prophecy and Pattern: Lucan Old Testament Christology*). Since then, the Gospel of Luke has been a special focus of his research, and he has produced commentaries on it for several series (the Baker Exegetical Commentary of the New Testament, Zondervan's NIV Application Bible, and the IVP New Testament Commentary). His commentary publishing now has extended to Mark and Acts as well.

This commitment to Jesus studies has led to several works[2] dealing with the background of Jesus within first-century Jewish culture and thought (*Jesus in Context: Background Readings for Gospel Study* and *Jesus according to Scripture: Restoring the Portrait from the Gospels*) and to significant contributions to contemporary debates about the historical person of Jesus, both at the popular level (*Breaking the DaVinci Code: Answers to the Questions Everyone Is Asking*; *Who Is Jesus? Linking the Historical Jesus with the Christ of Faith*; and *Dethroning Jesus: Exposing Popular Culture's Quest to Dethrone the Biblical Christ*) and in technical works (*Studying the Historical Jesus: A Guide to Sources and Methods*, and *Blasphemy and Exaltation in Judaism: The Charge against Jesus in Mark 14:53–65*).[3] Darrell also has contended for the integrity of the message of salvation found in the biblical canon at a time when the general public is being exposed to different voices and non-canonical writings (*The Missing Gospels: Unearthing the Truth behind Alternative Christianities*, and *Recovering the Real Lost Gospel: Reclaiming the Gospel as Good News*).

Deep loyalty to evangelicalism in general and to Dallas Theological Seminary in particular is a second dimension of Darrell's life and work. Darrell, with the support of some colleagues at that institution, was a major catalyst in developments in dispensational thought that led to the articulation of what is now labeled progressive dispensationalism (he co-authored a book of that title with Craig A. Blaising). Throughout the years of debates within that theological tradition Darrell worked tirelessly, respectfully, and always with his good sense of humor to build bridges between factions and to help guide that movement forward. This constructive impulse would earn him election as the president of the Evangelical Theological Society for 2000–2001. In 2002 he published a short book, the title of which reveals his heart for reconciliation, *Purpose-Directed Theology: Getting Our Priorities Right in Evangelical Controversies*.

A third focus of Darrell's ministry has been Jewish evangelism and the Messianic Jewish movement. He is the son of a Jewish father, and as the years have progressed he continues to dig more deeply into those familial

2. Some of the works listed here have been co-authored with other scholars.
3. Darrell co-edited a major tome on the historical Jesus with Robert L. Webb, *Key Events in the Life of the Historical Jesus: A Collaborative Exploration of Context and Coherence*, WUNT 2/247 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2009; reprinted, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010).

roots. Darrell has long collaborated with Chosen People Ministries and participated in activities of the World Evangelical Alliance related to the Gospel and the Jewish people. These matters have led to two publications in collaboration with the Jewish Christian leader Mitch Glazier (*To the Jew First: The Case for Jewish Evangelism in Scripture and History*, and *The People, the Land, and the Future of Israel: Israel and the Jewish People in the Plan of God*).

A final commitment of Darrell's is his involvement with the interface of evangelical faith and the public square. Increasingly, his duties at Dallas Theological Seminary have been centered around his directorship of the Howard Hendricks Center for Christian Leadership and Cultural Engagement, where he uses his creativity to deal thoughtfully with a range of social issues through various media. Appropriately, to his role as Senior Research Professor of New Testament has been added the title Executive Director of Cultural Engagement. One of his most recent publications models for readers how to weigh with wisdom and grace opposing sides of a host of challenging topics that today dominate the airwaves and the television screen, often in ways that are neither edifying nor substantive (*How Would Jesus Vote? Do Your Political Views Really Align with the Bible?*). Darrell is no stranger to newspaper, radio, and network interviews, and he is well-placed to communicate biblical convictions to the wider world. His impact in broader arenas also now involves input into initiatives in theological education in the United States and internationally. And, not long ago, Darrell joined the board of trustees of Wheaton College, a flagship institution of evangelical higher learning (which, ironically and wonderfully, makes him at some level my boss!).

Darrell Bock is a prolific writer (and I have not mentioned all the books he has penned or edited!), a captivating speaker, an inspiring teacher, and a dependable colleague. None of this is remarkable to me. Since I have known Darrell, his mind always has been churning for the Kingdom and for others . . . a wonderful gift to the people of God, when it is coupled with his scholarly acumen and pastoral impulse.

There is so much more I could share! One could mention his decades-long marriage to his wife, his deep commitment to his son and two daughters, and his utter joy of being a granddad. His scholarly accolades and his public influence, in other words, are solidified by this impeccable testimony of a devout Christian.

If I have been able to communicate just a portion of my admiration for my dear friend Darrell, then I feel that I will have provided the reader with a suitable entry into this volume of essays. He is deserving of the honor of this *Festschrift*, and it is my honor to salute him in this (personal) preface. This book will be a further reflection in the very areas that drive him, and for that I rejoice. *¡Felicidades, querido amigo y hermano mío!*

—M. Daniel Carroll R. (Rodas)
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Craig A. Blaising serves as Executive Vice President and Provost as well as Professor of Theology at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, a position he has held since January 2002. He also holds the Jesse Hendley Chair of Biblical Theology at Southwestern. He earned his Bachelor of Science from the University of Texas, Austin; Th.M. and Th.D. from Dallas Theological Seminary, and Ph.D. from the University of Aberdeen. Before joining Southwestern, he served seven years at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, where he held the Joseph Emerson Brown Chair of Christian Theology. Prior to joining Southern, he served for fifteen years on the faculty of Dallas Theological Seminary where he attained the rank of Professor of Systematic Theology with tenure. He has published several works in the areas of patristics, eschatology, dispensationalism, and biblical and systematic theology.

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Buist M. Fanning was Department Chair and Senior Professor of New Testament Studies at Dallas Theological Seminary, Dallas, Texas (now retired from full-time teaching). He holds a B.A. from Charleston University, Th.M. from Dallas Theological Seminary, and D.Phil. Oxford University. He wrote *Verbal Aspect in New Testament Greek* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990), co-edited and contributed to *Interpreting the New Testament Text: Introduction to the Art and Science of Exegesis* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2006), and has published a variety of essays on the Greek verb. He contributed to *A Biblical Theology of the New Testament*, eds. Roy B. Zuck and Darrell L. Bock (Chicago: Moody Press, 1994), *Four Views on the Warning Passages of Hebrews*, ed. Herbert W. Bateman (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2007), and the *NIV Zondervan Study Bible*, ed. D. A. Carson (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2015).

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Benjamin Simpson joined Dallas Theological Seminary's faculty in 2006 as the registrar. In 2016, he moved to the DTS, Washington DC Campus as assistant professor of New Testament studies. He holds a Ph.D. Dallas Theological Seminary. He teaches Greek, New Testament background, and Gospel exegesis. He is the author of *Recent Research on the Historical Jesus* (2014). Recently, he co-authored with Darrell Bock *Jesus the God-Man: The Unity and Diversity of the Gospel Portrayals* (2016), and the second edition of *Jesus according to Scripture* (2016).

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Joel F. Williams is Professor of New Testament Studies at Cedarville University (Cedarville, OH). He holds a B.A. from Moody Bible Institute, a Th.M. from Dallas Theological Seminary, and a Ph.D. from Marquette University. He is the author of *Other Followers of Jesus: Minor Characters as Major Figures in Mark's Gospel* (1994) and co-editor of *Mission in the New Testament: An Evangelical Approach* (1998). His current project involves writing the *Mark* volume for the Exegetical Guide to the Greek New Testament series. He has published journal articles in *Bibliotheca Sacra*, *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society*, *Bulletin for Biblical Research*, *Review and Expositor*, and *Journal of Biblical Literature*.

Abbreviations

GENERAL

AB	Anchor Bible
ABD	*Anchor Bible Dictionary*. Edited by David Noel Freedman. 6 vols. New York: Doubleday, 1992.
ABRL	Anchor Bible Reference Library
ASNU	Acta Seminarii Neotestamentici Upsaliensis
AYBRL	Anchor Yale Bible Reference Library
BAR	*Biblical Archeology Review*
BBR	*Bulletin for Biblical Research*
BDAG	Danker, Frederick W., Walter Bauer, William F. Arndt, and F. Wilbur Gingrich. *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature.* 3rd ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000.
BDF	Blass, Friedrich, Albert Debrunner, and Robert W. Funk. *A Greek Grammar of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1961.
BECNT	Baker Exegetical Commentary of the New Testament
BETL	Bibliotheca Ephemeridum Theologicarum Lovaniensium
Bib	*Biblica*
BNTC	Black's New Testament Commentaries
BRS	The Biblical Resource Series
BSL	Biblical Studies Library
BTB	*Biblical Theology Bulletin*
BTNT	Biblical Theology of the New Testament
BZNW	Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft
ca.	circa
CBC	Cambridge Bible Commentary
CBET	Contributions to Biblical Exegesis and Theology
CBQ	*Catholic Biblical Quarterly*
CBQMS	Catholic Biblical Quarterly Monograph Series
d.	*died*
DJG	*Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels.* Edited by Joel B. Green, Jeannine K. Brown, and Nicholas Perrin. 2d ed. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2013.
DPL	*Dictionary of Paul and His Letters.* Edited by Gerald F. Hawthorne and Ralph P. Martin. Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1993.

ESV	English Standard Version
EvQ	*Evangelical Quarterly*
FRLANT	Forschungen zur Religion und Literatur des Alten und Neuen Testaments
HTR	*Harvard Theological Review*
ISBE	International Standard Bible Encyclopedia
JBL	*Journal of Biblical Literature*
JETS	*Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society*
JR	*Journal of Religion*
JSHJ	*Journal for the Study of the Historical Jesus*
JSNT	*Journal for the Study of the New Testament*
JSNTSup	Journal for the Study of the New Testament Supplement Series
JTS	*Journal of Theological Studies*
KJV	King James Version
k.l.	Kindle location
LCL	Loeb Classical Library
LN	Louw, Johannes P., and Eugene A. Nida, eds. *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament: Based on Semantic Domains*. 2d ed. New York: United Bible Societies, 1989.
LNTS	The Library of New Testament Studies
LXX	Septuagint
m.	Mishnah (the spelling of tractate names follows *The SBL Handbook of Style* and differs occasionally from that of older works, such as Danby's *Mishnah*)
MHT	J. H. Moulton, W. F. Howard, and Nigel Turner, *Grammar of New Testament Greek*, 4 vols. (Edinburgh: T.&T. Clark, 1908–76).
MSJ	*The Master's Seminary Journal*
MT	Masoretic Text
NAC	New American Commentary
NASB	New American Standard Bible
NET	New English Translation
NICNT	New International Commentary on the New Testament
NIGNT	New International Greek Testament Commentary
NovT	*Novum Testamentum*
NovTSup	Supplements to Novum Testamentum
NTS	*New Testament Studies*
NTTS	New Testament Tools and Studies
OEAGR	*Oxford Encyclopedia of Ancient Greece and Rome*. Edited by Michael Gagarin. 7 vols. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010.
𝔓	Papyrus
PNTC	Pillar New Testament Commentary
RevExp	Review and Expositor
RSV	Revised Standard Version
SBLDS	Society of Biblical Literature Dissertation Series

SJT	*Scottish Journal of Theology*
SNTSMS	Society for New Testament Studies Monograph Series
t.	*Tosefta*
TDNT	*Theological Dictionary of the New Testament.* Edited by Gerhard Kittel and Gerhard Friedrich. Translated by Geoffrey W. Bromiley. 10 vols. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964–1976.
TUGAL	Texte und Untersuchungen zur Geschichte der altchristlichen Literatur
WBC	Word Biblical Commentary
WUNT	Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament
ZNW	Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft und die Kunde der älteren Kirche

ANCIENT WORKS

1 Apol.	Justin Martyr, *Apologia I*
Ag. Ap.	Josephus, *Against Apion*
Annals	*Tacitius, Annals*
Ant.	Josephus, *Jewish Antiquities*
Apol.	Tertullian, *Apology*
Aug.	Suetonius, *Divus Augustus*
Cons.	Augustine, *Harmony of the Gospels*
Embassy	Philo, *On the Embassy to Gaius*
Haer.	Ireneaus, *Against Heresies*
Hist. eccl.	Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History*
History	Cassius, *Roman History*
Marc.	Tertullian, *Against Marcion*
Nero	Suetonius, *Nero*
Tib.	Suetonius, *Tiberius*
War	Josephus, *Jewish War*

QUMRAN

CD	*Damascus Document*	
1QM	*The War Scroll*	*The War Rule*
1Q28	1QS	*1QRule of the Community*
1Q28a	1QSa	1QRule of the Congregation
4Q161	4QpIsaa	*4QIsaiah Peshera*
4Q174	4QFlor	*4QFlorilegium*
4Q175	4QTest	*4QTestimonia*
4Q246	4QapocrDan ar	Apocryphon of Daniel
4Q266	4QDa	*4QDamascus Documenta*
4Q285	4QSM	*4QSefer ha-Milhamah*
4Q376	4QapocrMosesb	*4QApocryphon of Mosesb*

RABBINIC WORKS

Num. R.	*Numbers Rabbah*
Deut R.	*Deuteronomy Rabbah*
Midr. Ps.	*Midrash Psalms*
Meg.	*Megillah*
Sot.	*Soṭah*

APOCRYPHA AND PSEUDEPIGRAPHAL WORKS

1–4 Macc.	1–4 Maccabees
I En.	*1 Enoch*
4 Ezra	
Ps. Sol.	*Psalms of Solomon*
Sir.	Sirach
T. Benj.	*Testament of Benjamin*
T. Jud.	*Testament of Judah*
T. Levi	*Testament of Levi*
Tob.	Tobit
Wis.	Wisdom of Solomon

BIBLICAL WORKS

Old Testament

Gen.	Genesis
Exod.	Exodus
Lev.	Leviticus
Num.	Numbers
Deut.	Deuteronomy
Josh.	Joshua
Judg.	Judges
Ruth	Ruth
1–2 Sam.	1–2 Samuel
1–2 Kgs	1–2 Kings
1–2 Chron.	1–2 Chronicles
Ezra	Ezra
Neh.	Nehemiah
Esth.	Esther
Job	Job
Ps.	Psalms
Prov.	Proverbs
Eccles.	Ecclesiastes
Song	Song of Songs
Isa.	Isaiah

Jer.	Jeremiah
Lam.	Lamentations
Ezek.	Ezekiel
Dan.	Daniel
Hos.	Hosea
Joel	Joel
Amos	Amos
Obad.	Obadiah
Jon.	Jonah
Mic.	Micah
Nah.	Nahum
Hab.	Habakkuk
Zeph.	Zephaniah
Hag.	Haggai
Zech.	Zechariah
Mal.	Malachi

New Testament

Matt.	Matthew
Mark	Mark
Luke	Luke
John	John
Acts	Acts
Rom.	Romans
1–2 Cor.	1–2 Corinthians
Gal.	Galatians
Eph.	Ephesians
Phil.	Philippians
Col.	Colossians
1–2 Thess.	1–2 Thessalonians
1–2 Tim.	1–2 Timothy
Titus	Titus
Philem.	Philemon
Heb.	Hebrews
James	James
1–2 Pet.	1–2 Peter
1–3 John	1–3 John
Jude	Jude
Rev.	Revelation

Introduction

CHAPTER ONE

The Gospels: Engaging Their Transforming Message

Herbert W. Bateman IV

While forty-eight percent of the New Testament consists of Gospel material,[1] expository sermons on an entire Gospel tend to be scarce. Preaching a passage from the Gospels is often consigned to Christmas and Easter. If, however, a sermon or a sermon series is preached from the Gospels, the importance of what each Gospel writer intended as he wrote it for his original audience is often ignored. Sometimes the sermon gets lost in the minutiae of the text and fails to grasp or communicate the Gospel's big picture or true relevance for the first century church. Other times harmonization abounds, or a proliferation of personal reflection dominates, or allegorizing controls the sermon. Sometimes a pastor's systematic theological bent gets imposed on the text. Respecting the uniqueness and message of each Gospel as well as their collective canonical contributions are often neglected. As a result, an accurate cross over and application to the twenty-first-century listener is skewed. This propensity may be attributed to the Gospel's distinctive genre or perhaps it is due to training that was limited to Paul's letters. In this book, we want to cultivate a greater appreciation for the Gospels and broaden your current understanding of them in such a way that we might direct a student, a pastor, or a teacher to revaluate their study and inclusion of the Gospels in their respective course choices or their preaching and teaching strategies.

Understanding the Gospels: A Guide for Preaching and Teaching does not, however, seek to provide a technical "how to" or "step-by-step" ap-

1. Using the NET and assuming the story about the women caught in adultery (John 7:53–8:11) and the longer ending of Mark (16:9–9) are part of the canon, there are 1070 verses in Matthew, 673 in Mark, 1151 verses in Luke, and 881 verses in John for a total of 3,775 verses out of 7,947 in the entire New Testament.

proach to studying the Gospels. Scot McKnight covers that information in his book *Interpreting the Synoptic Gospels* in Baker's Guide to New Testament Exegesis series (1988). This book does not provide a detailed analysis of the Synoptic problem or delve into historical and literary methods of criticism. Charles B. Puskas and David Crump engage in these sorts of scholarly debates as they relate to the Gospels and Acts in *An Introduction to the Gospels and Acts* (Eerdmans, 2008). Nor do we debate basic issues of authorship, date, origin, etc. Numerous introductory books like D. A. Carson and Douglas J. Moo's *An Introduction to the New Testament* (Zondervan, 2005) have been written to evaluate those issues. And while these books and others like them have a place in the study of the Gospels, we cover a range of Gospel centered topics as well as provide information helpful for the teaching and preaching the Gospels. Furthermore, *Understanding of the Gospels: A Guide for Preaching and Teaching* is not authored by one or two people. It is a collection of contributions from experts writing in their respective fields of study to honor Darrell L. Bock. While some contributors may have been a former student, others have been a former colleague or are current colleagues. One contributor, I. Howard Marshall, Darrell's dissertation adviser, died December 2015 before he was able to complete his contribution to the preface, which was to be a joint effort with his lifelong friend, Danny Carroll. The one common denominator shared by every contributing author is that they are friends of Darrell Bock and have contributed to this book to honor him. Finally, *Understanding the Gospels: A Guide for Preaching and Teaching* is not a disjointed collection of essays that merely reflect Bock's interests and academic activities throughout his career. Ultimately, it is an integrated book that reflects Darrell Bock's heart and concern for the Kingdom and underscores his desire that people know about Jesus, the Messiah of the Gospels. One way to know about Jesus is for people to gain an appreciation for the Gospels, study them, and proclaim their message. We've tried, throughout this book, to reflect that same desire.

Consequently, *Understanding the Gospels: A Guide for Preaching and Teaching* is broken into four parts. "Part One: Interpreting and Communicating the Gospels" has three chapters. Herbert W. Bateman IV, former student and former collogue, opens part one with a focus on "Interpreting the Gospels Historically: A Tale of Two Histories." He underscores the importance for interpreting the Gospels that not only reflects the historical setting of Jesus (4 BC–AD 33) but also gives attention to the importance for understanding the historical setting of the readers (AD 60s). As you read chapter 2, take special notice to the examples he highlights to add credence to his presentation. How might one of those examples be helpful for preaching or teaching the Gospels at Christmas or Easter? Chapter 3 moves from interpreting the Gospels historically to interpreting them as narrative literature. Joel F. Williams, in his chapter "Interpreting Gospel Narratives" provides two practical steps as well as cautions about four typ-

ical missteps that occur when interpreting Gospel narratives. Look for the questions he raises to guide the pastor and teacher in interpreting Gospel narratives correctly. How might his list of questions help an interpreter remain true to a Gospel's message? Donald R. Sunukjian, former colleague, closes part one with a focus on communicating the revelatory truth of the Gospels. In chapter 4, "Communicating the Gospels," Sunukjian supplies three helpful guidelines for preaching and teaching the Gospel narrative in a manner similar to how Jesus approached the Old Testament. His exemplified method insures the faithful teaching and preaching of the Gospels. After reading his chapter, can you list and distinguish between good and bad sermon formats? Are you able to state the threefold process Sunukjian exemplified in his examination and communication of the three passages from the Gospel of Mark?

"Part Two: Understanding the Gospels" has four chapters, one chapter per Gospel. Each chapter answers five questions. (1) Why did the author write the Gospel? (2) What are the interpretive issues? (3) What is the central truth the author wishes to communicate? (4) What is the significance of the Gospel today? And finally, (5) how should I preach or teach the Gospel? While "Understanding the Gospel of Matthew" is written by his longtime colleague David K. Lowery (chapter 5), former student and colleague J. William Johnston writes, "Understanding the Gospel of Mark" (chapter 6). Former student and current colleague Benjamin I. Simpson honors Darrell L. Bock in chapter 7 when he addresses the "Understanding the Gospel of Luke," while longtime colleague W. Hall Harris III closes part two with "Understanding the Gospel of John" (chapter 8). Once you have read all of part two, are you able to list and perhaps communicate the uniqueness of each Gospel: the reason why a Gospel was written and the central truth for each? What interpretive issues were you alerted to, if you were to study the Gospels? If you were to preach through one Gospel, what Gospel might you consider? Are you able to develop a preaching strategy, present your thoughts to a friend for feedback, and then work it into your preaching or teaching schedule?

The three chapters in "Part Three: Applying the Gospels" tackles various ways the Gospels have been handled in the early church that shifts naturally to the twenty-first-century church. Darrell Bock's former colleague Craig A. Blaising opens the section by drawing attention to "The Gospels and their Importance for the Early Church" (chapter 9). He moves from the reading of the Gospels within the early church to their usage in preaching and teaching. Blaising then identifies some of the extant early church commentaries on the Gospels before moving to how the early church used the Gospels to underscore sound doctrinal conclusions and establish ecclesiastical policy. Transitioning to the next chapter entitled "The Gospels and their Centrality in Christian Worship" (chapter 10) comes quite naturally. Timothy J. Ralston, former student and current colleague, traces how the Gospels were an essential visual, liturgical, temporal, and

theological center for worship in the early church, and is currently in desperate need of recovery. As you read these two chapters, compare the early church's use of the Gospels with that of the twenty-first-century church's practice. How much experience have you had in studying the Gospels, or how much exposure do the people to whom you minister have with Gospel material that makes-up forty-five percent of the New Testament? Part Three closes with "Applying the Gospels in the Christian Life" (chapter 11). Michael H. Burer, former student and current colleague, answers this question: How do I know when I have applied the Gospels correctly? Building upon three fundamental assumptions, Burer provides a model of application that is by nature holistic in coverage, intrinsic in experience, and potential in outworking. He then suggests three essential contours for applying the Gospels. As you read his chapter, are you able to list his three assumptions and his essential contours or application levels? How might you take into consideration Bauer's application of Luke 2:41–52 for creating a sermon based upon Donald R. Sunukjian's threefold process for sermon preparation?

Finally, "Part Four: Discovery Studies in the Gospels" surveys four longstanding and at times controversial studies where evangelicals, like Darrell L. Bock, are currently making significant contributions. First, Mark L. Strauss, who shares Bock's interest in the use of the Old Testament in the New, contributes "Discovering the Old Testament in the Gospels" (chapter 12). While it may be difficult to distinguish between a quote, allusion, and echo, Strauss demonstrates clearly how the theme of promise-fulfillment, pronounced by the Old Testament prophets and fulfilled in Jesus, permeates the Gospel narratives. As you read Strauss's contribution, observe the diverse use of Hebrew Scriptures in each Gospel as well as how that use contributes to each narrative's distinctive theological thrust? Second, Craig L. Blomberg, who shares Bock's interest in the historical Jesus studies, contributes his appraisal of this controversial subject in "Discovering the Historical Jesus in the Gospels" (chapter 13). After reading Blomberg's chapter, are you able to create a time line for as well as distinguish between the four quests of the historical Jesus and key players for each? Is there any value in sharing historical Jesus studies in a local church small group or an adult Sunday school class? Third, former student and current colleague Jay Smith writes about "Discovering the Gospel Tradition in the Pauline Letters" (chapter 14). By way of five questions, Smith challenges those who claim that Paul knew little about the Jesus tradition or that he had little interest in the earthly, historical Jesus. In what way does Smith challenge the notion that there is no convincing parallel to the Jesus tradition in Paul? Can you list the five theories concerning the limited amount of Jesus material in Paul? If you were confronted with a skeptic about Paul's use of the Jesus tradition, are you able to recount some of Smith's responses? Buist M. Fanning, longtime colleague, closes part four with "Discovering Biblical Theological Themes in the Gospels" (chapter 15). Fanning, after

clarifying what biblical theology is, not only underscores special issues of biblical theology in the Gospels he provides insights for discovering, organizing, and differentiating the biblical theologies of the Gospels. What challenges does Fanning raise when forming a biblical theology for each respective Gospel? What, according to Fanning, is essential in discovering and organizing a biblical theology for, let's say, the Gospel of Mark? Take some time and write out a one-page biblical theology for the Gospel of Mark, then share it with a friend.

Obviously, *Understanding the Gospels: A Guide for Preaching and Teaching* provides extensive information about the Gospels that strives to disclose as well as correct some of the misuse of the Gospels (Parts One and Two) and reveal the application of the Gospels in the church and interact with various topics relevant for today's church (Parts Three and Four). Like a seminary degree program, however, *Understanding the Gospels: A Guide for Preaching and Teaching* cannot cover everything in great detail. Our contributors are notable scholars and practitioners in the Gospels who have attempted to broaden our perspective and appreciation for the Gospels. The rest is now up to you. During my seminary and post-seminary studies, twenty-two credit hours were devoted to Gospel studies, even though my primary focus has always been second temple history, non-biblical Jewish literature, and the General Epistles. Whether a student in seminary, a pastor or teacher in the local church, or college or seminary professor you will need to make it a personal priority to study the Gospels beyond what we have provided here in this book or what you may have studied at seminary. For this reason we close *Understanding of the Gospels: A Guide for Preaching and Teaching* with "Selected Sources for the Preacher and Teacher of the Gospels" (chapter 16). The first half of chapter 16 is comprised of recommended sources for further reading that parallel each chapter. Perhaps you might pick a book, gather a group of fellow students or pastors in your area to read it, and then discuss it as a group.

The second half of chapter 16 presents a fourfold grouping of Darrell L. Bock's publications: Gospel studies, the use of the Old Testament in the New Testament, historical Jesus studies, and biblical theology. Obviously, Darrell Bock has been a prolific writer of books and journal articles. Naturally, his books are available on Amazon and elsewhere. Yet, he is an excellent speaker as well. As you read *Understanding of the Gospels: A Guide for Preaching and Teaching*, videos of Darrell Bock are woven throughout the book in order to provide you with an opportunity to hear Darrell Bock speak on the Gospels. So please enjoy the book as you engage the transforming message of the Gospels.

PART ONE

Interpreting *and* Communicating *the* Gospels

CHAPTER TWO

Interpreting *the* Gospels Historically: A Tale *of* Two Histories

Herbert W. Bateman IV

When approaching the Gospels, history matters, because they represent two historical contexts. On the one hand, they are ancient historical-biographical *narratives* about Jesus—his life, his message, his deeds, and a time period during which he lived. They recall historical events from 4 BC to AD 33 that occurred during the early years of the Julio-Claudian rule of a revitalized Roman Republic when Judea still had relatively good relations with Rome.

On the other hand, they are ancient historical *biographies* that are neither exhaustive nor chronological but rather persuasive narratives written to tackle Christological matters confronting an array of challenges encountered by their respective and diverse audiences. Original readers of the Synoptic Gospels lived toward the end of a Julio-Claudian rule of Rome when there was an escalating hostility between Judeans and Romans that eventually erupted into a Jewish revolt (AD 66–70). And while some may argue that the Gospel of John was written around the same time as the Synoptic Gospels, 65–70,[1] many still suggest John was written some twenty years after the temple's destruction, toward the end of a Flavian rule of Rome.[2] Conse-

1. Daniel B. Wallace, "John 5:2 and the Date of the Fourth Gospel" *Bib* 71 (1990): 177–205; Hall Harris, "Date—When Was the Fourth Gospel Written?" in *Commentary on the Gospel of John*, https://bible.org/series/backgroundstudy-john, viewed 6 September 2016.
2. Craig L. Blomberg, *The Historical Reliability of John's Gospel: Issues & Commentary* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2001), 41–44; Andreas J. Köstenberger. *John*, BECNT (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2004), 6–8. In his evaluation of John 5 and 9:1–10:21, Asiedu-Peprah establishes evidence that John's narrative uses these two passages to reflect the "*intra-Jewish debates* of the post-70 C.E. period." Martin Asiedu-Peprah's *Johannine Sabbath Conflicts As Juridical Controversy* in WUNT 2/132 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2001), 227–29.

quently in preparing for an exegetical study of the Gospels, we underscore a distinction between two histories: Jesus's historical context and historical contexts of the Gospel recipients with insights for interpretation.

HISTORICAL CONTEXT OF JESUS

Jesus was born in the winter of 5 or 4 BC,[3] just twenty-two years after the Roman Republic entered a new era of rule under the Julio-Claudian monarchy. While both Matthew and Luke recall the birth of Jesus, Luke clearly places the birth of Jesus during the reign of Caesar Augustus (2:1). Luke also reveals that Jesus's ministry began during the fifteenth year of Tiberius's reign (3:1). When considering Luke's latter statement alongside some historical clues in the Gospel of John, it seems reasonable to suggest that Jesus initiated his earthly ministry sometime during the summer or autumn of AD 29, a ministry, which ended with his crucifixion on Friday 3 April 33.[4] So to appreciate Jesus's historical context, we examine the first two Caesars and their relationships with the Jewish people.

JUDEA, NOT PALESTINE

In 539 BC, when the exiles began their return to Jerusalem (Ezra 1–2), they only occupied the geographical area of Judah.

In 164 BC, when Judas Maccabee re-established religious freedom to Judea, subsequent nephews expanded Judean influence to include Idumea, Samaria, Galilee, the coastal plains, and the Transjordan.

In 63 BC, when Pompey brought Judea under Roman control as a client kingdom, it was known as the province of Judea.

In AD 135, after the Romans subdued the Jewish revolts of AD 66–70 and 132–135, Rome renamed Judea Palestine. Thus Herod, Jesus, and his disciples lived in the province of Judea, not Palestine.

Augustus and His Relationship with Herod

The personality and policies of Caesar Augustus (formerly Gaius Octavius) marked a momentous turning point in the history of the Greco-Roman world. Born September 23, 63 BC, Augustus was related to both Pompey and Julius Caesar via his mother, Atia. He acquired Roman nobility when Atia married consul Lucius Marcius Phiippus in 56 BC—a nobility amplified when Julius Caesar, Octavian's great uncle, adopted him and made him heir of his estate in 45 BC.[5] In August 29

3. Harold W. Hoehner, *Chronological Aspects of the Life of Christ* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1977), 27. See also Stephen Young, "Birth of Jesus" *DJG*, 72–84.
4. Hoehner, *Chronological Aspects of the Life of Christ*, 29–114. See also D. A. Carson & Douglas J. Moo, *An Introduction to the New Testament*, 2d. ed. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1992, 2005), 125 n. 129.
5. *History of Rome* (or *Velleius Paterculus*) in LCL, trans. by Frederick W. Shipley (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1924), 177–81; Frédéric Hurlet and Frederik Vervaet, "Augustus, Life and Career" trans. by Johanna M. Baboukis in OEAGR, vol. 1 (Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 332–44.

> "May I be privileged to build firm and lasting foundations for the commonwealth. May I also achieve the reward to which I aspire: that of being known as the author of the best possible constitution, and of carrying with me, when I die, the hope that these foundations will abide secure."
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> —Caesar Augustus
> Suetonius, *Aug.* 280

BC, after years of political and military posturing, Octavian celebrated a three-day triumph and took his time in establishing his authority. In January 27 BC, he presented himself to the senate as having restored the Roman Republic as it entered a new era in Rome's history. Octavian would later recall the senate's response in this manner, "I received the title Augustus by degree of the senate. . . ."[6] He was also honored as the "first citizen" (*princeps*) of both war and peace. He transformed Rome's political system, repaired the religious institutions, and eventually transformed the social life from a Roman Republic to a Roman Empire with himself as leader.

"Augustus showed great respect towards all ancient and long-established foreign rites" (Suetonius, *Aug.* 93).[7] This certainly was true concerning the estimated eight thousand Jews living in Rome during the reign of Augustus (Josephus, *War* 2.1 §80). Philo contends that Augustus guaranteed their position in Rome, honored their Sabbath, and permitted them to send their temple tax to Jerusalem, to receive Roman citizenship, and to study Jewish law (Philo, *Embassy*, 156–58).[8] His positive relationship with the Jewish people living in Rome was extended to those in Judea seemingly due to his longstanding political and personal friendship with Herod the Great whereby Herod served as Caesar's client king over Judea for twenty-six years.[9]

Herod's political relationship with Augustus began as early as 40 BC when Mark Antony, Augustus (then Octavius), and the Senate declared Herod King of Judea. The appointment was celebrated with a banquet given by Antony (Josephus, *Ant.* 14.13.10–14.5 §§365–90). After Augustus's defeat of Antony at Actium on 2 September 31 BC, Herod endeared himself to Augustus (Josephus, *War* 1.20.1–2 §§386–92). Augustus admired Herod's loyalty and appreciated his ability to rule. Herod's success contributed to Augustus's *Pax Romana*, assisted in the spread of Roman culture by way of comprehensive building projects (e.g., Caesarea, Sephoris, Jerusalem temple, etc.), provided Rome with

6. *The Acts of Augustus* (or *Res Gestae Divi Augusti*) 34 in LCL, trans. by Frederic W. Shipley (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1924), 399.
7. All Suetonius quotes are from Suetonius, *The Twelve Caesars*, trans. by Robert Graves Revised with an Introduction and Notes by J. B. Rives (New York: Penguin Books, 2007).
8. John M. Barclay, *Jews in the Mediterranean Diaspora: From Alexander to Trajan (323 BCE–117 CE)*, (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1996), 292–95, cf. 76–77, 238, 267–68, 310.
9. Ibid., 250, 293–95.

a reliable ally on the eastern fringes of the empire, and prepared his sons in the ways of Rome with a Roman education.[10] It was a common practice of Augustus to find guardians for children of dynastic heirs until they came of age, to educate and raise them in Rome (Suetonius, *Aug.* 48). This practice was extended to Herod's sons, which enhanced the personal relationship between them.

Aristobulus and Alexander, the sons of Herod through his Hasmonean wife Mariamme, studied in Rome for five years. When tensions emerged between Herod and his two sons, Augustus intervened to reestablish domestic peace in Herod's home, even though it was short-lived. Aristobulus and Alexander were eventually executed at Sebaste for treason (Josephus, *Ant.* 16.4.6 §§132–134; *War* 1.28.2–3 §§458–60). After Herod died, Augustus served as executor of Herod's sixth will, whereby three other sons were honored with portions of Herod's kingdom. His sons through his wife Malthace, Archelaus and Antipas, were awarded the largest portion of Herod's kingdom. ***Archelaus*** was awarded Samaria, Judah, and Idumea. ***Antipas*** was awarded Galilee and Perea. Another son through his wife Cleopatra, ***Philip***, was awarded the regions of Batanea, Trachonitis, and Auranitis (Josephus, *Ant.* 17.11.4 §§ 318–20).

PAX ROMANA

Pax Romana means "peace of Rome." It was inaugurated with Augustus in 27 BC and lasted 207 years until Marcus Aurelius died in AD 180.

It was a period of relative peace, minimal Roman expansion by military force, and a period of expansion of the arts and architecture. Augustus was the first to help Rome realize they could live in peace without warring with those surrounding them.

Augustus established border security via the active role of Roman legends, which involve building Roman roads for military movement. This is not to suggest that Rome did not address with military force territories that were still on the fringes of the Roman Empire (e.g., the Balkans and Germania). With the exception of Claudius's invasion of Britain and Trajan's expansion efforts, Rome's foreign policy was to live at peace.

These sort of benevolent acts extended to Herod, his family, as well as the Jewish people do not suggest that Augustus understood the Jewish people or their customs. He believed the Jews fasted every Sabbath (Suetonius, *Aug.* 76). Nevertheless, Augustus's relationship with Herod and tolerance toward the Jews living in Rome appears to have spread to Jews living throughout the Roman world.[11]

10. For a complete history of Herod, see Peter Richardson's *Herod: King of the Jews and Friend of the Romans* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1996).
11. Barclay, *Jews in the Mediterranean Diaspora*, 279; "Diaspora," Livius: *Cultuur, geschiedenis en literatuur* (Livius.org, created in 1996; last modified on 25 April 2016), http://www.livius.org/articles/concept/diaspora/?.

So how might this historical information help in interpreting the historical setting about Jesus's birth recorded in Matthew? During my early study of Matthew, it seemed odd to me that Herod would act so violently (2:16) after he heard of the Magi seeking the birth of the Messiah (2:2–3). Yet for the early Judean follower of Jesus who was reading this account and for whom the Gospel was written,[12] they knew far more about the historical setting concerning Augustus and Herod then me. First, they knew of Herod's longstanding relationship with Rome's leaders as well as his paranoia. Herod was suspicious of everyone and trusted no one when it came to securing and retaining his rule over Judea. During the early years of consolidating his rule from 37 to 24 BC, he drowned his one brother-in-law Aristobulus III in 35 BC and executed his uncle Joseph in 34 BC (Josephus, *Ant.* 15.3.2–6 §§42–70). Herod killed his father-in-law John Hyrcanus II (30 BC), his Hasmonean wife Mariamme (29 BC), his mother-in-law Alexandra (28 BC), and another brother-in-law Costabar (27 BC). Herod's distrust would later spread to his sons Aristobulus and Alexander as well as his Idumean son, Antipater, through his wife Doris. All were put to death because they were a perceived threat to his throne. Second, they knew of Herod's close political and personal relationship with Augustus. After all, Augustus appointed Herod and supported his rule over Judea for decades.

So when Matthew 2:2–3 tells us that upon Herod's hearing of the Magi coming to pay homage to a newborn king, it caused him "inner turmoil" (ἐταράχθη; BDAG 990). Why? Was it because Herod was trying to thwart the Messiah? Or was it because Herod had established a pattern of paranoia that resulted in death for anyone who might threaten his rule. When he assembled the "experts of the law" (2:5–6), was it because he himself anticipated Messiah? Perhaps not! It may be he believed along with others of his day that David's dynasty ceased in 586 BC. According to Ben Sira, David's dynasty had ended, the power of the dynasty had been given to others, and the honor of the dynasty had been removed because of the great sins of the Davidic monarchs (Sir. 49:4–6). Elsewhere Ben Sira emphasizes that people have the power to choose to obey God. Each person, including kings, is responsible for his actions (Sir. 15:11–17). The kings of the Davidic monarchy chose disobedience and thereby forfeited their right to rule. Only David, Hezekiah, and Josiah appear to receive absolution. Ben Sira never mentions the restoration of David's line. Similarly, Josephus believed the establishment of David as king and his dynasty was a tribute to the power of God

12. J. Andrew Overman, *Matthew's Gospel and Formative Judaism: The Social World of the Matthean Community* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1990), 158–59; Jack D. Kingsbury, "Social History of the Matthean Community" in *Social History of the Matthean Community: Cross-Disciplinary Approaches*, ed. David L. Balch (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1991), 264.

(*Ant.* 5.9.4 §§335–37). God raised David to power, despite his ordinary parentage, and his dynasty lasted for twenty-one generations. Yet as the story of David and his dynasty continues to unfold, the longevity of the dynasty was evidently conditional with no everlasting dimensions (*Ant.* 7.4.4 §§ 92–93; 8.4.6 §§ 125–29).[13] Finally, it is interesting that Augustus appears to turn a blind eye to Herod's paranoia throughout the twenty-six years of Herod's reign. Why? Perhaps it was because of Herod's loyal support of Augustus when Augustus first assumed his rule over Rome. Perhaps it was because of Herod's longstanding political and personal relationship with Augustus. Whatever the real reason, these historical realities about Herod were common knowledge to Matthew's readers but not widespread among us twenty-first-century readers. Thus the manner in which we fill in Matthew's historical gaps should give consideration to Jesus's historical context.

While Herod died in late 4 or early 5 BC around the age of seventy (Josephus, *Ant.* 17.8.1 §§191–92), Augustus died a month short of his seventy-sixth birthday, 19 August 14 AD (Suetonius, *Aug.* 100). Nevertheless before they died, each left their kingdoms to heirs. For Herod, three sons inherited his kingdom (Josephus, *Wars* 1.33.8–9 §§665–73). For Augustus, he had convinced the Roman people that the next leader of Rome should come from his family.

Tiberius and His Relationship with the Jewish People

After a series of untimely deaths in his family, Augustus passed the mantle of leadership onto Tiberius (Suetonius, *Aug.* 62–65; 101). Born 16 November 42 BC, Tiberius was eventually adopted as a son of Augustus on 27 June AD 4 (Suetonius, *Tib.* 5, 15). Unlike Julius Caesar and Augustus who seized political power, Tiberius was the first in Rome to inherit it. On 19 August 14, Tiberius assumed ever-so-reluctantly the role as Caesar (Suetonius, *Tib.* 25). Thirteen years into his reign (AD 27) Tiberius left Rome for the island of Capri (Tacitus, *Annals* 4.41, 57) and appointed as regent his trusted advisor, Sejanus who was cruel and anti-Semitic (Cassius, *History* 57.19.5–7; 57.21.3). Seventeen years into his

> A freedman then read Augustus's will aloud . . . The preamble to the will ran as follows: "Since fate has cruelly carried off my sons Gaius and Lucius, Tiberius Caesar is to inherit two-thirds of my property." This wording strengthened the suspicion that Augustus had nominated Tiberius as his successor only for want of any better choice.
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> —Suetonius, *Tib.* 23

13. H.W. Attridge, *The Interpretation of Biblical History in the Antiquitates Judaicae of Flavius Josephus*, Harvard Dissertations in Religion 7 (Missoula, MT: Scholars Press, 1976), 78–83.

reign (AD 31), Sejanus became consul with Tiberius.[14] When Tiberius learned that Sejanus was plotting against him, he had Sejanus arrested and executed on 18 October 31 (Cassius, *History* 58.10.1–11.5). While it was unknown to Tiberius, two of Sejanus's co-conspirators were Pontius Pilate and Herod Antipas.[15] Once Tiberius began his execution, all of Sejanus's family, friends, and nearly all his supporters were arrested, imprisoned, and eventually put death (Suetonius, *Tib.* 55, 61). These sort of vicious acts contributed to his reputation as a mean-spirited tyrant who sought "to gratify his lust for seeing people suffer" (Suetonius, *Tib.* 59–61).

Unlike Augustus, Tiberius had a tense relationship with the Jewish people in Rome and Judea. In AD 19, "he abolished foreign cults at Rome, particularly the Egyptian and Jewish, forcing all those who had embraced these superstitions to burn their religious vestments and other accessories. Jews of military age were removed to unhealthy regions on the pretext of drafting them into the army; those too old or too young to serve—including non-Jews who had adopted similar practices—were expelled from the city and threatened with slavery if they defied the order" (Suetonius, *Tib.* 25; cf. Josephus, *Ant.* 18.3.5 §§81–84). This dislike of the Jewish people had an impact on his choice and support of the Roman officials placed in charge of Samaria, Judea, and Idumea.

After Augustus deposed Herod's son Archelaeus in 6 BC because of his cruel and tyrannical rule over the Jewish people (Josephus, *Ant.* 17.13.2 §§342–44), a Roman of equestrian rank was appointed governor (prefect, ἔπαρχος) over Samaria, Judah, and Idumea. These governors exercised judicial, military, and financial control over Rome's imperial province of Judea (Josephus, *War* 2.9.1 §§167–168). During the reign of Tiberius, two governors were appointed: Valerius Gratus (AD 15–26) and Pontius Pilate (AD 26–36). Pilate, a Sejanus appointee, was inflexible, self-willed, greedy, judiciously unfair, and cruel toward the Jewish people (Philo, *Embassy* 301–302). During the ten years of Pilate's appointment, his contempt for Jewish customs and privileges was well known to Judeans and Tiberius. Shortly after arriving in Judea in AD 26, Pilate introduced Roman standards with engraved figures of the emperor to the religious leaders and people living in Jerusalem (Josephus, *Ant.* 18.3.1 §§55–59; *War* 2.9.2 §§169–177). Later he seized money from the "sacred treasure known as *Corbonas*" and spent it on an aqueduct that brought water into Jerusalem (Josephus, *Ant.* 18.3.2 §§69–61; *War* 2.9.4 §§175–177). While these events put Pilate at odds with Jerusalem's religious leaders, his mass murder of Galileans during Passover in Luke 13:1 and dedication and placement of several gold

14. Suetonius, *Tib.* 65; Cassius, *History* 58.4.1–4.
15. Harold W. Hohner, *Herod Antipas: A Contemporary of Jesus Christ* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1980), 128–29.

coated shields bearing the Emperor's name in Herod's palace in Jerusalem (Philo, *Embassy* 299–300) created a strained political and personal relationship with Herod Antipas. So while Pilate's governor residence may have been in Judea's port city of Caesarea, Pilate managed to agitate Jewish people throughout all Judea.

So how might this historical information about Tiberius, Sejanus, Pilate, and Herod Antipas help in interpreting the historical setting surrounding Jesus's death? Luke tells us that during the trial of Jesus, "Herod and Pilate became friends with each other, for prior to this they had been enemies" (Luke 23:12; NET). Hoehner considers this "a curious statement in Luke that the long-standing enmity of Antipas and Pilate was finally removed during the trial of Jesus."[16] If Jesus was crucified during the spring of AD 33, the enmity alluded to in Luke was not only the massacre of the Galileans but also the votive shields placed in Herod's palace during the Feast of Tabernacles around 10 October 32.[17] The latter event was resolved with a rather harsh letter from Tiberius directing Pilate to remove the offensive shields (Philo, *Embassy* 305). So in Luke, Pilate was congenial toward Antipas during Jesus's trial because of this recently received letter from Tiberius. In John when Pilate tried to release Jesus, "the Jewish leaders shouted out, 'If you release this man, you are no friend of Caesar!'" (19:12, NET). As a Sejanus government appointee, this assertion may have alarmed Pilate, realizing that if he was not perceived as a friend of Tiberius, then does his allegiance still lie with Sejanus? Pilate could not afford to be at odds with Tiberius now that Sejanus and many others associated with him were dead. So after three attempts to release Jesus (Luke 23:4, 6–12, 13–25; cf. Matt. 27:11–26), Pilate hands Jesus over to the Jewish people rather than be inflexible, self-willed, and judiciously unfair, as Philo had described. Eventually, however, Pilate's seemingly anti-Semitic recklessness ended with his executing a group of influential Samaritans whereby he was later sent to Rome to answer to Tiberius. But before Pilate arrived, Tiberius died at the age of seventy-seven on 16 March 37 AD (Josephus, *Ant.* 18.4.1–2 §§85–89)—four years after the death and resurrection of Jesus.

So in this first tale of two histories, we addressed historical events *within* the Gospels that occurred during the time of Jesus's life and ministry with specific attention given to how history at times clarifies and fills in historical gaps about historical figures who played a role in Jesus's birth and death. Now we want to address the historical context of the Gospel recipients.

16. Hoehner, *Herod Antipas,* 180. Hoehner also discusses the enmity in Luke for those who favor an AD 30 crucifixion (180–83).
17. Ibid., 181.

First Emperors of the Roman Empire[18]	Jewish Rulers and Major Conflicts with Rome	The Rise of the Church in Judea and the Writing of the Gospels
Julio-Claudian Dynasty	**Herodian Dynasty**	**Events of the Early Church**
Augustus (31 BC–AD 14)	Herod the Great (40–4 BC) Archelaus: Judea (4 BC–AD 6)	Jesus Birth (late 5\early 4 BC)
Tiberius (AD 14–37)	Philip: Northeast Galilee (4 BC–AD 37)	Jesus Death & Resurrection (AD 33)
Caligula (AD 37–41)	Antipas: Galilee & Perea (4 BC–AD 39)	Peter at Pentecost (AD 33) James Leads Jerusalem Church (AD 33–62)
	Agrippa I (AD 37–44)	
Claudius (AD 41–54)	Agrippa II (AD 50–93)	Mark (late 50s–early 60s)
Nero (AD 54–68)	**Jewish Wars against Rome (AD 66–70)**	Luke (mid–late 60s) Matthew (late 60s) John (late 60s)
Roman Civil War (AD 68–69)		
Flavian Dynasty		or
Vespasian (AD 69–79) Titus (AD 79–81) Domitian (AD 81–96)		John (between 85 and 95)?

HISTORICAL CONTEXT OF THE GOSPEL RECIPIENTS

Assuming the Synoptic Gospels were written sometime during the 60s, as well as accepting the more recent argument that John too was written before AD 70,[19] this second tale of two histories focuses attention on the last emperor of the Julio-Claudian monarchy. More specifically, considerations are given to Nero and his relationship with the Jewish people and then tackle some Christological matters confronting recipients of two Gospels.

18. For a complete survey of Roman Emperors see Chris Scarre, *Chronicle of the Roman Emperors: The Reign-by-Reign Record of the Rulers of Imperial Rome* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1995).
19. Craig L. Blomberg, *Matthew*, NAC (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1992), 42; James R. Edwards, *The Gospel According to Mark*, PNTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002), 6-9; Darrell L. Bock, *Luke 1:1–9:50*, BECNT (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1994), 16-18. See footnote 1 for those holding a sixties dating of John.

Nero and His Relationship with the Jewish People

On 15 December 37, nine months after Tiberius's death, Nero was born (Suetonius, *Nero* 6). His mother, Agrippina the Younger, was a great-granddaughter of Caesar Augustus and Livia (Tacitus, *Annals* 12.69; 13.1). Two years after being proclaimed an adult at the age of 14, Nero not only married his stepsister, Claudia Octavia (Tacitus, *Annals* 12.41, 58) he was soon thereafter "acclaimed *imperator*" and honored by the Senate (Suetonius, *Nero* 8) on 13 October 54. "Barely emerged from boyhood," Nero was now emperor of Rome (Tacitus, *Annals* 13.1).

WHO WAS LIVIA?

Livia (30 January 58 BC–28 September 29 AD) was Caesar Augustus's third wife. Although they had no children, they were married some fifty-one years. When she married Augustus, she had a son Tiberius who became Caesar's adopted stepson. She was also grandmother to Claudius through her other son Drusus. She was a great-grandmother of Caligula and great-great-grandmother of Nero.

—Scarre, *Roman Emperors*, 26

As Nero grew into his role as Caesar, "his insolence, lust, extravagance, greed, and cruelty" were at first perceived as "youthful mistakes" that were later determined "faults of his character" (Suetonius, *Nero* 26). 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).[20] "Nothing could restrain Nero," according to Suetonius, "from murdering anyone he pleased, on whatever pretext" (*Nero* 37).

As to Nero's relationship with the Jewish people, it was strained. And yet "he despised all religious cults except that of the Syrian Goddess, and one day he showed that he had changed his mind even about her by urinating on the divine image" (Suetonius, *Nero* 56). Not surprising that when the chaotic, disparaging, and life-threatening events escalating throughout Judea erupted into war (AD 57–70) many people suffered. The events impacted Jewish people living throughout the Roman Empire but particularly those living in Rome and Judea. And while the precise cause and factor of Judea's ensuing war with Rome is dubious, Tacitus (*History* 5.9.3–5; 5.10.1) suggests it was due to Rome's appointment of two cruel and irresponsible governors: Felix (ca. AD 52–60) appointed by Claudius and Porcius Festus (ca. AD 60–62) appointed by Nero. Yet the political ambitions, incompetence in dealing with Jewish cultural concerns, and the personal greed of Felix, Festus, Albinus (ca.

20. Stephen Dando-Collins, *The Great Fire of Rome: The Fall of the Emperor Nero and the City of Rome* (Cambridge, MA: De Capo, 2010).

AD 62–64), and Gessius Florus (ca. AD 64–66) contributed to Judea's hostility with Rome.[21] According to Hengel, Josephus "believed that—in addition to the incompetence of the later Roman procurators—it was the work of (Jewish) individual criminal persons and groups that had led to the fateful development. He (= Josephus) also felt bound, as an apologist for Judaism, not to state openly in a Roman [*sic* an] environment that was largely hostile to Judaism that the cause of the catastrophe was to be found in certain fundamental Jewish religious themes such as the ideal of 'theocracy,' 'zeal for the law' and the people's messianic expectation."[22] So it seems, Nero's government appointees stirred the emotions of the Judean populous that not only heightened but also legitimized—from a Judean perspective—their revolt against Rome.[23] So Nero ordered Vespasian to Judea with two Roman legions to restore order (Josephus, *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 (AD 70).

So how does this historical setting of the Gospel recipients impact our interpretation of the Gospels? First, while there was no Chris Matthews of MSNBC's "Hardball," Wolf Blitzer of CNN's "Situation Room," or Greta Van Susteren of FOX's "On the Record," people throughout the Roman Empire were aware of Judean news and the growing hostilities with Rome. Luke tells us in Acts that "Jews from every nation under heaven" (2:5) came to Jerusalem for Passover and Pentecost. They came from major cities (i.e., Rome, Alexandria, and Antioch), provinces (i.e., Phrygia, Pamphylia, Galatia, and Asia), and islands (i.e., Crete, Cyprus). When they returned home, they became the newscasters broadcasting Judean news.[24] Roman governing officials and administrators throughout the Roman Empire were also aware of the rising tensions in Judea. Perhaps the Roman official, who may have been "the most excellent Theophilus" of Luke 1:3, questioned his faith due to the current upheaval in Judea. He may have asked Luke, if Christianity is an outgrowth of Judaism, why are Messiah figures rising up in Judea, recruiting followers, and revolting against Rome?[25] Luke answers Theophilus in his Gospel by underscoring how the

21. Barclay, *Jews in the Mediterranean Diaspora*, 250–55. For a more detailed discussion about the events leading up to the revolt during the 60s, see Herbert W. Bateman IV, *Jude*, Evangelical Exegetical Commentary (Bellingham, WA: Lexum Press, 2015), 66–93.
22. Martin Hengel, *The Zealots: Investigations into the Jewish Freedom Movement in the Period from Herod I until 70 A.D.* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1989, 1997), 385.
23. For a summary presentation of Judean War with Rome, see Y. Aharoni and M. Avi-Yonah, *The MacMillan Bible Atlas*, rev. ed. (New York: Macmillan Publishing, 1968, 1977), 157; Hengel, *The Zealots*, 330–76; L.I. Levine "Jewish War" in ABD (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 3:839–45.
24. Barclay, *Jews in the Mediterranean Diaspora*, 256–58, 281, 419–24.
25. Herbert W. Bateman IV, *Interpreting the General Letters: An Exegetical Handbook,* Handbooks for New Testament Exegesis (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2013), 71–72.

Jewish religious leaders rejected the real Messiah, Jesus (e.g., journey section 11:37–52; 12:1; 14:1–4; 15:1–2; 16:14–15; 19:45–47; 20:45–47). The Judean uprising conflicted with Christianity. So Luke sets out to reaffirm Theophilus in his newfound faith about Jesus and his messiahship.

Second, the Neronian persecution of Christians in Rome tends to confirm Mark's recipients to be Roman followers of Jesus. Mark's unique phrase "with wild animals" (1:13) may suggest that Mark wrote during the Neronian persecution, especially when connected with Tacitus's statement that Christians were "covered with wild beasts' skins and torn to death by dogs" (*Annals* 15.44).[26] Picking up on Hengel's belief that more should be made of the connection between the Neronian persecution (AD 64–65) and the Jewish revolt,[27] perhaps the escalating events of Judea under governor Florus (ca. AD 64–66) may illuminate why Nero mistreated and even tortured the Christians in Rome. Suetonius muses, "nothing could restrain Nero from murdering anyone he pleased, on whatever pretext" (*Nero* 37). And while Jewish Christians were not the ones revolting in Judea, Romans did not distinguish between Jews and Christians at the time.

Nero's thirteen-year, eight-month rule (Cassius, *History* 63.29.3; Josephus, *War* 4.9.2 §491) ended the Julio-Claudian rule of Rome. He was thirty years old when he died. And though Suetonius claims Nero committed suicide at the age of thirty-two on the anniversary of Claudia Octavia's murder (*Nero* 49, 57), his suicide is debated, the day is uncertain, and his age is wrong. Nevertheless it was just prior to Nero's death that, according to tradition, Peter was hanged upside down (*Acts of Peter*, 37–40) and Paul was beheaded (Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 2.25).[28]

Gospel Christology

While there were people like Ben Sira and Josephus who did not look for a Messiah figure, many other Jews anticipated someone to rise up to rid Judea of Roman occupation and to reestablish Israel as God's Kingdom.[29] In fact, the atmosphere always seemed ripe to move from merely dreaming of, writing about, and expecting a forthcoming Messiah to actual messianic insurrections. Several messianic insurrections occurred while Jesus was a child, as well as during the 60s.[30] The dissat-

26. Edwards, *Mark*, 8; Martin Hengel, *The Four Gospels and the One Gospel of Jesus Christ: An Investigation of the Collection and Origin of the Canonical Gospels*, trans. J. Bowden (Harrisburg, PA: Trinity, 2000), 79.
27. Martin Hengel, *Studies in the Gospel of Mark*, trans. J. Bowden (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1985), 30.
28. John Foxe, *Foxe's Book of Martyrs* ed. Paul L. Maier and R.C. Linnenkugel (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2016), 34–35.
29. 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), 253–329.
30. Bateman, *Interpreting the General Letters*, 70–72.

isfaction with Jewish leadership and Roman occupation fueled a longing for a Davidic Messiah figure. Second temple Jewish texts describe him as human, a descendant of David, a military warrior, and political leader (*Ps. Sol.*, 1Q28a, 4Q161, 4Q174, 4Q246, 4Q285). Despite these similarities, there was no monolithic view about this anticipated messianic figure. For instance, no one knew when he would come (1Q28, 4Q161, 4Q266). The cryptic epithets for Messiah reveal that no one knew his name (i.e., branch, son, etc.). The messianic diarchy also contributed to the confusion (CD, 1Q28, 4Q376, *T. Jud*). Nevertheless, many Jewish people were looking for a powerful and victorious messianic figure who would come and rid Judea of Roman rule so as to reestablish Judea as God's kingdom. These diverse and incomplete views about Messiah affected Jesus's audiences as well as the Gospel recipients.

So how does this historical setting of the Gospel recipients impact our interpretation of the Gospels? It is clear in each Gospel that Jesus defines his messiahship in his own terms, and yet those terms vary from one Gospel to another due to Christological misunderstandings. For Mark's audience the questions are twofold: Who is this man, 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)[31] along with three predicted rejections and emphasis on Jesus suffering (8:31; 9:31; 10:33–34). Mark's portrait appears to correct a flawed Christology whereby Jesus is some sort of messianic genie 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.[32] 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 is a call to suffering and not a right to happiness.

For Luke's audience, the central questions are threefold: Who is Jesus? What does he bring? How do we know he is God's chosen? Throughout Luke, "Jesus' messiahship needs clarification and careful definition."[33] Why? Partly due to the divergent messianic expectations prevalent among Jewish teachings that needed clarification and in part due to the turmoil in Judea and the rise of messianic figures and desire to reestablish Judea as an

31. Herbert W. Bateman IV, "Defining the Titles 'Christ' and 'Son of God' in Mark's Narrative Presentation of Jesus," *JETS* 50 (2007): 537–59.
32. Joel Williams, "The Gospel of Mark" in *What the New Testament Authors Really Cared About: A Survey of Their Writings*, ed. Kenneth Berding and Matt Williams, 2d ed. (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2015), 68–70.
33. Darrell L. Bock, *Luke 9:51–24:53*, BECNT (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1996), 29–30.

independent kingdom. Developing his Christology from the earth up,[34] Luke introduces Jesus as a regal-prophetic servant (3:21–22; 4:16–30) while moving the portrayal of Jesus as the Messiah-Servant-Prophet toward Jesus's authority as Lord (20:41–44; 21:27; 22:69). Although other titles for Jesus appear, Luke's organized portrait ultimately presents Jesus as one who "bears authority and promise." Unlike the messianic portraits in Jewish literature, Jesus as Messiah suffered death, was resurrected, and ascended to heaven.

Naturally there are many factors about the anticipated messiah absent from nonbiblical Jewish material. Missing is the concept of a suffering messiah, a messianic kingdom and rule that extends over the seen and unseen of all creation, a resurrected messiah who returns to consummate an already inaugurated kingdom, a messiah miraculously born of a virgin in Bethlehem, and a divine Davidic regal priest. Jesus presents these missing elements for the benefit of the Gospel recipients and their current misunderstandings about Jesus and his messiahship. In conclusion, when approaching the Gospels for teaching and preaching it is important that we do so with two histories in mind. Darrell Bock has committed his life to such an understanding. His work *Blasphemy and Exaltation in Judaism: The Charge against Jesus in Mark 14:53–65,*[35] completed at Eberhard-Karls-Universität Tübingen in 1995–96, is just one of many examples of his commitment to approaching the Gospels as a tale of two histories. Naturally, this sort of commitment has been extended to his students, for which I am greatly appreciative and indebted. Thank you, Darrell!

Darrell Bock Speaking on the Gospels from the Earth Up versus Heaven Down

34. Speaking at the second annual Let's Know the Bible Conference in Northern Indiana in 2015, Darrell Bock addressed three issues: "Jesus from the Earth Up versus Heaven Down: How to Read the Gospels" (QR Code above or https://youtu.be/6zfQGqI8k4k; "What Got Jesus into Trouble: How to Interpret the Gospels," at https://youtu.be/SvoVezu3xPc; and "Minding the Gap: How to Understand the Gap between the Event to the Writing of the Gospels," at https://youtu.be/jFDwqCfEE0Q. The Let's Know the Bible Conference is an annual fall conference held in Northern Indiana for local churches (hwbateman.com).
35. Darrell L. Bock, *Blasphemy and Exaltation in Judaism: The Charge against Jesus in Mark 14:53–65*, WUNT 2/ 106 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1998).