

1. **Description of Primary Documents.** List three (3) primary documents you read this semester. Preferably, these would be the ones that had the greatest impact on you. Give a **brief** description of each explaining their significance for studying the background to the New Testament. (Remember: **Be brief!**)
 - o Primary Document 1- 1 Enoch
 1. This document is a Jewish Pseudepigrapha considered to be apocalyptic in nature. Its descriptions on the resurrection of the dead and the Son of Man are found in the NT, which helps to understand the context of such ideas written about.
 - o Primary Document 2- 1 Maccabees
 1. This is considered a Jewish Apocrypha writing which registers the struggle of the Jews against Hellenism and its effect on Temple worship. Reading it helps to put into the context how the Jews protected Temple worship, especially the priestly class as mentioned in the Gospels.
 - o Primary Document 3- The Damascus Document
 1. As part of the Dead Sea Scrolls, this document contains language that speaks about the community it represents that would be familiar to New Testament readers. Self-assessment of a community that would sacrifice to God properly is used by the apostles in their general letters to the church.
2. **Impactful Reading and/or Content.** Write out a five-minute response describing the assigned reading or other content that most impacted you during this course. What was in the reading or other content that affected you? (*Use a timer. There are free online stopwatches you can set while working on your computer.*)
 - o All of the Jewish literature I was able to read for this course was exciting for me. Reading primary sources allowed me to feel like a New Testament scholar, and opened up for me to better interpret passages of the New Testament. The hardest to read for me were the Dead Sea Scrolls due to the gaps in the original documents, but still they were interesting because of some of the wording that is already familiar to me in the New Testament. The idea of being a chosen community who serves God in the way God wants turns out to be an age-old idea. The scrolls have a way of interpreting the Hebrew Bible that is parallel to the way the apostles interpret it in the New Testament. While taking this course I would go back to the New Testament where the apostles would quote from the Hebrew Bible and observe how they applied it to what they were writing about. This is important to me because I had only scratched the surface of interpretation methods of the Hebrew Bible when I noticed apostles like Peter quoting it in his first sermon after Pentecost. Before this course I couldn't understand as much why the apostles interpreted the Hebrew Bible the way they did. Also of consequence for me were the other books where scholars put together all that Jewish literature, organized it, and

summarized their meaning for the reader. The books by Grabbe, Helyer, Nickelsburg, and Green and McDonald have become my “go to” for understanding the New Testament background, and gain hermeneutic skills further than before. The arranging of primary source material of Jewish literature into topics directly connected to the New Testament definitely aided me in pinpointing subjects that I hadn’t thoroughly understood before. The New Testament environment plus the figure of Jesus were clarified so much, along with all of the conflicts expressed in the Gospels and the general letters. Even the language and expression of the book of Revelations became clearer for me as I read apocalyptic literature within all the material from Jewish sources that existed before the New Testament. Theological ideas that I learned in my Christian tradition are now more clear, and I am able to trace some of them to the Jewish sources that had been previously ignored for Bible study.

3. **Correlation with the New Testament.** Throughout the course, you likely began to make connections with the things you were learning that illumined one or more NT passages in a way you had never seen before. Choose one (1) NT passage and discuss briefly how your understanding has been deepened or corrected (**Length: One or two paragraphs**).
 - o One passage which I was able to deepen my understanding for was 1 Peter 2:5-9. The material used for this class aided me in comprehending what the apostle Peter meant in describing the community of believers as a temple. The figurative and spiritual concept of a community forming a temple for God was one seen in the Dead Sea Scrolls.
 - o Furthermore, the reading for this class also helped me understand the concept of the “royal priesthood” as written by the apostle Peter. The idea of kingdom of priests that came from the Hebrew Bible makes quite the transition in the Second Temple Period. Looking into the Jewish apocrypha, pseudegrapha, and Dead Sea Scrolls, helps to put together how that kingdom of priests became a spiritual and theological idea in the New Testament.
4. **Personal Impact.** Describe your feelings (whether positive or negative) as to the impact this course material has had on you personally. Were there areas of frustration or excitement, etc.? Document what you did or experienced while you were engaging this perspective or material, and any lasting results in your life and ministry resulting from this course material. (**Length: Around a paragraph**).
 - o As a result of this class and the materials I have studied I have a more positive outlook on Jewish pseudigrapha, apocrypha, and the Dead Sea Scrolls as well. These materials I read I had only considered them as reference works which I would go over briefly if anyone in Bible class asked about them. Never had I gone so deep into the correlation between these works and the New Testament. The reading materials for this class allowed me to bridge a huge gap I had in terms of knowing Jewish writings, culture, and history. No longer are these works simple references, they have helped me clarify theological ideas of the New Testament. My only area of frustration was the missing pieces of the Dead Sea Scrolls.
5. **Intended Use.** Discuss how you intend to use the information you acquired during this course. (**Length: Around a paragraph**).
 - o The way I intend to use the information acquired in this course is in my personal research and writing. I also intend to use the information in any New Testament studies that I may teach in the Bible studies of our church.

Moreover, the information I learned in this course has allowed me to better prepare for sermons based on the New Testament. As such, I plan to take maximum advantage of all this newly found information enthusiastically.

6. **Feedback.** What **one** thing would you like the professor to know about your experience in this class?

- o I would like to thank Professor Craigmiles, for opening my mind to all this material between the Old Testament and the New Testament as well as the history behind it. The Christian tradition under which I grew up in has no regard for these writing sources, and the Jewish roots of the New Testament. So thank you.