

REL A 212 Bible Dictionary Readings: Section 1, Background, The Book of Acts

Background Lecture #1

Roman Empire

In the apostolic age the Roman Empire was the one great power of the world. It included everything between the Euphrates, the Danube, the Rhine, the Atlantic, and the Sahara desert. Palestine became a client state in 63 B.C., when Pompey took Jerusalem; and at the banishment of Archelaus (A.D. 6) Judea was placed under a Roman prefect. For a list of the Emperors during the period covered by the New Testament, with the dates of their accessions, see Caesar; see also Bible Chronology in the appendix.

The Empire included a great variety of peoples. Broadly speaking, the eastern half was Greek, the western Latin; but the Greek language was understood not only throughout the whole of the East, but in a great part of the West as well, and was the language of commerce everywhere. It was only in the Lycaonian mountains (Acts 14:11) that Paul's Greek was not enough. The three largest cities of the Empire were Rome, Alexandria, and Antioch in Syria. In each of these there were large Jewish colonies. The Roman government of the provinces was not on the whole oppressive, though taxation was always heavy. It was the policy of Rome to treat all national religions with respect. The cohort in the Tower of Antonia at Jerusalem was there only to guard the peace of the temple. The Emperor made regular offerings, and (Acts 21:29) no Gentile was allowed to set foot in the court of Israel. The Jews had express permission to put to death even a Roman citizen, if he was found inside the middle wall of partition. (See Temple of Herod.) The Jewish parts of Palestine were practically governed by the high priest and Sanhedrin, except that capital sentences needed the confirmation of the prefect or procurator (John 18:31). The Jews also had exceptional privileges, such as freedom from military service and from legal business on the Sabbath. The high priest could even send Saul to bring the Christians of Damascus to Jerusalem for punishment (Acts 9:2). Yet the Jews always hated Roman rule and were constantly in rebellion. Even a census could not be taken without a dangerous rising (Acts 5:37). Judea was certainly unfortunate in having as prefects and procurators such men as Pilate, Felix, Albinus, and Gessius Florus. Only Festus was a better sort of man. All through the apostolic age the storm was gathering that broke in 70 years (A.D. 66–135) of war between Rome and Israel.

During the first 36 years after the Ascension, Roman officials were a protection to the Christian Church. At Philippi (Acts 16:37–39) and at Jerusalem (22:25–29; 23:27) Paul pleaded with success his rights as a Roman citizen. At Corinth the proconsul Gallio dismissed the charge brought against him (18:12–17); while at Ephesus the town clerk protected him from the fury of the mob (19:35–41), and the captain of the guard did the same at Jerusalem (21:31–32). Christianity was at first regarded by the government as a form of Judaism, a religion recognized by the state. Persecution began in A.D. 64. The Emperor Nero was suspected of being responsible for the great fire that occurred that year in Rome, and to stifle the report he laid the blame upon the Christians. This persecution lasted till A.D. 68, and among others who suffered were Peter and Paul. There was no further persecution till the reign of Domitian, A.D. 95.

Caesar

The title by which a Roman emperor was known. The emperors during the time covered by the New Testament, with the dates of their accessions, were as follows:

Augustus, 31 B.C.; Tiberius, A.D. 14; Caligula, A.D. 37; Claudius, A.D. 41; Nero, A.D. 54.

The chief occasions on which the imperial name is mentioned are (1) when a question was put to our Lord as to the duty of paying tribute (Matt. 22:17; Mark 12:14; Luke 20:22); (2) at His trial before Pilate, when the charge was disloyalty to Caesar (John 19:12; see also Acts 17:7); (3) the famine in the reign of Claudius, A.D. 47 (Acts 11:28), and his expulsion of Jews from Rome, about A.D. 50 (Acts 18:2); (4) at Paul's trial before Festus, when he claimed his right as a Roman citizen to be tried in the imperial court (Acts 25:11); (5) reference made by Paul to Christians who were members of Caesar's household (Philip. 4:22).

Caesarea

An important seaport town of Palestine, on the main road from Tyre to Egypt, 33 miles north of Joppa, and about 60 miles from Jerusalem. Built by Herod the Great, it was the official residence of Festus, Felix, and other Roman prefects and procurators of Judea (Acts 23:23, 33; 25:1–13). Philip worked in Caesarea (Acts 8:40; 21:8, 16). It was there that Cornelius, the gentile centurion, was baptized by Peter (Acts 10:1, 24; 11:11), and that Herod Agrippa died (Acts 12:23). Caesarea is also frequently mentioned in connection with Paul's journeys (Acts 9:30; 18:22; 21:8, 16; 23:23, 33; 25:1, 4, 6, 13).

Samaria

So called from Shemer, its first owner (1 Kgs. 16:24); a city built by Omri and made the capital of the kingdom of Israel. It occupied a strong position on a hill, and the Assyrians could not capture it until after a siege of three years (2 Kgs. 17:5–6). Herod rebuilt it and called it Sebaste. In New Testament times Samaria was the name of the whole of the central district of Palestine west of the Jordan. See also Samaritans.

Galilee

The name is not often found in the Old Testament, but see Josh. 20:7; 21:32; 1 Kgs. 9:11; 1 Chr. 6:76; Isa. 9:1. In New Testament times it was the most northerly of the three divisions into which Palestine west of the Jordan was divided and included the territories of Issachar, Naphtali, Zebulun, and Asher. The district is about 60 miles by 30. It contained some of the best land and the busiest towns of Palestine and was thickly populated by a hardy, warlike race. It was crossed by important highways leading to Damascus, Egypt, and eastern Palestine. Along these roads caravans would be constantly passing, and such a place as Nazareth would be kept in close touch with what was going on in other parts of the world.

Galilee had an excellent climate, mild near the seacoast, hot in the Jordan valley, and bracing in the highlands. The land was fertile, especially in the plain of Esdraelon, and produced large crops of olives, wheat, barley, and grapes. By the Sea of Galilee the fisheries were a great source of wealth and provided a large export trade.

On the death of Herod the Great after the birth of Jesus, his son Herod Antipas became tetrarch of Galilee and reigned until A.D. 39, when he was banished by the Emperor Caligula. Galilee then came under the rule of Herod Agrippa I, who died in A.D. 44.

Judaea

The name given after the return from exile to the southern part of western Palestine. It extended further north than the old kingdom of Judah and included the southern part of Ephraim. Its chief divisions were the (1) Shephelah, or “lowland,” to the west, on the Philistine frontier; (2) the “hill country,” some 35 miles long, and from 14 to 17 miles in breadth, consisting of stony moorland, capable of little cultivation, but broken up by valleys in which the land is fairly fruitful; (3) the Jordan valley and the Dead Sea in the east, and (4) the Negev, or “Dry Land,” in the south. During the time of the Persian supremacy Judea was part of the fifth satrapy of the Empire and was generally administered by a Jewish governor. In New Testament times, after the death of Herod the Great, Judea fell to Archelaus. On his deposition it was added to the Roman province of Syria and was administered by a prefect or procurator who generally lived at Caesarea.

Pilate

Roman prefect in Judea, A.D. 26–36 (Luke 3:1). His headquarters were at Caesarea, but he was generally present in Jerusalem at feast time. He had a great contempt for the Jewish people and for their religion. During his term of office there was much disorder, mainly in consequence of an attempt he made to introduce into the city silver busts of the emperor on the Roman ensigns. In Luke 13:1 there is a reference to an outbreak during one of the feasts, when Pilate sent soldiers into the temple courts and certain Galileans were slain. He is prominent in the story of our Lord’s Passion (Matt. 27:2–26; 27:58–66; Mark 15:1–15, 42–47; Luke 23:1–25, 50–53; John 18:28–40; 19:1–22, 31, 38). As the Sanhedrin had no power to carry out their sentence of death, Pilate’s consent had to be obtained. The Lord was therefore charged before him with stirring up sedition, making Himself a king, and forbidding to give tribute to Caesar. Pilate saw that there was no evidence to support the charge, and, having received a warning from his wife, he wished to dismiss the case. He also tried to avoid all responsibility in the matter by sending our Lord for trial to Herod Antipas, tetrarch of Galilee, but Herod sent Him back without any formal decision on the case. It was not until the Jews threatened to send a report to the Emperor Tiberius, whose suspicious nature Pilate well knew, that he passed a death sentence, knowing it to be unjust. The sentence was carried out under his directions by Roman soldiers. Pilate was removed from office a few years later in consequence of a disturbance in Samaria.

Diaspora

Dispersion. This refers to the scattering of the house of Israel into lands other than Palestine. In many instances those scattered remained in those lands and did not return. The Jews in particular penetrated all the large cities of the Roman Empire and established centers of Judaism, with synagogues, although they retained strong ties with Jerusalem, making frequent pilgrimages there at the Feasts of Passover, Pentecost, Tabernacles, etc. (John 7:35; Acts 2:5, 9–11). In these countries the Jews often adopted many traits of Greek and Roman culture. Paul was a Jew of the diaspora, as was also Aquila. See Dispersion; Septuagint.

Dispersion

A title applied to all Israelites who remained settled in foreign countries subsequent to the decree of Cyrus (Ezra 1). The Epistle of James is addressed to them (James 1:1; see also John 7:35). One result of this dispersion was the existence in many different parts of the world of Jewish synagogues, which became of great service to the spread of Christianity (Acts 2:5–11; 6:9;

13:43–45; 14:1–2, 19; 16:3; 17:1, 10–13; 18:2, 12, 19; 19:13–17, 33; 28:17–29). All Jews, wherever they might be, regarded the temple at Jerusalem as the center of their worship and contributed the usual half-shekel toward its maintenance (Matt. 17:24). The Jews of Babylonia spoke an Aramaic dialect similar to that spoken in Palestine. The Jews of Syria, Egypt, and Italy adopted the Greek language and along with it many Greek ideas. For their use, the Greek translation of the Old Testament known as the Septuagint was made. See also Diaspora; Septuagint.

Gentile

The word Gentiles means “the nations” and eventually came to be used to mean all those not of the house of Israel. It is first used in Genesis with reference to the descendants of Japheth (Gen. 10:2–5). As used throughout the scriptures it has a dual meaning, sometimes to designate peoples of non-Israelite lineage and other times to designate nations that are without the gospel, even though there may be some Israelite blood therein. This latter usage is especially characteristic of the word as used in the Book of Mormon.

The duties of Israelites toward Gentiles were defined in the law (Ex. 23:32; 34:12–16; Deut. 7:1–3; 20:10–18; 23:3–8; Ezra 9:2–15; 10:1–18; Neh. 13:1–3, 23–31). These regulations served to emphasize the distinction between Israel and Gentile. However, there were numerous provisions showing that Israel was to deal justly and honestly with non-Israelites and to be compassionate toward them (Ex. 22:21; 23:9; Lev. 19:10, 33–34; 24:22).

The pious Jews of New Testament times held themselves aloof from contact with the Gentiles. When a Gentile was converted to Judaism, he was called a proselyte. Even in the Church there was a cultural and doctrinal struggle among many Jewish Christians before they would permit one of gentile lineage to enjoy full fellowship. The first Gentiles to come into the New Testament Church were those who had already become proselytes to Judaism.

Cornelius (Acts 10–11) was the first Gentile of whom we have record who came into the Christian Church without first being a proselyte to Judaism. He was introduced to the gospel of Jesus Christ through a series of divine manifestations both to him and to Peter.

Paul was called the “apostle of the Gentiles” (Rom. 11:13), and it was primarily through his ministry that the gospel was established among those of gentile lineage throughout Europe and Asia Minor, although the way was opened by Peter’s baptism of Cornelius. See also Cornelius; Proselytes.

Hebrew

The name is first found in Gen. 14:13, where it may mean “one who had come from beyond (the Euphrates),” from ’eber, “to cross”; or it may be derived from the Eber mentioned in Gen. 10:25. The Hebrew language is one of a family called the Semitic languages (spoken by the descendants of Shem, the son of Noah). It was probably learned by Abraham after his settlement in Canaan and adopted by him in place of the Aramaic of his earlier years. It was spoken by all Israelites until after the return from captivity. About the 4th century B.C., it began to be replaced by what is called Western Aramaic. Hebrew remained the language of the learned, of the law, and of

religious literature; but in the time of our Lord, Aramaic was the language of ordinary intercourse.

Temple of Herod

To win popularity with the Jews, Herod, in the 18th year (17 B.C.) of his reign, proposed to rebuild the temple of Zerubbabel. The Jews feared lest, having pulled down, he should be unable to rebuild, and to reassure them, Herod promised to gather materials before he began the work. The area of the temple site was inadequate for his design, and to enlarge it he built up a wall from the bottom of the valley, binding rocks together with lead and iron and filling up the hollows. By this means he obtained a site nearly square, each side being 600 feet. The temple proper was built by the priests themselves in a year and six months. The cloisters (the specialty of Herod's temple) and outer enclosures were built in eight years. Other buildings were added from time to time. The work was proceeding all through our Lord's earthly life, and the design was not complete till the year A.D. 64, only six years before the temple's final destruction.

The temple area was divided into courts, and the outer courts stood on the lowest ground. Ascents were made by steps successively from the court of the Gentiles to the court of the women, the courts of the men of Israel and of the priests, and the temple itself. In the midst, not in the center of the site (but somewhat to the north and west of it), on the exact site of the temple of Solomon, with its porch facing the east and its Holy of Holies to the west, was placed the temple itself. It was thus visible from every part of the city. The temple area was surrounded on all sides by a high wall. Cloisters ran all around the wall. Those on the eastern side were called Solomon's Porch and were rebuilt by Herod. The cloisters, with the open space, about 30 cubits wide, adjoining them on the inside, formed the court of the Gentiles.

The court of the women comprised the easternmost portion of the inner temple. It was entered on the east by Nicanor's Gate, a gate of Corinthian brass, reckoned to be the principal gate. This is without doubt the gate "called Beautiful" of Acts 3:2. A wall separated the more sacred portions of the temple toward the west from the court of the women. From the latter the court of the men of Israel was reached by an ascent of 15 steps. A partition one cubit high compassed the holy house and altar and kept the people from the priests. The eastern part of this enclosure was called the court of the priests, and in it stood the huge altar of burnt offering and the laver for the priestly purifications. Twelve steps led from the court of the priests to the temple itself. The temple was 100 cubits long, 100 or 120 cubits high, the center being higher than the wings; 100 cubits broad at the porch, 60 cubits behind. The Holy Place and Holy of Holies were the same size as in Solomon's or Zerubbabel's temple. In front of the temple was a remarkable gateway without doors, with lintels above, adorned with colored and embroidered curtains. It was covered with gold, and a golden vine was spread upon it. Thirty-eight little chambers in three stories surrounded the temple, 15 on the north, 15 on the south, and 8 on the west.

The temple, like that of Zerubbabel, had no ark. A stone was set in its place, on which the high priest placed the censer on the Day of Atonement. It followed the tabernacle (not Solomon's temple) in having only one candlestick and one table of shewbread.

Along the walls of the inner temple were placed chambers for various purposes connected with the temple services. At the north end of the court of the women stood the treasury; at its south

end the Gazith, or chamber of hewn stone, in which the Sanhedrin sat. At the northwest corner of the temple, Herod erected the fortress of Antonia. From its southeast tower, 70 cubits high, the whole temple could be viewed. A Roman legion formed its garrison. Subterranean passages connected it with the temple cloisters, and through these the Roman soldiers poured down to repress the constantly occurring disturbances in the temple courts.

Of the places above mentioned, the court of the women was the scene of the Lord's temple teachings. In the Treasury, at its northern end, He taught (John 8:20); over against the Treasury, He sat and watched the people casting in their alms (Mark 12:41). It was the court of the Gentiles that He purified from the moneychangers; and in Solomon's Porch, at its east end, He walked in the winter (John 10:22). To the same porch gathered all the people greatly wondering (Acts 3:11), after Peter and John had healed the lame beggar who sat at the Beautiful Gate (the gate between the courts of the Gentiles and the women). Inside the Chel and in the court of the women, the Jews from Asia laid hands on Paul. They dragged him down the 14 steps into the court of the Gentiles (the temple gates being shut behind), and then from the Tower of Antonia through the cloisters the chief captain of the band ran down to rescue him (Acts 21). In the court of the men of Israel at the Feast of Tabernacles the Lord watched the priest bring the water from the Pool of Siloam through the water gate and pour it upon the altar of burnt offering (John 7). The veil that was rent at Christ's Crucifixion hung between the Holy Place and the Holy of Holies. The pinnacle that was the scene of one of His temptations was perhaps the roof of one of the porches.

In A.D. 70, on the evening of the anniversary of the destruction of the first temple, Herod's temple was taken and destroyed by the army of Titus. A temple to Jupiter Capitolinus was erected on the site by Hadrian.

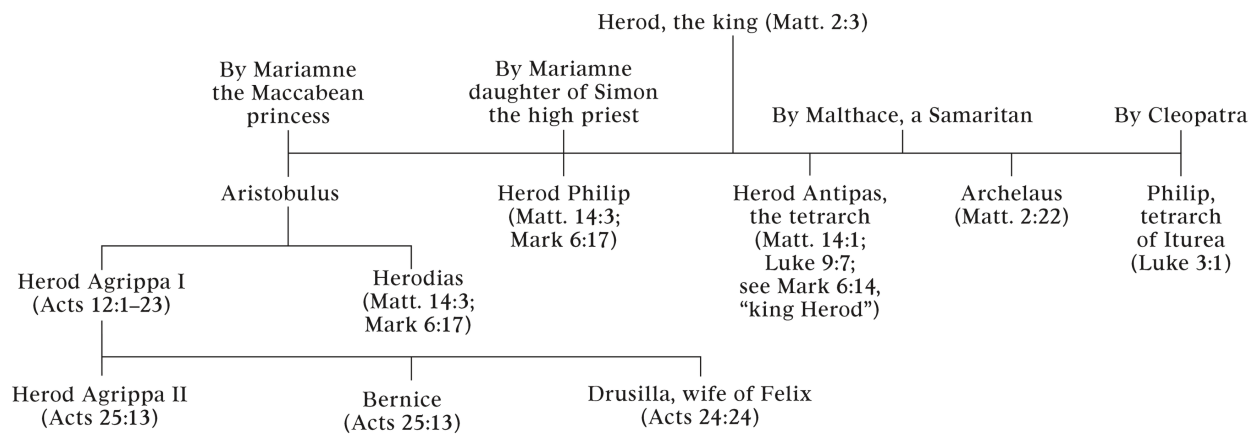
Herod

The following genealogical table shows the relationship between the various members of the Herodian family mentioned in the New Testament.

The Herodian family were Idumeans by birth but had become converts to the Jewish faith. Their object was to found, under the protection of Rome, a semi-independent kingdom. By his marriage with Mariamne, Herod the Great allied himself with the family of the Maccabees, who had been for several generations the leaders of the patriotic party among the Jews. Herod was a successful ruler and was on terms of friendship with Augustus, the Roman Emperor. In order to gain favor with his subjects, with whom he was most unpopular, he rebuilt the temple at an immense cost. (See Temple of Herod.) His reign was disgraced by many acts of cruelty. In a fit of jealousy he had his wife, whom he dearly loved, put to death; later on he had her two sons, Alexander and Aristobulus, also murdered. In the same year in which he gave the order for the massacre of the infants at Bethlehem, he had Antipater, another of his own sons, put to death. A few months later Herod himself died. His kingdom was then divided between three of his sons: Archelaus, who received Judea, Idumea, and Samaria; Antipas, who had Galilee and Perea; and Philip, who had the northeast districts of Palestine.

After a reign of nine years Archelaus was deposed by Augustus, and Judea was attached to the Roman province of Syria, being governed by a prefect. Antipas (called in the New Testament

“Herod the tetrarch”) built as his capital Tiberias on the Sea of Galilee; he is frequently mentioned in the Gospels (Matt. 14:1; Mark 6:14; Luke 9:7; 13:31; 23:7–15). He took as his wife Herodias, the wife of his half-brother Philip. He was deposed by the Emperor Caligula and banished to Lugdunum in Gaul, A.D. 39. Philip made Caesarea Philippi (previously called Panias) his capital and remained in possession of his tetrarchy until his death in A.D. 33. His territory then became part of the province of Syria, but in A.D. 37 it was given by Caligula, along with Abilene (the tetrarchy of Lysanias), to Agrippa, who was allowed to assume the title of king. On the deposition of Antipas he obtained the tetrarchy of Galilee, and in A.D. 41, on the accession of the Emperor Claudius, he received Judea and Samaria as well, and so became ruler of the whole territory governed by his grandfather. He lived in Jerusalem and was anxious to be regarded as an orthodox Jew. He began a persecution of the Church and put James to death, Peter escaping by a miracle (Acts 12:1–23). His death is described in Acts 12:20–23. His son, Agrippa II, was allowed by the Emperor Claudius to succeed to only a small part of his father’s dominions. He is mentioned in Acts 25:13. He was the last of the Herods.



Claudius

(1) Emperor of Rome, from A.D. 41 to 51 (Acts 11:28; 18:2).

(2) Claudius Lysias, the Roman military tribune in Jerusalem, who rescued Paul and sent him for trial to Caesarea (Acts 21:31–40; 22:24; 23:10, 26, 30; 24:7).

Felix

Procurator of Judea at the time of Paul’s arrest by the Roman military authorities (Acts 23:24). He investigated the case and heard Paul speak in his own defense (Acts 24) but put off giving any decision, his reason being that he had “more exact knowledge concerning the Way”: he knew more about the case and about Christianity than the prosecutors had told him. He hoped Paul would have offered him some bribe; but none being offered on his recall from Judea, he left the Apostle still in prison. See Drusilla; see also Bible Chronology in the appendix.

Festus

Porcius Festus, successor of Felix as procurator of Judea (Acts 24:27). Finding Paul in prison at Caesarea, he proposed to try him in Jerusalem. To avoid such a trial, Paul appealed to Caesar. While waiting for an opportunity to send him to Rome, Festus was visited by Herod Agrippa. Paul was brought before them and made a speech in his own defense. Festus died two years after his appointment to Judea. See also Bible Chronology in the appendix.

Jamnia

Also Yavneh or Javneh. A place near Joppa where, about A.D. 90, a council of rabbis declared the Old Testament canon to be completed. It is probable that the measure was partly defensive, precipitated by the increasing number of books being written by Christians. Traditionally, at this council the canon of the Old Testament was decided upon which eventually became known as the Masoretic text. See also Canon; Masoretic text.

Talmud

The word is from a Hebrew term meaning “learning.” The Talmud is a compilation of Jewish writing and tradition, literature rather than a single book, and consists of the Mishnah, or text, and the Gemara, or commentaries. The commentaries, which comprise both Halakah and Haggada, deal with almost every aspect of Jewish religious life, such as prayer, agriculture, marriage, and rules for the scribes in making copies of the sacred books. It dates from about A.D. 200 but reflects the thinking also of earlier times and is a fruitful source for many aspects of Jewish culture and belief.

Roll

A book in ancient times was usually written on parchment or papyrus in a series of parallel columns, which answered to the pages of a modern book. At each end, and parallel to the columns, was a stick around which the skin or papyrus was rolled, the reader as he went along unrolling one end and rolling up the other.

Scroll

A roll of leather or papyrus used for writing. Rolls were made by sewing sheets together to make a long strip. Some rolls became very long, exceeding 100 feet. They were usually from 9 to 11 inches high. Rolls were generally wound around a stick and, as used, would be unwound from one stick onto another. Much of the Old Testament and the New Testament was probably written on rolls. Scrolls (rolls) are mentioned in Ezra 6:1; Isa. 8:1; 34:4; Jer. 36; Ezek. 2:9; 3:1; Zech. 5:1–2; Rev. 6:14. The word book in Luke 4:17–20 probably refers to a scroll.

A variation in writing materials is a codex or book form, in which the sheets are placed on top of one another and joined at one side, rather than sewn side by side. The codex is like our modern book and is handier for use than the unrolling of a long scroll. The plates of Mormon, used in the translation of the Book of Mormon, were in codex form. It is not certain when this style came into common use in the Bible world, but it appears to be a later development than the scroll, some placing it as late as the 2nd century A.D. It appears that the Nephites were using the codex form as early as 570 B.C. (the small plates of Nephi).

Septuagint

The Greek translation of the Old Testament (so called because Jewish tradition said it was made in 70 days by 72 elders sent from Jerusalem) made in the first instance for the use of Greek-speaking Jews living in Alexandria in the reign of Ptolemy Philadelphus (284–246 B.C.), though parts were not finished till the middle of the 2nd century B.C. Most of the quotations from the Old Testament in the New Testament are taken from this version; it was the Bible in common use at the beginning of the Christian era and included the books we call the Apocrypha. This translation proved of immense service to the Christian Church, for it taught, in what was then the language of the civilized world, the religious truths that had been the special possession of the Hebrew race. In this way a church that was Jewish in origin was able to teach religion to the world. In commentary material the Septuagint is often referred to as the L X X.

Writing

From latter-day revelation we learn that writing sacred records and the recording of genealogy began with Adam and his immediate family. Adam and the early patriarchs had a perfect language that was both spoken and written. See D&C 107:57; Moses 6:5–6, 45–46; Abr. 1:31. This was an important intellectual ability of the people of God, and was given by inspiration. However, among nonbelievers it appears that there was an intellectual retrogression, so that many peoples subsequently have been without the blessings of a highly cultured spoken and written language. There has been a gradual renaissance in literary things, but nothing yet has equaled the pure and undefiled language of Adam. The promise is, however, that perfection in language and writing will return in the future with the full establishment of the kingdom of God on the earth (Zeph. 3:9; see also Moses 6:5–7).

The English alphabet in use at the present day is derived from that used by the Egyptian priests in the 25th century B.C., the intermediate alphabets in the line of descent being the Phoenician, Greek, and Roman. In the earliest Egyptian writing the symbols used (called hieroglyphs) were pictures denoting ideas or tangible objects; later they denoted sounds, as in modern alphabets. Papyrus (made from the pith of the plant *Cyperus Papyrus*) was the ordinary writing material. It becomes brittle with age, but there are still in existence many thousands of manuscripts written upon it. Some of the papyrus rolls were of great length; one that has been preserved is 144 feet long. The writing was in a series of parallel columns. A reed pen and vegetable ink were used. In Babylonia books were written on clay tablets or cylinders while the clay was damp, with a sharp-pointed instrument called a stylus. The symbols used were cuneiform or wedge-shaped. Large libraries of books written in this way have been discovered.

In 1887 a very important discovery was made at Tell el-Amarna in Egypt, between Thebes and Memphis, of some clay tablets with cuneiform inscriptions on them. They proved to be the official correspondence between King Amenophis IV (about 1380 B.C.) and Egyptian governors stationed in Palestine and elsewhere. Jerusalem and Lachish are mentioned by name. This discovery shows that Babylonian writing was used in Palestine 14 centuries before Christ and was the usual medium for official intercourse among the nations of the East. (See Tell el-Amarna Letters.)

It is clear from the Old Testament that the Israelites used rolls (Jer. 36:2, 18, 23) that were made of sheep or goat skin. The Hebrew alphabet was the same as the Phoenician. The words were

written from right to left. The oldest existing Hebrew inscription is that of the Moabite Stone. After the return from the Exile the shape of the letters changed somewhat.

The original manuscripts of the New Testament were probably written on papyrus; the earliest copies now in existence are on vellum. Manuscripts written in capital letters are called uncials, while those written in smaller letters and a running hand are called cursives. Uncial manuscripts are, as a class, older than cursives. No uncial is later than the 11th century, and no cursive earlier than the 9th. The oldest manuscripts are written with no breaks between the words and very few stops.

The Book of Mormon presents many interesting insights regarding the problems of writing. See Jacob 4:1–3; Mosiah 1:3–4; Morm. 9:32–34; Ether 12:23–25.

Background Lecture #2

Athens

Ancient capital of Attica, but by New Testament times it was in the Roman province known as Achaia. Much of its former greatness had passed away, and many Athenians had become engrossed in unprofitable discussions that Paul said were “too religious” (superstitious). Philosophy was represented by the Stoics and Epicureans. On his second mission journey Paul visited the city (Acts 17:15–18:1) and made a notable speech on Mars Hill, but it appears that his efforts met with only partial success.

Rome

The capital of the ancient world, on the Tiber, about 15 miles from its mouth (Acts 2:10; 18:2; 19:21; 23:11; Rom. 1:7, 15). Paul in Rome (Acts 28:14, 16; 2 Tim. 1:17). See Roman Empire.

Chronology see pp. 644-45 in your bible or go to <https://www.lds.org/scriptures/bible-chron?lang=eng>

Greece

Mentioned in the Old Testament by its Hebrew name Javan (Gen. 10:2–5, 20; 11:2; Zech. 9:13). The name only occurs once in the New Testament, in Acts 20:2, where it is a translation of Hellas and denotes the southern part of the Greek peninsula, elsewhere in the New Testament called Achaia. In New Testament times Greece formed part of the Roman empire.

The Greeks were a highly educated race, and their civilization, culture, and philosophy were of great service to the Church. Every educated man in the Roman Empire spoke Greek, and it was in the Greek language that the gospel was preached as soon as it spread outside Palestine. Care must be taken to distinguish between Greeks and Grecians. The Greeks, or Hellenes, are men who are Greek by descent (John 12:20; Acts 14:1); Grecians, or Hellenists, are Greek-speaking Jews (Acts 6:1).

Proselytes

Men of gentile birth who had been incorporated into the Jewish church. The ceremony of admission included circumcision, baptism, and a sacrifice. They were expected to observe the whole Mosaic law. Proselytes of this kind were probably few in number, though the Jews showed great zeal in their efforts to gain them (Matt. 23:15). In addition to these there were attached to most Jewish synagogues a number of “God-fearing” or “devout” Gentiles, who attended the services but only observed part of the ceremonial law and who were regarded as outside the Jewish church. There are many references to men of this kind in the New Testament (Acts 10:2, 22; 13:16, 26, 43, 50; 16:14; 17:4, 17; 18:7).

The entry of a “Godfearer” or “devout” man into the Christian church caused considerable commotion among the rigid Jews in the church, since the “Godfearers” had not been circumcised as had the proselytes. Thus the joining of Cornelius was a momentous event (Acts 10–11), whereas the status of a proselyte such as Nicolas (identified in Acts 6:5) is barely mentioned.

Epicureans

Derived their name from a Greek philosopher, Epicurus (342–271 B.C.). He taught that pleasure is the true end at which men should aim and that the experience of the bodily senses is the safest guide. The Epicureans and Stoics (Acts 17:18) were the chief schools of philosophy at the beginning of the Christian era. The Epicureans had many points of belief in common with the Sadducees.

Stoics

A school of philosophers, founded by Zeno, about 300 B.C. They taught that the practice of virtue was the first duty of man and that the only real things are those that the bodily senses can perceive. They were therefore what we should call materialists. So far as religious belief was concerned they were pantheists, holding that all things come from God and will be at last absorbed into Him again. They were also fatalists, holding that the universe is governed by absolutely fixed laws and that the private needs of individuals are of no concern to Providence. The way for the individual to be happy was to bring himself into harmony with the course of the universe. Suicide was held to be always lawful, and at times a duty. The Stoic tried to be proudly independent of externals and to bear evils with indifference. There was much that was noble about their teaching, and stoicism represents a high form of religious belief attained to by man’s unaided efforts. For Paul’s encounter with the Stoics see Acts 17:18.

Castor and Pollux

In Greek and Roman mythology, the twin sons of Jupiter (Zeus) and Leda. They formed the figurehead of the ship from Alexandria, in which Paul sailed from Melita to Puteoli (Acts 28:11).

Bible

By the Bible we mean the collection of writings that contain the records of divine revelation. The word itself is of Greek origin, being derived from *ta biblia*, “the books.” In course of time *biblia*, a neuter plural, was regarded as a feminine singular, and in that way “the books” came to be spoken of as “the book.” By the word Bible therefore we must understand not a single book but a divine library.

The Bible is the work of many prophets and inspired writers acting under the influence of the same Holy Spirit; but at the same time it came into being “in many parts and in many modes” by a gradual growth extending over many centuries, and we can see in the books themselves evidence of the varied conditions of time and place and thought under which they were composed.

In the New Testament we find the Jewish sacred books described as “the scriptures” (Matt. 22:29; John 5:39; Rom. 15:4) and “the holy scriptures” (Rom. 1:2; 2 Tim. 3:15).

Structure of the Bible. The Christian Bible has two great divisions, familiarly known as the Old and New Testaments. The Old Testament consists of the canon of scriptures current among the Jews of Palestine in our Lord’s time and received on that account in its entirety by the Christian Church. The New Testament contains writings belonging to the apostolic age, selected by the Church and regarded as having the same sanctity and authority as the Jewish scriptures. (For an account of the way in which these two collections of sacred writings were gradually made, see Canon.) The books of the Old Testament are drawn from a national literature extending over many centuries and were written almost entirely in Hebrew, while the books of the New Testament are the work of a single generation and were written in Greek (with the possible exception of the Gospels of Matthew and John, which may have been written originally in Aramaic).

With regard to the word testament, the Greek word *diatheke*, of which testament is a translation, meant in classical Greek an arrangement, and therefore sometimes a will or testament, as in an arrangement for disposal of a person’s property after his death. In the Old Testament the word testament represents a Hebrew word meaning “covenant.” The Old Covenant is the law that was given to Moses. The New Covenant is the gospel of Jesus Christ. The title Old Testament is a misnomer since all the prophets, beginning with Adam, had the fulness of the gospel of Christ, with its ordinances and blessings. However, a lesser law was given to Moses for the children of Israel (see Law of Moses). When the Savior came in the meridian of time, He restored the gospel to the Jews in Palestine. Since they had strayed, even from the law of Moses, it was a new covenant to them. Thus we have the record called the Old and the New Testaments.

In the Hebrew Bible (Old Testament) the books were divided into three groups: the Law, the Prophets, and the Writings (or *Hagiographa*). See Luke 24:44. This arrangement was according to the Jews’ evaluation of the importance of the books based on the identity of the author. The Bible used by the Christian world is based on a different arrangement of the Old Testament books and was set up by a Greek translation called *Septuagint*. In this case the books are classified according to subject matter, such as historical, poetical, and prophetical.

The books of the New Testament have varied in sequence somewhat through the centuries but are generally in this order: the four Gospels and Acts, being primarily historical; the epistles of Paul (arranged according to length, except Hebrews); the general epistles of James, Peter, John, and Jude; and the Apocalypse or Revelation of John.

The Bible used by most non-Catholic churches today has 66 books—39 in the Old Testament and 27 in the New Testament. The books called *Apocrypha* have generally not been printed in

the non-Catholic Bibles in the past century, although in recent years these books have been gaining in popularity. (See Apocrypha.)

Preservation of the Text of the Old Testament. The original language of most of the Old Testament is Hebrew, but a few portions (Ezra 4:8–6:18; 7:12–26; Jer. 10:11; Dan. 2:4–7:28) were written in what is popularly called Chaldee, but more correctly Aramaic. The direct evidence for the text of the Old Testament is of three kinds: Hebrew manuscripts, ancient versions, and quotations in the Talmud and other ancient Jewish writings. The manuscripts are of two kinds: (1) synagogue rolls, about which the Talmud gives elaborate rules as to the nature of the skins and fastenings, the number of columns in each, and the size of each column and title; these were written without vowel points or accents; (2) manuscripts for private use, in book form of various sizes, the vowel points being inserted, and a commentary generally provided in the margin.

If we had only Hebrew manuscripts we might conclude that the text of the Old Testament has been the same always and everywhere. But the existence of the Greek Version, called the Septuagint, and the Samaritan Pentateuch (see Samaritans) proves that this is by no means the case. They differ materially from the Masoretic text and in some cases have no doubt preserved older and truer readings; but it is most difficult in many cases to decide to which reading the preference should be given. The close agreement among the different Hebrew manuscripts (other than the Samaritan Pentateuch) is accounted for by the fact that soon after the destruction of Jerusalem (A.D. 70) much labor was bestowed upon the Hebrew text by the scholars who formed the Jewish School at Tiberias. One form of text was agreed upon, afterwards called the Masoretic text. Manuscripts that differed materially from this were destroyed, and the utmost care was taken to prevent any other readings from obtaining currency. The English KJV follows the Masoretic text except in a very few passages.

The Dead Sea Scrolls, some of which are believed to be as early as the 2nd century B.C., give evidence that the Old Testament text was corrupted at least by that time.

Preservation of the Text of the New Testament. In trying to decide what were the actual words written by the Apostles and other writers we have the evidence of (1) Greek manuscripts, (2) translations made from Greek into other languages, and (3) quotations by early Church writers.

(1) A Greek manuscript is called an Uncial if it is written entirely in capital letters and a Cursive if written in smaller letters and a running hand. Uncials are denoted for purposes of reference by capital letters and are relatively few in number, there being less than 70 known Uncial manuscripts, only 21 of which are at all complete. Cursive manuscripts are very numerous, being in the thousands, and are denoted by numbers. These are of later date than the Uncials and are of less importance as evidence of the original text.

(2) The most important of the early versions of the New Testament are (a) the Latin, including the Old Latin which belongs to the 2nd century, and the Vulgate, which was a Revised Latin text made by Jerome in the 4th century; (b) the Syriac, of which there are three important forms: the Old Syriac, the Peshitto, and the Philoxenian; (c) the Egyptian or Coptic, including the

Memphitic or Boheiric, the Sahidic or Thebaic, and the Bashmuric or Fayumic, these three versions being made in Lower, Upper, and Middle Egypt respectively.

(3) Quotations by early Christian writers are sometimes of much value as indicating the text of the New Testament, which they were accustomed to use; but this evidence requires careful use, for authors do not always take pains to quote correctly.

Such are the biblical materials at one's disposal for the purpose of deciding what was the original sense of the text of the Old and New Testaments. However, latter-day revelation, in the form of the Book of Mormon, the Doctrine and Covenants, the Pearl of Great Price, and also the teachings of Joseph Smith (through his translation of the Bible and otherwise), offers much evidence and many helpful suggestions about biblical interpretation and original content. These latter-day sources are indispensable to the student who wishes to obtain the clearest and most complete understanding of what the ancient prophets and apostles have written.

With the discovery of more ancient manuscripts not available to the King James translators, many translations of the Bible have been produced since 1900 by Bible scholars. However, based on the doctrinal clarity of latter-day revelation given to Joseph Smith, the Church has held to the King James Version as being doctrinally more accurate than these recent versions. The newer versions are in many instances easier to read but are in some passages doctrinally weaker in their presentation of the gospel. Therefore, the King James Version remains the principal Bible of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

The position of the Church regarding the Bible is that it contains the word of God as far as it is translated correctly (A of F 1:8). Joseph Smith taught that "many important points touching the salvation of men, had been taken from the Bible, or lost before it was compiled." He also said that the Bible was correct as "it came from the pen of the original writers," but that "ignorant translators, careless transcribers, or designing and corrupt priests have committed many errors." (HC 1:245; 6:57.) The Church reveres and respects the Bible but recognizes that it is not a complete nor entirely accurate record. It affirms also that the Lord has given additional revelation through His prophets in the last days that sustains, supports, and verifies the biblical account of God's dealings with mankind.

Bible (English)

The first attempts to translate the Bible into the English language were made in the 8th century. The Venerable Bede, who died at Jarrow in 735, was engaged on his translation of John's Gospel up to the very moment of his death. There are also in existence translations of the Psalms by Aldhelm, Bishop of Sherborne (d. 709), and King Alfred (d. 900). After the Norman conquest further attempts were made, but the first English Version of the whole Bible is associated with the name of John Wycliffe. There were two editions of this version, beginning in 1382. These versions were made from the Latin. They include all the canonical books and almost all the apocryphal books that are usually found in English Bibles. The work was circulated far and wide. The honor of making the first translation of the Bible into English from the languages in which it was originally written belongs to William Tindale, born about 1490. He studied first at Oxford and then at Cambridge, where Erasmus was then lecturing. Erasmus was the editor of the first printed edition of the Greek New Testament, published in 1516. In 1525 we find Tindale at

Cologne, engaged in printing a quarto edition of the New Testament in English translated from Erasmus's edition of the Greek text. When about 10 sheets were printed his plan was discovered, and an interdict was placed on the work. On this Tindale fled to Worms, carrying with him the sheets already printed, and there published an octavo edition of 3,000 copies. A fragment of one of the sheets printed at Cologne is now in the British Museum. A complete copy of the Worms edition is preserved at the British Library, London. They were proscribed by authorities of the Church of England and copies were burned when discovered. Tindale was still engaged on his translation of the Old Testament when he was put to death for heresy in 1536.

In 1530 Henry VIII promised the English people that they would have the New Testament in their own tongue, and in 1534 the Convocation petitioned for a translation of the whole Bible.

In 1535 Miles Coverdale issued, with the king's permission, the first complete English Bible. It was printed at Antwerp, the translation being made, as the title page tells us, "out of Douche (German) and Latin." In 1537 Thomas Matthew (whose real name was John Rogers) issued, also with the king's license, an edition that followed Tindale's as regards the New Testament and half the Old Testament, the remainder being taken from Coverdale's. A copy of this Bible was ordered by Henry VIII "to be set up in churches." In April 1539 appeared the first edition of the Great Bible (also known as Cranmer's, the Preface added in 1540 being written by him). On the title page is an elaborate engraving, which represents the king giving the word of God to the clergy, and, through Thomas Cromwell, to the laity of his kingdom, amid the great joy of his subjects. The Bible is here described as "truly translated after the verity of the Hebrew and Greek texts by the diligent study of divers excellent learned men."

The accession of Mary I, daughter of Henry VIII and Catherine of Aragon, threatened danger to all who were closely identified with the translation of the Bible into English. Coverdale narrowly escaped with his life; Cranmer and Rogers were brought to the stake. Many refugees found their way to Geneva, the city of Calvin. Here appeared in 1560, after Mary's death, the Genevan Bible, of which 150 editions were published in England and Scotland between 1560 and 1616. It at once became popular from its use of Roman type, its division of the text into verses, and its copious notes, explanatory and controversial. This version is familiarly known as the Breeches Bible, from the rendering in Gen. 3:7. Its strong Puritan flavor made it distasteful to many English churchmen, and accordingly Archbishop Parker devised a plan for the revision of the Great Bible by the joint labor of a number of learned men, mostly bishops. The revisers were instructed to follow "the common English translation used in the churches," unless alteration were necessary, and to avoid bitter and controversial notes. In three or four years the Bishops' Bible was completed and was presented to Queen Elizabeth I in 1568. It was regarded as the official English Church Bible. It was used in public worship but otherwise had no great circulation. It was unfortunately printed very carelessly. Some years later English Roman Catholics issued at Douai (France) a version of the Old Testament and at Rheims (France) a version of the New Testament. Modern editions of the Douai version have borrowed many renderings from the Authorized Version (KJV).

At the Hampton Court Conference (London) held in 1604, soon after the accession of James I, the Puritan party asked for a new translation, to which the king agreed and gave an outline of a plan for a new version, now known as the Authorized Version. The work was to be assigned to

the universities; the translation was to be then reviewed by the bishops and chief learned of the Church, presented to the Privy Council, and ratified by the king.

In 1607 six companies were appointed, consisting in all of 54 members, the meetings being held at Oxford, Cambridge, and Westminster. Of the rules laid down the following were the most important: the Bishops' Bible was to be followed and "as little altered as the truth of the original will permit"; the translations of Tindale, Matthew, Coverdale, Whitchurch (the Great Bible), and Geneva were to be used when they agreed better with the text than the Bishops' Bible; the old ecclesiastical words (church, etc.) were to be retained; no marginal notes were to be affixed unless for necessary explanation of some Hebrew or Greek words. The new translation was published in 1611. The familiar dedication to the king, and also a long preface, ably setting forth the principles and aims of the work (unfortunately omitted by most modern editions), are said to have been written by Dr. Miles Smith, afterwards Bishop of Gloucester. The words on the title page "appointed to be read in churches" would seem to imply express authorization; but we have no evidence that the book ever received formal sanction. There was at first some reluctance to adopt it, but in course of time its own merits enabled it to supplant all other existing English translations.

Canon

A word of Greek origin, originally meaning "a rod for testing straightness," now used to denote the authoritative collection of the sacred books used by the true believers in Christ. In The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, the canonical books are called standard works. The history of the process by which the books of the Bible were collected and recognized as a sacred authority is almost hidden in obscurity. There are several legends extant and these may have some truth in them but certainly are not complete or totally accurate. Though many of the details have not been preserved, we know that the servants of the Lord have been commanded to keep records even from the earliest times, and that those records have been revered by the faithful and handed down from generation to generation.

Much of the information we now have on this subject has come to us through latter-day revelation. For example, we learn that Adam was an intelligent being who could read and write and had a pure and perfect language. Sacred records were kept by him and handed down to succeeding patriarchs, even to Enoch and Abraham, who also added their own writings to the collection (Moses 6:3–6, 46; Abr. 1:31). Likewise Moses kept a record in his day (Moses 1:40–41). A collection of Old Testament documents and other writings was available in Jerusalem in 600 B.C., written upon plates of brass, and was obtained by Nephi from Laban (1 Ne. 4; 5:10–19).

The various Old Testament prophets wrote or dictated to scribes who recorded (such as Jeremiah to Baruch, Jer. 36), and thus the sacred books were produced and collected.

In New Testament times the apostles and prophets kept records, giving an official testimony of the earthly ministry of the Savior and the progress and teachings of the Church. Many of the details, such as time and place involved in the production and the preservation of the records, are not available, but the general concept is clear that the servants of the Lord wrote what they knew

to be true of Jesus. Thus came the Gospels. The epistles were primarily written to regulate affairs among the members of the Church.

With the multiplicity of true books, of both Old and New Testament origin, there was also a proliferation of false writings from apostates and from authors who for one reason or another wished to propagate some particular thesis. From time to time decisions needed to be made as to which books were authoritative and which were false. A council of Jewish scholars met for this purpose in Jamnia, or Javneh (near Joppa), in about A.D. 90, and some determinations were made as to what were the official and accepted books of the Jews' religion. This probably was a defensive reaction to the rise of Christian writings, and perhaps also from the fact that the Christians freely used the Jewish scriptures (Old Testament) as well as the writings of the Apostles and the early Christian leaders. It appears that the rabbis wanted to make clear the distinction between the two.

Councils were held in early Christianity to determine which of the writings were authoritative and which were heretical. Some good judgment was used, and many spurious books were rejected, while our present New Testament was preserved. Times of persecution also precipitated decisions as to which books were true and which false. If a Christian is forced by the Roman government to burn his books, he most likely will surrender those that are nonauthoritative and conceal the more valuable documents. In order to do this, he must know which are which.

No doubt many writings, of both Old and New Testament times, have been lost, and perhaps even willfully destroyed (see Lost books). When the Church was in apostasy, whether before or after the time of Christ, some valuable writings were misjudged to be in error (because the judges lacked the truth) and so were discarded. Likewise some books of lesser value may have been judged to be good. In the main, however, sound guidelines were established that helped to preserve the authoritative books. Among these rules were the following: (1) Is it claimed that the document was written by a prophet or an apostle? (2) Is the content of the writing consistent with known and accepted doctrines of the faith? (3) Is the document already used and accepted in the Church? By application of these tests the books now contained in the Bible have been preserved.

Although the decisions were made in the past as to which writings are authoritative, that does not mean that the canon of scripture is complete and that no more can be added. True prophets and apostles will continue to receive new revelation, and from time to time the legal authorities of the Church will see fit to formally add to the collection of scripture.

Lost Books

The so-called lost books of the Bible are those documents that are mentioned in the Bible in such a way that it is evident they were considered authentic and valuable but that are not found in the Bible today. Sometimes called missing scripture, they consist of at least the following: book of the Wars of the Lord (Num. 21:14); book of Jasher (Josh. 10:13; 2 Sam. 1:18); book of the acts of Solomon (1 Kgs. 11:41); book of Samuel the seer (1 Chr. 29:29); book of Gad the seer (1 Chr. 29:29); book of Nathan the prophet (1 Chr. 29:29; 2 Chr. 9:29); prophecy of Ahijah (2 Chr. 9:29); visions of Iddo the seer (2 Chr. 9:29; 12:15; 13:22); book of Shemaiah (2 Chr. 12:15); book of Jehu (2 Chr. 20:34); sayings of the seers (2 Chr. 33:19); an epistle of Paul to the Corinthians, earlier than our present 1 Corinthians (1 Cor. 5:9); possibly an earlier epistle to the

Ephesians (Eph. 3:3); an epistle to the Church at Laodicea (Col. 4:16); and some prophecies of Enoch, known to Jude (Jude 1:14). To these rather clear references to inspired writings other than our current Bible may be added another list that has allusions to writings that may or may not be contained within our present text but may perhaps be known by a different title; for example, the book of the covenant (Ex. 24:7), which may or may not be included in the current book of Exodus; the manner of the kingdom, written by Samuel (1 Sam. 10:25); the rest of the acts of Uzziah written by Isaiah (2 Chr. 26:22).

The foregoing items attest to the fact that our present Bible does not contain all of the word of the Lord that He gave to His people in former times and remind us that the Bible, in its present form, is rather incomplete.

Matthew's reference to a prophecy that Jesus would be a Nazarene (2:23) is interesting when it is considered that our present Old Testament seems to have no statement as such. There is a possibility, however, that Matthew alluded to Isa. 11:1, which prophesies of the Messiah as a Branch from the root of Jesse, the father of David. The Hebrew word for branch in this case is *netzer*, the source word of Nazarene and Nazareth. Additional references to the Branch as the Savior and Messiah are found in Jer. 23:5; 33:15; Zech. 3:8; 6:12; these use a synonymous Hebrew word for branch, *tzemakh*.

The Book of Mormon makes reference to writings of Old Testament times and connection that are not found in the Bible, the Book of Mormon, or in any other known source. These writings are of Zenock, Zenos, and Neum (1 Ne. 19:10; Alma 33:3–17). An extensive prophecy by Joseph in Egypt (which is not in the Bible) is also apparent from 2 Ne. 3:4–22, and a prophecy of Jacob (not found in the Bible) is given in Alma 46:24–26. These writings were evidently contained on the plates of brass spoken of in the Book of Mormon (1 Ne. 5:10–13).

Pseudepigrapha

The word refers to certain noncanonical writings purported to have come from biblical characters, and refers to books of ancient Jewish literature outside the canon and the Apocrypha. The writings purport to be the work of ancient patriarchs and prophets but are, in their present form, mostly productions from about 200 B.C. to A.D. 200.

These writings have at times been popular with some branches of Christianity, but by their very nature there is no accepted fixed limit to the number of writings that are called pseudepigrapha, for what one person or group regards as canon another may call pseudepigrapha. Some of the writings originated in Palestine and were written in Hebrew or Aramaic; others originated in North Africa and were written in Coptic Greek and Ethiopic. These include legends about biblical characters, hymns, psalms, and apocalypses. Things relating to Enoch, Moses, and Isaiah are prominent.

Although not canonized nor accepted as scripture, the pseudepigrapha are useful in showing various concepts and beliefs held by ancient peoples in the Middle East. In many instances latter-day revelation gives the careful student sufficient insight to discern truth from error in the narratives, and demonstrates that there is an occasional glimmer of historical accuracy in those

ancient writings. The student may profit from this, always applying the divine injunction that “whoso is enlightened by the Spirit shall obtain benefit therefrom” (D&C 91:5).

Codex

A manuscript volume of ancient biblical text. A codex form of manuscript is somewhat like our present book style with the pages piled on one another and joined at one side, generally with stitching. This is contrasted to a scroll, in which the sheets are joined side by side in a series, making one long and continuous piece that is rolled from one or both ends. The codex is much easier to use than is a long scroll. The general conclusion among scholars is that the Hebrews did not use codices until the 2nd or 3rd century A.D. Thus Old Testament documents are scrolls, although many New Testament documents are codices. The gold plates from which the Book of Mormon was translated were in codex form, joined with three rings on one side.

Italics

In the KJV italics identify words that are necessary in English to round out and complete the sense of a phrase but were not present in the Hebrew or Greek text of the manuscript used. Such additions were necessary because in some instances the manuscript was inadequate, and the translators felt obliged to clarify it in the translation. In other instances italics were necessary in cases where the grammatical construction of English called for the use of words that were not needed to make the same thought in Hebrew or Greek. Italics thus represent the willingness of the translators to identify these areas. It appears that generally, though not always, their judgment was justified in their choice of italicized words.

Vulgate

The name of the Latin (or “common”) version of the scriptures in use since the days of Jerome (4th century A.D.), which before his time was known as the Old Latin. The Vulgate was the Bible of the Middle Ages and the parent of all the translations into the modern languages of Western Europe.

Joseph Smith Translation (JST)

A revision or translation of the King James Version of the Bible begun by the Prophet Joseph Smith in June 1830. He was divinely commissioned to make the translation and regarded it as “a branch of his calling” as a prophet. Although the major portion of the work was completed by July 1833, he continued to make modifications while preparing a manuscript for the press until his death in 1844, and it is possible that some additional modifications would have been made had he lived to publish the entire work. Some parts of the translation were published during his lifetime.

The translation process was a learning experience for the Prophet, and several sections of the Doctrine and Covenants (and also other revelations that are not published in the Doctrine and Covenants) were received in direct consequence of the work (D&C 76–77; 91). Also, specific instruction pertaining to the translation is given in D&C 37:1; 45:60–61; 76:15–18; 90:13; 94:10; 104:58; 124:89. The book of Moses and the 24th chapter of Matthew (JS—M), contained in the Pearl of Great Price, are actual excerpts from the JST. Many excerpts from the JST are also given in the appendix and footnotes in the edition of the KJV that accompanies this dictionary.

The JST to some extent assists in restoring the plain and precious things that have been lost from the Bible (see 1 Ne. 13–14).

Although not the official Bible of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, the JST offers many interesting insights and is an invaluable aid to biblical interpretation and understanding. It is a most fruitful source of useful information for the student of the scriptures. It is likewise a witness for the divine calling and ministry of the Prophet Joseph Smith.

Acts

Acts of the Apostles

This book, as stated in its opening words, is the second of a two-part work written to Theophilus. The first part is known to us as the book of Luke. The early part of Acts records some of the major missionary activities of the Twelve Apostles under the direction of Peter during the time immediately following the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. The last half of the book outlines some of the travels and missionary work of Paul. It is evident that the book of Acts is not intended to be a comprehensive history of the early Church but is mainly a recitation of the early missionary efforts and the important opening of missionary activity to peoples other than the Jews. A brief outline of the book is foreshadowed by Jesus' words in Acts 1:8, "Ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem (Acts 1–5), and in all Judea, and in Samaria (Acts 6–9), and unto the uttermost part of the earth (Acts 10–28)."

1. "In Jerusalem." After an introduction containing an account of the Ascension (1:10–14) and the calling of Matthias to the Quorum of the Twelve (1:15–26), missionary work in Jerusalem goes forth with the outpouring of the Spirit on the day of Pentecost (2:1–13) and with Peter's bold declaration of the divinity of Jesus Christ and His literal bodily resurrection from the grave. In consequence of Peter's preaching on this occasion three thousand persons were added to the Church by baptism (2:37–47). We are shown how on two critical occasions the Sanhedrin refused to accept the testimony of the Brethren. The first occasion arose out of the arrest of Peter and John for preaching in the temple after healing the lame man (3:1–4:4). The second occasion was in consequence of the large number of converts coming into the Church (Acts 5) and resulted in a formal rejection of the apostolic doctrines (5:17–42).
2. "In all Judea and in Samaria." This is recorded in three stages. First we are told of the preaching of Stephen and that his martyrdom caused a dispersion of Church members throughout Judea and Samaria (6:8–8:2). Specific mention is made that one of the seven chosen to help with the affairs of the Church was a proselyte from Antioch. This designation means that he was probably of gentile lineage and was converted to Judaism before he joined the Christian Church. Then is recorded the work of Philip and of Peter and John in preaching the gospel in Samaria (a people who are not Jews, although partly of Israelite origin) (8:4–40) and also the baptism of the Ethiopian eunuch (8:26–40) (probably a non-Israelite by lineage but previously converted to Judaism before being baptized by Philip). All of this shows the gradual outreach of the Church: first to Jews, then to non-Jewish Israelites, and then to non-Israelite persons previously converted to Judaism. Then is given an account of the conversion of Saul of Tarsus and his early preaching, first at Damascus and then in Jerusalem (9:1–31). The coming of Saul into the Church presages the remaining portion of the book of Acts.

3. “Unto the uttermost part of the earth.” This portion also falls into three phases. The first (9:32–11:26) contains the opening of the door for the worldwide extension of the gospel. This was done by the baptism of Cornelius (10:1–11:18) at Caesarea and also the establishment of the Church in Antioch (11:19–26). Both of these events were among non-Israelite people. Cornelius’ entry into the Church inaugurates a new era because he is the first non-Israelite of whom we have record who entered into the Church without first having been converted to Judaism. The second phase (11:27–15:35) describes the continued activity of the Church at Antioch (consisting primarily of gentile members) and of the work there of Barnabas and Saul. The third phase (15:36–28:31) contains an account of the missionary activity of Paul (Saul), being an account of his travels through Asia Minor and Europe, by which he introduced the gospel of Jesus Christ to Jew and Gentile, and especially to the Gentile.

Although the book of Acts tells us of the preaching of only a few of the original members of the Twelve (namely Peter, James, and John), we conclude that the other Apostles were also actively bearing testimony of Jesus Christ and establishing the Church in whatever lands they could reach. Perhaps they visited in the areas east, north, and south of Palestine. People from such areas are mentioned as having been present on the day of Pentecost (Medes, Elamites, Mesopotamia, Cappadocia, Egypt, and Arabia, Acts 2:9–11), and it is probable that the gospel was first carried into these lands by these people returning from the Feast of Pentecost in Jerusalem and was formally established by the leaders of the Church in the ensuing years.

Luke

Mentioned three times in the New Testament (Col. 4:14; 2 Tim. 4:11; Philem. 1:24). He was also the writer of the third Gospel and of the Acts. In all passages in the latter book in which the first person plural is used (Acts 16:10), we can assume that Luke was Paul’s fellow-traveler. He was born of gentile parents and practiced medicine. He may have become a believer before our Lord’s Ascension, but there is no evidence of this. The identification of him with one of the disciples to whom our Lord appeared on the way to Emmaus is picturesque but historically unsupported. The first information about him is when he joined Paul at Troas (Acts 16:10); his medical knowledge would make him a welcome companion. He seems to have remained at Philippi for several years, as Paul found him there on his last journey to Jerusalem (20:6), and the two were together until their arrival in Rome. We learn from 2 Tim. 4:11 that Luke was with Paul during his second Roman imprisonment. It is uncertain when or where the Gospel was written; it was specially intended for gentile readers. (See Gospels.) The Acts was a continuation of the Gospel and deals mainly with the growth of the gentile churches. History tells us nothing of Luke’s later years, but tradition says he died a martyr. JST Luke 1:1 attributes to Luke a high calling as a “messenger of Jesus Christ” (see Luke 1:1 note a).

Gamaliel

A Pharisee, a doctor of the law, held in honor with all the people (Acts 5:34). He was a celebrated Jewish teacher who belonged to the more liberal school. His influence carried great weight in the Sanhedrin (5:35–40). Paul had been one of his pupils (22:3).

Paul

The life and work of the great Apostle Paul is recorded at considerable length in the Acts and the epistles. It is only possible to indicate here a few of the chief facts. He was known in early life as

Saul; his Latin name Paul is first mentioned at the beginning of his gentile ministry (Acts 13:9). He belonged to Tarsus, in Cilicia (Acts 9:11); was a Pharisee and a pupil of Gamaliel (Acts 22:3); was active in the persecution of Christians (Acts 8:3; 26:10; Gal. 1:13; Philip. 3:6); and took part in the martyrdom of Stephen (Acts 7:58; 8:1). He started for Damascus for the purpose of further persecution (Acts 9:1) and on the road saw a vision of the Lord Jesus, which changed the whole current of his life (Acts 9:4–19; 22:7; 26:14; Gal. 1:15–16). After his baptism by Ananias (Acts 9:18), he retired into Arabia (Gal. 1:17) and then returned to Damascus, where he preached (Acts 9:19–25; 2 Cor. 11:32; Gal. 1:17–18). Being compelled to flee, about three years after his conversion he went to Jerusalem, where he stayed 15 days, Barnabas introducing him to Peter and James (Acts 9:26–30; Gal. 1:18–19). Being in danger, he retired to Tarsus (Acts 9:29–30) and there remained six or seven years, preaching in Syria and Cilicia (Gal. 1:21–24). He was then brought by Barnabas to Antioch (Acts 11:26) and after one year paid a visit to Jerusalem (Acts 11:29–30). After two more years' work in Antioch, he started with Barnabas and Mark on his first missionary journey (Acts 13:1–14:26). Then came another visit to Jerusalem with Barnabas to attend a conference with the other Apostles (Acts 15:1–33; Gal. 2:1–10), after which they returned to Antioch (Acts 15:35). He then started on his second missionary journey (Acts 15:36–18:22), which lasted about three years and ended with a visit to Jerusalem. After a short stay in Antioch, Paul began his third journey, which occupied about 3½ years (Acts 18:23–21:15). On his return to Jerusalem he was arrested and sent to Caesarea (Acts 21:17–23:35), where he remained a prisoner for two years (Acts 24:1–26:32), and was then sent for trial to Rome, suffering shipwreck on the way (Acts 27:1–28:10). He remained in Rome two years (Acts 28:30) and was then released. He then appears to have visited Asia, Macedonia, Crete, and perhaps Spain. At the end of about four years he was again taken a prisoner to Rome and suffered martyrdom, probably in the spring of A.D. 65. For an account of his teaching, see Pauline Epistles.

Hellenists

The word denotes those who adopt the Greek language and possibly also Greek modes of life. The KJV does not use the word itself but translates it “Grecians” (Acts 6:1; 9:29, etc.). The Hellenists were Jews who had settled in Greek-speaking countries, and themselves used that language. It was for their use that the Greek translation of the Old Testament, the Septuagint, was made.

Libertines

Freedmen. Probably descendants of Jewish prisoners taken to Rome after the capture of Jerusalem by Pompey, who had gained their freedom. They had a synagogue in Jerusalem and are mentioned among the opponents of Stephen (Acts 6:9).

Gentile

The word Gentiles means “the nations” and eventually came to be used to mean all those not of the house of Israel. It is first used in Genesis with reference to the descendants of Japheth (Gen. 10:2–5). As used throughout the scriptures it has a dual meaning, sometimes to designate peoples of non-Israelite lineage and other times to designate nations that are without the gospel, even though there may be some Israelite blood therein. This latter usage is especially characteristic of the word as used in the Book of Mormon.

The duties of Israelites toward Gentiles were defined in the law (Ex. 23:32; 34:12–16; Deut. 7:1–3; 20:10–18; 23:3–8; Ezra 9:2–15; 10:1–18; Neh. 13:1–3, 23–31). These regulations served to emphasize the distinction between Israel and Gentile. However, there were numerous provisions showing that Israel was to deal justly and honestly with non-Israelites and to be compassionate toward them (Ex. 22:21; 23:9; Lev. 19:10, 33–34; 24:22).

The pious Jews of New Testament times held themselves aloof from contact with the Gentiles. When a Gentile was converted to Judaism, he was called a proselyte. Even in the Church there was a cultural and doctrinal struggle among many Jewish Christians before they would permit one of gentile lineage to enjoy full fellowship. The first Gentiles to come into the New Testament Church were those who had already become proselytes to Judaism.

Cornelius (Acts 10–11) was the first Gentile of whom we have record who came into the Christian Church without first being a proselyte to Judaism. He was introduced to the gospel of Jesus Christ through a series of divine manifestations both to him and to Peter.

Paul was called the “apostle of the Gentiles” (Rom. 11:13), and it was primarily through his ministry that the gospel was established among those of gentile lineage throughout Europe and Asia Minor, although the way was opened by Peter’s baptism of Cornelius. See also Cornelius; Proselytes.

Circumcision

The token of the Abrahamic covenant during Old Testament dispensations. Those who received it thenceforth enjoyed the privileges and undertook the responsibilities of the covenant. It symbolized some aspects of separation or dedication (1) to God, to whom Israel belonged; (2) from the world, the uncircumcised with whom Israel might not mix; (3) from sin (Deut. 10:16; 30:6; Jer. 4:4; 9:25–26; Ezek. 44:7).

The subjects of circumcision were (1) male Israelites, properly when eight days old (Gen. 17:12), but sometimes at a later age (Ex. 4:25; Josh. 5:2–9); (2) slaves born in the house or bought with money (Gen. 17:13); (3) strangers who wished to eat the Passover (Ex. 12:48).

Circumcision was not peculiar to Israel. It was practiced in Egypt and also by nations with whom Israel had not come in contact. The significance of circumcision was that it was the manifest token of the covenant that the Lord had made with Abraham and his seed. It does not matter that other nations also practiced circumcision for to them it did not have the same meaning or purpose. The various Canaanite tribes appear to have been uncircumcised (Gen. 34:14–17; Judg. 14:3; 1 Sam. 31:4; 2 Sam. 1:20).

With circumcision was connected the giving of a name; but there is no express mention of this custom until New Testament times (Luke 1:59; 2:21). It would follow naturally from the fact that Abram’s name was changed at the institution of the ordinance (Gen. 17:5, 10–14).

There was much controversy in the early church with regard to the obligation of circumcision (Acts 15:1–31). The Church under direction of Peter and the Twelve, and acting under the guidance of the Spirit, declared that circumcision was not obligatory for gentile converts.

However, it apparently did not settle the matter of whether or not Jewish members of the Church should have their children circumcised. As one reads the scriptures on the matter, it becomes evident that the real issue was not circumcision only but also the larger question as to continued observance of the law of Moses by members of the Church. The word circumcision seems to have been representative of the law in these instances. The controversy was renewed later on in Galatia, as we read in Gal. 2:1–15; 5:2–6, 11; 6:12–16. These passages, along with Rom. 2:25–29; 3:1–2; Philip. 3:3; and Col. 2:11, contain Paul’s teaching on the subject.

The Jewish part of the church membership, especially in Jerusalem, appears to have been very reluctant to cease from the rituals and ceremony of the law of Moses (Acts 21:17–25). This is a marked contrast to the Church among the Nephites, in which there seems to have been a cessation of the law immediately upon their awareness of the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. (3 Ne. 15:1–4; Moro. 8:8). See also Abraham, covenant of; Law of Moses; Proselytes.

Cornelius

A centurion at Caesarea, baptized by Peter (Acts 10). The significance of Cornelius’s baptism is that he was probably the first Gentile to come into the Church not having previously become a proselyte to Judaism (see Proselytes). Other Gentiles had joined the Church, but they had been converted to Judaism before becoming Christians, which caused no great commotion among Jewish Christians who thought of Christianity as having some ties with Judaism.

Preceding the baptism of Cornelius, there were several spiritual manifestations: the ministry of an angel to Cornelius; a vision to Peter showing that the dietary restrictions of the law of Moses were to be discontinued; the voice of the Spirit to Peter; and a manifestation of the power of the Holy Ghost, accompanied by the speaking in tongues. All of this would make clear the divine approval and direction of what was about to take place.

The baptism of Cornelius and his family marked a new dimension in the work of the Church in New Testament times, since it opened the way for the gospel to be preached to the Gentiles directly, without going by way of Judaism. It is notable that this major event in the missionary activity of the Church was done through the ministry of Peter, the chief Apostle, who held the keys of the kingdom of God at that time on the earth.

Aquila

A Jew, native of Pontus, settled in Rome as a tentmaker, married to Priscilla or Prisca, expelled from Rome by decree of Claudius, settled in Corinth where Paul met them, and then moved to Ephesus (Acts 18:2–3, 18). At Ephesus Aquila and Priscilla instructed Apollos in the faith (Acts 18:26), and their house seems to have been a center of Church activity (1 Cor. 16:19). From the references to them in Rom. 16:3 it appears that they returned to Rome, but later on we find them again at Ephesus (2 Tim. 4:19).

Areopagus

The hill of Ares or Mars, in Athens, west of the Acropolis, where the council, which was the highest judicial authority in Athens, used to meet. The assembly mentioned in Acts 17:19 was probably an informal gathering and not a judicial tribunal.

Agrippa

Listens to Paul at Caesarea (Acts 25:13–26:32). Son of Herod Agrippa I and brother of Bernice and Drusilla. See also Herod.