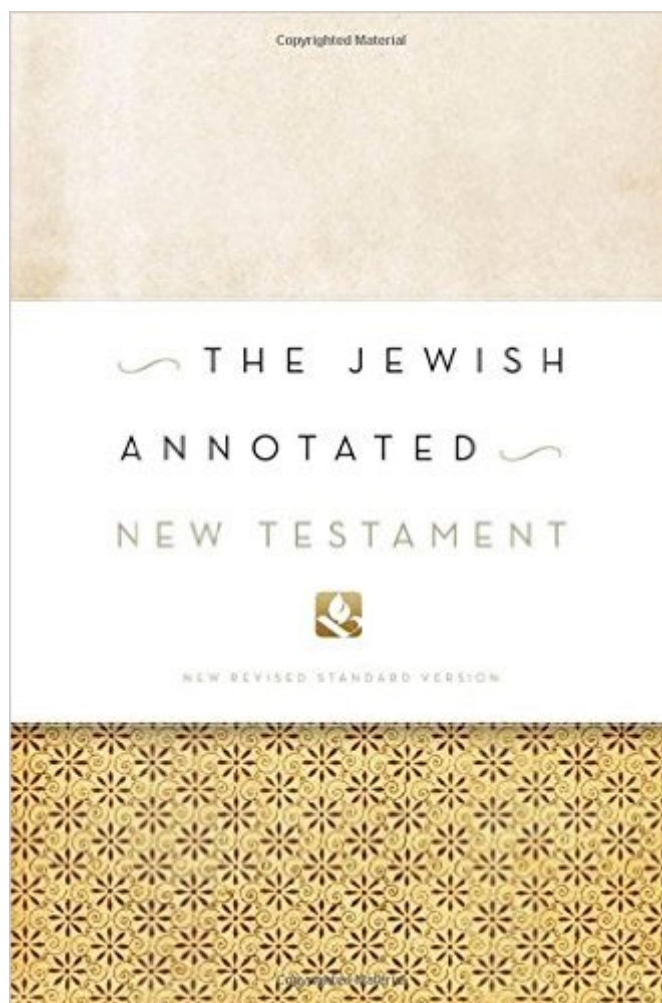


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The Jewish Annotated New Testament



Synopsis

Although major New Testament figures--Jesus and Paul, Peter and James, Jesus' mother Mary and Mary Magdalene--were Jews, living in a culture steeped in Jewish history, beliefs, and practices, there has never been an edition of the New Testament that addresses its Jewish background and the culture from which it grew--until now. In *The Jewish Annotated New Testament*, eminent experts under the general editorship of Amy-Jill Levine and Marc Z. Brettler put these writings back into the context of their original authors and audiences. And they explain how these writings have affected the relations of Jews and Christians over the past two thousand years. An international team of scholars introduces and annotates the Gospels, Acts, Letters, and Revelation from Jewish perspectives, in the New Revised Standard Version translation. They show how Jewish practices and writings, particularly the Greek translation of the Hebrew Bible, influenced the New Testament writers. From this perspective, readers gain new insight into the New Testament's meaning and significance. In addition, thirty essays on historical and religious topics--Divine Beings, Jesus in Jewish thought, Parables and Midrash, Mysticism, Jewish Family Life, Messianic Movements, Dead Sea Scrolls, questions of the New Testament and anti-Judaism, and others--bring the Jewish context of the New Testament to the fore, enabling all readers to see these writings both in their original contexts and in the history of interpretation. For readers unfamiliar with Christian language and customs, there are explanations of such matters as the Eucharist, the significance of baptism, and "original sin." For non-Jewish readers interested in the Jewish roots of Christianity and for Jewish readers who want a New Testament that neither proselytizes for Christianity nor denigrates Judaism, *The Jewish Annotated New Testament* is an essential volume that places these writings in a context that will enlighten students, professionals, and general readers.

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Customer Reviews

This review addresses the text, but it will make a point of describing how well the volume succeeds as a Kindle book. It gets five stars, in spite of blemishes, because the scholarship is first-rate and the perks one gets from the Kindle platform add enough value that you really get your money's worth. In a way, the only sign that the point of view is "Jewish" is that there is no bias to any Christian theology, such as Catholic, Lutheran, Episcopal, or Pentecostal. The intention for publishing The Jewish Annotated New Testament, according to its editors, Amy-Jill Levine and Mark Zvi Brettler is to recognize the growing understanding between Jewish and Christian traditions, and to help further that understanding. It may be worth noting that both editors are at the top of their fields. Amy-Jill Levine, a Jewish New Testament scholar, is literally a household name among the faculty and students at my seminary. Mark Zvi Brettler is an Old Testament specialist. The Translation is the NRSV, the most popular Protestant "Scholarly" translation. Therefore, the best yardstick for evaluating it would be the Harper/Collins Annotated (NRSV) Bible. There is only one other major contemporary study Bible on Kindle, and the problems it has are a lesson that the Bible is a difficult book for a generic e-reader to handle. However, I have found reasons to prefer this over dedicated biblical software such as Bibleworks. The "active" Table of Contents is good by Kindle standards, easy to reach, and gives you access to each book, essay, and appendix. This is much better than the ESV, but it stops too soon, in that once you come to the beginning of the book, it is tedious to scroll down to reach, for example Romans 8:8. With the ESV, you could enter a book and verse number, and go to that verse.

Every once in a while, a popular periodical will run a story about the state of biblical illiteracy common among the general populace -- including the church-going faithful. The common joke is that the Bible is the most revered never read book, or the best selling least read book, in the history of the printed word. Not any more. Oxford University Press has recently published "The Jewish Annotated New Testament", which will prove to be an invaluable introduction into the amazing world of modern biblical studies. Amy-Jill Levine (Professor of New Testament and Jewish Studies at Vanderbilt University in Nashville, TN) and Marc Z. Brettler (Professor of Biblical Studies at Brandeis University) have just edited this mixture of introduction to quality New Testament scholarship,

reference book and devotional scripture that should be obligatory reading for every Christian, New-Atheist, academic, or just anyone interested in the Bible. The volume offers the full text of the New Testament heavily annotated with the best in current biblical scholarship, with an intense (but not exclusive) interest in how our accumulated knowledge of Jewish history, culture, and religion -- especially in the context of the first and second centuries CE Roman world -- can further help us understand the development and impact of the writings of what came to be collected and known as our New Testament. Most Christians in America feel a certain kinship with Jewish people as co-inheritors of a common religious legacy, but not often are these shared faith genealogies explored thoroughly. Reading the New Testament through Judaism-colored glasses will certainly fill an emotional, as well as intellectual, void for both sides of this ecumenical dance.

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