

Brill Book Project - Two Diaspora Jews: Josephus and Paul

Preface

I. General Description

In Two Diaspora Jews: Paul and Josephus, we propose a comparative study of the Judaism of two central figures of the first century, Josephus and Paul. This investigation will contextualize these authors through an analysis of their historical and social contexts and Jewish theological perspectives within the diaspora world. The investigation provides a lens into first-century Hellenistic Judaism as it compares and contrasts each author's origin, roots and the transitions and evolution of backgrounds and theological thought.

II. Focus of the Book

The focus of the book is on Josephus and Paul and is contextual and comparative in nature. Prior to the comparative analysis, I will seek to contextualize both Paul and Josephus through an analysis of their historical and social contexts and Jewish theological perspectives. The theological analysis for Josephus will be centered on material from the *Antiquities*, *Against Apion*, *War* and the *Life* whereas for Paul we will focus on the undisputed Pauline letters – Romans, Galatians, 1 Thessalonians, 1 & 2 Corinthians, and Philippians. I include Luke in Acts as a sounding board since Luke's hero is Paul in the latter half of the *Acts of the Apostles* and his presentation of Paul highlights his Jewish affinities. There is some comparative descriptive material that coincides between Luke and Josephus' Diaspora summary of Jewish ideals in *Against Apion*. I have written elsewhere on the theme of Luke and Josephus so I may include some text in an excursus in the Paul section of the book. However, the book will be centered on Josephus and Paul.

Since I am seeking to uncover the Judaism of Josephus and Paul, I will need to treat our two authors methodologically different as Paul's audience is largely converts to the Jesus way who are in majority non-Jews, whereas in the sections of Josephus we will consider his audience which includes Roman Jews along with non – Jews including Roman intellectuals and Greco-Roman elites. I will explain in the introduction to the study the method to be employed in the theological, literary section of the book.

III. Impetus of Book

The impetus for the book is that no full length comparative and analytical study exists to examine Josephus and Paul's respective writings in relationship to each other with a focus on their depiction of Judaism. While Paul historically and in time may be placed between his older contemporary, Philo, and his younger contemporary, Josephus, the comparative work by scholars that has been pursued for the most part to date is between Paul and Philo and other contemporary literary of his period. While there does exist a select and small number of articles on Paul and

Josephus, along with a few books that treat Paul and Josephus within more narrow themes there does not exist a full length analytical study such as we have designed for Josephus and Paul. This characterizes the inquiry – a historical, social, literary and theological contextualization of Paul and Josephus and a comparison and contrast in light of each author’s origin, roots and the transitions and evolution of background and thought as a lens into first-century Hellenistic Judaism set with the classical diaspora world.

IV. Essential Argument

As part of the argument we will suggest that while Paul and Josephus have different beginnings and life trajectories they retain surprisingly some similarities in their depiction of Judaism to their Hellenistic audiences. As part of the contextualization of our authors, we will seek to offer explanations for the common, shared themes and differences based on their distinct beginnings. Given that Josephus and Paul are among the most prolific authors of the first century diaspora world who in their distinct ways had a significant role on the formative and subsequent years of early Christianity, it is fitting and timely to offer an analytical and comparative treatment of these two figures of the first century world.

V. Reasons for Study

There are several reasons to pursue a new study of our two authors:

- (i) Both are dominant figures of the first-century and Second Temple Period in the Jewish and the Greco-Roman worlds.
- (ii) Scholars of early Christianity, Jewish Studies and those interested in the ancient world utilize Josephus’ work for a variety of purposes and as a foundation for religious and historical background information.
- (iii) There is an emerging body of scholarship that seeks to contextualize Josephus as a figure and author writing in Rome for Roman intellectuals, Roman Jews and others ancients. The process used is contextual analysis to understand and better appreciate the Roman and diaspora context of Josephus and his native backgrounds. This approach is now becoming much more prevalent and is the thrust of current Josephus studies. Our study will contribute to this.
- (iv) No previous study has sought to contextualize Josephus and Paul in relationship to each other with a focus on their depiction of Judaism as reflected in their own respective writings.
- (v) The tides is changing for viewing Josephus as a traitor (M. Stern, B. D. Cohon, M. Aberbach, S. G. F. Brandon) so that his works are a good source for reconstructing first -century Judaism. This is, in part, related to the fact that scholarly opinion is changing regarding Josephus' so-called pro-Roman and un-Jewish sentiment.

(vi) There is also a greater appreciation for Paul as a source for first-century Judaism among Jewish scholars (so A. Segal) and one who may be classified as a Second Temple Jew yet no detailed analysis has been pursued – our study will contribute to this in the Paul portion of this study especially in tandem with Josephus.

(vii) What began or gained new momentum with the work of Ed Sanders of a more historically accurate portrayal of Second Temple Judaism has produced numerous responses to his proposal on Judaism and Paul. However, no study and very little work have been pursued on the role of Paul in relation to Josephus in this regard.

(viii) One of the sections of Josephus that I have analyzed in some detail is Against Apion Book 2 which offers a summary of the law and may be among the “earliest and oldest theological précis compiled by a contemporary of the NT writers” (so G. Vermes, cf. E.P. Sanders). In spite of this Vermes did not pursue and expand his tenet on Against Apion 2.190-219 to Pauline Studies, in general or to the definition of Paul’s Judaism, in particular.

(ix) A further reason for the pursuit of our study is the focus of the proposed work has not been attempted for the two central figures of first-century Diaspora Jewry – Josephus and Paul. We will seek to contextualize, correct perceptions for both of our figures, offer a more balancing reading of the evidence and interpret Paul and Josephus as first-century “soundings” of Hellenistic Judaism.

(x) Given the above sampling of indicators, there appears to us a variety of cogent reasons for treating Josephus and Paul in tandem in a search for “soundings” of Hellenistic Judaism and chart each in relation to the other.

VI. Working Outline

Two Diaspora Jews: Situation, Circumstance and the Re-interpretations of Sacred History

A. Setting the Stage - Context

I. Need for Study

- (i) Questions considered
- (ii) Rational for this study
- (iii) Setting the Scholarly Landscape - Literary sketch of scholars on Josephus & Pauline studies
- (iv) Josephus in Pauline studies and NT / Pauline introductions

II. Method of study

- (i) Projected use of autobiographical data

- (ii) Josephan literary works for purpose of study
- (iii) Paul's letters in the present study
- (iv) Contextual Reading - from literary document to Jewish sentiment

B. Part One - On Josephus

I. Judean Josephus - Context

- (i) Josephan Background - familial data
- (ii) Josephan religious, ascetic testing - Pharisaic, Sadducees, Essenes, Bannus, priest, prophet
- (iii) Josephan high points of career - education, Roman visit, Jerusalem military appointee, prophecy of emperors
- (iv) Josephan use of autobiography

II. Josephus - the War

- (i) Josephus' roles in the War
- (ii) Josephus' interpretation of the War
- (iii) Josephus as representative of both side - his nation and the Romans
- (iv) Josephan final Judean acts - captivity, release, negotiator, collection of books, new life in Rome
- (v) Vita & War - telling their stories

III. Roman Josephus

- (i) Privileges received
- (i) Josephus as literary - man of letters - historian and apologist
- (ii) Use of documents for intended purpose - book by book inquiry
- (iv) Impact of War inherent on writings - explicit and implicit

IV. Josephan Theological Reflection (as repository of theological sentiments)

- (i) Josephan theological perspectives - sensibilities - their presence?
- (ii) Summaries of Law - AJ 3- 4, CA 2
- (iii) Scriptural Reinterpretation - as Biblical exegete - AJ

- (iv) Interpretation of Jewish historical figures examples - Abraham and Moses – AJ
- (v) Apologies considered - AJ, CA
- (vi) Theological concepts - providence of God, justice of God, monotheism, expected behavior-virtue, prophecy, future hope ...

VII. Josephan Judaism - Summary

- (i) As Judean Jew
- (ii) As Roman Jew and Flavian
- (iii) As Jewish Negotiator
- (iv) As Jewish Patriot
- (v) As Jewish Traitor
- (iv) What can be known?

VIII. Contextualizing Josephus - Conclusions

C. Part Two - On Paul

I. Judean Paul - the context

- (i) Education in the Jewish traditions
- (ii) Pharisaic affiliations
- (iii) Persecutor of the church
- (iv) Pauline autobiography

II. Redirected Paul - Epiphany of Exalted Jesus and its Impacts

- (i) Damascus epiphany
- (ii) Damascus call
- (iii) Apostle to the Gentiles
- (iv) Promises of God for all on same basis

III. Diaspora Paul

- (i) Roman citizenship

- (ii) Recipient of the 39 strips
- (iii) Jewish or Gentiles teacher - missionary or both
- (iv) Convert from Judaism
- (v) IV. Paul's Jewish Theological Reflection
 - (i) Jewish Filters in Paul's Theology
 - (ii) Biblical Exegete - Abraham and Moses as test cases
 - (iii) Pauline Opposition - Jewish Christian Agitators
 - (iv) Jewish Ethics and Gentile Converts
 - (v) Paul as Critic of Jewish Perspectives
 - (vi) Paul Beyond Jewish Ideals
- (vii) Distinct and Unique soundings of Diaspora Judaism – Paul an anomalous Jew?

V. Contextualizing Paul - Conclusions

D. Part Three - Comparison and Contrasts - Josephus and Paul

- (i) Different Circumstances - Different Responses
- (ii) Josephan Judaism
- (iii) Unraveling Paul's Judaism
- (iv) Explanations and Impacts: War on Josephus and Epiphany on Paul
- (v) Common Ground, Shared Assumptions, Agreements Between Josephus and Paul
- (vi) Contextualizing of Shared Theological Themes
- (vi) Distinctive Theological Difference(s)

E. Part Four - Conclusions

- (i) Josephus and Paul - Figures of Diaspora Judaism
- (ii) Re-interpreters and innovators of Jewish ideals and responses