



# Noncanonical Writings and New Testament Interpretation

By Craig A. Evans



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Perhaps one of the most challenging hurdles facing the NT interpreter is becoming familiar with the ancient primary sources from the countless Greco-Roman, Jewish, and Pagan works. From the *Paraphrase of Shem* to *Pesiqta Rabbati*, scholars and students alike must have a fundamental understanding of these documents' content, provenance, and place in NT interpretation.

Unfortunately, achieving even an elementary facility with this literature has in the past depended on either years of experience or a photographic memory. Now Craig A. Evans pulls together the essentials of date, language, text and translations, and general bibliography. He also evaluates the material's relevance for interpreting the NT. Six appendixes, including a list of quotations, allusions, and parallels to the NT, and a comparison of Jesus' parables with those of the rabbis, are designed to further save the interpreter hours of precious time.

This volume stands in line to become a standard text in NT courses, and its usefulness to anyone interested in seriously studying the NT will become readily apparent.

"The publication of Professor Evans's book is an event of first importance for advanced students of the New Testament everywhere, and particularly in North America. The persistent tendency of current fashions— which even our graduate departments foster— is to compare Jesus and his movement with only one sort or another of ancient literature. Programmatic bias is the inevitable result. Now we have a book which shows us plainly where a full range of cognate sources may be found, and how comparative analysis might proceed. On such a basis, balanced historical study becomes feasible."

—The Reverend Dr. Bruce Chilton, Bernard Iddings Bell Professor of Religion, Bard College



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#### Review

"Experts on Christian origins recognize that the 66 canonical writings provide only a partial picture of the vibrant culture that produced the New Testament. Over 500 additional works must be known, including the Dead Sea Scrolls, the Old Testament Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha, the Versions of the Old Testament that circulated in ancient Palestine before A.D. 70, Philo's and Josephus's writings, the Targumim, Rabbinics (especially the Mishnah and Tosepta), the Nag Hammadi Codices, the early church 'Fathers,' and the New Testament Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha. There has been no one-volume guide to this vast amount of literature. Now, C. A. Evans fills this lacuna with insight and lively, engaging prose. Evans's introduction is more than a map to terra incognita, it is a helpful companion for all who study Judaism and 'Christianity' before the establishment of the Holy Roman Empire."

—James H. Charlesworth, George L. Collord Professor of New Testament Language and Literature, Princeton Theological Seminary -- *Review*

#### About the Author

Craig A. Evans is Professor of Biblical Studies at Trinity Western University (British Columbia). He is a frequent contributor to scholarly journals and the author of *Noncanonical Writings and New Testament Interpretation*.

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