

**Enhanced glossary for *Studying the New Testament: A Fortress Introduction* (Fortress Press, 2010)
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GLOSSARY with Hyperlinks

Apocalyptic (adj.), and apocalypse (noun), derive from the Greek noun "[apocalypsis](#)," revelation or uncovering of immanent and catastrophic events accompanying the end of the world and the birth of a new heaven and a new earth. In the biblical books of [Daniel](#) and [Revelation](#), visions given to a seer or prophet are written down.

Apocrypha from the Greek "hidden," or "secret" includes additions to the Greek Bible (see [Septuagint](#)) and entirely new books like [Tobit](#) and the [Wisdom of Solomon](#). Once thought to be hidden, these writings are now included in Scriptures of other Christian traditions and in publications of Old Testament and New Testament Apocrypha.

[Aramaic](#) was spoken and written throughout the Near East from ca. 600 B.C.E. to ca. 700 C.E. and was the major language of Palestine, Syria, and Mesopotamia in the formative periods of Christianity and rabbinic Judaism. Two of the major translation traditions of the Hebrew Bible—the Syriac [Peshitta](#) and the Jewish [Targums](#)—are in Aramaic, as are substantial portions of rabbinic literature, the entire literary corpus of Syriac Christianity, and that of the [Mandaeans](#) (a non-Christian gnostic sect of southern Iraq in existence today).

[Dead Sea Scrolls](#) refers to the publication of Hebrew, Aramaic or Greek material from 11 caves at Qumran on the shores of the Dead Sea between 1947 and the mid 1960's along with material from Judean desert caves (Murraba'at, Hever, Se'elim, Mishmar) containing literature dating between the two Jewish Revolts (70 to 135 C.E.). This material has revolutionized our knowledge of Judaism in the Second Temple period and dramatically influenced the study of Christian Origins. Versions of every book of the bible except Esther have been found amongst the scrolls. All the biblical texts predate versions of the biblical text published in our bibles.

[Diaspora](#), or dispersion refers to the dispersal of Jews throughout the Hellenistic world. Large Jewish communities existed in Rome from the 2nd C BCE and in Alexandria and Sardis from the 3rd Century BCE, for example.

Eschatology, from the Greek "[eschaton](#)" or last, describes last things including life after death and judgment of souls.

Eucharist, from the Greek word for thanksgiving, refers to the sacred meal in which gift of the body and blood of Christ is celebrated. The Eucharist was regarded as a sacrament in Christian churches from the third century CE.

Essenes, a Jewish sect described by [Josephus](#) and the philosopher [Philo of Alexandria](#) existing from the second century BCE to the end of the Jewish War against Rome (66-70 CE) on the shores of the Dead Sea. For many scholars, the Dead Sea Scrolls at Qumran are an Essene library.

Gnosticism derives from the Greek word [gnosis](#) or knowledge and is used (often pejoratively) by some scholars to describe a radically dualistic movement contemporaneous with Christianity in the first centuries of the Common Era. Other scholars have questioned whether the term is useful at all. Gnostic systems of thought view the world as the faulty creation of a fallen inferior god identified as the God of the Hebrew Bible. Recognizing themselves as mired in matter, the goal of human existence is to ascend to the place of origin, the world above. Publication of the [Nag Hammadi Library](#) has increased our knowledge of this movement.

Hellenism. The [Hellenistic world](#) describes Greek thought and culture including and subsequent to [Alexander the Great](#). After Alexander's death (323 BCE) without an heir, his generals continued as Hellenistic rulers in Egypt (the Ptolemies including Cleopatra) and Syria (the Seleucids including Antiochus IV Epiphanes). The spread of Greek language and culture throughout the Mediterranean world resulted in the translation of the Hebrew Bible into Greek in the 2nd C BCE (see Septuagint). The New Testament itself is written in Greek.

Mammon, an Aramaic word for wealth or property, occurs in the phrase "unrighteous mammon" (Luke 16:9,11).

Miqvah (Heb.pl miqvaoth) is a ritual washing to restore purity. In observance of ritual purity, the Pharisees drew on an old tradition of using priestly laws concerning purity, food, and marriage in order to separate, protect, and identify Judaism in the Greco-Roman period.

[Pseudepigrapha](#) (Old Testament and New Testament) literally refers to a falsely-titled work such as [I Enoch](#), the [Ascension or Assumption of Moses](#), since neither Enoch or Moses wrote writings subsequently attributed to them.

[Q](#) from the German word "quelle" meaning source, is a conjectured sayings source used in the composition of the gospels of Matthew and Luke. While some scholars have published reconstructions of Q, others prefer to regard the sayings common to Matthew and Luke as fluid oral tradition.

Septuagint, from the Latin word for 70, refers to the translation of the Hebrew Bible into Greek by 70 translators in the 3rd Century BCE, according to a story reported in the [Letter to Aristaeas](#). This is the form of the Bible familiar to most New Testament authors and many Christians in the first few centuries of the Common Era.

Son of God, a term used e.g. by Paul to describe Jesus. In the Hebrew Bible (Old Testament) the term is used to describe the divine beings (angels) of Genesis 6 who visit

human women on earth. In Psalm 2, God calls an anointed king of Israel "son of God". In Greek and Roman culture an individual human being e.g. the Emperor was called "son of god."

Son of Man is a term Jesus appears to use as a self-designation e.g. at Mark 2:10. Scholarly opinion is divided between the views that Jesus' use of the phrase is an Aramaic idiom for speaking about oneself in the third person or a particular divine figure derived from the apocalyptic description of the Son of Man in Daniel 7:13-14.

[Stoicism](#) was a particular philosophy prominent in the Hellenistic period. The philosopher Zeno established the Stoic school which lasted from 300 BCE to the 3rd Century CE. The name derives from stoa or pillars of the colonnade in Athens where Zeno walked with fellow philosophers. In Stoic philosophy, an active principle, reason ([logos](#)) permeates the universe and is manifest in reason and human rational thought. In Stoic ethics, freedom from passions is the result of virtue. Elements of Stoic philosophy can be seen in Paul's thought.

Synoptic Gospels is a term describing the first three gospels of the New Testament, Matthew, Mark and Luke from the fact that since they have so much material in common, they can be seen together or alongside one another. A synopsis of the four gospels publishes material from the gospels in four parallel columns. Much of the material from John's gospel exists without parallel in the Synoptic Gospels.

[Targums](#) (Heb. Targumim from the verb to translate or explain) are Aramaic translations and paraphrases of biblical Hebrew texts made for Aramaic-speaking Jews of the synagogues who no longer understood classical Hebrew. Eventually, under the direction of the Rabbis, these were set down in writing.