

Preface

This book began as a revision of an earlier volume, *Beginning New Testament Study* (London: SPCK, 1986). In the process of the revision, the authors and Rebecca Mulhearn, their editor at SPCK, realized that more than twenty years of change since *Beginning New Testament Study* appeared necessitated a different approach and an entirely new text, so much so that this is very much a new book.

The original volume was valued for offering, not another conventional New Testament introduction, but a way into understanding the kind of literature it is and how it could be studied. In order to achieve that aim today, we decided that further discussion of each book of the New Testament within a historical context needed to be provided, and that bibliography, exercises and notes needed to be offered for those embarking on an academic course of study. A more detailed discussion of individual books is provided in *The Cambridge Companion to the Bible*, second edition (Bruce Chilton, with contributions from Howard Clark Kee, Eric M. Meyers, John Rogerson, Amy-Jill Levine, Anthony J. Saldarini, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008). But in the balance of parts and the whole that we believe is key to serious study, we hope that our readers are here given a good start.

Resources made available to us by Fortress Press, for which we are grateful to our editor, Ross Miller, have enabled us to extend our approach. We hope that readers will appreciate new illustrations, a comprehensive system of referring to all visual representations in the book, and an electronic companion (www.fortresspress.com/chiltongood). These enhancements are intended to enliven the presentation, and to enable students to pursue their interests further into some of the resources, written and archaeological, which illuminate the New Testament and its world in ways that scarcely could have been imagined even a few decades ago.