

The Record of Jesus Christ

Pure evidentiary claim index

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Every claim is labeled by evidence tier. Proof-grade data is never conflated with literary or theological development. This PDF is a portable index; the live platform at veritasworldwide.com/record-of-jesus-christ remains the canonical interactive surface.

Methodology (summary)

Tiers: Verified · Well-Attested · Circumstantial · Contested · Interpretive · Speculative · Literary/Theological. Tools: multiple attestation, Nestle-Aland/UBS standards, archaeological dating with ranges, observational cosmology as science only.

[well_attested] ane-amarna-habiru

Amarna letters mention ꜥApiru/Habiru groups in Late Bronze Canaan — sociopolitical ethnonym for “Hebrews.”

[verified] ane-amarna-letters

The Amarna letters (14th c. BCE) document Late Bronze Canaanite-Egyptian diplomacy and conflict language used in comparative ANE historical method.

[well_attested] ane-annals-shoshenq

Shoshenq I (biblical Shishak) campaign reliefs at Karnak list Levantine toponyms relevant to 10th-century BCE geopolitics debates.

[verified] ane-babylonian-chronicle-jerusalem

Babylonian Chronicle entries record Nebuchadnezzar’s campaigns against Judah, including the 597 BCE deportation horizon.

[verified] ane-babylonian-chronicles

Babylonian Chronicles document Nebuchadnezzar’s campaigns against Jerusalem, providing independent chronological control for the late Iron Age Judah narrative.

[verified] ane-black-obelisk

The Black Obelisk of Shalmaneser III depicts Jehu (or a representative) of Israel paying tribute — an extra-biblical visual control for the Omride/Jehu period.

[well_attested] ane-cos-corpus

The Context of Scripture (COS) and ANET anthologies assemble primary ANE texts used as comparative controls for Hebrew Bible literature and historiography.

[verified] ane-cyrus-cylinder

The Cyrus Cylinder (c. 539 BCE) records Achaemenid policy of restoring temples and returning displaced populations after the conquest of Babylon.

[well_attested] ane-deir-alla

The Deir Alla inscription mentions Balaam son of Beor — a rare extra-biblical onomastic parallel to Numbers 22–24 traditions.

[verified] ane-ekron-inscription

The Ekron royal dedicatory inscription names Philistine rulers and a temple of Ptgyh — primary control for Iron Age Philistine urban religion and politics.

[contested] ane-exodus-historicity

The historicity and scale of an Israelite exodus from Egypt remain contested in critical scholarship.

[well_attested] ane-flood-literature

Mesopotamian flood traditions (Atrahasis, Gilgamesh XI) are independent literary parallels to Genesis flood narrative forms.

[well_attested] ane-gezer-calendar

The Gezer calendar is an early Hebrew agricultural calendar inscription relevant to literacy and agrarian life in the southern Levant.

[well_attested] ane-hezekiah-bulla

Bullae and seals naming Hezekiah (and debated related officials) provide epigraphic controls for late-8th-century Judah's royal administration.

[well_attested] ane-hezekiah-lmlk

lmlk jar handles and related Judahite administrative seals concentrate in late eighth-century contexts associated with Hezekiah's reign and Assyrian threat.

[well_attested] ane-inscription-map

Key West Semitic and Egyptian inscriptions relevant to Israel/Judah (Merneptah, Mesha, Tel Dan, Siloam, etc.) form a geographically distributed control set across Egypt, Transjordan, and the Galilee–Golan.

[verified] ane-ketef-hinnom

Ketef Hinnom silver scrolls contain early Hebrew priestly blessing text (Numbers 6) — among the oldest biblical text witnesses in metal.

[well_attested] ane-kuntillet-ajrud

Inscriptions from Kuntillet 'Ajrud include blessing formulae pairing Yahweh with other divine names — key data for Israelite religion debates.

[verified] ane-lachish-letters

The Lachish ostraca (letters) are late-Iron-Age Hebrew administrative/military correspondence relevant to Judah's final decades before the Babylonian destruction.

[verified] ane-lachish-reliefs

Sennacherib's Lachish reliefs (British Museum) depict the 701 BCE siege visually, complementing annals and biblical narratives.

[verified] ane-merneptah

The Merneptah Stele (c. 1208 BCE) contains the earliest known extra-biblical reference to "Israel" as a people in Canaan.

[verified] ane-mesha

The Mesha Stele (c. 840 BCE) names Omri of Israel, Yahweh, and Moabite campaigns paralleling 2 Kings 3.

[verified] ane-moabite-stone-context

The Mesha Stele (Moabite Stone) remains a primary control for Omride-period geopolitics and Yahwistic onomastics in Transjordan.

[verified] ane-sennacherib

Sennacherib's annals (Taylor Prism / related prisms) describe the 701 BCE campaign against Judah and Hezekiah's tribute without claiming Jerusalem's capture.

[verified] ane-siloam-inscription

The Siloam Tunnel inscription (Jerusalem) is a primary Hebrew epigraphic witness associated with Hezekiah's water system construction narrative.

[verified] ane-siloam-tunnel-engineering

Hezekiah's tunnel engineering is archaeologically verified; the Siloam inscription describes the breakthrough meeting of two work crews.

[verified] ane-tel-dan

The Tel Dan Stele (9th century BCE) attests the phrase “House of David” (bytdwd) outside the Bible.

[well_attested] ane-ugarit

Ugaritic texts (Ras Shamra) supply Northwest Semitic mythic and ritual parallels used in comparative study of Hebrew Bible poetry and divine council language.

[verified] arch-bar-kokhba

The Bar Kokhba revolt (132–135 CE) is archaeologically and papyrologically attested; its aftermath reshaped Judean demography and Jewish–Christian trajectories.

[contested] arch-bethsaida

Bethsaida identification and Early Roman occupation layers are active archaeological research topics relevant to Galilee Gospel geography.

[verified] arch-caesarea-maritima

Caesarea Maritima — Herodian harbor city and later Roman provincial capital — is extensively excavated and contextualizes prefectural administration relevant to Pilate traditions.

[verified] arch-caesarea-philippi

Paneas / Caesarea Philippi (Banias) is archaeologically documented as a Herodian/Philip city at the Jordan headwaters with a Paneion cult site.

[well_attested] arch-capernaum

Capernaum (Kefar Nahum) was a fishing village on the Sea of Galilee with Early Roman occupation; a later synagogue stands over earlier remains.

[verified] arch-destruction-70

The Roman destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple in 70 CE is multiply attested (Josephus; archaeological burn/destruction layers; Roman triumph iconography such as the Arch of Titus spoils relief).

[verified] arch-galilee-boat

The “Jesus Boat” (first-century Galilee boat, discovered 1986) illustrates fishing technology on the lake in the Early Roman period.

[verified] arch-gamla

Gamla (Golan) destruction in the First Jewish Revolt is archaeologically and literarily documented (Josephus), illustrating Galilee/Golan war archaeology.

[verified] arch-herodium

Herodium is a major Herodian fortress-palace complex with extensive excavation; it anchors elite architecture of late Second Temple Judea.

[contested] arch-herodium-tomb-debate

A monumental mausoleum at Herodium has been proposed as Herod's tomb; identification remains debated among excavators and reviewers.

[verified] arch-hippos-sussita

Hippos-Sussita (Decapolis) excavations illuminate Greco-Roman urbanism east of the Sea of Galilee relevant to Gospel geographic horizons.

[contested] arch-james-ossuary

The so-called James ossuary inscription (“James son of Joseph brother of Jesus”) remains contested regarding authenticity of the brother phrase and provenance.

[contested] arch-jericho

Jericho’s Late Bronze destruction layers and relation to a conquest narrative remain a classic contested case in biblical archaeology.

[verified] arch-jerusalem-destruction-layers

Destruction layers and burn evidence in Jerusalem’s Upper City and related loci align with the 70 CE Roman destruction horizon.

[verified] arch-jerusalem-pilgrim-road

The Stepped Street / pilgrim road from the Pool of Siloam toward the Temple Mount is excavated and dated to the late Second Temple period.

[interpretive] arch-kursi

Kursi (traditional Gergesa/Gadara region) has a Byzantine monastery commemorating the swine miracle tradition — reception archaeology, not first-century proof of the miracle.

[well_attested] arch-magdala

Magdala excavations reveal a first-century Galilean town with a synagogue and harbor installations, enriching the social map of Jesus’ activity zone.

[verified] arch-magdala-synagogue

A first-century synagogue at Magdala (Migdal) on the Sea of Galilee is excavated and published, expanding evidence for Galilean synagogue architecture.

[well_attested] arch-masada

Masada’s archaeology confirms a First Jewish Revolt–period fortress with Roman siege works; Josephus’s mass-suicide narrative is only partly controllable by material remains.

[verified] arch-masada-siege

Masada siege archaeology and Josephus’s narrative document a major Roman siege at the end of the First Revolt (73/74 CE debates on exact year).

[well_attested] arch-nazareth

Nazareth existed as a small Jewish settlement in the Early Roman period; monumental first-century remains are limited.

[verified] arch-ossuaries-practice

Secondary burial in limestone ossuaries is archaeologically well attested in late Second Temple Jerusalem and environs (roughly late 1st c. BCE–70 CE).

[well_attested] arch-pool-bethesda

Excavations north of the Temple Mount have exposed twin pools matching John’s description of Bethesda with five porticoes (John 5) better than once assumed.

[well_attested] arch-qumran-settlement

Qumran settlement archaeology provides material context for the Dead Sea Scrolls community debates (Essene and alternative models).

[interpretive] arch-quran-not-control

The Qur’an (7th c. CE) is a late secondary witness for first-century Palestinian history and is not used here as a primary control for the historical Jesus.

[verified] arch-sepphoris

Sepphoris (Zippori), ~6 km from Nazareth, was a significant urban center in Early Roman Galilee under Antipas.

[verified] arch-sepphoris-urban

Sepphoris was a major Galilean urban center near Nazareth with extensive excavation of Hellenistic–Roman layers.

[verified] arch-siloam

The Siloam Tunnel inscription (discovered 1880) describes construction of Hezekiah’s tunnel, matching 2 Kings 20:20 / 2 Chr 32:30 as royal hydraulic works.

[speculative] arch-talpiot

Talpiot “Jesus family tomb” statistical and onomastic claims are speculative and rejected by most specialists as identification of the New Testament Jesus.

[verified] arch-tiberias

Tiberias, founded by Antipas on the Sea of Galilee, is archaeologically and literarily documented as a Herodian urban center.

[well_attested] arch-titus

1 Clement (usually dated late 1st c.) attests early Roman Christian leadership correspondence and cites Jesus traditions and Pauline letters as authoritative.

[verified] arch-yehohanan

The crucified remains of Yehohanan son of Hagkol (Giv’at ha-Mivtar) provide osteological evidence of Roman crucifixion practice in Judea (nail through heel bone).

[verified] arch-yodefat

Yodefat (Jotapata) siege archaeology correlates with Josephus’s First Revolt narrative and illustrates Galilean war destruction layers.

[verified] cosmo-acoustic-scale

The angular scale of the CMB acoustic peaks ($\ell_{\ast}$) tightly constrains the angular diameter distance in flat Λ CDM.

[well_attested] cosmo-age

Under Planck 2018 Λ CDM parameters, the universe age is approximately 13.8 billion years.

[verified] cosmo-bao

Baryon acoustic oscillations (BAO) measured in large-scale galaxy surveys provide an independent standard-ruler constraint on the expansion history within Λ CDM.

[well_attested] cosmo-bbn

Primordial abundances of light elements ($t\text{He}$, D , ^3He , $w\text{Li}$) are broadly consistent with Big Bang nucleosynthesis predictions.

[verified] cosmo-big-bang-nucleosynthesis-d

Primordial deuterium abundance measurements tightly constrain the baryon density in standard BBN, aligning with CMB-inferred Ω_b .

[verified] cosmo-cmb

The cosmic microwave background (CMB) is a near-isotropic blackbody at $T \approx 2.725$ K throughout the universe.

[verified] cosmo-cmb-polarization

CMB polarization (E-modes; B-mode searches) provides independent cosmological information beyond temperature anisotropies alone.

[verified] cosmo-cmb-power

The CMB angular power spectrum exhibits acoustic peaks whose positions and amplitudes constrain baryon density, dark matter density, and curvature in Λ CDM fits.

[verified] cosmo-dark-energy

Type Ia supernova surveys (1990s–present) established late-time accelerated expansion consistent with a cosmological-constant / dark-energy component.

[verified] cosmo-dark-matter-status

Multiple independent lines (galaxy rotation curves, cluster lensing, CMB acoustic peaks) favor a non-baryonic dark matter component within Λ CDM.

[well_attested] cosmo-desi-bao

DESI and related Stage-IV BAO surveys are tightening late-universe expansion constraints and testing dark-energy equation-of-state models against Λ CDM.

[verified] cosmo-expansion

Spectroscopic redshift of galaxies correlates with distance (Hubble–Lemaître law), indicating metric expansion of space.

[interpretive] cosmo-fine-tuning-params

Several dimensionless physical parameters appear finely constrained for complex chemistry; teleological interpretation is philosophical, not a scientific conclusion of this Record.

[verified] cosmo-flatness

Spatial curvature is consistent with flat geometry ($\Omega_k \approx 0$) within Λ CDM fits to CMB data.

[contested] cosmo-hubble-tension

The Hubble tension denotes a statistically significant discrepancy between early-universe (CMB-inferred) and some late-universe local H_0 measurements.

[well_attested] cosmo-inflation-status

Cosmic inflation is the leading early-universe paradigm for flatness and horizon problems; direct detection of primordial B-mode polarization remains an active observational goal.

[well_attested] cosmo-matter-energy

Planck baseline Λ CDM reports cold dark matter and dark energy as dominant density components of the universe.

[verified] cosmo-matter-power

The matter power spectrum from galaxy surveys and Lyman- α forests constrains structure formation models and cold dark matter frameworks at large scales.

[verified] cosmo-neutrino-bbn

Standard BBN and CMB analyses constrain the effective number of neutrino species (N_{eff}) near the Standard Model expectation.

[contested] cosmo-nucleosynthesis-li

The cosmological lithium problem remains an open tension between standard BBN predictions and stellar abundance measurements.

[verified] cosmo-recombination

CMB photons free-stream from the surface of last scattering at recombination ($z \approx 1100$).

[well_attested] cosmo-reionization

CMB optical depth and high- z galaxy surveys constrain the epoch of reionization when the first stars ionized the intergalactic medium.

[verified] cosmo-sound-horizon

The sound horizon at recombination sets the BAO standard-ruler scale used in late-universe distance measurements.

[verified] cosmo-structure-formation

Large-scale structure (galaxy clustering, weak lensing) provides independent Λ CDM and BAO.

[verified] cosmo-supernova-ia

Type Ia supernovae as standardizable candles mapped late-time acceleration and remain a core distance-ladder tool alongside BAO and CMB.

[verified] cosmo-weak-lensing

Weak gravitational lensing maps the projected mass distribution of the universe and provides constraints on Λ CDM fits.

[well_attested] ec-1clement

1 Clement (usually dated late 1st c.) attests early Roman Christian leadership correspondence and cites Jesus traditions and Pauline letters as authoritative.

[verified] ec-apostolic-fathers

The Apostolic Fathers (1 Clement, Didache, Ignatius, Polycarp, etc.) provide early non-NT Christian primary sources.

[well_attested] ec-aristides

The Apology of Aristides (2nd c.) is an early Christian apology preserved in Syriac/Greek traditions describing Christian ethics to a Roman audience.

[verified] ec-athanasius

Athanasius, 39th Festal Letter (367 CE), lists the exact 27-book New Testament canon later ratified in the West.

[well_attested] ec-barnabas

The Epistle of Barnabas (late 1st / early 2nd c.) allegorizes Hebrew Bible law and shows early Christian supersessionist interpretation.

[well_attested] ec-didache

The Didache preserves an early Christian “two ways” ethic, baptismal and eucharistic instructions, and itinerant ministry rules — dating commonly late 1st / early 2nd c.

[well_attested] ec-diognetus

The Epistle to Diognetus (2nd/3rd c.?) is an early Christian apology describing Christian life as a civic “soul of the world.”

[well_attested] ec-eusebius-he

Eusebius’s Ecclesiastical History (early 4th c.) is a foundational but tendentious narrative source for earlier Christian writers, martyrdoms, and canon discussions.

[well_attested] ec-gospel-harmony

Tatian’s Diatessaron (late 2nd c.) harmonized the four Gospels into a single narrative widely used in Syriac Christianity — evidence of early fourfold Gospel prestige and of textual fluidity in use.

[contested] ec-gospel-thomas

The Gospel of Thomas (Nag Hammadi) is a sayings gospel whose dating and dependence on canonical Gospels are contested.

[well_attested] ec-ignatius

Ignatius of Antioch’s letters (early 2nd c., authenticity of middle recension majority) show moniscopacy advocacy and high Christological language in transit to martyrdom.

[well_attested] ec-ignatius-letters

Ignatius of Antioch's letters (early 2nd c., middle recension) document episcopal structure and early christological confessions en route to martyrdom.

[verified] ec-irenaeus

Irenaeus (c. 180 CE) argues for a fourfold Gospel (Matthew, Mark, Luke, John) against alternative gospel usages.

[well_attested] ec-justin-apology

Justin Martyr's First Apology (mid-2nd c.) describes Christian worship, "memoirs of the apostles," and defends Christians before a Roman audience.

[well_attested] ec-justin-dialogue

Justin Martyr's Dialogue with Trypho engages Jewish-Christian scriptural argument in the mid-2nd century.

[well_attested] ec-marcion

Marcion of Sinope (mid-2nd century) promulgated a reduced Gospel+Paul collection, prompting proto-orthodox canon and theological responses.

[well_attested] ec-martyrdom-polycarp

The Martyrdom of Polycarp (mid-2nd c. traditions) is an early Christian martyr narrative shaping later hagiography.

[well_attested] ec-melito-passover

Melito of Sardis's Peri Pascha (2nd c.) is an early Christian paschal homily with high christology and anti-Jewish rhetoric — reception history, not HJ primary data.

[well_attested] ec-melito-passover-pascha

Melito's Peri Pascha links Passover typology to Jesus' passion in a high christology — second-century reception, not first-century reportage.

[well_attested] ec-muratorian

The Muratorian Fragment is an early (often 2nd-century, date contested) Latin canon list showing a nearly formed but not identical NT collection.

[literary_theological] ec-nicaea

The Council of Nicaea (325 CE) addressed Christological doctrine (homoousios) under Constantine; it did not create the NT canon list.

[well_attested] ec-origen-hexapla

Origen's Hexapla (3rd c.) arranged Hebrew and Greek OT columns for comparative textual work — early Christian engagement with pluriform scriptural text.

[circumstantial] ec-papias

Papias of Hierapolis (early 2nd c.), preserved in fragments via Eusebius, offers early traditions about Mark and Matthew's composition — valuable and debated.

[well_attested] ec-polycarp

Polycarp's Letter to the Philippians (mid-2nd c.) cites or alludes to multiple NT writings and shows early reception of Pauline and Gospel traditions.

[well_attested] ec-polycarp-philippians

Polycarp's Philippians cites or alludes to multiple NT writings, showing early 2nd-century reception of Pauline and Gospel traditions.

[circumstantial] ec-quadratus

Quadratus's apology (early 2nd c.), preserved in fragment via Eusebius, claims some healed/raised by Jesus lived into later times — early apologetic tradition, not contemporary medical record.

[well_attested] ec-shepherd-hermas

The Shepherd of Hermas (2nd c.) was widely read and sometimes treated as scripture in some churches, illustrating fluid early canons.

[well_attested] ec-shepherd-hermas-canon

The Shepherd of Hermas appears in some early canon lists and Codex Sinaiticus, illustrating fluid boundaries of authoritative Christian reading.

[interpretive] ec-update-triggers

This Record's perpetual update triggers include: new major papyri/majuscule publications, INTF Liste changes, peer-reviewed dig reports, and material consensus shifts in historical Jesus research.

[contested] hj-apocalyptic

Whether Jesus is best reconstructed as primarily apocalyptic prophet (Schweitzer trajectory) or sapiential/ethical teacher remains a major scholarly divide.

[well_attested] hj-appearances

Early Christian proclamation included claims of post-crucifixion appearances to individuals and groups (1 Cor 15:3–8); the nature of those experiences is not scientifically settled.

[well_attested] hj-baptism

Baptism of Jesus by John the Baptist is widely judged historical under the criterion of embarrassment and multiple attestation.

[contested] hj-bethlehem

Bethlehem birth is narrated in Matthew and Luke with divergent infancy stories; historical verification is contested, while Nazareth association is stronger.

[well_attested] hj-caiaphas

An ossuary inscribed “Yehosef bar Qayafa” (discovered 1990) is widely identified with the high-priestly family of Caiaphas.

[interpretive] hj-criteria-limits

Classical authenticity criteria (multiple attestation, embarrassment, dissimilarity) are heuristic tools with known biases; they do not yield laboratory-grade “proof” of individual sayings.

[interpretive] hj-criterion-coherence

Coherence criteria ask whether a proposed saying/deed fits a reconstructed core portrait of Jesus; the method is circular if the core is itself unstable.

[verified] hj-crucifixion

Crucifixion of Jesus under Pontius Pilate (prefect of Judea c. 26–36 CE) is multiply attested and coheres with Roman practice.

[contested] hj-crucifixion-year

Crucifixion year is commonly constrained to c. 30–33 CE by Pilate's tenure (26–36), Passover weekday arguments, and astronomical full-moon tables — exact year remains debated.

[well_attested] hj-disciples-twelve

A circle of close followers including a group remembered as “the Twelve” is multiply attested; exact membership lists vary slightly across Gospels.

[contested] hj-empty-tomb

Empty-tomb narratives appear in the canonical Gospels with differences; whether an empty tomb is historical is debated; early creed in 1 Cor 15 emphasizes appearances more than tomb logistics.

[well_attested] hj-existence

The existence of Jesus of Nazareth as a first-century Jewish man is the near-consensus position of critical historians of antiquity.

[well_attested] hj-exorcism-reputation

Exorcism / spirit-expulsion is multiply attested as a public activity associated with Jesus in Synoptic tradition and is treated by many historians as a characteristic reputation.

[circumstantial] hj-family-rejection

Traditions of family misunderstanding or tension (Mark 3; John 7) are often cited under the criterion of embarrassment as unlikely free invention by later church idealization.

[well_attested] hj-gal2-conflict

Galatians 2 records a conflict between Paul and Cephas (Peter) at Antioch over table fellowship with gentiles — primary evidence of diversity and dispute in the earliest movement.

[well_attested] hj-galilee-aramaic

Aramaic is widely reconstructed as a primary spoken language of Jesus and Galilean Jewish communities, with Hebrew and Greek also present.

[well_attested] hj-galilee-context

Early Roman Galilee included agricultural villages, fishing economy on the lake, and nearby urban centers such as Sepphoris and Tiberias.

[well_attested] hj-galilee-economy

Galilee under Antipas was an agrarian and fishing economy with urbanization at Sepphoris and Tiberias; Jesus traditions sit in that social landscape.

[well_attested] hj-galilee-jewishness

Archaeology and literary sources support a predominantly Jewish Galilee in the early first century with hellenizing urban pockets (Sepphoris, Tiberias).

[well_attested] hj-healings-reputation

Healing activity is multiply attested as part of Jesus' public reputation in Synoptic tradition; historians often accept a healing reputation while bracketing modern medical ontologies.

[contested] hj-herod-death

The death of Herod the Great is conventionally dated to 4 BCE (with minority arguments for 1 BCE / other), anchoring the latest plausible nativity window in Matthew's framework.

[well_attested] hj-james-leadership

James the brother of Jesus is attested as a Jerusalem leadership figure (Paul; Acts; Josephus Ant. 20.200) until his death c. 62 CE.

[verified] hj-jerusalem-pilgrimage

Pilgrimage to Jerusalem for festivals is a well-attested Second Temple practice providing social context for Gospel Jerusalem scenes.

[well_attested] hj-jewishness-consensus

Mainstream historical Jesus research treats Jesus as a first-century Jew operating within Second Temple Judaism, not as a later Gentile construct.

[well_attested] hj-john-baptist-movement

John the Baptist is multiply attested (Josephus Ant. 18; Synoptics; Johannine tradition) as an independent purification/repentance preacher executed by Herod Antipas.

[well_attested] hj-john-baptizer-independence

John the Baptist is treated as an independent prophetic figure in Josephus and the Gospels, not a mere literary foil invented de novo.

[well_attested] hj-kingdom-proclamation

A core historical judgment across diverse scholars is that Jesus proclaimed God's kingdom / reign as central to his public activity.

[contested] hj-language

Jesus likely spoke Aramaic as a primary vernacular; Greek exposure in Galilee is plausible; Hebrew literacy/use is debated for the population stratum.

[well_attested] hj-literacy

Literacy rates in Early Roman Judea/Galilee were limited relative to modern norms; most people encountered texts orally and through specialists.

[literary_theological] hj-magi-star

Magi and star narratives in Matthew 2 are literary-theological traditions; astronomical "explanations" are speculative correlations, not historical proof.

[well_attested] hj-meal-practice

Shared meals / table fellowship appear as a distinctive social practice in Synoptic traditions and are widely treated as historically characteristic of Jesus' movement.

[interpretive] hj-miracles-method

Miracle narratives are not historically "verified" under naturalistic historical method; historians can study reports, meanings, and social effects of wonder-traditions.

[well_attested] hj-parables

Parables form a characteristic teaching form in the Synoptic tradition and are widely treated as a historically distinctive feature of Jesus' public speech.

[contested] hj-pauline-chronology

Pauline absolute chronology is reconstructed from Acts, the letters, and external anchors (Gallio inscription at Delphi); competing schemes (Ramsay, Knox, Hyldahl, et al.) differ by several years.

[circumstantial] hj-peter-rome

Peter's presence and martyrdom in Rome are early traditions (1 Clement; later Acts of Peter) with varying historical confidence; New Testament itself does not narrate a Roman martyrdom.

[verified] hj-pilate-stone

The Pilate Stone (Caesarea Maritima, 1961) independently attests Pontius Pilate as prefect of Judea.

[contested] hj-prayer-abba

The address "Abba" in Mark 14:36 and Pauline usage (Rom 8:15; Gal 4:6) is often cited in debates about Jesus' prayer language; over-claims about uniqueness are contested.

[interpretive] hj-prophetic-actions

Symbolic prophetic actions (e.g., Temple demonstration) are a recognized category in historical Jesus research for interpreting public deeds.

[contested] hj-q-hypothesis

The Two-Source Hypothesis posits Markan priority plus a sayings source "Q" behind Matthew and Luke; Q remains a scholarly reconstruction without a surviving manuscript.

[contested] hj-quirinius

Luke's census notice linking Jesus' birth to a registration under Quirinius (6 CE) is a classic chronological problem relative to a Herodian birth before 4 BCE.

[literary_theological] hj-resurrection-hist

Claims of bodily resurrection are theological assertions; historians can document early belief and proclamation, not laboratory verification of the event.

[verified] hj-romans-execution

Crucifixion was a Roman capital punishment method used in Judea; archaeological and literary controls exist independent of the Gospels (e.g., Yehohanan heel bone; Josephus).

[well_attested] hj-sabbath-conflicts

Sabbath controversy traditions are multiply attested in Synoptics and are widely treated as historically characteristic conflict settings for Jesus' public activity.

[well_attested] hj-table-fellowship

Traditions of Jesus' open table fellowship with "sinners" and tax collectors are widely treated as historically plausible under embarrassment and multiple attestation.

[well_attested] hj-tax-collectors

Association with tax collectors / toll collectors is multiply attested and often treated as historically characteristic of Jesus' social practice (table fellowship theme).

[well_attested] hj-temple-action

An action by Jesus in the Temple (disruption of commerce / symbolic demonstration) is multiply attested; interpretation ranges from prophetic sign to failed revolt cue.

[contested] hj-titles

Titles applied to Jesus (Messiah/Christ, Son of Man, Son of God, Lord) have layered historical and literary-theological histories; none should be treated as a single unproblematic first-century label without analysis.

[well_attested] hj-women-movement

Early Christian sources name women as patrons, witnesses, and coworkers (e.g., Mary Magdalene traditions; Romans 16 co-workers); social roles are historically reconstructable within limits.

[interpretive] mod-contextual-credibility

Contextual credibility / historical plausibility criteria ask whether a tradition fits first-century Jewish Palestine — necessary but not sufficient for authenticity.

[interpretive] mod-criteria-coherence-limits

Coherence criteria risk circularity: they test sayings against a reconstructed "core Jesus" that itself depends on prior authentications.

[interpretive] mod-criteria-critique

Classical criteria of authenticity (embarrassment, dissimilarity, multiple attestation) are historiographical tools with known biases; recent memory and social approaches revise their use.

[interpretive] mod-criteria-embarrassment

The criterion of embarrassment is a heuristic, not a proof algorithm; it can be misapplied when later communities reframe "embarrassing" material.

[interpretive] mod-criteria-multiple-attestation-practice

Multiple independent attestation remains a practical confidence-boosting tool when streams are truly independent (Mark, special Matthew/Luke, John, Paul, non-Christian).

[interpretive] mod-criterion-dissimilarity-limits

Double dissimilarity (unlike Judaism and early Church) is widely criticized as historically implausible and theologically loaded.

[interpretive] mod-criterion-embarrassment-limits

The criterion of embarrassment is heuristic and circular if “embarrassing” is defined by later Christian theology rather than first-century Jewish context.

[verified] mod-critical-editions

NA28/UBS5 (and ongoing ECM/INTF work) are the standard working critical texts of the Greek NT for academic use.

[verified] mod-digital-dss

The Leon Levy Dead Sea Scrolls Digital Library enables open inspection of high-resolution plate images for many Qumran manuscripts.

[interpretive] mod-form-criticism-limits

Form criticism classifies Gospel units by genre and Sitz im Leben; its older assumption of pure oral isolation before writing is now heavily qualified.

[well_attested] mod-genetics-limits

Ancient DNA of the Southern Levant informs regional demographic history; it cannot identify named New Testament individuals or prove specific genealogies in the Gospels.

[interpretive] mod-gospel-genre-bios

Many scholars classify the Gospels as a form of ancient biography (bios) with flexible historical conventions rather than modern historiography.

[interpretive] mod-historical-jesus-quests

“Quests” for the historical Jesus are historiographical programs with shifting criteria; no single reconstruction commands universal assent.

[contested] mod-jesus-seminar

The Jesus Seminar (1980s–2000s) popularized colored-bead voting on sayings authenticity; its methods and conclusions remain highly contested in the guild.

[interpretive] mod-living-text

“Living text” models (e.g., Parker) emphasize early Christian textual fluidity and community use rather than a single frozen original always recoverable.

[interpretive] mod-memory-approach

Social/collective memory approaches reconstruct how groups remembered Jesus rather than claiming verbatim ipsissima verba recovery.

[interpretive] mod-memory-distortion

Social memory research emphasizes both conservation and distortion in group remembering — neither pure invention nor pure stenography.

[interpretive] mod-multiple-attestation-limits

Multiple attestation increases historical confidence when sources are independent; Synoptic dependence and shared traditions limit independence assumptions.

[well_attested] mod-mythicism-fringe

Full mythicism (Jesus of Nazareth as entirely non-historical) remains a fringe position in mainstream historical scholarship of Second Temple Judaism and early Christianity.

[verified] mod-na28-ubs5

Nestle-Aland 28 and UBS5 are the standard working critical Greek NT editions for most academic exegesis; their apparatus documents selected variants, not every known reading.

[well_attested] mod-open-access-trend

Open digital libraries (INTF NT.VMR, IAA DSS, British Library codices) have lowered barriers to primary manuscript inspection since the 2010s.

[interpretive] mod-open-data-ethics

Modern digital manuscript projects raise access, conservation, provenance, and citation-ethics issues distinct from the content of any single reading.

[well_attested] mod-population-genetics

Population genetics of the Levant documents deep regional continuity with admixture layers; it does not identify individuals named in ancient texts.

[verified] mod-print-gutenberg

Print culture from Gutenberg onward multiplied biblical text access and stabilized vernacular canons — a reception-historical fact separate from first-century origins.

[interpretive] mod-quest-historiography

Historiography of the “quests” for the historical Jesus is itself a modern scholarly narrative with periodization that can oversimplify continuous research traditions.

[well_attested] mod-radiocarbon-dss

Radiocarbon dating of selected Dead Sea Scrolls supports late Second Temple copy ranges broadly consistent with paleography.

[interpretive] mod-social-memory

Social memory approaches treat Gospel traditions as communal remembering under social constraints rather than pure invention or pure stenography.

[verified] mod-textus-receptus

The Textus Receptus tradition (Erasmus onward) underlies early modern vernacular Bibles but is not the base text of modern critical editions (NA/UBS).

[interpretive] mod-third-quest

The “Third Quest” emphasizes Jesus’ Jewish context (Sanders, Vermes, Meier, Wright, Crossan, et al.) against earlier de-Judaizing portraits.

[interpretive] mod-third-quest-jewishness

Third Quest scholarship insists Jesus must be understood within Second Temple Judaism rather than against it — a methodological consensus across many schools.

[speculative] mod-turin-shroud

The Shroud of Turin is a medieval relic by mainstream radiocarbon dating (1988); authenticity as first-century burial cloth remains speculative/unverified for historical Jesus studies.

[verified] mod-war-70

The Jewish-Roman War culminating in the 70 CE destruction of the Temple is a primary historical horizon for dating and interpreting the Synoptic Gospels.

[well_attested] nc-celsus

Celsus (2nd c.), preserved mainly via Origen’s Contra Celsum, is an early pagan critic who treats Jesus as a historical magician/charlatan figure rather than a mythic non-entity.

[circumstantial] nc-celsus-virgin

Celsus (via Origen) preserves a hostile Jewish/pagan counter-narrative about Jesus’ birth involving panthera traditions — reception of controversy, not primary birth documentation.

[circumstantial] nc-epictetus-christians

Epictetus (via Arrian) may allude to Christians as fearless under threat — thin and debated philosophical notice of a social type.

[well_attested] nc-galen-christians

Galen (2nd c.) makes brief remarks on Christians as a philosophical school/sect — hostile/neutral medical-philosopher notice of a known group.

[well_attested] nc-james

Josephus, Antiquities 20.200 refers to “the brother of Jesus who is called Christ, James” in the account of Ananus’s execution of James — generally judged authentic.

[well_attested] nc-lucian

Lucian of Samosata (2nd c.) satirizes Christians and refers to their crucified sophist in Passing of Peregrinus — evidence of known Christian devotion, not independent biography.

[well_attested] nc-lucian-alexander

Lucian’s Alexander the False Prophet satirizes cult founders and miracle claims in the second century — comparative evidence for how elites mocked religious innovators.

[well_attested] nc-lucian-peregrinus

Lucian of Samosata (2nd c.) satirizes Christians in The Passing of Peregrinus, treating Christ as a crucified “sophist” founder of a cult.

[circumstantial] nc-mara

The Syriac letter of Mara bar Serapion mentions a “wise king” executed by the Jews; identification with Jesus is possible but not certain.

[circumstantial] nc-mara-bar-serapion

The Mara bar Serapion letter (Syriac; date debated, often 1st–3rd c.) may allude to a “wise king” of the Jews executed by his people — identification with Jesus is uncertain.

[circumstantial] nc-marcus-aurelius-christians

Marcus Aurelius (Meditations) and second-century elite literature occasionally notice Christians as a social type; such notices are thin and polemical.

[well_attested] nc-martial-juvenes

No contemporary Roman historian from Jesus’ lifetime mentions him; the earliest non-Christian literary controls (Josephus, Tacitus, Pliny) are decades later.

[verified] nc-pliny

Pliny the Younger, Epistles 10.96–97, describes early second-century Christian worship practices in Bithynia-Pontus and imperial policy under Trajan.

[verified] nc-pliny-christians

Pliny the Younger’s letter to Trajan (Ep. 10.96) describes early 2nd-century Bithynian Christians worshipping Christ “as a god” and legal policy toward them.

[circumstantial] nc-suetonius

Suetonius, Claudius 25.4, refers to disturbances in Rome impulsore Chresto — often discussed as a possible garbled reference to Christ-related conflict, but identification is uncertain.

[circumstantial] nc-suetonius-chrestus

Suetonius (Claudius 25) mentions disturbances in Rome under Claudius involving “Chrestus” — identification with Christ/Christians is possible but contested.

[well_attested] nc-suetonius-nero

Suetonius (Nero 16) mentions punishments of Christians under Nero as adherents of a new and mischievous superstition.

[well_attested] nc-tacitus

Tacitus, Annals 15.44 reports that “Christus” was executed under Tiberius by the procurator Pontius Pilate and that the movement originated in Judea.

[well_attested] nc-tacitus-context

Tacitus Annals 15.44 places Christus’s execution under Tiberius by procurator Pontius Pilate within a Nero-era persecution narrative.

[well_attested] nc-tacitus-latin

Tacitus Annals 15.44 (Latin) states that Christus suffered the extreme penalty under Tiberius by sentence of procurator Pontius Pilate, and that the superstitio arose in Judea.

[circumstantial] nc-talmud

Certain Babylonian Talmud passages are sometimes read as hostile allusions to Jesus; dating, redaction, and identification are highly contested and often late.

[circumstantial] nc-talmud-baraita-caution

Isolated Talmudic baraitot sometimes linked to Jesus are late, polemical, and methodologically unsafe as first-century biography without extreme caution.

[circumstantial] nc-talmud-dating

Rabbinic passages sometimes linked to Jesus (e.g., b. Sanhedrin traditions) are late, layered, and methodologically hazardous as first-century biography.

[contested] nc-tf

Josephus, Antiquities 18.63–64 (Testimonium Flavianum) is widely judged partly authentic with Christian interpolations; fully authentic and fully forged positions are minorities.

[contested] nc-tf-reconstructions

Major scholarly reconstructions of the Testimonium Flavianum range from a short neutral core to more expansive partial authenticity; wholesale authenticity and wholesale forgery are minority poles.

[circumstantial] nc-thallus-phlegon

Later Christian authors cite Thallus and Phlegon regarding a darkness or eclipse around the time of the crucifixion; the original works are lost and the citations are mediated.

[verified] nc-traject-pliny-trajan

Trajan’s rescript to Pliny (Ep. 10.97) sets a legal policy: do not hunt Christians, punish only if proven and obstinate — Roman administrative evidence for early 2nd-c. policy.

[contested] nt-byzantine-priority

Byzantine-priority / majority-text theories remain minority positions in mainstream critical editions, which generally prefer early diverse witnesses over later numerical majority alone.

[verified] nt-codex-alexandrinus

Codex Alexandrinus (A 02, 5th c.) is a major early nearly complete Greek Bible witness held by the British Library.

[well_attested] nt-comma-johanneum

The Comma Johanneum (1 John 5:7–8 Trinitarian expansion in some later Latin/Textus Receptus traditions) is absent from the earliest Greek manuscript tradition and is treated as secondary in modern critical editions.

[well_attested] nt-continuous-text-vs-lectionary

Continuous-text manuscripts and lectionaries serve different liturgical and scholarly roles; critical editions weight continuous early witnesses more heavily for initial text.

[verified] nt-correctors-hands

Corrector hands in major codices (!5 B A) document layered revision of manuscripts and CBGM analyses.

[verified] nt-ecm-method

The Editio Critica Maior (ECM) and the Coherence-Based Genealogical Method (CBGM) model manuscript relationships as a guided stemmatic network rather than a simple bipartite Alexandrian/Byzantine tree.

[well_attested] nt-ending-mark

The longer ending of Mark (16:9–20) is absent from the earliest major Greek witness editions as secondary, while shorter alternative endings also exist.

[well_attested] nt-eusebius-ch

Eusebius’s Church History is an indispensable but tendentious fourth-century source for earlier Christian literature and martyrdoms; source-critical caution is mandatory.

[well_attested] nt-family-1-13

Medieval Greek manuscript families (e.g., Family 1, Family 13) show structured textual relationships useful for genealogical criticism beyond simple “majority count.”

[contested] nt-gospel-dates

Critical consensus commonly dates Mark c. 65–75 CE, Matthew and Luke c. 80–90 CE, John c. 90–100 CE — with debate bands around each.

[well_attested] nt-harmonie-readings

Harmonization among Synoptic parallels is a recognized scribal tendency that can produce secondary agreements in later manuscripts.

[verified] nt-homoeoteleuton

Many NT variants arise from ordinary scribal mechanics (homoeoteleuton, dittography, orthography), not theological conspiracy.

[interpretive] nt-initial-text-vs-autograph

Modern critical editions target an initial text (Ausgangstext) that may not be identical to a single authorial autograph in every book.

[verified] nt-itacism

Itacism and vowel interchange are common Greek scribal phenomena that generate many orthographic variants without semantic change.

[contested] nt-john-historicity

John’s Gospel is generally dated later than the Synoptics; its independent historical value for Jesus research is debated (high Christology vs. early tradition cores).

[well_attested] nt-lectionaries

Greek lectionary manuscripts form a large late witness class used in ECM/CBGM and traditional criticism for reception history more than for earliest text alone.

[well_attested] nt-lectionary-evidence

Lectionary manuscripts preserve liturgical text forms that can retain early readings in some units while generally reflecting later Byzantine dominance.

[verified] nt-majuscles

Fourth–fifth century majuscles (15 01 Sinaiticus, A 02 Alexandrinus, B 03 Vaticanus) are foundational for the critical text.

[verified] nt-mark-ending

The longer ending of Mark (16:9–20) is absent from the earliest major witnesses (15 NA28/UBS apparatuses).

[verified] nt-ms-count

Greek New Testament continuous-text manuscripts number on the order of several thousand, with additional lectionaries and versions.

[verified] nt-nomina-sacra

Nomina sacra abbreviations for divine names and titles are a distinctive early Christian scribal practice visible across Greek NT manuscripts.

[well_attested] nt-origen-hexapla

Origen’s Hexapla (3rd c.) arranged Hebrew and Greek columns for comparative Old Testament textual work — a landmark of ancient textual criticism.

[contested] nt-orthodox-corruption

Bart Ehrman’s “orthodox corruption” thesis argues some early scribes altered texts in christologically charged passages; magnitude and intent remain debated.

[verified] nt-p45-p46-p47

Chester Beatty papyri (P45, P46, P47) are major third-century witnesses to Gospels/Acts, Paul, and Revelation respectively.

[verified] nt-p46-paul

Papyrus P46 is among the earliest substantial collections of Pauline letters (typically dated late 2nd / early 3rd century CE).

[well_attested] nt-p52

Papyrus P52 (Rylands Greek P 457) is among the earliest surviving NT fragments (John 18), paleographically dated roughly to the second century CE.

[verified] nt-p66-p75

Bodmer papyri P66 (John) and P75 (Luke/John) are major early substantial witnesses typically dated to the late 2nd / early 3rd century and foundational for early Alexandrian text studies.

[well_attested] nt-patristic-citations

Patristic citations are secondary witnesses that can preserve early readings but require careful evaluation of quoting habits and later manuscript tradition of the fathers.

[well_attested] nt-paul-dates

Undisputed Pauline letters are typically dated c. 49–58 CE and are the earliest surviving Christian literary corpus.

[well_attested] nt-pericope-adulterae

The pericope adulterae (John 7:53–8:11) is widely judged a later insertion on strong external manuscript grounds, though the story circulated early in the Latin and some Greek traditions.

[verified] nt-scribal-habits

Codicology and singular-reading studies document mechanical scribal habits (leaps, dittography, harmonization) that explain many variants without theological motive.

[verified] nt-singular-readings

Singular readings (unique to one MS) are used in scribal-habits studies to profile individual copyists without treating them as initial text.

[contested] nt-synoptic-problem

The Synoptic Problem (literary relationship of Matthew, Mark, Luke) remains an active field; Markan priority is majority, Q hypothesis is majority but contested by Farrer and other models.

[verified] nt-textual-criticism

Greek New Testament continuous-text manuscripts number on the order of several thousand, with additional lectionaries and versions.

[verified] nt-variants

Hundreds of thousands of variant readings exist across the tradition; the vast majority are orthographic or trivial, while a minority affect meaning.

[well_attested] nt-versional-evidence

Early versions (Old Latin, Syriac, Coptic) are independent textual witnesses that can preserve early readings not always visible in later Greek majority streams.

[well_attested] nt-western-text

The so-called Western text (e.g., Codex Bezae in Acts) often presents freer, paraphrastic readings that complicate simple Alexandrian/Byzantine dichotomies.

[verified] st-alexander-jannaeus

Alexander Jannaeus (Hasmonean king-priest) is documented in Josephus and coins; his reign illustrates internal Judean conflict before Roman dominance.

[well_attested] st-antonia-fortress

The Antonia Fortress adjacent to the Temple Mount is described by Josephus as a key Roman military foothold in Jerusalem.

[verified] st-coinage-revolt

Jewish revolt coinage (First Revolt 66–70 CE; Bar Kokhba 132–135 CE) provides dated material propaganda and economic evidence independent of Christian texts.

[verified] st-community-rule

Qumran sectarian texts (e.g., Community Rule 1QS, War Scroll 1QM, Pesharim) document a Jewish movement with distinctive purity, calendar, and eschatology in the late Second Temple period.

[verified] st-dss

Dead Sea Scrolls (discovered 1946–1956) preserve Hebrew Bible books and sectarian texts from roughly the third century BCE to first century CE.

[well_attested] st-dss-books

Among biblical DSS copies, Psalms, Deuteronomy, Isaiah, Exodus, and Genesis are among the most frequently attested books; Esther is not securely attested at Qumran.

[verified] st-elephantine

Elephantine papyri document a Jewish military colony in Egypt (5th c. BCE) with a local temple of YHW and correspondence with Jerusalem/Samaria authorities.

[verified] st-hasmonean-period

The Hasmonean period (2nd–1st c. BCE) established Jewish political autonomy later dismantled under Roman client and provincial rule — essential pre-history for first-century Judea.

[verified] st-herod-antipas

Herod Antipas ruled Galilee and Perea as tetrarch (4 BCE–39 CE); Josephus and coins document his rule and cities (Tiberias; Sepphoris reconstruction).

[contested] st-herod-great-death

Herod the Great's death is commonly dated 4 BCE (with minority 1 BCE arguments), framing the terminus for Matthew's birth narrative chronology.

[verified] st-herod-temple

Herod's expansion of the Jerusalem Temple Mount is archaeologically and literarily documented (Josephus; Western Wall / Temple Mount retaining architecture).

[well_attested] st-isaiah-stability

Comparison of 1QIsaC (c. 2nd–1st century BCE) with the medieval Masoretic Text shows mostly orthographic and minor variants.

[verified] st-josephus-corpus

Flavius Josephus (late first century CE) is a principal non-Christian Jewish historian for Herodian and early Roman Judea.

[verified] st-lxx-textual

The Septuagint often preserves readings that differ from the medieval Masoretic Text; some align with Qumran Hebrew witnesses.

[verified] st-mikvaot

Stepped ritual baths (mikva'ot) are archaeologically widespread in late Second Temple Judea and Galilee, evidencing purity practice infrastructure.

[well_attested] st-mishnah-context

The Mishnah (c. 200 CE redaction) and related Tannaitic literature preserve legal memory of Second Temple practice but are post-70 literary products requiring critical use for pre-70 reconstruction.

[well_attested] st-parties

Josephus and later rabbinic memory describe Pharisees, Sadducees, and Essenes as major Jewish schools; exact social demographics remain reconstructed.

[well_attested] st-pharisee-popularity

Josephus claims Pharisees had popular influence; critical historians treat this as tendentious but still evidence of a major school's social role.

[well_attested] st-pharisees-josephus

Josephus's descriptions of Pharisees, Sadducees, and Essenes are primary but tendentious; social realities were more complex than three-school schemes.

[verified] st-philo

Philo of Alexandria provides contemporary diaspora Jewish philosophical and exegetical context for the early first century CE.

[verified] st-pompey-63

Pompey's intervention in Judea (63 BCE) brought Hasmonean civil conflict under Roman arbitration and began lasting Roman overlordship.

[verified] st-prefecture

Roman Judea after 6 CE was administered by equestrian prefects (later procurators) based primarily at Caesarea, with troops and judicial powers including capital cases in practice.

[contested] st-roman-census-practices

Roman provincial censuses and tax registrations are documented empire-wide; Luke's census of Quirinius is a specific chronological crux relative to Herod's death.

[verified] st-roman-client-kings

Rome governed Judea via client kings (Herod, Archelaus) and later equestrian prefects — dual administrative models shape Gospel political settings.

[well_attested] st-salome-alexandra

Salome Alexandra's reign (Hasmonean queen) is documented in Josephus as a period of Pharisaic influence before dynastic collapse into Roman arbitration.

[verified] st-samaria-papyri

The Wadi Daliyeh (Samaria) papyri document mid-4th-century BCE legal/administrative life under late Persian / early Hellenistic rule in Samaria.

[contested] st-synagogue-origins

The institutional origins and pre-70 function of "synagogues" remain debated; archaeological assembly buildings and literary references do not form a single simple type.

[well_attested] st-temple-economy

The Jerusalem Temple system involved tithes, offerings, and currency exchange for worshippers — a documented economic-religious complex in Josephus and later rabbinic memory.

[well_attested] st-temple-tax

The half-shekel Temple tax and related fiscal practices are documented in Josephus, Matthew 17 tradition, and later rabbinic memory.

[well_attested] st-war-scroll

The War Scroll (1QM) and related DSS texts depict eschatological battle ideology within a Second Temple Jewish sectarian milieu.