



The Foundation on Judaism and Christian Origins

The Foundation is a non-profit organization, formed April 29, 1983, and exempt under IRC Sec. 501(c)(3). Its officers contribute to the Foundation and receive no remuneration.

The purpose of the Foundation is to explore the life and thought of Jews and “Christians” in antiquity and to clarify the origins of Christianity. Among its accomplishments, celebrated internationally, are the scholarly demonstrations that Jesus was a faithful Jew, that Christianity originated as a small but identifiable group of Jews within First-century Judaism, that the Gospels of Matthew and John are Jewish compositions (which is in marked contrast to the claims of German scholars who were widely influential during the first half of the 20th century), and that the canon of Jewish scripture was not closed during Jesus’ time. The Foundation has tended to focus on two areas: **1) publishing and studying the Dead Sea Scrolls and other Jewish “sacred” documents celebrated as Scripture by Jesus’ contemporaries, and 2) incorporating within biblical research the archaeological discoveries and insights obtained by scientific excavations in the Holy Land.**



Accomplishments

The Foundation helps support the production and publication of the critical editions of the Dead Sea Scrolls that are not copies of the Hebrew Bible. It joined with others, notably the Edith C. Blum Foundation and Princeton Theological Seminary, to support the following critical editions of the Dead Sea Scrolls:

The Rule of the Community (1994)

The Damascus Document and the War Scroll (1995)

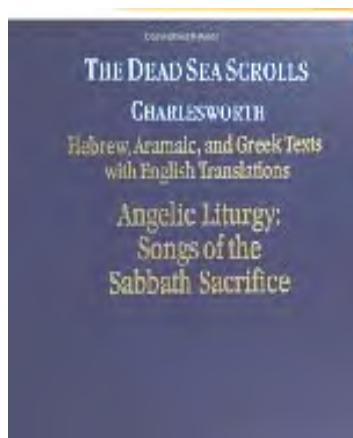
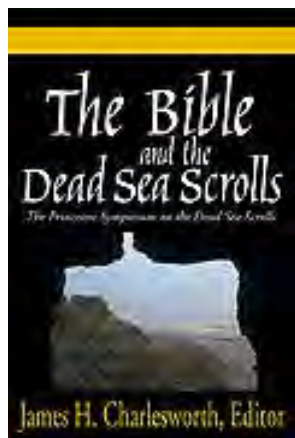
The Pseudepigraphic and Non-Masoretic Psalms and Prayers (1997)

The Angelic Liturgy: Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifices (1999)

Pesharim, Other Commentaries (2002)

Damascus Document Fragments, Some Works of the Torah, and Related Documents (2006)

The Temple Scroll and its Witnesses (2009)



The Bible and the Dead Sea Scrolls (shown above) is a notable collaborative publication supported by the **Foundation on Judaism and Christian Origins**. On behalf of the Foundation and with its support Dr. Charlesworth edited this three-volume work. Virtually all the leading scholars of the category the Bible and the Dead Sea Scrolls contributed to these volumes. They contain definitive studies on topics such as: How the Dead Sea Scrolls help us improve our biblical texts; how the Dead sea Scrolls reveal a community of Jews dedicated to the study of Scriptures (some of whom were expecting the Messiah); and, explorations on how the Scrolls help us comprehend John the Baptizer, Jesus, Paul, John, and the Revelation.

The Foundation has assisted in the preparation and publication of many books (some considered invaluable reference works), including the following examples:

The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha, 2 vols. (1983, 1985)

The New Testament Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha: A Guide to Publications, with Excurses on Apocalypses (1987)

Jesus' Jewishness: Exploring the Place of Jesus within Early Judaism (1991)

Jesus and the Dead Sea Scrolls (1992)

The Messiah: Developments in Earliest Judaism and Christianity (1992)

What Has Archeology to Do with Faith? (1992)

The Pseudepigrapha and Early Biblical Interpretation (1993)

The Old and New Testaments: Their Relationship and the "Intertestamental" Literature (1993)

Images of Jesus Today (1994)

Qumran Questions (1995)

Earthing Christologies: From Jesus' Parables to Jesus the Parable (1995)

Hillel and Jesus: Comparisons of Two Major Religious Leaders (1997)

Critical Reflections on the Odes of Solomon (1998)

Caves of Enlightenment (1998)

The Dead Sea Scrolls and Christian Faith (1998)

Qumran-Messianism: Studies on the Messianic Expectations in the Dead Sea Scrolls (1998)

The Millennium Guide for Pilgrims to the Holy Land (2000)

Jesus Two Thousand Years Later (2000)

The Pesharim and Qumran History (2002)

Light in a Spotless Mirror: Reflections on Wisdom Traditions in Judaism and Early Christianity (2003)

Resurrection: The Origin and Future of a Biblical Doctrine (2006)

The Bible and the Dead Sea Scrolls, 3 vols. (2006)

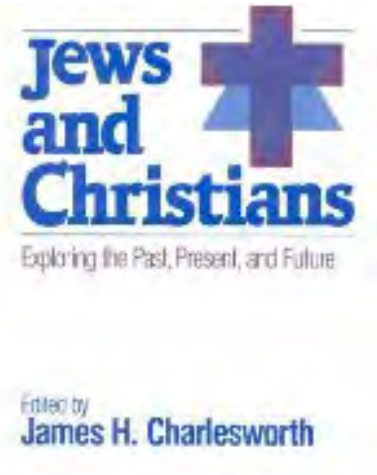
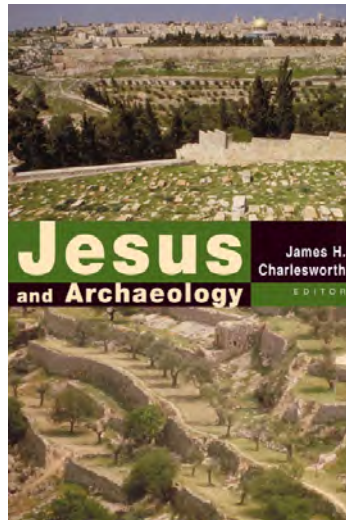
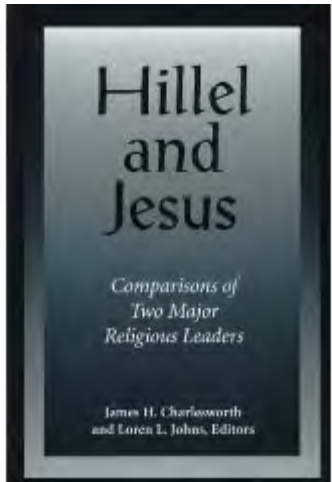
Jesus and Archaeology (2006)

The Historical Jesus: An Essential Guide (2007)

The Pseudepigrapha and Christian Origins (2008)

The Earliest Christian Hymnbook: The Odes of Solomon (2009)

The Good and Evil Serpent (2009)



Enduring Projects

The Foundation covers the costs of numerous series, including the T & T Clark volumes in the series “Jewish and Christian Texts in Contexts and Related Studies,” the Faith and Scholarship Colloquies, and the proceedings of the Princeton-Prague Symposia on the Historical Jesus. For 30 years, the Foundation has been the lone sponsor of the *Syrus Sinaiticus Project* which focuses on the oldest and best copy of the New Testament in a language similar to Jesus’ own speech. He spoke Aramaic; the early manuscript of the New Testament Gospels in St. Katherine’s Monastery is in Old Syriac (a language which developed from Aramaic).

Recent Projects

The Foundation is helping Dr. Mordechai Aviam with his Institute for Galilean Archaeology. The Foundation and Institute opened up the excavations at Khirbet Beza, a ruin near the site of biblical Cabul and southwest of Acco where the Roman armies landed in 66 and 67 to quell the Great Revolt (66-70, 74). Foundation President Dr. James H. Charlesworth and Aviam discovered the remains of a Jewish village and numerous massive olive presses. They found on the surface parts of a stone vessel and a stone lamp. Both items, made from stone in accordance with Jewish purity laws, reveal the purity regulations that antedate 70 CE. It is possible that the Institute and Foundation may find the first Galilean synagogue from Jesus’ time in this most western section of Jewish Galilee.



Dr. Aviam and Professor Charlesworth examine newly excavated Khirbet Beza

Khirbet Beza seems to have disappeared in the mid-first-century CE. Was it destroyed at the beginnings of the disastrous Great Revolt? Recall that the Evangelists remembered that Jesus warned against revolt [“he who lives by the sword dies by the sword”]. The village reappeared in the second century CE, but again disappeared, rather abruptly, in the third century CE. Why? This and other questions require our ongoing attention.

The Foundation has contributed to the excavations at Migdal which is on the western shores of the Sea of Galilee. The archaeologists may have located the house of Mary Magdalene. They also uncovered the harbor. It is plastered, as is the one at Caesarea Maritima. They have unearthed pieces of glass that prove the inhabitants enjoyed wealthy items from the West, challenging the current assumption that Galilee was occupied primarily by peasants in the first century CE. Now, it is clear that Migdal was a cosmopolitan city. Its size can only be imagined, perhaps it held about 5,000 people in the time of Hillel and Jesus. In contrast to Migdal, Capernaum (“Jesus home”) was a small Jewish fishing village of maybe 1,000 inhabitants. ¹

One may wonder: Where did Jesus meet Mary Magdalene? Was it here in Migdal? Was it near her house and along the *Via Mare* that now is most likely exposed on the western edge of Migdal? Why did Mary Magdalene follow Jesus?

¹ The Israel Antiquities Authority in 2009 announced the identification of the remains a 1st century synagogue at Migdal. a truly important discovery!

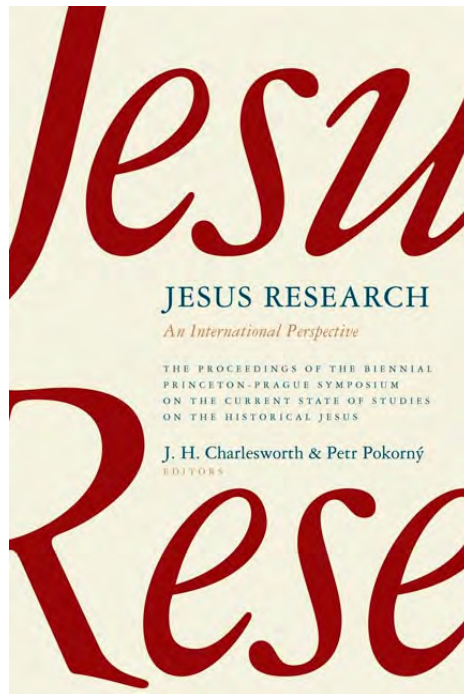


Remains of tower at Migdal
Courtesy James H. Charlesworth

The Foundation is now seeking funds to 1) continue to the *Dead Sea Scrolls Project* and 2) prepare the second edition of the *Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*. The Foundation in the past has, in modest ways, helped Princeton Theological Seminary to produce the first critical edition of the *Temple Scroll*. This volume and other published volumes of the PTS Dead Sea Scrolls Project presents the Hebrew text that is accompanied by a critical apparatus of Hebrew variant readings and other witnesses to the text in Greek and Syriac scripts, an English translation, and notes, all preceded by an introduction. In 2010, the Foundation on Judaism and Christian Origins will accept responsibility for funding the remaining volumes of the Dead Sea Scrolls Project, continuing this essential project started by Dr. Charlesworth and Princeton Theological Seminary.

The corpus of the *Old Testament Pseudepigrapha* presents introductions and translations for more than 60 documents once considered on the fringes of the Jewish canon. Professor Charlesworth published the first edition of the Old Testament Pseudepigrapha in two volumes [1983 and 1985], superseding a similar work published around 1900. Now, Yale University Press is eager to publish a second edition, because over the past 25 years scholars have significantly advanced the study of these documents. Although these documents are “biblical” texts known to Jesus and other Jews of his time, and though they were sacred to early Christians, none of them were finally included in the Bible of the West. Some of these ancient writings were recovered over the past two centuries, thanks to research in libraries, monasteries, and monumental archaeological discoveries [especially the Dead Sea Scrolls]. These sacred writings that did not become part of the canon are essential to informing educators and scholars of the complex origins of Jewish religious thought during the period of Christian Origins.

The Foundation regularly sponsors symposia, especially the biennial Princeton-Prague Symposia on the Historical Jesus. The first two volumes of these symposia will appear this year (2009 – one volume has now been released). These symposia have won the support of leading experts on Jesus and pre-70 Judaism, including Jews (Aviam, Mendels, Segal) and Christians (Charlesworth, Moody Smith, Theissen, Bauckham).



Eerdmans – 2009

The Foundation helped cover costs of a symposium in Jerusalem during January 2008. The focus was on early Jewish tombs in and near Jerusalem. Over 30 scholars shared with other experts various ways to better comprehend what can be known about Israelite and Jewish concepts of the afterlife, Jewish burial customs near Jerusalem, and the historical facts related to a tomb some allege to belong to Jesus. In contrast to most symposia, this one featured all relevant scientific disciplines, including archeology, ossuary analysis, paleography, epigraphy, architecture, DNA analysis, archeological forensics, geology, topography, pottery analysis, art history, symbology, sociology, anthropology, patristics, Mariology, theology, and statistical applications to ancient evidence. The discussions were featured in the *Jerusalem Post*, *Newsweek*, and elsewhere. The proceedings are being edited now for publication by Eerdmans.

Preaching the Historical Jesus (to be published by Abingdon). Many Christian leaders are convinced that too often preaching has devolved into entertaining or moralizing and are concerned with the continuing tendency to elevate Christianity by denigrating Judaism. The Foundation will support studies that indicate preaching should proclaim the “good news from God.” The good news is about Jesus the Christ and the “good” originated in his words of wisdom and his life of sacrificial service which took on powerful meaning as the proclamation of Jesus’ death-and-resurrection (the *kerygma*) became the key message of the Church. Jesus taught those who experienced first-century Jewish life just as he did. To understand and to preach Jesus’

message demands comprehending the richly symbolic world of Second Temple Judaism. Archaeology can help religious leaders imagine that creative, deeply spiritual, and symbolic world. For example, a lamp mentioned by Jesus is not a modern lamp that produces light for hours; a first-century lamp is small and will lose its oil within one hour. According to Matthew 25, Jesus warns us to take not only a lamp but also a lamp-filler [not a flask as in some translations] to prepare for delays in the fulfillment of our hopes, otherwise our light will go out.

The Good and Evil Serpent. Yale University Press will make this massive work available in December. The Foundation joined with other foundations (esp. the Princeton Theological Seminary's research council) to help



finance seven years of research, exploration, and study. The research was devoted to one main question: “What did the serpent symbolize in antiquity and especially in Jesus’ world?” Quite surprisingly, it became clear that the serpent symbolized not only 18 negative concepts, but almost 30 positive concepts. Virtually all biblical scholars have missed the complexity and symbolic depth of this most complex symbol, and 900 pages of research explore the universal symbolism of the serpent.