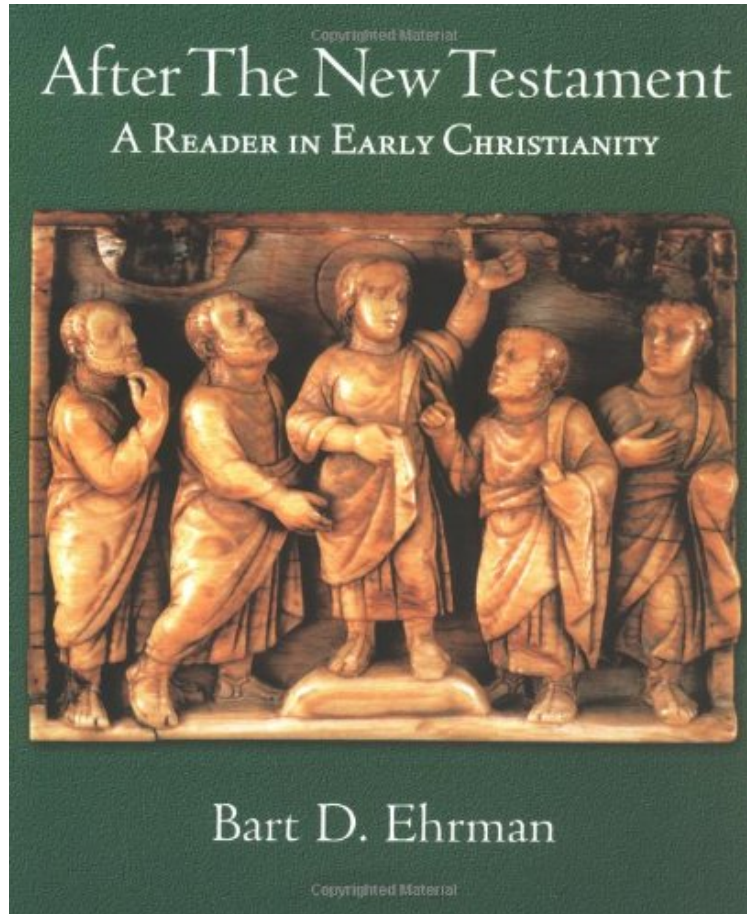


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From Oxford University Press : **After the New Testament: A Reader in Early Christianity (Justice)** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised **After the New Testament: A Reader in Early Christianity (Justice)**:

28 of 28 people found the following review helpful. A nice serviceable volume of worthwhile texts
By Charles S. Houser
Professor Ehrmann has assembled a nice collection of Christian (orthodox and heterodox) writings from the period immediately following the New Testament and before the Council of Nicea. Although these are not brand new translations and all are readily available in other collections, the easy-to-read double column textbook format, the thematic way the texts are categorized, and the brief, helpful introductions make this anthology well worth its price. This volume and Ehrmann's other anthology **THE NEW TESTAMENT AND OTHER EARLY CHRISTIAN WRITINGS** are essential companions to his **THE NEW TESTAMENT: A HISTORICAL INTRODUCTION TO THE EARLY CHRISTIAN WRITINGS**. On the frustrating side, there is much overlap between Ehrmann's two anthologies-- in fact, I ended up buying them both because it was too much trouble to compare the tables of contents to see which volume included more non-New Testament works. Also somewhat disappointing was the fact that there are no

bibliographic references to the supplied texts (each chapter introduction concludes with a short list of general topic books "For Further Reading"). I would, at least, like to know if there are other respected translations or commentaries in print on any of these texts. Another oddity: The Didache is split into three parts and presented out of sequence (with the document's brief chapter 6 being omitted altogether). This is not inappropriate, considering that Ehrmann has arranged his texts topically so readers can read significant key documents in relation to one another (such as, The Structure of Early Christianity [Did ch 11-15]; The Development of the Liturgy [Did 7-10]; Leading the Upright Life [Did 1-5]). This is a nice, handy collection of key texts that I'm sure I'll return to over and over, especially as I read other books about the beginnings of the early Church. 98 of 100 people found the following review helpful. First Steps in Christian Beginnings By E. T. Veal Though the Church in the Second and Third Centuries is a "Dark Age" in the minds of most Christians, the darkness is not due to lack of data. The 19th Century series "The Ante-Nicene Fathers" runs to 5,000-some large pages in small type - and it was not complete even in its own day. Subsequent discoveries, most notably the Nag Hammadi library of Gnostic-Christian literature, have added much to our knowledge or, oftentimes, to our perplexity. Professor Ehrman's selection of readings gives an overview of this vast forest. He has selected 76 works, mostly self-contained excerpts, though a few are complete. In addition to familiar items that cannot be omitted from such a collection (e. g., the Epistle to Diognetos, large parts of the Epistles of St. Ignatios, and selections from Justin Martyr, Tertullian and Origen), we are given much that later generations found heretical, dubious or silly: apocryphal Scriptures, esoteric Gnostic speculation and writings by Christians who refused to recognize any separation between their faith and Judaism. The texts are arranged thematically (e. g., "The Attack on Christianity: Persecution and Martyrdom in the Early Church", "Anti-Judaic Polemic", "The Development of the Liturgy") in such a way that neighboring pieces illuminate one another. The translations have all appeared in print before, and the editor deserves credit for choosing clear, readable versions. His introductions, while well-suited to the intended audience, are open to criticism. On the positive side, they are judicious and nonpartisan, avoiding (except on the topic of the ministry of women in the early Church, where no mainstream modernist can afford to be completely candid) speculation beyond the evidence. On the negative, they are so judicious that the untutored reader is left unaware of controversies that have a major impact on the meaning of the texts. To take a significant instance, Prof. Ehrman blandly states that "most scholars" date the manual of Church discipline known as the "Didache" to c. 100 A.D. True enough, but some date it much earlier and some much later, and its value as evidence depends crucially on the time and place from which it came. All in all, for anyone who would like to know more about pre-Nicene Church history, this volume is, if not the last word, a useful and interesting preface. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Four Stars By rudy It helps figure out how back in history Christian beliefs extend.

The remarkable diversity of Christianity during the formative years before the Council of Nicea has become a plain, even natural, "fact" for most ancient historians. Until now, however, there has been no sourcebook of primary texts that reveals the many varieties of Christian beliefs, practices, ethics, experiences, confrontations, and self-understandings. To help readers recognize and experience the rich diversity of the early Christian movement, After the New Testament provides a wide range of texts from the second and third centuries, both "orthodox" and "heterodox," including such works as the Apostolic Fathers, the writings of Nag Hammadi, early pseudepigrapha, martyrologies, anti-Jewish tractates, heresiologies, canon lists, church orders, liturgical texts, and theological treatises. Rather than providing only fragments of texts, this collection prints large excerpts--entire documents wherever possible--organized under social and historical rubrics. This unique reader's concise and informative introductions and clear and up-to-date English translations make it ideal for courses on the New Testament, Christian Origins, Early Church History, or Late Antiquity. It will also be of interest to anyone--student, scholar, and general reader alike--interested in the entire range of early Christian literature from the period after the New Testament up to the writings of the so-called father of church history, Eusebius.

"[Ehrman's] collection presents a broad range of primary texts from the early years of Christianity, with as full a set of texts as possible within the restrictions of providing these works in a single volume. The texts deal with a range of significant issues within early Christianity, such as evangelism, persecution and martyrdom, apologetics, heresies, apocrypha/pseudepigrapha, church offices, liturgics and ethics, arranged according to the topics themselves rather than according to the categories of systematic theology.... Ehrman has sought to include large selections: complete texts when possible, and lengthy excerpts when not.... In spite of having most of these texts in various editions I found myself excitedly looking through the selections for the intelligent topical arrangement, and looking forward to using this as a required textbook...." [this review takes up 2 fields; see below for conclusion] Each chapter begins with a sketch of the important historical aspects of the topic, and each individual text is introduced with brief comments concerning its historical context and significance. The topical introduction of each chapter is not a brief and passing mention, but rather an in-depth essay to the stated topic, with a brief bibliography before the primary text on good current titles for further reading. This reader is a welcome and needed addition to the increasing titles available on early Christianity, especially since it is not an anthology of secondary scholarly opinion on the history of early

Christianity, but provides the opportunity for students to become immersed in the primary sources themselves."--John Voelker, Marquette University, in the Journal of Early Christian Studies"An outstanding collection of relevant primary sources for courses on the history of early Christianity. Students found the texts exciting, readable (because of the modern translation), and informative. They also appreciated the helpful introductions to each section."--William Tabbernee, Phillips Theological Seminary"Finally! Just what I have been looking for: a judiciously selected anthology with appropriate-length early texts."--Stephen Healey, University of Bridgeport"A wonderful text. It is a comprehensive and provocative collection of early Christian writings sufficient to induce even the most sleepy-headed reader to ask questions. Those who teach Christian history should welcome this anthology."--Lawrence Snyder, Western Kentucky University"An excellent Ante-Nicean primary source reader. The thematic approach is well thought out. A very useful text for a class on Christian origins."--Gaston Espinosa, Westmont College"Ehrman's shrewd chapter topics, along with his brief (but pithy) introductions enable good use of these 2nd and 3rd century texts which together well represent the breadth and variety of Christian beginnings. We now have a fresh and student-friendly set of resources for examination of early Christian literature 'after the New Testament.'"--Bob Gregg, Stanford University"This is a splendid anthology that should replace several others that have been in use during the past decades. It should be of tremendous benefit to teachers and students of the New Testament and Early Christianity."--Elizabeth A. Clark, Duke University"This volume will be invaluable to teachers of early Christian history who have lacked such a broad-ranging collection of key texts. It is likely to be sufficient in itself for a college or seminary introduction to early church history. Ehrman's selection of texts and of passages to excerpt is judicious, covering a wonderfully vast territory of topics with depth sufficient both to map central issues and to allow students to explore more obscure regions."--Derek Krueger, The University of North Carolina, Greensboro"This is a tremendous anthology of early church writings--will be of better value to my church history class than previous anthologies."--Merrill Hawking, Carson Newman College

About the Author
Bart D. Ehrman is at University of North Carolina.