In this present part of this volume, due attention is given to the contributions made by archaeology and geography and to the results of researches in the political and social sciences with regard to the world of Jesus.

The present essay will devote itself principally to the thought world of the first century of our era, in so far as this can be known from the sources that can be legitimately used for such a study. Needless to say, while concentrating principally on Jesus, by the nature of the case what will be said holds for the entire first century of our era, if not for longer. This will include the early church, with the formation of the gospel tradition and the writings of the gospels as well as the brief period of Jesus’ public ministry. The thought world, the mind set, the thought patterns, the religious language used, must hold as much for the continuation of Jesus’ ministry in the Church as for Jesus himself. In fact, religious imagery, language, phraseology occurring in the gospels on the lips of Jesus and demonstrably attested for that period in Jewish literary sources, may as easily be from a later stage in the formation of the gospels, or from the evangelists themselves, as from Jesus.

1.1. Sources

The sources on which one has to draw are the Hebrew Bible, the extra books (Apocrypha, Deuterocanonicals) of the Greek Old Testament and the Pseudepigrapha, the Dead Sea Scrolls, rabbinic literature and Aramaic Targums.

1.1.1. Sources: Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha

The apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha have been edited in English translation by R. H. Charles in 1913,¹ and a much wider collection of the


Most of these Pseudepigrapha have been transmitted in the Christian church, rather than by Jews, and in translation (mainly Greek, Ethiopic, Syriac, Georgian, Armenian, Latin, occasionally Irish) rather than in their original language of composition, although the original Semitic originals of some of them have been found among the Dead Sea Scrolls. The question which arises arising with regard to individual writings among the Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha is whether it is in whole or in part a Christian rather than a Jewish composition, or at least has been influenced or recast by a Christian hand. Even when regarded as of Jewish origin, the original language (Hebrew, Aramaic, Greek) and exact place of origin (Palestine, the Diaspora) can present a problem. The questions will be considered for each of the works as occasion demands.

While we are chiefly interested in works composed in Palestine and in Hebrew or Aramaic, attention will also be paid to works written in Greek and outside of Palestine when those can be supposed to show contact with Palestinian Jewish tradition.

1.1.2. Sources. The Dead Sea Scrolls
The total number of manuscripts recovered from the Dead Sea area from 1947 onwards amounts to about 800. Of these 250 are copies of various biblical books. So little of the text of 275 to 300 other manuscripts has been preserved that they reveal little or nothing with regard to content. The remaining manuscripts contain a variety of texts, most

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