

**Writing assignment: Please bring brief answers to all of the questions on this sheet (many required one word answers).**

**Reading assignment: Photocopied excerpt from N.T. Wright, *The New Testament and the People of God* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1972).**

Note: This is your only new reading for Monday, 2/28: six photocopied pages from Wright's book. I am assigning it for two main reasons: (1) this brief excerpt includes passages from the only *non-biblical* first century (CE) Jewish apocalyptic we're going to have time to look at (I had hoped to look at rather more), and (2) this is a chance to read a small bit of real scholarship on our topic as opposed to the textbook distillations of Harris. Harris is a wonderfully clear textbook presenter of scholars' ideas; Bright is the thing itself (though even here is writing for a general audience). N.T. Wright is a "Fellow, Chaplain, and Tutor in Theology" at Worcester College, Oxford University, in England. This brief excerpt is from a 500-page book which is one volume of a five-volume series on the "historical and theological questions surrounding the origins of Christianity"! It's brilliant work and was recommended to me by Professor Eugene Webb at the University of Washington, who considers it the best available work on the historical Jesus, for those of you who might be interested.

*I have numbered the ten paragraphs of the Wright excerpt for ease of reference.*

- 1) The title of this section, "No King But God," recalls us to a point many weeks back in our study of Israelite history. What point is that? (Hint: think 1 Samuel.)
- 2) Wright tells us that there were first-century Jews talking about military-political revolution against Rome. Were their motives in all cases religious?
- 3) Please re-visit Daniel 2.31-45 (we should really re-read all of Daniel). This is Daniel interpreting Nebuchadnezzar's dream about the statue made of many metals. (a) Again, when was Daniel written? (b) Which was the last of the four empires Daniel would have been referring to in this passage (this would be the one in his own time; see footnotes)?
- 4) A continuation of the previous question. Wright mentions "Josephus." This would be Flavius Josephus (37-100 CE), an important Jewish historian who got along with the Roman authorities and was allowed to do his work. It is reasonable to suppose that getting along with the Roman authorities involved practicing certain restraints in his writing. Bright tells us in par. 4 that Josephus, though he doesn't say it himself, clearly knew of interpretations of Daniel in Josephus's own time that re-interpreted 2.31-45 as foretelling the destruction not of Hellenistic Syria in about 160 BCE, but of \_\_\_\_\_ in \_\_\_\_\_?

- 5) Back to Daniel for a moment. In Daniel 2.44, after “foretelling” the destruction of those four kingdoms, what does Daniel say will happen when the kings of those empires are destroyed?
- 6) In Bright’s par. 5, there is an important passage from “The Testament of Moses,” one of the only passages of *non*-biblical first century (CE) Jewish apocalyptic we’ll get to read (I will want you to know about this passage on the test). What specific lines echo passages of biblical apocalyptic we have read?
- 7) Bright’s par. 6 includes another passage of non-biblical Jewish apocalyptic (which I also want you to know about). Note the fascinatingly detailed military plans and try to grasp the point Bright makes about it. Let me know if you need help.
- 8) In par. 8, Bright makes a very important point, I think. Why, according to Bright, did those writers use *cosmic* imagery to write about the coming *earthly* victory of Israel over its earthly enemies?
- 9) So according to Bright, in these apocalyptic writings, when the kingdom of God comes and God is king, how will he rule the world? Through \_\_\_\_\_!

*The next reading, for Wednesday, March 2, will be Revelation. The assignment sheet for that will include review questions on what we looked at last week – Joel, Zechariah, and Malachi.*