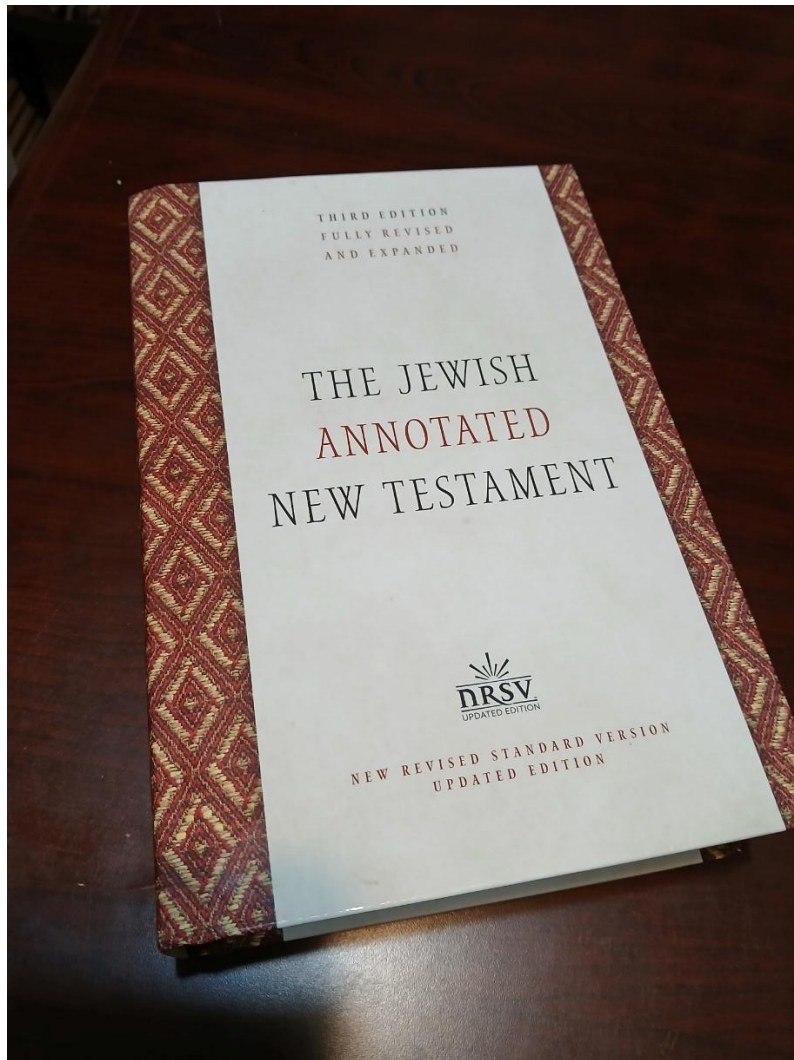




A Publication of
The Old Paths Restoration Ministry
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Review: *The Jewish Annotated New Testament*, 3rd Edition (2026)

A Restorationist-oriented assessment for readers of Old Paths Restoration Ministry. This Review was prepared by an AI program with guidelines provided by our Ministry.

The **third edition** of *The Jewish Annotated New Testament* (Oxford University Press, 2026), edited by **Amy-Jill Levine** and **Marc Zvi Brettler**, is the most expansive and academically refined version of this project to date. For Tanakh-only Restorationist readers, this volume offers a rare opportunity: a New Testament presented not through Christian theology, but through **Jewish historical, cultural, and literary scholarship**.

This edition is not devotional. It is not apologetic. It is not written to defend Christian doctrine.

Instead, it situates the Christian New Testament within the **Jewish world that produced it**, allowing readers to examine the text without the interpretive weight of later Christian tradition.

Purpose and Orientation

The editors approach the Christian New Testament as **Jewish sectarian literature** emerging from the diverse landscape of **Second Temple Judaism**. Their commentary is descriptive, academic, and historically grounded.

This means:

- No Trinitarian assumptions
- No harmonization of contradictions
- No “fulfilled prophecy” framing
- No theological smoothing
- No evangelistic agenda

The goal is clarity, not conversion.

Major Features of the 3rd Edition

✓ Updated to the NRSV Updated Edition (2021)

This edition uses the NRSVue, incorporating:

- Revised translation choices
- Updated textual scholarship
- More accurate renderings of Greek terms
- Greater sensitivity to Jewish context

✓ Revised and expanded annotations

Many notes have been rewritten to:

- Clarify Jewish historical background
- Identify where NT authors reinterpret Tanakh
- Highlight intra-Jewish debates
- Correct common Christian misunderstandings

✓ Ten new essays

New essays address topics such as:

- Sin
- Purity
- Judas Iscariot
- Jewish–Christian relations
- Historical context of early Jesus-movement Judaism

These essays deepen the reader’s understanding of the NT as literature emerging from **Jewish social, political, and religious tensions**.

Examples of the Commentary’s Approach

(No copyrighted text quoted — only descriptive summaries.)

Matthew

Annotations explain Matthew’s use of **midrashic techniques** to connect Jesus to Tanakh figures. Jewish scholars clarify how these interpretive moves fit within Second Temple storytelling rather than literal prophecy fulfillment.

John

Notes highlight the sectarian tone of John’s language about “the Jews,” explaining how internal Jewish conflict later became misunderstood as anti-Jewish polemic.

Paul's Letters

Paul is presented as a **diaspora Jew** engaged in intra-Jewish debates about Torah, Gentile inclusion, and apocalyptic expectation — not as the founder of a new religion.

Hebrews

The commentary describes Hebrews' reinterpretation of priesthood and sacrifice as **creative midrash**, noting where these ideas diverge sharply from Torah's own categories.

Revelation

Revelation is treated as **Jewish apocalyptic literature**, comparable to Daniel and 1 Enoch, helping readers understand its symbolism without later Christian eschatology.

Strengths for Tanakh-Only Restorationist Readers

✓ Tanakh-first clarity

The commentary consistently identifies where NT authors quote, adapt, or reshape Hebrew Scripture, allowing readers to compare NT claims with the original context.

✓ Genre separation

The editors treat:

- Gospels as ancient biographies
- Epistles as sectarian correspondence
- Revelation as apocalyptic literature

This aligns perfectly with Restorationist genre-structured teaching.

✓ **Historical grounding**

The book restores the Jewish world of:

- Pharisees
- Sadducees
- Essenes
- Apocalyptic movements
- Temple politics
- Roman occupation

✓ **De-Christianized commentary**

Because the annotators are Jewish scholars, they do not attempt to defend Christian doctrine. This makes the commentary unusually clear and academically honest.

Limitations

✗ **Not a Restorationist commentary**

It is Jewish, not Tanakh-supremacist. It does not argue for Torah primacy over NT claims.

✗ **Does not resolve contradictions**

The editors do not harmonize conflicting NT passages. They simply explain them historically.

✗ **Does not critique NT theology directly**

Its purpose is descriptive, not polemical.

Is This Book a Jewish Commentary on the NT?

A comparison with David Stern's Messianic commentary

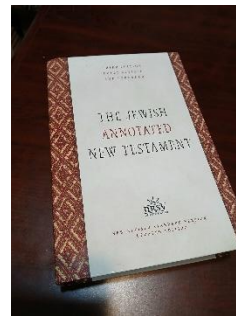
Yes — *The Jewish Annotated New Testament* is a **Jewish commentary** in the academic sense. But it is crucial to distinguish it from **David Stern's Jewish New Testament Commentary**, which is widely used in Messianic Christian circles.

Here is the contrast:

1. Purpose and Orientation

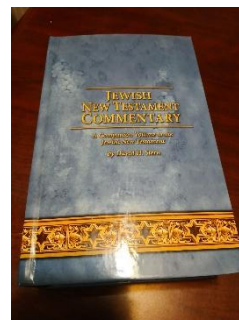
Jewish Annotated NT (JANT)

- Jewish scholars
- Academic, historical, literary
- No Christian theology
- No evangelistic agenda
- Treats NT as **Jewish sectarian literature**



David Stern's Commentary

- Messianic Christian author
- Evangelistic tone
- Seeks to prove Jesus is Messiah
- Harmonizes contradictions
- Treats NT as **divinely inspired Christian Scripture**



Summary: JANT is Jewish scholarship. Stern is Christian apologetics with Jewish vocabulary.

2. Treatment of the Tanakh

JANT

- Shows where NT authors reshape Tanakh passages
- Notes contextual shifts
- Explains Jewish interpretive methods
- Does not claim prophecy fulfillment

Stern

- Treats NT quotations as literal fulfillments
- Uses Tanakh to validate NT claims
- Reinterprets Hebrew passages through Christian theology

Summary: JANT preserves Tanakh meaning. Stern subordinates Tanakh to NT theology.

3. Treatment of Jesus and Paul

JANT

- Jesus as Jewish teacher
- Paul as diaspora Jew
- No divinity or messiahship claims
- Historical context only

Stern

- Jesus as divine Messiah
- Paul as authoritative apostle
- NT theology drives interpretation

Summary: JANT gives historical Jewish context. Stern gives Christian theological interpretation.

4. Use of Hebrew Terminology

JANT

- Hebrew used academically
- No theological jargon

Stern

- Heavy Hebrew usage (Yeshua, Ruach HaKodesh)
- Creates Jewish aesthetic for Christian theology

Summary: JANT uses Hebrew precisely. Stern uses Hebrew devotionally.

Final Comparison

The **Jewish Annotated New Testament (2026)** is a **true Jewish commentary** in the academic sense — grounded in Jewish history, Jewish scholarship, and Jewish interpretive tradition.

David Stern's commentary is **Messianic Christian**, not Jewish. It uses Jewish terminology, but its theology and interpretive framework are entirely Christian.

In short:

- **JANT = Jewish scholarship explaining the NT historically.**
- **Stern = Christian theology dressed in Jewish vocabulary.**

For Tanakh-only Restorationist readers, the **Jewish Annotated NT (2026)** is the far more reliable and useful resource.

Final Assessment

The **Jewish Annotated New Testament, 3rd Edition (2026)** is a landmark academic resource. It is not a devotional book. It is not a theological defense. It is not a polemic.

It is a **Jewish scholarly guide** to understanding the Christian New Testament within the world that produced it — a world shaped by the Tanakh, Jewish law, Jewish sectarian debates, and the pressures of Roman occupation.

For Restorationist readers, it is one of the most important tools available for understanding the NT on its own historical terms.