

The parents' next challenge was to keep their children alive, teach them necessary life skills, and impart cultural values (Prov 22:6). In turn, children were to honor and respect their parents (Exod 20:12; Prov 23:22). A child's early years were especially perilous; a child who transitioned past breastfeeding had significantly greater chances of surviving into adulthood. Hebrew has different words for small children who are safe (*gamul*) or in danger (*yoneq*, *'olel*). The HB offers images of tender parent and small child interactions (1 Sam 1:23–24; Isa 66:13; Hos 11:3–4). Parents raised children in an extended household; no term in the HB reflects the limited concept of a nuclear family. Rather, the wider family resided in the “house of the father” (*bet 'av*) and occasionally the “house of the mother” (*bet 'eem*: Gen 24:28; Ruth 1:8; Song 3:4; 8:2). Persistent parental effort and sometimes advocacy were needed to help children survive and remain within their family of origin (2 Kgs 4:1–7; Neh 5:1–5). In return, children were to respect and honor their parents (Exod 20:12; Deut 5:16; Prov 1:8).

Arranging a child's marriage was another parental role (Gen 21:21; 24:1–4; 29:15–30; 34:8–12; Exod 2:21; Judg 14:1–8; 1 Sam 18:20–21; 1 Kgs 3:1). Fathers had the ultimate say about whom their daughters married and the validity of their vows (Num 30:3–5). The family of the man to be married needed to produce bridewealth (Heb. *mohar*) as a gift to the woman's family to legitimize the union (Exod 22:15–16 [ET 22:16–17]; 1 Sam 18:25). Parents also had a role in ensuring their daughter's honor in a marriage (Deut 22:13–19).

While parents usually prioritized their child's welfare, they also placed their children in dangerous or deadly situations. YHWH, as the divine parent, sets a precedent in demanding the sacrifice of the firstborn child (Exod 13:2; 22:28 [ET 22:2]). Parents used their children in military exploits (Judg 8:20; 2 Kgs 3:26–27) or to ensure a victory (Judg 11:30–40), sometimes at the cost of the offspring's life. Repeated injunctions against sacrificing one's children attest to the persistence of the practice (e.g., Gen 22:1–19; Deut 18:10–12; 2 Kgs 17:17; Isa 57:5; Jer 7:31; Ezek 20:25–31; 23:36–39). Parents could legislate the parental sale of children into slavery (Exod 21:2–11) or children could be sold as slaves to pay debts (2 Kgs 4:1–7).

In biblical antiquity, as today, raising children was hard work. There is no specific word for “parent” in Hebrew that could refer to “mother” or “father,” although repeated references to *'avôt* (lit. “fathers”) likely suggest both parents. Nonetheless, while the term “parenting” is anachronistic when applied to the HB, many modern parenting concerns are reflected in the biblical text. For the most part, both mother and father wanted health and safety for their children whom they trained in the skills they would need to survive when older. Suc-

cessful parents in biblical Israel raised children who not only reached adulthood and maintained productive lives, but also perpetuated the beliefs and practices of the covenant community.

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III. New Testament

In the Greek text of the NT, references to parents can be classified in two groups: (1) the Greek word for parents is used (in the NT only in pl.: γονεῖς; e.g., John 9:2, 23), (2) the Greek word for father (πατήρ; e.g., Luke 11:11) or mother (μήτηρ; e.g., Matt 20:20; John 2:1) is used. On occasion, the idea of parenting is expressed by verbs, e.g., “to beget,” “to father” (γεννάω; e.g., Matt 1:2), or “to be in the pain of childbirth” (ὀδίνω; e.g., Gal 4:19; Rev 12:2). There are texts in which a real family relationship is referred to (e.g., Luke 2:27) and in which someone is a father or mother to someone in a figurative sense (e.g., 1 Cor 4:15; Rom 16:13). The latter usage is more numerous in the NT, due to the frequent reference to God as “Father” (e.g., Matt 6:4, 6, 9, 14–15; 23:9; Luke 23:46; John 8:41–42). Parents are implied in texts where the sons or daughters of someone are mentioned (e.g., Mark 5:21–43 par.; Luke 9:37–43 par.).

The Gospels of Matthew and Luke contain references to Jesus's parents in the infancy narratives (Matt 1:18–25; 2:13–15, 19–23; Luke 1:26–38; 2:1–35). Luke preserved one narrative about the twelve-year-old Jesus (Luke 2:41–52), who is shown as giving priority to his heavenly Father, and yet also as being obedient to his earthly parents (vv. 49 and 51; Francis: 151).

There are passages which describe an enmity within the family as a consequence of some of the family members following Jesus (Matt 10:21–22 par.). Enmity among parents and children is presented as a sign of the end times (2 Tim 3:1–2), and as a consequence of people turning away from their creator (Rom 1:30).

When Jesus called his first disciples, this calling involved leaving the family (Matt 4:18–22 par.). Such pericopes are examples of the priority Jesus claimed for himself in the lives of his followers (Matt 19:27–30 par.). Such a priority was to be given him as the Son of God, because parents were to be

honored after God (or the “gods”) in the environment of the NT and in early Christianity as well (Balla: 229–32). Jesus affirmed the commandment “Honor your father and your mother” (Matt 15:4 par.; 19:19 par.). He is presented as a faithful son who was caring for his mother even when he was dying (John 19:25–27). The priority claimed by Jesus may be the key to understanding some of his radical sayings (Luke 9:60; 14:26; cf. Matt 10:37). Jesus calls all those who do the will of God his own “brother and sister and mother” (Mark 3:35).

In the so-called “household codes” children are addressed together with their parents (Eph 6:1–4; Col 3:20–21; Osiek/Balch: 118). NT authors used expressions of the parent-child relationship in a figurative way when speaking about relationships among Christians (2 Cor 12:14; Phil 2:22; Phlm 10; 1 Tim 1:2; 2 Tim 1:2; Titus 1:4; 1 John 2:1, 12–14, 18, 28; 2 John 1, 4, 13; 3 John 4; cf. Aasgaard: 249–56).

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Péter Balla

IV. Judaism

■ Second Temple and Hellenistic Judaism ■ Rabbinic Judaism ■ Medieval Judaism ■ Modern Judaism

A. Second Temple and Hellenistic Judaism

In the Second Temple period, the expectation that parents and children have mutual responsibilities continued to be maintained. Children were taught to obey and honor their parents. The role of parents entailed not only physical care but often an intense pedagogical component as well. The preponderance of father-to-son tutorials found in Second Temple texts indicates that instruction was viewed as one of the main aspects of childrearing. Such instruction usually had as its end the religious formation of children.

Many of the surviving texts from this period portray instruction that is specifically religious and moral in character as the primary parental responsibility. For example, the last words of the patriarchs to their children in the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs involve exhortations to virtue and other aspects of moral living. Similarly, Tobit’s last words for his son Tobias in Tob 14 (cf. Tob 4) involve such warnings. Mattathias’s deathbed speech in 1 Macc 2 encourages his sons to zeal and piety, and the mother of the seven sons in 2 Macc 7 encourages her children to die rather than to reject the ancient

teachings. These deathbed instructions variously depend on tropes from earlier blessings, such as Jacob’s blessings in Gen 49, Moses’s final blessings in Deut 33, and David’s last words to Solomon in 1 Kgs 2.

Direct references to children’s education outside the narrative genre also focus on their religious formation. Children are to be taught “the precepts of the covenant,” and boys taught from texts such as the book of *hgy* (1QS*a* I, 5–8). A pedagogical sensitivity and an extended teaching on children’s religious education are evident in 1QS*a* in that one is to be educated “from his youth” and “according to his age.” The specific responsibilities of the *mebaqqēr* of the Damascus Document (CD XIV, 15–16, a text related to the portion of 1QS*a* just mentioned) are not clear. Yet, since he is assigned to novices, it is to be assumed that a main facet of his role is religious instruction.

Part of this formation also entailed physical discipline. This emphasis is in keeping with earlier practices, although it receives special attention in Sir 30. The rewards listed in this text motivate serious discipline and indicate that children’s impiety is not only a detriment to themselves but also to parents. Parents should be concerned about preserving their honor and that of their family from the shameless deeds of impious children, and thus they are highly incentivized to discipline them.

Religious instruction came to dominate notions of parenting in this period, so much so that the begetting of many children was subordinated to raising up pious children. For example, most versions of Sir 16:1 read, “Do not desire a multitude of useless children,” and it continues to teach that one pious son is better than many lawless children. For Sirach, having only one pious son is sufficient for gaining immortality: “His father may die, and yet he is not dead, for he has left behind him one like himself” (Sir 30:4). This constitutes a major qualification of the tradition, since immortality was often seen to be obtained in some way by begetting many children. Sirach, however, teaches “to die childless is better than to have impious children” (16:3). A similar thought is conveyed in Wis 3–4, where virtue in the soul of the barren and the eunuch is praised, apparently to highlight that the real goal in life is to grow in virtue and not simply to multiply children: “Better is childlessness with virtue” (4:1) than bearing many impious children. Philo frequently refers to virtues themselves as parents of certain moral fruits (e.g., *Sacrifices* 43). Similar to these teachings is the encouragement of the Macbean mother to her sons to die rather than to apostatize (2 Macc 7) or the portrayal of the mothers who would circumcise their infants even at the risk of losing their own lives and that of their children (2 Macc 6:10).

The focus on instruction as a principal aspect of parenting in the Second Temple period makes it