

# Jason Robert Combs

*Associate Professor*

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## EDUCATION

- PhD University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill — Religious Studies (2016),  
*Royster Fellow*.  
Major Area: Ancient Mediterranean Religions  
Minor Area: Religion and Culture  
*Dissertation*: “Epiphanies in Second- and Third-Century Christian Literature: Discourse, Identity, and Divine Manifestations.”
- MA Columbia University — Classics (2008).  
Major Area: Greek  
Minor Area: Latin
- MAR Yale University Divinity School — Biblical Studies (2006),  
*Summa Cum Laude*.  
Major Area: New Testament  
Minor Area: Hebrew Bible
- BA Brigham Young University — Near Eastern Studies (2001).  
Major Area: Near Eastern Studies  
Minor Area: Psychology
- Member, Classics Honors Society
  - Co-founder and Vice President, Ancient Studies Club (*now* Students of the Ancient Near East)

## ADDITIONAL EDUCATION

Baden-Württemberg Exchange Program for study at Ruprecht-Karls Universität Heidelberg, Germany (January – July 2006).

Classics Post-Baccalaureate Program, University of California at Los Angeles (2003).

## **R E S E A R C H**

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### **WORKS IN PROGRESS**

*Dreaming Christian: Divine Manifestations and Christian Identity in the Second and Third Centuries* — academic monograph.

“An Extended Inverted Allusion to Psalm 22 in Mark 15: Reading Reversal in the Markan Passion,” *New Testament Studies* (forthcoming)

### **PUBLICATIONS — BOOKS, ARTICLES, AND BOOK CHAPTERS**

“Sabbath and Sunday in Ancient Christianity: Second through Sixth Centuries” in *Sacred Time: The Sabbath as a Perpetual Covenant*, ed. Gaye Strathearn (Provo, UT: BYU Religious Studies Center, 2023), 123–47.

“Historical Criticism of the Bible among the Latter-day Saints” in *The Bible and the Latter-day Saint Tradition*, eds. Taylor G. Petrey, Cory Crawford, and Eric A. Eliason (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 2023), 202–16.

*Ancient Christians: An Introduction for Latter-day Saints* (Provo, UT: Neal A. Maxwell Institute for Religious Scholarship, 2022).

- Coedited with Mark D. Ellison, Catherine Gines Taylor, and Kristian S. Heal.

“Introduction: Understanding Ancient Christians, Apostasy, and Restoration” in *Ancient Christians: An Introduction for Latter-day Saints*, ed. Jason R. Combs, Mark D. Ellison, Catherine Gines Taylor, and Kristian S. Heal (Provo, UT: Neal A. Maxwell Institute for Religious Scholarship, 2022), 1–23.

“The Nature of God: Father, Son, and Holy Ghost” in *Ancient Christians: An Introduction for Latter-day Saints*, ed. Jason R. Combs, Mark D. Ellison, Catherine Gines Taylor, and Kristian S. Heal (Provo, UT: Neal A. Maxwell Institute for Religious Scholarship, 2022), 290–326.

“Shepherd of Hermas and the Christian Experience of Non-Christian Epiphany” in *Experiencing the Shepherd of Hermas*, ed. Angela Kim Harkins and Harry O. Maier, Ekstasis: Religious Experience from Antiquity to the Middle Ages (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2022), 153–69.

“Christian Anti-Sabbath Polemic and the Textual Transmission of Luke 4:16 and 23:56,” *TC: A Journal of Biblical Textual Criticism* 26 (2021): 29–46.

“The Narrative Fulfillment of Isaiah 6 in 3 Nephi 11,” *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 29 (2020): 289–98.

“The Polemical Origin of Luke 6.5D: Dating Codex Bezae’s Sabbath-Worker Agraphon,” *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 42 (2019): 162–84.

“Noncanonical Gospels” in *New Testament History, Culture, and Society: A Background to the Texts of the New Testament*, ed. Lincoln H. Blumell (Provo, UT: BYU Religious Studies Center, 2019), 322–40.

“‘Christ’ after the Apostles: The Humanity and Divinity of the Savior in the Second Century” in *“Thou Art the Christ, the Son of the Living God”: The Person and Work of Jesus in the New Testament — Sperry Symposium 2018*, ed. Eric Huntsman, Lincoln Blumell, and Tyler Griffin (Provo, UT: BYU Religious Studies Center, 2018), 303–34.

“From King Ahaz’s Sign to Christ Jesus: The ‘Fulfillment’ of Isaiah 7:14” in *Prophets and Prophecies of the Old Testament: Text and Context — Sperry Symposium 2017*, ed. Aaron Schade, Brian Hauglid, and Kerry Muhlestein (Provo, UT: BYU Religious Studies Center, 2017), 95–122.

“A Walking, Talking Cross: The Polymorphic Christology of the *Gospel of Peter*,” *Early Christianity* 5 (2014): 198–219.

“A Marriage-Gift of Part of a Monastery from Byzantine Egypt,” *Bulletin of the American Society of Papyrologists* 48 (2011): 79–88.  
- Coauthored with Joseph G. Miller.

“A Ghost on the Water?: Understanding an Absurdity in Mark 6:49–50,” *Journal of Biblical Literature* 127.2 (2008): 345–58.

## **PUBLICATIONS — BOOK REVIEWS AND NOTICES**

Review of “A. Keith Thompson, *Trinity and Monotheism: A historical and theological review of the origins and substance of the doctrine* (Modotti Press, 2019),” *BYU Studies Quarterly* 60, no. 2 (2021): 224–228. — Invited.

“Book Notice: Thomas A. Wayment, *The New Testament: A Translation for Latter-day Saints*,” *Religious Educator* 20.1 (2019): 173–75. — Invited.

## **PRESENTATIONS — PROFESSIONAL MEETINGS**

“*Apostasia* and the Antichrist: Medieval Readings of 2 Thessalonians 2”

Christian Historiography Seminar — Hosted at St. Andrews University, Scotland and sponsored by BYU’s Maxwell Institute (August 2023).

“Circumscribing Perpetua’s Dreams: Authority and Gender in Early Christian Dream Discourse.”

- With response by Stephanie Cobb (University of Richmond)  
Society of Biblical Literature Annual Meeting — *Inventing Christianity: Apostolic Fathers, Apologists, and Martyrs* (November 2022).

“What is Montanism?: Heterodoxy and the Historiography of Visions”

Christian Historiography Seminar —Hosted at Pembroke College, Oxford University and sponsored by BYU’s Maxwell Institute (August 2022).

“Christ the Young Shepherd and Baptism at Dura-Europos: Baptismal Christophanies as Ekphrasis in the Apocryphal Acts.”

- With response by Karen Stern, Brooklyn College (CUNY)  
Society of Biblical Literature Annual Meeting — Art and Religions of Antiquity (November 2021).

“(En)gendering Christian Dreams: Tertullian, Authority, and a Visionary Woman in Carthage”

International Conference on Patristic Studies, Oxford — Tertullian Session (August 2019).

“‘Eloi la... Elijah’?: Reading a Mondegreen in Mark 15:34–35.”

AAR/SBL/ASOR Rocky Mountain-Great Plains Regional Meeting at Creighton University, Omaha, NE (March 2019).

“The Shepherd of Hermas and the Problem of Non-Christian Epiphany.”

- With response by Harry Maier (Vancouver School of Theology).  
Society of Biblical Literature Annual Meeting — Combined Session of Inventing Christianity and Religious Experience in Antiquity (November 2018).

“Soliciting Divine Manifestations: Proto-Orthodox Practices in the Late-Second and Early-Third Century CE.”

Society of Biblical Literature Annual Meeting — Combined Session of Mysticism, Esotericism, and Gnosticism in Antiquity and Religious Experience in Antiquity (November 2018).

“Dreams/Visions among Early Third-Century Proto-Orthodox Christians: Experience at the Boundaries of Discourse.”

- With response by Frances Flannery (James Madison University).  
Society of Biblical Literature Annual Meeting — Religious Experience in Antiquity (November 2017).

“Dreams of Divine Chastisement: The Origin and Influence of an Early Christian Dream-Type.”  
North American Patristics Society Annual Meeting (May 2017).

“Dating the Sabbath-Worker Agraphon: The Fourth-Century Origin and Significance of Bezae-Luke 6.5.”

AAR/SBL/ASOR Rocky Mountain-Great Plains Regional Meeting at the University of Colorado Boulder (March 2017).

- “Christ in the Form of a Young Man: An Early Christian Epiphany-Type.”  
*Disclosure, Inspiration, Epiphany: Divine Revelation in the Ancient Mediterranean*;  
Conference at King’s College, London (May 2016).
- “Christophany as Ecclesiology: Christ Manifest as Apostle in the Apocryphal Acts.”  
International Conference on Patristic Studies, Oxford — Apostolic Apocrypha Session  
(August 2015).
- “Reading Reversal in the Markan Passion: Psalm 22 as ‘Inverted Quotation’ in Mark 15.”  
Southeastern Commission for the Study of Religion — New Testament IV Session  
(March 2015).
- “Dreaming Christian: Tertullian’s Epiphanies and the Construction of Pagan/Christian Identity.”
- With response by Stephanie Cobb (University of Richmond).  
Society of Biblical Literature Annual Meeting — Combined Session of Inventing  
Christianity and Contextualizing North African Christianity (November 2014).
- “‘In the Eye of the Beholder’: Art and Epiphanies in Greek Novels and the Apocryphal Acts.”  
North American Patristics Society Annual Meeting — Christianity and Sophistic Culture  
in the Second and Third Centuries Session (May 2014).
- “Identifying Dreams: Recognizing Jesus in Tertullian and the *Acts of Peter*.”  
North Carolina Religious Studies Association — Ancient Mediterranean Session  
(November 2013).
- “Constraining Christian Visions: The Problem of Polymorphy in the Apocryphal Acts.”  
North American Patristics Society Annual Meeting — Second Century Christianities  
Session (May 2013).
- “Dreams(?) Matter: Idol-Demons and Early Christian Oneiric Techniques.”
- With response by Steven Larson (Ohio Wesleyan University).  
Society of Biblical Literature Annual Meeting — Religious Competition in the Third  
Century CE: Interdisciplinary Approaches Section (November 2012).
- “Exception as Power: Reading Agamben in the Apostolic Fathers.”  
North American Patristics Society Annual Meeting — Church Leadership Session (May  
2012).
- “Re-contextualizing the Walking, Talking Cross: Dualistic Christology in the *Gospel of Peter*.”
- Special session on the *Gospel of Peter*, including reviews of Paul Foster’s  
commentary.  
Society of Biblical Literature Annual Meeting — Christian Apocrypha Section  
(November 2011).

“Correcting the Commandment: The Effect of Early Christian Sabbath Polemic on the Text of Luke’s Gospel.”

- With response by Bill Warren (New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary). Society of Biblical Literature Annual Meeting — Sabbath in Text, Tradition and Theology Consultation (November 2010).

“Jewish ‘Fools’ and their Gentile Foil: Reading Comedy in Mark 15:34–39.”

Society of Biblical Literature Annual Meeting — Synoptic Gospels Section (November 2010).

“Locating Luke 6.5D: Toward a Social Context for the Sabbath Worker.”

Southeastern Commission for the Study of Religion — New Testament II Session (March 2010).

“‘They Thought it was a Ghost.’ Understanding an Absurdity in Mark 6:49–50.”

Society of Biblical Literature Annual Meeting — Synoptic Gospels Section (November 2006).

“Roman Comedy and Pauline Humor: Rethinking the Metaphors of Slavery and Sons in Galatians 3.22–4.9.”

Society of Biblical Literature Annual Meeting — Pauline Epistles Section (November 2005).

## **PRESENTATIONS — INVITED RESPONSES**

“Repositioning Perpetua: A Response to Rebillard’s ‘Res gestas martyrum digerere.’”

Guest lecture of Eric Rebillard, “Res gestas martyrum digerere: North African Hagiography until the time of Augustine,” hosted by Duke University’s Center for Late Ancient Studies (March 2015).

## **PRESENTATIONS — PUBLIC LECTURES**

“Why Ancient Near Eastern Studies?”

Invited lecture to the Students of the Ancient Near East (SANE) organization at BYU (Sept 2023)

“Ancient Christians: A Conversation.”

Book launch lecture hosted by BYU’s Maxwell Institute, Provo, UT (March 2023) (<https://youtu.be/iSIlp-Y18KU?si=Xdy8bRxcDJUD98dD>).

“The Jesus of the Gospels and Godspell” (<https://4thwalldramaturgy.byu.edu/the-jesus-christ-of-godspell>)

Invited lecture and panel discussion for the event, “The Jesus Christ of Godspell” in conjunction with BYU’s production of the musical, Godspell.

- “Ancient Christians: An Introduction for Latter-day Saints.”  
Book launch lecture hosted by Writ & Vision, Provo, UT (December 2022).
- “Gendering Ancient Christian Dreams: The Martyrdom of Perpetua and Felicitas”  
Brigham Young University David M. Kennedy Center for International Studies —  
Kennedy Research Fellowship Lecture (September 2022).
- “What are the Gospels?”  
Invited lecture for Seminaries and Institutes of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day  
Saints—Utah South Area Inservice Meeting (June 2022).
- “How We Got Our Bible: The Formation and Survival of the New Testament.”  
Monday Lecture—BYU Education Week 2021.
- “The Nativity in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke.”  
Tuesday–Friday Series of Classes—BYU Education Week 2021.
- “The New Testament Apocryphal Gospels.”  
Tuesday–Friday Series of Classes—BYU Education Week 2021.
- “The Rise of Christianity in the Roman Empire.”  
Invited public lecture hosted by Books & Bridges; Salt Lake City, UT (March 25, 2021).
- “The Other Gospels: Exploring the History and Theology of New Testament Apocrypha.”  
Invited fireside lecture—Aspen Grove, UT (July 2019).
- “‘Becoming the Beloved Disciple’ Becoming Jesus: Reading Eric Huntsman with Origen of  
Alexandria.”  
Invited lecture in honor of the publication of Eric Huntsman’s *Becoming the Beloved  
Disciple*, hosted by Writ & Vision, Provo, UT (January 2019).
- “‘Christ’ after the Apostles: The Humanity and Divinity of the Savior in the Second Century”  
“Thou Art the Christ, the Son of the Living God”: The Person and Work of Jesus in the  
New Testament — BYU Sperry Symposium 2018.
- “The Discovery and Content of the Ancient Christian Nag Hammadi Library”  
Monday Lecture —BYU Education Week 2018.
- “After the Apostles: Christianity in the 2nd and 3rd Centuries A.D.”  
Tuesday–Friday Series of Classes—BYU Education Week 2018.

“From King Ahaz’s Sign to Christ Jesus: The ‘Fulfillment’ of Isaiah 7:14”  
Prophets and Prophecies of the Old Testament: Text and Context — BYU Sperry  
Symposium 2017.

“New Directions in Biblical Studies”  
Keynote Address at the BYU Students of the Ancient Near East Symposium (March  
2017).

“Visions of Jesus: How to Dream like an Ancient Christian.”  
Guest Speaker at New Garden Friends Meeting, Greensboro, NC (April 2013).

“Sing to the Lord a New Song: How Early Christians Read a Jewish Prophet.”  
Invited lecture for the Mini-Conference, “Isaiah: A Prophet of Hope for Jews and  
Christians,” hosted by UNC’s Institute for the Arts and Humanities (November 2013).

“The ‘Fulfillment’ of the Beatitudes in Matthew, the Dead Sea Scrolls, and 3 Nephi”  
Sidney B. Sperry Symposium at Brigham Young University, UT (October 2010).

#### **AWARDS — RESEARCH AND TRAVEL**

Association for Mormon Letters Award for Best Book in Religious Nonfiction 2022 for *Ancient  
Christians: An Introduction for Latter-day Saints* (Awarded April 2023)

David M. Kennedy Center for International Studies Faculty Research Fellowship for the Fall  
2022 theme, *The Global Religious Experience*, BYU (2022).

Harvey B. and Susan Easton Black Outstanding Publication Award in Ancient Scripture for  
Academic Scholarship, BYU (2020).

- Awarded for “The Polemical Origin of Luke 6.5D: Dating Codex Bezae’s Sabbath-  
Worker Agraphon,” *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 42.2 (2019): 162–84.

Lovick P. Corn Dissertation Fellow, The Royster Society of Fellows, UNC (2014–2015).

Graduate and Professional Student Federation Travel Award, UNC (May 2014).

Hugh W. Nibley Fellowship, Maxwell Institute for Religious Scholarship (2009–2013).

Robert Miller Fund for Excellence in Religious Studies — Travel Award, UNC (2012).

Mitteln des Ministeriums für Wissenschaft, Forschung und Kunst Baden-Württemberg.  
Stipend for study at Heidelberg University (January–July 2006).



Graduate and Professional Student Senate Conference Travel Fund, Yale University (November 2005).

Ezekiel H. Trowbridge Scholarship, Yale Divinity School (2005–2006).

Paul Wesley Chalfant Scholarship, Yale Divinity School (2004–2005).

## **RESEARCH LANGUAGES**

Ancient: Greek (Classical and Koine), Latin, Hebrew, Syriac (beginning), Coptic (beginning).

Modern: German (basic conversational and reading), Spanish (conversational and reading), French (reading), Italian (reading).

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## ***TEACHING***

### **ACADEMIC EMPLOYMENT — TEACHING**

Associate Professor      2023–*current* — Department of Ancient Scripture, Brigham Young University, Provo, UT.

Assistant Professor      2018–2023 — Department of Ancient Scripture, Brigham Young University, Provo, UT.

Visiting Assistant Professor      2016–2018 — Department of Ancient Scripture, Brigham Young University, Provo, UT.

Lecturer      2016 — Department of Religion and Philosophy, High Point University, High Point, NC.

Lecturer      2014 — Department of Religious Studies, University of North Carolina at Greensboro.

Part-Time Instructor      2013 — Department of Religious Studies, Guilford College in Greensboro, NC.

Teaching Fellow      2012–2014, 2016 — Department of Religious Studies, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

Online Instructor      2012, 2014, 2016 — Friday Center for Continuing Education, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

Teaching Assistant	2008–2012 — Department of Religious Studies, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. <i>Led weekly discussion sections, graded, and lectured for courses taught by Bart Ehrman, Zlatko Pleše, Jodi Magness, Bennie Reynolds, and David Lambert.</i>
Part-Time Faculty	2007 — Department of Ancient Scripture, Brigham Young University, Provo, UT.
Adjunct Instructor	2006–2007 — Department of Philosophy, Westminster College in Salt Lake City, UT.  2006–2007 — Department of Philosophy and Humanities, Utah Valley State College ( <i>now</i> Utah Valley University) in Orem, UT.

## UNIVERSITY TEACHING — INSTRUCTION AND COURSE DEVELOPMENT

### *BYU Courses Designed and Taught:*

- REL A 121 — Book of Mormon, I
- REL A 122 — Book of Mormon, II
- REL A 275 — Teachings & Doctrine of the Book of Mormon
- REL A 211 — New Testament: Gospels
- REL A 212 — New Testament: Acts–Revelation
- REL A 250 — Jesus Christ and the Everlasting Gospel
- ANES 495 — Senior Seminar in Ancient Near Eastern Studies

### *Other Courses Designed and Taught:*

- Introduction to the New Testament
- Introduction to the Hebrew Bible / Old Testament
- Jesus in Myth, Tradition, and History (30–200CE)
- Birth of Christianity
- Religions of the World
- Ethics and Values

*Online Courses Taught:*

- Introduction to the New Testament
- Birth of Christianity

*Additional Courses Assisted:*

- Varieties of Early Christianity
- Introduction to Early Judaism
- Archaeology of Palestine in the New Testament Period

## **TEACHING AWARDS**

Tanner Award for Excellence in Undergraduate Teaching by Graduate Teaching Assistants 2012, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (Awarded 26 April 2012).

*\* One of five selected university-wide to receive this most distinguished teaching award. Nominated by students, the University Committee on Teaching Awards reviews the nominees, collects additional information from Department Chairs, and recommends five winners to the Chancellor. The Tanner Award was established “to recognize excellence in inspirational teaching of undergraduate students, particularly first- and second-year students.”*

Student Undergraduate Teaching and Staff Award 2011 (SUTASA), University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (Awarded 12 April 2011).

*\* One of nine selected among faculty and graduate students university-wide for this honor. It is awarded once annually “on the basis of demonstrated and consistent teaching excellence, success in positively affecting a broad spectrum of students both in and outside the classroom, and creation of a dynamic learning environment.”*

## **PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES**

### **ACADEMIC SERVICE**

*Brigham Young University*

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|------------------|---|
| Chair            | Diversity Recruitment Group (2023–present).   |
| Committee Member | Hiring Committee (2023–present).  |
| Faculty Advisor  | Student Journal — <i>Studia Antiqua: A Student Journal for the Study of the Ancient World</i> (2022–present). |
| Chair            | Visiting Scholars Program, Department of Ancient Scripture (2022–2023).                                       |

- Organizing Committee 2022 Sperry Symposium, Religious Education (2021–2022).
- Committee Chair Public Communications Advisory Committee, Religious Education (2020–2023).
- Organizing Committee Seminar on Book of Mormon and Ethics, Maxwell Institute (2019–2021).
- Committee Chair Online Resources for Adjunct and Transfer Faculty Committee, Ancient Scripture (2019–2020).
- Committee Member Visualizing Learning Committee, Religious Education (2019–2022).
- Committee Member Religious Education Undergraduate Student Symposium (2016–2019).

*Mormon Scholars Foundation*

- Organizing Committee Faith and Knowledge Conference for LDS Graduate Students in Religious Studies.  
– Wesley Theological Seminary, Washington D.C. February 2013.
- General Chair Faith and Knowledge Conference for LDS Graduate Students in Religious Studies.  
– Duke University, Durham, NC. February 2011.

*University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill*

- Steering Committee Theory Reading Group – joint UNC-Duke (2011–2014).
- Committee Member Graduate Student Teaching Committee (2012–2014).
- Convener Christianity in Antiquity Colloquium – joint UNC-Duke (2009–2011, 2013–2014).
- SBL-OSR On-campus Student Representative for the *Society of Biblical Literature* (2010–2014).
- Summer Program Discussion Leader Carolina Summer Reading Program for First-Year and Transfer Students (2009–2012)

## **PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS**

Society of Biblical Literature (2004 – *Present*)

North American Patristics Society (2008 – *Present*)

American Academy of Religion (2012 – *Present*)