



*YOU CAN UNDERSTAND THE BIBLE*

*NEW TESTAMENT SURVEY*

*MATTHEW - REVELATION*

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BIBLE LESSONS INTERNATIONAL: MARSHALL, TEXAS  
2000 (Revised 2007)

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# A GUIDE TO GOOD BIBLE READING: A PERSONAL SEARCH FOR VERIFIABLE TRUTH

Can we know truth? Where is it found? Can we logically verify it? Is there an ultimate authority? Are there absolutes which can guide our lives, our world? Is there meaning to life? Why are we here? Where are we going? These questions—questions that all rational people contemplate—have haunted the human intellect since the beginning of time (Eccl. 1:13-18; 3:9-11).

I can remember my personal search for an integrating center for my life. I became a believer in Christ at a young age, based primarily on the witness of significant others in my family. As I grew to adulthood, questions about myself and my world also grew. Simple cultural and religious clichés did not bring meaning to the experiences I read about or encountered. It was a time of confusion, searching, longing, and often a feeling of hopelessness in the face of the insensitive, hard world in which I lived.

Many claimed to have answers to these ultimate questions, but after research and reflection I found that their answers were based upon: (1) personal philosophies, (2) ancient myths, (3) personal experiences, or (4) psychological projections. I needed some degree of verification, some evidence, some rationality on which to base my worldview, my integrating center, my reason to live.

These I found in my study of the Bible. I began to search for evidence of its trustworthiness, which I found in: (1) the historical reliability of the Bible from archaeology, (2) the accuracy of the prophecies of the Old Testament, (3) the unity of the Bible message over the sixteen hundred years of its production, and (4) the personal testimonies of people whose lives had been permanently changed by contact with the Bible. Christianity, as a unified system of faith and belief, has the ability to deal with complex questions of human life. Not only did this provide a rational framework, but the experiential aspect of Biblical faith brought me emotional joy and stability.

I thought that I had found the integrating center for my life—the Bible. It was a heady experience, an emotional release. I can still remember the shock and pain when it began to dawn on me how many different interpretations of this book were advocated, sometimes even within the same churches and schools of thought. Affirming the inspiration and trustworthiness of the Bible was not the end, but only the beginning. How do I verify or reject the varied and conflicting interpretations of the many difficult passages in Scripture by those who were claiming its authority and trustworthiness?

This task became my life's goal and pilgrimage of faith. I knew that my faith in Christ had brought me great peace and joy. My mind longed for some absolutes in the midst of the relativity of my culture and the dogmatism of conflicting religious systems and denominational arrogance. In my search for valid approaches to the interpretation of ancient literature, I was surprised to discover my own historical, cultural, denominational and experiential biases. I had often read the Bible simply to reinforce my own views. I used it as a database to attack others while affirming my own insecurities and inadequacies. How painful this realization was to me!

Although I can never be totally objective, I can become a better reader of the Bible. I can limit my biases by identifying them and acknowledging their presence. I am not yet free of them, but I have confronted my own weaknesses. The interpreter is often the worst enemy of good Bible reading!

Therefore, let me list some of the presuppositions I bring to my study of the Bible so that you, the reader, may examine them along with me:

1. I believe the Bible is the only inspired self-revelation of the one true God. Therefore, it must be interpreted in light of the intent of the original divine author through a human writer in a specific historical setting.
2. I believe the Bible was written for the common man—for all men! God accommodated Himself to speak to us clearly within a historical and cultural context. God does not hide truth—He wants

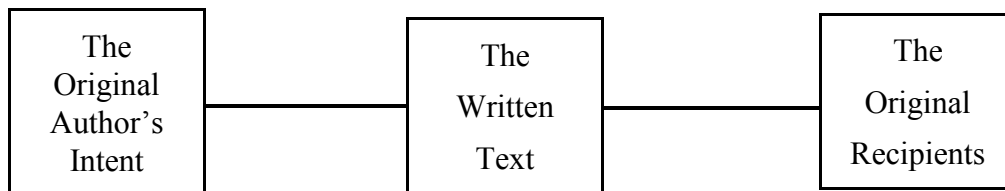
us to understand! Therefore, it must be interpreted in light of its day, not ours. The Bible cannot mean to us what it never meant to those who first read or heard it. It is understandable by the average human mind and uses normal human communication forms and techniques.

3. I believe the Bible has a unified message and purpose. It does not contradict itself, though it does contain difficult and paradoxical passages. Thus, the best interpreter of the Bible is the Bible itself.
4. I believe that every passage (excluding prophecies) has one and only one meaning based on the intent of the original, inspired author. Although we can never be absolutely certain we know the original author's intent, many indicators point in its direction:
  1. the genre (literary type) chosen to express the message
    - (a) the historical setting and/or specific occasion that elicited the writing
    - (b) the literary context of the entire book as well as each literary unit
    - (c) the textual design (outline) of the literary units as they relate to the whole message
    - (d) the specific grammatical features employed to communicate the message
    - (e) the words chosen to present the message

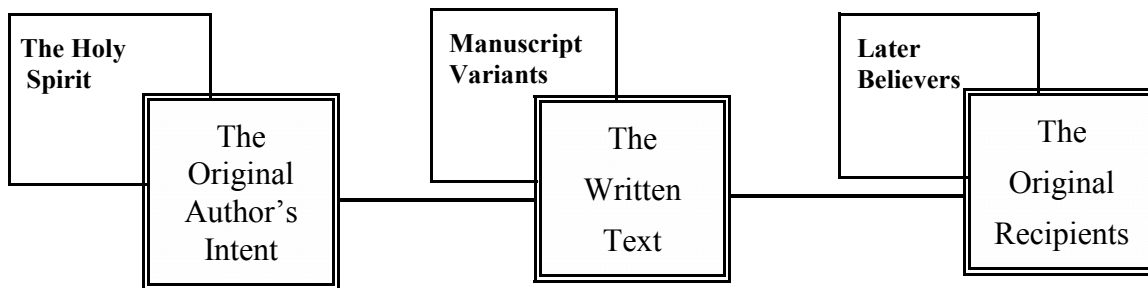
The study of each of these areas becomes the object of our study of a passage. Before I explain my methodology for good Bible reading, let me delineate some of the inappropriate methods being used today that have caused so much diversity of interpretation, and that consequently should be avoided:

1. Ignoring the literary context of the books of the Bible and using every sentence, clause, or even individual words as statements of truth unrelated to the author's intent or the larger context. This is often called "proof-texting."
2. Ignoring the historical setting of the books of the Bible by substituting a supposed historical setting that has little or no support from the text itself.
3. Ignoring the historical setting of the books of the Bible and reading it as the morning hometown newspaper written primarily to modern individual Christians.
4. Ignoring the historical setting of the books of the Bible by allegorizing the text into a philosophical/theological message totally unrelated to the first hearers and the original author's intent.
5. Ignoring the original message by substituting one's own system of theology, pet doctrine, or contemporary issue unrelated to the original author's purpose and stated message. This phenomenon often follows the initial reading of the Bible as a means of establishing a speaker's authority. This is often referred to as "reader response" (what-the-text-means-to-me" interpretation).

At least three related components may be found in all written human communication:



In the past, different reading techniques have focused on one of the three components. But to truly affirm the unique inspiration of the Bible, a modified diagram is more appropriate:



In truth all three components must be included in the interpretive process. For the purpose of verification, my interpretation focuses on the first two components: the original author and the text. I am probably reacting to the abuses I have observed: (1) allegorizing or spiritualizing texts and (2) “reader response” interpretation (what-it-means-to-me). Abuse may occur at each stage. We must always check our motives, biases, techniques, and applications. But how do we check them if there are no boundaries to interpretations, no limits, no criteria? This is where authorial intent and textual structure provide me with some criteria for limiting the scope of possible valid interpretations.

In light of these inappropriate reading techniques, what are some possible approaches to good Bible reading and interpretation which offer a degree of verification and consistency?

At this point I am not discussing the unique techniques of interpreting specific genres but general hermeneutical principles valid for all types of biblical texts. A good book for genre-specific approaches is *How To Read The Bible For All Its Worth*, by Gordon Fee and Douglas Stuart, published by Zondervan.

My methodology focuses initially on the reader allowing the Holy Spirit to illumine the Bible through four personal reading cycles. This makes the Spirit, the reader, and the text primary, not secondary. This also protects the reader from being unduly influenced by commentators. I have heard it said: “The Bible throws a lot of light on commentaries.” This is not meant to be a depreciating comment about study aids, but rather a plea for an appropriate timing for their use.

We must be able from the text itself to support our interpretations. Five areas provide at least limited verification:

- (1) historical setting
- (2) literary context
- (3) grammatical structures (syntax)
- (4) contemporary word usage
- (5) relevant parallel passages

We need to be able to provide the reasons and logic behind our interpretations. The Bible is our only source for faith and practice. Sadly, Christians often disagree about what it teaches or affirms.

Four reading cycles are designed to provide the following interpretive insights:

- (1) The first reading cycle
  - (a) Read the book during one sitting. Read it again in a different translation, hopefully from a different translation theory:
    - (i) word-for-word (NKJV, NASB, NRSV)
    - (ii) dynamic equivalent (TEV, JB)
    - (iii) paraphrase (Living Bible, Amplified Bible)
  - (b) Look for the central purpose of the entire writing. Identify its theme.
  - (c) Isolate (if possible) a literary unit, a chapter, a paragraph or a sentence which clearly expresses this central purpose or theme.

- (d) Identify the predominant literary genre:
  - (i) Old Testament
    - 1) Hebrew narrative
    - 2) Hebrew poetry (wisdom literature, psalm)
    - 3) Hebrew prophecy (prose, poetry)
    - 4) Law codes
  - (ii) New Testament
    - 1) Narratives (Gospels, Acts)
    - 2) Letters/epistles
    - 3) Apocalyptic literature
- (2) The second reading cycle
  - (a) Read the entire book again, seeking to identify major topics or subjects.
  - (b) Outline the major topics and briefly encapsulate their contents in a declarative statement.
  - (c) Check your purpose statement and broad outline with study aids.
- (3) The third reading cycle
  - (a) Read the entire book again, seeking to identify the historical setting and specific occasion for the writing.
  - (b) List the historical items:
    - (i) the author
    - (ii) the date
    - (iii) the recipients
    - (iv) the specific reason for writing
    - (v) aspects of the cultural setting that relate to the purpose of the writing
  - (c) Expand your outline to paragraph level for that part of the biblical book you are interpreting. Always identify and outline the literary unit. This may be several chapters or paragraphs. This enables you to follow the original author's logic and textual design.
  - (d) Check your historical setting by using study aids.
- (4) The fourth reading cycle
  - (a) Read the specific literary unit again in several translations.
  - (b) Look for literary or grammatical structures:
    - (i) repeated phrases
    - (ii) repeated grammatical structures
    - (iii) contrasting concepts
  - (c) List the following items:
    - (i) significant terms
    - (ii) unusual terms
    - (iii) important grammatical structures
    - (iv) particularly difficult words, clauses, and sentences
  - (d) Look for relevant parallel passages:
    - (i) look for the clearest teaching passage on your subject using:
      - a) "systematic theology" books
      - b) reference Bibles
      - c) concordances
    - (ii) look for a possible paradoxical pair within your subject; many biblical truths are presented in dialectical pairs; many denominational conflicts come from proof-texting half of a biblical tension. All of the Bible is inspired, and we must seek out its complete message in order to provide a Scriptural balance to our interpretation.

- (iii) look for parallels within the same book, same author or same genre; the Bible is its own best interpreter because it has one author, the Spirit.
- (e) Use study aids to check your observations of historical setting and occasion
  - (i) study Bibles
  - (ii) Bible encyclopedias, handbooks and dictionaries
  - (iii) Bible introductions
  - (iv) Bible commentaries (At this point in your study, allow the believing community, past and present, to aid and correct your personal study.)

At this point we turn to application. You have paid the price to understand the text in its original setting; now it must be applied to your life, your culture. I define biblical authority as “understanding what the original biblical author was saying to his day and applying that truth to our day.”

Application must follow interpretation of the original author's intent both in time and logic. One cannot apply a Bible passage to his own day until he knows what it was saying to its day! A Bible passage cannot mean what it never meant!

Your detailed outline, to paragraph level (reading cycle #3), will be your guide. Application should be made at paragraph level, not word level. Words only have meaning in context; clauses only have meaning in context; sentences only have meaning in context. The only inspired person involved in the interpretive process is the original author. We only follow his lead by the illumination of the Holy Spirit. But illumination is not inspiration. To say “thus saith the Lord,” we must abide in the original author's intent. Application must relate specifically to the general intent of the whole writing, the specific literary unit and paragraph level thought development.

Do not let the issues of our day interpret the Bible; let the Bible speak! This may require us to principalize the text. This is valid if the text supports a principle. Unfortunately, many times our principles are just that, “our” principles—not the text's principles.

In applying the Bible, it is important to remember that (except in prophecy) one and only one meaning may be valid for a particular Bible text. That meaning is related to the intent of the original author as he addressed a crisis or need in his day. Many possible applications may be derived from this one meaning. The application will be based on the recipients' needs but must be related to the original author's meaning.

So far I have discussed the logical process involved in interpretation and application. Now let me discuss briefly the spiritual aspect of interpretation. The following checklist has been helpful for me:

- (1) Pray for the Spirit's help (cf. I Cor. 1:26-2:16).
- (2) Pray for personal forgiveness and cleansing from known sin (cf. I Jn. 1:9).
- (3) Pray for a greater desire to know God (cf. Ps. 19:7-14; 42:1ff.; 119:1ff).
- (4) Apply any new insight immediately to your own life.
- (5) Remain humble and teachable.

It is so hard to keep the balance between the logical process and the spiritual leadership of the Holy Spirit. The following quotes have helped me balance the two:

- (1) from James W. Sire, *Scripture Twisting*, IVP, p. 17-18:

“The illumination comes to the minds of God's people—not just to the spiritual elite. There is no guru class in biblical Christianity, no illuminati, no people through whom all proper interpretation must come. And so, while the Holy Spirit gives special gifts of wisdom, knowledge and spiritual discernment, He does not assign these gifted Christians to be the only authoritative interpreters of his Word. It is up to each of His people to learn, to judge and to discern by reference to the Bible which stands as the authority even to those to whom God has given special abilities. To summarize, the assumption I am making throughout the entire book is that the Bible is God's true revelation to all humanity, that it is our ultimate authority on all matters about which it speaks, that it is not a total mystery but can be adequately understood by ordinary people in every culture.”

- (2) on Kierkegaard, found in Bernard Ramm, *Protestant Biblical Interpretation*, (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Book House, 1970), p. 75:

According to Kierkegaard the grammatical, lexical, and historical study of the Bible was necessary but preliminary to the true reading of the Bible. “To read the Bible *as God's word* one must read it with his heart in his mouth, on tip-toe, with eager expectancy, in conversation with God. To read the Bible thoughtlessly or carelessly or academically or professionally is not to read the Bible as God's Word. As one reads it as a love letter is read, then one reads it as the Word of God.”

- (3) H. H. Rowley in *The Relevance of the Bible*, p. 19:

“No merely intellectual understanding of the Bible, however complete, can possess all its treasures. It does not despise such understanding, for it is essential to a complete understanding. But it must lead to a spiritual understanding of the spiritual treasures of this book if it is to be complete. And for that spiritual understanding something more than intellectual alertness is necessary. Spiritual things are spiritually discerned, and the Bible student needs an attitude of spiritual receptivity, an eagerness to find God that he may yield himself to Him, if he is to pass beyond his scientific study unto the richer inheritance of this greatest of all books.”

The *Study Guide Commentary* is designed to aid your interpretive procedures in the following ways:

1. A brief historical outline introduces each book. After you have done “reading cycle #3” check your information.
2. Contextual insights are found at the beginning of each chapter. This will help you see how the literary unit is structured.
3. Paragraph divisions and their descriptive captions are provided from several modern translations:
  - a. The United Bible Society Greek text, fourth edition revised (UBS<sup>4</sup>)
  - b. The New American Standard Bible, 1995 update (NASB)
  - b. The New King James Version (NKJV)
  - c. The New Revised Standard Version (NRSV)
  - d. Today's English Version (TEV)
  - e. The Jerusalem Bible (JB)Paragraph divisions are not inspired. They must be ascertained from the context. By comparing several modern translations from differing translation theories and theological perspectives, one is able to analyze the supposed structure of the original author's thought. Each paragraph has one major truth. This has been called “the topic sentence” or “the central idea of the text.” This unifying thought is the key to proper historical, grammatical interpretation. One should never interpret, preach or teach on less than a paragraph! Also remember that each paragraph is related to its surrounding paragraphs. This is why a paragraph level outline of the entire book is so important. One must be able to follow the logical flow of the subject being addressed by the original inspired author.
4. The notes follow a verse-by-verse approach to interpretation. This forces us to follow the original author's thought. The notes provide information from several areas:
  - a. literary context
  - b. historical, cultural insights
  - c. grammatical information
  - d. word studies
  - e. relevant parallel passages



5. At certain points in the commentary, the text of the New American Standard Version, updated, will be supplemented by the translations of several other modern versions:
  - a. The New King James Version (NKJV), which follows the textual manuscripts of the “Textus Receptus.”
  - b. The New Revised Standard Version (NRSV), which is a word-for-word revision from the National Council of Churches of the Revised Standard Version.
  - c. The Today’s English Version (TEV), which is a dynamic equivalent translation from the American Bible Society.
  - d. The Jerusalem Bible (JB), which is an English translation based on a French Catholic dynamic equivalent translation.
6. For those who do not read Greek fluently, comparing English translations helps in identifying problems in the text:
  - a. manuscript variations
  - b. alternate word meanings
  - c. grammatically difficult texts and structure
  - d. ambiguous texts

Although the English translations cannot solve these problems, they do target them as places for deeper and more thorough study.
7. At the close of each chapter relevant discussion questions are provided which attempt to target the major interpretive issues of that chapter.

*Study Guide Commentary* Volumes now available:

|                        |  |
|------------------------|--|
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| Vol. 2                 | The Gospel According to Peter: Mark, I and II Peter                                |
| Vol. 3A                | Luke the Historian: The Gospel of Luke   |
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# OPENING LECTURE

## I. DEFINITIONS OF COMMONLY USED TERMS

### A. NAMES FOR DEITY

1. Lord (YHWH / Kurios)
2. God (Elohim / Theos)
3. Son of Man
4. Son of God
5. Savior
6. Jesus
7. Christ

### B. NAMES OF TEXTS AND TRANSLATIONS

1. Masoretic Text
2. Septuagint
3. Targums
4. Vulgate
5. Peshitta
6. Dead Sea Scrolls

### C. GLOSSARY OF TERMS (SEE APPENDIX ONE)

### D. TEXTUAL CRITICISM (SEE APPENDIX TWO)

### E. GREEK GRAMMATICAL TERMS THAT IMPACT INTERPRETATION (SEE APPENDIX THREE)

### III. BASIC TIME LINE OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

### III. BASIC MAP OF THE FIRST CENTURY MEDITERRANEAN WORLD

#### A. Bodies of Water

- |                      |                 |
|----------------------|-----------------|
| 1. Mediterranean Sea | 4. Aegean Sea   |
| 2. Black Sea         | 5. Nile River   |
| 3. Adriatic Sea      | 6. Jordan River |

#### B. Countries Mentioned in the NT

- |               |               |
|---------------|---------------|
| 1. Egypt      | 10. Galatia   |
| 2. Judea      | 11. Pamphylia |
| 3. Samaria    | 12. Lycia     |
| 4. Decapolis  | 13. Asia      |
| 5. Galilee    | 14. Bithynia  |
| 6. Syria      | 15. Pontus    |
| 7. Phoenicia  | 16. Achaia    |
| 8. Cilicia    | 17. Macedonia |
| 9. Cappadocia | 18. Illyricum |
|               | 19. Italy     |

#### C. Islands Mentioned in the NT

1. Cyprus
2. Crete
3. Patmos
4. Silicy
5. Malta

#### D. Major Cities

1. Alexandria
2. Memphis
3. Jerusalem
4. Antioch
5. Tarsus
6. Ephesus
7. Pergamum
8. Corinth
9. Athens
10. Rome
11. Thessalonica

# INTRODUCTION TO MATTHEW

## I. OPENING STATEMENT

- A. Until the time of the Renaissance/Reformation the Gospel of Matthew was thought to have been the first Gospel written (and still is by the Roman Catholic church).
- B. It was the most copied, most quoted, most used Gospel in catechism and in the early liturgy by the church for the first two centuries.
- C. William Barclay in *The First Three Gospels*, p. 19, said “When we turn to Matthew, we turn to the book which may well be called the most important single document of the Christian faith, for in it we have the fullest and the most systematic account of the life and the teachings of Jesus.”  
This is because it developed the teachings of Jesus in a thematic way. It was used to teach new converts (both Jew and Gentile) about the life and message of Jesus of Nazareth, the Christ.
- D. It forms a logical bridge between the Old and New Covenants, between Jewish believers and Gentile believers. It used the Old Testament in a promise/fulfillment format as did the early sermons of Acts which are called the *kerygma*. The Old Testament is quoted over fifty times and alluded to many more. Also, many of the titles and analogies used of YHWH are applied to Jesus.
- E. Therefore, the purposes of The Gospel According to Matthew were evangelism and discipleship, the twin aspects of the Great Commission (28:19-20).
  - 1. They were to help convert Jews by informing them of Jesus’ life and teachings,
  - 2. They were to disciple both believing Jews and Gentiles into how they should live as Christians.

## II. AUTHORSHIP

- A. Although the earliest copies of the Greek NT ( A.D. 200-400) have the designation “according to Matthew,” the book itself is anonymous.
- B. The uniform tradition of the early church is that Matthew (also known as Levi, cf. Mark 2:14; Luke 5:27,29), tax-collector (cf. Matt. 9:9; 10:3) and disciple of Jesus, wrote the Gospel.
- C. Matthew, Mark and Luke are strikingly similar:
  - 1. they often agree in form on OT quotes that are not found in the Masoretic text nor the Septuagint,
  - 2. they often quote Jesus in unusual grammatical constructions, even using rare Greek words,
  - 3. they often use phrases and even sentences of exactly the same Greek words,
  - 4. obviously literary borrowing has occurred.
- D. Several theories have been advanced concerning the relationship between Matthew, Mark and Luke (the Synoptic Gospels).

1. The uniform tradition of the early church is that Matthew (Levi), the tax-collector and disciple of Jesus, wrote the Gospel. The Apostle Matthew was unanimously affirmed to be the author until the Renaissance/Reformation.
2. Around 1776 A. E. Lessing (and later Gieseler in 1818), theorized an oral stage in the development of the Synoptic (“to see together”) Gospels. He asserted that they were all dependent on earlier oral traditions which the writers modified for their own target audiences:
  - a. Matthew: Jews
  - b. Mark: Romans
  - c. Luke: Gentiles

Each was related to a separate geographical center of Christianity

- a. Matthew: Antioch, Syria
  - b. Mark: Rome, Italy
  - c. Luke: Caesarea by the Sea, Palestine
  - d. John: Ephesus, Asia Minor
3. In the early nineteenth century J. J. Griesbach theorized that Matthew and Luke wrote separate accounts of Jesus’ life, completely independent of each other. Mark wrote a brief Gospel trying to mediate between these other two accounts.
  4. In the early twentieth century H. J. Holtzmann theorized that Mark was the first written Gospel and that both Matthew and Luke used his Gospel structure plus a separation document containing the sayings of Jesus called Q (German *quelle* or “source”). This was labeled the “two source” theory (also endorsed by Fredrick Schleiermacher in 1832).
  5. Later B. H. Streeter theorized a modified “two source” theory called “the four source” theory which posited a “proto Luke” plus Mark plus Q.
  6. The above theories of the formation of the Synoptic Gospels are only speculation. There is no historical nor actual manuscript evidence of either a “Q” source or a “proto Luke.”

Modern scholarship simply does not know how the Gospels developed nor who wrote them (the same is true of the OT Law and former Prophets). However, this lack of information does not affect the Church’s view of their inspiration or trustworthiness as historical as well as faith documents.

7. There are obvious similarities in structure and wording between the Synoptics, but there are also many arresting differences. Differences are common in eye witness accounts. The early church was not bothered by the divergence of these three eyewitness accounts of Jesus’ life.

It may be that the target audience, the style of the author and the different languages involved (Aramaic and Greek) account for the seeming discrepancies. It must be stated that these inspired writers, editors or compilers had the freedom to select, arrange, adapt and summarize the events and teachings of Jesus’ life (cf. *How to Read the Bible for All Its Worth* by Fee and Stuart, pp. 113-148).

- E. There is a tradition of the early church from Papias, the bishop of Hierapolis (A.D. 130), which was recorded in Eusebius’ *Historical Ecclesiasticus* 3:39:16, that Matthew wrote his Gospel in Aramaic. However, modern scholarship has rejected this tradition because

1. the Greek of Matthew does not have the characteristics of a translation from Aramaic
2. there are Greek word plays (cf. 6:16; 21:41; 24:30)
3. most of the OT quotes are from the Septuagint (LXX) not the Masoretic Hebrew Texts

It is possible that 10:3 is a hint at Matthew’s authorship. It adds “tax-gatherer” after his name. This self-deprecating comment is not found in Mark. Matthew also was not a well known person in the NT or early church. Why would so much tradition have developed around his name and this first apostolic Gospel?

### III. DATE

- A. In many ways the date of the Gospel is linked to the Synoptic problem. Which Gospel was written first and who borrowed from whom?
  - 1. Eusebius, in *Historical Ecclesiasticus*, 3:39:15 said Matthew used Mark as a structural guide.
  - 2. Augustine, however, called Mark “a camp follower” and an abbreviator of Matthew.
  
- B. The best approach would be to try to set the limits of possible dates
  - 1. It must have been written before A.D. 96 or 115
    - a. Clement of Rome ( A.D. 96) made an allusion to Matthew’s Gospel in his letter to the Corinthians.
    - b. Ignatius ( A.D. 110-115), the Bishop of Antioch, quoted Matthew 3:15 in his letter *To the Smyrneans*, 1:1
  - 2. The more difficult question is how early could it have been written?
    - a. obviously after the events recorded which would be in the mid 30's
    - b. some time would have had to pass for its need, composition, and circulation
    - c. what is chapter 24's relationship to the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70? Parts of Matthew imply the sacrificial system was still in place (5:23-24; 12:5-7; 17:24-27; 26:60-61). This means a date before A.D. 70
    - d. if Matthew and Mark were written during the time of Paul’s ministry (A.D. 48-68) why does he never refer to them? Irenaeus is quoted by Eusebius in *Historical Ecclesiasticus* 5:8:2, to say that Matthew wrote his Gospel while Peter and Paul were in Rome. Peter and Paul were both killed during Nero’s reign which ended in A.D. 68
    - e. modern scholarship’s earliest guess is A.D. 50
  
- C. Many scholars believe that the four Gospels relate more to geographical centers of Christianity than to the traditional authors. Matthew may have been written from Antioch of Syria, because of its Jewish/Gentile church issues, possibly about A.D. 60 or at least before A.D. 70.

### IV. RECIPIENTS

- A. As the authorship and date of the Gospel are uncertain, so are the recipients. It seems best to relate it to both believing Jews and Gentiles. The Church at Antioch of Syria of the first century fits this profile best.
  
- B. Origen is quoted by Eusebius in *Historical Ecclesiasticus* 6:25:4, that it was written for Jewish believers.

### V. STRUCTURAL OUTLINE

- A. How is this Gospel structured? One can best find the intent of the original inspired author by analyzing the structure of the entire book.
  
- B. Scholarship has suggested several structures
  - 1. the geographical movements of Jesus
    - a. Galilee
    - b. north of Galilee
    - c. Perea and Judea (while traveling to Jerusalem)
    - d. in Jerusalem

2. Matthew's five thematic units. They are discernable by the recurrent phrase "And when Jesus had finished these things" (cf. 7:28; 11:1; 13:53; 19:1; 26:1). Many scholars see these five units as Matthew's attempt to portray Jesus as the "new Moses," with each unit being analogous to one of the five books of Moses (Gen., Exod., Lev., Num. Deut.)
    - a. a chiasmic structure which alternates between narrative and discourse sections
    - b. a theological/biographical format which picks up on the recurrent phrase "from that time on Jesus began. . ." (cf. 4:17; 16:21) thereby dividing the book into three sections (1:1-4:16; 4:17-16:20; and 16:21-28:29)
    - c. Matthew's emphasis on OT predictive passages by use of the key term "fulfillment" (cf. 1:22; 2:15,17,23; 4:14; 8:17; 12:17; 13:35; 21:4; 27:9 and 27:35)
- C. The "gospels" are a unique literary genre. They are not biographical. They are not historical narrative. They are a selective theological, highly structured literary type. Each of the Gospel writers chose from the life events and teachings of Jesus to uniquely present Him to their target audience. The Gospels were evangelistic tracts.

## VI. TERMS AND PHRASES TO BRIEFLY IDENTIFY

1. Messiah, 1:1
2. Virgin, 1:23,25
3. Immanuel, 1:23
4. Magi, 2:1
5. Nazarene, 2:23
6. Repent, 3:2
7. Confess, 3:6
8. Pharisees, 3:7
9. Sadducees, 3:7
10. "remove His sandals," 3:11
11. "This is My beloved Son," 3:17
12. "pinnacle of the temple," 4:5
13. "the Law or the Prophets," 5:17
14. "certificate of divorce," 5:31
15. "the footstool of His feet," 5:35
16. synagogue, 6:2
17. "the narrow gate," 7:13
18. scribe, 8:19
19. "demon-possessed," 8:28
20. "reclining at the table," 9:10
21. wineskins, 9:17
22. flute-players, 9:23
23. apostles, 10:2
24. yoke, 11:29,30
25. "this age or the age to come," 12:32
26. parable, 13:3
27. tares, 13:25
28. "the tradition of the elders," 15:2
29. hades, 16:18

30. transfigured, 17:2
31. lunatic, 17:15
32. "the two-drachma tax," 17:24
33. denarius, 20:2,9
34. Hosanna literally "save us now," Aramaic, "royal power to" , 21:9
35. "birth pangs," 24:8
36. "abomination of desolation" 26:64
37. talent, 25:20
38. "the whole Council," 26:59
39. "coming on the clouds of heaven," 26:64
40. "Field of Blood," 27:8
41. Praetorium, 27:27
42. "Golgotha," 27:33
43. "but some were doubtful," 28:17

## VII. PERSONS TO BRIEFLY IDENTIFY

1. Zerubbabel, 1:12
2. Herod, 2:13
3. Son of David, 9:27
4. Son of Man, 10:23
5. My Servant, 12:18
6. Beelzebul, 12:24
7. Herodias, 14:6
8. Simon Barjona, 16:17
9. "chief priests and elders," 21:23
10. Herodians, 22:16
11. Rabbi, 23:7
12. Caiaphas, 26:3
13. Pilate, 27:2
14. Barabbas, 27:16
15. Mary Magdalene, 27:56
16. Joseph of Arimathea, 27:57

## VIII. MAP LOCATIONS TO PLOT

1. Bethlehem, 2:1
2. wilderness of Judea, 3:1
3. Galilee, 3:13
4. Nazareth, 4:13
5. Capernaum, 4:13
6. Sodom and Gomorrah, 10:15
7. Bethsaida, 11:21
8. Sidon, 15:21
9. Caesarea Philippi, 16:13
10. Mount of Olives, 21:2
11. Gethsemane, 26:36



## IX. DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Why do the genealogies of Matthew and Luke differ?
2. What do Tamar, Rahab, and Ruth have in common?
3. What do Elijah and John the Baptist have in common?
4. What is “the kingdom of heaven”?
5. What exactly was Satan tempting Jesus to do in the wilderness?
6. Explain 5:17 in your own words.
7. Explain 5:48 in your own words.
8. Explain 7:6 in your own words.
9. Why is 8:5-13 so unusual and significant?
10. Explain 10:38 in your own words.
11. Explain 10:19 in your own words.
12. Why did Jesus heal on the Sabbath?
13. What is blasphemy against the Spirit? (12:31-32)
14. How is germination related to fruit-bearing in the parable of the sower? (13)
15. Explain 13:44 in your own words.
16. Explain 15:11 in your own words.
17. Explain 16:20 in your own words.
18. Explain 18:8 in your own words.
19. Does every believer have a guardian angel?
20. Explain 19:17 in relation to Jesus being the Son of God.
21. Explain 21:18-19 in your own words.
22. Why did Jesus speak so harshly to the scribes and Pharisees in chapter 23?
23. What is the significance of 24:36?

# INTRODUCTION TO MARK

## I. OPENING STATEMENT

- A. The ancient church usually bypassed copying, studying, and teaching Mark in preference to Matthew and Luke because they saw Mark as a “reader’s digest” version (i.e. abridged gospel), a view which is specifically stated later by Augustine.
- B. Mark is not often quoted by the early Greek church fathers or the second century apologists (defenders of the faith).
- C. Since the rise of the modern historical-grammatical approach to biblical interpretation, the Gospel of Mark has taken on new significance because it is viewed as the first written Gospel. Both Matthew and Luke use it in their presentations of Jesus’ life and significance. Thereby Mark becomes the foundational document of the church, the first official account of Jesus’ life.

## II. GENRE

- A. The Gospels are not modern biographies or histories. They are selective theological writings used to introduce Jesus to different audiences and bring them to faith in Him. They are “good news” accounts of Jesus’ life for the purpose of evangelism (cf. John 20:30-31).
- B. Mark addresses four distinct historical settings and four theological purposes
  1. the life and teachings of Jesus
  2. the life and ministry of Peter
  3. the needs of the early church
  4. the evangelistic purpose of John Mark
- C. The four Gospels are unique in Near Eastern and Greco-Roman literature. The inspired authors had the Spirit-led task of selecting Jesus’ teachings and actions which clearly revealed His character and/or purpose.

They arranged these words and actions in different ways. One example would be in comparing Matthew’s Sermon on the Mount (Matt. 5-7) with Luke’s Sermon on the Plain. It becomes obvious that Matthew tended to collect all of Jesus’ teachings into one long sermon, while Luke spread these same teachings throughout his Gospel. This same thing could be said about Matthew putting Jesus’ miracles together, while Luke spreads them throughout his Gospel.

This implies the Gospel writers’ ability not only to select and arrange Jesus’ teachings, but also to adapt them for their own theological purposes (read Fee and Stuart’s *How to Read the Bible For All Its Worth*, pp. 113-134). When reading the Gospels one must continue to ask what theological point these writers are trying to make. Why include this particular event, miracle, lesson here?
- D. Mark’s Gospel is a good example of Koine Greek as a second language of the people of the Mediterranean world. Mark’s mother tongue was Aramaic (as was Jesus’ and all Jews in first century Palestine). This Semitic flavor is characteristic of Mark’s Gospel.

### III. AUTHORSHIP

- A. John Mark has traditionally been identified with the Apostle Peter in writing this Gospel. The work itself (like all the Gospels) is anonymous.
- B. Another evidence of Peter's eyewitness account is the fact that Mark does not record three special events in which Peter was personally involved.
1. his walking on water (cf. Matt. 14:28-33)
  2. his being the spokesperson at Caesarea Philippi for the faith of the Twelve (cf. Matt. 16:13-20), in Mark only 8:27-30 and the "on this rock" and "keys of the kingdom" passages are omitted.
  3. his procurement of the temple tax for himself and Jesus (cf. Matt. 17:24-27)
- Perhaps Peter's modesty motivated him not to emphasize these events in his sermons.
- C. Early church tradition
1. I Clements, written from Rome about A.D. 95, alludes to Mark (as does *Shepherd of Hermes*).
  2. Papias, the bishop of Hierapolis (about A.D. 130), wrote *Interpretation of the Lord's Sayings*, which is quoted by Eusebius (A.D. 275-339) in his *Ecclesiastical History* 3.39.15. He asserts that Mark was Peter's interpreter who recorded accurately, but not chronologically, Peter's memories of Jesus. Apparently Mark took and adapted Peter's sermons and organized them into a Gospel presentation. Papias claims to have received this information from "the elder," which could refer to the Apostle John.
  3. Justin Martyr (A.D. 150), in quoting Mark 3:17, adds that it comes from Peter's memory.
  4. The Anti-Marcionite Prologue to Mark, written about A.D. 180, identifies Peter as the eyewitness of Mark's Gospel. It also states that Mark wrote the Gospel from Italy after Peter's death (traditionally in Rome around A.D. 65).
  5. Irenaeus, writing about A.D. 180, mentions John Mark as Peter's interpreter and compiler of his memoirs after his death (cf. *Contra Haereses* 3:1:2).
  6. Clement of Alexandria (A.D. 195) asserts that those who heard Peter preach in Rome asked Mark to record these sermons.
  7. The Muratorian Fragment (i.e. canon), written about A.D. 200 from Rome, although the text is incomplete, seems to affirm John Mark's recording Peter's sermons.
  8. Tertullian (A.D. 200) in *Against Marcion* (4:5) says Mark published Peter's memories.
  9. In *The Expositor's Bible Commentary* Vol. 8, p. 606, Walter Wessel makes the interesting comment that the above early church traditions are from geographically diverse church centers
    - a. Papias from Asia Minor
    - b. Anti-Marcion Prologue and the Muratorian Fragment both from Rome
    - c. Irenaeus (cf. *Adv. Haer.* 3.1.1) from Lyons in France. Irenaeus' tradition is also found in Tertullian (cf. *Adv. Marc.* 4.5) from north Africa and Clement of Alexandria, Egypt (cf. *Hypotyposes* 6 quoted by Eusebius, *Eccl. His.* 2.15.1-2; 3.24.5-8; 6:14:6-7). This geographical diversity gives credence to its trustworthiness because of the tradition's wide acceptance in early Christianity.
  10. According to Eusebius' *Eccl. His.* 4:25, Origen (A.D. 230) in *Commentary on Matthew* (there is no known commentary on Mark by anyone until the fifth century) says Mark wrote the Gospel as Peter explained it to him.

11. Eusebius himself discusses the Gospel of Mark in *Eccl. His.* 2.15 and says Mark recorded Peter's sermons at the behest of those who heard them so that they could be read in all the churches. Eusebius bases this tradition on the writings of Clement of Alexandria.
- D. What do we know about John Mark
1. His mother was a well known believer in Jerusalem in whose house the church met (possibly the night of the Lord's Supper, cf. Mark 14:14-15; Acts 1:13-14; Acts 12:12). He was possibly the unnamed man who fled from Gethsemane (Mark 14:51-52).
  2. He accompanied his uncle Barnabas (cf. Col. 4:10) and Paul back to Antioch from Jerusalem (Acts 12:25).
  3. He was a companion of Barnabas and Paul on the first missionary journey (Acts 13:5), but returned home suddenly (Acts 13:13).
  4. Later Barnabas wanted to take Mark on a second missionary journey, but this caused a terrible disagreement between Barnabas and Paul (Acts 15:37-40).
  5. He was later reunited with Paul and became a friend and co-worker (Col. 4:10; II Tim. 4:11; Philemon 24).
  6. He was a companion and co-worker with Peter (I Pet. 5:13), possibly in Rome.
- E. Mark's personal knowledge of the life of Jesus seems confirmed by 14:51-52, where a man flees naked from the garden of Gethsemane just after Jesus' arrest. This unusual and totally unexpected detail seems to reflect Mark's personal experience.

#### IV. DATE

- A. The Gospel is the eyewitness account and interpretation of Jesus' life, actions, and teachings, apparently taken from Peter's sermons. They were compiled and distributed after his death, so says the Anti-Marcionite Prologue and Irenaeus (who also adds after the death of Paul). Both Peter and Paul were martyred under Nero (A.D. 54-68) in Rome (church tradition). The exact dates are uncertain, but if true, then probably the date of Mark was in the mid sixties.
- B. It is possible that the Anti-Marcionite Prologue and Irenaeus do not refer to Peter's death, but his departure (i.e. exodus) from Rome. There is some traditional evidence (i.e. Justin and Hippolytus) that Peter visited Rome during the reign of Claudius (A.D. 41 to 54), (Eusebius' *Eccl. His.* 2.14.6).
- C. It seems that Luke concludes Acts with Paul still in prison in the early sixties. If it is true that Luke used Mark in his Gospel, then it must have been written before Acts and, therefore, earlier than the early sixties.
- D. The authorship and date of Mark does not in any way affect the historical/theological/evangelistic truths of this (or any) Gospel. Jesus, not the human author, is the key figure!
- E. It is surprising that none of the Gospels (even John, written A.D. 95-96) refers or alludes to the destruction of Jerusalem (cf. Matt. 24; Mark 13; Luke 21) in A.D. 70 by the Roman general, later Emperor, Titus. Mark was probably written before this event. It is even possible that Matthew and Luke were written before this major judgment on Judaism. It simply must be stated that the exact dates for the composition of the Synoptic Gospels are uncertain at this time (as is their literary relationship to one another).

#### V. RECIPIENTS

- A. Mark is connected to Rome by several early church writers
  - 1. I Peter 5:13
  - 2. Anti-Marcionite Prologue (Italy)
  - 3. Irenaeus (Rome, cf. *Adv. Haer.* 3.1.2)
  - 4. Clement of Alexandria (Rome cf. Eusebius *Eccl. Hist.* 4.14.6-7; 6.14.5-7)
  
- B. Mark does not specifically state his purposes in writing the Gospel. There have been several theories.
  - 1. an evangelistic tract (cf. 1:1) written specifically to Romans (cf. 1:15; 10:45)
    - a. Jewish elements interpreted (cf. 7:3-4; 14:12; 15:42)
    - b. Aramaic words translated (cf. 3:17; 5:41; 7:1,34; 10:46; 14:36; 15:22,34)
    - c. use of many Latin words (cf. executioner, 6:27; sextanus, 7:4; census, 12:14; quadrans, 12:42; praetorium, 15:16; centurio, 15:39; flagellare, 15:42)
    - d. inclusive language in relation to Jesus
      - (1) inclusive language relating to those in Palestine (cf. 1:5,28,33,39; 2:13; 4:1; 6:33,39,41,55)
      - (2) inclusive language relating to all people (cf. 13:10)
  - 2. persecution following the fire in Rome in A.D. 64, which Nero blamed on the Christians, initiated a terrible wave of persecution towards believers. Mark often mentions persecution (cf. Jesus' suffering 8:31; 9:39; 10:33-34,45 and His followers' suffering 8:34-38; 10:21,30,35-44).
  - 3. the delayed Second Coming
  - 4. the death of eyewitnesses to Jesus, especially the Apostles
  - 5. the rise of heresies within the wide-spread Christian churches
    - a. Judaizers (Galatians)
    - b. Gnostics (I John)
    - c. the combination of a. and b. (i.e. Colossians and Ephesians; II Pet. 2)

## VI. STRUCTURAL OUTLINE

- A. Mark is structured in such a way that the last week of Jesus' life is the focus of over one-third of the book. The theological significance of the Passion Week is obvious.
  
- B. Since Mark is, according to early church tradition, taken from Peter's sermons, (i.e., probably in Rome) it becomes evident why no birth narratives were included. Mark begins where Peter's experience starts, with Jesus as an adult, and is theologically related to John the Baptist's message of repentance and faith in preparation for the work of Messiah.
 

Peter's sermons must have used the concepts of "Son of Man" and "Son of God." The Gospel reflects Peter's own theology of Jesus' person. At first He was a great teacher and healer, but He became Messiah! This Messiah was not the expected conquering military general, but a Suffering Servant (cf. Isaiah 53).
  
- C. Mark's basic geographical structural outline is shared by the other Synoptic Gospels (i.e., Matthew and Luke)
  - 1. a Galilean Ministry (1:14-6:13)
  - 2. ministry outside Galilee (6:14-8:30)
  - 3. the journey to Jerusalem (8:31-10:52)
  - 4. the last week in the Jerusalem area (11:1-16:8)

- D. It is even possible that Mark's structure emulates the basic pattern of early Apostolic preaching (i.e., Acts 10:37-43, cf. C. H. Dodd's *New Testament Studies* pp. 1-11). If this is true then the written Gospels are the culmination of a period of oral traditions (i.e., *kerygma*). Judaism considered oral teaching to be superior to written texts.
- E. Mark is characterized by a fast moving account (i.e., "immediately," cf. 1:10) of the life of Jesus. Mark does not record long teaching sessions, but moves rapidly from event to event (i.e. his repeated use of "immediately"). Mark's Gospel reveals Jesus by His actions. However, this fast-paced account is strewn with vivid eyewitness details (i.e. Peter).

## VII. TERMS AND PHRASES TO BRIEFLY IDENTIFY

1. a baptism of repentance, 1:4
2. clothes with camel's hair, 1:5
3. like a dove, 1:10
4. forty days, 1:13
5. the kingdom of God is at hand, 1:15
6. synagogue, 1:23
7. blasphemy, 2:7
8. scribes, 2:6
9. wineskins, 2:22
10. parables, 4:2
11. cloak, 5:27
12. leaven of the Pharisees, 8:15
13. Get behind me, Satan, 8:33
14. transfigured, 9:2
15. hell (Gehenna), 9:47
16. a house of prayer for all nations, 11:17
17. denarius, 12:15
18. the Passover, 14:1
19. nard, 14:3
20. this cup, 14:36
21. the hour has come, 14:41
22. Preparation Day, 15:42
23. first day of the week, 16:2

## VIII. PERSONS TO BRIEFLY IDENTIFY

1. Simon, 1:16
2. Zebedee, 1:20
3. unclean spirit, 1:23
4. Levi, 2:14
5. Abiathar, 2:26
6. the Cananaen, 3:18
7. Beelzebul, 3:22
8. Legion, 5:9
9. King Herod, 6:14

10. Herodias, 6:17
11. Syrophoenician, 7:26
12. Bartimaeus, 10:46
13. Caesar, 12:14
14. abomination of desolation, 13:14
15. the elect, 13:20
16. false Christ, 13:22
17. chief priests, 14:1
18. Abba, 14:36
19. the Council, 14:55
20. Barabbas, 15:7, 11
21. Simon of Cyrene, 15:21
22. Salome, 15:40
23. centurion, 15:45

#### IX. MAP LOCATIONS TO PLOT

1. Judea, 1:4
2. Jerusalem, 1:4
3. Jordan River, 1:5
4. Nazareth, 1:9
5. Galilee, 1:9
6. Capernaum, 1:21
7. Idumea, 3:8
8. Tyre, 3:8
9. Sidon, 3:8
10. Gerasenes, 5:1
11. Decapolis, 5:20
12. Bethsaida, 6:45
13. Dalmanutha, 8:10
14. Jericho, 10:46
15. Mount of Olives, 11:1
16. Gethsemane, 14:32

#### X. DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What is the baptism with the Spirit? (1:8)
2. What are the requirements of the new covenant? (1:15)
3. Why were Jesus' hearers amazed at His teachings? (1:22)
4. Why did Jesus not permit the demons to speak? (1:34)
5. Why did Jesus tell those He healed not to tell anyone? (1:43)
6. Why is Jesus accused of blasphemy in chapter 2?
7. Explain 2:17 in your own words.
8. Why did Jesus heal on the Sabbath so often?
9. Why did Jesus teach in parables? (3:10-13)
10. Explain the parable of the soils in your own words (4:3-9).
11. Why could Jesus not do many miracles in His own hometown? (6:4-6)
12. Why did Jesus walk on the water in chapter 6?

13. Explain Isaiah's prophesy in 7:6-7.
14. Explain 7:15 in your own words.
15. Why does Mark quote Jesus' Aramaic words?
16. Explain 8:38 in your own words.
17. Why do the Pharisees ask Jesus about divorce in chapter 10?
18. Why were the disciples surprised (10:26) at what Jesus said in 10:25?
19. Why does Jesus ride on a baby donkey in chapter 11?
20. Why did Jesus cleanse the temple in chapter 11?
21. Why is 11:28 such an important question?
22. Why is the parable at the beginning of chapter 12 so powerful and to whom does it refer?
23. What is the greatest Old Testament commandment?
24. Why is 13:30 so hard to interpret?
25. Explain 15:34 in your own words.



# INTRODUCTION TO LUKE

## I. OPENING STATEMENTS

- A. Luke is the longest Gospel. Luke-Acts (if one rejects Hebrews as Pauline) contain the largest number of pages by any author in the New Testament and he is a Gentile and a second-generation Christian!
- B. Luke writes the best Koine Greek of all the New Testament writers with the possible exception of the author of Hebrews. Greek apparently was his mother tongue. He was also highly educated and a physician (cf. Col. 4:14).
- C. Luke accentuates Jesus' love and care for those whom the Jewish leaders never even noticed:
  - 1. women (e.g., Mary, Elizabeth, Anna, Mary and Martha, etc.)
  - 2. the poor (cf. Luke's Beatitudes, Luke 6:20-23 and teachings on wealth, cf. 12:13-21; 16:9-13,19-31)
  - 3. the socially, racially, and religiously ostracized
    - a. immoral women (cf. 7:36-50)
    - b. Samaritans (cf. 9:51-56; 10:29-37; 17:11-16)
    - c. lepers (cf. 17:11-19)
    - d. tax collectors (cf. 3:12-13; 18:9-14;19:1-10)
    - e. criminals (cf. 23:35-43)
- D. Luke records the eye-witness memories of Mary (i.e. the first two chapters of Acts) and also possibly her genealogy (i.e. 3:23-38). Luke's Gospel records Jesus' concern for both Jews and Gentiles.

## II. AUTHOR

- A. Unanimous early church tradition
  - 1. Irenaeus (A. D. 175-195, *Against Heresies*, 3.1.1; 3.14.10) says specifically that Luke recorded in a book the gospel preached by Paul.
  - 2. Anti-Marcion Prologue to Luke (A.D. 175) says Luke was the author of the Gospel.
  - 3. Tertullian (A.D. 150-160-220/240 in *Against Marcion* 4:2,3; 4: 5,3) says Luke wrote a digest of Paul's gospel
  - 4. Muratorian Fragment (A.D. 180-200) names Luke as the author and calls him a physician companion of Paul. Also it says that he wrote his account by hearsay (meaning he interviewed eye-witnesses).
  - 5. Origen, quoted by Eusebius from his commentary on Matthew (*Hist. Eccl.* 6.25.6), asserts Luke's authorship of the Gospel.
  - 6. Eusebius (*Hist. Eccl.* 3.4.2,6-7) also affirms Luke's authorship of both the Gospel of Luke and Acts.
- B. Internal evidence for Luke's authorship
  - 1. This gospel, like so many biblical works, is anonymous

2. If Luke-Acts is a two volume set, which seems true from the similar introduction, then the “we” sections of Acts (cf. 16:10-17; 20:5-16; 21:1-18; 27:1-28:16) imply an eye-witness account of Paul’s missionary activity.
3. The introduction to Luke (cf. 1:1-4) states that Luke researched eye-witness accounts in order to write a historical approach to Jesus’ life which shows he was a second-generation believer. The Introduction to Luke also covers Acts. Luke and Acts slightly overlap in time (i.e., post-resurrection events).

### III. LUKE, THE MAN

- A. Anti-Marcion Prologue to Luke (A.D. 175)
  1. native of Antioch of Syria
  2. physician
  3. single
  4. follower of Paul
  5. wrote from Achaia
  6. died at age 84 in Boeotia
  
- B. Eusebius of Casarea (A.D. 275-339) in *Hist. Eccl.* III.4.2
  1. from Antioch
  2. missionary companion of Paul
  3. wrote the Gospel and Acts
  
- C. Jerome (A.D. 346-420 in *Migna* XXVI. 18)
  1. wrote from Achaia
  2. died in Boeotia
  
- D. He was a highly educated man
  1. good Koine Greek grammar
  2. large vocabulary (esp. medical and nautical)
  3. research methods (cf. 1:1-4)
  4. he probably was a physician (cf. Col. 4:14). Also, Mark’s negative comments about physicians in Mark 5:26 is omitted in the parallel in Luke 8:43. Luke used terms related to medicine, cures, diseases, etc. at least 300 times (cf. W. K. Hobart, *The Medical Language of Luke*, or better, A. Harnack, *Luke the Physician*).
  
- E. He was a Gentile
  1. Paul seems to make a distinction in his list of helpers in Col. 4:10-11 (i.e., “who are from the circumcision”) and other helpers (i.e. Epaphras, Luke and Demas).
  2. In Acts 1:9 Luke says “in their own language,” referring to Aramaic which implies it was not his language.
  3. In his Gospel Luke omits all the controversies with Pharisees concerning the Jewish Oral Law.
  
- F. Of all people to be the writer of the longest Gospel and, with Acts, the writer of most of the New Testament, it is surprising that a little-known, non-eyewitness (i.e., non-Apostle) Gentile would be chosen. Yet, this is the unanimous tradition of the early church, no dissenters!

#### IV. DATE OF WRITING

- A. One never knows the exact relationship between (1) Luke's original research notes (probably done while Paul was in prison at Caesarea [cf. Acts 23-26 and specifically 24:27]); (2) his final draft (i.e. the Gospel of Luke as we know it using Mark and "Q"); and (3) circulation of Luke - Acts (to or for Theophilus).
- B. It must be before A.D. 95 if I Clement has quotes or allusions from Acts and Acts is subsequent to the gospel
  - 1. Acts 13:22 - I Clement, 18:1
  - 2. Acts 20:36 - I Clement, 2:1
- C. Acts must be before the destruction of Jerusalem (A.D. 70) by the Roman general, Titus
  - 1. no mention of the deaths of
    - 1. James the Apostle (A.D. 62)
    - 2. Paul the Apostle (A.D. 64-67)
  - 2. Stephen's sermon in Acts 7 does not include the destruction of the Temple which would powerfully illustrate God's judgment on Judaism
  - 3. Paul visits Jerusalem in Acts 21 and Luke, if he wrote after A.D. 70, would probably have mentioned the destruction of Jerusalem in his Gospel
- D. If Luke used the Gospel of Mark as an outline and/or Luke wrote close to the time of his research in Palestine, then the late fifties and early sixties (with Acts written soon after while Paul was still in prison in Rome, A.D. 62-63).

#### V. RECIPIENTS

- A. It is dedicated to Theophilus (cf. Luke 1:1-4; Acts 1:1). There are several theories as to his identity:
  - 1. a Roman governmental official because Luke calls him "most excellent" in Luke 1:3 and he uses this same title for Felix (cf. Acts 23:26; 24:3) and Festus (cf. Acts 26:25)
  - 2. a wealthy patron (Theophilus was a common name among Jews and Greeks) who helped pay the expenses for writing, copying and distributing Luke and Acts.
  - 3. his name means "God loved," "lover of God," therefore it is possibly a cryptic reference to some Christian
- B. Luke's Gospel is targeted to Gentiles
  - 1. It explains Jewish customs
  - 2. The gospel is for all people (cf. 2:10)
  - 3. It quotes prophecies which refer to "all flesh" (cf. 3:5-6 which is a quote from Isaiah 40)
  - 4. the genealogy goes back to Adam (i.e., all humans, cf. 3:38)
  - 5. many examples of God's love for Gentiles (e.g., Luke extends the boundaries of those welcomed to the Messianic banquet, 13:29)
  - 4. Old Testament examples, announce God's love for Gentiles (cf. 2:32; 4:25-77)
  - 5. Luke's Great Commission - forgiveness preached to all nations (cf. 24:47)

## VI. PURPOSE(S) OF LUKE'S WRITINGS

- A. All of the Gospels were written to target specific groups of people for the purpose of evangelism (cf. John 20:30-31)
1. Matthew to Jews
  2. Mark to Romans
  3. Luke to Gentiles
  4. John to Gentiles
- Luke uniquely mentions the mission of the Seventy (cf. 10:1-24). For the rabbis, 70 was the number denoting the languages of the world (cf. Gen 10). By Jesus sending out 70 preachers of the good news, this would communicate that the gospel is for all people.
- B. Other possible purposes
1. to deal with the delayed Second Coming
    - a. Luke 21 is similar to, but slightly different from Matt. 24, Mark 13, concerning the imminent return of Christ and the end of the world.
    - b. However, Luke speaks of world evangelization which takes time for the church to accomplish (cf. 24:47).
    - c. Also Luke (like Paul) emphasizes that the Kingdom of God is here now (cf. 10:9, 11; 11:20; 17:21) as well as future.
    - d. A good summary of the opinions and discussions of biblical scholars can be seen in The Anchor Bible, vol. 28, pp. 231-235.
  2. to explain Christianity to Roman governmental officials (as does Acts)
    - a. title "most excellent" in introduction
    - b. Luke 23 has Pilate saying three times, "I find no fault in this man" (cf. 23:4, 14-15, 22)
    - c. the government officials in Acts are presented in a good light and Paul's addresses to Roman officials show respect to them and they respond positively in return to him (cf. Acts 26:31-32)
    - d. the Roman centurion, at the crucifixion also gives a positive witness to Jesus (cf. Luke 23:47)
- C. There are some unique theological themes that play a role in the purposes for Luke's writings
1. Luke shows special care to certain groups of people.
    - a. The poor vs. the rich (e.g., Luke's Beatitudes, Luke 6:20-23)
    - b. The outcasts
      - (1) immoral women (cf. Luke 7:36-50)
      - (2) Samaritans (cf. Luke 9:51-56; 10:29-37)
      - (3) rebellious runaways (cf. Luke 15:11-32)
      - (4) tax collectors (cf. Luke 19:1-10)
      - (5) lepers (cf. Luke 17:11-19)
      - (6) criminals (cf. Luke 23:39-43)
  2. Luke mentions the Temple in Jerusalem. The Gospel begins with the Jews and their Scriptures (i.e., Jesus fulfills OT prophesy), but they reject Him (cf. 11:14-36) and He becomes the Savior of the entire world (cf. 10:1-24) and replaces their temple with Himself (cf. ??).

## VII. THE SOURCES FOR LUKE'S GOSPEL

### A. Several theories have been advanced concerning the relationship between Matthew, Mark and Luke (the Synoptic Gospels)

1. The uniform tradition of the early church is that Luke, a Gentile physician and missionary companion of the Apostle Paul, wrote the Gospel.
2. Around 1776 A. E. Lessing (and later Gieseler in 1818), theorized an oral stage in the development of the Synoptic ("to see together") Gospels. He asserted that they were all dependent on earlier oral traditions which the writers modified for their own target audiences
  - a. Matthew: Jews
  - b. Mark: Romans
  - c. Luke: Gentiles

Each was related to a separate geographical center of Christianity

- a. Matthew: Antioch, Syria or Judea
  - b. Mark: Rome, Italy
  - c. Luke: Caesarea by the Sea, Palestine or Achaia
  - d. John: Ephesus, Asia Minor
3. In the early nineteenth century J. J. Griesbach theorized that Matthew and Luke wrote separate accounts of Jesus' life, completely independent of each other. Mark wrote a brief Gospel trying to mediate between these other two accounts.
  4. In the early twentieth century H. J. Holtzmann theorized that Mark was the first written Gospel and that both Matthew and Luke used his Gospel structure plus a separation document containing the sayings of Jesus called Q (German *quelle* or "source"). This was labeled the "two source" theory (endorsed by Fredrick Schleiermacher in 1832).

Some speculate that this list of quotes from Jesus, structured like OT wisdom literature, may be what Papias records that Matthew wrote. The problem is that not one copy of this list of sayings survived. If the church cherished the Gospels so much, how could they lose a list of the sayings of the Founder of the Faith used by both Matthew and Luke?

5. Later, B. H. Streeter theorized a modified "two source" theory that he called "the four source" theory which posited a "proto Luke" plus Mark plus Q.
6. The above theories of the formation of the Synoptic Gospels are only speculation. There is no historical nor actual manuscript evidence of either a "Q" source or a "proto Luke."

Modern scholarship simply does not know how the Gospels developed nor who wrote them (the same is true of the OT Law and former Prophets). However, this lack of information does not affect the Church's view of their inspiration or trustworthiness as historical as well as faith documents.

7. There are obvious similarities in structure and wording between the Synoptics, but there are also many arresting differences. Differences are common in eyewitness accounts. The early church was not bothered by the divergence of these three eyewitness accounts of Jesus' life.

It may be that the target audience, the style of the author and the different languages involved (Aramaic and Greek) account for the seeming discrepancies. It must be stated that these inspired writers, editors or compilers had the freedom to select, arrange, adapt and summarize the events and teachings of Jesus' life (cf. *How to Read the Bible for All Its Worth* by Fee and Stuart, pp. 113-148).

### B. Luke specifically claims that he did research (cf. Luke 1:1-4) into Jesus' life from eye-witnesses. Paul's imprisonment at Caesarea by the Sea in Palestine allowed Luke time and access to these

people. Chapters 1-2 may reflect Mary's memories (cf. Sir William Ramsay, *Was Christ Born at Bethlehem?*) as does the genealogy of chapter 3.

- C. Several of the early church sources mention that Luke was a traveling missionary companion of the Apostle Paul. Some of these early sources also assert that Luke's Gospel was affected by Paul's preaching. It cannot be denied that the worldwide mission of the gospel is clearly identified as fulfilled prophecy in Luke, Acts, and Paul's writings.

## VIII. THE UNIQUENESS OF LUKE

- A. The first two chapters are unique to Luke and may have come from Mary, as does the genealogy of 3:23-28.
- B. Miracles unique to Luke
  1. son of the widow of Nain resuscitated, 7:12-17
  2. sick woman in synagogue healed on the Sabbath, 13:10-17
  3. sick man in synagogue healed on the Sabbath, 14:1-6
  4. ten lepers healed, only one, a Samaritan, returns to give thanks, 17:11-18
- C. Parables unique to Luke
  1. the good Samaritan, 10:25-37
  2. the persistent friend, 11:5-13
  3. the rich fool, 12:13-21
  4. the lost coin, 15:8-10
  5. the two sons, 15:11-32
  6. the unrighteous steward, 16:1-8
  7. the rich man and Lazarus, 16:19-31
  8. the unrighteous judge, 18:1-8
  9. the Pharisee and Publican, 18:9-14
- D. Parables in Luke that are also in Matthew but used differently
  1. 12:39-46 (Matt. 24:43-44)
  2. 14:16-24 (Matt. 22:2-14)
  3. 19:11-27 (Matt. 25:14-30)
- E. Other unique accounts
  1. the events of the first two chapters
  2. Zaccheus the tax-collector, 19:1-10
  3. Jesus sent to Herod by Pilate to be examined, 23:8-12
  4. the two on the road to Emmaus, 24:13-32
- F. The most unique elements in Luke are found in 9:51-18:14. Here Luke does not rely on Mark or "Q" (i.e., sayings of Jesus possibly written by Matthew). Even similar events or teachings are put into a different form. The unifying theme of this section is "on the way to Jerusalem" (cf. 9:51; 13:22, 33; 17:11; 18:31; 19:11,28) which is really His journey to the cross.

## IX. TERMS AND PHRASES TO BRIEFLY IDENTIFY

1. barren, 1:7
2. redemption, 1:6;8
3. horn of salvation, 1:69
4. census, 2:1
5. zealot, 6:15
6. the kingdom of God, 6:20
7. played the flute, 7:32
8. synagogue official, 8:49
9. the Son of Man must suffer, 9:22
10. Samaritan, 10:33
11. Woe to you! 11:42, 43, 44, 47, 52
12. repent, 13:3, 5
13. the narrow door, 13:24
14. carry his own cross, 14:27
15. mammon, 16:11
16. the Law and the Prophets, 16:16
17. Abraham's bosom, 16:22
18. millstone, 17:2
19. until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled, 21:24
20. the Council of elders, 22:66
21. Paradise, 23:43

## X. PERSONS TO BRIEFLY IDENTIFY

1. Theophilus, 1:3
2. Zacharias, 1:5
3. an angel of the Lord, 1:11; 2:9
4. Gabriel, 1:26
5. Quirinius, 2:2
6. Anna, 2:36
7. Tiberius, 3:1
8. Herod the tetrarch, 3:1, 19
9. Caiaphas, 3:2
10. Naaman, 4:2
11. Queen of the south, 11:31
12. Zechariah, 10:51
13. Lazarus, 16:23
14. Zaccheus, 19:2
15. Joseph, 23:50
16. Cleopas, 24:18

## XI. MAP LOCATIONS TO PLOT

1. Galilee, 1:26
2. Nazareth, 1:4
3. Bethlehem, 1:4

4. Ituraea, 3:1
5. Bethsaida, 9:10
6. Chorazin, 10:13
7. Tyre, 10:13
8. Capernaum, 10:15
9. Samaria, 17:11
10. Sodom, 17:29
11. Jericho, 19:1
12. Emmaus, 24:13
13. Bethany, 24:50

## XII. DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What is the significance of God revealing the birth of Jesus to the shepherds first?
2. What is the significance of Jesus' statement in 2:49?
3. Why does the genealogy in Luke go all the way back to Adam?
4. How were the disciples breaking the law in 6:1-5? What law were they breaking?
5. Explain Jesus' words in 6:46.
6. Why did John doubt Jesus was the promised Messiah in chapter 17:18-23?
7. Why did the people of Gerasene want Jesus to leave?
8. Explain in your own words the implications of 9:62.
9. When did Satan fall from heaven? (10:18)
10. Why did the Jews hate the Samaritans?
11. Does 12:41-48 imply degrees of punishment or levels of hell?
12. Explain 13:28-30 in your own words.
13. What is the purpose(s) of the parable of the prodigal son in 15:11-32?
14. Explain 16:18 in your own words but be sure to interpret it in light of its historical setting.
15. Does 17:34-35 support a secret rapture? Why or why not?
16. Why is 20:2 such an important question?
17. Who are the vine-growers of 20:10?
18. Was Judas responsible for his acts in light of 22:3?
19. Why would 23:20 be an important verse for Luke to record?



# INTRODUCTION TO JOHN

## I. OPENING STATEMENTS

- A. Matthew and Luke begin with Jesus' birth, Mark begins with His baptism, but John begins before the creation.
- B. John presents the full deity of Jesus of Nazareth from the first verse of the first chapter and repeats this emphasis throughout the Gospel. The Synoptic Gospels veil this truth until late in their presentations ("The Messianic Secret").
- C. Apparently John develops his Gospel in light of the basic affirmations of the Synoptic Gospels. He attempts to supplement and interpret the life and teachings of Jesus in light of the needs of the early church (late first century).
- D. John seems to structure his presentation of Jesus the Messiah around
  - 1. seven miracles/signs and their interpretation
  - 2. twenty-seven interviews and/or dialogues with individuals
  - 3. certain worship and feast days
    - a. the Sabbath
    - b. the Passover (cf. chapters 5-6)
    - c. the Tabernacles (cf. chapters 7-10)
    - d. Hanukkah (cf. 10:22-39)
  - 4. "I Am" statements
    - a. related to the divine name (YHWH)
      - 1) I am He (4:26; 8:24,28; 13:19; 18:5-6)
      - 2) before Abraham was I am (8:54-59)
    - b. with predicate nominatives
      - 1) I am the bread of life (6:35, 41, 48, 51)
      - 2) I am the light of the world (8:12)
      - 3) I am the door of the sheepfold (10:7, 9)
      - 4) I am the good shepherd (10:11, 14)
      - 5) I am the resurrection and the life (11:25)
      - 6) I am the way, the truth and the life (14:6)
      - 7) I am the true vine (15:1, 5)
- E. The differences between John and the other Gospels
  - 1. Although it is true that John's primary purpose is theological, his use of history and geography is extremely accurate and detailed. The exact reason for the discrepancies between the Synoptics and John is uncertain
    - a. an early Judean ministry (early cleansing of the Temple)
    - b. chronology and date of the last week of Jesus' life
  - 2. It would be helpful to take a moment to discuss the obvious difference between John and the Synoptics. Let me quote George Eldon Ladd from *A Theology of the New Testament* on the differences:

- a. “The Fourth Gospel is so different from the Synoptics that the question must be honestly faced whether it reports accurately the teachings of Jesus or whether Christian faith has so modified the tradition that history is swallowed up in theological interpretation” (p. 215).
- b. “The solution that lies closest to hand is that the teachings of Jesus are expressed in Johannine idiom. If this is the correct solution, and if we must conclude that the Fourth Gospel is couched in Johannine idiom, this important question follows: To what extent is the theology of the Fourth Gospel that of John rather than that of Jesus? To what extent has the teaching of Jesus been so assimilated in John’s mind that what we have is a Johannine interpretation rather than an accurate representation of Jesus’ own teaching?” (p. 215).
- c. Ladd also quotes W. F. Albright from “Recent Discoveries in Palestine and the Gospel of John” in *The Background of the New Testament and Its Eschatology* edited by W. D. Davies and D. Daube

“There is no fundamental difference in teaching between John and the Synoptics; the contrast between them lies in the concentration of tradition along certain aspects of Christ’s teachings, particularly those which seem to have resembled the teaching of the Essenes most closely.

There is absolutely nothing to show that any of Jesus’ teachings have been distorted or falsified, or that a vital new element has been added to them. That the needs of the early Church influenced the selection of items for inclusion in the Gospel we may readily admit, but there is no reason to suppose that the needs of that Church were responsible for any inventions or innovations of theological significance.

One of the strangest assumptions of critical New Testament scholars and theologians is that the mind of Jesus was so limited that any apparent contrast between John and the Synoptics must be due to differences between early Christian theologians. Every great thinker and personality is going to be interpreted differently by different friends and hearers, who will select what seems most congenial or useful out of what they have seen and heard” (pp. 170-171).

- d. And again from George E. Ladd:

“The difference between them is not that John is theological and the others are not but that all are theological in different ways. Interpreted history may represent more truly the facts of a situation than a mere chronicle of events. If John is a theological interpretation, it is an interpretation of events that John is convinced happened in history. It is obviously not the intent of the Synoptic Gospels to give a report of the *ipsissima verba* of (the exact words) Jesus nor a biography of the events of his life. They are portraits of Jesus and summaries of his teaching. Matthew and Luke feel themselves free to rearrange the material in Mark and to report Jesus’ teaching with considerable freedom. If John used more freedom than Matthew and Luke, it is because he wished to give a more profound and ultimately more real portrait of Jesus” (pp. 221-222).

## II. AUTHOR

- A. The Gospel is anonymous but hints at John’s authorship
  1. an eye witness author (cf. 19:35)

2. the phrase “the beloved disciple” (both Polycrates and Irenaeus identify him as John the Apostle)
  3. John, son of Zebedee, never mentioned by name
- B. The historical setting is obvious from the Gospel itself, therefore, the issue of authorship is not a crucial factor in interpretation. The affirmation of an inspired author is crucial!
- The authorship and date of John’s Gospel does not affect inspiration, but interpretation. Commentators seek a historical setting, an occasion that caused the book to be written. Should one compare John’s dualism to (1) the Jewish two ages; (2) the Qumran teacher of righteousness; (3) Zoroastrian religion; (4) Gnostic thought; or (5) the unique perspective of Jesus?
- C. The early traditional view is that John the Apostle, son of Zebedee, is the human, eye-witness source. This must be clarified because second century external sources seem to link others in the production of the Gospel:
1. Fellow believers and the Ephesian elders encouraged the aging Apostle to write (Eusebius quotes Clement of Alexandria)
  2. A fellow Apostle, Andrew (the Muratorian Fragment, A.D. 180-200, from Rome)
- D. Some modern scholars have assumed another author based on several assumptions about the style and subject matter of the Gospel. Many assume an early second century date (before A.D. 115):
1. written by John’s disciples (a Johannine circle of influence) who remembered his teachings (J. Weiss, B. Lightfoot, C. H. Dodd, O. Cullmann, R. A. Culpepper, C. K. Barrett)
  2. written by “the elder John,” (one of a series of early leaders from Asia influenced by John the Apostle’s theology and terminology) which is derived from an obscure passage in Papias (A.D. 70-146) quoted by Eusebius (A.D. 280-339)
- E. Evidence for John himself as the primary source for the material of the Gospel
1. internal evidence
    - a. the author knew Jewish teachings and rituals and shared their OT world view
    - b. the author knew Palestine and Jerusalem in their pre-A.D. 70 condition
    - c. the author claims to be an eyewitness
      - 1) 1:14
      - 2) 19:35
      - 3) 21:24
    - d. the author was a member of the apostolic group, for he is familiar with:
      - 1) details of time and place (the night trials)
      - 2) details of numbers (water pots of 2:6 and fish of 21:11)
      - 3) details of persons
      - 4) the author knew details of events and the reaction to them
      - 5) the author seems to be designated as “the beloved disciple”
        - a) 13:23,25
        - b) 19:26-27, 34-35
        - c) 20:2-5,8
        - d) 21:7, 20-24
      - 6) the author seems to be a member of the inner circle along with Peter
        - a) 13:24
        - b) 20:2
        - c) 21:7

- 7) the name John, son of Zebedee, never appears in this Gospel, which seems highly unusual because he was a member of the Apostolic inner circle
- e. External evidence
  - 1) Gospel known by
    - a) Irenaeus (A.D. 120-202) who was associated with Polycarp, knew John the Apostle (cf. Eusebius' *Historical Eccleasticus* 5:20:6-7) - "John the disciple of the Lord who reclined on His breast and himself issued the Gospel at Ephesus in Asia" (*Haer.*, 3:1:1, quoted in Eusebius' *Hist. Eccl.* 5:8:4).
    - b) Clement of Alexandria (A.D. 153-217) - "John who was urged by his friends and divinely moved by the Spirit, composed a spiritual Gospel" (Eusebius' *Historical Eccleasticus* 6:14:7)
    - c) Justin Martyr (A.D. 110-165) in his *Dialogue with Trypho* 81:4
    - d) Tertullian (A.D. 145-220)
  - 2) John's authorship asserted by very early witnesses
    - a) Polycarp (A.D. 70-156, recorded by Irenaeus), who was bishop of Smyrna (A.D. 155)
    - b) Papias (A.D. 70-146, recorded by the Anti-Marconite Prologue from Rome and Eusebius), who was the bishop of Hierapolis in Phrygia and reported to be a disciple of John the Apostle

#### F. Reasons used to doubt traditional authorship

1. The Gospel's connection with gnostic themes
2. The obvious appendix of chapter 21
3. The chronological discrepancies with the Synoptics
4. John would not have referred to himself as "the beloved disciple"
5. John's Jesus uses different vocabulary and genres than the Synoptics

#### G. If we assume it was John the Apostle then what can we assume about the man?

1. He wrote from Ephesus (Irenaeus says "issued the Gospel from Ephesus")
2. He wrote when he was an older man (Irenaeus says he lived until the reign of Trajan, A.D. 98-117)

### III. DATE

#### A. If we assume John the Apostle

1. before A.D. 70, when Jerusalem was destroyed by the Roman General (later Emperor), Titus
  - a. in John 5:2, "Now in Jerusalem near the sheeppath there is a pool called in Hebrew Bethesda, which has five porticoes. . ."
  - b. repeated use of the early title "disciples" to denote the apostolic group
  - c. supposed later gnostic elements have now been discovered in the Dead Sea Scrolls, which show they were part of the theological jargon of the first century
  - d. no mention of the destruction of the Temple and the city of Jerusalem in A.D. 70
  - e. the famous American archaeologist W. F. Albright asserts a date for the Gospel in the late 70's or early 80's
2. later in the first century
  - a. the developed theology of John
  - b. the fall of Jerusalem not mentioned because it occurred some twenty years earlier
  - c. John's use of gnostic-type phrasing and emphasis

- d. the early traditions of the church
  - 1) Irenaeus
  - 2) Eusebius
- B. If we assume “John the elder” then the date would be early to mid second century. This theory started with Dionysius’ rejection of John the Apostle’s authorship (for literary reasons). Eusebius, who rejected John the Apostle’s authorship of Revelation for theological reasons, felt he had found another “John” at the right time and in the right place in Papias’ quote (*Historical Eccleasticus* 3:39:5,6), which lists two “Johns” (1) the Apostle and (2) an Elder (presbyter).

#### IV. RECIPIENTS

- A. Originally it was written to the churches of the Roman Province of Asia Minor, particularly Ephesus.
- B. Because of the profound simplicity and depth of this account of the life and person of Jesus of Nazareth this became a favorite Gospel for both Hellenistic Gentile believers and gnostic groups.

#### V. PURPOSES

- A. The Gospel itself asserts its evangelistic purpose, 20:30-31
  - 1. for Jewish readers
  - 2. for Gentile readers
  - 3. for incipient gnostic readers
- B. It seems to have an apologetic thrust
  - 1. against the fanatic followers of John the Baptist
  - 2. against the incipient gnostic false teachers (especially the Prologue); these gnostic false teachings also form the background to other NT books:
    - a. Ephesians
    - b. Colossians
    - c. the Pastoral Epistles (I Timothy, Titus, II Timothy)
    - d. I John (I John may have functioned as a cover letter for the Gospel)
- C. There is the possibility that the purpose statement of 20:31 may be understood as encouraging the doctrine of perseverance as well as evangelism because of the consistent use of the PRESENT TENSE to describe salvation. In this sense John, like James, may be balancing an over-emphasis of Paul’s theology by some groups in Asia Minor (cf. II Peter 3:15-16). It is surprising that early church tradition identifies John with Ephesus, not Paul (cf. F. F. Bruce’s *Peter, Stephen, James and John: Studies in Non-Pauline Christianity*, pp. 120-121).
- D. The Epilogue (chapter 21) seems to answer specific questions of the early church
  - 1. John supplements the accounts of the Synoptic Gospels. However, he focuses on the Judean ministry, particularly Jerusalem.
  - 2. The two questions covered in the Appendix, chapter 21
    - a. Peter’s restoration
    - b. John’s longevity
    - c. Jesus’ delayed return

- E. Some see John as de-emphasizing sacramentalism by purposefully ignoring and not recording or discussing the ordinances themselves despite perfect contextual opportunities in chapter 3 (for baptism) and chapter 6 (for the Eucharist or the Lord's Supper).

## VI. OUTLINE BASED ON

- A. A philosophical/theological Prologue (1:1-18) and a practical Epilogue (chapter 21)
- B. Seven miracle signs during Jesus' public ministry (chapters 2-12) and their interpretation:
  - 1. changing water into wine at the wedding feast in Cana (2:1-11)
  - 2. healing the son of the officer of the court at Capernaum (4:46-54)
  - 3. healing of the lame man at the pool of Bethesda in Jerusalem (5:1-18)
  - 4. feeding of about 5,000 in Galilee (6:1-15)
  - 5. walking on the Sea of Galilee (6:16-21)
  - 6. healing of the man born blind in Jerusalem (9:1-41)
  - 7. raising of Lazarus in Bethany (11:1-57)
- C. Interviews and dialogue with individuals
  - 1. John the Baptist (1:19-34; 3:22-36)
  - 2. disciples
    - a. Andrew and Peter (1:35-42)
    - b. Philip and Nathanael (1:43-51)
  - 3. Nicodemus (3:1-21)
  - 4. woman of Samaria (4:1-45)
  - 5. Jews in Jerusalem (5:10-47)
  - 6. crowd in Galilee (6:22-66)
  - 7. Peter and disciples (6:67-71)
  - 8. Jesus' brothers (7:1-13)
  - 9. Jews in Jerusalem (7:14-8:59; 10:1-42)
  - 10. disciples in upper room (13:1-17:26)
  - 11. Jewish arrest and trial (18:1-27)
  - 12. Roman trial (18:28-19:16)
  - 13. post-resurrection conversations, 20:11-29
    - a. with Mary
    - b. with the ten Apostles
    - c. with Thomas
  - 14. epilogue dialogue with Peter, 21:1-25
  - 15. (7:53-8:11, the story of the adulterous woman, was not originally part of John's Gospel!)
- D. Certain worship/feast days
  - 1. the Sabbaths (5:9; 7:22; 9:14; 19:31)
  - 2. the Passovers (2:13; 6:4; 11:55; 18:28)
  - 3. the feast of Tabernacles (chapters 8-9)
  - 4. Hanukkah (festival of lights, cf. 10:22)
- E. Use of "I Am" statements
  - 1. "I am 'He'" (4:26; 6:20; 8:24,28,54-59; 13:19; 18:5-6,8)
  - 2. "I am the bread of life" (6:35,41,48,51)

3. "I am the light of the world" (8:12; 9:5)
4. "I am the door of the sheepfold" (10:7,9)
5. "I am the good shepherd" (10:11,14)
6. "I am the resurrection and the life" (11:25)
7. "I am the way, the truth and the life" (14:6)
8. "I am the true vine" (15:1,5)

## VII. TERMS AND PHRASES TO BRIEFLY IDENTIFY

1. the Word, 1:1
2. believe, 1:7
3. "the world was made through Him," 1:10
4. "the Word became flesh," 1:14
5. truth, 1:17
6. the Prophet, 1:21
7. the Lamb of God," 1:29
8. "as a dove," 1:32
9. Rabbi, 1:38
10. "Truly, truly," 1:51
11. "the angels of God ascending and descending," 1:51
12. "six stone waterpots," 2:6
13. "a ruler of the Jews," 3:1
14. "born again," 3:3
15. "the Son of Man must be lifted up," 3:14; 12:34
16. "eternal life," 3:16
17. "I am the bread of life," 6:35,48
18. "Feast of Booths," 7:2
19. "You have a demon," 7:20; 8:48; 10:20
20. the Dispersion (diaspora), 7:35
21. "Jesus was not yet glorified," 7:39
22. "before Abraham was born, I am," 8:58
23. "put out of the synagogue," 9:22
24. "door of the sheep," 10:7
25. "the Feast of Dedication," 10:22
26. blaspheming, 10:36
27. "finding a young donkey, sat on it," 12:14
28. "the hour," 12:23
29. "Satan then entered into him," 13:27
30. "a new commandment," 13:34
31. "dwelling places," 14:2
32. "abide in Me," 15:4
33. "lifting up His eyes to heaven," 17:1
34. "the only true God," 17:3
35. "before the foundation of the world," 17:24
36. scourged, 19:1
37. Gabbatha, 19:13
38. Golgotha, 19:17
39. "asked Pilate that their legs might be broken," 19:31

40. the Jewish day of preparation,” 19:42

#### VIII. PERSONS TO BRIEFLY IDENTIFY

1. John, 1:6
2. Son of God, 1:34
3. Messiah, 1:41
4. Cephas, 1:42
5. Nicodemus, 3:1
6. the Prophet, 7:40
7. Lazarus, 11:2
8. Didymus, 11:16
9. Judas Iscariot, 13:2
10. the Helper, 14:26
11. Malchus, 18:10
12. Annas, 18:24
13. Mary the wife of Clopas, 19:25

#### IX. MAP LOCATIONS TO PLOT

1. Galilee, 1:43
2. Nazareth, 1:45
3. Cana, 2:1
4. Capernaum, 2:12
5. Aenon near Salim, 3:23
6. Samaria, 4:4
7. Tiberias, 6:1
8. Bethlehem, 7:42
9. Bethany, 11:1
10. Kidron, 18:1
11. Sea of Tiberias, 21:1

#### X. DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Why is John 1:1 so important?
2. Why was John’s baptism unusual?
3. What does being born again mean?
4. How are “believe” and “obey” related in 3:35?
5. What does 4:24 mean?
6. Why is John 5:4 in brackets?
7. Does 9:2 imply reincarnation?  
If not, explain why?
8. Explain the irony of 9:41
9. Explain 10:34-35 in your own words.
10. Why did Jesus wash the disciples’ feet in chapter 13? What is the setting of chapters 13-17?
11. Why is John 14:6 so significant?
12. Why is John 14:23 so important?
13. Explain John 15:16.



14. John 17 is called “Jesus’ High Priestly prayer.” He prays for three different people or groups, name them.
15. Explain the interchange between Jesus and Pilate in John 18:33-38
16. Did the disciples receive the Spirit in 20:22 or at Pentecost in Acts 1?
17. Why is John 20:31 significant?

# INTRODUCTION TO ACTS

## I. OPENING STATEMENTS

- A. Acts forms an indispensable link between the accounts of Jesus' life (Gospels), their preaching in Acts, their interpretation, and the application in the Apostolic Letters of the New Testament.
- B. The early church developed and circulated two collections of New Testament writings: (1) the Gospels (four Gospels) and (2) the Apostle (i.e., Paul's letters). However, with the early Christological heresies of the second century, the value of the book of Acts became obvious. Acts reveals this content and purpose of Apostolic preaching (*kerygma*) and the amazing results of the gospel.
- C. The historical accuracy of Acts has been accentuated and confirmed by modern archaeological discoveries, especially in relation to the title of Roman governmental officials (e.g., *stratēgoi*, 16:20,22,35,36 [also used of temple captains, Luke 22:4,52; Acts 4:1; 5:24-26]; *politarchas*, 17:6,8; and *prōtō*, Acts 28:7, cf. A. N. Sherwin-White, *Roman Society and Roman Law in the New Testament*). Luke records the tensions within the early church, even the fight between Paul and Barnabas (cf. Acts 15:39). This reflects a fair, unbalanced, researched historical/theological writing.

- D. The title of the book is found in slightly different forms in the ancient Greek texts:
  - 1. Manuscript  $\aleph$  (Sinaiticus), Tertullian, Didymus, Eusebius have "Acts" (ASV, NIV)
  - 2. Manuscripts B (i.e., Vaticanus), D (i.e., Bezae) in a subscription, Irenaeus, Tertullian, Cyrian, Athanasius have "Acts of the Apostles" (KJV, RSV, NEB)
  - 3. Manuscripts A<sup>2</sup> (i.e., first correction of Alexandrinus), E, G, Chrysostom have "Acts of the Holy Apostles"

It is possible that the Greek word *praxeis*, *praxis* (i.e., acts, ways, behavior, deeds, practice) reflects an ancient Mediterranean literary genre, which denotes the lives and actions of famous or influential people (i.e., John, Peter, Stephen, Philip, Paul). The book probably originally had no title (like Luke's Gospel).

- E. There are two distinct textual traditions of Acts. The shorter one is the Alexandrian (MSS P<sup>45</sup>, P<sup>74</sup>,  $\aleph$ , A, B, C). The Western family of manuscripts (P<sup>29</sup>, P<sup>38</sup>, P<sup>48</sup> and D) seem to include many more details. It is uncertain whether they are from the author or were later insertions by scribes, based on early church traditions. Most textual scholars believe that the Western manuscripts have later additions because (1) they smooth out or try to fix unusual or difficult texts; (2) add additional details; (3) add specific phrases to accentuate Jesus as the Christ; and (4) are not quoted by any early Christian writers sometime in the first three centuries (cf. F. F. Bruce, *Acts: Greek Text*, pp. 69-80). For a more detailed discussion consult *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament* by Bruce M. Metzger, published by the United Bible Societies, pp. 259-272.

Because of the vast number of later additions this commentary will not deal with all the textual options. Whenever a textual variant is crucial to interpretation, then and only then will it be dealt with in this commentary.

## II. AUTHOR

- A. The book is anonymous, but Luke is strongly implied.
  - 1. The unique and surprising “we” sections, 16:10-17 (second missionary journey at Philippi); 20:5-15; 21:1-18 (end of third missionary journey) and 27:1-28:16 (Paul sent as prisoner to Rome) strongly imply Luke as the author.
  - 2. The connection between the third Gospel and Acts is obvious when one compares Luke 1:1-4 with Acts 1:1-2.
  - 3. Luke, a Gentile physician, is mentioned in Col. 4:10-14, Philemon 24, and II Timothy 4:11 as a companion of Paul. Luke is the only Gentile writer in the NT.
  - 4. The unanimous witness of the early church was that the author was Luke.
    - a. the Muratorian Fragment (A.D. 180-200 from Rome says, “compiled by Luke the physician”)
    - b. the writings of Irenaeus (A.D. 130-200)
    - c. the writings of Clement of Alexandria (A.D. 156-215)
    - d. the writings of Tertullian (A.D. 160-200)
    - e. the writings of Origen (A.D. 185-254)
  - 5. The internal evidence of style and vocabulary (especially medical terms) confirms Luke as author (i.e., Sir William Ramsay and A. Harnack).
  
- B. We have three sources of information about Luke.
  - 1. The three passages in the NT (Col. 4:10-14; Philemon 24; II Tim. 4:11) and the book of Acts itself.
  - 2. The second century Anti-Marcion prologue to Luke (A.D. 160-180)
  - 3. The early church historian of the fourth century, Eusebius, in his *Ecclesiastical History*, 3:4, says “Luke, by race, a native of Antioch, and by profession, a physician, having associated mainly with Paul and having companioned with the rest of the apostles less closely, has left us examples of that healing of souls which he acquired from them in two inspired books, The Gospel and The Acts of the Apostles.”
  - 4. This is a composite profile of Luke.
    - a. a Gentile (listed in Col. 4:12-14 with Epaphras and Demas as helpers and not with the Jewish helpers)
    - b. from either Antioch of Syria (if Anti-Marcion prologue to Luke) or Philippi of Macedonia (i.e., Sir William Ramsay on Acts 16:19)
    - c. a physician (cf. Col. 4:14, or at least a well educated man)
    - d. became a convert in middle adulthood after the church was started at Antioch (Anti-Marcion prologue)
    - e. Paul’s traveling companion (“we” sections of Acts)
    - f. unmarried
    - g. wrote the third Gospel and Acts (similar introductions and similar style and vocabulary)
    - h. died at the age of 84 at Boeotia
  
- C. Challenges to Luke’s authorship
  - 1. Paul’s preaching on Mars Hill in Athens uses Greek philosophical categories and terms to form a common ground (cf. Acts 17), but Paul, in Rom. 1-2, seems to regard any “common ground” (i.e., nature, inner moral witness) as futile.
  - 2. Paul’s preaching and comments in Acts depict him as a Jewish Christian who takes Moses seriously, but Paul’s letters depreciate the Law as problematic and passing away.

3. Paul's preaching in Acts does not have the eschatological focus that his early books do (i.e., I and II Thessalonians).
  4. This contrasting of terms, styles, and emphasis is interesting, but not conclusive. When the same criteria is applied to the Gospels, the Jesus of the Synoptics speaks very differently than the Jesus of John. Yet, very few scholars would deny that both reflect the life of Jesus.
- D. When discussing authorship of Acts it is crucial that we discuss Luke's sources because many scholars (i.e., C. C. Torrey, ) believe Luke used Aramaic source documents (or oral traditions) for many of the first fifteen chapters. If this is true, Luke is an editor of this material, not an author. Even in the later sermons of Paul Luke only gives us a summary of Paul's words, not verbatim accounts. Luke's use of sources is as crucial a question as his authorship of the book.

### III. DATE

- A. There is much discussion and disagreement as to the time of the writing of Acts, but the events themselves cover from about A.D. 30-63 (Paul was released from prison in Rome in the middle 60's and rearrested and executed under Nero, probably in the persecutions of A.D. 65).
- B. If one assumed the apologetic nature of the book concerning the Roman government then a date (1) before A.D. 64 (the beginning of Nero's persecution of Christians in Rome) and/or (2) related to the Jewish revolt of A.D. 66-73.
- C. If one tried to relate Acts to Luke's Gospel in sequence, then the date for the writing of the Gospel influences the date of the writing of Acts. Since the fall of Jerusalem to Titus in A.D. 70 is prophesied (i.e., Luke 21), but not described, seems to demand a date before A.D.70. If so, then Acts, written as a sequel, must be dated in the 80's.
- D. If one is bothered by the abrupt ending (i.e., Paul still in prison in Rome, F. F. Bruce), then a date related to the end of Paul's first Roman imprisonment, A.D. 58-63, is favored.
- E. Some historical dates related to the historical events recorded in Acts.
1. widespread famine under Claudius, Acts 11:28, A.D. 44-48
  2. death of Herod Agrippa I, Acts 12:20-23, A.D. 44 (spring)
  3. proconsulship of Sergius Paulus, Acts 13:7, appointed in A.D. 53
  4. expulsion of Jews from Rome by Claudius, Acts 18:2, A.D. 49 (?)
  5. proconsulship of Gallio, Acts 18:12, A.D. 51 or 52 (?)
  6. proconsulship of Felix, Acts 23:26; 24:27, A.D. 52-56 (?)
  7. replacement of Felix by Festus, Acts 24:27, A.D. 57-60 (?)
  8. Judea's Roman officials
    - a. Procurators
      - (1) Pontius Pilate, A.D. 26-36
      - (2) Marcellus, A.D. 36-37
      - (3) Marullus, A.D. 37-41
    - b. In A.D. 41 the pro curatorial method of Roman administration was changed to an empirical model. The Roman Emperor, Claudius, appointed Herod Agrippa I in A.D. 41.

- c. After the death of Herod Agrippa I, A.D. 44, the procurator method was reestablished until A.D. 66
  - (1) Antonius Felix
  - (2) Porcius Festus

#### IV. PURPOSE AND STRUCTURE

- A. One purpose of the book of Acts was to document the rapid growth of the followers of Jesus: from Jewish roots to worldwide ministry; from the locked upper room to the palace of Caesar:
  - 1. This geographical pattern follows Acts 1:8, which is Acts' Great Commission (Matt. 28:19-20).
  - 2. This geographical expansion is expressed in several ways.
    - a. Using major cities and national boundaries. In Acts there are 32 countries, 54 cities and 9 Mediterranean Islands mentioned. The three major cities are Jerusalem, Antioch and Rome (cf. Acts 9:15).
    - b. Using key persons. Acts can almost be divided into two halves: the ministries of Peter and Paul. There are over 95 people mentioned in Acts, but the major ones are: Peter, Stephen, Philip, Barnabas, James and Paul.
    - c. There are two or three literary forms which appear repeatedly in Acts which seem to reflect the author's conscious attempt at structure:
 

|                              |                          |                    |
|------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------|
| (1) summary statements       | (2) statements of growth | (3) use of numbers |
| 1:1 - 6:7 (in Jerusalem)     | 2:47                     | 3:41               |
| 6:8 - 9:31 (in Palestine)    | 5:14                     | 4:4                |
| 9:32 - 12:24 (to Antioch)    | 6:7                      | 5:14               |
| 12:25 - 15:5 (to Asia Minor) | 9:31                     | 6:7                |
| 16:6 - 19:20 (to Greece)     | 12:24                    | 9:31               |
| 19:21 - 28:31 (to Rome)      | 16:5                     | 11:21,24           |
|                              | 19:20                    | 12:24              |
|                              |                          | 14:1               |
|                              |                          | 19:20              |
- B. Acts is obviously related to the misunderstanding that surrounded the death of Jesus for treason. Apparently, Luke is writing to Gentiles (Theophilus, possibly a Roman official). He uses (1) the speeches of Peter, Stephen, and Paul to show the scheming of the Jews and (2) the positiveness of Roman governmental officials toward Christianity. The Romans had nothing to fear from the followers of Jesus.
  - 1. speeches of Christian leaders
    - a. Peter, 2:14-40; 3:12-26; 4:8-12; 10:34-43
    - b. Stephen, 7:1-53
    - c. Paul, 13:10-42; 17:22-31; 20:17-25; 21:40-22:21; 23:1-6; 24:10-21; 26:1-29
  - 2. contacts with governmental officials
    - a. Pontius Pilate, Luke 23:13-25
    - b. Sergius Paulus, Acts 13:7,12
    - c. chief magistrates of Philippi, Acts 16:35-40
    - d. Gallio, Acts 18:12-17
    - e. Asiarchs of Ephesus, Acts 19:23-41 (esp. v. 31)
    - f. Claudius Lysias, Acts 23:29
    - g. Felix, Acts 24

- h. Porcius Festus, Acts 24
  - i. Agrippa II, Acts 26 (esp. v. 32)
  - j. Publius, Acts 28:7-10
3. When one compares Peter's sermons with Paul's it is obvious that Paul is not an innovator, but a faithful proclaimer of apostolic, gospel truths. The *kerygma* is unified!
- C. Luke not only defended Christianity before the Roman government, but he also defended Paul before the Gentile church. Paul was repeatedly attacked by Jewish groups (i.e., Judaizers of Galatians, the "super apostles" of II Cor. 10-13; and Hellenistic groups (i.e., gnosticism of Colossians and Ephesians). Luke shows Paul's normalcy by clearly revealing his heart and theology in his travels and sermons.
- D. Although Acts was not intended to be a doctrinal book, it does record for us the elements of the early Apostles' preaching which C. H. Dodd has called "the *Kerygma*" (i.e., essential truths about Jesus). This helps us see what they felt were the essentials of the gospel, especially as they relate to Jesus' death and resurrection.

#### **SPECIAL TOPIC: THE *KERYGMA* OF THE EARLY CHURCH**

- A. The promises by God made in the Old Testament have now been fulfilled with the coming of Jesus the Messiah (Acts 2:30; 3:19,24; 10:43; 26:6-7,22; Rom. 1:2-4; I Tim. 3:16; Heb. 1:1-2; I Peter 1:10-12; 2 Peter 1:18-19).
- B. Jesus was anointed as Messiah by God at His baptism (Acts 10:38).
- C. Jesus began His ministry in Galilee after His baptism (Acts 10:37).
- D. His ministry was characterized by doing good and performing mighty works by means of the power of God (Mark 10:45; Acts 2:22; 10:38).
- E. The Messiah was crucified according to the eternal purpose of God (Mark 10:45; John 3:16; Acts 2:23; 3:13-15,18; 4:11; 10:39; 26:23; Rom. 8:34; I Cor. 1:17-18; 15:3; Gal. 1:4; Heb. 1:3; I Peter 1:2,19; 3:18; I John 4:10).
- F. He was raised from the dead and appeared to His disciples (Acts 2:24,31-32; 3:15,26; 10:40-41; 17:31; 26:23; Rom. 8:34; 10:9; I Cor. 15:4-7,12ff; I Thess. 1:10; I Tim. 3:16; I Peter 1:2; 3:18,21).
- G. Jesus was exalted by God and given the name "Lord" (Acts 2:25-29,33-36; 3:13; 10:36; Rom. 8:34; 10:9; I Tim. 3:16; Heb. 1:3; I Peter 3:22).
- H. He gave the Holy Spirit to form the new community of God (Acts 1:8; 2:14-18,38-39; 10:44-47; I Peter 1:12).
- I. He will come again for judgment and the restoration of all things (Acts 3:20-21; 10:42; 17:31; I Cor. 15:20-28; I Thess. 1:10).
- J. All who hear the message should repent and be baptized (Acts 2:21,38; 3:19; 10:43,47-48; 17:30; 26:20; Rom. 1:17; 10:9; I Peter 3:21).

This schema served as the essential proclamation of the early church, though different authors of the New Testament may leave out a portion or emphasize other particulars in their preaching. The entire Gospel of Mark closely follows the Petrine aspect of the *kerygma*. Mark is traditionally seen as structuring Peter's sermons, preached in Rome, into a written Gospel. Both Matthew and Luke follow Mark's basic structure.

- E. Frank Stagg in his commentary, *The Book of Acts, the Early Struggle for an Unhindered Gospel*, asserts the purpose is primarily the movement of the message about Jesus (i.e., the gospel) from a strictly nationalistic Judaism to a universal message for all humans. Stagg's commentary focuses on Luke's purpose(s) in writing Acts. A good summary and analysis of the different theories is found on pp. 1-18. Stagg chooses to focus on the term "unhindered" in 28:31, which is an unusual way to end a book, as the key to understanding Luke's emphasis on the spread of Christianity overcoming all barriers.
- F. Although the Holy Spirit is mentioned more than fifty times in Acts, it is not "the Acts of the Holy Spirit." There are eleven chapters where the Spirit is never mentioned. He is mentioned most often in the first half of Acts, where Luke is quoting other sources (possibly originally written in Aramaic). Acts is not to the Spirit what the Gospels are to Jesus! This is not meant to depreciate the Spirit's place, but to guard us from building a theology of the Spirit primarily or exclusively from Acts.
- G. Acts is not designed to teach doctrine (cf. Fee and Stuart, *How to Read the Bible For All Its Worth*, pp. 94-112). An example of this would be the attempt to base a theology of conversion from Acts which is doomed to failure. The order and elements of conversion differ in Acts; therefore, which pattern is normative? We must look to the Epistles for doctrinal help.
- However, it is interesting that some scholars (i.e., Hans Conzelmann) have seen Luke purposefully reorienting the imminent eschatologies of the first century with a patient service approach to the delayed Parousia. The kingdom is here in power now, changing lives. The church functioning now becomes the focus, not an eschatological hope.
- H. Another possible purpose of Acts is similar to Rom. 9-11, why did the Jews reject the Jewish Messiah and the church become mostly Gentile? Several places in Acts the worldwide nature of the gospel is clearly trumpeted. Jesus sends them into all the words (cf. 1:8). Jews reject Him, but Gentiles respond to Him. His message reaches Rome.
- It is possible that Luke's purpose is to show that Jewish Christianity (i.e., Peter) and Gentile Christianity (i.e., Paul) can live together and grow together! They are not in competition, but joined in world evangelism.
- I. As far as purpose is concerned I agree with F. F. Bruce (i.e., *New International Commentary*, p. 18) that since Luke and Acts were originally one volume, that the prologue for Luke (i.e., 1:1-4) functions also for Acts. Luke, though not an eyewitness to all the events, carefully researched them and recorded them accurately, using his own historical, literary, theological framework.
- Luke then, in both his Gospel and narrative, wants to show the historical reality and theological trustworthiness (cf. Luke 1:4) of Jesus and the church. It may be that the focus of Acts is the theme of fulfillment (i.e., unhindered, cf. 28:31, where it is the last word of the book). This theme is carried forward by several different words and phrases (cf. Walter L. Liefeld, *Interpreting the Book of Acts*, pp. 23-24). The Gospel is not an after-thought, a plan B, or a new thing. It is God's predetermined plan (cf. Acts 2:23; 3:18; 4:28; 13:29).

## V. GENRE

- A. Acts is to the NT what Joshua- II Kings is to the OT, historical narrative. Biblical historical narrative is factual, but the focus is not on chronology or exhaustive recording of event. It selects

certain events which explain who God is, who we are, how we are made right with God, how God wants us to live.

- B. The problem in interpreting biblical narrative is that the authors never put in the text (1) what their purpose is, (2) what the main truth is, or (3) how we should emulate the things recorded. The reader needs to think through the following questions:
  - 1. Why was the event recorded?
  - 2. How does it relate to previous biblical material?
  - 3. What is the central theological truth?
  - 4. Is there significance to the literary context? (What event precedes or follows? Has this subject been dealt with elsewhere?)
  - 5. How large is the literary context? (Sometimes large amounts of narrative form one theological theme or purpose.)
- C. Historical narrative should not be the only source of doctrine. Often things are recorded that are incidental to the purpose of the author. Historical narrative can illustrate truths recorded elsewhere in the Bible. Just because something happened does not mean it is God's will for all believers in all ages (ex. suicide, polygamy, holy war, handling snakes, etc.).
- D. The best brief discussion of how to interpret historical narrative is in Gordon Fee and Douglas Stuart's *How to Read the Bible For All Its Worth*, pp. 78-93 and 94-112.

## VI. BIBLIOGRAPHY OF HISTORICAL SETTING

New books on placing Acts in its first century setting produced by classicists. This inter-disciplinary approach has truly helped the understanding of the NT. The series is edited by Bruce M. Minter.

- A. *The Book of Acts in Its Ancient Literary Setting*
- B. *The Book of Acts in Its Graeco-Roman Setting*
- C. *The Book of Acts and Paul in Roman Custody*
- D. *The Book of the Acts in Its Palestinian Setting*
- E. *The Book of Acts in Its Diaspora Setting*
- F. *The Book of Acts in Its Theological Setting*

Also very helpful is:

- 1. A. N. Sherwin-White, *Roman Society and Roman Law in the New Testament*
- 2. Paul Barnett, *Jesus and the Rise of Early Christianity*
- 3. James S. Jeffers, *The Greco-Roman World*

## VII. TERMS AND PHRASES TO BRIEFLY IDENTIFY

- 1. "many convincing proofs," 1:3
- 2. "forty days," 1:3
- 3. "kingdom of God," 1:3



4. "a cloud received Him," 1:9
5. "a Sabbath day's journey," 1:12
6. "a Field of Blood," 1:19
7. "lots," 1:26
8. "Pentecost," 2:1
9. "filled with the Holy Spirit," 2:4
10. "to speak with other tongues," 2:4
11. "proselytes," 2:10; 13:43
12. "the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God," 2:23
13. "Hades," 2:31
14. "the right hand of God," 2:33
15. "repent," 2:38; 3:19
16. "the breaking of bread," 2:42,46
17. "the hour of prayer," 3:1
18. "beg alms," 3:2
19. "portico of Solomon," 3:11; 5:12
20. "the Holy and Righteous One," 3:14
21. "the times of refreshing," 3:19
22. "uneducated and untrained," 4:13
23. "he fell asleep," 7:60
24. "the Way," 9:2
25. "lay hands on," 9:12 (cf. 8:17)
26. "cohort," 10:1
27. "Christians," 11:26
28. "divination," 16:16
29. "and all his household," 16:33
30. "Epicurean," 17:18
31. "Stoic," 17:18
32. "Areopagus," 17:22
33. "Jewish exorcists," 19:13
34. "magic. . .books," 19:19
35. "silver shrines of Artemis," 19:24

#### VIII. PERSONS TO BRIEFLY IDENTIFY

1. Theophilus, 1:1
2. the women, 1:14
3. Matthias, 1:23
4. Sadducees, 4:1; 5:17
5. Annas, 4:6
6. Caiaphas, 4:6
7. "rulers and elders of the people," 4:8
8. Ananias, 5:1; 9:10
9. Sapphira, 5:1
10. Gamaliel, 5:34
11. Stephen, 6:5
12. Saul, 7:58; 8:1; 9:1
13. Philip, 8:5

14. Dorcas, 9:36
15. Cornelius, 10:1
  
16. Agabus, 11:28; 21:10
17. Eutychus, 20:9

#### IX. MAP LOCATIONS TO PLOT

1. Jerusalem, 1:8
2. Judea, 1:8
3. Samaria, 1:8
4. Parthians, 2:9
5. Cappadocia, 2:9
6. Pontus, 2:9
7. Asia, 2:9
8. Phrygia, 2:10
9. Pamphylia, 2:10
10. Egypt, 2:10
11. Libya, 2:10
12. Cyrene, 2:10
13. Cretans, 2:11
14. Nazareth, 2:22
15. Alexandria, 6:9
16. Cilicia, 6:9
17. Damascus, 9:2
18. Caesarea
19. Jappa, 9:36
20. Phoenicia, 11:19
21. Cyprus, 11:20
22. Tarsus, 11:25
23. Sidon, 12:20
24. Philippi, 16:12
25. Berea, 17:10
26. Athens, 17:16
27. Corinth, 18:1

#### X. DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. How does 1:6 reveal the Apostles' lack of understanding?
2. How is 1:8 related to Matt. 28:19-20?
3. List the qualifications of an apostle (1:22).
4. Why are "wind" and "fire" associated with the Spirit? (2:2-3)
5. Explain the miracle of 2:8.
6. Peter says Joel's prophecy is fulfilled. How then do you explain 1:17 and 19-20?
7. What is the theological significance of Jesus being called "Lord" and "Christ"? (2:36)
8. Is 2:44 a biblical mandate for communism? (cf. 4:34-35)
9. Explain the implication of 3:18.
10. Explain how the OT in 4:11 applies to Jesus.

11. Is the filling of the Spirit always associated with witnessing in Acts?
12. List the qualifications of “the Seven” in Acts 6. Were they deacons?
13. Why was Saul so mad at Christians? (8:1-3)
14. Does 8:15-16 provide modern believers an order of the events of salvation?
15. What is the purpose of tongues in 10:44-48?
16. Why did Paul first preach in the local synagogues? (13:5)
17. What happened at Lystra that caused Paul and Barnabas to tear their robes? (14:8-18)
18. What was the purpose of the Jerusalem Council in Acts 15?
19. Why did Paul and Barnabas have a fight? (15:36-41)
20. Why did the Spirit forbid Paul to go to Asia? (16:6)
21. Why were the city leaders so upset in 16:35-40?
22. How did Priscilla and Aquila help Apollos? (18:24-28)
23. Why is 20:21 a significant verse?
24. What is the implication of 21:9?
25. Why was Paul imprisoned at Jerusalem in Acts 21?
26. Explain 23:6-7 in your own words.

# INTRODUCTION TO ROMANS

## I. OPENING STATEMENTS

- A. Romans is the most systematic and logical doctrinal book of the Apostle Paul. It was affected by circumstances in Rome, therefore, it is an “occasional” document. Something occurred that caused Paul to write the letter. However it is the most neutral of Paul’s writings, in that Paul’s way of dealing with the problem (possibly the jealousy between believing Jewish and Gentile leadership) was a clear presentation of the gospel and its implications for daily life.
- B. Paul’s presentation of the gospel in Romans has impacted the church’s life in every age:
  - 1. Augustine was converted in A.D. 386 reading Romans 13:13-14.
  - 2. Martin Luther’s understanding of salvation was radically changed in A.D. 1513 as he compared Ps. 31:1 to Rom. 1:17 (cf. Hab. 2:4).
  - 3. John Wesley was converted in A.D. 1738 by hearing Luther’s sermon on the introduction to Romans.
- C. To know Romans is to know Christianity! The letter shapes the life and teachings of Jesus into bedrock truths for the Church of all ages.

## II. AUTHOR

Paul was definitely the author. His typical greeting is found in 1:1. It is generally agreed that Paul’s “thorn in the flesh” was bad eyesight, therefore, he did not physically write this letter himself, but he used a scribe, Tertius (cf. 16:22).

## III. DATE

- A. The probable date for the authorship of Romans is A.D. 56-58. This is one of the few New Testament books which can be dated fairly accurately. This is done by comparing Acts 20:2ff with Romans 15:17ff. Romans was probably written at Corinth toward the end of Paul’s third missionary journey, just before he left for Jerusalem.
- B. Possible chronology of Paul’s writings following F. F. Bruce and Murry Harris with minor adaptations.

| <u>Book</u>           | <u>Date</u> | <u>Place of Writing</u> | <u>Relation to Acts</u> |
|-----------------------|-------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1. Galatians          | 48          | Syrian Antioch          | 14:28; 15:2             |
| 2. I Thessalonians    | 50          | Corinth                 | 18:5                    |
| 3. II Thessalonians   | 50          | Corinth                 |                         |
| 4. I Corinthians      | 55          | Ephesus                 | 19:20                   |
| 5. II Corinthians     | 56          | Macedonia               | 20:2                    |
| 6. Romans             | 57          | Corinth                 | 20:3                    |
| 7.-10. Prison Letters |             |                         |                         |
| Colossians            | early 60's  |                         |                         |
| Ephesians             | early 60's  | Rome                    |                         |
| Philemon              | early 60's  |                         |                         |
| Philippians           | late 62-63  |                         | 28:30-31                |

#### 11.-13. Fourth Missionary Journey

|            |               |             |
|------------|---------------|-------------|
| I Timothy  | 63 (or later, | Macedonia   |
| Titus      | 63 but before | Ephesus (?) |
| II Timothy | 64 A.D. 68)   | Rome        |

#### IV. RECIPIENTS

The letter states its destination as Rome. We do not know who founded the church at Rome:

- A. It may have been some of the people who were visiting Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost and were converted and returned home to start a church (cf. Acts 2:10);
- B. It could have been disciples who fled the persecution in Jerusalem after the death of Stephen (cf. Acts 8:4); or
- C. It could have been converts from Paul's missionary journeys who traveled to Rome. Paul had never visited this church, but he longed to (cf. Acts 19:21). He had many friends there (cf. Rom. 16).

Apparently his plan was to visit Rome on his way to Spain (cf. Rom. 15:28) after his trip to Jerusalem with the "love gift." Paul felt his ministry in the eastern Mediterranean was finished. He sought new fields (cf. 16:20-23). The bearer of the letter from Paul in Greece to Rome seems to have been Phoebe, a deaconess, who was traveling in that direction (cf. Rom. 16:1). Why is this letter, written on the back streets of Corinth in the first century by a Jewish tentmaker, so valuable? Martin Luther called it "the chief book in the New Testament and the purest Gospel." The value of this book is found in the fact that it is an in-depth explanation of the gospel by the converted rabbi, Saul of Tarsus, called to be an apostle to the Gentiles. Most of Paul's letters are strongly colored by a local situation, but not Romans. It is a systematic presentation of an Apostle's life-long faith.

Did you realize, fellow Christian, that most of the technical terms used today to describe "faith" ("justification," "imputation," "adoption," and "sanctification") come from Romans? Pray for God to open to you this marvelous letter as we search together for His will for our lives today!

#### V. PURPOSE

- A. An appeal for help for his missionary trip to Spain. Paul saw his apostolic work in the eastern Mediterranean finished (cf. 16:20-23).
- B. To address the problem in the Roman church between believing Jews and believing Gentiles. This was probably a result of the expulsion of all Jews from Rome and their later return. By then the Jewish Christian leaders had been replaced by Gentile Christian leaders.
- C. To introduce himself to the Roman church. There was much opposition to Paul from sincere converted Jews in Jerusalem (Jerusalem Council of Acts 15), from insincere Jews (Judaizers in Galatians and II Cor. 3, 10-13), and from Gentiles (Colossians, Ephesians) who tried to merge the gospel with their pet theories or philosophies.
- D. Paul was accused of being a dangerous innovator, adding recklessly to Jesus' teaching. The book of Romans was his way of systematically defending himself by showing how his gospel was true, using the Old Testament and the teachings of Jesus (the Gospels).

## VI. BRIEF OUTLINE

- A. Introduction (1:1-17)
  - 1. Salutation (1:1-7)
    - a. Author (1-5)
    - b. Destination (6-7a)
    - c. Greeting (7b)
  - 2. Occasion (1:8-15)
  - 3. Theme (1:16-17)
  
- B. Need for Divine Righteousness (1:18-3:20)
  - 1. Decline of the Gentile World (1:18-32)
  - 2. Hypocrisy of the Jews or Pagan Moralists (2:1-16)
  - 3. Judgment of the Jews (2:17-3:8)
  - 4. Universal Condemnation (3:9-20)
  
- C. What is Divine Righteousness (3:21-8:39)
  - 1. Righteousness by Faith Alone (3:21-31)
  - 2. The Basis of Righteousness: God's Promise (4:1-25)
    - a. Abraham's right standing (4:1-5)
    - b. David (4:6-8)
    - c. Abraham's Relation to Circumcision (4:9-12)
    - d. God's Promise to Abraham (4:13-25)
  - 3. The Attainment of Righteousness (5:1-21)
    - a. The subjective aspect: unmerited love, unequalled joy (5:1-5)
    - b. the objective basis: God's amazing love (5:6-11)
    - c. Adam/Christ typology: Adam's offense, God's provision (5:12-21)
  - 4. Divine righteousness must issue in personal righteousness (6:1-7:25)
    - a. Freed from sin (6:1-14)
      - (1) A supposed objection (6:1-2)
      - (2) The meaning of baptism (6:3-14)
    - b. Satan's slave or God's slave: your choice (6:15-23)
    - c. Man's marriage to the Law (7:1-6)
    - d. The Law is good, but sin prevents the good (7:7-14)
    - e. The eternal struggle of good and evil in the believer (7:15-25)
  - 5. The observable results of divine righteousness (8:1-39)
    - a. Life in the Spirit (8:1-17)
    - b. The redemption of creation (8:18-25)
    - c. The Spirit's constant help (8:26-30)
    - d. The judicial triumph of justification by faith (8:31-39)
  
- D. The Divine Purpose for All Humanity (9:1-11:32)
  - 1. The election of Israel (9:1-33)
    - a. Real heirs of faith (9:1-13)
    - b. Sovereignty of God (9:14-26)
    - c. God's universal plan includes the heathen (9:27-33)
  - 2. The salvation of Israel (10:1-21)
    - a. God's righteousness vs. mankind's righteousness (10:1-13)

- b. God's mercy necessitates messengers, a call for world missions (10:14-18)
    - c. Israel's continued disbelief in Christ (10:19-21)
  - 3. The failure of Israel (11:1-36)
    - a. The Jewish remnant (11:1-10)
    - b. Jewish jealousy (11:11-24)
    - c. Israel's temporary blindness (11:25-32)
    - d. Paul's outburst of praise (11:33-36)
  
- E. The Result of the gift of Divine Righteousness (12:1-15:13)
  - 1. Call to consecration (12:1-2)
  - 2. The use of gifts (12:3-8)
  - 3. Believers' relations with other believers (12:9-21)
  - 4. Relations with the State (13:1-7)
  - 5. Relations with neighbors (13:8-10)
  - 6. Relations with our Lord (13:11-14)
  - 7. Relations with fellow church members (14:1-12)
  - 8. Our effect on others (12:13-23)
  - 9. Relations in Christlikeness (15:1-13)
  
- F. Conclusion (15:14-33)
  - 1. Paul's personal plans (15:14-29)
  - 2. Requests for prayer (15:30-33)
  
- G. Postscript (16:1-27)
  - 1. Greetings (16:1-24)
  - 2. Benediction (16:25-27)

## VII. TERMS AND PHRASES TO BRIEFLY IDENTIFY

- 1. apostle, 1:1
- 2. "descendant of David according to the flesh," 1:3
- 3. saints, 1:7
- 4. righteousness, 1:17
- 5. the wrath of God, 1:18
- 6. repentance, 2:4
- 7. "there is no partiality with God," 2:11
- 8. circumcision, 2:25
- 9. "the oracles of God," 3:2
- 10. justified, 3:4
- 11. propitiation, 3:25
- 12. "we also exult in our tribulations," 5:3
- 13. "having now been justified by His blood," 5:9
- 14. "the gift of righteousness," 5:17
- 15. "he who has died is freed from sin," 6:7
- 16. sanctification, 6:19
- 17. "the Spirit of God dwells in you," 8:9
- 18. Abba, 8:15
- 19. perseverance, 8:25

20. foreknew, 8:29
21. predestined, 8:29
22. glorified, 8:29
23. “the right hand of God,” 8:34
24. “principalities. . . powers,” 8:38
25. adoption, 9:4
26. covenants, 9:4
27. “a stone of stumbling,” 9:33
28. confess,” 10:9
29. believe, 10:4,11
30. natural branches, 11:21
31. mystery, 11:25
32. Amen, 11:36
33. practicing hospitality, 12:13
34. curse, 12:14
35. “be subject to governing authorities,” 13:1
36. “lay aside. . . put on,” 13:12
37. “weak in faith,” 14:1
38. “we who are strong,” 15:1

#### VIII. PERSONS TO BRIEFLY IDENTIFY

1. Abraham, 4:1
2. the fathers, 9:5
3. Esau, 9:13
4. Baal, 11:4
5. Phoebe, 16:1
6. Prisca and Aquila, 16:3
7. Junias, 16:7 (KJV, Junia)
8. Tertius, 16:22

#### IX. MAP LOCATIONS TO PLOT

1. Rome, 1:7
2. Cenchrea, 16:1

#### X. DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Why is 1:16 so characteristic of Paul?
2. In what two ways do all humans know God? (i.e. chapters 1-2)
3. How does 1:26-27 address the current issue of homosexuality?
4. How does 2:6 relate to Gal. 6:7?
5. In chapter 3 verses 9-18 is a series of OT quotes. they all refer to what theological truth?
6. Why is 4:6 so significant?
7. Explain 4:15 in your own words.
8. What does 5:8 say about God?
9. How are 5:18 and 19 parallel?
10. Explain the practical implication of 6:11.
11. Romans 6:23 has been called the gospel in a nutshell, why?
12. Explain the difference between “the newness of the Spirit” and “the oldness of the letter.” (7:6)



13. Who does chapter 7 describe?
14. What does 7:7-12 say about the purpose of the OT law?
15. How does 7:19 apply to your life?
16. Explain 8:22 in your own words.
17. Is 8:26-27 talking about speaking in tongues?
18. How is 8:28 related to 8:29?
19. What is the subject of the literary unit, chapters 9-11?
20. Explain 10:4 in your own words.
21. Explain 11:7 in your own words.
22. Explain 11:26 in your own words.
23. Are the spiritual gifts mentioned in chapter 12 still valid and functioning?
24. Explain 12:20 in your own words.
25. Explain 14:14 in your own words.
26. Explain 14:23 in your own words.

# INTRODUCTION TO I CORINTHIANS

## (PRACTICAL ADVICE TO A TROUBLED CHURCH)

### I. THE UNIQUENESS OF I CORINTHIANS

- A. It is quoted more often and earlier by the early church fathers than any other writing of Paul which shows its importance and usefulness.
- B. In the Muratorian Fragment, which was a list of canonical books from Rome (A.D. 200), it is listed as the first of Paul's writings which also shows its importance.
- C. Paul makes a distinction in this practical letter between his personal opinion and the Lord's commands. However, this is based on his knowledge of Jesus' teachings on any given subject. If he could he would pass on Jesus' words. He believed his opinions were also inspired and authoritative (cf. 7:25, 40).
- D. Paul's guiding principle for church fellowship is that the freedom of individual believers, but also their commensurate corporate responsibility, is based not on law, but on love. The health and growth of the whole church supercedes any personal preference or privilege (cf. 12:7).
- E. This letter (along with II Corinthians) gives us an early look into the NT church, its structure, methods, and message. However, it must also be remembered that this church was a problematic, non-typical congregation.

### II. THE CITY OF CORINTH

- A. Winter shipping lanes around the southern most point of Greece (i.e. Cape Malea) were very dangerous. Therefore, a land route of the shortest possible length was crucial. The geographical location of Corinth on the four mile isthmus between the Gulf of Corinth (i.e. Adriatic Sea) and the Saronic Gulf (i.e. Aegean Sea) made the city a major commercial shipping, trading (specializing in types of pottery and a special type of brass), and military center. In Paul's day this was literally where the cultures of the East and West met.
- B. Corinth was also a major cultural center of the Greco-Roman world because it hosted the bi-annual Isthmian Games which began in 581 B.C. (at the Temple of Poseidon). Only the Olympic Games in Athens, every four years, rivaled them in size and importance (Thucydides, *Hist.* 1.13.5).
- C. In 146 B.C. Corinth was involved in a revolt (i.e. the Achaean League) against Rome and was destroyed by the Roman General Lucius Mummius and the Greek population dispersed into slavery. Because of its economical and military importance it was rebuilt in either 46 or 48 B.C. by Julius Caesar. It became a Roman colony where Roman soldiers retired. It was a mimic of Rome in architecture and culture and was the administrative center of the Roman (i.e. Senatorial) province of Achaia in 27 B.C. It became an Imperial Province in A.D. 15.
- D. The acropolis of Old Corinth, rising more than 1880 feet above the plain, was the site of the temple to Aphrodite. To this temple were attached 1,000 prostitutes (Strabo, *Geography*, 8.6.20-22). To

be called “a Corinthian” (i.e. *Korinthiazesthai*, coined by Aristophanes [450-385 B.C.]) was synonymous to loose, riotous living. This temple, as most of the city, was destroyed in an earthquake about 150 years before Paul arrived, as it was again in A.D. 77. It is uncertain if the fertility cult continued in Paul’s day. Since the Romans, in 146 B.C., destroyed the city and killed or enslaved all of its citizens, the Greek flavor of the city was superseded by its Roman colonial status (Pausanias, II.3.7). This Roman cultural context instead of Greek culture, makes a significant difference in interpreting I Corinthians.

### III. THE AUTHOR

- A. It was to this city that Paul the Apostle came on his second missionary journey; the account is found in Acts 18:1-21. Through a vision the Lord revealed to Paul that many would believe and that there would be no successful opposition to his ministry (cf. Acts 18:9-10).
- B. Paul’s missionary strategy was to plant a church in the major cities of his day, knowing that converted visitors, traveling salesmen, and sailors would spread the gospel as they went. It was up to the local church to take responsibility for the evangelism and discipleship of their area.
- C. Paul found Aquila and Priscilla, also believing Jewish tent-makers or leather workers, in Corinth. They were forced out of Rome in A.D. 49 by Claudius’ edict (Orosius, *Hist.* 7:6:15-16) against any Jewish rites or rituals (cf. Acts 18:2). Paul had come to Corinth alone. Both Silas and Timothy were on assignments in Macedonia (cf. Acts 18:5). He was very discouraged (cf. Acts 18:9-19; I Cor. 2:3). However, he persevered and stayed in Corinth eighteen months (cf. Acts 18:11).
- D. Paul’s authorship of this book is attested to by Clement of Rome, who wrote a letter to Corinth in A.D. 95/96 (*I Clement* 37:5; 47:1-3; 49:5). Pauline authorship of this letter has never been doubted, even by modern critical scholarship.

### IV. THE DATE

- A. The date of Paul’s visit to Corinth has been ascertained by an inscription of the Emperor Claudius found at Delphi, which dates the proconsulship of Gallio as beginning in July A.D. 51 through July, 52 (cf. Acts 18:12-17), which would make the date of Paul’s arrival about A.D. 49-50.
- B. The date of Paul’s letter would then be sometime in the mid-50’s. He wrote it from Ephesus where he ministered between two years (cf. Acts 19:10) and three years (cf. Acts 20:34).
- C. A possible chronology of Paul’s writings following F. F. Bruce and Murry Harris with minor adaptations:

| <u>Book</u>           | <u>Date</u> | <u>Place of Writing</u> | <u>Relation to Acts</u> |
|-----------------------|-------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1. Galatians          | 48          | Syrian Antioch          | 14:28; 15:2             |
| 2. I Thessalonians    | 50          | Corinth                 | 18:5                    |
| 3. II Thessalonians   | 50          | Corinth                 |                         |
| 4. I Corinthians      | 55          | Ephesus                 | 19:20                   |
| 5. II Corinthians     | 56/57       | Macedonia               | 20:2                    |
| 6. Romans             | 57          | Corinth                 | 20:3                    |
| 7.-10. Prison Letters |             |                         |                         |
| Colossians            | early 60’s  | Rome                    |                         |

|                                   |               |             |          |
|-----------------------------------|---------------|-------------|----------|
| Ephesians                         | early 60's    | Rome        |          |
| Philemon                          | early 60's    | Rome        |          |
| Philippians                       | late 62-63    | Rome        | 28:30-31 |
| 11.-13. Fourth Missionary Journey |               |             |          |
| I Timothy                         | 63 (or later, | Macedonia   |          |
| Titus                             | 63 but before | Ephesus (?) |          |
| II Timothy                        | 64 A.D. 68)   | Rome        |          |

(Paul was probably executed in A.D. 65).

## V. RECIPIENT OF THE LETTER

- A. The recipient of the letter was the fledgling church made up mostly of Gentiles. The population of Corinth was racially and culturally mixed. We know from archaeology and Scripture (cf. Acts 18:4-8) that there was a synagogue in Corinth.
- B. Roman soldiers were retired there after they completed twenty years of military service. Corinth was a free city, a Roman colony, and capital of the Roman province of Achaia.
- C. The letter seems to reflect several groups in the church: (1) intellectual Greeks who were still very proud of their philosophical traditions and were trying to wed Christian revelation to these old customs and intellectual traditions; (2) Roman patrons and the socially elite; (3) a believing Jewish contingent made up mostly of “god-fearing” Gentiles, who attended the synagogue; and (4) a large number of converted slaves.

## VI. THE PURPOSE OF THE LETTER

- A. Paul heard of the problems that had developed at Corinth from four sources
  1. Chloe’s people, 1:11
  2. a letter from the church asking questions, 7:1,25; 8:1; 12:1; 16:1,12
  3. a personal visit from Stephanas, Fortunatus, and Achaicus, 16:17. It is possible that the letter (#2) was brought by these men (#3).

It is interesting that Murry Harris has outlined the book of I Corinthians based on Paul’s received information about the church.

  1. oral report from members of Chloe’s household, resulting in Paul writing chapters 1-4
  2. oral report from church representatives (i.e. Stephanus, Fortunatus, and Achaicus), resulting in chapters 5-6
  3. written questions from the church, resulting in chapters 7-16
- B. The church had become factious, advocating different leaders: Paul, Apollos, Peter, and possibly a Christ party (cf. 1:12). Not only was the church divided over leadership types, but also over several moral issues and the use of spiritual gifts. A main point of contention was Paul’s Apostolic authority (especially II Corinthians)!

## VII. PAUL’S CONTACTS WITH THE CORINTHIAN CHURCH—A TENTATIVE PROPOSAL

- A. How many letters did Paul write to Corinth?
  1. just two, I and II Corinthians

2. three, with one letter being lost
3. four, with two letters being lost
4. some modern scholars find parts of the two lost letters in II Corinthians
  - a. previous letter (I Cor. 5:9) in II Cor. 6:14-17:1)
  - b. severe letter (II Cor. 2:3-4,9; 7:8-12) in II Cor. 10-13)
5. five, with II Cor. 10-13 being the fifth letter, sent after Titus' report relating the further bad news

B. Theory #3 seems to fit best

1. previous letter, lost (I Cor. 5:9)
2. I Corinthians
3. severe letter, lost (possibly part of which is recorded in II Cor. 2:1-11; 7:8-12)
4. II Corinthians

C. A proposed reconstruction

| DATE  | VISIT   | LETTER  |
|---|---|---|
| <p>A.D. 50-52 Paul's Second Missionary Journey</p> <p>A.D. 52 Gallio was proconsul from a.d. 52 (cf. Acts 18:12-17)</p> <p>A.D. 56 (Spring)</p> <p>A.D. 56 (Winter) or A.D. 57 (Winter)</p> | <p>a. On Paul's Second Missionary Journey he stayed in Corinth eighteen months (cf. Acts 18:1-11)</p> <p>b. Paul hears about problems in the church while he is in Ephesus from two sources: (1) Chloe's people, I Cor. 1:11 and (2) Stephanas, Fortunatus, and Achaicus, I Cor. 16:17. They apparently brought a letter from the Corinthian house churches containing questions</p> <p>c. Paul made an emergency, painful visit to Corinth (not recorded in Acts, cf. II Cor. 2:1). It was not successful, but he vowed to return.</p> | <p>a. I Cor. 5:9-11 seems to refer to a letter about an immoral situation in the church. This letter is unknown unless: (1) as some suppose, that II Cor. 6:14-7:1 is part of it or (2) that II Cor. 2:3,4,9 are epistolary aorists and refer to II Corinthians.</p> <p>b. Paul answers these questions (cf. I Cor. 7:1,25; 8:1; 12:1; 16:1,2) by writing I Corinthians. Timothy (cf. I Cor. 4:17) takes the response from Ephesus (cf. I Cor. 16:8) to Corinth. Timothy was not able to solve the problems in the church.</p> <p>c. Paul wrote a severe letter (cf. II Cor. 2:3-4:9; 7:8-12) to the Corinthian house churches which was delivered by Titus (cf. II Cor. 2:13; 7:13-15). This letter is unknown, unless, as some suppose, part of it is in II Cor. 10-13.</p> |

|                            |   |  |
|----------------------------|---|--|
| <p>A.D. 57-58 (Winter)</p> | <p>d. Paul planned to meet Titus in Troas, but Titus did not come, so Paul went to Macedonia (cf. II Cor. 2:13; 7:5,13), possibly Philippi (cf. MSS B<sup>e</sup>, K, L, P).</p> <p>e. Paul's last recorded visit to Corinth seems to be referred to in Acts 20:2-3. Although it does not mention Corinth by name, it is assumed. He stayed there during the winter months.</p> | <p>d. He found Titus and heard that the church had responded to his leadership and he then wrote II Corinthians in great thanksgiving (cf. 7:11-16). It was delivered by Titus</p> <p>e. The marked mood change between chapters 1-9 and 10-13 is explained by some scholars as more bad news (possibly the revitalization of old opponents and the addition of new opponents) from the Corinthian house churches after chapters 1-9 had been written (F. F. Bruce).</p> |
|----------------------------|---|--|

## VIII. CONCLUSION

- A. In I Corinthians we see Paul, a pastor, dealing with a problem church. In this letter and in Galatians, we see him apply universal gospel truth in different ways, based on the need of the church: freedom for the Galatian churches/limits to the Corinthian church.
- B. This book is either a series of “cultural dinosaurs” or a wealth of principled truth applied to a particular historical/cultural setting. We must be careful not to confuse truth and cultural applications of that truth. For a good discussion of this very important hermeneutical issue see Gordon D. Fee and Douglas Stuart’s *How To Read the Bible for All Its Worth*, pp. 65-76.
- C. This book will push you to the limit of your spiritual ability to interpret the Bible. It will force you to rethink aspects of your theology. It will open a window to God’s will for our day, practically speaking, as few other biblical writings.

## IX. BRIEF OUTLINE OF I CORINTHIANS

- A. Introduction 1:1-9
  1. Greeting, 1:1-3
  2. Thanksgiving, 1:4-9
- B. Reported problems at Corinth, 1:10-6:20
  1. Factions within the church because of the misunderstanding of Christian leadership’s (i.e. Paul, Apollos, Peter) motives and message, 1:10-4:12
  2. Shocking immorality, 5:1-13
  3. Christian lawsuits, 6:1-11
  4. Christian freedom limited by responsibility, 6:12-20
- C. A letter from Corinth asking the nagging questions, 7:1-1-16:4
  1. Human sexuality, 7:1-40
  2. Relationship to an idolatrous culture and Christian freedom, 8:1-11:1

3. Christian worship and spirituality, 11:2-14:40
4. Insights on eschatology, especially the resurrection, 15:1-58
5. The contribution for the mother church in Jerusalem, 16:1-4

D. Concluding remarks

1. Paul's (and his fellow ministers) travel plans, 16:5-12
2. Final exhortation and greetings, 16:13-24

X. SUGGESTED READINGS ON PAUL'S THOUGHT

- A. *The Mind of St. Paul*, William Barclay, published by Harper & Row
- B. *Paul, Apostle of the Heart Set Free*, F. F. Bruce, published by Eerdmans
- C. *The Origins of Paul's Religion*, J. Gresham Machen, published by Eerdmans
- D. *Paul, An Outline of His Theology*, Herman Ridderbos (translated by John De Witt), published by Eerdmans
- E. *Epochs in the Life of Paul*, A. T. Robertson, published by Baker
- F. *A Man In Christ*, James S. Stewart, published by Harper & Row
- G. *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters*, published by IVP
- H. *Paul in the Roman World, The Conflict at Corinth*, Robert M. Grant, published by Westminster, John Knox Press
- I. *Philo and Paul Among the Sophists*, Bruce W. Winter, published by Eerdmans
- J. *After Paul Left Corinth*, Bruce W. Winter

XI. TERMS AND PERSONS TO BRIEFLY IDENTIFY

1. sanctified, 1:2
2. ages, 2:7,8
3. "the depths of God," 2:10
4. "God's building," 3:9
5. "you are a temple of God," 3:16,17
6. "the mysteries of God," 4:1
7. "deliver such a one to Satan," 5:5
8. "we shall judge angels," 6:3
9. "and such were some of you," 6:11
10. "concerning virgins," 7:25
11. "I myself will not be disqualified," 9:27
12. "sacrifice to demons," 10:20
13. "drink the cup of the Lord," 10:21
14. "because of the angels," 11:10
15. "I hear divisions exist among you," 11:18
16. "Jesus is accursed," 12:3
17. "distinguishing spirits," 12:10
18. clanging symbol, 13:1
19. "when the perfect comes," 13:10
20. "see in a mirror dimly," 13:12
21. prophesy, 14:39
22. abolished, 15:24
23. "the collection for the saints," 16:1

## XII. PERSONS TO BRIEFLY IDENTIFY

1. Sosthenes, 1:1
2. Chloe's people, 1:11
3. Apollos, 1:12
4. Cephas, 1:12
5. Crispus and Gaius, 1:14
6. "the rulers of this age," 2:6,8
7. natural man, 2:14
8. spiritual man, 3:1
9. babes in Christ, 3:1
10. Cephas, 15:5
11. the twelve, 15:5
12. James, 15:7

## XIII. MAP LOCATIONS TO PLOT

1. Corinth, 1:2
2. churches of Galatia, 16:1
3. Jerusalem, 16:3
4. Macedonia, 16:5
5. Ephesus, 16:8
6. Achaia, 16:15
7. Asia, 16:19

## XIV. DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Why did the Jews reject Jesus as the Messiah?
2. Why did the Greeks reject Jesus?
3. Why does Paul make such negative statements about philosophy in 1:18-25 and 2:1-5?
4. Explain the implications of 1:26-31.
5. To whom does 3:10-15 refer?
6. Why was the church condemned by Paul in 5:1-8?
7. Does 6:1-11 preclude Christians from law suits today?
8. Is Paul implying that celibacy is the will of God in chapter 7?
9. Does 7:12-13 imply that believers can marry unbelievers?
10. How is chapter 8 like Romans 14?
11. Why would Paul not take money from the church in Corinth? (9:3-18)
12. Explain the implications of 9:19-23.
13. Explain 10:1-13 in your own words.
14. Why is 10:13 such a wonderful verse for believers?
15. State the spiritual principle of 10:23 in your own words.
16. How does 11:5 contradict 14:34?
17. Does 11:30 mean some believers had died by taking the Lord's Supper?
18. Explain the circumstances of Paul's statement in 11:34.
19. What is the implication of the spiritual principle in 11:7?
20. How are spiritual gifts related to natural talents? When do believers receive their spiritual gift(s)?
21. How does 12:29-30 answer the question, "Should all believers speak in tongues"? (14:5)



22. In 13:8 what will pass away and what will remain?
23. How does chapter 14 delineate the use of tongues in public worship?
24. What three groups does Paul limit in public worship in chapter 14?
25. List the points of the gospel in 15:1-4.
26. When in the life of Jesus does 15:6 occur?
27. How is 15:22 like Romans 5:12-21?

# INTRODUCTION TO II CORINTHIANS

## I. OPENING STATEMENTS

- A. This book, more than any other letter of Paul, shows us the heart and mind of the Apostle to the Gentiles. It is the closest we have to his spiritual/pastoral autobiography.
- B. This book may be Paul's most accomplished rhetorical work. Raymond E. Brown, *An Introduction to the New Testament*, says, "it may well be the most oratorically persuasive of all Paul's writings" p. 541. However, this was done to refute the Sophists who had come to Corinth and attacked Paul's public speaking methods as well as his content (i.e. his attack on wisdom in I Cor. 1-4).

### **SPECIAL TOPIC: SOPHISTS**

The Greek word *sophia* means wisdom. The related term *sophistēs* came to denote someone "skilled" or "educated in rhetoric." It usually denoted a public speaker, often itinerant, who come to a town and tried to start a school to train the children of the elite class. This public speaking is what caused the parents to seek them out for private lessons or schooling of their children.

There was a tremendous competition between these "wise men" related to their reputations and ability to attract students. There was even a set of guidelines for their initial speaking opportunities. One of these set procedures was a time for the philosopher to list his qualifications and strength.

Paul's problems at Corinth seem to be related to

1. factions in the Church, each claiming to follow a particular teacher (I Cor. 1-4)
2. Hellenistic-trained Jewish false teachers from Jerusalem (II Cor. 10-13)

Paul's disclaimer of "wisdom" in I Cor. 1-4 set the stage for his being attacked by those who gloried in their philosophical, rhetorical training and judged all others in light of these criteria. It is surprising that Jewish teachers would have gloried in philosophical categories, but a precedent is set in Judaism by Philo of Alexandria and possibly even the training and background of Apollos of Alexandria.

Paul was not a polished public speaker. He was attacked for this. He retaliates by writing polished, balanced, well-constructed, rhetorical form in II Cor. 10-13. He uses their terms, their forms and exposes their improper attitudes and arrogance.

- C. This book is a strange combination, like Paul himself, of spiritual highs and lows, of free-flowing emotions ranging from anger to great joy.
- D. This book is truly a letter and as a letter it is only one half of a conversation. Many of the logical antecedents and circumstances behind Paul's responses have been lost. This is a good example of the truth that the epistles of the New Testament were originally written as correspondence to specific needs, not independent theological dissertations.
- E. This book has been neglected by scholarship and in preaching. This is unfortunate because it is the source of Paul's most definitive discussion on suffering in the Christian life.
- F. For pastors, this book offers insightful guidelines on how to deal with problems within local churches. Paul gives us all an example to follow amidst personal attacks and misunderstandings.

## II. AUTHOR

- A. Even amidst all of the modern denials of the traditional authorship of biblical books, this book has never been denied to Paul.
- B. It is so autobiographical and so difficult to understand some of its phrases that the possibility of someone trying to mimic Paul by writing a book like this is highly improbable. The difficulty and specificity of the letter speak of its genuineness. It is true that many NT scholars think that II Corinthians is a composite letter combining several separate letters of Paul into one. I hold to its unity because:
  - 1. There is no hint of disunity in any of the ancient Greek manuscripts.
    - a. No variations of the literary units
    - b. No manuscript which does not contain all thirteen chapters.
  - 2. Although II Cor. 13 was apparently unknown to Clement of Rome in A.D. 96, it is quoted by Polycarp in A.D. 105.
  - 3. The book is understandable as a unit. There seem to be certain themes which show its unity, such as “suffering.”
  - 4. The internal evidence is too limited to defend a radical dissection of II Corinthians.
- C. Paul is stated to be the author in 1:1 and 10:1.

## III. DATE

- A. The date of II Corinthians is inseparably linked to I Corinthians and the book of Acts.
- B. Acts 18:1-18 and 20:2-3 relate Paul’s being in Corinth, but there also seems to have been at least one unrecorded trip (II Corinthians 2:1; with a third visit mentioned in 12:14; 13:1-2).
- C. The major question is the time relationship between Paul’s visits and his letters to Corinth.
- D. The real problem with dating the events related to Corinth is that we have no external evidence or information between Acts 18:1-18 and Acts 20:2-3, except the ambiguous internal evidence of the Corinthian letters themselves.
- E. Paul’s contacts with the Corinthian Church—A proposed reconstruction

| DATE  | VISIT  | LETTER  |
|---|--|---|
| A.D. 50-52 Paul’s Second Missionary Journey                   | a. On Paul’s Second Missionary Journey he stayed in Corinth eighteen months (cf. Acts 18:1-11) | a. I Cor. 5:9-11 seems to refer to a letter about an immoral situation in the church. This letter is unknown unless: (1) as some suppose, that II Cor. 6:14-7:1 is part of it or (2) that II Cor. 2:3,4,9 are epistolary aorists and refer to II Corinthians. |
| A.D. 52 Gallio was proconsul from A.D. 52 (cf. Acts 18:12-17) |  |   |

|  |   |  |
|--|---|--|
| <p>A.D. 56 (Spring)</p> <p>A.D. 56 (Winter) or<br/>A.D. 57 (Winter)</p> <p>A.D. 57-58 (Winter)</p> | <p>b. Paul hears about problems in the church while he is in Ephesus from two sources: (1) Chloe's people, I Cor. 1:11 and (2) Stephanas, Fortunatus, and Achaicus, I Cor. 16:17. They apparently brought a letter from the Corinthian house churches containing questions</p> <p>c. Paul made an emergency, painful visit to Corinth (not recorded in Acts, cf. II Cor. 2:1). It was not successful, but he vowed to return.</p> <p>d. Paul planned to meet Titus in Troas, but Titus did not come, so Paul went to Macedonia (cf. II Cor. 2:13; 7:5,13), possibly Philippi (cf. MSS B<sup>c</sup>, K, L, P).</p> <p>e. Paul's last recorded visit to Corinth seems to be referred to in Acts 20:2-3. Although it does not mention Corinth by name, it is assumed. He stayed there during the winter months.</p> | <p>b. Paul answers these questions (cf. I Cor. 7:1,25; 8:1; 12:1; 16:1,2) by writing I Corinthians. Timothy (cf. I Cor. 4:17) takes the response from Ephesus (cf. I Cor. 16:8) to Corinth. Timothy was not able to solve the problems in the church.</p> <p>c. Paul wrote a severe letter (cf. II Cor. 2:3-4:9; 7:8-12) to the Corinthian house churches which was delivered by Titus (cf. II Cor. 2:13; 7:13-15). This letter is unknown, unless, as some suppose, part of it is in II Cor. 10-13.</p> <p>d. He found Titus and heard that the church had responded to his leadership and he then wrote II Corinthians in great thanksgiving (cf. 7:11-16). It was delivered by Titus</p> <p>e. The marked mood change exists between chapters 1-9 and 10-13. This is explained by some scholars: (1) more bad news (itinerant false teachers from Jerusalem) from the Corinthian house churches after Paul had written chapters 1-9 (F. F. Bruce) or (2) chapters 1-9 are Paul's message to the faithful believers in Corinth, while chapters 10-13 are Paul's message to the rebellious believers in Corinth (from J. W. MacGorman).</p> |
|--|---|--|

#### IV. HOW MANY LETTERS DID PAUL WRITE TO CORINTH

- A. Just two, I and II Corinthians
- B. Three, with one letter being lost
- C. Four, with two lost letters

- D. Some modern scholars find the lost letters in II Corinthians
  - 1. previous letter (I Cor. 5:9) in II Cor. 6:14-7:1
  - 2. severe letter (II Cor. 2:3-4,9; 7:8-12) in II Cor. 10-13
- E. Five, with II Cor. 10-13 being the fifth letter, sent after Titus' report relating the further bad news
- F. I hold to C (see also H. C. Thiessen, *Introduction to the New Testament*, p. 209)
  - 1. previous letter—lost (I Cor. 5:9)
  - 2. I Corinthians
  - 3. severe letter—lost (II Cor. 2:1-11, 7:8-12)
  - 4. II Corinthians

## V. PAUL'S ENEMIES AT CORINTH

- A. In II Corinthians the problem seems to be with several factions dominating the different house churches (not necessarily the same factions as in I Corinthians, but probably).
  - 1. a group of believers supporting traditional Roman culture and customs
  - 2. a group of believers supporting traditional Greek rhetorical training
  - 3. a group of believers supporting traditional Jewish culture and customs
  - 4. a group of believers from the powerless and the disenfranchised of society
- B. The arrival of Jewish troublemakers from Palestine caused additional controversy (cf. II Cor. 10-13). They are different from the Judaziers of Galatians and the Jewish/Greek legalists of Colossians. They were probably rhetorically trained, charismatic teachers, similar to Apollos.
- C. Here are some of the charges leveled against Paul to which he responds.
  - 1. Paul was fickle (i.e. his travel plans changed, cf. 1:15ff).
  - 2. Paul was a powerful writer, but weak in personal speech (cf. 10:10).
  - 3. Paul was not a polished orator (cf. 10:10; 11:6).
  - 4. Paul did not accept money (cf. 11:7ff; 12:13ff).
  - 5. Paul was not a true Apostle (cf. 11:5,13; 12:4).
  - 6. Paul was not an orthodox Jew (cf. 11:21ff).
  - 7. Paul did not have direct revelation and spiritual visions as they had (cf. 12:1ff).

## VI. OCCASION AND PURPOSE OF II CORINTHIANS

- A. Thankfulness for the church's positive response to Paul's leadership (cf. 2:12,13; 7:11-16)
- B. Preparation for Paul's third visit (cf. 10:1-11). His second was apparently painful and unsuccessful. The changed emotional tone of chapters 10-13 is obvious. Some have asserted that it is the result of several of Paul's letters to the church at Corinth being combined into II Corinthians. It is also possible that Paul wrote these after he heard about a new outbreak of opposition within the Corinthian fellowship. It is an emotional addendum.
- C. Refuting the itinerant Jewish false teachers (cf. 10-12) who had rejected Paul's:
  - 1. person
  - 2. motives
  - 3. authority

4. delivery style
5. gospel message

## VII. POSSIBLE LITERARY UNITS

- A. Outlining this book is extremely difficult because of:
  1. mood swings
  2. variety of subjects
  3. extended parentheses (2:14-7:1 or 7:4)
  4. our limited knowledge of the local situation
  
- B. However, there are obviously three major subject divisions:
  1. Paul responds to Titus' message and relates his travel plans, chapters 1-7 (there is a major parenthesis dealing with Paul's apostolic ministry, 2:14-7:1 or 7:4)
  2. Paul's encouragement for the completion of the contribution for the Jerusalem church, chapters 8-9
  3. Paul's defense of his leadership, chapters 10-13
  
- C. I affirm the unity of II Corinthians because
  1. There is no hint of disunity in any of the ancient Greek manuscripts
    - a. no variations of the literary units
    - b. no manuscript which does not contain all thirteen chapters
  2. Although II Cor. 13 was apparently unknown to Clement of Rome in A.D. 96, it is quoted by Polycarp in A.D. 105.
  3. The book is understandable as a unit. There seems to be certain themes which show its unity, such as "suffering."
  4. The internal evidence is too limited to defend a radical dissection of II Corinthians.

## VIII. TERMS AND PHRASES TO BRIEFLY IDENTIFY

1. Grace and peace, 1:2
2. "in the day of our Lord Jesus," 1:14
3. sealed, 1:22
4. "leads us in triumph," 2:14
5. sweet aroma, 2:14
6. "peddling the word of God," 2:17
7. "letters of commendation," 3:1
8. "from the Lord, the Spirit," 3:18
9. outer man, 4:16
10. inner man, 4:16
11. earthly tent, 5:1
12. "the Spirit as a pledge," 5:5
13. new creature, 5:17
14. -reconciled, 5:18
15. "the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh," 10:4
16. angel of light, 11:14
17. the third heaven, 12:2
18. Paradise, 12:4

19. holy kiss, 13:12

#### IX. PERSONS TO BRIEFLY IDENTIFY

1. “the god of this world,” 4:4
2. Belial, 6:15
3. Titus, 7:6

#### X. MAP LOCATIONS TO PLOT

1. Achaia, 1:1
2. Asia, 1:8
3. Macedonia, 1:16
4. Judea, 1:16
5. Corinth, 1:23
6. Troas, 2:12
7. Damascus, 11:32

#### XI. DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What are the theological implications of 1:20?
2. Explain in your own words 3:6.
3. How is the term “veil” used in two senses in chapter 3? (4:3)
4. List Paul’s suffering in 4:7-11; 6:4-10; 11:23-28
5. Will believers appear before the judgment seat of Christ? If so, for what?
6. Explain in your own words the spiritual principle of 5:14-15.
7. What doctrine is 5:21 stating?
8. List the principles of giving found in chapters 8-9.
9. How do Paul’s enemies describe him in 10:10?
10. Who is Paul referring to in 11:4?
11. List the ways Paul compares himself to others in 11:21-30.
12. What was Paul’s thorn in the flesh? (12:7)

# INTRODUCTION TO GALATIANS

## I. INTRODUCTION

- A. The book of Galatians is one of the clearest expressions of the radically new and free truth of salvation by grace alone, through faith alone. It is often called “The Magna Carta of Christian Liberty.”
- B. This letter stirred the fires of the Protestant Reformation.
  - 1. Martin Luther said, “the little book of Galatians is my letter; I have betrothed myself to it; it is my wife.”
  - 2. John Wesley found lasting peace from a sermon on Galatians.
  - 3. In his *Study Guide Commentary*, p. 11, Curtis Vaughan wrote, “few books have more profoundly influenced the minds of men, have so significantly shaped the course of human history, or continued to speak with such relevance to the deepest needs of modern life.”
- C. This doctrinally oriented letter, possibly Paul’s first, was a precursor to Romans and its development of the doctrine of justification by faith apart from Judaism’s emphasis on keeping the Law:
  - 1. Salvation cannot be found in both Law and grace.
  - 2. Salvation must be found in either Law or grace.
  - 3. Christlikeness will follow a true conversion.
  - 4. Beware of Christian legalism.
- D. This radically free salvation, by grace alone through faith alone, is desperately needed in our day because of the recurrent, subtle pull of our self-oriented, works-oriented religious consciousness. In every age the simple truth of God’s initiating, self-giving, unconditional love mediated through human repentance and humble faith is challenged! It is not that the false teachers were rejecting Christ's central place in redemption, but they were adding to Him. It is not what we add, but that we add anything!

## II. AUTHOR

Paul’s authorship of this letter has never been seriously doubted, as it forms a significant pillar of the Pauline Corpus. Galatians is very autobiographical and personal. It is highly emotional yet precisely logical.

## III. DATE AND RECIPIENTS

- A. These two aspects of background material must be dealt with together because two opposing theories of the identities of the recipients affect the dating of the letter. Both theories have logical weight and limited biblical evidence.
- B. The two theories are:
  - 1. The traditional theory that was unanimous until the eighteenth century.
    - a. It is called the “Northern Galatian Theory.”



- b. It assumes that “Galatia” refers to the ethnic Galatians of the northern central plateau of Turkey (cf. I Pet. 1:1). These ethnic Galatians were Celts (Greek *Keltoi* or Latin *Gall*) who invaded this area in the third century B.C. They were called “Gallo-Graecians” to distinguish them from their western European brothers. They were defeated in 230 B.C. by Attalus I, the King of Pergamum. Their geographical influence was limited to northern central Asia Minor or modern Turkey.
  - c. If this ethnic group is assumed, then the date would be the mid 50's during Paul’s second or third missionary journey. Paul’s traveling companions would be Silas and Timothy.
  - d. Some have linked Paul’s illness in Gal. 4:13 to malaria. They assert that Paul went north into the highlands to get away from the marshy, malaria-infested, coastal lowlands.
2. The second theory is championed by Sir Wm. M. Ramsay, *St. Paul the Traveller and Roman Citizen*, New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1896.
- a. As the traditional theory defined “Galatia” as ethnic, this theory defines it as administrative. It seems that Paul often used Roman provincial names (cf. I Cor. 16:19; II Cor. 1:1; 8:1, etc.) The Roman province of “Galatia” included a larger area than ethnic “Galatia.” These ethnic Celts supported Rome very early and were rewarded with more local autonomy and expanded territorial authority. If this large area was known as “Galatia,” then it is possible that Paul's first missionary journey to these southern cities of Antioch in Pisidia, Lystra, Derbe and Iconium, recorded in Acts 13-14, is the location of these churches.
  - b. If one assumes this “Southern Theory,” the date would be very early—close to, but before, the “Jerusalem Council” of Acts 15, which addresses the same subject matter as the book of Galatians. The Council occurred in A.D. 48-49 and the letter was probably written during the same period. If this is true, Galatians is the first letter of Paul in our New Testament.
  - c. Some evidences for the southern Galatian theory:
    - (1) There is no mention of Paul’s traveling companions by name but Barnabas is mentioned three times (cf. 2:1,9,13). This fits the first missionary journey of Paul.
    - (2) It is mentioned that Titus was not circumcised (cf. 2:1-5). This fits best before the Jerusalem Council of Acts 15.
    - (3) The mention of Peter (cf. 2:11-14) and the problem of fellowship with Gentiles fits best before the Jerusalem Council.
    - (4) When the money was taken to Jerusalem several companions of Paul from different areas (cf. Acts 20:4) were listed. None, however, were listed from northern Galatia cities, although we know these ethnic Galatian churches participated (cf. I Cor. 16:1).
3. For the detailed presentation of the different arguments concerning these theories consult a technical commentary. They each have valid points but at this point in time there is no consensus, but the “Southern Theory” seems to fit all of the facts best.

C. Relationship of Galatians to Acts:

- 1. Paul made five visits to Jerusalem, recorded by Luke in the book of Acts:
  - a. 9:26-30, after his conversion
  - b. 11:30; 12:25, to bring famine relief from the Gentile churches
  - c. 15:1-30, the Jerusalem Council
  - d. 18:22, brief visit
  - e. 21:15ff., another explanation of Gentile work
- 2. There are two visits to Jerusalem recorded in Galatians:
  - a. 1:18, after three years

- b. 2:1, after fourteen years
  - 3. It seems most probable that Acts 9:26 is related to Gal. 1:18. Acts 11:30 & 15:1ff. are the setting of unrecorded meetings which are mentioned in Gal. 2:1.
  - 4. There are some differences between the Acts 15 and Gal. 2 accounts but this is probably due to:
    - a. different perspectives
    - b. different purposes of Luke and Paul
    - c. the fact that Gal. 2 may have occurred sometime before the meeting described in Acts 15 but in conjunction with it.
- D. Possible chronology of Paul's writings following F. F. Bruce and Murry Harris with minor adaptations.

| <u>Book</u>                       | <u>Date</u>   | <u>Place of Writing</u> | <u>Relation to Acts</u> |
|-----------------------------------|---------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1. Galatians                      | 48            | Syrian Antioch          | 14:28; 15:2             |
| 2. I Thessalonians                | 50            | Corinth                 | 18:5                    |
| 3. II Thessalonians               | 50            | Corinth                 |                         |
| 4. I Corinthians                  | 55            | Ephesus                 | 19:20                   |
| 5. II Corinthians                 | 56            | Macedonia               | 20:2                    |
| 6. Romans                         | 57            | Corinth                 | 20:3                    |
| 7.-10. Prison Letters             |               |                         |                         |
| Colossians                        | early 60's    | Rome                    |                         |
| Ephesians                         | early 60's    | Rome                    |                         |
| Philemon                          | early 60's    | Rome                    |                         |
| Philippians                       | late 62-63    | Rome                    | 28:30-31                |
| 11.-13. Fourth Missionary Journey |               |                         |                         |
| I Timothy                         | 63 (or later, | Macedonia               |                         |
| Titus                             | 63 but before | Ephesus (?)             |                         |
| II Timothy                        | 64 A.D. 68)   | Rome                    |                         |

#### IV. PURPOSE OF THE LETTER

- A. Paul addressed three distinct areas of concern about the message of the false teachers. These heretics have been labeled "Judaizers" because they believed that one had to become a Jew before he could become a Christian (cf. 6:12). His concerns revolved around the charges of the Judaizers:
  - 1. Paul was not truly an Apostle like the Twelve (cf. Acts 1:21-22); therefore, he was dependent on their authority or at least the authority of the Mother Church in Jerusalem.
  - 2. Paul's message was different from theirs, and thus, false. This seems directly related to the concept of "justification by faith apart from the Law." The Apostles in Jerusalem were still very Jewish in their personal lives.
  - 3. An element of libertinism was connected in some way with these churches (cf. 5:18-6:8). Exactly how this is to be explained is debated. Some have even seen two target groups in Paul's letter: Judaizers and gnostics (cf. 4:8-11). However, it seems best to relate these verses to pagan practices. The Jews were concerned about the lifestyle of Gentiles. How did Paul's radical free grace relate to pagan idolatry and excess?
- B. Doctrinally, this letter is very similar to Paul's letter to the Romans. These two books contain Paul's major doctrines repeated and developed in different settings.

## V. BRIEF OUTLINE

- A. Prologue, 1:1-10
  - 1. general introduction to the book
  - 2. the occasion for writing the book
- B. Paul defends his Apostleship, 1:11-2:14
- C. Paul defends the doctrinal truths of his gospel, 2:15-4:20
- D. Paul defends the practical implications of his gospel, 5:1-6:10
- E. Personal summary and closing, 6:11-18

## VI. TERMS AND PHRASES TO BRIEFLY IDENTIFY

- 1. "this present evil age," 1:4
- 2. "a different gospel," 1:6
- 3. Judaism, 1:13
- 4. ancestral traditions, 1:14
- 5. "may it never be," 2:17
- 6. "you foolish Galatians," 3:1,3
- 7. bewitched, 3:1
- 8. "if indeed it was in vain," 3:4; 4:11
- 9. "under a curse," 3:10
- 10. "his seed," 3:16
- 11. "having been ordained through angels by the agency of a mediator," 3:19
- 12. "we were kept in custody under the law," 3:23
- 13. "the elemental things," 4:3,9
- 14. Abba, 4:6
- 15. "a bodily illness," 4:13
- 16. "by the bondwoman. . .by the free woman," 4:23
- 17. allegorically, 4:24
- 18. "walk by the Spirit," 5:16
- 19. "the fruit of the Spirit," 5:22
- 20. "what large letters," 6:11
- 21. "the brand-marks of Jesus," 6:17

## VII. PERSONS TO BRIEFLY IDENTIFY

- 1. "an angel from heaven," 1:8
- 2. Cephas, 1:18
- 3. Barnabas, 2:1
- 4. Titus, 2:2
- 5. "those who were of reputation," 2:2,6
- 6. "false brethren," 2:4
- 7. "who were reputed to be pillars," 2:9
- 8. "the party of the circumcision," 2:12

9. “guardians and managers,” 4:2
10. Hagar, 4:25

#### VIII. MAP LOCATIONS TO PLOT

1. churches of Galatia, 1:2
2. Arabia, 1:17
3. Damascus, 1:17
4. Syria, 1:21
5. Cilicia, 1:21
6. Antioch, 2:11

#### IX. DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Explain in your own words 1:11-12.
2. When did Paul persecute the church of God? (1:13)
3. Why did some want Titus circumcised? (7:3)
4. Explain 2:6 in your own words.
5. Galatians 2:16 may be the theme of the whole book. Why?
6. Explain 2:20 in your own words.
7. How would you answer Paul’s question in 3:3?
8. Explain the significance of Paul’s quote of Gen. 15:6,8 in Gal. 3:6-8.
9. How was Jesus cursed? (3:13)
10. What is the purpose of the OT in light of 3:19?
11. Why is 3:22 such a good summary statement?
12. Why is 3:28 such a significant truth?
13. What was Paul’s bodily illness mentioned in 4:13?
14. What is the goal of Christianity? (4:19)
15. What is Paul’s theological point in 5:3?
16. Explain the proverb in 5:9.
17. What does 5:4 mean, “you have fallen from grace”?
18. How does 5:13 relate to Romans 14:1-15:13?
19. Explain 5:23 in your own words.
20. How are believers to relate to sinning believers? (6:1-5)
21. What is the spiritual principle stated in 6:7?
22. How does 6:10 relate to those outside the believing community?

# INTRODUCTION TO EPHESIANS

## I. OPENING STATEMENTS

- A. The truths of this book have impacted the lives of many saints
  - 1. Samuel Coleridge called it “the divine composition of man”
  - 2. John Calvin called it his favorite book of the Bible
  - 3. John Knox asked that Calvin’s sermons on Ephesians be read to him on his deathbed
- B. This book has been called the “crowning jewel,” or capstone, of Paul’s theology. All of the great themes of Paul are expressed in wonderful summary fashion.
- C. As God used Romans to instigate the Reformation, He will use Ephesians to reunite splintered Christendom. Believers’ unity and commonality in Christ far overshadow their differences.

## II. AUTHOR

- A. Paul
  - 1. Expressly stated in 1:1, 3:1
  - 2. Reference to imprisonment (probably in Rome) in 3:1; 4:1; 6:20
  - 3. Almost unanimous church tradition
    - a. Clement of Rome, in A.D. 95, wrote a letter to Corinth that quotes 4:4-6
    - b. Ignatius (A.D. 30-107) quotes from 1:9; 2:19; 3:4-9
    - c. Polycarp (A.D. 65-155), the disciple of John the Apostle, and the bishop of Smyrna asserts Paul’s authorship
    - d. Irenaeus (A.D. 130-200) asserts Paul’s authorship
    - e. Clement of Alexandria (A.D. 150-210) asserts Paul's authorship
  - 4. It is listed in
    - a. Marcion’s (who came to Rome in A.D. 140's) list of accepted books
    - b. Muratorian Fragment (A.D. 180-200), a list of canonical books from Rome and placed it in Paul's writings
  - 5. The closings of both Colossians and Ephesians have 29 words that are almost exactly the same in Greek (there are two additional words in Colossians.).
- B. Another Author
  - 1. Erasmus was the first to doubt Paul’s authorship based on
    - a. Style - long sentences that are very uncharacteristic of Paul’s other letters
    - b. No personal greetings
    - c. Unique vocabulary
  - 2. 18th-Century critical scholarship began to deny Paul’s authorship
    - a. Several verses seem to be from a second generation believer, 2:20; 3:5
    - b. Theological words were used with differing definitions (example: “mystery”)
    - c. Uniqueness of the genre of a cyclical or circular letter
- C. Answers to Erasmus’ points
  - 1. The style is different because Paul had time to think when writing Ephesians while in prison.

2. The absence of a personal greeting is explained by the fact that Ephesians was a cyclical letter that was to be sent to many churches in the area. A Roman postal route which included Ephesus and the Lycus River Valley can be seen in Rev. 2-3. Paul wrote a twin letter, Colossians, to a specific group of three churches which included several personal greetings.
3. The number of unique words in Ephesians is exactly the same as the number of unique words (*hapax legomena*) in Romans. The purpose, subject matter, recipients and occasion explain the use of new words.
4. Paul speaks of “apostles and prophets” in I Cor. 12:28, which is similar to 2:20 and 3:5. No one denies Paul’s authorship of I Corinthians.

### III. THE LITERARY RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN COLOSSIANS AND EPHESIANS

#### A. The historical relationship between Colossians and Ephesians

1. Epaphras (Col. 1:7; 4:12; Philemon 23) was converted during Paul’s Ephesian campaign (Acts 19)
  - a. He took his newly found faith back to his home area, the Lycus River Valley.
  - b. He started three churches—in Hierapolis, Laodicea and Colossae.
  - c. Epaphras sought Paul for advice on how to combat this merging of world views by the heretics. Paul was in prison at Rome (early 60’s).
2. False teachers came and began to merge the gospel with Greek ontology
  - a. spirit and matter were co-eternal
  - b. spirit (God) was good
  - c. matter (creation) was evil
  - d. a series of eons (angelic levels) existed between the good high God and a lesser god who formed matter
  - e. salvation was based on knowledge of secret passwords which helped people progress through the eons (angelic levels)

#### B. The literary relationship between Paul’s two letters

1. Paul heard of the heresy in these churches which he had never visited personally from Epaphras.
2. Paul wrote a hard-hitting letter in short, emotional sentences, directed at the false teachers. The central theme was the cosmic lordship of Jesus. This is known as Paul’s letter to the Colossians.
3. Apparently, soon after writing Colossians, with time on his hands in prison, he developed these same themes. Ephesians is characterized by long sentences and developed theological concepts (1:3-14, 15-23; 2:1-10, 14-18, 19-22; 3:1-12, 14-19; 4:11-16; 6:13-20). It takes Colossians as a starting point and draws out its theological implications. Its central theme is the unity of all things in Christ, which was a contrast to the incipient gnostic concept.

#### C. Related literary and theological structure

1. Similarity of the basic structure
  - a. they have very similar openings
  - b. they have doctrinal sections dealing primarily with Christ
  - c. they have practical sections admonishing Christian lifestyle using the same categories, terms and phrases
  - d. they have closing verses exactly alike in 29 consecutive words in Greek, with only two different words added in Colossians.

2. Similarity of words or short phrases
 

|                               |                                       |
|-------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Eph. 1:1c and Col. 1:2a       | “faithful”                            |
| Eph. 1:4 and Col. 1:22        | “holy and blameless”                  |
| Eph. 1:7 and Col. 1:14        | “redemption . . . forgiveness”        |
| Eph. 1:10 and Col. 1:20       | “all things . . . heaven . . . earth” |
| Eph. 1:15 and Col. 1:3-4      | “heard . . . love for all the saints” |
| Eph. 1:18 and Col. 1:27       | “the riches of the glory”             |
| Eph. 2:1 and Col. 1:13        | “you were dead”                       |
| Eph. 2:16 and Col. 1:20       | “reconcile . . . cross”               |
| Eph. 3:2 and Col. 1:25        | “stewardship”                         |
| Eph. 3:3 and Col. 1:26,27     | “mystery”                             |
| Eph. 4:3 and Col. 3:14        | “unity”                               |
| Eph. 4:15 and Col. 2:19       | “head” and “grow”                     |
| Eph. 4:24 and Col. 3:10,12,14 | “put on . . .”                        |
| Eph. 4:31 and Col. 3:8        | “anger,” “wrath,” “malice,” “slander” |
| Eph. 5:3 and Col. 3:5         | “immorality,” “impurity,” “greed”     |
| Eph. 5:5 and Col. 3:5         | “idolatry” (coveting)                 |
| Eph. 5:6 and Col. 3:6         | “the wrath of God”                    |
| Eph. 5:16 and Col. 4:5        | “making the most of the time”         |
  
3. Exact phrases or sentences
 

|                             |   |
|-----------------------------|---|
| Eph. 1:1a and Col. 1:1a     |   |
| Eph. 1:1b and Col. 1:2a     |   |
| Eph. 1:2a and Col. 1:2b     |   |
| Eph. 1:13 and Col. 1:5      |   |
| Eph. 2:1 and Col. 2:13      |   |
| Eph. 2:5b and Col. 2:13c    |   |
| Eph. 4:1b and Col. 1:10a    |   |
| Eph. 6:21-22 and Col. 4:7-8 | (29 consecutive words alike, except for “ <i>kai syndoulos</i> ” in Colossians) |
  
4. Similarity of phrases or sentences
 

|                               |  |
|-------------------------------|--|
| Eph. 1:21 and Col. 1:16       |  |
| Eph. 2:1 and Col. 1:13        |  |
| Eph. 2:16 and Col. 1:20       |  |
| Eph. 3:7a and Col. 1:23d, 25a |  |
| Eph. 3:8 and Col. 1:27        |  |
| Eph. 4:2 and Col. 3:12        |  |
| Eph. 4:29 and Col. 3:8; 4:6   |  |
| Eph. 4:32b and Col. 3:13b     |  |
| Eph. 5:15 and Col. 4:5        |  |
| Eph. 5:19-20 and Col. 3:16    |  |
  
5. Theologically synonymous concepts:
 

|                           |                     |
|---------------------------|---------------------|
| Eph. 1:3 and Col. 1:3     | a prayer of thanks  |
| Eph. 2:1,12 and Col. 1:21 | alienation from God |
| Eph. 2:15 and Col. 2:14   | hostility of Law    |
| Eph. 4:1 and Col. 1:10    | worthy walk         |

|                            |   |
|----------------------------|---|
| Eph. 4:15 and Col. 2:19    | Christ's body growing to maturity from Head |
| Eph. 4:19 and Col. 3:5     | sexual impurity                             |
| Eph. 4:22,31 and Col. 3:8  | "lay aside" sins                            |
| Eph. 4:32 and Col. 3:12-13 | Christians kind to one another              |
| Eph. 5:4 and Col. 3:8      | Christian speech                            |
| Eph. 5:18 and Col. 3:16    | filling of Spirit = word of Christ          |
| Eph. 5:20 and Col. 3:17    | thanksgiving to God for all things          |
| Eph. 5:22 and Col. 3:18    | wives be subject to husbands                |
| Eph. 5:25 and Col. 3:19    | husbands love your wives                    |
| Eph. 6:1 and Col. 3:20     | children obey your parents                  |
| Eph. 6:4 and Col. 3:21     | fathers do not provoke children             |
| Eph. 6:5 and Col. 3:22     | slaves obey masters                         |
| Eph. 6:9 and Col. 4:1      | masters and slaves                          |
| Eph. 6:18 and Col. 4:2-4   | Paul's request for prayer                   |

6. Terms used in both Colossians and Ephesians which are not found in other Pauline literature

- a. "fullness"
  - Eph. 1:23 "the fullness of Him who fills all in all"
  - Eph. 3:19 "be filled up to all the fullness of God"
  - Eph. 4:13 "to the fullness of Christ"
  - Col. 1:19 "for all the fullness to dwell in Him"
  - Col. 2:9 "for in Him all the fullness of Deity dwells"
- b. Christ as "head" of the church
  - Eph. 4:15, 5:23 and Col. 1:18;2:19
- c. "alienated"
  - Eph. 2:12; 4:18 and Col. 1:21
- d. "redeeming the time"
  - Eph. 5:16 and Col. 4:5
- e. "rooted"
  - Eph. 3:17 and Col. 2:7
- f. "the word of truth, the gospel"
  - Eph. 1:13 and Col. 1:5
- g. "forbearing"
  - Eph. 4:2 and Col. 3:13
- h. unusual phrasing and terms ("held together," "supply")
  - Eph. 4:16 and Col. 2:19

D. Summary

1. Over one third of the words in Colossians are in Ephesians. It has been estimated that 75 of the 155 verses in Ephesians have a parallel in Colossians. Both claim Paul's authorship while in prison.
2. Both were delivered by Paul's friend Tychicus.
3. Both were sent to the same area (Asia Minor).
4. Both deal with the same Christological topic.
5. Both emphasize Christ as head of the church.
6. Both encourage appropriate Christian living.



- E. Major Points of Dissimilarity
1. The church was always local in Colossians but universal in Ephesians. This may be due to the cyclical nature of the letter of Ephesians.
  2. Heresy, which was such a prominent feature of Colossians, is not directly mentioned in Ephesians. However, both letters use characteristic gnostic terms (“wisdom,” “knowledge,” “fullness,” “mystery,” “principalities and powers” and “stewardship.”)
  3. The second coming is immediate in Colossians but delayed in Ephesians. The church was, and is, called to serve in a fallen world. (2:7; 3:21; 4:13).
  4. Several characteristically Pauline terms are used differently. One example is the term “mystery.” In Colossians the mystery is Christ (Col. 1:26-27; 2:2; 4:3), but in Ephesians (1:9; 5:32) it is God’s previously hidden, but now revealed, plan for the unity of Gentiles and Jews.
  5. Ephesians has several Old Testament allusions (1:22—Ps. 8; 2:17—Isa. 57:19) (2:20—Ps. 118:22) (4:8—Ps. 68:18) (4:26—Ps. 4:4) (5:15—Isa. 26:19, 51:17, 52:1, 60:1) (5:3—Gen. 3:24) (6:2—3-Exod. 20:12) (6:14—Isa. 11:5, 59:17) (6:15—Isa. 52:7), but there are only one or two in Colossians (2:3—Isa. 11:2) or (2:22—Isa. 29:13).
- F. Though very similar in words, phrases and often outline, the letters also include unique truths.
1. The Trinitarian blessing of grace - Eph. 1:3-14
  2. The grace passage - Eph. 2:1-10
  3. The merging of Jews and Gentiles into one new body - Eph. 2:11-3:13
  4. The unity and giftedness of the body of Christ - Eph. 4:1-16
  5. “Christ and the church” are the pattern for “husband and wife” Eph. 5:22-33
  6. The spiritual warfare passage - Eph. 6:10-18
  7. The Christological passage - Col. 1:13-18
  8. Human religious ritual and rules - Col. 2:16-23
  9. The theme of the cosmic significance of Christ in Colossians versus the theme of the unity of all things in Christ in Ephesians
- G. In conclusion, it seems best to follow A. T. Robertson and F. F. Bruce in asserting that Paul wrote both letters in close proximity by developing the thoughts of Colossians into a capstone presentation of truth.

#### IV. DATE

- A. The date of this letter is linked to one of Paul’s imprisonments in Ephesus, Philippi, Caesarea, or Rome. A Roman imprisonment best fits the facts of Acts.
- B. Once Rome is assumed to be the place of imprisonment, the question arises, which time? Paul was in jail in the early 60's, which is recorded in Acts, but he was released and wrote the Pastoral letters (I & II Timothy and Titus) and was then rearrested and killed before June 9, A.D. 68, which was the date of Nero’s suicide.
- C. The best educated guess for the writing of Ephesians is Paul’s first imprisonment in Rome in the early 60's.
- D. Tychicus, along with Onesimus, probably took the letters of Colossians, Ephesians and Philemon to Asia Minor.

- E. Possible chronology of Paul's writings following F. F. Bruce and Murry Harris with minor adaptations.

| <u>Book</u>         | <u>Date</u>          | <u>Place of Writing</u> | <u>Relation to Acts</u> |
|---------------------|----------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1. Galatians        | 48 (southern theory) | Syrian Antioch          | 14:28; 15:2             |
| 2. I Thessalonians  | 50                   | Corinth                 | 18:5                    |
| 3. II Thessalonians | 50                   | Corinth                 |                         |
| 4. I Corinthians    | 55                   | Ephesus                 | 19:20                   |
| 5. II Corinthians   | 56                   | Macedonia               | 20:2                    |
| 6. Romans           | 57                   | Corinth                 | 20:3                    |
| 7.- 10.             |                      |                         |                         |
| Colossians          | early 60's (prison)  | Rome                    |                         |
| Ephesians           | early 60's (prison)  | Rome                    | 28:30-31                |
| Philemon            | early 60's (prison)  | Rome                    |                         |
| Philippians         | late 61-62 (prison)  | Rome                    |                         |
| 11. I Timothy       | 63 (or later, but    | Macedonia               |                         |
| 12. Titus           | 63 before            | Ephesus (?)             |                         |
| 13. II Timothy      | 64 A.D. 68)          | Rome                    |                         |

## V. RECIPIENTS

- A. Many manuscripts (Chester Beatty Papyri, P<sup>46</sup>; Sinaiticus,  $\aleph$ ; Vaticanus, B; Origen's Greek text, and Tertullian's Greek text) omit "in Ephesus" in 1:1. The RSV and Williams translations omit the phrase.
- B. The Greek grammar of v. 1 can accommodate a place name. Possibly, as a circular letter, the place name of the church was left blank so it could be supplied when read aloud to the churches. This might explain the phrase in Colossians 4:15-16, "letter from the Laodiceans," which was possibly the Book of Ephesians (Marcion called Ephesians by the title "letter to the Laodiceans").
- C. Ephesians was written primarily to Gentiles, 2:1; 4:17, whom Paul had not personally met, 1:15; 3:2. The churches in the Lycus River Valley (Laodicea, Hierapolis, and Colossae) were started not by Paul but by Epaphras (Col. 1:7; 4:12; Philemon 23).

## VI. PURPOSE

- A. The theme of the book is found in 1:10 and 4:1-10, which emphasizes the unity of all things in Christ. Christ restores the image of God in humanity and in the world (*kosmos*).
- B. Ephesians is one of Paul's four prison letters. The outlines of Ephesians and Colossians are very similar. Colossians was written to combat the heresy of incipient Gnosticism in the Lycus River Valley of Asia Minor. Ephesians was written as a circular letter to the same area to prepare the other churches for the coming heresy. Colossians is a terse, hard-hitting letter, while Ephesians is an extended logical presentation of the same truths using very long sentences: (1:3-14, 15-23; 2:1-9; 3:1-7, etc.).

## VII. BRIEF OUTLINE

- A. The book naturally divides into two parts (as do most of Paul's writings)
  - 1. Unity in Christ, chapters 1-3 (theology)
  - 2. Unity in the Church, chapters 4-6 (application)
  
- B. Suggested thematic outline
  - 1. Traditional Pauline opening, 1:1-2
  - 2. The Father's plan for the unity of all things in Christ, 1:3-3:21
    - a. Paul's praise to the Father, 1:3-14
      - (1) for the Father's love before time
      - (2) for the Father's love in His Son at the right time
      - (3) for the Father's continuing love by the Spirit through time
    - b. Paul's prayer to the Father for the churches, 1:15-23
      - (1) for the Father's revelation in Christ to be understood
      - (2) for the Father's power to work powerfully in believers
      - (3) for the Father's elevation of Christ above all things
    - c. Paul's understanding of the Father's plan for all humanity, 2:1-3:13
      - (1) sinful mankind's need
      - (2) the Father's gracious provision
      - (3) mankind's needed covenantal response
      - (4) the Father's plan fully revealed
    - d. Paul's prayer to the Father for the believers, 3:14-21
      - (1) to receive inner strength (by the Spirit)
      - (2) to fully understand the gospel (not in propositional truths only) in experience and love
      - (3) to be filled with the fullness of God (which is Christ)
      - (4) all this from the God who is able
  - 3. The Father's desire for the unity of His new people, 4:1-6:20
    - a. The unity of the Triune God is reflected in the unity of His children, 4:1-16
      - (1) unity is not uniformity, but lifestyle love
      - (2) Deity is a tri-une unity
      - (3) spiritual gifts are for the good of the body, not individual honor
      - (4) unity demands ministry
      - (5) unity is under angelic attack
      - (6) unity is in Christ
    - b. Christian unity contrasted with pagan self centeredness, 4:17-5:14
      - (1) lay aside the deeds of the old life
      - (2) put on Christlikeness
    - c. The means of accomplishing and maintaining unity, 5:15-6:9
      - (1) ever be filled with the Spirit
      - (2) the Spirit-filled life described
        - (a) five participles, vv. 19-21
        - (b) three domestic examples
          - i husbands - wives
          - ii parents - children
          - iii masters - slaves
    - d. The struggle for Christlike unity, 6:10-20

- (1) the spiritual battle
- (2) God's armor
- (3) prayer's power
4. Closing remarks, 6:21-24

## VIII. THE PHILOSOPHICAL AND THEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND OF THE FALSE TEACHERS (GNOSTICISM)

- A. Gnostic beliefs of the first and second centuries:
  1. An ontological (eternal) dualism between spirit (God) and matter (physical things).
  2. Spirit was good, while matter was evil.
  3. A series of angelic levels (*eons*) between a holy high God and a lesser god who structured evil matter.
  4. The path to salvation
    - a. knowledge of the secret password which allowed movement through the angelic spheres from earth to heaven,
    - b. a divine spark in all men although all would not understand or receive saving knowledge,
    - c. knowledge came only to an elite group by special revelation.
  5. Ethics
    - a. totally unrelated to the spiritual life (libertarians, antinomians)
    - b. crucial to salvation (legalists).
- B. Contradictions with historical, biblical Christianity
  1. separating the humanity and Deity of Christ (Gnostics said He could not be fully God and fully human)
  2. removing His vicarious death as the only way of salvation
  3. substituting human knowledge for free divine grace.

## IX. TERMS AND PHRASES TO BRIEFLY IDENTIFY

1. saints, 1:1
2. Lord, 1:2
3. heavenly places, 1:3
4. "before the foundation of the world," 1:4
5. blameless, 1:4
6. predestined, 1:5
7. "redemption," 1:7
8. mystery, 1:9
9. "the fullness of time," 1:10
10. sealed, 1:13
11. pledge, 1:14
12. glory, 1:17
13. "seated Him at His right hand," 1:20
14. "the fullness of Him who fills all in all," 1:23
15. "the course of this world," 2:2
16. "the gift of God," 2:8
17. "fellow citizens," 2:19
18. "the corner stone," 2:20
19. "boldness and confident access," 3:12

20. “the trickery of men,” 4:14
21. “by craftiness in deceitful scheming,” 4:14
22. “walk in love,” 5:2
23. “a fragrant aroma,” 5:2
24. “the kingdom of Christ and God,” 5:5
25. “be subject to one another,” 5:21
26. “the full armor of God,” 6:11
27. “gird up your loins,” 6:14
28. “sword of the Spirit,” 6:17

#### X. PERSONS TO BRIEFLY IDENTIFY

1. Gnostics
2. “the prince of the power of the air,” 2:2
3. Gentiles
4. apostles, 4:11
5. prophets, 4:11
6. evangelists, 4:11
7. the head, 4:15
8. the devil, 4:27
9. “the sons of disobedience,” 5:6
10. “the children of Light,” 5:8
11. “spiritual forces of wickedness,” 6:12
12. Tychicus, 6:21

#### XI. MAP LOCATIONS — NONE

#### XII. DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What is the basic theme of 1:3-14?
2. Why is the phrase “to the praise of His glory” used three times in 1:3-14?
3. Why does Paul speak so often of “wisdom and insight” or “knowledge” in this book?
4. To whom does 1:19 refer?
5. Explain the Jewish concept of two ages. (1:21)
6. Summarize the topic of 2:1-3.
7. Summarize the topic of 2:4-6.
8. Explain the historical allusion in 2:14.
9. What revelation is Paul talking about in 3:3?
10. Why does Paul call himself “the least of all saints”? (3:8)
11. Why is the word “one” used so often in 4:4-6?
12. What is Christ’s gift in 4:7?
13. Where in the OT is Paul’s quote in 4:8? Why is Paul’s quote different from your OT?
14. Why is 4:12 so significant?
15. Does 5:5 limit those who can be saved?
16. How is being drunk related to being filled with the Spirit? (5:18)
17. Why are Christ’s love and sacrifice for the church related to the Christian home? (5:25-33)
18. How are “honor” and “obey” related?
19. Why is 6:18 so needed today?

# INTRODUCTION TO PHILIPPIANS

## I. INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

- A. This is one of Paul's most informal letters. With this church he did not feel the need to assert his Apostolic authority. His overflowing love for them is obvious. He even allowed them to send him money (cf. 1:5,7; 4:15), which was very unusual for him.
- B. Paul is imprisoned, yet he uses the term for joy (noun and verb) over sixteen times. His peace and hope were not based on circumstances.
- C. There is an element of false teaching present in the church (cf. 3:2, 18-19). These heretics seem to be similar to those in the churches of Galatia, who were called Judaizers. They insisted that one had to become a Jew before one could be a Christian.
- D. This letter includes an example of an early Christian hymn, creed, or liturgical poem (cf. 2:6-11). It is one of the finest Christological passages in the entire New Testament (cf. John 1:1-14; Col. 1:13-20; Heb. 1:2-3). Paul uses it as an example of Christ's humility to be imitated by every believer (cf. 2:1-5), not primarily in a doctrinal sense.
- E. In a book of 104 verses, Jesus' name or title occurs 51 times. It is obvious who is central in Paul's heart, mind and theology.

## II. PHILIPPI AND MACEDONIA

- A. The city of Philippi
  - 1. In 356 B.C. it was captured and enlarged by Philip II of Macedon, Alexander the Great's father. The original Thracian village was named *Krenides* (springs). The city was important because of the gold ore in the region.
  - 2. At the battle of Pydna in 168 B.C., the region became a Roman Province and later one of four in Macedonia.
  - 3. In 42 B.C., Brutus and Cassius (Republicans) fought Antony and Octavian (Imperial) near Philippi, over governmental reform in Rome. After that battle, Antony settled some of his victorious veterans here.
  - 4. In 31 B.C., after the battle of Actium in which Octavian defeated Antony, Antony's supporters in Rome were deposed and exiled here.
  - 5. In 31 B.C. Philippi became a Roman Colony (cf. Acts 16:12). The townspeople were declared citizens of Rome. Latin was spoken and the city became like a little Rome. It was located on the Ignatian Way, the major east-to-west Roman highway. The special privileges they enjoyed as Roman citizens were:
    - a. no poll taxes and no land taxes
    - b. the right to buy and sell property
    - c. all protection and rights of Roman law
    - d. special local governmental leaders (praetors and lictors)

- B. The gospel comes to Philippi
1. On Paul's second missionary journey he wanted to turn north to enter north central Asia (modern Turkey, biblical Bithynia). Instead, in a vision he saw a man (possibly Luke) of Macedonia (northern Greece) calling to him to come and help them (Acts 16:6-10). By this vision the Spirit directed Paul to Europe.
  2. Paul was accompanied by his helpers
    - a. Silas (Silvanus)
      - (1) Silas was a leader from the Jerusalem church and a prophet who replaced Barnabas as Paul's missionary co-worker (cf. Acts 15:15:22,32; 36-41);
      - (2) Silas and Paul were both imprisoned at Philippi (Acts 16:16-26);
      - (3) Paul always called him Silvanus (cf. II Cor. 1:19; I Thess. 1:1; II Thess. 1:1);
      - (4) It is possible that Silas later became a companion of Peter, as John Mark did (cf. I Pet. 5:12).
    - b. Timothy
      - (1) he was a convert from Paul's first missionary journey (cf. Acts 16:1-2; II Tim. 1:5; 3:15);
      - (2) his grandmother and mother were Jewish, but his father was Greek (cf. Acts 16:1; II Tim. 1:5);
      - (3) because he was well spoken of by the brothers (cf. Acts 16:2) and Paul saw the gifts of ministry in him (cf. I Tim. 4:14; II Tim. 1:6), he chose him as a helper to replace John Mark (cf. Acts 13:13);
      - (4) Paul circumcised Timothy so that he would be accepted by the Jews (cf. Acts 16:3);
      - (5) Timothy became Paul's trusted apostolic representative (cf. Phil. 2:19-22; I Cor. 4:17; 3:2,6; II Cor. 1:1,19).
    - c. Luke
      - (1) the anonymous, but probable, author of the Gospel of Luke and Acts;
      - (2) he was apparently a Gentile physician (cf. Col. 4:14). Some think the term "physician" meant "highly educated." It is certainly true that he was informed in several technical areas besides medicine, such as sailing. However, Jesus used this same Greek term for "physician" (cf. Matt. 9:12; Mark 2:17; 5:26; Luke 4:23; 5:31);
      - (3) Paul's traveling companion (cf. Acts 16:10-17; 20:5-15; 21:1-18; 27:1-28:16; Col. 4:14; II Tim. 4:11; Philemon 24);
      - (4) it is interesting that the "we" sections of Acts begin and end at Philippi. In *Paul, Apostle of the Heart Set Free*, (p. 219), F. F. Bruce suggests that Luke stayed on at Philippi to help the new converts and collect the Gentile relief fund for the Jerusalem church.
      - (5) Luke may have been, in a sense, Paul's personal physician. Paul had several physical problems due to his conversion (cf. Acts 9:3,9), his ministry (cf. II Cor. 4:7-12; 6:4-10; 11:23-29) and his special weakness (cf. II Cor. 12:1-10).
  3. Paul returned to Philippi on his third missionary journey (cf. Acts 20:1-3,6). He had sent Silas and Timothy earlier (cf. Acts 19:19-24; Phil. 2:19-24).
- C. Philippi as a Roman Colony (cf. Acts 16:12)
1. Paul used the status of this city as a Roman colony in his terminology
    - a. "praetorian guard," 1:13
    - b. "citizenship," 3:20 (Acts 16:22-34, 35-40)
    - c. "Caesar's household," 4:22

2. The city was populated by retired and exiled Roman soldiers. In many ways it was “a little Rome.” The fads of Rome could be seen on the streets of Philippi (cf. Acts 26:21).
3. Both Paul (Acts 22:25; 26:32) and Silas (Acts 16:37) were Roman citizens, which allowed them legal rights and social standing.

#### D. The Province of Macedonia

1. Women had more social freedom and economic opportunities in Macedonia than anywhere in the Roman Empire.
2. This is illustrated by
  - a. presence of many women worshipping by the river outside Philippi (cf. Acts 16:13);
  - b. the business woman Lydia (cf. Acts 16:14);
  - c. women co-workers in the gospel (cf. 4:2-3);
  - d. several leading women mentioned at Thessalonica (also in Macedonia, cf. Acts 17:4).

### III. AUTHOR

- A. This highly personal letter has always been attributed to Paul. The first person pronouns “I” and “my” appear 51 times.
- B. It is quoted or alluded to by early authors (for a complete list of citations see H.C. G. Moule, *Studies in Philippians*, pp. 20-21, published by Kregel):
  1. Clement of Rome in *I Clement*, written to the Corinthian church about A.D. 95;
  2. Ignatius, in *Letters of Ignatius*, about A.D. 110;
  3. Polycarp, the Apostle John’s companion, in *Letter to the Philippians*, about A.D. 110;
  4. a Marcionite prologue (a follower of the heretic Marcion) to Paul’s letter to the Philippians about A.D. 170.
  5. Irenaeus, about A.D. 180;
  6. Clement of Alexandria, about A.D. 190;
  7. Tertullian of Carthage, about A.D. 210.
- C. Although Timothy is mentioned along with Paul in 1:1, he was a co-worker, not a co-author (although he may have acted as a scribe for Paul from time to time).

### IV. DATE

- A. The date is contingent on where Paul was imprisoned (cf. II Cor. 11:23)
  1. Philippi, Acts 16:23-40;
  2. Ephesus, I Cor. 15:32; II Cor. 1:8;
  3. Jerusalem/Caesarea, Acts 21:32-33:30;
  4. Rome, Acts 28:30 (stated in Marcionite Prologue to Philippians)
- B. Most scholars believe that a Roman imprisonment fits the context of Paul’s life and Acts best. If so, a date in the early 60’s seems most likely.
- C. This book is known as one of Paul’s “prison epistles” (Colossians, Ephesians, Philemon, and Philippians). From internal considerations it appears that Colossians, Ephesians and Philemon were written early during Paul’s Roman imprisonment and taken together to Asia Minor by



Tychicus (Col. 4:7; Eph. 6:21). Philippians has a different tone. Paul seemed confident he would be released from prison (1:17-26) and would get to visit them (2:24).

This structure also provides a period of time for: (1) Paul's influence to have reached the Imperial soldiers (cf. 1:13; Acts 28:16) and servants (cf. 4:22); and (2) several trips between Paul and messengers from the church at Philippi.

## V. PURPOSE(S) OF THE LETTER

- A. To communicate Paul's thanksgiving to this loving church that helped him monetarily several times and even sent a helper, Epaphroditus (cf. 1:3-11; 2:19-30; 4:10-20). The letter also may have been written to explain Epaphroditus' early return home while Paul was still in prison.
- B. To encourage the Philippians concerning his circumstances. The gospel was actually progressing in prison. Paul was bound, but the gospel was unbound!
- C. To encourage the Philippians amidst the false teachings which were very similar to the Judaizers of Galatians. These heretics demanded that new converts become Jewish first and then Christian (cf. Acts 15).

However because the list of sins in 3:19 fits the Greek false teachers (gnostics) more than the Jewish, the identity of the heretics is uncertain. It is possible that some believers had reverted back to their previous pagan lifestyle.

- D. To encourage the Philippian believers to joy even amidst internal and external persecution. Paul's joy was not dependent on circumstances but on his faith in Christ.

This joy amidst problems was not a Stoic resignation, but a Christian world-view and a constant struggle. Paul drew metaphors from several areas of life to communicate the tension of the Christian life

- 1. athletic (cf. 3:12,14; 4:3);
- 2. military (cf. 1:7,12,15,16,17,22,28,30);
- 3. commercial (cf. 3:7,8; 4:15,17,18).

## VI. CONTEXT OUTLINE

- A. It is difficult to outline Philippians because it is so personal and informal. Paul was talking to friends and trusted co-workers in Christ. His heart overflowed before his mind could organize the thoughts. In wonderfully transparent ways this book reveals the heart of the great Apostle to the Gentiles. Paul felt "joy" in Christ, in any and all circumstances and in service to the gospel!

### B. Literary Units

- 1. a typical Pauline introduction, 1:1-2
  - a. greeting
    - (1) from Paul (and Timothy) 1:1
    - (2) to saints at Philippi (including overseers and deacons), 1:1
    - (3) Paul's stylized prayer, 1:2
  - b. prayer, 1:3-11:
    - (1) co-workers in the gospel from the first, 1:5
    - (2) supporters of Paul's ministry. 1:7

- (3) Paul's request for:
  - (a) abundant love, 1:9
  - (b) abundant knowledge, 1:9
  - (c) abundant discernment, 1:9
  - (d) abundant holiness, 1:10
2. Paul's concern for them over their concern for him, in prison, 1:12-26
  - a. God had used his time in prison to spread the gospel to
    - (1) Imperial guard, 1:13
    - (2) others of Caesar's house, 1:13; 4:22
    - (3) emboldened preachers, 1:14-18
  - b. Paul's confidence for release because of:
    - (1) their prayers, 1:19
    - (2) Holy Spirit, 1:19
  - c. Paul's confidence whether in release or in death, 1:20-26
3. Paul's encouragement, 1:27-2:18:
  - a. call to Christlike unity amidst persecution, 1:27-30
  - b. live in Christlike selflessness, 2:1-4
  - c. Christ our example, 2:5-11
  - d. in light of Christ's example live in peace and unity, 2:12-18
4. Paul's plans related to Philippi, 2:19-30
  - a. send Timothy, 2:19-24
  - b. return Epaphroditus, 2:25-30
5. stand firm against false teachers, 1:27; 4:1
  - a. the dogs, the false circumcisers, the Judaizers (Acts 15, Galatians), 3:1-4
  - b. Paul's Jewish heritage:
    - (1) in light of the false teachers, 3:5-6
    - (2) in light of Christ, 3:7-16
  - c. Paul's grief for them, 3:17-21
6. Paul repeats his admonitions:
  - a. unity, 4:1-3
  - b. Christlike characteristics, 4:4-9
7. Paul repeats his gratitude for the Philippians' help
  - a. their recent gift, 4:10-14
  - b. their previous gift, 4:15-20 (1:5)
8. a typical Pauline closing, 4:21-23

## VII. TERMS AND PHRASES TO BRIEFLY IDENTIFY

1. "in my imprisonment," 1:7,13
2. "the affection," 1:8
3. "the day of Christ," 1:10
4. "the fruit of righteousness," 1:11
5. "praetorian guard," 1:13
6. "to suffer for His sake," 1:29
7. "emptied Himself," 2:7
8. "in the likeness of men," 2:7
9. confess, 2:11
10. "I did not run in vain, nor toil in vain," 2:16

11. "I am being poured out as a drink offering," 2:17
12. "beware of the dogs," 3:2
13. "Hebrew of Hebrews," 3:5
14. "they are enemies of the cross of Christ," 3:18
15. "our citizenship is in heaven," 3:20
16. "whose names are in the book of life," 4:3

#### VIII. PERSONS TO BRIEFLY IDENTIFY

1. overseers, 1:1
2. deacons, 1:1
3. Timothy, 2:19
4. Epaphroditus, 2:25
5. "false circumcision," 3:2
6. Syntyche, 4:2

#### IX. MAP LOCATIONS TO PLOT

1. Philippi, 1:1
2. Macedonia, 4:15
3. Thessalonica, 4:16

#### X. DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What doctrine does 1:6 emphasize?
2. Explain what Paul meant in 1:16.
3. What does the phrase "the Spirit of Jesus Christ" imply?
4. Explain 1:21 in your own words.
5. How does 2:6 relate to Jesus' pre-existence and deity?
6. Why did Jesus die on a cross? (2:8)
7. Who does "those in heaven, on earth, and under the earth" refer to?
8. What does it mean "to work out your own salvation with fear and trembling"? (2:12)
9. List Paul's Jewish qualifications in 2:4-6.
10. What is the significance of 3:9?
11. Philippians 4:4 says, "the Lord is near." If so, why has He not returned?

# INTRODUCTION TO COLOSSIANS

## I. OPENING STATEMENTS

- A. Thank God for the heretics at Colossae; because of them Paul wrote this powerful letter. Remember that to understand the book, we must relate it to its historical setting. Paul's letters are called "occasional documents" because he was addressing local problems with the universal gospel truths. The heresy at Colossae was an unusual mixture of Greek philosophy (gnosticism) and Judaism.
- B. The cosmic Lordship of Jesus is the central theme (cf. 1:15-17). The Christology of this book is unsurpassed! Colossians forms the basic outline for Ephesians. Paul knew the heresy would spread in Asia minor. Colossians attacks the false teachings while Ephesians develops its central themes to prepare other churches for the coming heresy. The emphasis of Colossians is Christological while the emphasis in Ephesians is the unity of all things in Christ, who is Lord of all things.
- C. Paul refutes legalism, both Jewish and Greek, in very powerful terms (2:6-23).

## II. THE CITY

- A. Originally the city of Colossae was part of the kingdom of Pergamum within Phrygia. In 133 B.C. it was given to the senate of Rome.
- B. Colossae was a large commercial center before Paul's day (cf. Heroditus' *Histories* VII:30 and Xenophon *Anabasis* 1:2:6).
  - 1. The valley in which Colossae was located was the ancient Mediterranean world's leading producer of wool, especially black wool, and dyed wool, purple and scarlet. The volcanic soil produced excellent pasture land and the chalky water aided the dyeing process (Strabo, 13:4:14).
  - 2. Volcanic activity (Strabo, 12:8:6) caused the city to be destroyed several times in its history; the latest time being A.D. 60 (Tacitus) or A.D. 64 (Eusebius).
- C. Colossae was located on the Lycus River, a tributary of the Maeander River, which ran by Ephesus, 100 miles downstream. In this one valley were located Hierapolis (6 miles away) and Laodicea (10 miles away) (cf. 1:2; 2:1; 4:13, 15-16).
- D. After the Romans built their major east-west highway, *Via Ignatia*, which bypassed Colossae, it dwindled to almost nothing (Strabo). This was similar to what happened to Petra in the Trans-Jordan area of Palestine.
- E. The city was made up mostly of Gentiles (Phyrgians and Greek settlers), but there were numerous Jews also. Josephus tells us that Antiochus III (223-187 B.C.) transported 2,000 Jews from Babylon to Colossae. Records show that by A.D. 76, 11,000 Jewish males lived in the district of which Colossae was the capital.

### III. AUTHOR

- A. There are two senders, Paul and Timothy (cf. Col. 1:1). However, the main author is Paul; Timothy was sending his greeting as Paul's co-worker and possibly scribe (*amanuensus*).
- B. The ancient literature is unanimous that Paul the Apostle was the author:
  - 1. Marcion (who came to Rome in A.D. 140's), the anti-Old Testament heretic, included it in his Pauline corpus.
  - 2. It was listed with Paul's letters in the Muratorian Canon (a list of canonical books from Rome around A.D. 200)
  - 3. Several early church fathers quote from it and identify Paul as author
    - a. Irenaeus (wrote A.D. 177-190)
    - b. Clement of Alexandria (lived A.D. 160-216)

### IV. THE LITERARY RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN COLOSSIANS AND EPHESIANS

- A. The historical relationship between these two prison letters follows this outline
  - 1. Epaphras (Col. 1:7; 4:12; Philemon 23) was converted during Paul's Ephesian Campaign (Acts 19).
    - 1. Epaphras took his new-found faith back to his home area, the Lycus River valley (cf. 4:12).
    - 2. Epaphras started three churches: Hierapolis, Laodicea (cf. 4:13), and Colossae.
    - 3. Epaphras asked Paul for advice on how to combat this merging of Christianity, Judaism, and Greek thought, which the heretics were teaching. Paul was imprisoned (cf. 4:3,18) at Rome (early 60's).
  - 2. False teachers advocated Greek metaphysics
    - a. Spirit and matter were co-eternal
    - b. Spirit (God) was good
    - c. Matter (creation) was evil
    - d. A series of *eons* (angelic levels) existed between a good high God and a lesser god who formed matter
    - e. Salvation was based on knowledge of secret passwords which helped people progress through the angelic levels (*eons*) to the high good God
- B. The literary relationship between Paul's two letters
  - 1. Paul heard of the heresy in these churches which he had never personally visited (cf. 1:7-8).
  - 2. Paul wrote a hard-hitting letter in short, emotional sentences, directed at the false teachers. The central theme was the cosmic lordship of Jesus. This is known as Paul's letter to the Colossians.
  - 3. Apparently, soon after writing Colossians, with time on his hands in prison, he developed the themes in the letter we know as Ephesians. He knew that this attempt to merge Greek thought and the gospel for the purpose of making Christianity "relevant" to Greek culture would spread to all the new churches in Asia Minor. Ephesians is characterized by long sentences and developed theological concepts (1:3-14, 15-23; 2:1-10, 14-18, 19-22; 3:1-12, 14-19; 4:11-16; 6:13-20). It takes Colossians as a starting point and draws out its theological implications. Its central theme is the unity of all things in Christ, which is a contrast to the *eons* (angelic levels) of incipient gnosticism.

C. Related literary and theological structure

1. The basic structure

- a. They have very similar openings
- b. They each have a doctrinal section dealing primarily with Christ
- c. Each has a practical section which emphasizes Christian lifestyle using the same categories, terms, and phrases
- d. They have virtually identical closing verses. In Greek they share 29 consecutive words; Colossians adds only two additional words (“and fellow bond slave”). Compare Eph. 6:21-22 with Col. 4:7-9.

2. Exact words or short phrases

|                                 |                                     |
|---------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Eph. 1:1c and Col. 1:2a         | “faithful”                          |
| Eph. 1:4 and Col. 1:22          | “holy and blameless”                |
| Eph. 1:7 and Col. 1:14          | “redemption. . .forgiveness”        |
| Eph. 1:10 and Col. 1:20         | “all things. . .heaven. . .earth”   |
| Eph. 1:15 and Col. 1:3-4        | “heard. . .love for all the saints” |
| Eph. 1:18 and Col. 1:27         | “the riches of the glory”           |
| Eph. 1:27 and Col. 1:18         | “head. . .church”                   |
| Eph. 2:1 and Col. 1:13          | “you were dead”                     |
| Eph. 2:16 and Col. 1:20         | “reconcile. . .cross”               |
| Eph. 3:2 and Col. 1:25          | “stewardship”                       |
| Eph. 3:3 and Col. 1:26,27       | “mystery”                           |
| Eph. 4:3 and Col. 3:14          | “unity”                             |
| Eph. 4:15 and Col. 2:19         | “head” and “grow”                   |
| Eph. 4:24 and Col. 3:10, 12, 14 | “put on . . .”                      |
| Eph. 4:31 and Col. 3:8          | “anger” “wrath” “malice” “slander”  |
| Eph. 5:3 and Col. 3:5           | “immorality” “impurity” “greed”     |
| Eph. 5:5 and Col. 3:5           | “idolatry” (coveting)               |
| Eph. 5:6 and Col. 3:6           | “the wrath of God”                  |
| Eph. 5:16 and Col. 4:5          | “making the most of the time”       |

3. Exact phrases or sentences

|   |
|---|
| Eph. 1:1a and Col. 1:1a   |
| Eph. 1:1b and Col. 1:2a   |
| Eph. 1:2a and Col. 1:2b   |
| Eph. 1:13 and Col. 1:5  |
| Eph. 2:1 and Col. 2:13  |
| Eph. 2:5b and Col. 2:13c  |
| Eph. 4:1b and Col. 1:10a  |
| Eph. 6:21,22 and Col. 4:7-9 (29 consecutive words except for “kai syndoulos” in Colossians) |

4. Similar phrases or sentences

|                               |
|-------------------------------|
| Eph. 1:21 and Col. 1:16       |
| Eph. 2:1 and Col. 1:13        |
| Eph. 2:16 and Col. 1:20       |
| Eph. 3:7a and Col. 1:23d, 25a |
| Eph. 3:8 and Col. 1:27        |
| Eph. 4:2 and Col. 3:12        |
| Eph. 4:29 and Col. 3:8; 4:6   |
| Eph. 5:15 and Col. 4:5        |
| Eph. 5:19,20 and Col. 3:16    |

5. Theologically synonymous concepts
 

|                           |   |
|---------------------------|---|
| Eph. 1:3 and Col. 1:3     | a prayer of thanks                              |
| Eph. 2:1,12 and Col. 1:21 | alienation from God                             |
| Eph. 2:15 and Col. 2:14   | hostility of Law                                |
| Eph. 4:1 and Col 1:10     | worthy walk                                     |
| Eph. 4:15 and Col. 2:19   | Christ's body growing to maturity from its Head |
| Eph. 4:19 and Col. 3:5    | sexual impurity                                 |
| Eph.4:22,31 and Col. 3:8  | "lay aside" sins                                |
| Eph.4:32 and Col. 3:12-13 | Christians kind to one another                  |
| Eph. 5:4 and Col. 3:8     | Christian speech                                |
| Eph. 5:18 and Col. 3:16   | filling of Spirit=word of Christ                |
| Eph. 5:20 and Col. 3:17   | thanksgiving to God for all things              |
| Eph. 5:22 and Col. 3:18   | wives be subject to husbands                    |
| Eph. 5:25 and Col. 3:19   | husbands love your wives                        |
| Eph. 6:1 and Col. 3:20    | children obey your parents                      |
| Eph. 6:4 and Col. 3:21    | fathers do not provoke children                 |
| Eph. 6:5 and Col. 3:22    | slaves obey masters                             |
| Eph. 6:9 and Col. 4:1     | masters and slaves                              |
| Eph. 6:18 and Col. 4:2-4  | Paul's request for prayer                       |
6. Terms and phrases used in both Colossians and Ephesians which are not found in other Pauline literature
  - a. "fullness" (which was the gnostic term for the angelic levels)
 

|           |   |
|-----------|---|
| Eph. 1:23 | "the fullness of Him who fills all in all"    |
| Eph. 3:19 | "be filled up to all the fullness of God"     |
| Eph. 4:13 | "to the fullness of Christ"                   |
| Col. 1:19 | "for all the fullness to dwell in Him"        |
| Col. 2:9  | "for in Him all the fullness of Deity dwells" |
  - b. Christ as "Head" of the church  
Eph. 4:15; 5:23 and Col. 1:18; 2:19
  - c. "alienated"  
Eph. 2:12; 4:18 and Col. 1:21
  - d. "redeeming the time"  
Eph. 5:16 and Col. 4:5
  - e. "rooted"  
Eph. 3:17 and Col. 1:5
  - f. "the word of truth, the gospel"  
Eph. 1:13 and Col. 1:5
  - g. "forbearing"  
Eph. 4:2 and Col. 3:13
  - h. unusual phrasing and terms ("held together," "supply")  
Eph. 4:16 and Col. 2:19

#### D. Summary

1. Over one third of the words in Colossians are also in Ephesians. It has been estimated that 75 of the 155 verses in Ephesians have a parallel in Colossians. Both claim Paul's authorship while in prison.
2. Both were delivered by Paul's friend Tychicus.
3. Both were sent to the same area (Asia Minor).

4. Both deal with the same Christological topic.
5. Both emphasize Christ as Head of the church.
6. Both encourage Christian living.

E. Major Points of Dissimilarity

1. The church is always local in Colossians but universal in Ephesians. This may be because of the circular nature of the letter of Ephesians.
2. Heresy, which is such a prominent feature of Colossians, is totally absent in Ephesians. However, both letters use characteristic gnostic terms (“wisdom,” “knowledge,” “fullness,” “mystery,” “principalities and powers” and “stewardship.”)
3. The Second Coming is immediate in Colossians but delayed in Ephesians. The church was, and is, called to serve in a fallen world. (2:7; 3:21; 4:13).
4. Several characteristically Pauline terms are used differently. One example is the term “mystery.” In Colossians the mystery is Christ (Col. 1:26-27; 2:2; 4:3), but in Ephesians (1:9; 5:32) it is God’s previously hidden, but now revealed, plan for the unity of Gentiles and Jews.
5. Ephesians has several Old Testament allusions (1:22—Ps. 8; 2:17—Isa. 57:19) (2:20—Ps. 118:22) (4:8—Ps. 68:18) (4:26—Ps. 4:4) (5:15—Isa. 26:19, 51:17, 52:1, 60:1) (5:3—Gen. 3:24) (6:2—Exod. 20:12) (6:14—Isa. 11:5, 59:17) (6:15—Isa. 52:7) but there are only one or two in Colossians (2:3—Isa. 11:2) or (2:22—Isa. 29:13).

F. Though very similar in words, phrases, and often outline, the letters also include unique concepts:

1. The Trinitarian blessing of grace, Eph. 1:3-14
2. The grace passage, Eph. 2:1-10
3. The merging of Jews and Gentiles into one new body, Eph. 2:11-3:13
4. The unity and giftedness of the body of Christ, Eph. 4:1-16
5. “Christ and the church” as the pattern for “husband and wife,” Eph. 5:22-33
6. The spiritual warfare passage, Eph. 6:10-18
7. The Christological passage, Col. 1:13-18
8. Human religious rituals and rules, Col. 2:16-23
9. The theme of the cosmic significance in Christ of Colossians versus the theme of the unity of all things in Christ in Ephesians.

G. In conclusion, it seems best to follow A. T. Robertson and F. F. Bruce in asserting that Paul wrote both letters in close proximity and developed the thoughts of Colossians into his capstone presentation of truth, Ephesians.

V. DATE

- A. The date of Colossians is linked to one of Paul’s imprisonments (Ephesus, Philippi, Caesarea, or Rome). A Roman imprisonment best fits the facts of Acts.
- B. Once Rome is assumed to be the place of imprisonment, the question arises—which time? Acts records that Paul was imprisoned in the early 60’s. However, he was released and wrote the Pastoral letters (I & II Timothy and Titus) and was then rearrested and killed before June 9, A.D. 68 (the date of Nero’s suicide), probably in A.D. 67.



- C. The best educated guess for the writing of Colossians (Ephesians and Philemon) is Paul's first imprisonment, in the early 60's. (Philippians was the last of the prison letters, probably written toward the mid 60's.)
- D. Tychicus, along with Onesimus, probably took the letters of Colossians, Ephesians, and Philemon to Asia Minor. Later, possibly several years later, Epaphroditus, recovered from his physical illness, took the letter of Philippians back to his home church.
- E. Possible chronology of Paul's writings following F. F. Bruce and Murry Harris with minor adaptations.

| <u>Book</u>                       | <u>Date</u>   | <u>Place of Writing</u> | <u>Relation to Acts</u> |
|-----------------------------------|---------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1. Galatians                      | 48            | Syrian Antioch          | 14:28; 15:2             |
| 2. I Thessalonians                | 50            | Corinth                 | 18:5                    |
| 3. II Thessalonians               | 50            | Corinth                 |                         |
| 4. I Corinthians                  | 55            | Ephesus                 | 19:20                   |
| 5. II Corinthians                 | 56            | Macedonia               | 20:2                    |
| 6. Romans                         | 57            | Corinth                 | 20:3                    |
| 7.-10. Prison Letters             |               |                         |                         |
| Colossians                        | early 60's    | Rome                    |                         |
| Ephesians                         | early 60's    | Rome                    |                         |
| Philemon                          | early 60's    | Rome                    |                         |
| Philippians                       | late 62-63    | Rome                    | 28:30-31                |
| 11.-13. Fourth Missionary Journey |               |                         |                         |
| I Timothy                         | 63 (or later, | Macedonia               |                         |
| Titus                             | 63 but before | Ephesus (?)             |                         |
| II Timothy                        | 64 A.D. 68)   | Rome                    |                         |

## VI. RECIPIENTS AND OCCASION

- A. The church was apparently started by Epaphras (cf. 1:7,8; 2:1; 4:12-13), who was probably converted by Paul at Ephesus (cf. Col. 1:7-8 and compare 2:1). It was mostly made up of Gentiles (cf. 1:21; 3:7). Epaphras came to Paul in prison to report a problem with false teachers who taught a mixture of Christianity with Greek philosophy called gnosticism (2:8) and Jewish legalism (cf. Jewish elements, 2:11, 16, 17: 3:11; angel worship, 1:16; 2:15, 18 and asceticism 2:20-23). There was a very large Jewish community in Colossae which had become very Hellenistic. The essence of the problem centered around the person and work of Christ. The gnostics denied that Jesus was fully man but affirmed that He was fully divine because of their eternal antagonistic dualism between matter and spirit. They would affirm His Deity but deny His humanity. They also denied His mediatorial preeminence. For them there were many angelic levels (*eons*) between a good high god and humanity; Jesus, even though the highest, was only one of the gods. They also tended to be intellectually exclusive (cf. 3:11, 14, 16, 17) and emphasized a special exclusive secret knowledge (cf. 2:15, 18, 19) as the path to God instead of Jesus' atoning, vicarious sacrifice and mankind's repentant faith response to His free offer of forgiveness.
- B. Because of this theological, philosophical atmosphere, the book of Colossians emphasizes
  - 1. The uniqueness of the person of Christ and His finished work of salvation.
  - 2. The cosmological ownership, reign and significance of Jesus of Nazareth - His birth, His teachings, His life, His death, His resurrection and His ascension! He is Lord of all!

## VII. PURPOSE

Paul's purpose was to refute the Colossian heresy. To accomplish this goal, he exalted Christ as the very image of God (1:15), the Creator (1:16), the preexistent sustainer of all things (1:17), the head of the church (1:18), the first to be resurrected (1:18), the fullness of deity in bodily form (1:19, 2:9) and the reconciler (1:20-22). Thus, Christ was completely adequate. Believers "have been given fullness in Christ" (2:10). The Colossian heresy was completely theologically inadequate to provide spiritual salvation. It was a hollow and deceptive philosophy (2:8), lacking any ability to restrain the old sinful nature (2:23).

A recurring theme in Colossians is the complete adequacy of Christ as contrasted with the emptiness of mere human philosophy. This adequacy is expressed in the cosmic Lordship of Jesus. He is owner, creator and sovereign over all things, visible and invisible (cf. 1:15-18).

## VIII. OUTLINE

- A. Traditional Pauline openings
  - 1. Identification with sender, 1:1
  - 2. Identification with recipients, 1:2a
  - 3. Greetings, 1:2b
- B. The Supremacy of Christ (topics 1-10 taken from NKJV paragraph outline)
  - 1. Faith in Christ, 1:3-8
  - 2. The Preeminence of Christ, 1:9-18
  - 3. Reconciliation in Christ, 1:19-23
  - 4. Sacrificial service for Christ, 1:24-29
  - 5. Not philosophy, but Christ, 2:1-10
  - 6. Not legalism, but Christ, 2:11-23
  - 7. Not carnality, but Christ, 3:1-11
  - 8. Put on Christ, 3:12-17
  - 9. Let Christ affect your home, 3:19-4:1
  - 10. Let Christ affect your daily life, 4:2-6
- C. Paul's messengers, 4:7-9
- D. Paul's friends send their greetings, 4:10-14
- E. Paul sends greetings, 4:15-17
- F. Paul's closing in his own hand, 4:18

## IX. GNOSTICISM

- A. Most of our knowledge of this heresy comes from the gnostic writings of the second century. However, the incipient ideas were present in the first century (Dead Sea Scrolls).
- B. The problem at Colossae was a hybrid of Christianity, incipient gnosticism, and legalistic Judaism.

- C. Some stated tenets of Valentinian and Cerinthian Gnosticism of the second century
1. Matter and spirit were co-eternal (an ontological dualism). Matter is evil, spirit is good. God, who is spirit, cannot be directly involved with molding evil matter.
  2. There are emanations (*eons* or angelic levels) between God and matter. The last or lowest one was YHWH of the Old Testament who formed the universe (*kosmos*).
  3. Jesus was an emanation like YHWH but higher on the scale, closer to the true God. Some put Him as the highest but still less than God and certainly not incarnate deity, (cf. John 1:14). Since matter is evil, Jesus could not have a human body and still be divine. He just appeared human, but was really a spirit (cf. I John 1:1-3; 4:1-6).
  4. Salvation was obtained through faith in Jesus plus special knowledge, which is only known by special persons. Knowledge (passwords) was needed to pass through heavenly spheres. Jewish legalism was also required to reach God.
- D. The gnostic false teachers advocated two opposite ethical systems:
1. For some, lifestyle was totally unrelated to salvation. For them, salvation and spirituality were encapsulated into secret knowledge (passwords) through the angelic spheres (*eons*).
  2. For others, lifestyle was crucial to salvation. In this book, the false teachers emphasized an ascetic lifestyle as an evidence of true spirituality (cf. 2:16-23).
- E. A good reference book is *The Gnostic Religion* by Hans Jonas, published by Beacon Press.

#### X. TERMS AND PHRASES TO BRIEFLY IDENTIFY

1. “the hope laid up for you in heaven,” 1:5
2. the gospel, 1:5
3. “the domain of darkness,” 1:13
4. redemption, 1:14
5. “the invisible God,” 1:15
6. “all the fullness to dwell in Him,” 1:19
7. “having made peace through the blood of His cross,” 1:20
8. “in filling up what is lacking in Christ’s affliction,” 1:24
9. “the tradition of men,” 2:8
10. “the elementary principles of the world,” 2:8,20
11. “buried with Him in baptism,” 2:12
12. “you were dead in your transgressions,” 2:13
13. “cancelled out the certificate of debt,” 2:14
14. “your life is hidden with Christ in God,” 3:3
15. barbarian, 3:11
16. “my letter that is coming from Laodicea,” 4:16

#### XI. PERSONS TO BRIEFLY IDENTIFY

1. Epaphras, 1:7; 4:12
2. “the first born of all creation,” 1:15
3. “thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities,” 1:16
4. the firstborn of the dead, 1:18
5. Scythian, 3:11
6. Tychicus, 4:7

7. Onesimus, 4:9
8. Mark, 4:10
9. Luke, 4:14
10. Demas, 4:14

## XII. MAP LOCATIONS TO PLOT

1. Colossae, 1:2
2. Laodicea, 2:1
3. Hierapolis, 4:13

## XIII. DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Why does Paul talk so much about knowledge and wisdom? (1:9)
2. What does the warning of 1:23 imply?
3. What is the mystery of God hidden from the past ages? (1:27)
4. Did Paul not know the people of this church? (2:1)
5. How could someone take them captive through philosophy? (2:8)
6. What doctrine does 2:9 emphasize?
7. Explain the Roman historical background of 2:15.
8. To whom is 2:16-17 referring?
9. How does 2:14-23 address legalism?
10. Why do the sins of 3:5 equal idolatry?
11. How does Col. 3:11 relate to Gal. 3:28?
12. How is 3:16 related to Eph. 5:18?
13. What is the spiritual principle of 3:23?
14. Explain in your own words the proverb of 4:6.
15. Why did Paul write the closing of all his letters? (4:18)

# INTRODUCTION TO THE THESSALONIAN LETTERS

## I. OPENING STATEMENT

### A. Brief Summary

1. The Thessalonian letters provide tremendous insight into Paul as both missionary and pastor. We find him establishing a church in a brief time and continuing to pray and be concerned about its growth, development, and ministry.
2. We see him faithfully proclaiming the gospel, concerned for the converts, scolding them, praising them, guiding them, exhorting them, teaching them, loving them, even giving of himself to them. He was thrilled with their progress to that point, but was disappointed with the rate at which they matured.
3. In these Epistles we meet a zealous, loving servant of Christ and a small, zealous, but growing new church. Both were faithful, both were used by God, and both served each other in a Christlike manner seldom found among God's people.

### B. The City of Thessalonica

#### 1. Brief History of Thessalonica

- a. Thessalonica was located at the head of the Thermaic Gulf. Thessalonica was a coastal town on the major Roman road, Via Ignatia (the way of the nations), running eastward from Rome. A seaport, it was also very close to a rich, well-watered, coastal plain. These three advantages made Thessalonica the largest, most important commercial and political center in Macedonia.
- b. Thessalonica was originally named Therma, derived from the hot springs located in the area. An early historian, Pliny the Elder, refers to Therma and Thessalonica existing together. If this is the case, Thessalonica simply surrounded Therma and annexed it (Leon Morris, *The First and Second Epistles to the Thessalonians*, Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1991, p. 11). Yet most historians believe Cassander, one of Alexander the Great's generals, renamed Therma in 315 B.C. after Philip of Macedonia's daughter and Alexander's half-sister and his wife, Thessalonica (Strabo VII Fragment 21). Sometime during the early centuries of the spread of Christianity, Thessalonica came to be nicknamed "the orthodox city" because of its Christian character (Dean Farrar, *The Life and Work of St. Paul*, New York: Cassell and Company, Limited, 1904, p. 364). Today Thessalonica is known as Salonika and it still is an important city in Greece.
- c. Thessalonica was a cosmopolitan metropolis similar to Corinth, inhabited by peoples from all over the known world.
  - (1) Barbaric Germanic peoples from the north were living there, bringing with them their pagan religion and culture.
  - (2) Greeks lived there, coming from Achaia to the south and from the islands of the Aegean Sea, in turn bringing their refinement and philosophy.
  - (3) Romans from the west also settled there. They were mostly retired soldiers and they brought their strength of will, wealth and political power.
  - (4) Finally, Jews came in large numbers from the east; eventually one third of the population was Jewish. They brought with them their ethical monotheistic faith and their national prejudices.

- d. Thessalonica, with a population of about 200,000, was truly a cosmopolitan city. It was a resort and health center because of the hot springs. It was a commercial center because of its seaport, fertile plains and the proximity of the Ignatian Way.
  - e. As the capital and largest city, Thessalonica was also the central political headquarters of Macedonia. Being a Roman provincial capital and home of many Roman citizens (mostly retired soldiers), it became a free city. Thessalonica paid no tribute and was governed by Roman law, since most Thessalonians were Roman citizens. Thus the Thessalonian rulers were called “politarchs.” This title appears nowhere else in literature but it is preserved by an inscription over the triumphal arch at Thessalonica known as the Vardar Gate (Farrar, p. 371n.).
2. Events Leading to Paul’s Coming to Thessalonica
    - a. Many events led Paul to Thessalonica, yet behind all the physical circumstances is the direct, definite call of God. Paul had not originally planned to enter the European continent. But his desire on this second missionary journey was to revisit the churches in Asia Minor that he had established on his first journey and then to turn eastward. Yet, just as the moment arrived to turn northeastward, God started closing the doors. The culmination of this was Paul’s Macedonian vision (cf. Acts 16:6-10). This caused two things to happen: first, the continent of Europe was evangelized and second, Paul, because of circumstances in Macedonia, began writing his Epistles (Thomas Carter, *Life and Letters of Paul*, Nashville: Cokesbury Press, 1921, p. 112).
    - b. After noting the above spiritual direction, the physical circumstances that led Paul to Thessalonica were:
      - (1) Paul went to Philippi, a small town with no synagogue. His work there was thwarted by the owners of a prophetic, demonic slave girl and the town council. Paul was beaten and humiliated yet a church was formed even in the midst of all this. Because of the opposition and physical punishment, Paul was forced to leave, possibly sooner than he had wished.
      - (2) Where would he go from there? He passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia that also had no synagogue,
      - (3) He came to the largest city in the area, Thessalonica, which did have a synagogue. Paul had made it a pattern to go to the local Jews first. He did this because:
        - (a) of their knowledge of the Old Testament;
        - (b) of the opportunity for teaching and preaching that the synagogue presented;
        - (c) of their position as the chosen people, God’s covenant people (cf. Matt. 10:6; 15:24; Rom. 1:16-17; 9-11);
        - (d) Jesus had offered Himself first to them, then to the world—so too, Paul would follow Christ’s example.
  3. Paul’s Companions
    - a. Paul was accompanied by Silas and Timothy in Thessalonica. Luke was with Paul at Philippi and he remained there. We learn this by the “we” and “they” passages of Acts 16 and 17. Luke speaks of “we” at Philippi, but of “they” as traveling to Thessalonica.
    - b. Silas, or Silvanus, was the man Paul picked to go with him on the second missionary journey after Barnabas and John Mark went back to Cyprus:
      - (1) He is first mentioned in the Bible in Acts 15:22 where he is called a chief man among the brethren of the Jerusalem Church.
      - (2) He was also a prophet (cf. Acts 15:32).
      - (3) He was a Roman citizen like Paul (cf. Acts 16:37).

- (4) He and Judas Barsabbas were sent to Antioch by the Jerusalem Church to inspect the situation (cf. Acts 15:22,30-35).
  - (5) Paul praises him in II Cor. 1:19 and mentions him in several letters.
  - (6) Later he is identified with Peter in writing I Peter (cf. I Pet. 5:12).
  - (7) Both Paul and Peter call him Silvanus while Luke calls him Silas.
  - c. Timothy was also a companion and fellow-worker of Paul:
    - (1) Paul met him at Lystra where he was converted on the first missionary journey.
    - (2) Timothy was half Greek (father) and half Jewish (mother). Paul wanted to use him to work with evangelizing the Gentiles.
    - (3) Paul circumcised him so that he could work with Jewish people.
    - (4) Timothy is mentioned in the salutation in: II Corinthians, Colossians, I and II Thessalonians and Philemon.
    - (5) Paul spoke of him as “my son in the ministry” (cf. I Tim. 1:2; II Tim. 1:2; Tit. 1:4). Paul’s general tone throughout his letters implies Timothy was younger and timid.
    - (6) Paul has great confidence and trust in him (cf. Acts 19:27; I Cor. 4:17; Phil. 2:19).
  - d. It is only fitting in the section on Paul’s companions that mention is made of the men who came to Thessalonica and accompanied Paul on his later missions. They are Aristarchus (Acts 19:29; 20:4; 27:2) and Secundus (Acts 20:4). Also, Demas could have been from Thessalonica (Philem. 24; II Tim. 4:10).
4. Paul’s Ministry in the City
- a. Paul’s ministry in Thessalonica followed his usual pattern of going to the Jews first and then turning to the Gentiles. Paul preached on three Sabbaths in the synagogue. His message was “Jesus is the Messiah.” He used Old Testament Scriptures to show that the Messiah was to be a suffering Messiah (cf. Gen. 3:15; Isa. 53), and not a political temporal Messiah. Paul also emphasized the resurrection and offered salvation to all. Jesus was clearly presented as the Messiah promised of old that could save all peoples.
  - b. The response to this message was that some Jews, many devout Gentiles, and many important women accepted Jesus as Savior and Lord. An analysis of these groups of converts is very meaningful in understanding Paul’s later letters to this church.
  - c. Gentiles comprised most of the members of the church, seen by the absence of allusions to the OT in either of the two epistles. The Gentiles readily accepted Jesus as Savior and Lord for several reasons:
    - (1) Their traditional religions were powerless superstition. Thessalonica lay at the foot of Mt. Olympus and all knew its heights were empty.
    - (2) The gospel was free to all.
    - (3) Christianity contained no Jewish exclusive nationalism. The Jewish religion had attracted many because of its monotheism and its high morals, but it also repelled many because of its repugnant ceremonies (such as circumcision), and its inherent racial and national prejudices.
  - d. Many “chief women” accepted Christianity, because of these women’s abilities to make their own religious choices. Women were more free in Macedonia and Asia Minor than in the rest of the Greco-Roman world (Sir Wm. M. Ramsay, *St. Paul the Traveller and Roman Citizen*, New York: G. P. Putnam’s Sons, 1896, p. 227). Yet the poorer class of women, although free, were still under the sway of superstition and polytheism (Ramsay, p. 229).
  - e. Many have found a problem in the length of time that Paul stayed at Thessalonica:
    - (1) Acts 17:2 speaks of Paul’s reasoning in the synagogue on three Sabbaths while in Thessalonica.

- (2) I Thess. 2:7-11 tells of Paul's working at his trade. This was tent-making or as some have suggested working with leather.
  - (3) Phil. 4:16 supports the longer residence, when Paul received at least two money gifts from the church at Philippi while in Thessalonica. The distance between the two cities is about 100 miles. Some suggest that Paul stayed about two or three months and that the three Sabbaths only refer to the ministry to the Jews (Shepard, p. 165).
  - (4) The differing accounts of the converts in Acts 17:4 and I Thess. 1:9 and 2:4 support this view, the key difference in the accounts being the rejection of idols by the Gentiles. The Gentiles in Acts were Jewish proselytes and had already turned from idols. The context implies Paul may have had a larger ministry among pagan Gentiles than Jews.
  - (5) When a larger ministry might have occurred is uncertain because Paul always went to the Jews first. After they rejected his message, he turned to the Gentiles. When they responded to the gospel in large numbers, the Jews became jealous (which was one of Paul's missionary techniques, cf. Rom. 9-11) and started a riot among the rabble of the city.
- f. Because of a riot Paul left Jason's house and hid with Timothy and Silas or at least they were not present when the mob stormed Jason's house looking for them. The Politarchs made Jason put up a security bond to insure peace. This caused Paul to leave the city by night and go to Berea. Nevertheless, the church continued its witness of Christ in the face of much opposition.

## II. AUTHOR

- A. I Thessalonians. Only modern form critics have seriously doubted the Paul's authorship and the authenticity of I Thess., but their conclusions have not convinced many scholars. I Thess. is included in Marcion's canon (A.D. 140) and in the Muratorian Fragment (A.D. 200). Both lists of canonical books of the NT circulated in Rome. Irenaeus quoted I Thess. by name—he wrote around A.D. 180.
- B. II Thessalonians.
1. The book of II Thess. has not always been accepted as Pauline and has been attacked on several grounds:
    - a. The vocabulary poses one problem. The letter contains many words not found in the other Pauline letters.
    - b. "The style is stereotyped and at times curiously formal" (Heard, p. 186).
    - c. The eschatology of the two letters is supposedly inconsistent.
    - d. II Thess. contains a view of the anti-Christ unique in the NT, therefore, some conclude that Paul could not be the author.
  2. The authenticity of II Thess. is based on several premises:
    - a. Polycarp, Ignatius, and Justin recognized it;
    - b. The Marcionite canon included it;
    - c. The Muratorian Fragment included it;
    - d. Irenaeus quoted it by name;
    - e. The vocabulary, style and theology are as Pauline as I Thessalonians



### C. The Two Compared

1. The two letters are very similar, not only in ideas, but also in actual phraseology. If the opening and closing formula language are excluded, resemblances still occur in about one-third of the material.
2. The general tone of II Thessalonians is different from the first letter, being colder and more formal. Yet this can easily be understood when one sees the emotional circumstances involved in the writing of the first letter and the developed problems of the second letter.

### D. The Order of the Letters

1. Another interesting hypothesis is presented by F. W. Manson using Johannes Weiss' notes. They contend that the order of the books is reversed. The reasons for this are:
  - a. the trials and tribulations are at their height in II Thess., but are past in I Thess.;
  - b. in II Thessalonians the internal difficulties are spoken of as a new development of which the author of the letter has just learned, whereas in I Thess. the circumstances were familiar to all concerned;
  - c. the statement that the Thessalonians have no need to be instructed about times and seasons (I Thess. 5:1) is very relevant if they are acquainted with II Thess. 2;
  - d. the formula "Now concerning. . ." in I Thess. 4:9, 13; 5:1, is like that in I Cor. 7:1,25; 8:1; 12:1; 16:1,12, where the writer is replying to points raised in a letter sent to him. Manson thinks that the replies might concern certain questions arising from statements in II Thess.
2. Several premises may counteract this argument:
  - a. the problems occupying Paul's attention intensify and deepen from I Thess. to II Thess.;
  - b. the passages in II Thess. refer to a letter from Paul (2:2, 15; 3:17) and if we assume this letter not to be I Thess., then we have the problem of a lost letter;
  - c. the personal reminiscences forming so prominent a part of the first letter are lacking in the second, which seems natural if the letter is a sequel to the first;
  - d. the tone of the letters seems completely unnatural to this situation if the order is reversed.

## III. DATE OF LETTERS

- A. The date for the writing of the Thessalonian Letters is one of the most certain dates we have involving Paul's letters. It is recorded that while Paul was in "Corinth he was arrested and brought before Gallio, the proconsul of Achaia." An inscription discovered at Delphi answers a question referred to the Emperor Claudius by this same Gallio. It was dated in the twelfth year of the Emperor's tribunal power and after his twenty-sixth acclamation as Emperor. This twelfth year was from 25 January A.D. 52 through 24 January A.D. 53. While the date of the twenty-sixth acclamation is not exactly known, the twenty-seventh was before 1 August A.D. 52. Claudius' decision would have been given to Gallio during the first half of 52. Now proconsuls usually took office in early summer and held office for one year. It would seem, therefore, Gallio entered his term of office in the early summer of 51" (Morris, p. 15).
- B. This dating of the term of office of the proconsul does not completely solve all the problems of the dating of the Thessalonian Letters. Paul was in Corinth for 18 months (Acts 18:11) but at which time he appeared before Gallio is not known. Most commentators date I and II Thessalonians in 50-51 A.D.

- C. Possible chronology of Paul's writings following F. F. Bruce and Murry Harris with minor adaptations.

| <u>Book</u>                       | <u>Date</u>   | <u>Place of Writing</u> | <u>Relation to Acts</u> |
|-----------------------------------|---------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1. Galatians                      | 48            | Syrian Antioch          | 14:28; 15:2             |
| 2. I Thessalonians                | 50            | Corinth                 | 18:5                    |
| 3. II Thessalonians               | 50            | Corinth                 |                         |
| 4. I Corinthians                  | 55            | Ephesus                 | 19:20                   |
| 5. II Corinthians                 | 56            | Macedonia               | 20:2                    |
| 6. Romans                         | 57            | Corinth                 | 20:3                    |
| 7.-10. Prison Letters             |               |                         |                         |
| Colossians                        | early 60's    | Rome                    |                         |
| Ephesians                         | early 60's    | Rome                    |                         |
| Philemon                          | early 60's    | Rome                    |                         |
| Philippians                       | late 62-63    | Rome                    | 28:30-31                |
| 11.-13. Fourth Missionary Journey |               |                         |                         |
| I Timothy                         | 63 (or later, | Macedonia               |                         |
| Titus                             | 63 but before | Ephesus (?)             |                         |
| II Timothy                        | 64 A.D. 68)   | Rome                    |                         |

#### IV. EVENTS SURROUNDING THE THESSALONIAN LETTERS

- A. The events that led to Paul's writing of the Thessalonian letters are complex and intertwined. Certain distinctions must be noted, especially concerning the physical setting and the emotional setting. Paul was forced to leave the new Thessalonian believers because the Jews had incited the superstitious, polytheistic rabble of the city to riot at Jason's house in a search for Paul and his companions. After a hearing before the Politarchs, Jason and other Christian leaders were forced to put up a security bond to assure peace. When Paul heard of this he knew he had to move on and leave this young, immature church. He, therefore, went to Berea with Timothy and Silas. Timothy apparently stayed at first (cf. Acts 17:10) then later joined Silas to go to Athens (cf. Acts 17:15). At first the honest reception of the Jews at Berea was a blessing to Paul in the face of such strong Jewish opposition previously. Yet this did not last long. The Jews from Thessalonica came down to Berea and started causing trouble. Therefore, Paul had to leave again.
- B. This time Paul went to Athens where he received a cold and unresponsive welcome. He became a novelty to the academic philosophers. His experience in Macedonia was characterized by persecution and opposition. He was beaten, stripped naked, and chased out of town by night. Scholars mocked him, and pagans and many of his own countrymen hated him (cf. II Cor. 4:7-11; 6:4-10; 11:23-29).
- C. Paul had been forced to leave this promising church at Thessalonica at a crucial time. They were immature in the faith and were facing affliction and persecution. Paul could stand the mental anguish no longer. Worried about the young converts, somewhere between Berea and Athens, Paul sent Timothy and Silas back to the new Macedonian churches. Timothy went to Thessalonica. Many feel he stayed and ministered there for six months to a year. The church desperately needed someone to teach them, comfort them and encourage them. Timothy himself was a fairly new convert. He was converted on Paul's first missionary journey, but he had only been with Paul since Paul went to Lystra on his second missionary journey. He was, therefore, new in the ministry but

Paul had great confidence in him. This was Timothy's first assignment as Paul's official representative.

- D. Paul ministered in Athens alone and he became very discouraged and depressed because of the lack of response to the gospel in Macedonia and his incessant concern for the new Christians there. He was concerned about the Thessalonian church in particular. Could a church be founded in such a short time and in difficult circumstances and still endure? (Carter, p. 115) To add to this he had received no word from Timothy and Silas for some time (six months to a year, although some say only one or two months) (Farrar, p. 369). This was the emotional state in which we found Paul as he arrived in Corinth.
- E. In Corinth two things happened that greatly encouraged Paul.
  - 1. The vision that God had many in Corinth who would respond to the gospel (Acts 18:9-10).
  - 2. Timothy and Silas arrived and brought good news (Acts 18:5). It was Timothy's message from Thessalonica that would lead Paul to write to them from Corinth. Paul was responding to questions from the church on doctrinal and practical issues.
- F. The writing of II Thess. was not long after I Thess. because it did not achieve all that Paul had hoped it would. Also, he had become aware of other problems. Many scholars believe II Thess. was written about six months after I Thess.

## V. PURPOSE OF THE LETTERS

- A. The Thessalonian Letters have a threefold purpose:
  - 1. to share Paul's joy and thanksgiving to God for the faithfulness and Christlikeness of the Thessalonians, even amidst persecution.
  - 2. to answer the criticism of his motives and character which had been brought against him.
  - 3. to discuss the return of the Lord. This eschatological element of Paul's preaching caused two questions in the minds of the Thessalonian Christians:
    - a. What would happen to believers who had died before the Lord's return?
    - b. What would happen to the believers in the congregation who had stopped working and were sitting around waiting for the Lord's return (Barclay, pp. 21-22).
- B. Much of the above can be explained by the fact that this was a young and very zealous church. Yet because of the circumstances, they were imperfectly trained and disciplined. These problems represent what would be expected of a church of this nature: the new believers, the weak, the fainthearted, the idle, the visionary, and the puzzled.
- C. The occasion for II Thessalonians was, "It is simply a second prescription for the same case, made after discovering that certain stubborn symptoms had not yielded to the first treatment" (Walker, p. 2968).

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## VII. CONTENT OUTLINE \*

- A. Greeting, 1:1
- B. Prayer of Thanksgiving, 1:2-4
- C. Reminiscences, 1:5-2:16
  - 1. Response of the Thessalonians to the original preaching, 1:5-10
  - 2. The preaching of the Gospel at Thessalonica, 2:1-16
    - a. The purity of the team's motives, 2:1-6a
    - b. The team's refusal to accept maintenance, 2:6b-9
    - c. The team's behavior had been impeccable, 2:10-12
    - d. The team's message of the Word of God, 2:13
    - e. Persecution, 2:14-16
- D. The Relationship of Paul to the Thessalonians, 2:17-3:13
  - 1. His desire to return, 2:17,18
  - 2. Paul's joy in the Thessalonians, 2:19, 20
  - 3. Timothy's mission, 3:1-5
  - 4. Timothy's report, 3:6-8
  - 5. Paul's satisfaction, 3:9, 10
  - 6. Paul's prayer, 3:11-13
- E. Exhortation to Christian Living, 4:1-12
  - 1. General, 4:1, 2
  - 2. Sexual purity, 4:3-8
  - 3. Brotherly love, 4:9, 10
  - 4. Earning one's living, 4:11, 12
- F. Problems Associated with the Second Coming, 4:13-5:11
  - 1. Believers who died before the Parousia, 4:13-18
  - 2. The time of the Parousia, 5:1-3
  - 3. Children of the day, 5:4-11

G. General Exhortations, 5:12-22

H. Conclusion, 5:23-28

\* THIS BOOK DOES NOT OUTLINE AS NEATLY INTO A DOCTRINAL SECTION AND A PRACTICAL SECTION AS MOST OF PAUL'S OTHER LETTERS. IF THE GENERAL PATTERN IS FOLLOWED PAUL'S DISCUSSION OF THE SECOND COMING IN 4:17-18 IS THE PRACTICAL SECTION, NOT THE DOCTRINAL! THE SECOND COMING IS NOT A DOCTRINE TO BE AFFIRMED ONLY, BUT A LIFE TO LIVE IN ANTICIPATION OF HIS ANY-MOMENT RETURN.

#### VIII. TERMS AND PHRASES TO BRIEFLY IDENTIFY

1. "YOU BECAME IMITATORS OF US," 1:6
2. "A LIVING AND TRUE GOD," 1:9
3. "THE WRATH TO COME," 1:10
4. "AS A NURSING MOTHER," 2:7
5. "HOSTILE TO ALL MEN," 2:15
6. "SATAN HINDERED US," 2:18
7. "COMPLETE WHAT IS LACKING IN YOUR FAITH," 3:10
8. SANCTIFICATION, 4:3
9. ASLEEP, 4:13
10. "WILL NOT PRECEDE THOSE WHO HAVE FALLEN ASLEEP," 4:15
11. "THE TRUMPET OF GOD," 4:16
12. "THE CLOUDS," 4:17
13. "SO WE SHALL ALWAYS BE WITH THE LORD," 4:17
14. SLEEP, 5:6,7
15. SOBER, 5:8
16. "BREASTPLATE OF FAITH AND LOVE," 5:8
17. "HELMET, THE HOPE OF SALVATION," 5:8
18. A HOLY KISS, 5:26
19. PERSEVERANCE, II THESS. 1:4
20. ETERNAL DESTRUCTION, II THESS. 1:9
21. APOSTASY, II THESS. 2:3
22. "THE LORD WILL SLAY WITH THE BREATH OF HIS MOUTH," II THESS. 2:8

#### IX. PERSONS TO BRIEFLY IDENTIFY

1. Silvanus, II Thess. 1:1
2. archangel, I Thess. 4:16
3. "while they are saying. . .," I Thess. 5:3
4. "the man of lawlessness," II Thess. 2:3
5. "he who now restrains," II Thess. 2:7
6. "who leads an unruly life," II Thess. 3:6

#### X. MAP LOCATIONS TO PLOT

1. Thessalonica, 1:1
2. Macedonia, 1:8
3. Achaia, 1:8
4. Philippi, 2:2
5. Judea, 2:14
6. Athens, 3:1

## XI. DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Paul describes his preaching in five ways in 2:3 and 5. List them.
2. Why would Paul not accept money from the churches he preached to? (2:9)
3. How does 4:11 relate to the historical situation that caused Paul to write this letter? (Also II Thess. 3:6-12)
4. How does 4:17 relate to the rapture?
5. What is 5:1 referring to?
6. Why does Paul describe the believer as a soldier? (5:8)
7. How does 5:12-13 relate to today's ministers?
8. List the things that believers are called on to do in 5:14-22.
9. Is mankind a trichotomy based on 5:23?
10. What is the central theme of II Thess. 1? How is it different from I Thess. 1?
11. Does II Thess. 2:4 demand the rebuilding of the Jewish Temple?
12. How is II Thess. 2:11 related to human freewill and responsibility?
13. How does II Thess. 2:13-15 balance predestination and freewill?

# INTRODUCTION TO THE PASTORAL LETTERS

## I and II TIMOTHY and TITUS

### I. OPENING STATEMENT

- A. The geographical locations mentioned in I Timothy, Titus, and II Timothy do not fit into the chronology of either Acts or Paul's other letters.
1. visit to Ephesus (cf. I Tim. 1:3)
  2. visit to Troas (cf. II Tim. 4:13)
  3. visit to Miletus (cf. II Tim. 4:20)
  4. mission to Crete (cf. Titus 1:5)
  5. mission to Spain (from Clement of Rome, A.D. 95 and the introduction to the Muratorian Canon, A.D. 180-200)

Therefore, I think that Paul was released from prison (early to mid 60's, which is documented in I Clement 5, written about A.D. 95) and took a fourth missionary journey, was then rearrested and killed before A.D. 68 (Nero's suicide).

- B. The purpose of these letters has generally been thought to have been administrative (church organization). However, in the *New International Biblical Commentary*, Vol. 13, on I and II Timothy and Titus, Gordon Fee convinces me that the occasion for the letters was false teaching emerging within the house churches of Ephesus (I Timothy) and on the island of Crete (Titus).
- C. In some ways the Pastoral Letters establish an administrative pattern similar to the Essenes' *Manual of Discipline*. These guidelines were all the more necessary in light of the early and pervasive deviation from Apostolic teachings and form.
- D. The similarity between the Pastoral Letters and Luke's vocabulary in Luke and Acts may be due to the fact that Paul used him as a scribe (cf. C. F. C. Moule, *The Problem of the Pastoral Epistles: A Reappraisal*). S. G. Wilson has even asserted in *Luke and the Pastoral Epistles* that these three books may have been Luke's attempt to write a third volume delineating the gospel's movement beyond Rome.
- E. Why are these three books lumped together? Is it possible they deal with separate times/places/issues? Only I Timothy and Titus have anything to do with church organization. It is really (1) their vocabulary; (2) the false teachers that seem to unify these books; and (3) the fact they do not easily fit into the chronology of Acts (if taken together).

### II. AUTHOR

- A. The letters themselves claim to be from Paul the Apostle (cf. I Tim. 1:1; II Tim. 1:1; and Titus 1:1) to his two apostolic representatives, Timothy and Titus.
- B. The issue of authorship of the Pastoral Letters began to be debated in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. The rejection of Paul's authorship is usually based on
1. a developed church organization (qualifications for leaders)
  2. a developed gnosticism (documented in the second century)

3. a developed theology (creedal statements)
  4. a variation of vocabulary and style (one-third of the words are not used in Paul's other writings)
- C. These differences can be explained
1. these are Paul's last writings, possibly using Luke as a scribe
  2. vocabulary and style are dependent on the occasion
  3. gnostic ideas were a development of first century Jewish thought (cf. Dead Sea Scrolls)
  4. Paul was a brilliant theologian and creative writer with a large vocabulary
- D. There is a growing understanding of historical precedent
1. Paul's use of a professional Christian scribe (in this case, possibly Luke)
  2. Paul's use of co-writers (i.e. part of his mission team, cf. II Tim. 4:11)
  3. Paul's use of liturgical or hymnic quotes (a good summary is found in *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters*, edited by Hawthorne and Martin, published by IVP, p. 664).  
 Suggestions that portions of the Pastoral Letters are quotes from other sources help explain the numbers of *hapax legomena* (words used only one time in the NT), non-Pauline idioms, and unique use of Pauline terms.
    - a. doxologies (cf. I Tim. 1:17; 6:15-17)
    - b. list of vices (cf. I Tim. 1:9-10)
    - c. appropriate conduct for wives (cf. I Tim. 2:9-3:1a)
    - d. qualifications for ministers (cf. I Tim. 3:1b-13)
    - e. hymnic confessions (cf. I Tim. 2:5-6; 3:16; II Tim. 1:9-10; Titus 3:3-7)
  4. hymns (cf. I Tim. 6:11-12,15-16; II Tim. 2:11-13; Titus 2:11-14)
    - a. OT *midrash* (cf. I Tim. 1:9-10; 2:9-3:1a; 5:17-18; II Tim. 2:19-21; Titus 3:3-7)
    - b. formula
      - (1) "faithful is the word" (cf. I Tim. 1:15; 2:9-3:1a; II Tim. 2:11-13; Titus 3:3-8)
      - (2) "knowing this that" (cf. I Tim. 1:9-10; II Tim. 3:1-5)
      - (3) "these things" (cf. I Tim. 4:6,11; II Tim. 2:14; Titus 1:15-16; 2:1)
  5. quote from a Greek poet (cf. Titus 1:12 [Epimenides and/or Euripides])
- E. It is surprising that a supposed second century "Paulinist" would mention such specific details as people's names (i.e. Hymenaeus, I Tim. 1:20; II Tim. 2:17; Alexander, I Tim. 1:20; Zenas, Titus 3:13) and events (Trophimus' illness at Miletus, II Tim. 4:20; or the widow's role, I Tim. 5:9) that are not mentioned elsewhere in Paul's writings. These things do not fit with the assumption of pseudographity.  
 For a good article on pseudonymity related to NT letters, see *An Introduction to the New Testament*, by Carson, Moo, and Morris, pp. 367-371.

### III. DATE

- A. If it is true that Paul was released from prison (after the close of the book of Acts, possibly A.D. 59-61), then is there any early tradition of his post-prison activities (i.e. preaching in Spain, cf. Rom. 15:24,28)?
1. the Pastoral Letters (cf. II Tim. 4:10)
  2. I Clement 5
    - a. Paul preached in the east and west (i.e. Spain)



- b. Paul was killed under “the prefects” (i.e. Tigellinus and Sabinus, who functioned in the last year of Nero’s reign, A.D. 68)
  - 3. the introduction to the Muratorian Fragment (a list of canonical books from Rome about A.D. 180-200)
  - 4. Eusebius’ *Historical Ecclesiastical History* 2:22:1-8 states that Paul was released from Roman imprisonment
- B. It seems that I Timothy and Titus were written close together before Paul’s re-arrest. II Timothy is Paul’s last writing and good-bye while in prison.
- C. Possible chronology of Paul’s writings following F. F. Bruce and Murry Harris with minor adaptations.

| <u>Book</u>                       | <u>Date</u>   | <u>Place of Writing</u> | <u>Relation to Acts</u> |
|-----------------------------------|---------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1. Galatians                      | 48            | Syrian Antioch          | 14:28; 15:2             |
| 2. I Thessalonians                | 50            | Corinth                 | 18:5                    |
| 3. II Thessalonians               | 50            | Corinth                 |                         |
| 4. I Corinthians                  | 55            | Ephesus                 | 19:20                   |
| 5. II Corinthians                 | 56            | Macedonia               | 20:2                    |
| 6. Romans                         | 57            | Corinth                 | 20:3                    |
| 7.-10. Prison Letters             |               |                         |                         |
| Colossians                        | early 60's    | Rome                    |                         |
| Ephesians                         | early 60's    | Rome                    |                         |
| Philemon                          | early 60's    | Rome                    |                         |
| Philippians                       | late 62-63    |                         | 28:30-31                |
| 11.-13. Fourth Missionary Journey |               |                         |                         |
| I Timothy                         | 63 (or later, | Macedonia               |                         |
| Titus                             | 63 but before | Ephesus (?)             |                         |
| II Timothy                        | 64 A.D. 68)   | Rome                    |                         |

#### IV. RECIPIENTS

- A. The name, Pastoral Epistles, comes from D. N. Berdot’s commentary of A.D. 1703. It speaks of their unique character and content. Timothy and Titus, however, are not pastors, but apostolic delegates.
- B. These letters were written to churches, but under the literary form of letters to Paul’s co-workers, Timothy and Titus. Paul addresses the congregations as he addresses his leadership team. Hints of Paul’s wider audience are
- 1. the formal introductions mentioning his apostleship
  - 2. the plural “you” in the final close of all three letters
  - 3. Paul’s defense of his call (cf. I Tim. 2:7)
  - 4. Paul’s writing to Timothy about things he would already have known from his time with Paul (cf. I Tim. 3:15)

## V. OCCASION/PURPOSE

- A. The main purpose was to combat emerging heresies (cf. I Tim. 1:3-7). The specific heresy may be a combination of Jewish and gnostic tendencies (much like the false teachers of Ephesians and Colossians). Possibly there were two distinct groups.
- B. The OT gives specific guidelines for the organization of the community of faith. The NT does not contain specific instructions concerning the organization or polity of the church. The Pastoral Letters (I Timothy, II Timothy, and Titus) are as close as it comes to NT guidelines.
- C. I Timothy was written:
  - 1. to request Timothy to stay on at Ephesus (cf. I Tim. 1:3)
  - 2. to deal with the false teachers (cf. I Tim. 1:19-20; 4:1-5; 6:4-5,20-21)
  - 3. to help organize the leadership (cf. I Tim. 3)
- D. Titus had a similar assignment to deal with heresy and organization on Crete (cf. 1:5)
- E. II Timothy finds Paul in prison with little hope of release (cf. 4:6-8, 16-18)
- F. There is a strong sense of “sound teaching” (i.e. correct doctrine) that rings through these letters (cf. I Tim. 1:10; 4:6; 6:3; II Tim. 1:13; 4:3; Titus 1:9; 2:1) or “sound in the faith” (cf. Titus 1:13; 2:2). God entrusted this “sound teaching” to Paul (cf. I Tim. 1:11); Paul entrusted it to Timothy (cf. I Tim. 6:20) and Timothy was to entrust it to faithful men (cf. II Tim. 2:2).

## VI. THE FALSE TEACHERS

- A. It is difficult to discuss the false teachers because of our lack of specific first century information. Paul is writing to those who knew these false teachers firsthand. He, therefore, does not fully discuss their theology, but usually condemns their lifestyle and motives (as does Jude).
- B. The main interpretive issue relates to whether they were
  - 1. Jewish
  - 2. Greek
  - 3. a combination
- C. The false teachers seem to be a mixture of Jewish and Gnostic elements. But how did these totally divergent religious movements merge?
  - 1. Judaism always incorporated some dualistic elements (cf. Dead Sea Scrolls)
  - 2. Gnosticism of the second century developed these common near-eastern philosophical/theological themes
  - 3. Judaism of the diaspora was much more eclectic than modern scholarship previously imagined
  - 4. there is a first century precedent for a Jewish-gnostic heresy in the book of Colossians
- D. Some of the elements of the false teachers
  - 1. Jewish aspects
    - a. false teachers
      - (1) teachers of the Law (cf. I Tim. 1:7)
      - (2) the circumcision party (cf. Titus 1:10)

- b. false teachers warned about Jewish myths (cf. I Tim. 3:9; Titus 1:14)
- c. false teachers concerned with food laws (cf. I Tim. 4:1-5)
- d. false teachers concerned with genealogies (cf. I Tim. 1:4; 4:7; II Tim. 4:4; Titus 1:14-15; 3:9)
- 2. Gnostic aspects (See Special Topic at Titus 1)
  - a. asceticism forbidding and exempting
    - (1) forbid marriage (cf. I Tim. 2:15; 4:3)
    - (2) exempt certain foods (cf. I Tim. 4:4)
  - b. sexual exploitation (cf. I Tim. 4:3; II Tim. 3:6-7; Titus 1:11,15)
  - c. emphasis on knowledge (cf. I Tim. 4:1-3; 6:20)

## VII. CANONICITY

- A. Paul's letters were gathered together into one volume called "the Apostle" and then circulated among all the churches. The only Greek manuscript of Paul's letters that lacks I and II Timothy and Titus (also II Thessalonians and Philemon) is a papyrus manuscript from the 200's, called P<sup>46</sup> (from the Chester Beatty papyri). Even this is conjecture because the manuscript is missing several concluding papyrus pages. All other Greek manuscripts contain what came to be called "the Pastoral Epistles."
- B. Ancient sources which quote, allude to, or mention the Pastoral Letters
  - 1. early church leaders
    - a. Pseudo-Barnabas (A.D. 70-130) quotes II Timothy and Titus
    - b. Clement of Rome (A.D. 95-97) alludes to I Timothy and II Timothy and quotes Titus 3:1
    - c. Polycarp (A.D. 110-150) alludes to I Timothy, II Timothy, and Titus
    - d. Hermas (A.D. 115-140) quotes I Timothy and II Timothy
    - e. Irenaeus (A.D. 130-202) quotes often from I Timothy, II Timothy, and Titus
    - f. Diognetus (A.D. 150) quotes Titus
    - g. Tertullian (A.D. 150-220) quotes I Timothy, II Timothy, and Titus
    - h. Origen (A.D. 185-254) quotes I Timothy, II Timothy, and Titus
  - 2. list of canonical books which includes the Pastoral Letters
    - a. Muratorian Fragment (from Rome about A.D. 200)
    - b. Barococcio (A.D. 206)
    - c. Apostolic List (A.D. 300)
    - d. Cheltenham List (A.D. 360)
    - e. Athanasius' Letter (A.D. 367)
  - 3. early versions which contain the Pastoral Letters
    - a. old Latin (A.D. 150-170)
    - b. old Syriac (A.D. 200)
    - c. early church councils which affirmed the inspired status of the Pastoral Letters
    - d. Nicea (A.D. 325-340)
    - e. Hippo (A.D. 393)
    - f. Carthage (A.D. 397 and 419)
- C. A process of consensus among the early Christian congregations of the Roman Empire developed the canon. This consensus was surely affected by internal and external social pressures. The basic requirements for inclusion in the canon seem to have been
  - 1. relationship to an Apostle

2. a message consistent with other Apostolic writings
3. the changed lives of those who encountered these writings
4. a growing agreement in the lists of accepted writings among these early churches

- D. The need for a canon developed because of
1. the delayed Second Coming
  2. the geographical distance between churches and Apostles
  3. the death of the Apostles
  4. the early rise of false teachers
    - a. Judaism
    - b. Greek philosophy
    - c. mixture of Jewish and Gnostic elements (Colossians)
    - d. other Greco-Roman mystery religions (e.g. Mithra)
 This occurred as the gospel spread to different cultures.

- E. The issue of canonicity is historically related to authorship. The early church accepted the Pastoral Letters as Paul's writings. My own presuppositions about canonicity include the involvement of the Spirit, not only in the writing of the Scriptures, but also in their gathering and preservation. The question of Paul's authorship (which I assume) does not affect inspiration and canonization.

#### VIII. I TIMOTHY - TERMS AND PHRASES TO BRIEFLY IDENTIFY

1. "my true child in the faith," 1:2
2. blasphemer, 1:13
3. Amen, 1:17
4. mediator, 2:5
5. ransom, 2:6
6. "lift up holy hands," 2:8
7. "above reproach, 3:2
8. "addicted to much wine," 3:8
9. "the mystery of the faith," 3:9
10. "doctrines of demons," 4:1
11. "seared in their own conscience," 4:2
12. "worldly fables," 4:7
13. "the laying on of hands," 4:14; 5:22
14. presbytery, 4:14
15. "honor widows who are widows indeed," 5:3
16. "previous pledge," 5:12
17. "double honor," 5:17
18. contentment, 6:6
19. unapproachable light, 6:16

#### IX. I TIMOTHY- PERSONS TO BRIEFLY IDENTIFY

1. the Father, 1:2
2. "teachers of the Law," 1:7
3. "the King eternal," 1:17
4. Hymenaeus and Alexander, 1:20

5. overseer, 3:2
6. deacons, 3:8
7. women, 3:11
8. elders, 5:17
9. Pontius Pilate, 6:13

#### X. I TIMOTHY - MAP LOCATIONS TO PLOT

1. Macedonia, 1:3
2. Ephesus, 1:3

#### XI. I TIMOTHY - DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Describe in your own words the false teachers mentioned in 1:3-4.
2. Does 1:9-11 reflect the Ten Commandments? If so, what are the differences?
3. Why did Paul consider himself the foremost of all sinners? (1:15)
4. To what event in Timothy's life does 1:18 refer?
5. What does it mean that Paul handed someone over to Satan? (1:20)
6. Why is 2:4 such an important verse?
7. Explain 2:9 in light of first century culture.
8. How does 2:12 apply today?
9. Explain 2:15 in your own words.
10. List the qualifications of an overseer. (3:1-7)
11. Why is 3:16 thought to be a quote from an early hymn?
12. Why did the false teachers forbid marriage? (4:3)
13. How does 4:4 relate to Romans 14?
14. Explain 4:10 in your own words.
15. What event is 4:14 describing?
16. How does 5:19 reflect the OT?
17. To what cultural problem is 5:23 referring?
18. Explain 6:10 in your own words.
19. Where do the titles for Jesus in 6:15 come from?

#### XII. II TIMOTHY - TERMS AND PHRASES TO BRIEFLY IDENTIFY

1. "kindle afresh the gift of God," 1:6
2. "the treasure which has been entrusted to you," 1:14
3. gangrene, 2:17
4. "having this seal," 2:19
5. vessels, 2:20
6. Master, 2:21
7. "in season and out of season," 4:2
8. myths, 4:4
9. "the books. . . parchments," 4:13
10. "the lion's mouth," 4:17

### XIII. II TIMOTHY - PERSONS TO BRIEFLY IDENTIFY

1. my forefathers, 1:3
2. Lois, 1:5
3. Eunice, 1:5
4. Onesiphorus, 1:16
5. Hymenaeus, 2:17
6. Philetus, 2:17
7. Jannes and Jambres, 3:8,9
8. evangelist, 4:5
9. Demas, 4:10
10. Luke, 4:11
11. Mark, 4:11
12. Tychicus, 4:12
13. Alexander, 4:14

### XIV. II TIMOTHY - MAP LOCATIONS TO PLOT

1. Asia, 1:15
2. Rome, 1:17
3. Ephesus, 1:18; 4:12
4. Antioch, 3:11
5. Iconium, 3:11
6. Lystra, 3:11
7. Thessalonica, 4:10
8. Galatia, 4:10
9. Dalmatia, 4:10
10. Troas, 4:13
11. Corinth, 4:20
12. Miletus, 4:20

### XV. II TIMOTHY - DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Where was Paul imprisoned?
2. Explain 1:12 in your own words.
3. How is 1:9 like Titus 3:5a?
4. What did Onesiphorus do for Paul in prison? (1:16-18)
5. II Timothy 2:2 is a very important verse. Why?
6. Why is 2:11 thought to be a quote from an early hymn?
7. To what is 2:15 referring?
8. Does 2:25 imply that God gives repentance? If so what are the implications?
9. List the things that believers should do to help the “seduced ones.” (2:24-25)
10. Who and what is 3:6-7 dealing with?
11. Why is 3:16 such an important verse?
12. Why could Paul not heal Trophimus?

# INTRODUCTION TO TITUS

## I. BRIEF BACKGROUND

- A. Titus is part of the collection of Paul's letters known as "the Pastoral Letters." This is because I Timothy, Titus, and II Timothy deal with Paul's admonitions to his co-workers on (1) how to deal with false teachers, (2) how to establish leadership in local churches, and (3) how to encourage godliness. The apparent chronological order of these books is: I Timothy and/or Titus then later, II Timothy. Titus deals with the same subjects as I Timothy. Titus may have been written first because its introduction is so lengthy and theologically involved, much like Romans.
- B. The geographical movements of Paul and these co-workers do not fit into the geographical movements of Paul in Acts. Therefore, many assume that this is evidence that Paul was released from prison and conducted a fourth missionary journey.
- C. The dates for this fourth missionary journey would have to be sometime between the early A.D. 60's to A.D. 68 because Paul was beheaded under Nero and Nero killed himself in A.D. 68 (many assume in the persecution of A.D. 65).

## II. TITUS, THE MAN

- A. Titus was one of Paul's most trusted co-workers. This is evidenced by the fact that Paul sent him to the trouble spots of Corinth and Crete.
- B. He was a full Gentile (Timothy was only half-Greek), converted under Paul's preaching. Paul refused to circumcise him (cf. Gal. 2:3).
- C. He is mentioned often in Paul's letters (cf. II Cor. 2:13; 7:6-15; 8:6-24; 12:18; Gal. 2:1-3; II Tim. 4:10) and it is very surprising that Luke does not mention him in Acts. Some commentaries theorize that:
  - 1. he may have been a relative of Luke (possibly a brother) and to include his name would have been seen as an act of cultural impropriety on Luke's part
  - 2. Titus is Luke's major source of information about Paul's life and ministry and, therefore, like Luke, would not be named.
- D. He accompanied Paul and Barnabas to the all important Jerusalem Council, recorded in Acts 15, where the issue of the new Gentile believers' relationship to the Mosaic Law was debated and settled.
- E. This book focuses on advice Paul gives Titus about his ministry on Crete. Titus is acting as Paul's official surrogate/legate.
- F. The last information in the NT about Titus is that he was sent to minister in Dalmatia (cf. II Tim. 4:10).

### III. THE FALSE TEACHERS

- A. There is obviously a group of false teachers on Crete who opposed Paul's gospel.
  - 1. Their theological teachings led to conflict with the godly lifestyle that is expected of all believers.
  - 2. references to godly living: 1:1,16; 2:7,14; 3:1,8,14
  - 3. summaries of character qualities: 2:11-14; 3:4-7
- B. There is an obvious Jewish flavor to this false teaching (cf. 1:10,14; 3:8-9). These heresies are a combination of Jewish legalism and Greek speculative thought (gnosticism, see Special Topic at 1:1). They are similar to the false teachers addressed in I Timothy, Colossians, and Ephesians. The focus of the Pastoral Letters is on heresy, and not exclusively church organization.

### IV. TERMS AND PHRASES TO BRIEFLY IDENTIFY

- 1. godliness, 1:1
- 2. "in the hope of eternal life," 1:2
- 3. "which God who cannot lie," 1:2
- 4. hospitable, 1:8
- 5. Jewish myths, 1:14
- 6. sound doctrine, 2:1
- 7. perseverance, 2:2
- 8. "in the present age," 2:12
- 9. "the blessed hope," 2:13
- 10. redeem, 2:14
- 11. "the washing of regeneration," 3:5

### V. PERSONS TO BRIEFLY IDENTIFY

- 1. elders, 1:5
- 2. overseer, 1:7
- 3. "those of the circumcision," 1:10
- 4. "a prophet of their own," 1:12
- 5. "to rulers, to authorities," 3:1
- 6. Tychicus, 3:12
- 7. Apollos, 3:13

### VI. MAP LOCATIONS TO PLOT

- 1. Crete, 1:5
- 2. Nicopolis, 3:12

### VII. DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- 1. Why is it significant that both God the Father and Jesus the Son are called "Savior" (3 times each) in Titus?
- 2. How does 1:16 relate to false teachers?
- 3. Does 2:1-5 refer to church leaders or church members?



4. Why is 2:11 such an important verse?
5. Does 2:13 call Jesus God?
6. Why is 3:5a a basic theme of Paul?
7. Does 3:5b teach baptismal regeneration?

# INTRODUCTION TO PHILEMON

## I. OPENING STATEMENTS

- A. This book is an example of a private letter, so common in the first century Greco-Roman world. It probably fit on one papyrus sheet (cf. III John). It is uncertain to whom it is primarily addressed: (1) Philemon; (2) Apphia and Archippus (cf. Col. 4:17) or (3) or in some sense, the entire house church.
- B. This letter provides a window into
  - 1. the pastoral methods of the Apostle Paul
  - 2. the home churches of the first century (cf. Rom. 16:5; I Cor. 10:19; Col. 4:15)
- C. Christianity was already radically changing the social milieu of the Mediterranean world. Social barriers to the gospel were falling (cf. I Cor. 12:13; Gal. 3:28; Col. 3:11).

## II. AUTHOR

- A. The personal nature of the letter convinces most readers (one exception, F. C. Baur) that the author was Paul, the Apostle.
- B. Philemon and Colossians are closely related
  - 1. Same origin
  - 2. Same people give greetings
  - 3. Same closing
  - 4. Tychicus delivered the letter of Colossians and traveled with Onesimus (cf. Col. 4:7,9). If Philemon is Pauline, so is Colossians (which has been doubted by several modern scholars).
- C. It is listed among Paul's letters by both the early heretic Marcion (who came to Rome in A.D. 140's) and the list of canonical books, the Muratorian Fragment (written in Rome between A.D. 180-200).

## III. DATE

- A. The date of this letter is linked to one of Paul's imprisonments (Ephesus, Philippi, Caesarea, or Rome). A Roman imprisonment fits the facts of Acts the best.
- B. Once Rome is assumed to be the place of imprisonment, the question arises—which time? Paul was in jail in the early 60's and this is recorded in Acts. However, he was released and wrote the Pastoral letters (I & II Timothy and Titus) and was then rearrested and killed before June 9, A.D. 68 (Nero's suicide). The best educated guess for the writing of Colossians, Ephesians, and Philemon is Paul's first imprisonment, early 60's. Philippians was probably written toward the mid 60's.
- C. Tychicus, along with Onesimus, probably took the letters of Colossians, Ephesians, and Philemon to Asia Minor. Later (possibly several years later) Ephaphroditus, recovered from his physical illness, took the letter of Philippians back to his home church.

D. Possible chronology of Paul's writings following F .F. Bruce and Murray Harris (with minor adaption).

| <u>Book</u>                       | <u>Date</u>   | <u>Place of Writing</u> | <u>Relation to Acts</u> |
|-----------------------------------|---------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1. Galatians                      | 48            | Syrian Antioch          | 14:28; 15:2             |
| 2. I Thessalonians                | 50            | Corinth                 | 18:5                    |
| 3. II Thessalonians               | 50            | Corinth                 |                         |
| 4. I Corinthians                  | 55            | Ephesus                 | 19:20                   |
| 5. II Corinthians                 | 56            | Macedonia               | 20:2                    |
| 6. Romans                         | 57            | Corinth                 | 20:3                    |
| 7.-10. Prison Letters             |               |                         |                         |
| Colossians                        | early 60's    | Rome                    |                         |
| Ephesians                         | early 60's    | Rome                    |                         |
| Philemon                          | early 60's    | Rome                    |                         |
| Philippians                       | late 62-63    | Rome                    | 28:30-31                |
| 11.-13. Fourth Missionary Journey |               |                         |                         |
| I Timothy                         | 63 (or later, | Macedonia               |                         |
| Titus                             | 63 but before | Ephesus (?)             |                         |
| II Timothy                        | 64 A.D. 68)   | Rome                    |                         |

#### IV. OCCASION FOR THE LETTER (people mentioned in Philemon)

- A. Philemon was a slave owner in Colossae. He was a convert of Paul, probably while Paul was ministering in Ephesus.
- B. Onesimus was a runaway slave. He was also a convert of Paul, while in prison at Rome (A.D. 61-63). It is uncertain how they met. Perhaps (1) both were imprisoned, (2) Onesimus was sent on an errand to Paul or (3) Onesimus sought Paul for advice after changing his mind about running away.
- C. Epaphras was a believer from Asia Minor and the founder of the Churches in the Lycus River Valley, (Colossae, Laodicea and Hierapolis). He brought word to Paul in prison about the heresy in Colossae and about Philemon's faithfulness.
- D. Tychicus was the bearer of Paul's three letters to this area: Colossians, Ephesians, and Philemon (cf. Col. 4:7-9; Eph. 6:21-22). Onesimus also went back with him to face his master (cf. v. 11). Philemon is one of two private letters preserved in the New Testament (cf. III John).

About fifty years later (A.D. 110) Ignatius, on his way to Rome to be martyred, wrote a letter ("To the Ephesians" 1:3) to the bishop of Ephesus named Onesimus! It could have been this converted slave!

#### V. PURPOSE OF THE LETTER

- A. It shows how Paul used his apostolic authority and pastoral encouragement.
- B. It shows how Christianity made brothers and sisters out of slaves and slave owners, rich and poor! This truth would, in time, radically change the Roman Empire.
- C. It shows Paul's belief that he would be released from Roman imprisonment and return to Asia Minor.

## VI. TERMS AND PHRASES TO BRIEFLY IDENTIFY

1. “the church in your house,” v. 2
2. my child, Onesimus, v. 10
3. useless. . .useful, v. 11
4. “you own me even your own self,” v. 19

## VII. PERSONS TO BRIEFLY IDENTIFY

1. Apphia, v. 1
2. Onesimus, v. 10
3. Epaphras, v. 23
4. Mark, v. 24

## VIII. MAP LOCATIONS TO PLOT — NONE

## IX. DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. How is Paul asserting his apostolic authority in 1:8?
2. How does this little book impact the issue of slavery?
3. Does v. 18 imply that Onesimus stole from his master?
4. Does v. 19 imply that Paul normally used a scribe?

# INTRODUCTION TO HEBREWS

## I. CRUCIAL OPENING STATEMENT

As I have studied this book it has become more and more obvious that my theology has been molded by Paul's. It is very difficult for me to allow the plurality of the other NT authors to present their inspired thoughts because I tend to put them into Pauline categories. This is particularly evident in the emphasis of Hebrews on continuing in the faith. In the book of Hebrews faith is not a forensic position (justification by faith), but a faithful life to the end (chapters 11-12).

I am afraid that many of the questions I struggle with in Hebrews would have never been asked by its author (nor Peter, nor James). Hebrews is an occasional document, like all the NT books. I must let the author speak even when he/she makes me uncomfortable; even when he/she does not use my cherished categories or even radically disrupts those categories. I dare not substitute my systematic theology for an inspired NT author's message.

I prefer to repent of my theological dogmatism and live within a NT tension that I do not fully understand or like! I am afraid I view the NT through the filter of a modern evangelical, conventionist grid. I want to affirm biblical promises; promises of God's love, provision, and keeping power; yet I am convicted by the powerful warnings and mandates of the NT authors. I desperately need to hear Hebrews, but it is so painful! I want to explain away the tension. I suppose, in reality, I want to affirm a free salvation and a cost-everything Christian life. But where do I draw the line when the ideal is not met? Is eternal fellowship with God an initial faith response or a continuing faith response? Hebrews clearly states the mandate of a continuing faith response. The Christian life is viewed from the end, not the beginning!

This is not meant to imply a works-oriented salvation, but a works-oriented confirmation. Faith is the evidence, not the mechanism (which is grace). Believers are not saved by works, but unto works. Works are not the means of salvation, but the result of salvation. Godly, faithful, daily Christlikeness is not something we do, but who we are in Him. If there is no changed, and changing, life of faith there is no evidence, no security. Only God knows the heart and the circumstances. Assurance is meant to be a companion in a life of faith, not an initial theological assertion devoid of lifestyle evidence.

My prayer is that we will allow this inspired NT author to clearly speak and not relegate Hebrews to a theological footnote in a systematic theological grid, be it Calvinistic or Arminian.

## II. OPENING INSIGHTS

- A. This book uses OT texts interpreted by rabbinical hermeneutics to communicate its message. In order to understand the original author's intent, this book must be interpreted in light of first century rabbinical Judaism, not modern western thought.
- B. This book begins like a sermon (no salutation or typical greeting) and ends like a letter (typical Pauline close of chapter 13). It is possibly a synagogue homily turned into a letter. The author calls his/her book "a word of exhortation" in 13:22. This same phrase is also used in Acts 13:15 of a sermon.
- C. This is an insightful New Covenant commentary on the Mosaic covenant:
  1. a very authoritative view of the OT

2. a comparison of the old and new covenants
  3. the only NT book which calls Jesus our high priest
- D. This book is filled with warnings against falling away (“shrinking back” cf. 10:38), or returning to Judaism (i.e. chapters 2,4,5,6,10,12; cf. *No Easy Salvation* by R. C. Glaze, Jr., published by Insight Press).
- E. Although it is an over-generalization, it is helpful to see Paul with his emphasis on salvation as a finished work of the sovereign God (i.e. justification by faith) assert security as an initial truth. Peter, James, and the letters of I and II John emphasize the ongoing responsibilities of the New Covenant and assert that security is daily, confirmed by a changed and changing life. The author of Hebrews, emphasizing a life of faithfulness (cf. chapter 11), asserts security from an end-of-life perspective. Modern western rational thinking tends to polarize these perspectives, while the NT writers, by one divine author (i.e. the Spirit), wants to hold them in tension and affirm all three. Assurance is never the goal, but the by-product of an active faith in the promises of God.

### III. AUTHORSHIP

- A. Although the authorship of Hebrews is in dispute, several early Gnostic works (i.e. *Gospel of Truth*, *Gospel of Philip* and *The Apocrypha of John*) quote it several times, which shows it was considered part of the authoritative Christian writings by the second century (cf. Andrea Helmbold’s *The Nag Hammadi Gnostic Texts and the Bible*, p. 91).
- B. The Eastern Church (Alexandria, Egypt) accepted Paul’s authorship as is seen by its listing Hebrews in Paul’s writings in the early papyrus manuscript P<sup>46</sup>. This manuscript is called the Chester Beatty Papyri and was copied at the end of the second century. It places Hebrews after Romans. Some Alexandrian leaders recognized the literary problems related to Paul’s authorship.
1. Clement of Alexandria (A.D. 150-215, quoted by Eusebius) says that Paul wrote it in Hebrew and Luke translated it into Greek.
  2. Origen (A.D. 185-253) asserted that the thoughts are Paul’s but it was written by a later follower, such as Luke or Clement of Rome.
- C. This book is omitted in the list of Paul’s letters adopted by the Western Church called the Muratorian Fragment (a list of NT canonical books from Rome about A.D. 180-200).
- D. What we do know about the author
1. He was apparently a second generation Jewish Christian (2:3).
  2. He quotes from the Greek translation of the OT called the Septuagint.
  3. He uses ancient tabernacle procedures and not current temple rituals.
  4. He writes using classical Greek grammar and syntax (this book is not platonic. Its orientation is the OT, not Philo).
- E. This book is anonymous, but the author was well known to the recipients (cf. 6:9-10; 10:34; 13:7,9).
- F. Why there are doubts about Paul’s authorship
1. The style is so different (except chapter 13) from Paul’s other writings.
  2. The vocabulary is different.

3. There are subtle differences in word and phrase usage and emphasis.
4. When Paul calls his friends and co-workers “brother” the person’s name always comes first (cf. Rom. 16:23; I Cor. 1:1; 16:12; II Cor. 1:1; 2:13; Phil. 2:25) but 13:23 has “our brother Timothy.”

#### F. Theories of Authorship

1. Clement of Alexandria’s in his book *Hypotyposes* (quoted by Eusebius) believed Luke translated into Greek Paul’s original writing in Hebrew (Luke used excellent Koine Greek).
2. Origen said either Luke or Clement of Rome wrote it but followed Paul’s teaching.
3. Jerome and Augustine accepted Paul’s authorship only to facilitate the book’s acceptance into the Canon by the Western Church.
4. Tertullian (*De Pudic.* 20) believed Barnabas (a Levite associated with Paul) wrote it.
5. Martin Luther said Apollos, an Alexandrian-trained intellectual associated with Paul (cf. Acts 18:24), wrote it.
6. Calvin said Clement of Rome (the first to quote it in A.D. 96) or Luke was the author.
7. Adolph von Harnack said Aquila and Priscilla (they taught Apollos the full gospel and were associated with Paul and Timothy, cf. Acts 18:26) wrote it.
8. Sir William Ramsey said Philip (the evangelist) wrote it for Paul while Paul was in prison at Caesarea.
9. Others have asserted Philip or Silas (Silvanus).

#### IV. RECIPIENTS

- A. The title “to the Hebrews” addresses the Hebrew people, therefore, the book was written to all Jews (cf. Clement of Alexandria, quoted by Eusebius, *Eccl. Hist.* VI, 14).
- B. The internal evidence following R. C. Glaze, Jr.’s *No Easy Salvation* asserts that a specific group of believing Jews or a synagogue is being addressed (cf. 6:10; 10:32-34; 12:4; 13:7,19,23).
  1. They seem to be Jewish believers because of the numerous OT quotes and the subject matter (cf. 3:1; 4:14-16; 6:9; 10:34; 13:1-25).
  2. They had experienced some persecution (cf. 10:32; 12:4). Judaism was recognized as a legal religion by the Roman authorities while later in the first century Christianity was considered illegal when it separated from synagogue worship.
  3. They had been believers for a long time, but were still immature (cf. 5:11-14). They were afraid to break completely with Judaism (cf. 6:1-2).
- C. The ambiguous text of 13:24 could imply it was written (1) from Italy or (2) to Italy, probably Rome.
- D. The location of the recipients is linked to the different theories concerning authorship.
  1. Alexandria - Apollos
  2. Antioch - Barnabas
  3. Caesarea - Luke or Philip
  4. Rome - Clement of Rome and the mention of Italy in 13:24.
  5. Spain - This was the theory of Nicolas of Lyra (A.D. 1270-1340)

## V. DATE

- A. Just before the destruction of Jerusalem by the Roman General (later Emperor) Titus, in A.D. 70
  - 1. the author mentions Paul's companion Timothy by name (cf. 13:23)
  - 2. the author refers to sacrifices continuing (cf. 8:13; 10:1-2) in the Temple
  - 3. the author mentions persecution which may fit Nero's day (A.D. 54-68)
  - 4. the author encourages the readers not to return to Judaism and its rituals
- B. After A.D. 70
  - 1. the author uses the rituals of the tabernacle, not Herod's temple
  - 2. the author mentions persecution
    - a. possibly under Nero (cf. 10:32-34)
    - b. later possibly under Domitian (cf. 12:4-13)
  - 3. the book may relate to the revival of rabbinical Judaism (writings from Jamnia) late in the first century
- C. Before A.D. 95 because the book is quoted by Clement of Rome

## VI. PURPOSE

- A. The Jewish Christians are encouraged to leave the synagogue and identify publicly (fully) with the church (cf. 13:13).
- B. The Jewish Christians are encouraged to take up the missionary mandate of the gospel (cf. Matt. 28:19-20; Acts 1:8).
- C. The Jewish unbelievers in fellowship with these Jewish Christians are the focus of chapters 6 and 10. Notice the presence of three groups, "we," "you," and "they." They are warned to personally respond to the abundant and clear evidence in the lives of their Christian friends and co-worshippers.
- D. This supposed historical reconstruction is taken from *No Easy Salvation* by R. C. Glaze, Jr.

“The problem was not that of tension between the Christian majority and the non-Christian minority. The very opposite was true. The Jewish Christians of this congregation had so compromised their faith and sense of stewardship that the two groups could worship together as one congregation. Neither group seriously troubled the conscience of the other. No longer did the preaching of the Christian group result in conviction and decision on the part of the unsaved members of the synagogue. The Christians were in a state of stagnation because of their unwillingness to accept the full demands of courageous Christian living. The unbelievers had become hardened by continual rejection to the point of utter indifference. These groups had now become compatible bedfellows.

The reluctance of the Christian group to ‘press on unto perfection’ (6:1) was motivated by two phenomena: high regard for the traditions of Judaism and unwillingness to pay the price of full identification with Christianity, which was becoming more and more a Gentile movement” (p. 23).



## VII. BRIEF OUTLINE OF HEBREWS

|                      |   |
|----------------------|---|
| 1:1-3                | Superiority of the Son over the prophets                          |
| 1:4-2:18             | Superiority of the Son over the angels                            |
| 3:1-4:13             | Superiority of the Son over the Mosaic Covenant                   |
| 4:14-5:10; 6:13-7:28 | Superiority of the Son over the Aaronic Priesthood                |
| 5:11-6:12            | Superiority of the believing Jews over the unbelieving Jews       |
| 8:1-10:18            | Superiority of the Son over the procedures of the Mosaic Covenant |
| 10:19-13:25          | Superiority of the Son advocated and revealed in believers        |

## VIII. TERMS AND PHRASES TO BRIEFLY IDENTIFY

1. "in these last days," 1:2
2. "radiance of His glory," 1:3
3. "exact representation of His nature," 1:3
4. Majesty, 1:3
5. "so that we do not drift away from it," 2:1
6. "the word spoken through angels," 2:2
7. "He might taste death for everyone," 2:9
8. "the perfect author of salvation," 2:10
9. "a high priest," 2:17; 4:15
10. propitiation, 2:17
11. the Apostle, 3:1
12. the High Priest, 3:1
13. confession, 3:1; 4:14
14. today, 3:13
15. "the seventh day," 4:4
16. "a Sabbath rest," 4:9
17. "passed through the heavens," 4:14
18. "yet without sin," 4:15
19. "let us draw near," 4:16
20. "the elementary principles," 5:12
21. washings, 6:2
22. "the promise," 6:15
23. "the veil," 6:19
24. "Jesus has become the guarantee of a better covenant," 7:22
25. intercession, 7:25
26. tabernacle, 8:2
27. "a copy and shadow of the heavenly things," 8:5
28. "a new covenant," 8:8,13
29. "the Holy of Holies," 9:3
30. Aaron's rod, 9:4
31. mercy seat, 9:5
32. "so great a cloud of witnesses," 12:1
33. "a root of bitterness," 12:15
34. "heavenly Jerusalem," 12:22

## IX. PERSONS TO BRIEFLY IDENTIFY

1. “the firstborn,” 1:6
2. “him who had the power of death,” 2:14
3. “who provoked Him,” 3:16
4. Melchizedek, 5:6
5. There are three groups mentioned in 5:11-6:8: “you,” “those,” and “we.” To whom does each refer?
6. cherubim, 9:5
7. Enoch, 11:5
8. Rahab, 11:31
9. “the great Shepherd,” 13:20
10. Timothy, 13:23

## X. MAP LOCATIONS TO PLOT

1. Salem, 7:1
2. Jericho, 11:30
3. Mount Zion, 12:22
4. Italy, 13:24

## XI. DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. List the aspects of “the son” mentioned in 1:2-4
2. Why are the angels mentioned so much in the early chapters of Hebrews?
3. How are angels related to believers? (1:14)
4. How was Jesus made a little lower than the angels? (2:9)
5. What is the great truth of 2:18; 4:15?
6. How are Moses and Jesus compared in 3:1-6?
7. What does 3:7 imply about the Spirit?
8. What is 3:12 talking about?
9. What does 3:11 mean, “they shall not enter my rest”?
10. What does 3:14 say about Christian assurance?
11. Explain 4:12 in your own words.
12. Why does our author bring up an ancient Canaanite priest? (5:6-10)
13. Explain the significance of 5:8-9.
14. List the doctrines in 6:1-2. Are they Jewish or Christian? Why?
15. Why does the term “impossible” in 6:6 refute those who believe you can be saved, lost, saved?
16. Why is Melchizedek said to be without father and mother? (7:3)
17. Why is Abraham paying a tithe to Melchizedek so important? (7:4-10)
18. What do 8:13 and 10:4 imply about the OT?
19. How does 9:22 refute Hinduism?
20. How do 10:25 and 39 relate to the historical setting?
21. How is chapter 6 related to chapter 10?
22. Summarize chapter 11 in your own words.
23. To what is 12:2 referring?
24. Why is 13:8 so significant?

# INTRODUCTION TO JAMES

## I. OPENING STATEMENTS

- A. This was Soren Kierkegaard's favorite book in the New Testament because it emphasizes practical, daily Christianity.
- B. This was Martin Luther's least favorite book in the New Testament because it seems to contradict Paul's "justification by faith" emphasis in Romans and Galatians.
- C. This is a very different genre from other NT books
  - 1. very much like a new covenant book of Proverbs (i.e. wisdom literature) spoken by a fiery prophet
  - 2. written early after Jesus' death and still very Jewish and practical

## II. AUTHOR

- A. The traditional author is James (Hebrew, "Jacob"), the half-brother of Jesus (one of four, cf. Matt. 13:55; Mark 6:3; Acts 1:14; 12:17; Gal. 1:19). He was the leader of the Jerusalem Church (A.D. 48-62, cf. Acts 15:13-21; Gal. 2:9).
  - 1. He was called "James the Just" and later nicknamed "camel knees" because he constantly prayed on his knees (from Hegesippus, quoted by Eusebius).
  - 2. James was not a believer until after the resurrection (cf. Mark 3:21; John 7:5). Jesus appeared to him personally after the resurrection (cf. I Cor. 15:7).
  - 3. He was present in the upper room WITH THE DISCIPLES (cf. Acts 1:14) with the disciples (cf. Acts 1:14) and possibly also there when the Spirit came on Pentecost.
  - 4. He was married (cf. I Cor. 9:5).
  - 5. He is referred to by Paul as a pillar (possibly an apostle, cf. Gal. 1:19) but was not one of the Twelve (cf. Gal. 2:9; Acts 12:17; 15:13ff).
  - 6. In *Antiquities of the Jews*, 20:9:1, Josephus says that he was stoned in A.D. 62 by orders from the Sadducees of the Sanhedrin, while another tradition (the second century writers, Clement of Alexandria or Hegesippus) says he was pushed off the wall of the Temple.
  - 7. For many generations after Jesus' death a relative of Jesus was appointed leader of the church in Jerusalem.
- B. In *Studies in the Epistle of James*, A. T. Robertson affirms James' authorship:

"There are many proofs that the epistle was written by the author of the speech in Acts 15:13-21—delicate similarities of thought and style too subtle for mere imitation or copying. The same likeness appears between the Epistle of James and the letter to Antioch, probably written also by James (Acts 15:23-29). There are, besides, apparent reminiscences of the Sermon on the Mount, which James may have heard personally or at least heard the substance of it. There is the same vividness of imagery in the epistle that is so prominent a characteristic of the teaching of Jesus" (p. 2).

A. T. Robertson is here following J. B. Mayor's *The Epistle of St. James*, pp. iii-iv.
- C. There are two other men named James in the NT apostolic band. However, James, the brother of John, was killed very early in A.D. 44 by Herod Agrippa I (cf. Acts 12:1-2). The other James, "the

less” or “the younger” (cf. Mark 15:40), is never mentioned outside the lists of apostles. The author of our epistle was apparently well known.

- D. There have been three theories as to the relationship of James to Jesus:
1. Jerome said that he was Jesus’ cousin (by Alphaeus and Mary of Clopas). He deduced this from comparing Matt. 27:56 with John 19:25.
  2. Roman Catholic tradition asserts that he was a half-brother by a previous marriage of Joseph (cf. Origen’s comments on Matt. 13:55 and Epiphanius in *Heresies*, 78).
  3. Tertullian (A.D. 160-220), Helvidius (A.D. 366-384) and most Protestants assert that he was a true half-brother of Jesus by Joseph and Mary (cf. Mark 6:3; I Cor. 9:5).
  4. Options #1 and #2 were developed to guard the Roman Catholic doctrine of the perpetual virginity of Mary.

### III. DATE

- A. If the above authorship is accepted, there are two possible dates:
1. Early, before the Jerusalem Council (Acts 15) in A.D. 49 (if this date is true then James is the earliest NT book to be circulated).
  2. Later, just before the death of James in A.D. 62.
- B. The early date has in its favor:
1. the use of “synagogue” in 2:2
  2. the lack of church organization
  3. the use of the word “elder” in its Jewish sense in 5:14
  4. no mention of the controversy over the Gentile mission (cf. Acts 15)
  5. James seems to be writing to early Jewish believing communities away from Jerusalem and probably out of Palestine (cf. 1:1)
- C. The late date has in its favor:
1. the possible reaction by James (cf. 2:14-20) to Paul’s letter to the Romans (cf. 4:1ff), taking an opposite approach to correct an inappropriate usage by the heretics (cf. II Pet. 3:15-16). If this is true, a good title for James would be “a mid-course correction.”
  2. The book apparently assumes basic Christian doctrines because of their total absence from the book.

### IV. RECIPIENTS

- A. The reference to “the twelve tribes that are scattered over the world” (1:1) is our major hint. Also, the inclusion of the letter in the “catholic epistles” (i.e. letters addressed to several churches) reflects its encyclical nature. Obviously one church is not as prominent as a specific though scattered group of individuals and these seem to be Jewish Christians outside of Palestine.
- B. There are three possible interpretations of the phrase in 1:1:
1. Jews—This seems improbable because of the recurrent use of “brethren,” the lack of the major gospel truths about Jesus, as well as the specific mentioning of faith in Christ in 2:1. Also, after the Babylonian Exile, many of the original twelve tribes never returned. The same metaphor is used symbolically of believers in Rev. 7:4-8.

2. Christian Jews—This seems to be the most likely because of the Jewish flavor of the book and the leadership position of James in the Jerusalem church.
3. The church as spiritual Israel—This is possible because of the use of “diaspora” in I Pet. 1:1 and Paul’s allusion to the church (believing Jews and Gentiles ) as spiritual Israel (cf. Rom. 2:28-29; 4:16ff; Gal. 3:29; 6:16; I Pet. 2:5,9).

V. OCCASION - There are two major theories:

- A. An attempt to apply the New Covenant specifically to first century Jewish Christians living in pagan settings.
- B. Some believe it was wealthy Jews persecuting Christian Jews. It is also possible that the early Christians were subject to antisemitic pagan abuse. It was obviously a time of physical need and persecution (cf. 1:2-4,12; 2:6-7; 5:4-11,13-14).

VI. LITERARY GENRE

- A. This letter/sermon reflects a knowledge of wisdom literature, both canonical (Job - Song of Songs) and inter-biblical (Ecclesiasticus about 180 B.C.). Its emphasis is practical living—faith in action (cf. 1:3-4).
- B. In some ways the style is very similar to both Jewish wisdom teachers and Greek and Roman moral itinerant teachers (like the Stoics). Some examples are:
  1. loose structure (jumping from one subject to another)
  2. many imperatives (54 of them)
  3. diatribe (a supposed objector asking questions, cf. 2:18; 4:13). This is also seen in Malachi, Romans, and I John.
- C. Although there are few direct quotations from the OT (cf. 1:11; 2:8,11,23; 4:6), like the book of the Revelation, there are many allusions to the OT.
- D. The outline of James is almost longer than the book itself. This reflects the rabbinical technique of jumping from subject to subject in order to keep the attention of the audience. The rabbis called it “pearls on a string.”
- E. James seems to be a combination of OT literary genres: (1) sages (wisdom teachers) and (2) prophets (much like Amos or Jeremiah). He uses OT truths but bathes them in Jesus’ Sermon on the Mount teachings. (See section B. under Content below).

VII. CONTENT

- A. James uses allusions to Jesus’ words, found in the Synoptic Gospels, more than any other NT book (i.e. 1:5,6,22; 2:5,8,13; 3:12,18; 4:10,12; 5:12). It is even possible that James contains some quotes from Jesus (cf. 1:27; 2:13; 3:18; 4:11-12,17).

B. James is reminiscent of the Sermon on the Mount.

| <b>JAMES</b> | <b>SERMON ON THE MOUNT</b>    |
|--------------|-------------------------------|
| 1:2          | Matt. 5:1-2                   |
| 1:4          | Matt. 5:48                    |
| 1:5          | Matt. 7:7 (21:26)             |
| 1:12         | Matt. 5:3-11                  |
| 1:20         | Matt. 5:22                    |
| 1:22-25      | Matt. 7:24-27                 |
| 2:5          | Matt. 5:3 (25:34)             |
| 2:8          | Matt. 5:43; 7:12              |
| 2:13         | Matt. 5:7 (6:14-15; 18:32-35) |
| 3:6          | Matt. 5:22,29,30              |
| 3:12         | Matt. 7:16                    |
| 3:18         | Matt. 5:9; 7:16-17            |
| 4:4          | Matt. 6:24                    |
| 4:11-12      | Matt. 7:1                     |
| 4:13         | Matt. 6:34                    |
| 5:2          | Matt. 6:19-20                 |
| 5:10-11      | Matt. 5:12                    |
| 5:12         | Matt. 5:34-37                 |

C. It is applied theology (faith without works is dead). Out of 108 verses, 54 are imperatives.

## VIII. CANONIZATION

A. James' inclusion was late and difficult.

1. James was not in the canonical list from Rome about A.D. 200 called "Muratorian Fragment."
2. It was not in the canonical list from North Africa, A.D. 360, called "Cheltenham List" (also called Karl Mommsen's catalog).
3. It was not included in the Old Latin version of the NT.
4. Eusebius lists it as one of the disputed books (Hebrews, James, II Peter, II and III John, Jude, and Revelation), *Hist. Eccl.* II:23:24-24; III:25:3.
5. It was not received in the Western Church until the 4<sup>th</sup> century and was not documented in the Eastern Church until the revision of the Syriac translation of the 5<sup>th</sup> century called the Peshitta.

6. It was rejected by Theodore of Mopsuetia (A.D. 392-428), the leader of the Antiochean school of biblical interpretation (he rejected all of the catholic epistles).
7. Erasmus had doubts about it, as did Martin Luther, who called it a “strawy epistle” because he felt it contradicted Romans’ and Galatians’ emphases on “justification by faith.”

B. Evidence of James’ genuineness:

1. It was alluded to in the writings of Clement of Rome (A.D. 95) and later in the second century by Ignatius, Polycarp, Justin Martyr, and Irenaeus.
2. It is alluded to in the non-canonical, but popular, Christian writing called *Shepherd of Hermas*, written about A.D. 130.
3. It is quoted directly by Origen (A.D. 185-245) in his commentary on John, XIX:23.
4. In his *Hist. Eccl.* 2:23, Eusebius listed it among the “disputed books,” but added that it was accepted by most churches.
5. It is included in the revision of the Syriac translation of A.D. 412 (called the Peshitta).
6. Origen and John of Damascus in the East and Jerome and Augustine in the West championed this book’s inclusion in the Canon. It received official canonical status at the Councils of Hippo, A.D. 393, and Carthage, A.D. 397 and again in A.D. 419.
7. It was accepted by Chrysostom (A.D. 345-407) and Theodoret (A.D. 393-457), both leaders of the Antiochean school of biblical interpretation.

IX. TERMS AND PHRASES TO BRIEFLY IDENTIFY

1. “the twelve tribes,” 1:1
2. dispersed, 1:1
3. “consider it,” 1:2
4. approved, 1:12
5. crown of life, 1:12
6. “no variation of shifting of shadow,” 1:17
7. “doers of the word,” 1:22
8. the perfect law, 1:25
9. “demons also believe,” 2:19
10. “stricter judgment,” 3:1
11. hell, 3:6
12. “swear by heaven or by earth,” 5:12
13. anointing, 5:14
14. “confess your sins to one another,” 5:16

X. PERSONS TO BRIEFLY IDENTIFY

1. “double-minded man,” 1:8
2. “the Father of lights,” 1:17
3. Rahab, 2:25
4. “the Lord of Sabaoth,” 5:4
5. Job, 5:11
6. the elders, 5:14
7. Elijah, 5:17

XI. MAP LOCATIONS TO PLOT — NONE

## XII. DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. How can 1:2 be true?
2. How is prayer limited? (1:5-8; 4:1-5)
3. How does 1:9-11 reverse the cultural role expectations?
4. How does 1:13 compare to Matt. 6:13?
5. How is 1:22 the theme of the book?
6. Is 2:1-7 talking about a worship setting or a church court setting? Why?
7. To what event in the Christian life is 2:7 referring?
8. Why is 2:10 an important truth?
9. Why does 2:17 caused so much conflict in the church? (cf. 2:20)
10. How do Paul and James use Abraham as an example, but in different ways? (2:18-26)
11. Explain the point of 3:1-5 in your own words.
12. Describe the difference between worldly wisdom and God's wisdom. (3:15-17)
13. Why is 4:5 so hard to interpret?
14. Why would 5:1-6 have surprised Jewish believers?



# INTRODUCTION TO I PETER

## I. AUTHORSHIP

### A. Internal evidence for the Apostle Peter's authorship

1. specifically stated in 1:1
2. allusions to the words and life experiences of Jesus and the Twelve
  - a. examples taken from E. G. Selwyn's *The First Epistle of St. Peter*, 1946
    - (1) 1:3 - John 21:27
    - (2) 1:7-9 - Luke 22:31; Mark 8:29
    - (3) 1:10-12 - Luke 24:25ff; Acts 15:14ff
    - (4) 3:15 - Mark 14:29,71
    - (5) 5:2 - John 21:15ff
  - b. examples taken from Alan Stibbbs' *The First Epistle General of Peter*, 1971
    - (1) 1:16 - Matt. 5:48
    - (2) 1:17 - Matt. 22:16
    - (3) 1:18 - Mark 10:45
    - (4) 1:22 - John 15:12
    - (5) 2:4 - Matt. 21:42ff
    - (6) 2:19 - Luke 6:32; Matt. 5:39
    - (7) 3:9 - Matt. 5:39
    - (8) 3:14 - Matt. 5:10
    - (9) 3:16 - Matt. 5:44; Luke 6:28
    - (10) 3:20 - Matt. 24:37-38
    - (11) 4:11 - Matt. 5:16
    - (12) 4:13 - Matt. 5:10ff
    - (13) 4:18 - Matt. 24:22
    - (14) 5:3 - Matt. 20:25
    - (15) 5:7 - Matt. 6:25ff
3. words and phrases similar to Peter's sermons in Acts
  - a. 1:20 - Acts 2:23
  - b. 2:7-8 - Acts 4:10-11
  - c. 2:24 - Acts 5:30; 10:39 (esp. use of the Greek term *xylon* for cross)
  - d. 4:5 - Acts 10:45
4. contemporary first century missionary comparisons
  - a. Silvanus (Silas) - 5:12
  - b. Mark (John Mark) - 5:13

### B. External evidence for the Apostle Peter's authorship

1. accepted early and widely by the early church
  - a. similar phrasing, possibly quotes, by Clement of Rome in his *Letter to Corinthians* (A.D. 95)
  - b. similar phrasing, possibly quotes, in the *Epistle of Barnabas* (A.D. 130)
  - c. alluded to by Papias, the Bishop of Hieropolis (A.D. 140) in a quote from Eusebius' *His. Eccl.*
  - d. quoted by Polycarp in his *Epistle to the Philippians* 8:1, but he does not mention I Peter by name (Polycarp died in A.D. 155)
  - e. quoted by Irenaeus (A.D. 140-203)

- f. quoted by Origen (A.D. 185-253). Origen believed that I Pet. 5:13, where Peter calls Mark “my son” means he wrote Peter’s Gospel.
- g. quoted by Tertullian (A.D. 150-222)

C. Reasons for questioning the Apostle Peter’s authorship

1. it is not listed in the Muratorian Fragment, a list of canonical books compiled in Rome between A.D. 180 and 200
2. the Greek is good, polished Koine Greek, which is surprising from an “uneducated” (*a grammatos*, cf. Acts 4:13) Galilean fisherman
3. it sounds so much like Paul’s writings in Romans and Ephesians
4. its description of persecution described in I Peter better fits a later date
  - a. Domitian (A.D. 81-96)
  - b. Trajan (A.D. 98-117)

D. Possible answers to modern scholarship concerns

1. The Muratorian Fragment is damaged and missing at least one line of text (cf. B. F. Westcott’s *A General Survey of the History of the Canon of the New Testament*, 6<sup>th</sup> ed. p. 289).
2. Peter was not uneducated (cf. Acts 4:13), but merely untrained in a recognized rabbinical school. Apparently most Jews in Galilee were bilingual from birth. The other major issue in this discussion is Peter’s use of a scribe. The wording of I Pet. 5:12 suggests he may have used Silvanus (Silas).
3. Both Peter and Paul often quoted liturgical or training material (catechism documents) common in the early church. They also had some contact with each other through the years (i.e., Acts, Gal. and II Pet. 3:15-16).

For me the most probable reason for the similarity between Peter and Paul’s writing can be explained by Peter’s use of Paul’s missionary companion Silas (Silvanus) as a scribe.

4. I Peter does not necessarily reflect an Empire-wide persecution. Peter’s affirmation of believers needing to be subject to government (cf. 2:13-17) would be unusual in a day of official Empire-wide persecution.

Nero’s (A.D. 54-68) growing mental illness (e.g. grandiose claims) encouraged local emperor cults, especially in Asia Minor, to instigate local persecutions. I Peter fits Nero’s day better than Domitian’s (A.D. 81-96) or Trajan’s day (A.D. 98-117). It is even possible that some of the persecution is coming from Jewish groups as well as local governmental officials or emperor cults.

E. There is nothing in I Peter itself which demands a later period or author.

II. DATE

- A. The date is obviously related to authorship.
- B. Tradition links Peter’s and Paul’s deaths in Rome under Nero, probably A.D. 65. If so, then I Peter had to have been written about A.D. 63-64.
- C. A mid-first century date is probable if I Peter is alluded to by Clement of Rome (A.D. 95).
- D. A. T. Robertson believes Peter died in A.D. 67-68 and wrote I Peter in A.D. 65-66. I think he died in A.D. 64-65 and wrote just before this.

### III. RECIPIENTS

- A. Typical of first century letters, the recipients are noted in 1:1 as “those who reside as aliens scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia.” These Roman provinces (assuming Galatia is northern ethnic Galatia) are located in northern modern Turkey. These areas are apparently places that Paul did not evangelize (cf. Acts 16:6) nor did Peter (cf. 1:12). Possibly these churches originated from Jewish converts who returned home after Pentecost (cf. Acts 2:9-11).
- B. Although these churches may have originally been started by Jewish believers at the time of Peter’s writing, they were mostly Gentile
1. formerly ignorant of God (1:14)
  2. futile ways of life inherited from their forefathers (1:18)
  3. now God’s people (2:9-10, a play on Hosea 1:9-10; 2:23)
  4. among the Gentiles (2:12)
  5. lists of Gentile vices (4:3-4)
- C. The book does contain Jewish elements
1. the use of the terms “aliens” and “diaspora” reflect a Jewish setting (cf. John 7:35; Acts 7:6)
  2. the use of OT Scriptures
    - a. Exodus 19 (cf. 2:5,9)
    - b. Isaiah 53 (cf. 1:19; 2:22,24,25)However, these examples do not necessarily reflect a Jewish church, but
  3. the transfer of OT titles from Israel to the church (i.e., “a kingdom of priests”)
    - a. 2:5
    - b. 2:9
  4. a church training document (i.e., catechism materials for new believers), which employed OT Messianic texts
    - a. 1:19 - Isaiah 53:7 (i.e., Lamb)
    - b. 2:22 - Isaiah 53:5
    - c. 2:24 - Isaiah 53:4,5,11,12
    - d. 2:25 - Isaiah 53:6
- D. Although Peter was called specifically to minister to Jews (cf. Gal. 2:8), he, like Paul, worked with both Jews and Gentiles (cf. Acts 10). Cornelius’ conversion showed Peter the radical inclusiveness of the gospel! I Peter reflects this new realization.

### IV. PURPOSE

- A. I Peter has both a doctrinal and practical aspect. However, as Paul divided his letters into a beginning section on doctrine and a concluding section on application, Peter merges the two. His book is much more difficult to outline. In many ways it reflects a sermon more than a letter.
- B. The major issue discussed is suffering and persecution. This is done in two ways.
1. Jesus is presented as the ultimate example of suffering and rejection (cf. 1:11; 2:21,23; 3:18; 4:1,13; 5:1).
  2. Jesus’ followers are called on to emulate His pattern and attitude (cf. 1:6-7; 2:19; 3:13-17; 4:1,12-19; 5:9-10).

- C. In light of the suffering and persecutions so common in the early years of Christianity, it is not surprising how often the Second Coming is mentioned. This book, like most NT writings, is thoroughly eschatological.

## V. GENRE

- A. This book has a typical first century Greco-Roman opening and close
1. 1:1-2
    - a. author
    - b. recipients
    - c. prayer
  2. 5:12-14
    - a. closing greetings
      - (1) from whom
      - (2) to whom
    - b. prayer
- B. The main body of the letter resembles a sermon more than a letter. Some have assumed it was
1. first a sermon
  2. first a baptismal liturgy
  3. first pieces of early church catechism material combined
- C. The letter seems to close at 4:11 with a doxology, but no Greek manuscript stops at this point. It is possible that 4:12-5:11 is a purposeful summary of the entire letter.
- D. I personally believe that I Peter functions as a cyclical letter to churches which Peter did not personally start, much like Paul's Colossians (sent to Colossae, Laodicea, and Hierapolis, cf. Col. 4:13), but also a general encouragement to believers to watch out for coming problems, much like Paul's Galatian and Ephesian letters.

This cyclical genre explains the lack of a personal opening and closing to the letter. It also explains the lack of specific examples of persecution.

## VI. CANONIZATION

- A. I include the category of canonization in I Peter because the issue is so controversial with II Peter.
- B. I Peter is listed in Eusebius' *Eccl. His.* 3:3:25, as being part of "the undisputed books." In the ancient church it was never doubted as a true letter from the Apostle Peter.
- C. The issue of canonicity is exacerbated because of the number of spurious writings attributed to Peter. The early church never accepted any of these, recognizing only I Peter and the disputed II Peter as truly from the Apostle.
1. Acts of Peter
  2. Acts of Peter and Andrew
  3. Acts of Peter and Paul
  4. The Passion of Peter and Paul
  5. The Acts of Peter and the Twelve
  6. Apocalypse of Peter

7. Gospel of Peter
8. Passion of Peter
9. Preaching of Peter
10. Slavonic Acts of Peter

(For a discussion of each of these pseudonymous writings see the *Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible* Vol. 4; pp. 721-723, 732-733, 740.) None of these writings supposedly attributed to Peter were even seriously considered to be part of the canon of the NT. This, in and of itself, says much about the inclusion of I and II Peter.

# PETER, THE MAN

## I. HIS FAMILY

- A. Peter's family lived in Galilee of the Gentiles in the city of Bethsaida on the northern shore of the Sea of Galilee (or the Sea of Tiberias cf. John 1:44), but apparently moved to Capernaum at some point (cf. Mark 1:21,29).
- B. Peter's father's name was Jonah (cf. Matt. 16:17) or John (cf. John 1:42; 21:15-17).
- C. His given name was Simon (cf. Mark 1:16,29,30,36), which was common in Palestine of the first century. It was the Jewish form of Symeon (cf. Acts 15:14; II Pet. 1:1), which was the name of one of the Twelve Tribes of Israel (cf. Gen. 29:33; Exod. 1:1).

Jesus renamed him Peter (*Petros*, which means "rock," meant to describe his eventual strength and stability) in Matt. 16:18; Mark 3:16; Luke 6:14; and John 1:42. The Aramaic form is *Cephas* (cf. John 1:42; I Cor. 1:12; 3:22; 9:5; 15:5; Gal. 1:18; 2:9,11,14). Often in the NT these two names are given together (cf. Matt. 16:16; Luke 5:8; John 1:40; 6:8,68; 13:6,9,24,36; 18:10,15,25; 20:2,6; 21:2-3,7,11,15).
- D. Peter's brother's name was Andrew (cf. Mark 1:16). He was a disciple of John the Baptist (cf. John 1:35,40) and later a believer and follower of Jesus (cf. John 1:36-37). He brought Simon to Jesus (cf. John 1:41). Several months later Jesus confronted them by the Sea of Galilee and called them to be His official full-time disciples (cf. Matt. 4:18-20; Mark 1:16-18; and Luke 5:1-11).
- E. He was married (cf. Mark 1:30; I Cor. 9:5), but there is no mention of children.

## II. HIS OCCUPATION

- A. Peter's family owned several fishing boats and even hired servants.
- B. Peter's family may have been partners with James, John, and their father, Zebedee (cf. Luke 5:10).
- C. Peter briefly returned to fishing after Jesus' death (cf. John 21).

## III. HIS PERSONALITY

- A. Peter's strengths
  1. He was a dedicated follower, but quite impulsive (cf. Mark 9:5; John 13:4-11).
  2. He attempted acts of faith, but often failed (e.g. walking on water, cf. Matt. 14:28-31).
  3. He was brave and willing to die (cf. Matt. 26:51-52; Mark 14:47; Luke 22:49-51; John 18:10-11).
  4. After His resurrection, Jesus addressed him personally as the discredited leader of the Twelve in John 21 and provided an opportunity for repentance and restoration to leadership.
- B. Peter's weaknesses
  1. He had initial tendencies toward Jewish legalism
    - a. eating with Gentiles (Gal. 2:11-21)
    - b. food laws (Acts 10:9-16)

2. He, like all the Apostles, did not fully understand Jesus' radical new teachings and their implications
  - a. Mark 9:5-6
  - b. John 13:6-11; 18:10-11
3. He was personally and severely chastised by Jesus (Mark 8:33; Matt. 16:23)
4. He was found sleeping instead of praying in Jesus' great hour of need in Gethsemane (Mark. 14:32-42; Matt. 26:36-46; Luke 22:40-60)
5. He repeatedly denied knowing Jesus (Mark 14:66-72; Matt. 26:69-75; Luke 22:56-62; John 18:16-18,25-27)

#### IV. HIS LEADERSHIP OF THE APOSTOLIC GROUP

- A. There are four lists of the Apostles (cf. Matt. 10:2-4; Mark 3:16-19; Luke 6:14-16; Acts 1:13). Peter is always listed first. The Twelve were divided into three groups of four. I believe this allowed them to rotate home to check on their families.
- B. Peter often serves as the spokesman for the Apostolic group (cf. Matt. 16:13-20; Mark 8:27-30; Luke 9:18-21). These passages have also been used to assert Peter's authority within the group (cf. Matt. 16:18). However, within this very context he is chided by Jesus as a tool of Satan (cf. Matt. 16:23; Mark 8:33).
 

Also, when the disciples are arguing over who is greatest, Peter is not assumed to take that position (cf. Matt. 20:20-28, especially v. 24; Mark 9:33-37; 10:35-45).
- C. Peter was not the leader of the Jerusalem church. This fell to James, Jesus' half-brother (cf. Acts 12:17; 15:13; 21:18; I Cor. 15:7; Gal. 1:19; 2:9,12).

#### V. HIS MINISTRY AFTER JESUS' RESURRECTION

- A. Peter's leadership role is clearly seen in the early chapters of Acts
  1. He led in the election of Judas' replacement (cf. Acts 1:15-26).
  2. He preached the first sermon on Pentecost (cf. Acts 2).
  3. He healed a lame man and preached the second recorded sermon (cf. Acts 3:1-10; 3:11-26).
  4. He spoke boldly to the Sanhedrin in Acts 4.
  5. He presided over the church discipline of Ananias and Sapphira in Acts 5.
  6. He spoke at the Jerusalem Council in Acts 15:7-11.
  7. Several other events and miracles are attributed to him in Acts.
- B. Peter, however, did not always embody the gospel's implications
  1. He retained an OT mind-set (cf. Gal. 2:11-14).
  2. He had to have a special revelation to include Cornelius (cf. Acts 10) and other Gentiles.

#### VI. THE SILENT YEARS

- A. There is little or no information about Peter after the Jerusalem Council of Acts 15
  1. Galatians 1:18
  2. Galatians 2:7-21
  3. I Corinthians 1:12; 3:22; 9:5; 15:5

B. Early church tradition

1. Peter's being martyred in Rome is mentioned in Clement of Rome's letter to the church at Corinth in A.D. 95.
2. Tertullian (A.D. 150-222) also notes Peter's martyrdom in Rome under Nero (A.D. 54-68).
3. Clement of Alexandria (A.D. 200) says Peter was killed in Rome.
4. Origen (A.D. 252) says Peter was martyred by crucifixion, head down, in Rome.

VII. TERMS AND PHRASES TO BRIEFLY IDENTIFY

1. foreknowledge, 1:2
2. "sprinkled with His blood," 1:2
3. "born again," 1:3
4. various trials, 1:6
5. "the proof of your faith," 1:7
6. "the revelation of Jesus Christ," 1:7,13
7. souls, 1:9
8. "a lamb unblemished and spotless," 1:19
9. "He was foreknown before the foundation of the world," 1:20
10. "the living and enduring word of God," 1:23
11. "the pure milk of the word," 2:2
12. "a living stone," 2:4
13. "a holy priesthood," 2:5
14. a cornerstone, 2:6
15. "a stone of stumbling," 2:8
16. submit, 2:13
17. "die to sin and live to righteousness," 2:24
18. "by His wounds you were healed," 2:24
19. kindhearted, 3:8
20. a defense, 3:15
21. "baptism now saves you," 3:21
22. testing, 4:12
23. "resist him," 5:9

VIII. PERSONS TO BRIEFLY IDENTIFY

1. "the Holy One," 1:15
2. "the Shepherd and Guardian of your souls," 2:25
3. the elders, 5:1
4. the Chief Shepherd, 5:4
5. Silvanus, 5:12
6. Mark, 5:13

IX. MAP LOCATIONS TO PLOT

1. Pontus, 1:1
2. Galatia, 1:1
3. Cappadocia, 1:1
4. Asia, 1:1



5. Bithynia, 1:1
6. Zion, 2:6
7. Babylon, 5:13

## X. DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Describe the believers' inheritance. (1:4-5)
2. Explain 1:11 in your own words.
3. What is it that angels want to know? (1:12)
4. How are Christians to obey 1:16?
5. How does one grow in respect to salvation? (2:2)
6. Why is 2:5 and 9 important?
7. How does 2:16 relate to Romans 14?
8. How does 3:3 relate to today?
9. Can our relationship with our spouse affect our prayers? (3:7)
10. Where did James go to preach to the spirits in prison? (3:19)
11. Explain 3:22 in light of gnostic theology.
12. What is the general theme of I Peter?

# INTRODUCTION TO II PETER

## I. OPENING STATEMENTS

- A. The purpose or scope of this introduction is not to discuss in detail the problems connected to the authorship of II Peter. I personally have concluded that there is no compelling reason to deny Peter's authorship. Three sources have been helpful in thinking through this issue.
1. Bruce M. Metzger's article "Literary Forgeries and Canonical Pseudepigrapha" in *The Journal of the Society of Biblical Literature*, 1972, pp. 3-24.
  2. Michael J. Kruger's article "The Authenticity of 2 Peter" in *The Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society*, Vol. 42, No. 4, pp. 645-671.
  3. E. M. B. Green's book *2 Peter Reconsidered*, Tyndale Press, 1961.
- B. As I think about the possibility that II Peter was not written by Peter, many things go through my mind.
1. Who wrote II Peter does not change my view that it is inspired and trustworthy. Authorship affects hermeneutics, not inspiration, which is a faith presupposition and a documentable historical process.
  2. Why am I bothered by pseudonymity? Apparently the first century Greco-Roman world was accustomed to it (Metzger's article).
  3. Am I unwilling to allow it because of my own preferences or am I able to honestly evaluate the historical and textual evidence? Has tradition predisposed me to a certain conclusion?
  4. The ancient church questioned Peter's authorship, but not the book's message (except the Syrian church). It is an orthodox message in theological unity with other NT books with many affinities to Peter's sermons in Acts.
- C. Eusebius used three categories to describe Christian writings:
1. accepted
  2. disputed
  3. spurious
- He included II Peter along with James, Jude, II John, and III John in category 2 (i.e. disputed). Eusebius accepted I Peter; had doubts about II Peter, and rejected as spurious other supposed writings of Peter (1) the Acts of Peter; (2) the Gospel of Peter; (3) the Preaching of Peter; and (4) the Apocalypse of Peter.

## II. AUTHORSHIP

- A. This is the most disputed NT book as to traditional authorship.
- B. The reasons for these doubts are both internal (its style and content) and external (its late acceptance).
1. External
    - a. not listed by Marcion (A.D. 145) or Muratorial Fragment (A.D. 170).
    - b. is found in Bodamer Papyri P<sup>72</sup> of the early third century
    - c. not quoted directly by Early Church writers until third century (Origen and Methodius)

- d. not accepted into the Canon officially until Council of Carthage A.D. 397, apparently following Athanasius' letter of A.D. 367. It was rejected in the Eastern Church until the sixth century
  - e. not in the Syriac (Peshita) translation of the fifth century
  - f. Eusebius, writing in A.D. 325 (*Ecclesiastical History* 3:25:3) places it among the disputed books (II Peter, Jude, James, II John, and III John)
2. Internal
- a. style very different from I Peter (I Peter is syntactical Greek, while II Peter is not; Jerome attributed this difference to separate scribes)
  - b. II Peter seems to follow a literary type known as "Asianism," which was characteristic of some Asia Minor literature
  - c. the allusion to extra-canonical sources has caused great problems, but I Peter seems to make an allusion to I Enoch
  - d. II Peter and Jude have some literary linkage (II Pet. 2:1-18 and Jude 4-13 and II Pet. 3:1-3 and Jude 17-18); who copied whom is uncertain
  - e. the book claims to be written by the Apostle Peter; 1:1,14,16-18; 3:1,15

### C. Genre

- 1. Is this a typical first century letter?
  - a. it has a typical opening and close
  - b. it, however, seems to be a cyclical letter to several churches, like Galatians, Ephesians, James, and I John
  - c. It may be a specialized Jewish genre called "testament," which is characterized by
    - (1) a farewell discourse
      - (a) Deuteronomy 31-33
      - (b) Joshua 24
      - (c) the Testament of the Twelve Patriarchs
      - (d) John 13-17
      - (e) Acts 20:17-28
    - (2) a prediction of imminent death (cf. II Timothy)
    - (3) an admonition of his hearers to keep on in his tradition
- 2. The relation between II Peter 2 and Jude
  - a. There has obviously been some literary borrowing.
  - b. The allusion to non-canonical sources has caused many to reject both Jude and II Peter, yet even I Peter makes allusion to I Enoch and Paul even quotes Greek poets.
- 3. The book itself claims to be from Peter the Apostle
  - a. He is named in 1:1. He is called Symeon Peter. Peter is the name given to him by Jesus (cf. Matt. 16). Symeon (not Simon) is rare and unusual. If someone were trying to write in Peter's name the choice of this Semitic spelling is very surprising and counterproductive to pseudonymity.
  - b. He claims to be an eye-witness to the transfiguration (cf. Matt. 17:1-8; Mark 9:2-8; Luke 9:28-36) in 1:16-18.
  - c. He claims to have written a first letter (cf. 3:1), which implies I Peter.
- 4. Orthodoxy
  - a. There is nothing in this letter which contradicts NT Apostolic teaching.
  - b. There are a few unique items (i.e. world destroyed by fire and Paul's writings seen as Scripture), but nothing gnostic or adoptionistic or obviously heretical.

## EXTERNAL CONCERNS

1. Eusebius lists Christian writings of the first and second centuries in three categories
  - a. accepted
  - b. disputed
  - c. spuriousII Peter, along with Hebrews, James, II and III John are listed in the disputed category.
2. II Peter does not appear in the Marcion canon (A.D. 154), but Marcion also rejected many other NT books.
3. II Peter does not appear in the Muratorian Fragment (A.D. 180-200), but the list seems to be damaged and it also does not list Hebrews, James, or I Peter.
4. It was rejected by the Eastern (Syrian) church
  - a. not in the Peshitta (first half of the fifth century)
  - b. was included in the Philoxeniana (A.D. 507) from Iraq and the Harclean version (A.D. 616) from north Africa
  - c. Chrysostom and Theodore of Mopsuestia (i.e. leaders of the Antiochian school of interpretation) rejected all the catholic epistles.
5. II Peter seems to be quoted in “the Gospel of Truth” and “the Apocryphon of John” found in the Nag Hammadi gnostic texts (cf. *The Nag Hammadi Gnostic Texts and the Bible* by Andrew K. Helmbold, p. 91). These writings in Coptic are translations of earlier Greek texts. If II Peter is alluded to then it is impossible for it to have been written in the second century.
6. It is included in P<sup>72</sup>, dated by the UBS<sup>4</sup> (p. 8) as third or fourth century.
7. It is alluded to or quoted by Clement of Rome (A.D. 95)
  - a. I Clement (9:2 - II Peter 1:17)
  - b. I Clement (23:3 - II Peter 3:4)
  - c. I Clement (35:5 - II Peter 2:2)
8. It may be alluded to in Justin Martyr’s (A.D. 115-165) *Dialogue with Trypho* 82:1 - II Pet. 2:1. These are the only two places in ancient Christian writings where the Greek term *pseudopphetai* is used.
9. Irenaeus (A.D. 130-200) possibly alludes to II Peter (he is quoted by Eusebius’ *His. Eccl.* 5:32:2 - II Pet. 3:8 and 3:1:1 - II Pet. 1:15).
10. Clement of Alexandria (A.D. 150-215) wrote the first commentary (though it is now lost) on II Peter.
11. It appears in Athanasius’ Easter letter (A.D. 367), which was a current list of canonical books.
12. It was accepted as canonical by the early church councils of Laodicea (A.D. 372) and Carthage (A.D. 397).
13. It is interesting that other supposed writings of Peter (i.e. the Acts of Peter, the Acts of Andrew and Peter, the Acts of Peter and Paul, Passion of Peter and Paul, the Acts of Peter and the Twelve Apostles, the Apocalypse of Peter, and the Preaching of Peter) were all rejected by the early churches as spurious (i.e. non-inspired).

## III. DATE

- A. This depends on authorship.
- B. If one is convinced of Peter’s authorship then sometime before his death (cf. 1:14).
- C. Church tradition asserts that the Apostle Peter died in Rome while Nero was Caesar. Nero instituted persecution towards Christians in A.D. 64. He killed himself in A.D. 68.

- D. If a follower of Peter wrote in his name, then a date as late as A.D. 130-150 is probable because II Peter is quoted in the *Apocalypse of Peter* as well as *The Gospel of Truth* and *Apocryphon of John*.
- E. The renowned American archaeologist W. F. Albright asserts that it was written before A.D. 80 because of its similarities to the Dead Sea Scrolls.

#### IV. RECIPIENTS

- A. If I Peter is referred to in II Peter 3:1 then the recipients would be the same (i.e. northern Turkey).
- B. II Peter may be a testimonial to encourage all believers to persevere under trial, resist false teachers, and live faithfully in the gospel tradition in anticipation of the Second Coming.

#### V. EMPHASIS

- A. To combat heresy, probably incipient antinomian gnosticism (2:1-22; 3:15-18)
- B. To discuss the delayed second coming of Christ (3:3-4). At this time the False teachers and other sinners will be judged and God's children will be glorified.

#### VI. OCCASION

- A. As I Peter addresses persecution and suffering, II Peter addresses false teachers.
- B. The exact nature of the false teaching is uncertain, but it may be related to antinomian gnosticism (cf. 2:1-22; 3:15-18). This book uses technical vocabulary employed by both incipient gnosticism and the mystery religions. This may have been a purposeful apologetic technique attacking their theology.
- C. This book, like II Thessalonians, addresses the subject of a delayed, but certain, Second Coming, wherein God's children will be glorified and unbelievers judged (cf. 3:3-4). It is interesting that I Peter characteristically uses the term *apocalupsis* to refer to Jesus' return, while II Peter uses *parousia*. This possibly reflects the use of different scribes (i.e. Jerome).

#### VII. TERMS AND PHRASES TO BRIEFLY IDENTIFY

1. bond-servant, 1:1
2. divine power, 1:3
3. godliness, 1:3
4. "partakers of the divine nature," 1:4
5. "the eternal kingdom," 1:11
6. "the laying aside of my earthly dwelling is imminent," 1:14
7. "coming of our Lord Jesus Christ," 1:16
8. "we were eyewitness of His majesty," 1:16
9. "My Beloved Son," 1:17
10. "the morning star arises," 1:19
11. false prophets, 2:1
12. false teachers, 2:1

13. “angels when they sinned,” 2:4
14. hell (i.e. Tartarus), 2:4
15. “despise authority,” 2:10
16. “revile angelic majesties,” 2:10
17. “the holy commandment,” 2:21
18. “hastening the coming of the Lord,” 3:12
19. “new heavens and a new earth,” 3:13
20. “spotless and blameless,” 3:140

#### VIII. PERSONS TO BRIEFLY IDENTIFY

1. Noah, 2:5
2. Lot, 2:7
3. Balaam, 2:15

#### IX. MAP LOCATIONS TO PLOT — NONE

#### X. DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Is 1:1 calling Jesus God?
2. How does 1:10 relate to God’s sovereignty and human free will?
3. When did Jesus tell Peter about His death? (1:14)
4. List the ways that chapter 1 reflects Peter’s days with Jesus.
5. What great truth does 1:20-21 affirm?
6. List the characteristics of the false leaders in chapter 2.
7. Why is 2:1, “denying the Master who bought them,” so distressing?
8. Why is 2:8 surprising? (2:20)
9. Explain 2:20 in your own words.
10. What exactly are the false teachers asserting in 3:4?
11. Why is the earth said to be formed out of water? (3:5)
12. What is the implication of 3:8?
13. How is 3:9b related to I Tim. 2:4?
14. Where else in the Bible is the truth of 3:10 given?
15. Why is Peter’s mention of Paul so important?
16. What is the central theme of II Peter?

# INTRODUCTION TO I JOHN

## I. UNIQUENESS OF THE BOOK

- A. The book of I John is not a personal letter nor a letter written to one church as much as it is an “Impassioned Office Memo from Headquarters” (corporate letter).
1. It has no traditional introduction (from whom, to whom).
  2. It has no personal greetings or closing message.
- B. There is no mention made of personal names. This is highly unusual except in books written to many church, such as Ephesians and James. The only NT letter which does not include the name of the author is Hebrews. However, it is obvious that it was written to believers presently facing an internal church problem of false teachers.
- C. This letter is a powerful theological treatise
1. The centrality of Jesus
    - a. fully God and fully man
    - b. salvation comes by faith in Jesus Christ, not a mystical experience or secret knowledge (false teachers)
  2. The demand for a Christian lifestyle (three tests of genuine Christianity)
    - a. brotherly love
    - b. obedience
    - c. rejection of the fallen world system
  3. The assurance of eternal salvation through faith in Jesus of Nazareth (“know” used 27 times)
  4. How to recognize false teachers
- D. John’s writings (especially I John) are the least complicated Koine Greek of any NT writer, yet his books, as no other, plumb the depths of the profound and eternal truths of God in Jesus Christ (i.e. God is Light, 1:5; God is Love, 4:8,16; God is spirit, John 4:24).
- E. It is possible that I John was meant to be a cover letter for the Gospel of John. The gnostic heresy of the first century forms the background for both books. The Gospel has an evangelistic thrust, while I John is written for believers.
- The renowned commentator Westcott asserted that the Gospel affirms the deity of Jesus, while I John affirms His humanity. These books go together!
- F. John writes in black and white (dualistic) terms. This is characteristic of the Dead Sea Scrolls and the gnostic false teachers. I John’s structured literary dualism is both verbal (light versus dark) and stylistic (a negative statement followed by a positive one). This is different from the Gospel of John, which employs a vertical dualism (from above versus from below).
- G. It is very difficult to outline I John because of John’s recurrent use of themes. The book is like a tapestry of truths woven together in repeated patterns (cf. Bill Hendricks, *Tapestries of Truth, The Letters of John*).

## II. AUTHOR

- A. The authorship of I John is part of the debate over the authorship of the Johannine Corpus — the Gospel, I John, II John, III John and Revelation.
- B. There are two basic positions
  1. Traditional
    - a. Tradition was unanimous among the early Church fathers that John, the beloved Apostle, was the author of I John
    - b. Summary of early church evidence
      - (1) Clement of Rome (A.D. 90) makes allusions to I John
      - (2) Polycarp of Smyrna, *Philippians* 7 (A.D.. 110-140) quotes I John
      - (3) Justin Martyr's, *Dialogue* 123:9 (A.D. 150-160) quotes I John
      - (4) Allusions to I John are made in the writings of
        - (a) Ignatius of Antioch (date of his writings are uncertain but in early A.D. 100's)
        - (b) Papias of Hierapolis (born between A.D. 50-60 and martyred about A.D. 155)
      - (5) Irenaeus of Lyons (A.D. 130-202) attributes I John to the Apostle John. Tertullian, an early apologist who wrote 50 books against heretics, often quoted I John
      - (6) Other early writings which attribute authorship to John the Apostle are Clement, Origen and Dionysius all three of Alexandria, the Muratorian Fragment (A.D. 180-200) and Eusebius (third century).
      - (7) Jerome (second half of fourth century) affirmed John's authorship but admitted that it was denied by some in his day.
      - (8) Theodore of Mopsuestia, Bishop of Antioch from A.D. 392-428, denied John's authorship.
    - c. If John, what we do know about John the Apostle?
      - (1) He was the son of Zebedee and Salome
      - (2) He was a fisherman on the Sea of Galilee with his brother, James (possibly owned several boats)
      - (3) Some believe his mother was a sister of Mary, the mother of Jesus (cf. John 19:25; Mark 15:20)
      - (4) Apparently he was wealthy because he had:
        - (a) hired servants (cf. Mark 1:20)
        - (b) several boats
        - (c) a home in Jerusalem (cf. Matt. 20:20)
      - (5) John had access to the High Priest's home in Jerusalem, which shows he was a person of some renown (cf. John 18:15-16)
      - (6) It was John in whose care Mary, the mother of Jesus, was committed
    - d. Early Church tradition unanimously testified that John outlived all of the other Apostles, and after the death of Mary in Jerusalem he moved to Asia Minor and settled in Ephesus, the largest city in that area. From this city he was exiled to the Island of Patmos (just off the coast) and was later released and returned to Ephesus (Eusebius quotes Polycarp, Papias and Irenaeus).
  2. Modern Scholarship
    - a. The vast majority of modern scholars recognize the similarity among all of the Johannine writings, especially in phrasing, vocabulary, and grammatical forms. A good example of this is the stark contrast which characterized these writings: life versus death, truth



versus falsehood. This same stark dichotomy can be seen in other writings of the day; the Dead Sea Scrolls and incipient gnostic writings.

- b. There have been several theories about the inter-relationship between the five books traditionally ascribed to John. Some groups assert authorship to one person, two people, three people, and so on. It seems the most plausible position is that all of the Johannine writings are the result of the thoughts of one man, even if possibly penned by several of his disciples.
  - c. My personal belief is that John, the aged Apostle, wrote all five books toward the end of his ministry in Ephesus.
3. The issue of authorship is an issue of hermeneutics, not inspiration. Ultimately the author of Scripture is God!

### III. DATE—Obviously this is linked to authorship

- A. If John the Apostle wrote these letters, and especially I John, we are talking about some time during the close of the first century. This would give time for the development of the gnostic false theological/philosophical systems and also would fit into the terminology of I John (“little children”), which seems to imply an older man talking to a younger group of believers. Jerome says John lived 68 years after Jesus’ crucifixion. This seems to fit with this tradition.
- B. A.T. Robertson thinks I John was written between A.D. 85-95, while the Gospel was written by A.D. 95.
- C. *The New International Commentary Series on I John* by I. Howard Marshall asserts that a date between A.D. 60-100 is as close as modern scholarship would like to come to estimating the date of the Johannine writings.

### IV. RECIPIENTS

- A. Tradition asserts that this book was written to the Roman Province of Asia Minor (western Turkey), with Ephesus being its major metropolitan area.
- B. The letter seems to have been sent to a specific group of churches in Asia Minor which were experiencing a problem with false teachers (like Colossians and Ephesians), specifically (1) docetic gnostics who denied the humanity of Christ, but affirmed His deity and (2) antinomian gnostics who separated theology from ethics/morality.
- C. Augustine (fourth century A.D.) says it was written to the Parthians (Babylon). He is followed by Cassiodorus (early sixth century A.D.). This probably came from the confusion of the phrase “the elect lady”, and the phrase, “she who is in Babylon,” which are used in I Peter 5:13 and II John 1.
- D. The Muratorian Fragment, an early canonical list of NT books written between A.D. 180-200 in Rome, asserts that this letter was written “after the exhortation of his fellow disciples and bishops” (in Asia Minor).

### V. THE HERESY

- A. The letter itself is obviously a reaction against a type of false teaching (cf. “If we say. . .” 1:6ff and “he who says . . .” 2:9; 4:20 [diatribe]).

- B. We can learn some of the basic tenets of the heresy by internal evidence from I John.
  1. a denial of the incarnation of Jesus Christ
  2. a denial of the centrality of Jesus Christ in salvation
  3. a lack of an appropriate Christian lifestyle
  4. an emphasis on knowledge (often secret)
  5. a tendency toward exclusivism

C. The setting of the first century

The Roman world of the first century was a time of eclecticism between the Eastern and Western religions. The gods of the Greek and Roman pantheons were in ill repute. The Mystery religions were very popular because of their emphasis on personal relationship with the deity and secret knowledge. Secular Greek philosophy was popular and was merging with other world-views. Into this world of eclectic religion came the exclusiveness of the Christian faith (Jesus is the only way to God, cf. John 14:6). Whatever the exact background of the heresy, it was an attempt to make the seeming narrowness of Christianity plausible and intellectually acceptable to a wider Greek-Roman audience.

D. Possible options as to which group of gnostics John is addressing

1. Incipient gnosticism

- a. The basic teachings of incipient gnosticism of the first century seem to have been an emphasis on the ontological (eternal) dualism between spirit and matter. Spirit (High God) was considered good, while matter was inherently evil. This dichotomy resembles Platonism's ideal versus physical, heavenly versus earthly, invisible versus visible. There was also an overemphasis on the importance of secret knowledge (passwords or secret codes which allow a soul to pass through the angelic spheres [*aeons*] up to the high god) necessary for salvation.
  - b. There are two forms of incipient gnosticism which apparently could be in the background of I John
    - (1) Docetic gnosticism, which denies the true humanity of Jesus because matter is evil
    - (2) Cerinthian gnosticism, which identifies the Christ with one of many *aeons* or angelic levels between the good high god and evil matter. This "Christ Spirit" indwelt the man Jesus at his baptism and left him before his crucifixion.
    - (3) of these two groups some practiced asceticism (if the body wants it, it is evil), the other antinomianism (if the body wants it, give it). There is no written evidence of a developed system of gnosticism in the first century. It is not until the middle of the second century that documented evidence existed. For further information about "gnosticism" see
      - (a) *The Gnostic Religion* by Hans Jonas, published by Beacon Press
      - (b) *The Gnostic Gospels* by Elaine Pagels, published by Random House
      - (c) *The Nag Hammadi Gnostic Texts and the Bible* by Andrew Helmbold
2. Ignatius suggests another possible source of the heresy in his writings *to the Smyrnaeans* iv-v. They denied the incarnation of Jesus and lived antinomian lifestyles.
  3. Yet another less likely possibility of the source of the heresy is Meander of Antioch, who is known from the writings of Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* XXIII. He was a follower of Simon the Samaritan and an advocate of secret knowledge.

- E. The Heresy Today
  - 1. The spirit of this heresy is present with us today when people try to combine Christian truth with other systems of thought.
  - 2. The spirit of this heresy is present with us today when people emphasize “correct” doctrine to the exclusion of personal relationship and lifestyle faith.
  - 3. The spirit of this heresy is present with us today when people turn Christianity into an exclusive intellectual eliteness.
  - 4. The spirit of this heresy is present with us today when people turn to asceticism or antinomianism.

## VI. PURPOSE

- A. It has a practical focus for believers
  - 1. to give them joy (cf. 1:4)
  - 2. to encourage them to live godly lives (cf. 1:7; 2:1)
  - 3. to command them (and remind them) to love one another (cf. 4:7-21) and not the world (cf. 2:15-17).
  - 4. to give them assurance of their salvation in Christ (cf. 5:13)
- B. It has a doctrinal focus for believers
  - 1. refute the error of separating Jesus’ deity and humanity
  - 2. refute the error of separating spirituality into an intellectualism devoid of godly living
  - 3. refute the error that one can be saved in isolation from others

## VII. TERMS AND PHRASES TO BRIEFLY IDENTIFY

- 1. from the beginning, 1:1
- 2. Word of life, 1:1
- 3. eternal life, 1:2
- 4. fellowship (*koinōnia*), 1:3
- 5. God is light, 1:5
- 6. walk, 1:6, 7
- 7. the blood of Jesus, 1:7
- 8. my little children, 2:1
- 9. propitiation, 2:2; 4:10
- 10. know, 2:3, 4, 18, 20, 21, etc.
- 11. abides, 2:6, 17, 24, 25, 27, etc.
- 12. new commandment, 2:7
- 13. for His name’s sake, 2:12
- 14. the world, 2:15
- 15. the last hour. 2:18
- 16. anointing, 2:20, 27
- 17. confess, 2:23; 4:2, 3, 15, etc.
- 18. test the spirits, 4:1
- 19. the day of judgment, 4:17
- 20. "the Spirit and the water and the blood," 5:8
- 21. a sin leading to death, 5:16

22. born of God, 5:18
23. guard yourselves from idols, 5:21

#### VIII. PERSONS TO BRIEFLY IDENTIFY

1. Advocate, 2:1
2. liar, 2:4, 22
3. antichrist, 2:18; 4:3
4. antichrists, 2:18
5. those who are trying to deceive you, 2:26
6. devil, 3:8, 10
7. Cain, 3:12
8. the evil one, 5:18

#### IX. MAP LOCATIONS TO PLOT - None

#### X. DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Why does I John 1:1-4 use so many verbs reflecting the senses (i.e. heard, seen, beheld, handled, seen, heard)?
2. Why would someone say they have no sin? (1:8)
3. Why is 1:9 such an important verse? To whom is it speaking?
4. How do you relate 1:10 with 3:6 and 9?
5. How does 2:2 relate to John 3:16?
6. Why is the word “know” used so often in I John? Define its Hebrew connotation.
7. What does the recurrent phrase, “If we say. . .,” mean or imply?
8. Who are the false teachers John is confronting? Explain their beliefs which are contrary to biblical Christianity!
9. To what doctrine does 3:2 relate?
10. Why are 3:6 and 9 so hard to interpret?
11. How does 4:8 relate to fighting Christians?
12. The concept of the Trinity appears in 4:13-14. Explain this in your own words.
13. Explain 4:19 in your own words.
14. There are three tests in I John which assure believers that they are Christians. List the three tests.
15. Why is 5:13 such an important verse?
16. Does 5:14-15 promise believers that their prayers will always be answered positively?
17. What is a sin that leads to death? (5:16)
18. Does 5:18 promise believers that they will never be tried or tempted by Satan? Why or why not?
19. What does the phrase, “the whole world lies in the power of the evil one,” mean?

# INTRODUCTION TO II and III JOHN

## I. OPENING STATEMENTS

- A. This little letter is only entitled III John because it is slightly shorter than II John. I really think both II John and III John form a balanced message to a local church, probably somewhere in the Roman Province of Asia Minor, towards the end of the first century.
- B. II John deals with the problem of heretical, itinerant preachers, while III John deals with the admonition to help itinerant Christian preachers.
- C. There are three different men specifically named in III John:
  - 1. Gaius (a godly man in the recipient church)
    - a. There are three Gaius's mentioned in other parts of the Bible: Gaius of Macedonia, Acts 19:29; Gaius of Derbe, Acts 20:4; and Gaius of Corinth, Rom. 16:23; I Cor. 1:14.
    - b. The writings known as "Apostolic Constitutions" list the Gaius of III John as the Bishop of Pergamum, appointed by John.
  - 2. Diotrephes (a godless trouble-maker in the recipient church)
    - a. This is the only mention of this man in the NT. His name is a very rare name which means "nursed of Zeus." How ironic it is that man named after "Zeus" would be against travelers when "Zeus" was the "protector of travelers."
    - b. His attitude is exposed in verses 9-10.
  - 3. Demetrius (the bearer of John's letter to this local church)
    - a. Apparently he is one of the traveling missionaries and the bearer of the letter from the Apostle in Ephesus.
    - b. The tradition called "The Apostolic Constitutions" lists Demetrius as the Bishop of Philadelphia, who was appointed by the Apostle John.
- D. The early church struggled with how to evaluate and support traveling preachers, teachers, and evangelists. One early non-canonical Christian writing from the early second century called *The Didache* or *The Teaching of the Twelve Apostles* has these guidelines:

### CHAPTER XI—CONCERNING TEACHERS, APOSTLES, AND PROPHETS

"Whosoever, therefore, cometh and teacheth you all these things that have been said before, receive him. But if the teacher himself turn and teach another doctrine to the destruction of this, hear him not; but *if he teach* so as to increase righteousness and the knowledge of the Lord, receive him as the Lord. But concerning the apostles and prophets, according to the decree of the Gospel, thus do: Let every apostle that cometh to you be received as the Lord. But he shall not remain *except* one day; but if there be need, also the next; but if he remain three days, he is a false prophet. And when the apostle goeth away, let him take nothing but bread until he lodgeth; but if he ask money, he is a false prophet" (p. 380).

## CHAPTER XII—RECEPTION OF CHRISTIANS

“But whosoever saith in the Spirit, Give me money, or something else, ye shall not listen to him; but if he saith to you to give for other’s sake who are in need, let no one judge him.

But let every one that cometh in the name of the Lord be received, and afterward ye shall prove and know him; for ye shall have understanding right and left. If he who cometh is a wayfarer, assist him as far as ye are able; but he shall not remain with you, except for two or three days, if need be. But if he willeth to abide with you, being an artisan, let him work and eat; but if he hath no trade, according to your understanding see to it that, as a Christian, he shall not live with you idle. But if he willeth not so to do, he is a Christ-monger. Watch that ye keep aloof from such” (p. 381).

### II. TERMS AND PHRASES TO BRIEFLY IDENTIFY

1. “from the beginning,” 1:1
2. “God is Light,” 1:5
3. confess, 1:9
4. “my little children,” 2:1
5. advocate, 2:1
6. propitiation, 2:2
7. know, 2:3
8. “abides in Him,” 2:6
9. “do not love the world,” 2:15
10. “the last hour,” 2:18
11. the anointing, 2:27
12. “the Spirit and the water and the blood,” 5:8
13. “a sin leading to death,” 5:16
14. “guard yourselves from idols,” 5:21

### III. PERSONS TO BRIEFLY IDENTIFY

1. the Word of Life, 1:2
2. antichrist, 2:18 (II John v. 7)
3. antichrists, 2:18
4. the chosen lady, II John v. 1
5. her children, II John v. 1
6. “the children of your chosen sister,” II John v. 13
7. Gaius, III John v. 1
8. Diotrephes, v. 9
9. Demetrius, v. 12

### IV. MAP LOCATIONS TO PLOT — NONE

## V. DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Why does 1:1-5 have so many verbs that relate to the five senses?
2. Why would someone say they have no sin? (1:8)
3. How does 2:2 relate to John 3:16?
4. Explain 2:7-8 in your own words.
5. Does 2:12-14 relate to different age groups in the church or all Christians?
6. Explain 2:22-23 in light of gnostic theology.
7. What is the central truth of the paragraph, 2:28-3:3?
8. Why are 3:6 and 9 so hard to interpret?
9. How does 3:15 relate to the Sermon on the Mount?
10. Explain 3:20 in your own words.
11. How does one test the spirits? (4:1-6)
12. How does 4:2 relate to gnostic theology? (II John v. )
13. What is the central truth of 4:7-24?
14. How does 5:13 function as one of the themes of the whole book?
15. Does God answer all prayer? (5:14-15)
16. Is II John 10 referring to one's home or one's church? Why?
17. Is III John v. 2 a text that promises health and prosperity?

# INTRODUCTION TO JUDE

## I. OPENING STATEMENTS

- A. Jude is a frightening book about the recurrent danger of error, rebellion, and judgment. Believers must always be on guard. Their protection is
  - 1. the Father's call, love, and keeping power
  - 2. knowledge of the Scriptures, godly living, and mercy toward wounded fellow believers.
- B. Yet, even amidst the warnings, the conclusion of Jude is one of the strongest prayers of the affirmation of the keeping power of God.
- C. The relationship between Jude and II Peter is uncertain as to:
  - 1. which one was written first
  - 2. why they are so similar yet different
  - 3. how one describes a coming heresy and the other a present heresy
  - 4. whether there was an early church document from which both authors drew
  - 5. whether any of the examples of rebellion involved believers
- D. This book illustrates the theological balance between
  - 1. the keeping power of God (vv. 1,24)
  - 2. believers keeping themselves (v. 21)

## II. AUTHOR

- A. Jude (Hebrew, Judah, or Greek, Judas) characterizes himself by two designations
  - 1. "a bond-servant of Jesus Christ" - This is not exactly the same as Paul's usual designation, although they look the same in English. Paul always puts the noun "slave" first, followed by the GENITIVE descriptive phrase. This is also true of II Peter.  
However, the word order in Jude is the same as the word order in James (descriptive GENITIVE phrase first).
  - 2. "a brother of James" - There are many persons in the NT named James (Jacob), but the name by itself, without any description, reminds one of James 1:1. James, the half-brother of Jesus, was the leader of the Jerusalem church during Paul's missionary journeys (cf. Acts 15). It has been speculated that both half-brothers chose, out of humility, not to identify themselves as biologically related to Jesus.
- B. The simple opening reflects someone who was well-known and active (cf. I Cor. 9:3) in the early church, but about whom no information has survived. If someone writing at a later period wanted to write in the name of a famous person from the past (pseudography), Jude would not be a good candidate.
- C. The ancient tradition that Jude was a Hebrew Christian and half-brother of Jesus (cf. Matt. 13:55; Mark 6:3) rests on several assumptions
  - 1. a family relationship to James (cf. James 1:1)
  - 2. the extensive use of the OT



3. the characteristic Hebrew literary use of threes
    - a. three OT events of apostasy
    - b. three OT characters
    - c. opening greeting
      - (1) three verbs: “called,” “beloved,” “kept”
      - (2) three prayer requests: “mercy,” “peace,” “love”
- D. The Greek style and form of Jude is well-written Koine Greek. Jude must have had a cosmopolitan exposure (cf. I Cor. 9:5).  
As far as personality, he is much like James; he uses a no-nonsense, straight-forward approach to the mandate for godly living in this world of sin and rebellion.

### III. DATE

- A. There is no certainty, only speculation.
- B. Let us list some of the parameters
  1. during Jude’s lifetime if he was the younger brother of James and half-brother of Jesus
  2. the book of Jude’s literary relationship to II Peter. Of the twenty-five verses in Jude, sixteen (vv. 3-18) have some association with II Pet. 2:1-18. If Peter is the author of II Peter, then the date is close to his lifetime (he died in A.D. 64). It is, however, uncertain who quotes who:
    - a. II Peter quotes Jude
    - b. Jude quotes II Peter
    - c. both use early catachistic documents or church tradition
- C. The contents of the book imply a mid-first century date. Enough time had elapsed for heresy to develop. The physical presence of the Apostles had just passed (vv. 18-19). However, a uniform doctrine had not developed. Jude mentions the moral problems of the false teachers, but does not discuss the doctrinal errors. He uses OT examples, not Jesus’ teachings (quotes or stories).
- D. In *Historical Ecclesiasticus* III:19:1-20:6, Eusebius mentions a tradition.
  1. that Jude’s grandsons were taken to Rome to face Domitian on charges of treason
  2. that they were descendants of Jewish royalty
  3. that they were relatives of Jesus of Nazareth
 Domitian reigned from A.D. 81-96.
- E. A date from the 60's to the 80's is possible.

### IV. RECIPIENTS AND OCCASION

- A. The early church was not theologically monolithic; even the Apostles emphasized different aspects of the gospel. As the Apostles began to die (or at least were too few and too far away to be consulted) and the Second Coming continued to be delayed, the early church faced the challenge of “standardizing” acceptable parameters for gospel teachings. The OT, the words and stories of Jesus, and the preaching of the Apostles became the standards.

B. Jude was written in a day of flux and disruption of clear authority. The believers (whether a local church or geographical area is uncertain) were facing massive invasion of error through speculative theology/philosophy. What is known of the heresy:

1. the heretics were part of the church meetings (“love feasts” cf. v. 12)
2. the heretics were immoral, manipulative teachers who were causing divisions among God’s people (cf. v. 19)
3. the heretics seem to have used or discussed “angels” in their theology
4. the heretics seem to have emphasized “knowledge” (*gnosis*)

If one is familiar with the Greco-Roman world of the first and second centuries, these characteristics imply the philosophical/theological movement known as “Gnosticism.” It is surely true that the origins of these specific second century heretics were a common element of much near-eastern thought. Elements of the dualism so characteristic of Gnosticism is present in the Dead Sea Scrolls. Many of the NT books (Eph. - Col, the Pastorals, I, II John) were written to combat a similar type of false teaching/teachers.

## V. PURPOSE

- A. The author desired to write about their common salvation (cf. v. 3).
- B. The invasion of false teachings and teachers into the inner fellowship times of the church (cf. v. 12) caused the author to address the burning issue of “the faith once and for all given to the church” (cf. vv. 3,20). His goal was orthodoxy, but he approached the subject through godly living (orthopraxy), not doctrine (very similar to James 2:14-24). How people lived was a clear window into their theology.
- C. The author wants to encourage believers to
  1. grow spiritually (cf. v. 20)
  2. be assured of salvation (cf. vv. 21,24-25)
  3. help the fallen (cf. vv. 22-23)

## VI. CANONIZATION

- A. This book was initially accepted (cf. quote by Clement of Rome about A.D. 94), then later disputed and finally fully accepted (Council of Nicea, A.D. 325 and Carthage, A.D. 397).
- B. Its major problem in acquiring canonical status was its quote of non-canonical books (I Enoch and the Assumption of Moses). These books, especially I Enoch, circulated widely among the believers of the first century and were theologically influential.
  1. Why is this a problem? Does it imply that the non-canonical books are authoritative?
    - a. the OT quotes non-inspired writing (cf. Num. 21:14-15,26-30 [Balaam’s prophecies in Num. 22-23]; Josh. 10:13; II Sam. 1:18ff; I Kgs. 11:41; 14:19,29; 15:7,23,31)
    - b. Jesus used non-canonical sources as illustrative material (cf. Matt. 23:35)
    - c. Stephen used non-canonical sources (cf. Acts 7:4,14-16)
    - d. Paul often used non-canonical sources
      - (1) Rabbinic Midrash concerning Christ as a rock that followed the children of Israel during the wilderness wandering period (cf. I Cor. 10:4)
      - (2) the names of Pharaoh’s magicians from Exod. 7:11,22; 8:7 (cf. II Tim. 3:8) were taken from some intertestamental Jewish writings

- (3) Greek writers
      - a) the poet Aratus (Acts 17:28)
      - b) the poet Menander (I Cor. 15:33)
      - c) the poet Epimenides or Euripes (Titus 1:12)
    - e. James used rabbinical tradition in James 5:17
    - f. John used the mythology of near eastern cosmologies in Rev. 12:3
  - 2. Why did Jude use these non-canonical sources?
    - a. possibly they were freely used by the false teachers
    - b. possibly they were respected and read by the recipients
- C. Support for Jude's canonicity is supported by
  - 1. quoted or alluded to by
    - a. Clement of Rome (A.D. 94-97)
    - b. Polycarp (A.D. 110-50)
    - c. Irenaeus (A.D. 130-202)
    - d. Tertullian (A.D. 150-220)
    - e. Athenagoras (A.D. 177)
    - f. Origen (A.D. 185-254)

(These are taken from International Critical Commentary, pp. 305-308)
  - 2. named in
    - a. Clement of Alexandria (A.D. 150-215)
    - b. Cyril of Jerusalem (A.D. 315-386)
    - c. Jerome (A.D. 340-420)
    - d. Augustine (A.D. 400)
  - 3. listed in the canonical lists of
    - a. Muratorian fragment (A.D. 200)
    - b. Barococcio (A.D. 206)
    - c. Athanasius (A.D. 367)
  - 4. affirmed by Councils
    - a. Nicea (A.D. 325)
    - b. Hippo (A.D. 393)
    - c. Carthage (A.D. 397 and 419)
  - 5. present in the translations of
    - a. Old Latin (A.D. 150-170)
    - b. Syriac Revision, the Peshitta (5<sup>th</sup> Century A.D.)
- D. The later church was unsure of Jude's canonical (inspired) status. Eusebius listed it among the disputed books (*Hist. Eccl.* III:25). Both Chrysostom and Jerome mention Jude's quoting from non-canonical sources as the reason it is disputed by some as canonical. It was rejected by the early Syrian church along with II Peter, II and III John. This is probably because it was this area of the Empire which was affected by Gnostic use of Jewish angeology. Therefore, Jude and I Peter added fuel to the false teachers' arguments.
- E. Just a word about I Enoch. It was originally written in Hebrew (but is now lost except for fragments in Aramaic among the Dead Sea Scrolls), translated into Greek (only fragments survive) and by A.D. 600 copied into Ethiopian (one copy survives). The book was written in the inter-biblical period, but was edited many times, as the Ethiopian copy shows. It was very influential in the early church; Tertullian quotes it as Scripture. It was cited in the Epistle of Barnabas (as

Scripture) and by Irenaeus and Clement of Alexandria. It had lost favor in the early church by the fourth century.

#### VII. TERMS AND PHRASES TO BRIEFLY IDENTIFY

1. "our common salvation," v. 3
2. "the faith which was once and for all handed down to the saints," v. 3
3. licentiousness, v. 4
4. "their proper abode," v. 6
5. "eternal bonds under darkness," v. 6
6. "strange flesh," v. 7
7. "eternal fire," v. 7
8. love feasts, v. 12
9. holy ones, v. 14
10. "praying in the Holy Spirit," v. 20
11. "the only God," v. 25

#### VIII. PERSONS TO BRIEFLY IDENTIFY

1. "certain persons have crept in," v. 4
2. "angels who did not keep their own domain," v. 6
3. Michael, v. 9
4. Balaam, v. 11
5. Korah, v. 11
6. Enoch, v. 14
7. "to Him who is able," v. 24

#### IX. MAP LOCATIONS TO PLOT

1. Egypt, v. 5
2. Sodom and Gomorrah, v. 7

#### X. DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. To what kind of false teachers is Jude referring? (cf. 8-13)
2. Why does Jude quote non-canonical books? (vv. 9, 14-15)
3. How does one keep himself in the love of God? (v. 21)
4. What is the central theme of Jude?
5. How is Jude related to II Peter?

# INTRODUCTION TO OT PROPHECY

## I. INTRODUCTION

### A. Opening Statements

1. The believing community does not agree on how to interpret prophecy. Other truths have been established as to an orthodox position throughout the centuries, but not this one.
2. There are several well defined stages of OT prophecy
  - a. premonarchial (before King Saul)
    - (1) individuals called prophets
      - a) Abraham - Gen. 20:7
      - b) Moses - Num. 12:6-8; Deut. 18:15; 34:10
      - c) Aaron - Exod. 7:1 (spokesman for Moses)
      - d) Miriam - Exod. 15:20
      - e) Medad and Eldad - Num. 11:24-30
      - f) Deborah - Judg. 4:4
      - g) unnamed - Judg. 6:7-10
      - h) Samuel - I Sam. 3:20
    - (2) references to prophets as a group - Deut. 13:1-5; 18:20-22
    - (3) prophetic groups or guilds - I Sam. 10:5-13; 19:20; I Kgs. 20:35,41; 22:6,10-13; II Kgs. 2:3,7; 4:1,38; 5:22; 6:1, etc.
    - (4) Messiah called prophet - Deut. 18:15-18
  - b. non-writing monarchial prophets (they address the king)
    - (1) Gad - I Sam. 7:2; 12:25; II Sam. 24:11; I Chron. 29:29
    - (2) Nathan - II Sam. 7:2; 12:25; I Kgs. 1:22
    - (3) Ahijah - I Kgs. 11:29
    - (4) Jehu - I Kgs. 16:1,7,12
    - (5) unnamed - I Kgs. 18:4,13; 20:13,22
    - (6) Elijah - I Kgs. 18; II Kgs. 2
    - (7) Milcaiah - I Kgs. 22
    - (8) Elisha - II Kgs. 2:8,13
  - c. classical writing prophets (they address the nation as well as the king): Isaiah—Malachi (except Daniel)

### B. Biblical Terms

1. *ro'eh* = seer, I Sam. 9:9. This reference shows the transition to the term *Nabi*, which means “prophet” and comes from the root, “to call.” *Ro'eh* is from the general Hebrew term “to see.” This person understood God’s ways and plans and was consulted to ascertain God’s will in a matter.
2. *hozeh* = seer, II Sam. 24:11. It is basically a synonym of *ro'eh*. It is from a rarer Hebrew term “to see.” The participle form is used most often to refer to prophets.
3. *nabi'* = prophet, cognate of Akkadian verb *nabu* = “to call” and Arabic *naba'a* = “to announce.” This is the most common OT term to designate a prophet. It is used over 300 times. The exact etymology is uncertain, but “to call” at present seems the best option. Possibly the best understanding comes from YHWH’s description of Moses’ relationship to Pharaoh through Aaron (cf. Exod. 4:10-16; 7:1; Deut. 5:5). A prophet is someone who speaks for God to His people (cf. Amos 3:8; Jer. 1:7,17; Ezek. 3:4).

4. All three terms are used of the prophet's office in I Chron. 29:29; Samuel - *Ro'eh*; Nathan - *Nabi*'; and Gad - *Hozeh*.
5. The phrase *ish ha - 'elohim*, "man of God," is also a broader designation for a speaker for God. It is used some 76 times in the OT in the sense of "prophet."
6. The word "prophet" is Greek in origin. It comes from (1) pro = "before" or "for"; (2) phemi = "to speak."

## II. DEFINITION OF PROPHECY

- A. The term "prophecy" had a wider semantic field in Hebrew than in English. The Jews labeled the history books of Joshua through Kings (except Ruth) "the former prophets." Both Abraham (Gen. 20:7; Ps. 105:5) and Moses (Deut. 18:18) are designated as prophets (also Miriam, Exod. 15:20). Therefore, beware of an assumed English definition!
- B. "Propheticism may legitimately be defined as that understanding of history which accepts meaning only in terms of divine concern, divine purpose, divine participation" (*Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible*, vol. 3, p. 896).
- C. "The prophet is neither a philosopher nor a systematic theologian, but a covenant mediator who delivers the word of God to His people in order to shape their future by reforming their present" ("Prophets and Prophecy," *Encyclopedia Judaica*, vol. 13, p. 1152).

## III. PURPOSE OF PROPHECY

- A. Prophecy is a way for God to speak to His people, providing guidance in their current setting and hope in His control of their lives and world events. Their message was basically corporate. It is meant to rebuke, encourage, engender faith and repentance, and inform God's people about Himself and His plans. Often it is used to clearly reveal God's choice of a spokesman (Deut. 13:1-3; 18:20-22). This, taken ultimately, would refer to the Messiah.
- B. Often, the prophet took a historical or theological crisis of his day and projected it into an eschatological setting. This end-time view of history (teleological) is unique to Israel and her sense of divine election and covenant promises.
- C. The office of prophet seems to balance (Jer. 18:18) and supplant the office of High Priest as a way of knowing God's will. The Urim and Thummim transcend into a verbal message from God's spokesman. The office of prophet seems to also have passed away in Israel after Malachi. It does not appear until 400 years later with John the Baptist. It is uncertain how the New Testament gift of "prophecy" relates to the OT. New Testament prophets (Acts 11:27-28; 13:1; 14:29,32,37; 15:32; I Cor. 12:10,28-29; Eph. 4:11) are not revealers of new revelation, but forth-tellers and fore-tellers of God's will in covenant situations.
- D. Prophecy is not exclusively or primarily predictive in nature. Prediction is one way to confirm his office and his message, but it must be noted "... less than 2% of OT prophecy is Messianic. Less than 5% specifically describes the New Covenant Age. Less than 1% concerns events yet to come" (Fee & Stuart, *How To Read The Bible For All It Is Worth*, p. 166).

- E. Prophets represent God to the people, while Priests represent the people to God. This is a general statement. There are exceptions like Habakkuk, who addresses questions to God.
- F. One reason it is difficult to understand the prophets is because we do not know how their books were structured. They are not chronological. They seem to be thematic, but not always the way one would expect. Often there is no obvious historical setting, time-frame, or clear division between oracles, it is difficult (1) to read the books through in one sitting; (2) to outline them by topic; and (3) to ascertain the central truth or authorial intent in each oracle.

#### IV. CHARACTERISTICS OF PROPHECY

- A. In the Old Testament there seems to be a development of the concept of “prophet” and “prophecy.” In early Israel there developed a fellowship of prophets, led by a strong charismatic leader such as Elijah or Elisha. Sometimes the phrase “the sons of the prophets” was used to designate this group (II Kgs. 2). The prophets at times were characterized by forms of ecstasy (I Sam. 10:10-13; 19:18-24).
- B. However, this period passed rapidly into the time of individual prophets. There were those prophets (both true and false) who identified with the King, and lived at the palace (Gad, Nathan). Also, there were those who were independent, sometimes totally unconnected with the status quo of Israelite society (Amos). They are both male and female (II Kgs. 22:14).
- C. The prophet was often a revealer of the future, conditioned on man’s immediate response. Often the prophet’s task was to unfold God’s universal plan for His creation which is not affected by human response. This universal eschatological plan is unique among the prophets of the Ancient Near East. Prediction and Covenant fidelity are twin foci of the prophetic messages (cf. Fee and Stuart, p. 150). This implies that the prophets were primarily corporate in focus. They usually, but not exclusively, address the nation.
- D. Most prophetic material was presented orally. It was later combined by means of theme or chronology, or other patterns of Near Eastern literature, which are lost to us. Because it was oral, it is not as structured as written prose. This makes the books difficult to read straight through and difficult to understand without a specific historical setting.
- E. The prophets use several patterns to convey their messages
  1. Court scene - God takes His people to court; often it is a divorce case where YHWH rejects his wife (Israel) for her unfaithfulness (Hosea 4; Micah 6).
  2. Funeral dirge - the special meter of this type of message and its characteristic “woe” sets it apart as a special form (Isaiah 5; Habakkuk 2).
  3. Covenant blessing pronouncement - the conditional nature of the Covenant is emphasized and the consequences, both positively and negatively, are spelled out for the future (Deuteronomy 27-28).

#### V. BIBLICAL QUALIFICATIONS FOR VERIFICATION OF A TRUE PROPHET

- A. Deuteronomy 13:1-5 (predictions/signs)
- B. Deuteronomy 18:9-22 (false prophets/true prophets)

- C. Both men and women are called and designated as prophets or prophetesses
  1. Miriam - Exodus 15
  2. Deborah - Judges 4:4-6
  3. Huldah - II Kings 22:14-20; II Chronicles 34:22-28

In the surrounding cultures prophets were verified by means of divination. In Israel they were verified by

1. a theological test - the use of the name of YHWH
2. a historical test - accurate predictions

## VI. HELPFUL GUIDELINES FOR INTERPRETING PROPHECY

- A. Find the intent of the original prophet (editor) by noting the historical setting and the literary context of each oracle. Usually it will involve Israel breaking the Mosaic Covenant in some way.
- B. Read and interpret the whole oracle, not just a part; outline it as to content. See how it relates to surrounding oracles. Try to outline the whole book (by literary units and to paragraph level).
- C. Assume a literal interpretation of the passage until something in the text itself points you to figurative usage; then put the figurative language into prose.
- D. Analyze symbolic action in light of historical setting and parallel passages. Be sure to remember that this is ancient near eastern literature, not western or modern literature.
- E. Treat predictions with care
  1. Are they exclusively for the author's day?
  2. Were they subsequently fulfilled in Israel's history?
  3. Are they yet future events?
  4. Do they have a contemporary fulfillment and yet a future fulfillment?
  5. Allow the authors of the Bible, not modern authors, to guide your answers.

Special concerns

  1. Is the prediction qualified by conditional response?
  2. Is it certain to whom the prophecy is addressed (and why)?
  3. Is there a possibility both biblically and/or historically for multiple fulfillments?
  4. The NT authors under inspiration were able to see the Messiah in many places in the OT that are not obvious to us. They seem to use typology or word play. Since we are not inspired, we best leave this approach to them.

## VII. HELPFUL BOOKS

- A. *A Guide to Biblical Prophecy* by Carl E. Armerding and W. Ward Gasque
- B. *How to Read the Bible for All Its Worth* by Gordon Fee and Douglas Stuart
- C. *My Servants the Prophets* by Edward J. Young
- D. *Plowshares and Pruning Hooks: Rethinking the Language of Biblical Prophecy and Apocalyptic* by D. Brent Sandy
- E. *Cracking the Old Testament Code*, D. Brent Sandy and Ronald L. Giese, Jr.



# **CRUCIAL INTRODUCTORY ARTICLE - REVELATION**

## **(Why Do Christians Have So Many Dogmatic Interpretations of Revelation)**

Through the years of my study of eschatology I have learned that most Christians do not have or want a developed, systematized, end-time chronology. There are some Christians who focus or major on this area of Christianity for theological, psychological, or denominational reasons. These Christians seem to become obsessed with how it will all end, and somehow miss the urgency of the gospel! Believers cannot affect God's eschatological (end-time) agenda, but they can participate in the gospel mandate (cf. Matt. 28:19-20; Luke 24:47; Acts 1:8). Most believers affirm a Second Coming of Christ and an end-time culmination of the promises of God. The interpretive problems arising from how to understand this temporal culmination come from several biblical paradoxes.

1. the tension between Old Covenant prophetic models and New Covenant apostolic models
2. the tension between the Bible's monotheism (one God for all) and the election of Israel (a special people)
3. the tension between the conditional aspect of biblical covenants and promises ("if. . .then") and the unconditional faithfulness of God to fallen mankind's redemption
4. the tension between Near Eastern literary genres and modern western literary models
5. the tension between the Kingdom of God as present, yet future.
6. the tension between belief in the imminent return of Christ and the belief that some events must happen first.

Let us discuss these tensions one at a time.

### **FIRST TENSION (OT racial, national, and geographical categories vs. all believers over all the world)**

The OT prophets predict a restoration of a Jewish kingdom in Palestine centered in Jerusalem where all the nations of the earth gather to praise and serve a Davidic ruler, but Jesus nor the NT Apostles ever focus on this agenda. Is not the OT inspired (cf. Matt. 5:17-19)? Have the NT authors omitted crucial end-time events?

There are several sources of information about the end of the world:

1. OT prophets (Isaiah, Micah, Malachi)
2. OT apocalyptic writers (cf. Ezek. 37-39; Dan. 7-12; Zech.)
3. intertestamental, non-canonical Jewish apocalyptic writers (like I Enoch, which is alluded to in Jude)
4. Jesus Himself (cf. Matt. 24; Mark 13; Luke 21)
5. the writings of Paul (cf. I Cor. 15; II Cor. 5; I Thess. 4-5; II Thess. 2)
6. the writings of John (I John and Revelation).

Do these all clearly teach an end-time agenda (events, chronology, persons)? If not, why? Are they not all inspired (except the Jewish intertestamental writings)?

The Spirit revealed truths to the OT writers in terms and categories they could understand. However, through progressive revelation the Spirit has expanded these OT eschatological concepts to a universal scope ("the mystery of Christ," cf. Eph. 2:11-3:13. See Special topic at 10:7). Here are some relevant examples:

1. The city of Jerusalem in the OT is used as a metaphor of the people of God (Zion), but is projected into the NT as a term expressing God's acceptance of all repentant, believing humans (the new Jerusalem of Revelation 21-22). The theological expansion of a literal, physical city into the new people of God (believing Jews and Gentiles) is foreshadowed in God's promise to redeem fallen mankind in Gen. 3:15 before there even were any Jews or a Jewish capital city. Even Abraham's call (cf. Gen. 12:1-3) involved the Gentiles (cf. Gen. 12:3; Exod. 19:5).

2. In the OT the enemies of God's people are the surrounding nations of the Ancient Near East, but in the NT they have been expanded to all unbelieving, anti-God, Satanically-inspired people. The battle has moved from a geographical, regional conflict to a worldwide, cosmic conflict (cf. Colossians).
3. The promise of a land which is so integral in the OT (the Patriarchal promises of Genesis, cf. Gen. 12:7; 13:15; 15:7-15; 17:8) has now become the whole earth. New Jerusalem comes down to a recreated earth, not the Near East only or exclusively (cf. Rev. 21-22).
4. Some other examples of OT prophetic concepts being expanded are (1) the seed of Abraham is now the spiritually circumcised (cf. Rom. 2:28-29); (2) the covenant people now include Gentiles (cf. Hos. 1:10; 2:23, quoted in Rom. 9:24-26; also Lev. 26:12; Exod. 29:45, quoted in II Cor. 6:16-18 and Exod. 19:5; Deut. 14:2, quoted in Titus 2:14); (3) the temple is now Jesus and through Him the local church (cf. I Cor. 3:16) or the individual believer (cf. I Cor. 6:19); and (4) even Israel and its characteristic descriptive OT phrases now refer to the whole people of God (i.e. "Israel," cf. Rom. 9:6; Gal. 6:16, i.e. "kingdom of priests," cf. I Pet. 2:5, 9-10; Rev. 1:6)

The prophetic model has been fulfilled, expanded, and is now more inclusive. Jesus and the Apostolic writers do not present the end-time in the same way as the OT prophets (cf. Martin Wyngaarden, *The Future of The Kingdom in Prophecy and Fulfillment*). Modern interpreters who try to make the OT model literal or normative twist the Revelation into a very Jewish book and force meaning into atomized, ambiguous phrases of Jesus and Paul! The NT writers do not negate the OT prophets, but show their ultimate universal implication. There is no organized, logical system to Jesus' or Paul's eschatology. Their purpose is primarily redemptive or pastoral.

However, even within the NT there is tension. There is no clear systemization of eschatological events. In many ways the Revelation surprisingly uses OT allusions in describing the end instead of the teachings of Jesus (cf. Matt. 24; Mark 13)! It follows the literary genre initiated by Ezekiel, Daniel, and Zechariah, but developed during the intertestamental period (Jewish apocalyptic literature). This may have been John's way of linking the Old and New Covenants. It shows the age-old pattern of human rebellion and God's commitment to redemption! But it must be noted that although Revelation uses OT language, persons, and events, it reinterprets them in light of first century Rome.

## **SECOND TENSION (monotheism vs. an elect people)**

The biblical emphasis is on one personal, spiritual, creator-redeemer, God (cf. Exod. 8:10; Isa. 44:24; 45:5-7,14,18,21-22; 46:9; Jer. 10:6-7). The OT's uniqueness in its own day was its monotheism. All of the surrounding nations were polytheists. The oneness of God is the heart of OT revelation (cf. Deut. 6:4). Creation is a stage for the purpose of fellowship between God and mankind, made in His image and likeness (cf. Gen.1:26-27). However, mankind rebelled, sinning against God's love, leadership, and purpose (cf. Gen. 3). God's love and purpose was so strong and sure that He promised to redeem fallen humanity (cf. Gen. 3:15)!

The tension arises when God chooses to use one man, one family, one nation to reach the rest of mankind. God's election of Abraham and the Jews as a kingdom of priests (cf. Exod. 19:4-6) caused pride instead of service, exclusion instead of inclusion. God's call of Abraham involved the intentional blessing of all mankind (cf. Gen. 12:3). It must be remembered and emphasized that OT election was for service, not salvation. All Israel was never right with God, never eternally saved based solely on her birthright (cf. John 8:31-59; Matt. 3:9), but by personal faith and obedience (cf. Gen. 15:6, quoted in Rom. 4). Israel lost her mission, turned mandate into privilege, service into a special standing! God chose one to choose all!

### **THIRD TENSION** (conventional covenants vs. unconditional covenants)

There is a theological tension or paradox between conditional and unconditional covenants. It is surely true that God's redemptive purpose/plan is unconditional (cf. Gen. 15:12-21). However, the mandated human response is always conditional!

The "if...then" pattern appears in both OT and NT. God is faithful; mankind is unfaithful. This tension has caused much confusion. Interpreters have tended to focus on only one "horn of the dilemma," God's faithfulness or human effort, God's sovereignty or mankind's free will. Both are biblical and necessary.

This relates to eschatology, to God's OT promises to Israel. If God promises it, that settles it, yes? God is bound to His promises; His reputation is involved (cf. Ezek. 36:22-38). The unconditional and conditional covenants meet in Christ (cf. Isa. 53), not Israel! God's ultimate faithfulness lies in the redemption of all who will repent and believe, not in who was your father/mother! Christ, not Israel, is the key to all of God's covenants and promises. If there is a theological parenthesis in the Bible, it is not the Church, but Israel (cf. Acts 7 and Gal. 3).

The world mission of gospel proclamation has passed to the Church (cf. Matt. 28:19-20; Luke 24:47; Acts 1:8). It is still a conditional covenant! This is not to imply that God has totally rejected the Jews (cf. Rom. 9-11). There may be a place and purpose for end-time, believing Israel (cf. Zech. 12:10).

### **FOURTH TENSION** (Near Eastern literary models vs. western models).

Genre is a critical element in correctly interpreting the Bible. The Church developed in a western (Greek) cultural setting. Eastern literature is much more figurative, metaphorical, and symbolic than modern, western culture's literary models. It focuses on people, encounters, and events more than societal propositional truths. Christians have been guilty of using their history and literary models to interpret biblical prophecy (both OT and NT). Each generation and geographical entity has used its culture, history, and literalness to interpret Revelation. Every one of them has been wrong! It is arrogant to think that modern western culture is the focus of biblical prophecy!

The genre in which the original, inspired author chooses to write is a literary contract with the reader. The book of Revelation is not historical narrative. It is a combination of letter (chapters 1-3), prophecy, and mostly apocalyptic literature. It is as wrong to make the Bible say more than was intended by the original author or to make it say less than what he intended! Interpreters' arrogance and dogmatism are even more inappropriate in a book like Revelation.

The Church has never agreed on a proper interpretation. My concern is to hear and deal with the whole Bible, not some selected part(s). The Bible's eastern mind-set presents truth in tension-filled pairs. Our western trend toward propositional truth is not invalid, but unbalanced! I think it is possible to remove at least some of the impasse in interpreting Revelation by noting its changing purpose to successive generations of believers. It is obvious to most interpreters that Revelation must be interpreted in light of its own day and its genre. An historical approach to Revelation must deal with what the first readers would have, and could have, understood. In many ways modern interpreters have lost the meaning of many of the symbols of the book. Revelation's initial main thrust was to encourage persecuted believers. It showed God's control of history (as did the OT prophets); it affirmed that history is moving toward an appointed terminus, judgment or blessing (as did the OT prophets). It affirmed in first century Jewish apocalyptic terms God's love, presence, power, and sovereignty!

It functions in these same theological ways to every generation of believers. It depicts the cosmic struggle of good and evil. The first century details may have been lost to us, but not the powerful, comforting truths. When modern, western interpreters try to force the details of Revelation into their contemporary history, the pattern of false interpretations continues!

It is quite possible that the details of the book may become strikingly literal again (as did the OT in relation to the birth, life, and death of Christ) for the last generation of believers as they face the onslaught of an anti-God leader (cf. II Thess.2) and culture. No one can know these literal fulfillments of the

Revelation until the words of Jesus (cf. Matt. 24; Mark.13; and Luke 21) and Paul (cf. I Cor. 15; I Thess. 4-5; and II Thess. 2) also become historically evident. Guessing, speculation, and dogmatism are all inappropriate. Apocalyptic literature allows this flexibility. Thank God for images and symbols that surpass historical narrative! God is in control; He reigns; He comes!

Most modern commentaries miss the point of the genre! Modern western interpreters often seek a clear, logical system of theology rather than being fair with an ambiguous, symbolic, dramatic genre of Jewish apocalyptic literature. This truth is expressed well by Ralph P. Martin in his article, "Approaches to New Testament Exegesis," in the book *New Testament Interpretation*, edited by I. Howard Marshall:

"Unless we recognize the dramatic quality of this writing and recall the way in which language is being used as a vehicle to express religious truth, we shall grievously err in our understanding of the Apocalypse, and mistakenly try to interpret its visions as though it were a book of literal prose and concerned to describe events of empirical and datable history. To attempt the latter course is to run into all manner of problems of interpretation. More seriously it leads to a distortion of the essential meaning of apocalyptic and so misses the great value of this part of the New Testament as a dramatic assertion in mythopoetic language of the sovereignty of God in Christ and the paradox of his rule which blends might and love (cf. 5:5,6; the Lion is the Lamb)" (p. 235).

W. Randolph Tate in his book *Biblical Interpretations* said:

"No other genre of the Bible has been so fervently read with such depressing results as apocalypse, especially the books of Daniel and Revelation. This genre had suffered from a disastrous history of misinterpretation due to a fundamental misunderstanding of its literary forms, structure, and purpose. Because of its very claim to reveal what is shortly to happen, apocalypse has been viewed as a road map into and a blueprint of the future. The tragic flaw in this view is the assumption that the books' frame of reference is the reader's contemporary age rather than the author's. This misguided approach to apocalypse (particularly Revelation) treats the work as if it were a cryptogram by which contemporary events can be used to interpret the symbol of the text. . . First, the interpreter must recognize that apocalyptic communicates its messages through symbolism. To interpret a symbol literally when it is metaphoric is simply to misinterpret. The issue is not whether the events in apocalyptic are historical. The events may be historical; they may have really happened, or might happen, but the author presents events and communicates meaning through images and archetypes" (p. 137).

From *Dictionary of Biblical Imagery*, edited by Ryken, Wilhost and Longman III:

"Today's readers are often puzzled and frustrated by this genre. The unexpected imagery and out-of-this-world experiences seem bizarre and out of sync with most of Scripture. Taking this literature at face value leaves many readers scrambling to determine 'what will happen when,' thus missing the intent of the apocalyptic message" (p. 35).

### **FIFTH TENSION** (the Kingdom of God as present yet future)

The kingdom of God is both present, yet future. This theological paradox becomes focused at the point of eschatology. If one expects a literal fulfillment of all OT prophecies to Israel then the Kingdom becomes mostly a restoration of Israel to a geographical locality and a theological pre-eminence! This would necessitate that the Church is secretly raptured out at chapter 5 and the remaining chapters relate to Israel.

However, if the focus is on the kingdom being inaugurated by the promised OT Messiah, then it is present with Christ's first coming, then the focus becomes the incarnation, life, teachings, death, and resurrection of Christ. The theological emphasis is on a current salvation. The kingdom has come, the OT is fulfilled in Christ's offer of salvation to all, not His millennial reign over some!

It is surely true that the Bible speaks of both of Christ's comings, but where is the emphasis to be placed? It seems to me that most OT prophecies focus on the first coming, the establishment of the

Messianic kingdom (cf. Dan. 2). In many ways this is analogous to the eternal reign of God (cf. Dan. 7). In the OT the focus is on the eternal reign of God, yet the mechanism for that reign's manifestation is the ministry of the Messiah (cf. I Cor. 15:26-27). It is not a question of which is true; both are true, but where is the emphasis? It must be said that some interpreters become so focused on the millennial reign of the Messiah (cf. Rev. 20) that they have missed the biblical focus on the eternal reign of the Father. Christ's reign is a preliminary event. As the two comings of Christ were not obvious in the OT, neither is a temporal reign of the Messiah!

The key to Jesus' preaching and teaching is the kingdom of God. It is both present (in salvation and service), and future (in pervasiveness and power). Revelation, if it focuses on a Messianic millennial reign (cf. Rev. 20), is preliminary, not ultimate (cf. Rev. 21-22). It is not obvious from the OT that a temporal reign is necessary; as a matter of fact, the Messianic reign of Daniel 7 is eternal, not millennial.

### **SIXTH TENSION (imminent return of Christ vs. the delayed *Parousia*)**

Most believers have been taught that Jesus is coming soon, suddenly, and unexpectedly (cf. Matt. 10:23; 24:27,34,44; Mark 9:1; 13:30). But every expectant generation of believers so far has been wrong! The soonness (immediacy) of Jesus' return is a powerful promised hope of every generation, but a reality to only one (and that one a persecuted one). Believers must live as if He were coming tomorrow, but plan and implement the Great Commission (cf. Matt. 28:19-20) if He tarries.

Some passages in the Gospels (cf. Mark 13:10; Luke 17:2; 18:8) and I and II Thessalonians are based on a delayed Second Coming (*Parousia*). There are some historical events that must happen first:

1. world-wide evangelization (cf. Matt. 24:15; Mark 13:10)
2. the revelation of "the man of Sin" (cf. Matt. 24:15; II Thess. 2; Rev. 13)
3. the great persecution (cf. Matt. 24:21,24; Rev. 13)

There is a purposeful ambiguity (cf. Matt. 24:42-51; Mark 13:32-36)! Live everyday as if it were your last but plan and train for future ministry!

### **CONSISTENCY AND BALANCE**

It must be said that the different schools of modern eschatological interpretation all contain half truths. They explain and interpret well some texts. The problem lies in consistency and balance. Often there is a set of presuppositions which use the biblical text to fill in the pre-set theological skeleton. The Bible does not reveal a logical, chronological, systematic eschatology. It is like a family album. The pictures are true, but not always in order, in context, in a logical sequence. Some of the pictures have fallen out of the album and later generations of family members do not know exactly how to put them back. The key to proper interpretation of Revelation is the intent of the original author as revealed in his choice of literary genre. Most interpreters try to carry their exegetical tools and procedures from other genres of the NT into their interpretations of Revelation. They focus on the OT instead of allowing the teachings of Jesus and Paul to set the theological structure and let Revelation act as illustrative.

I must admit that I approach this commentary with some fear and trepidation, not because of the curse of Rev. 22:18-19, but because of the level of controversy the interpretation of this book has caused and continues to cause among God's people. I love God's revelation. It is true when all men are liars (cf. Rom. 3:4)! Please use this commentary as an attempt to be thought provoking and not definitive, as a sign post and not a road map, as a "what if," not a "thus says the Lord." I have come face to face with my own inadequacies, biases, and theological agenda. I have also seen those of other interpreters. It almost seems that people find in Revelation what they expect to find. The genre lends itself to abuse! However, it is in the Bible for a purpose. Its placement as the concluding "word" is not by accident. It has a message from God to His children of each and every generation. God wants us to understand! Let us join hands, not form camps; let us affirm what is clear and central, not all that may be, might be, could be true. God help us all!

Use this space to list your own presuppositions about how to interpret the Revelation. All of us bring our biases with us into the interpretation of this book. Identifying them helps us overcome their influence and limits our dogmatism.

1.

2.

3.

4.

# INTRODUCTION TO REVELATION

## I. OPENING STATEMENTS

- A. Most of my adult academic/theological life I have had the presupposition that those who believe the Bible take it “literally” (and that is surely true for historical narrative). However, it has become more and more obvious to me that to take prophecy, poetry, parables, and apocalyptic literature literally is to miss the point of the inspired text. The author’s intent, not literalness, is the key to a proper understanding of the Bible. To make the Bible say more (doctrinal specificity) is as dangerous and misleading as to interpret it in such a way as to make it say less than was intended by the original, inspired writer. The focus must be the larger context, the historical setting, and the intention the author expressed in the text itself and in his choice of genre. Genre is a literary contract between the author and the reader. To miss this clue is surely to lead to misinterpretation!

The book of Revelation is surely true, but not historical narrative, not meant to be taken literally. The genre itself is screaming this point to us if we will only hear it. This does not mean that it is not inspired, or not true; it is just figurative, cryptic, symbolic, metaphorical, and imaginative. The first century Jews and Christians were familiar with this type of literature, but we are not! The Christian symbolism in the *Lord of the Rings* or the *Chronicles of Narnia* might possibly be modern parallels.

- B. Revelation is a uniquely Jewish literary genre, apocalyptic. It was often used in tension-filled times to express the conviction that God was in control of history and would bring deliverance to His people. This type of literature is characterized by
1. a strong sense of the universal sovereignty of God (monotheism and determinism)
  2. a struggle between good and evil, this evil age and the age of righteousness to come (dualism)
  3. use of secret code words (usually from the OT or intertestamental Jewish apocalyptic literature)
  4. use of colors, numbers, animals, sometimes animals/humans
  5. use of angelic mediation by means of visions and dreams, but usually through angelic mediation and interpretation
  6. primarily focuses on the soon-coming, climatic events of the end-time (new age)
  7. use of a fixed set of symbols, not reality, to communicate the end-time message from God
  8. Some examples of this type of genre are:
    - a. Old Testament
      - (1) Isaiah 24-27, 56-66
      - (2) Ezekiel 37-48
      - (3) Daniel 7-12
      - (4) Joel 2:28-3:21
      - (5) Zechariah 1-6, 12-14
    - b. New Testament
      - (1) Matthew 24, Mark 13, Luke 21, and I Corinthians 15 (in some ways)
      - (2) II Thessalonians 2 (in most ways)
      - (3) Revelation (chapters 4-22)
    - c. Daniel 7-12 and Rev. 4-22 are the classic examples of this genre in the Bible
  9. non-canonical (taken from D. S. Russell, *The Method and Message of Jewish Apocalyptic*, pp. 37-38)
    - a. I Enoch, II Enoch (the Secrets of Enoch)
    - b. The Book of Jubilees

- c. The Sibylline Oracles III, IV, V
  - d. The Testament of the Twelve Patriarchs
  - e. The Psalms of Solomon
  - f. The Assumption of Moses
  - g. The Martyrdom of Isaiah
  - h. The Apocalypse of Moses (Life of Adam and Eve)
  - i. The Apocalypse of Abraham
  - j. The Testament of Abraham
  - k. II Esdras (IV Esdras)
  - l. II & III Baruch
10. There is a sense of duality in this genre. It sees reality as a series of dualisms, contrasts, or tensions (so common in John's writings) between:
- a. heaven - earth
  - b. evil age (evil men and evil angels) - new age of righteousness (godly men and godly angels)
  - c. current existence - future existence

All of these are moving toward a consummation brought about by God. This is not the world God intended it to be, but He is continuing to play, work, and project His will for a restoration of the intimate fellowship begun in the Garden of Eden. The Christ event is the watershed of God's plan, but the two comings have brought about the current dualisms.

- C. These apocalyptic works were never presented orally. They are highly structured, literary works. The structure is crucial to a proper interpretation. A major part of the planned structure of the book of Revelation is seven literary units, which parallel each other to some extent, e.g. the seven seals, seven trumpets, and seven bowls. With each cycle the judgment increases: seals, 1/4 destruction; trumpets, 1/3 destruction; bowls, total destruction. Within each literary unit the Second Coming of Christ or some eschatological event occurs: (1) sixth seal, 6:12-17; (2) seventh trumpet, 11:15-18; an end-time angel judgment in 14:14-20; (3) seventh bowl, 16:17-21 and again in 19:11-21 and still again in 22:6-16. This shows that the book is not chronologically sequential, but a drama in several acts which foresees the same period of time in progressively violent OT judgment motifs (cf. James Blevins, *Revelation as Drama* and "The Genre of Revelation" in Review and Expositor, Sept. 1980, pp. 393-408).

There are seven literary sections plus a prologue and an epilogue

- 1. prologue, 1:1-8
- 2. chapters 1-3 (Christ and the seven churches)
- 3. chapters 4-8:1 (heaven and the seven seals)
- 4. chapters 8:2-11 (seven angels with trumpets)
- 5. chapters 12-14 (the two communities and their leaders)
- 6. chapters 15-16 (seven angels with bowls)
- 7. chapters 17-19 (Babylon and its judgment)
- 8. chapters 20-22 (judgment and the new heaven and earth)
- 9. epilog, 22:6-21

William Hendriksen's *More Than Conquerors* outline is

- 1. chapters 1-3 (Christ in the midst of the Seven Lampstands)
- 2. chapters 4-7 (The Book with Seven Seals)
- 3. chapters 8-11 (the Seven Trumpets of Judgment)
- 4. chapters 12-14 (the woman and the man-child persecuted by the Dragon and His Helpers [the Beast and the Harlot])



5. chapters 15-16 (the Seven Bowls of Wrath)
6. chapters 17-19 (the fall of the Great Harlot and of the Beasts)
7. chapters 20-22 (the judgment upon the Dragon (Satan) followed by the New Heaven and Earth, New Jerusalem), p.28

In *More Than Conquerors*, William Hendriksen says that Revelation has seven sections: 1-3; 4-7; 8-11; 12-14; 15-16; 20-22 and that each of these is parallel and covers the period between Christ's first coming and His second coming. Each ends with some aspect related to judgment and the Second Coming (pp. 22-31).

Although I surely agree in the dramatic parallelism of the seals, trumpets, and bowls and I also am very attracted to 17-19 being parallel to 20-22 (there is the second coming in 19:11-21 and another second coming in 22:6-16), I cannot see where each of his seven sections ends in the *Parousia*, especially chapters 1-3, unless there is an aspect of judgment and coming at the end of each one (cf. 2:5,7,11,16-17,25-26; 3:5; 10:12,18-21). This seven-fold recapitulation is becoming more and more a possibility for understanding the parallel structure of the whole book.

- D. It is obvious that the number "seven" plays a large part in the structure of the book as can be seen from the seven churches, seven seals, seven trumpets, and seven bowls. Some other examples of "seven" are:

1. 7 blessings, 1:3; 14:13; 16:15; 19:9; 20:6; 22:7,14
2. 7 lampstands, 1:12
3. 7 spirits of God, 1:4; 3:1; 4:5; 5:6
4. 7 stars, 1:16,20; 2:1
5. 7 lamps of fire, 4:5
6. 7 seals on scroll, 5:1
7. 7 horns, 7 eyes of the lamb, 5:6
8. 7 attributes of Jesus praised, 5:12
9. 7 signs in nature, 6:12-14
10. 7 types of men, 6:15
11. 7 attributes of God praised, 7:12
12. 7 angels before God, 8:2,6
13. 7 trumpets held by the seven angels, 8:6 (15:1,6,7,8; 17:1; 21:9)
14. 7 signs, 12:1,3; 13:13,14; 15:1; 16:14; 19:20
15. 7 heads, 7 diadems of the red dragon, 12:3
16. 7 heads of the sea beast, 13:1; 17:3,8
17. 7 angels, 14:6-20
18. 7 plagues, 15:1; 21:9
19. 7 hills, 17:9
20. 7 kings 17:10
21. 7 things that are no more in chapters 21-22 (21:1,4[four times]; 21:25; 22:3)

- E. The interpretation of this book is most susceptible to theological bias. One's presuppositions drive the interpretation of the ambiguous details. These theological presuppositions function on several levels

1. the origin of the symbols
  - a. Old Testament allusions
    - (1) the OT themes like creation, the fall, the flood, the exodus, restored Jerusalem
    - (2) hundreds of allusions (not direct quotes) from the prophets

- b. intertestamental Jewish literature (I Enoch, II Baruch, Sibylline Oracles, II Esdras)
  - c. first century Greco-Roman world
  - d. ancient near eastern cosmological-creation accounts (especially Rev. 12)
2. the time frame of the book
    - a. first century
    - b. every century
    - c. last generation
  3. systematic theological grids
    - a. preterist
    - b. historicist
    - c. futurist
    - d. idealist
  4. theological positions on chapter 20
    - a. a millennial
    - b. post millennial
    - c. pre millennial
    - d. dispensational pre-millennial

In light of hermeneutical divergence (the different approaches to interpretation) and inappropriate dogmatism (the know-it-all attitude), how should an interpreter proceed?

1. let us admit that modern western Christians do not understand the genre and do not recognize the historical allusions that first century Christians would have immediately understood.
2. let us admit that every generation of Christians has forced the Revelation into its personal historical setting and all have been wrong so far.
3. Let us read the Bible before we read the theological systems. Look for the literary context of each vision/oracle and state the central truth in one declarative sentence. The central truth will be the same for every generation of believers while the specificity of the details may be relevant for only the first and/or last generation of believers. The details may be relevant, but history, not theology, will reveal their purpose.
4. Let us remember that this book is primarily a word of comfort and encouragement to faithfulness amidst the persecution of believers by unbelievers. This book is not meant to answer the curiosity of every generation of believers, nor outline a detailed plan of end-time events.
5. It is safe to affirm that fallen human society is on a collision course with the kingdom of God. It will appear at first that the world has won (like Calvary), but wait; God is sovereign, He is in control of history, of life and death. His people are victorious in Him!

F. Despite the difficulty and ambiguity of interpretation, this book has a message and is an inspired word from God to His people in every age. It is worth the extra effort necessary to study this unique book. Its strategic position in the NT canon speaks of its capstone message. Alan Johnson, *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, vol. 12, says "Indeed, it may well be that, with the exception of the Gospels, the Apocalypse contains the most profound and moving teaching on Christian doctrine and discipleship found anywhere in Holy Scripture. Neither the fanaticism of some who have fixed their attention on prophecy rather than on Christ, nor the diversity of interpretive viewpoints should discourage us from pursuing Christian truth in this marvelous book" (p. 399).

Remember, these are truly the last words of Jesus to His church! The modern Church dares not ignore or minimize them! They are to prepare believers for persecution and conflict in light of God's sovereignty (monotheism), the reality of the evil one (limited dualism), the ongoing

results of the fall (human rebellion), and God's promises to redeem mankind (unconditional covenant cf. Gen. 3:15; 12:1-3; Exod. 19:5-6; John 3:16; II Cor. 5:21).

## II. AUTHOR

- A. Internal evidence of John the Apostle's authorship
  - 1. Author named himself four times as John (cf. 1:1,4,9; 22:8)
  - 2. He also called himself
    - a. a bond servant (cf. 1:1; 22:6)
    - b. a brother and fellow-partaker in tribulation (cf. 1:9)
    - c. a prophet (cf. 22:9), and called his book a prophecy (cf. 1:3; 22:7,10,18,19)
  - 3. He knows the OT (does not use LXX, but Targums) as well as Tabernacle and Synagogue procedures
  
- B. External evidence of John the Apostle's authorship from early Christian authors
  - 1. John the Apostle, son of Zebedee
    - a. Justin Martyr (Rome A.D. 110-165) in *Dialogue with Trypho* 81.4
    - b. Irenaeus (Lyons A.D. 120-202) in *Against Heresies* IV.14.2; 17.6; 21.3; V.16.1; 28.2; 30.3; 34.6; 35.2
    - c. Tertullian (North Africa A.D. 145-220) in *Against Praxeas* 27
    - d. Origen (Alexandria A.D. 181-252) in
      - (1) *On the Soul*, L:8:1
      - (2) *Against Marcion*, II:5
      - (3) *Against Heretics*, III:14, 25
      - (4) *Against Celsus*, VI:6, 32; VIII:17
    - e. The Muratorian Canon (Rome A.D. 180-200)
  - 2. Other Candidates
    - a. John Mark - This was first mentioned by Dionysius, Bishop of Alexandria (A.D. 247-264), who denied the authorship of John the Apostle but still held the work as canonical. He based his rejection on vocabulary and style as well as the anonymous nature of John's other writings. He convinced Eusebius of Caesarea.
    - b. John the elder - This comes from a quote in Eusebius from Papias (*Eccl. His.* 3.39.1-7). However, Papias' quote probably used this title for John the Apostle rather than its asserting another author.
    - c. John the Baptist - (with later editorial additions) has been suggested by J. Massyngberde Ford in the Anchor Bible commentary, based primarily on John the Baptist's use of "lamb" for Jesus. The only other occurrence of this title is in Revelation.
  
- C. Dionysius, the bishop of Alexandria (A.D. 247-264) and student of Origen, was the first to express doubts (his book has been lost, but he is quoted by Eusebius of Caesara, who agreed with him) about John the Apostle's authorship, based on
  - 1. John the Apostle does not refer to himself as John in the Gospel nor his letters, but Revelation is from "John"
  - 2. the structure of Revelation is different from the Gospel and the letters
  - 3. the vocabulary of Revelation is different from the Gospel and the letters
  - 4. the grammatical style of Revelation is of inferior quality to the Gospel and the letters

- D. Probably the most serious modern challenge to John the Apostle's authorship comes from R. H. Charles in *Saint John*, Vol. I p. xxxixff.
- E. The majority of modern scholarship has rejected the traditional authorship of many of the NT books. A good example of this trend related to the authorship of Revelation might be Raymond E. Brown, a renowned Catholic Johannine scholar. The introductory volume of the Anchor Bible Commentary series says, "written by a Jewish Christian prophet named John who was neither John, son of Zebedee, nor the writer of the Johannine Gospel or of the Epistles" (p. 774).
- F. In many ways authorship is uncertain. There are striking parallels with the Apostle John's other writings and also striking differences. The key to understanding this book is not in its human author, but in its Divine author! The author believed himself to be an inspired prophet (cf. 1:3; 22:7,10,18,19).

### III. DATE

- A. This is certainly integrally linked to authorship and interpretive perspective (cf. Historical Theories C.)
- B. Some possible dates:
  1. The traditional date is during Domitian's reign (A.D. 81-96) because it fits internal evidence of persecution
    - a. Irenaeus (quoted by Eusebius) in *Against Heresies*, 5.30.3. "It (this persecution) was seen not very long ago, almost in our generation, at the close of the reign of Domitian"
    - b. Clement of Alexandria
    - c. Origen of Alexandria
    - d. Eusebius of Caesarea, *Church History*, iii.23.1
    - e. Victorinus, *Apocalypse* x.11
    - f. Jerome
  2. Epiphanius, a third century writer, in *Haer*, 51.12, 32, says that John wrote it after his release from Patmos which was during Claudius' reign (A.D. 41-54).
  3. Others supposed it to be during Nero's reign (A.D. 54-68) because of:
    - a. the obvious background of Emperor cult persecution
    - b. *Caesar Nero*, written in Hebrew, equals the number of the beast, 666
    - c. If preterists are correct that John's Revelation refers to the destruction of Jerusalem, then if the book is prophecy, it must have been written before A.D. 70

### IV. RECIPIENTS

- A. From 1:4 it is obvious that the original recipients were seven churches in the Roman Province of Asia. These churches are addressed in such a way as to imply the travel route of the bearer of the letter.
- B. The message of Revelation uniquely relates to all churches and believers who are experiencing persecution from a fallen world system.
- C. As the canonical conclusion to the NT this book is a message of consummation to all believers of all ages.

## V. OCCASION

- A. The setting was persecution caused by the separation of the local churches from the legal protection Rome accorded to Judaism. This division occurred officially around A.D. 70 when the rabbis from Jamnia instituted an oath formula which demanded the members of the local synagogues to curse Jesus of Nazareth.
- B. Roman documents indicate that Emperor worship became a major conflict with the church from the reigns of Nero (A.D. 54-68) to Domitian (A.D. 81-96). However, there is no documentation of an official empire-wide persecution. Apparently Revelation reflected the exuberance of local Emperor worship cults in the Eastern Provinces of the Roman Empire (cf. "Biblical Archaeology Review," May/June 1993 p. 29-37).

## VI. THE SYNTAX

- A. There are many grammatical problems in the Greek text.
- B. Some possible reasons for these problems
  1. John's Aramaic thought patterns.
  2. He had no scribe on Patmos to write for him.
  3. The excitement of the visions was overwhelming.
  4. They are purposeful for the effect.
  5. The genre (apocalyptic) was highly figurative.
- C. Similar grammatical idiosyncrasies are found in other Jewish apocalyptic writings. Therefore, Revelation is not written in a poor grammatical style, but in a genre with grammatical distinctives.

## VII. CANONICITY

- A. It was rejected early by the Eastern Church; the book does not appear in the Peshitta (fifth century Syriac version).
- B. In the early fourth century Eusebius, following Dionysius of Alexandria in the late third century, said Revelation was not written by the Apostle John. He listed it as one of the "disputed" books but included it in his canonical list (cf. *Ecclesiastical History*, III:24:18; III:25:4; and III:39:6).
- C. The Council of Laodicea (about A.D. 360) omitted it from the list of canonical books. Jerome rejected it as canonical, but the Council of Carthage (A.D. 397) included it. Revelation was admitted by means of a compromise by which both Hebrews and Revelation were accepted into the church's canon.
- D. We should acknowledge that it is a faith presupposition of believers that the Holy Spirit guided the historical process of developing a Christian canon.
- E. The two major theologians of the Protestant Reformation rejected its place in Christian doctrine
  1. Martin Luther called it neither prophetic or apostolic, in essence rejecting its inspiration.
  2. John Calvin, who wrote a commentary on every book of the NT except Revelation, in essence is rejecting its relevance.

## VIII. HISTORICAL THEORIES OF INTERPRETATION

- A. It has been notoriously difficult to interpret; therefore, dogmatism is inappropriate!
- B. The symbols are drawn from
  - 1. Old Testament apocalyptic passages in
    - a. Daniel
    - b. Ezekiel
    - c. Zechariah
    - d. Isaiah
  - 2. intertestamental Jewish apocalyptic literature
  - 3. the first century Greco-Roman historical setting (especially Revelation 17)
  - 4. ancient near eastern mythological creation accounts (especially Revelation 12)
- C. In general there are four interpretive grids or presuppositions
  - 1. PRETERIST - this group sees the book as primarily or exclusively related to the first century churches in the Roman Province of Asia. All the details and prophecies were fulfilled in the first century.
  - 2. HISTORICIST - this group sees the book as an overview of history, primarily of Western civilization and in some sense the Roman Catholic Church. Often the letters to the seven churches of chapters 2 and 3 are used as a description of certain periods of time. Some see these as temporally synchronous and others as chronologically sequential.
  - 3. FUTURIST - this group sees the book as referring to the events immediately preceding and following the Parousia (Second Coming of Christ) which will be literally and historically fulfilled.
  - 4. IDEALIST - this group sees the book as totally symbolic of the struggle between good and evil which has no historical references.

All of these have some validity, but they miss the intentional ambiguity of John's choice of genre and imagery. The problem is balance, not which one is correct

## IX. PURPOSE OF THE BOOK

- A. The purpose of Revelation is to show God's sovereignty in history and the promise of the culmination of all things in Him. The faithful are to remain in faith and hope amidst the persecution and aggression of this fallen world system. The focus of the book is the persecution (Emperor worship in the eastern provinces) and faithfulness (false teachers and cultural compromise) of believers in the first century and in every century (cf. 2:10). Remember, prophets spoke of the future in an effort to reform the present. Revelation is not only about how it will end, but how it is going. In his article in *The Expositors Bible Commentary*, Vol. I entitled, "The Eschatology of the Bible," Robert L. Sancy said, "the biblical prophets were not concerned primarily with the time and chronological arrangement of future events. For them the spiritual state of their contemporaries was the point of importance and the great eschatological visitation of God for the judgment of unrighteousness and the blessing of the pious was interjected for its ethical impact in the present" (p. 104).
- B. The general purpose is summed up well in the brief introduction to the TEV and NJB translations
  - 1. TEV, p. 1122, "The Revelation to John was written at a time when Christians were being persecuted because of their faith in Jesus Christ as Lord. The writer's main concern is to give

his readers hope and encouragement, and to urge them to remain faithful during times of suffering and persecution.”

2. NJB, p. 1416, “The Bible is summed up in the message of hope and the rich symbolism of this book. It is a vision of rescue from the trials which beset God’s people, and a promise of a glorious future. The message is expressed by means of imagery which draws on the whole of the Bible, so that every feature, animals, colors, numbers, is evocative and full of overtones to a reader familiar with the OT. In this way it is a secret and allusive revelation of what is to come, though the natural symbolism of the great acts of worship and the final vision of the messianic splendor of the new Holy City are clear enough. There was a tradition of such writing in Judaism from Daniel onwards, to strengthen God’s people in persecution with assurance of eventual deliverance and triumph.”

C. It is crucial that the interpreter give the redemptive theme priority.

1. God has brought individual, corporate, and cosmic salvation through Christ.
2. God’s redemption is both spiritual and physical. The Church is saved, but not safe! One day She will be!
3. God still loves fallen, rebellious, self-centered humanity. The wrath of God in the seals and trumpets is for redemption (cf. 9:20-21; 14:6-7; 16:9,11; 21:7; 22:17).
4. God not only restores fallen mankind, but also fallen creation (cf. Rom. 8:18-25). Evil at every level will be purged!

The recurrent attempt by God to reach lost humanity with the gospel magnifies the gracious character of God. The bowl judgments are the result of recalcitrant evil, not an unloving God. God only judges and isolates evil when it refuses again and again to repent. The book ends in a gospel invitation (cf. 22:17).

D. This book must not be seen as a chronological chart of the events, times, and manner of the Second Coming. It has often been interpreted as the “secret” to western history (the seven churches seen as ages). Every generation has forced its histories into the apocalyptic symbols; every one has been wrong so far.

The details of these prophecies will be much more obvious to the last generation of believers suffering under the Anti-Christ. A literal interpretation has caused this book to be ignored by some (Calvin), depreciated by others (Luther, “neither apostolic nor prophetic”), and overemphasized by others (millennialists).

## X. BOB’S KEYS TO INTERPRETATION

A. We need to take into account the OT aspect

1. OT apocalyptic genre is a highly symbolic literary type
2. Numerous allusions are drawn from the OT (some estimate that of 404 verses 275 include allusions to OT texts); the meaning of these symbols have been reinterpreted in light of the first-century Roman situation.
3. Prophetic foreshadowing takes current events to foreshadow eschatological events. Often these first- century historical fulfillments point to ultimate end-time historical fulfillments.

B. The overall structure of the book helps us to see the author’s purpose

1. The seals, trumpets, and bowls cover basically the same period of time (chapters 6-16). Revelation is a drama in sequential acts.

2. It is possible that chapters 17-19 are parallel to 20-22. Parts of chapter 19 (i.e. 19:11-21) are recapitulated in 20:7-10.
  3. See the seven literary units at Opening Statements, C.
- C. The historical context must be taken into account in any interpretation of the book
1. The presence of Emperor worship
  2. Local persecution in the Eastern Provinces
  3. The Bible cannot mean what it never meant. The interpretation of Revelation must be related to John's day first. It may have multiple fulfillments or applications, but they must be grounded in the first century.
- D. The meaning of some of the cryptic terms has been lost to us due to our cultural, linguistic and existential setting. Possibly the end-time events themselves will shed light on the proper interpretation of these symbols. Be careful not to push all of the details of this apocalyptic drama. Modern interpreters must seek the major truth in each of these visions.
- E. Let me summarize some of the key interpretive elements
1. The historical origins of the symbolism
    - a. OT themes, OT allusions
    - b. Ancient Near Eastern mythology
    - c. Intertestamental apocalyptic literature
    - d. Greco-Roman first century setting
  2. The author's ways of defining his symbolism
    - a. Conversations with angelic guides
    - b. The hymn of heavenly choirs
    - c. Author himself states the meaning
  3. The structure of the book (dramatic parallelism)
- F. Further help
1. My two favorite commentators on Revelation are George Eldon Ladd and Alan F. Johnson. They do not agree. There is so much disagreement among godly, educated, sincere scholars that a word of caution is appropriate. Let me quote Alan Johnson in his *Commentary on Revelation* from Zondervan:

“In view of the elaborate use of imagery and visions from 4:1 through the end of Revelation and the question how this material relates to chapters 1-3, it is not surprising that commentators differ widely in their treatment of these chapters. One problem is that of interpretation: *What* do the imagery and visions mean? Another problem involves chronology: *When* do these things take place? Furthermore, does John interpret his frequent Old Testament images in exact accordance with their Old Testament sources, or does he freely reinterpret these images? What is symbolic and what is literal? Answers to such questions will determine the interpreter's approach. Since few of these questions are capable of dogmatic answers, there is a need for tolerance of divergent approaches in the hope that the Spirit may use open-minded discussion to lead us further into the meaning of the Apocalypse” (p. 69).



2. For a general introduction to Revelation's relationship to the OT, I recommend John P. Milton's *Prophecy Interpreted* and John Bright's *The Authority of the Old Testament*. For a good discussion of Revelation's relationship to Paul, I recommend James S. Stewart's *A Man In Christ*.

#### XI. TERMS AND PHRASES TO BRIEFLY IDENTIFY

1. "the things which must soon take place," 1:1,3
2. "coming with the clouds," 1:7
3. Amen, 1:7
4. "the Alpha and the Omega," 1:8
5. "out of the mouth came a sharp two-edged sword," 1:16
6. "the keys of death and Hades," 1:18
7. "you have left your first love," 2:4
8. "to him who overcomes," 2:7
9. "the tree of life in the Paradise of God," 2:7
10. "a synagogue of Satan," 2:9; 3:9
11. "the second death," 2:11
12. "the deep things of Satan," 2:24
13. "the book of life," 3:5
14. "the key of David," 3:7
15. new Jerusalem, 3:12
16. "I was in the Spirit," 4:2
17. a sea of glass, 4:6
18. a book, 5:1
19. seven seals, 5:1
20. "a Lamb standing as if slain," 5:6
21. "seven horns and seven eyes," 5:6
22. "the great tribulation," 7:14
23. "a golden censer," 8:3
24. "the bottomless pit," 9:2
25. Hallelujah, 19:1
26. "the marriage supper of the Lamb," 19:9
27. "the winepress of God's wrath," 19:15
28. "bound him a thousand years," 20:2
29. new Jerusalem, 21:2
30. "the bright morning star," 22:16

#### XII. PERSONS TO BRIEFLY IDENTIFY

1. "communicated by His angel," 1:1
2. John, 1:1
3. "the seven spirits," 1:4
4. the Almighty, 1:8
5. Who is described in 1:12-16?  
Where does this description come from?
6. Nicolaitans, 2:6,15
7. Jezebel, 2:20

8. elders, 4:4,10
9. the Lion that is from the tribe of Judah, 5:5
10. "a white horse, and he who sat on it had a bow," 6:2
11. "underneath the altar the souls of those who had been slain," 6:9
12. "sealed. . .on their foreheads," 7:3
13. "a great multitude," 7:9
14. "a star from heaven," 9:1
15. "another strong angel," 10:1
16. "the two witnesses," 11:3
17. a woman, 12:1
18. "a great red dragon," 12:3
19. "a son, a male child," 12:5
20. "a beast coming up out of the sea," 13:1
21. "another beast coming up out of the earth," 13:11
22. Babylon, 14:8
23. the great harlot, 17:1
24. "a white horse, and he who sat on it," 19:11
25. Gog and Magog, 20:8

### XIII. MAP LOCATIONS TO PLOT

1. Patmos, 1:9
2. Ephesus, 1:11
3. Smyrna, 1:11
4. Pergamum, 1:11
5. Thyatira, 1:11
6. Sardis, 1:11
7. Philadelphia, 1:11
8. Laodicea, 1:11
9. Mount Zion, 14:1

### XIV. DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What kind of genre is Revelation? List the characteristics.
2. Why are there seven churches mentioned in chapters 2 and 3?
3. Why will all the tribes of the earth mourn over Him? (1:7)
4. List all the "sevens" in chapter 1
5. What does it mean that Jesus will remove a church's lampstand? (2:5)
6. List the common items found in the message to each of the seven churches.
7. What is the setting for chapters 4-5?
8. What is the relationship between the seven seals, the seven trumpets, and the seven bowls?
9. Who are the seven horsemen of chapter 6? Where does this imagery come from?
10. Who are the 144,000? Why are the Jewish tribes listed incorrectly?
11. Why do the judgments increase from 1/4 in the seals to 1/3 in the trumpets, to complete destruction in the bowls?
12. Who does the army of 200,000,000 refer to in 9:13-19?
13. Describe the war in heaven in 12:7-10.
14. Why does God allow the beast to make war against the saints? (13:7)

15. How does the beast mimic Christ?
16. Who will be a part of the first resurrection? (2:4-6) Who will be a part of the second resurrection?
17. What is the significance of 22:3?
18. How is 22:5 related to 20:4?
19. Explain 22:18-19 in your own words.
20. What is the central theme of Revelation?

# APPENDIX ONE

## GLOSSARY

**Adoptionism.** This was one of the early views of Jesus' relation to deity. It basically asserted that Jesus was a normal human in every way and was adopted in a special sense by God at his baptism (cf. Matt. 3:17; Mark 1:11) or at His resurrection (cf. Rom. 1:4). Jesus lived such an exemplary life that God, at some point, (baptism, resurrection) adopted Him as His "son" (cf. Rom. 1:4; Phi. 2:9). This was an early church and eighth century minority view. Instead of God becoming a man (the Incarnation) it reverses this and now man becomes God!

It is difficult to verbalize how Jesus, God the Son, pre-existent deity, was rewarded or extolled for an exemplary life. If He was already God, how could He be rewarded? If He had pre-existent divine glory how could He be honored more? Although it is hard for us to comprehend, the Father somehow honored Jesus in a special sense for His perfect fulfillment of the Father's will.

**Alexandrian School.** This method of biblical interpretation was developed in Alexandria, Egypt, in the second century A.D. It uses the basic interpretive principles of Philo who was a follower of Plato. It is often called the allegorical method. It held sway in the church until the time of the Reformation. Its most able proponents were Origen and Augustine. See Moises Silva, *Has The Church Misread The Bible?* (Academic, 1987)

**Alexandrinus.** This fifth century Greek manuscript from Alexandria, Egypt includes the Old Testament, Apocrypha, and most of the New Testament. It is one of our major witnesses to the entire Greek New Testament (except parts of Matthew, John, and II Corinthians). When this manuscript, which is designated "A," and the manuscript designated "B" (Vaticanus) agree on a reading, it is considered to be original by most scholars in most instances.

**Allegory.** This is a type of biblical interpretation which originally developed within Alexandrian Judaism. It was popularized by Philo of Alexandria. Its basic thrust is the desire to make the Scripture relevant to one's culture or philosophical system by ignoring the Bible's historical setting and/or literary context. It seeks a hidden or spiritual meaning behind every text of Scripture. It must be admitted that Jesus, in Matthew 13, and Paul, in Galatians 4, sometimes used allegory to communicate truth. This, however, was in the form of typology, not strictly allegory.

**Analytical lexicon.** This is a type of research tool which allows one to identify every Greek form in the New Testament. It is a compilation, in Greek alphabetical order, of forms and basic definitions. In combination with an interlinear translation, it allows non-Greek reading believers to analyze New Testament Greek grammatical and syntactic forms.

**Analogy of Scripture.** This is the phrase used to describe the view that all of the Bible is inspired by God and is, therefore, not contradictory but complementary. This presuppositional affirmation is the basis for the use of parallel passages in interpreting a biblical text.

**Ambiguity.** This refers to the uncertainty that results in a written document when there are two or more possible meanings or when two or more things are being referred to at the same time. It is possible that John uses purposeful ambiguity (double entendres).

**Anthropomorphic.** Meaning “having characteristics associated with human beings,” this term is used to describe our religious language about God. It comes from the Greek term for mankind. It means that we speak about God as if He were a man. God is described in physical, sociological, and psychological terms which relate to human beings (cf. Gen. 3:8; I Kgs. 22:19-23). This, of course, is only an analogy. However, there are no categories or terms other than human ones for us to use. Therefore, our knowledge of God, though true, is limited.

**Antiochian School.** This method of biblical interpretation was developed in Antioch, Syria, in the third century A.D. as a reaction to the allegorical method of Alexandria, Egypt. Its basic thrust was to focus on the historical meaning of the Bible. It interpreted the Bible as normal, human literature. This school became involved in the controversy over whether Christ had two natures (Nestorianism) or one nature (fully God and fully man). It was labeled heretical by the Roman Catholic Church and relocated to Persia but the school had little significance. Its basic hermeneutical principles later became interpretive principles of the Classical Protestant Reformers (Luther and Calvin).

**Antithetical.** This is one of three descriptive terms used to denote the relationship between lines of Hebrew poetry. It relates to lines of poetry which are opposite in meaning (cf. Prov. 10:1, 15:1).

**Apocalyptic literature.** This was predominantly, possibly even uniquely, a Jewish genre. It was a cryptic type of writing used in times of invasion and occupation of the Jews by foreign world powers. It assumes that a personal, redemptive God created and controls world events, and that Israel is of special interest and care to Him. This literature promises ultimate victory through God’s special effort.

It is highly symbolic and fanciful with many cryptic terms. It often expressed truth in colors, numbers, visions, dreams, angelic mediation, secret code words and often a sharp dualism between good and evil.

Some examples of this genre are (1) in the OT, Ezekiel (chapters 36-48), Daniel (chapters 7-12), Zechariah; and (2) in the NT, Matt.24; Mark 13; II Thess. 2 and Revelation.

**Apologist (Apologetics).** This is from the Greek root for "legal defense." This is a specific discipline within theology which seeks to give evidence and rational arguments for the Christian faith.

**A priori.** This is basically synonymous with the term "presupposition." It involves reasoning from previously accepted definitions, principles or positions which are assumed to be true. It is that which is accepted without examination or analysis.

**Arianism.** Arius was a presbyter in the church at Alexandria, Egypt, in the third and early fourth century. He affirmed that Jesus was pre-existent, but not divine (not of the same essence as the Father), possibly following Proverbs 8:22-31. He was challenged by the bishop of Alexandria, who started (A.D. 318) a controversy which lasted many years. Arianism became the official creed of the Eastern Church. The Council of Nicaea in A.D. 325 condemned Arius and asserted the full equality and deity of the Son.

**Aristotle.** He was one of the philosophers of ancient Greece, a pupil of Plato and teacher of Alexander the Great. His influence, even today, reaches into many areas of modern studies. This is because he emphasized knowledge through observation and classification. This is one of the tenets of the scientific method.

**Autographs.** This is the name given to the original writings of the Bible. These original, handwritten manuscripts have all been lost. Only copies of copies remain. This is the source of many of the textual variants in the Hebrew and Greek manuscripts and ancient versions.

**Bezae.** This is a Greek and Latin manuscript of the sixth century A.D. It is designated by "D." It contains the Gospels and Acts and some of the General Epistles. It is characterized by numerous scribal additions. It forms the basis for the "Textus Receptus," the major Greek manuscript tradition behind the King James Version.

**Bias.** This is the term used to describe a strong predisposition toward an object or point of view. It is the mindset in which impartiality is impossible regarding a particular object or point of view. It is a prejudiced position.

**Biblical Authority.** This term is used in a very specialized sense. It is defined as understanding what the original author said to his day and applying this truth to our day. Biblical authority is usually defined as viewing the Bible itself as our only authoritative guide. However, in light of current, improper interpretations, I have limited the concept to the Bible as interpreted by the tenets of the historical-grammatical method.

**Canon.** This is a term used to describe writings which are believed to be uniquely inspired. It is used regarding both the Old and New Testament Scriptures.

**Christocentric.** This is a term used to describe the centrality of Jesus. I use it in connection with the concept that Jesus is Lord of all the Bible. The Old Testament points toward Him and He is its fulfillment and goal (cf. Matt. 5:17-48).

**Commentary.** This is a specialized type of research book. It gives the general background of a biblical book. It then tries to explain the meaning of each section of the book. Some focus on the application, while others deal with the text in a more technical way. These books are helpful, but should be used after one has done his own preliminary study. The commentator's interpretations should never be accepted uncritically. Comparing several commentaries from different theological perspectives is usually helpful.

**Concordance.** This is a type of research tool for Bible study. It lists every occurrence of every word in the Old and New Testaments. It helps in several ways: (1) determining the Hebrew or Greek word which lies behind any particular English word; (2) comparing passages where the same Hebrew or Greek word was used; (3) showing where two different Hebrew or Greek terms are translated by the same English word; (4) showing the frequency of the use of certain words in certain books or authors; (5) helping one find a passage in the Bible (cf. Walter Clark's *How to Use New Testament Greek Study Aids*, pp. 54-55).

**Dead Sea Scrolls.** This refers to a series of ancient texts written in Hebrew and Aramaic which were found near the Dead Sea in 1947. They were the religious libraries of sectarian Judaism of the first century. The pressure of Roman occupation and the zealot wars of the 60's caused them to conceal the scrolls in hermetically sealed pottery jars in caves or holes. They have helped us understand the historical setting of first century Palestine and have confirmed the Masoretic Text as being very accurate, at least as far back as the early B.C. era. They are designated by the abbreviation "DSS."

**Deductive.** This method of logic or reasoning moves from general principles to specific applications by means of reason. It is opposite from inductive reasoning, which reflects the scientific method, from observed specifics to general conclusions (theories).

**Dialectical.** This is the method of reasoning whereby that which seems contradictory or paradoxical is held together in a tension, seeking a unified answer which includes both sides of the paradox. Many biblical doctrines have dialectical pairs, predestination—free will; security—perseverance; faith—works; decision—discipleship; Christian freedom—Christian responsibility.

**Diaspora.** This is the technical Greek term used by Palestinian Jews to describe other Jews who live outside the geographical boundaries of the Promised Land.

**Dynamic equivalent.** This is the name of a theory of Bible translation. Bible translation can be viewed as a continuum from “word to word” correspondence, where an English word must be supplied for every Hebrew or Greek word, to a “paraphrase” where only the thought is translated with less regard to the original wording or phrasing. In between these two theories is “the dynamic equivalent” which attempts to take the original text seriously, but translates it in modern grammatical forms and idioms. A really good discussion of these various theories of translations is found in Fee and Stuart’s *How To Read The Bible For All It Is Worth*, p. 35 and in Robert Bratcher’s Introduction to the TEV.

**Eclectic.** This term is used in connection with textual criticism. It refers to the practice of choosing readings from different Greek manuscripts in order to arrive at a text which is supposed to be close to the original autographs. It rejects the view that any one family of Greek manuscripts captures the originals.

**Eisegesis.** This is the opposite of exegesis. If exegesis is a "leading out" of the original author's intent, this term implies a "leading in" of a foreign idea or opinion.

**Etymology.** This is an aspect of word study that tries to ascertain the original meaning of a word. From this root meaning, specialized usages are more easily identified. In interpretation, etymology is not the main focus, rather the contemporary meaning and usage of a word.

**Exegesis.** This is the technical term for the practice of interpreting a specific passage. It means "to lead out" (of the text) implying that our purpose is to understand the original author's intent in light of historical setting, literary context, syntax and contemporary word meaning.

**Genre.** This is a French term that denotes different types of literature. The thrust of the term is the division of literary forms into categories which share common characteristics: historical narrative, poetry, proverb, apocalyptic and legislation.

**Gnosticism.** Most of our knowledge of this heresy comes from the gnostic writings of the second century. However, the incipient ideas were present in the first century (and before).

Some stated tenets of Valentian and Cerinthian Gnosticism of the second century are: (1) matter and spirit were co-eternal (an ontological dualism). Matter is evil, spirit is good. God, who is spirit, cannot be directly involved with molding evil matter; (2) there are emanations (*eons* or angelic levels) between God and matter. The last or lowest one was YHWH of the OT who formed the universe (*kosmos*); (3) Jesus was an emanation like YHWH but higher on the scale, closer to the true God. Some put Him as the highest but still less than God and certainly not incarnate Deity (cf. John 1:14). Since matter is evil,

Jesus could not have a human body and still be Divine. He was a spiritual phantom (cf. I John 1:1-3; 4:1-6); and (4) salvation was obtained through faith in Jesus plus special knowledge, which is only known by special persons. Knowledge (passwords) was needed to pass through heavenly spheres. Jewish legalism was also required to reach God.

The gnostic false teachers advocated two opposite ethical systems: (1) for some, lifestyle was totally unrelated to salvation. For them, salvation and spirituality were encapsulated into secret knowledge (passwords) through the angelic spheres (*eons*); or (2) for others, lifestyle was crucial to salvation. They emphasized an ascetic lifestyle as evidence of true spirituality.

**Hermeneutics.** This is the technical term for the principles which guide exegesis. It is both a set of specific guidelines and an art/gift. Biblical, or sacred, hermeneutics is usually divided into two categories: general principles and special principles. These relate to the different types of literature found in the Bible. Each different type (genre) has its own unique guidelines but also shares some common assumptions and procedures of interpretation.

**Higher Criticism.** This is the procedure of biblical interpretation which focuses on the historical setting and literary structure of a particular biblical book.

**Idiom.** This word is used for the phrases found in different cultures which have specialized meaning not connected to the usual meaning of the individual terms. Some modern examples are: "that was awfully good," or "you just kill me." The Bible also contains these types of phrases.

**Illumination.** This is the name given to the concept that God has spoken to mankind. The full concept is usually expressed by three terms: (1) revelation—God has acted in human history; (2) inspiration—He has given the proper interpretation of His acts and their meaning to certain chosen men to record for mankind; and (3) illumination—He has given His Spirit to help mankind understand His self-disclosure.

**Inductive.** This is a method of logic or reasoning which moves from the particulars to the whole. It is the empirical method of modern science. This is basically the approach of Aristotle.

**Interlinear.** This is a type of research tool which allows those who do not read a biblical language to be able to analyze its meaning and structure. It places the English translation on a word for word level immediately under the original biblical language. This tool, combined with an "analytical lexicon," will give the forms and basic definitions of Hebrew and Greek.

**Inspiration.** This is the concept that God has spoken to mankind by guiding the biblical authors to accurately and clearly record His revelation. The full concept is usually expressed by three terms: (1) revelation—God has acted in human history; (2) inspiration—He has given the proper interpretation of His acts and their meaning to certain chosen men to record for mankind; and (3) illumination—He has given His Spirit to help mankind understand His self-disclosure

**Language of description.** This is used in connection with the idioms in which the Old Testament is written. It speaks of our world in terms of the way things appear to the five senses. It is not a scientific description, nor was it meant to be.

**Legalism.** This attitude is characterized by an over-emphasis on rules or ritual. It tends to rely on the human performance of regulations as a means of acceptance by God. It tends to depreciate relationship



and elevates performance, both of which are important aspects of the covenantal relationship between a holy God and sinful humanity.

**Literal.** This is another name for the textually-focused and historical method of hermeneutics from Antioch. It means that interpretation involves the normal and obvious meaning of human language, although it still recognizes the presence of figurative language.

**Literary genre.** This refers to the distinct forms that human communication can take, such as poetry or historical narrative. Each type of literature has its own special hermeneutical procedures in addition to the general principles for all written literature.

**Literary unit.** This refers to the major thought divisions of a biblical book. It can be made up of a few verses, paragraphs or chapters. It is a self-contained unit with a central subject.

**Lower criticism.** See "textual criticism."

**Manuscript.** This term relates to the different copies of the Greek New Testament. Usually they are divided into the different types by (1) material on which they are written (papyrus, leather), or (2) the form of the writing itself (all capitals or running script). It is abbreviated by "MS" (singular) or "MSS" (plural).

**Masoretic Text.** This refers to the ninth century A.D. Hebrew manuscripts of the Old Testament produced by generations of Jewish scholars which contain vowel points and other textual notes. It forms the basic text for our English Old Testament. Its text has been historically confirmed by the Hebrew MSS, especially Isaiah, known from the Dead Sea Scrolls. It is abbreviated by "MT."

**Metonymy.** This is a figure of speech in which the name of one thing is used to represent something else associated with it. As an example, "the kettle is boiling" actually means "the water within the kettle is boiling."

**Muratorian Fragments.** This is a list of the canonical books of the New Testament. It was written in Rome before A.D. 200. It gives the same twenty-seven books as the Protestant NT. This clearly shows the local churches in different parts of the Roman Empire had "practically" set the canon before the major church councils of the fourth century.

**Natural revelation.** This is one category of God's self-disclosure to man. It involves the natural order (Rom. 1:19-20) and the moral consciousness (Rom. 2:14-15). It is spoken of in Ps. 19:1-6 and Rom. 1-2. It is distinct from special revelation, which is God's specific self-disclosure in the Bible and supremely in Jesus of Nazareth.

This theological category is being re-emphasized by the "old earth" movement among Christian scientists (e.g. the writings of Hugh Ross). They use this category to assert that all truth is God's truth. Nature is an open door to knowledge about God; it is different from special revelation (the Bible). It allows modern science the freedom to research the natural order. In my opinion it is a wonderful new opportunity to witness to the modern scientific western world.

**Nestorianism.** Nestorius was the patriarch of Constantinople in the fifth century. He was trained in Antioch of Syria and affirmed that Jesus had two natures, one fully human and one fully divine. This view deviated from the orthodox one-nature view of Alexandria. Nestorius' main concern was the title

“mother of God,” given to Mary. Nestorius was opposed by Cyril of Alexandria and, by implication, his own Antiochian training. Antioch was the headquarters of the historical-grammatical-textual approach to biblical interpretation, while Alexandria was the headquarters of the four-fold (allegorical) school of interpretation. Nestorius was ultimately removed from office and exiled.

**Original author.** This refers to the actual authors/writers of Scripture.

**Papyri.** This is a type of writing material from Egypt. It is made from river reeds. It is the material upon which our oldest copies of the Greek New Testament are written.

**Parallel passages.** They are part of the concept that all of the Bible is God-given and, therefore, is its own best interpreter and balancer of paradoxical truths. This is also helpful when one is attempting to interpret an unclear or ambiguous passage. They also help one find the clearest passage on a given subject as well as all other Scriptural aspects of a given subject.

**Paraphrase.** This is the name of a theory of Bible translation. Bible translation can be viewed as a continuum from “word to word” correspondence, where an English word must be supplied for every Hebrew or Greek word; to a “paraphrase” where only the thought is translated with less regard to the original wording or phrasing. In between these two theories is “the dynamic equivalent” which attempts to take serious the original text but translates it in modern grammatical forms and idioms. A really good discussion of these various theories of translations is found in Fee and Stuart’s *How To Read The Bible For All It Is Worth*, (p. 35).

**Paragraph.** This is the basic interpretive literary unit in prose. It contains one central thought and its development. If we stay with its major thrust we will not major on minors or miss the original author’s intent.

**Parochialism.** This relates to biases which are locked into a local theological/cultural setting. It does not recognize the transcultural nature of biblical truth or its application.

**Paradox.** This refers to those truths which seem to be contradictory, yet both are true, although in tension with each other. They frame truth by presenting it from opposite sides. Much biblical truth is presented in paradoxical (or dialectical) pairs. Biblical truths are not isolated stars, but are constellations made up of the pattern of stars.

**Plato.** He was one of the philosophers of ancient Greece. His philosophy greatly influenced the early church through the scholars of Alexandria, Egypt, and later, Augustine. He posited that everything on earth was illusionary and a mere copy of a spiritual archetype. Theologians later equated Plato’s “forms/ideas” with the spiritual realm.

**Presupposition.** This refers to our preconceived understanding of a matter. Often we form opinions or judgments about issues before we approach the Scriptures themselves. This predisposition is also known as a bias, an *a priori* position, an assumption or a preunderstanding (presupposition).

**Proof-texting.** This is the practice of interpreting Scripture by quoting a verse without regard for its immediate context or larger context in its literary unit. This removes the verses from the original

author's intent and usually involves the attempt to prove a personal opinion while asserting biblical authority.

**Rabbinical Judaism.** This stage of the life of the Jewish people began in Babylonian Exile (586-538B.C.). As the influence of the Priests and the Temple was removed, local synagogues became the focus of Jewish life. These local centers of Jewish culture, fellowship, worship and Bible study became the focus of the national religious life. In Jesus' day this "religion of the scribes" was parallel to that of the priests. At the fall of Jerusalem in 70 A.D. the scribal form, dominated by the Pharisees, controlled the direction of Jewish religious life. It is characterized by a practical, legalistic interpretation of the Torah as explained in the oral tradition (Talmud).

**Revelation.** This is the name given to the concept that God has spoken to mankind. The full concept is usually expressed by three terms: (1) revelation—God has acted in human history; (2) inspiration—He has given the proper interpretation of His acts and their meaning to certain chosen men to record for mankind; and (3) illumination—He has given His Spirit to help mankind understand His self-disclosure.

**Semantic field.** This refers to the total range of meanings associated with a word. It is basically the different connotations a word has in different contexts.

**Septuagint.** This is the name given to the Greek translation of the Hebrew Old Testament. Tradition says that it was written in seventy days by seventy Jewish scholars for the library of Alexandria, Egypt. The traditional date is around 250 B.C. (in reality it possibly took over one hundred years to complete). This translation is significant because (1) it gives us an ancient text to compare with the Masoretic Hebrew text; (2) it shows us the state of Jewish interpretation in the third and second century B.C.; (3) it gives us the Jewish Messianic understanding before the rejection of Jesus. Its abbreviation is "LXX."

**Sinaiticus.** This is a Greek manuscript of the fourth century A.D. It was found by the German scholar, Tischendorf, at St. Catherine's monastery on Jebel Musa, the traditional site of Mt. Sinai. This manuscript is designated by the first letter of the Hebrew alphabet called "*aleph*" [א]. It contains both the Old and the entire New Testaments. It is one of our most ancient uncial MSS.

**Spiritualizing.** This term is synonymous with allegorizing in the sense that it removes the historical and literary context of a passage and interprets it on the basis of other criteria.

**Synonymous.** This refers to terms with exact or very similar meanings (although in reality no two words have a complete semantic overlap). They are so closely related that they can replace each other in a sentence without loss of meaning. It is also used to designate one of the three forms of Hebrew poetic parallelism. In this sense it refers to two lines of poetry that express the same truth (cf. Ps. 103:3).

**Syntax.** This is a Greek term which refers to the structure of a sentence. It relates to the ways parts of a sentence are put together to make a whole thought.

**Synthetical.** This is one of the three terms that relates to types of Hebrew poetry. This term speaks of lines of poetry which build on one another in a cumulative sense, sometimes called "climatic" (cf. Ps. 19:7-9).

**Systematic theology.** This is a stage of interpretation which tries to relate the truths of the Bible in a unified and rational manner. It is a logical, rather than mere historical, presentation of Christian theology by categories (God, man, sin, salvation, etc.).

**Talmud.** This is the title for the codification of the Jewish Oral Tradition. The Jews believe it was given orally by God to Moses on Mt. Sinai. In reality it appears to be the collective wisdom of the Jewish teachers through the years. There are two different written versions of the Talmud, the Babylonian and the shorter, unfinished Palestinian.

**Textual criticism.** This is the study of the manuscripts of the Bible. Textual criticism is necessary because no originals exist and the copies differ from each other. It attempts to explain the variations and arrive (as close as possible) to the original wording of the autographs of the Old and New Testaments. It is often called "lower criticism."

**Textus Receptus.** This designation developed into Elzevir's edition of the Greek NT in 1633 A.D. Basically it is a form of the Greek NT that was produced from a few late Greek manuscripts and Latin versions of Erasmus (1510-1535), Stephanus (1546-1559) and Elzevir (1624-1678). In *An Introduction to the Textual Criticism of the New Testament*, p. 27, A. T. Robertson says "the Byzantine text is practically the Textus Receptus." The Byzantine text is the least valuable of the three families of early Greek manuscripts (Western, Alexandrian and Byzantine). It contains the accumulation errors of centuries of hand-copied texts. However, A.T. Robertson also says, "the Textus Receptus has preserved for us a substantially accurate text" (p, 21). This Greek manuscript tradition (especially Erasmus' third edition of 1522) forms the basis of the King James Version of 1611 A.D.

**Torah.** This is the Hebrew term for "teaching." It came to be the official title for the writings of Moses (Genesis through Deuteronomy). It is, for the Jews, the most authoritative division of the Hebrew canon.

**Typological.** This is a specialized type of interpretation. Usually it involves New Testament truth found in Old Testament passages by means of an analogical symbol. This category of hermeneutics was a major element of the Alexandrian method. Because of the abuse of this type of interpretation, one should limit its use to specific examples recorded in the New Testament.

**Vaticanus.** This is the Greek manuscript of the fourth century A.D. It was found in the Vatican's library. It originally contained all the Old Testament, Apocrypha and New Testament. However, some parts were lost (Genesis, Psalms, Hebrews, the Pastorals, Philemon and Revelation). It is a very helpful manuscript in determining the original wording of the autographs. It is designated by a capital "B."

**Vulgate.** This is the name of Jerome's Latin translation of the Bible. It became the basic or "common" translation for the Roman Catholic Church. It was done in the 380's A.D.

**Wisdom literature.** This was a genre of literature common in the ancient near east (and modern world). It basically was an attempt to instruct a new generation on guidelines for successful living through poetry, proverb, or essay. It was addressed more to the individual than to corporate society. It did not use allusions to history, but was based on life experiences and observation. In the Bible, Job, and Song of Songs, assumed the presence and worship of YHWH, but this religious world view is not explicit in every human experience every time.

As a genre it stated general truths. However, this genre cannot be used in every specific situation. These are general statements that do not always apply to every individual situation.

These sages dared to ask the hard questions of life. Often they challenged traditional religious views (Job and Ecclesiastes). They form a balance and tension to the easy answers about life's tragedies.

**World picture and world view.** These are companion terms. They are both philosophical concepts related to creation. The term "world picture" refers to "the how" of creation, while "world view" relates to "the Who." These terms are relevant to the interpretation that Genesis 1-2 deals primarily with the Who, not the how, of creation.

**YHWH.** This is the Covenant name for God in the Old Testament. It is defined in Exod. 3:14. It is the CAUSATIVE form of the Hebrew term "to be." The Jews were afraid to pronounce the name, lest they take it in vain; therefore, they substituted the Hebrew term *Adonai*, "lord." This is how this covenant name is translated in English.

# APPENDIX TWO

## TEXTUAL CRITICISM

This subject will be dealt with in such a way as to explain the textual notes found in this commentary. The following outline will be utilized

- I. The textual sources of our English Bible
  - A. Old Testament
  - B. New Testament
- II. Brief explanation of the problems and theories of "lower criticism" also called "textual criticism."
- III. Suggested sources for further reading

### I. The textual sources of our English Bible

#### A. Old Testament

1. Masoretic text (MT) - The Hebrew consonantal text was set by Rabbi Aquiba in A.D. 100. The vowel points, accents, marginal notes, punctuation and apparatus points started being added in the sixth century A.D. and were finished in the ninth century A.D. It was done by a family of Jewish scholars known as the Masoretes. The textual form they used was the same as the one in the Mishnah, Talmud, Targums, Peshitta, and Vulgate.
2. Septuagint (LXX) - Tradition says the Septuagint was produced by 70 Jewish scholars in 70 days for the Alexandria library under the sponsorship of King Ptolemy II (285-246 B.C.) The translation was supposedly requested by a Jewish leader living in Alexandria. This tradition comes from "Letter of Aristeas." The LXX frequently was based on a differing Hebrew textual tradition from the text of Rabbi Aquiba (MT).
3. Dead Sea Scrolls (DSS) - The Dead Sea Scrolls were written in the Roman B.C. period (200 B.C. to A.D. 70) by a sect of Jewish separatists called the "Essenes." The Hebrew manuscripts, found in several sites around the Dead Sea, show a somewhat different Hebrew textual family behind both the MT and the LXX.
4. Some specific examples of how the comparison of these texts have helped interpreters understand the Old Testament
  - a. The LXX has helped translators and scholars understand the MT
    - (1) the LXX of Isa. 52:14, "As many shall be amazed at him."
    - (2) the MT of Isa. 52:14, "Just as many were astonished over you."
    - (3) in Isa. 52:15 the pronoun distinction of the LXX is confirmed
      - (a) LXX, "so will many nations marvel at him"
      - (b) MT, "so he sprinkles many nations"
  - b. The DSS have helped translators and scholars understand the MT
    - (1) the DSS of Isa. 21:8, "then the seer cried, Upon a watchtower I stand..."
    - (2) the MT of Isa. 21:8, "and I cried a lion! My Lord, I always stand on the watch tower by day..."
  - c. Both the LXX and DSS have helped clarify Isa. 53:11
    - (1) LXX & DSS, "after the travail of his soul he will see light, he will be satisfied"
    - (2) MT, "he shall see...of the travail of his soul, He shall be satisfied"

## B. New Testament

1. Over 5,300 manuscripts of all or parts of the Greek New Testament are extant. About 85 are written on papyri and 268 are written in all capital letters (uncials). Later, about the ninth century A.D., a running script (minuscule) was developed. The Greek manuscripts in written form number about 2,700. We also have about 2,100 copies of lists of Scripture texts used in worship that we call lectionaries.
2. About 85 Greek manuscripts containing parts of the New Testament written on papyrus are housed in museums. Some are dated from the second century A.D., but most are from the third and fourth centuries A.D. None of these MSS contain the whole New Testament. Just because these are the oldest copies of the New Testament does not automatically mean they have fewer variants. Many of these were copied rapidly for a local use. Care was not exercised in the process. Therefore, they contain many variants.
3. Codex Sinaiticus, known by the Hebrew letter  $\aleph$  (*aleph*) or (01), was found at St. Catherine's monastery on Mt. Sinai by Tischendorf. It dates from the fourth century A.D. and contains both the LXX of the OT and the Greek NT. It is of "the Alexandrian Text" type.
4. Codex Alexandrinus, known as "A" or (02), is a fifth century Greek manuscript which was found in Alexandria, Egypt.
5. Codex Vaticanus, known as "B" or (03), was found in the Vatican's library in Rome and dates from the middle of the fourth century A.D. It contains both LXX of the Old Testament and Greek New Testament. It is of "the Alexandrian Text" type.
6. Codex Ephraemi, known as "C" or (04), is a fifth century Greek manuscript which was partially destroyed.
7. Codex Bezae, known as "D" or (05), is a fifth or sixth century Greek manuscript. It is the chief representative of what is called "The Western Text." It contains many additions and was the main Greek witness for the King James translation.
8. The NT MSS can be grouped into three, possibly four, families that share certain characteristics.
  - a. Alexandrian text from Egypt
    - (1) P<sup>75</sup>, P<sup>66</sup> (about A.D. 200), which record the Gospels
    - (2) P<sup>46</sup> (about A.D. 225), which records Paul's letters
    - (3) P<sup>72</sup> (about A.D. 225-250), which records Peter and Jude
    - (4) Codex B, called Vaticanus (about A.D. 325), which includes the whole OT and NT
    - (5) Origen quotes from this text type
    - (6) other MSS which show this text type are  $\aleph$ , C, L, W, 33
  - b. Western text from North Africa
    - (1) quotes from North African church fathers, Tertullian, Cyprian, and the Old Latin translation
    - (2) quotes from Irenaeus
    - (3) quotes from Tatian and Old Syriac translation
    - (4) Codex D "Bezae" follow this text type
  - c. Eastern Byzantine text from Constantinople
    - (1) this text type is reflected in over 80% of the 5,300 MSS
    - (2) quoted by Antioch of Syria's church fathers, Cappadoceans, Chrysostom, and Therodoret
    - (3) Codex A, in the Gospels only
    - (4) Codex E (eighth century) for full NT
  - d. the fourth possible type is "Caesarean" from Palestine
    - (1) it is primarily seen only in Mark

(2) some witnesses to it are P<sup>45</sup> and W

II. Brief explanation of the problems and theories of "lower criticism" or "textual criticism."

A. How the variants occurred

1. inadvertent or accidental (vast majority of occurrences)
  - a. slip of the eye in hand copying which reads the second instance of two similar words and, thereby, omits all of the words in between (homoioteleuton)
    - (1) slip of the eye in omitting a double letter word or phrase (haplography)
    - (2) slip of the mind in repeating a phrase or line of a Greek text (dittography)
  - b. slip of the ear in hand copying by oral dictation where a misspelling occurs (itacism). Often the misspelling implies or spells a similar sounding Greek word.
  - c. the earliest Greek texts had no chapter or verse divisions, little or no punctuation and no division between words. It is possible to divide the letters in different places forming different words.
2. intentional
  - a. changes were made to improve the grammatical form of the text copied
  - b. changes were made to bring the text into conformity with other biblical texts (harmonization of parallels)
  - c. changes were made by combining two or more variant readings into one long combined text (conflation)
  - d. changes were made to correct a perceived problem in the text (cf. I Cor. 11:27 and I John 5:7-8)
  - e. some additional information as to the historical setting or proper interpretation of the text was placed in the margin by one scribe but placed into the text by a second scribe (cf. John 5:4)

B. The basic tenets of textual criticism (logical guidelines for determining the original reading of a text when variants exist)

1. the most awkward or grammatically unusual text is probably the original
2. the shortest text is probably the original
3. the older text is given more weight because of its historical proximity to the original, everything else being equal
4. MSS that are geographically diverse usually have the original reading
5. doctrinally weaker texts, especially those relating to major theological discussions of the period of manuscript changes like the Trinity in I John 5:7-8, are to be preferred.
6. the text that can best explain the origin of the other variants
7. two quotes that help show the balance in these troubling variants
  - a. J. Harold Greenlee's book, *Introduction to New Testament Textual Criticism*, p. 68:  
"No Christian doctrine hangs upon a debatable text; and the student of the NT must beware of wanting his text to be more orthodox or doctrinally stronger than is the inspired original."
  - b. W. A. Criswell told Greg Garrison of *The Birmingham News* that he (Criswell) doesn't believe every word in the Bible is inspired, "at least not every word that has been given to the modern public by centuries of translators." Criswell said: "I very much am a believer in the textual criticism. As such, I think, the last half of the 16th chapter of Mark is heresy: it's not inspired, it's just concocted...When you compare those manuscripts way back yonder, there was no such thing as that conclusion of the Book of Mark. Somebody added it..."



The patriarch of the SBC inerrantists also claimed that "interpolation" is also evident in John 5, the account of Jesus at the pool of Bethesda. And he discusses the two different accounts of the suicide of Judas (cf. Matt. 27 and Acts 1): "It's just a different view of the suicide," Criswell said. "If it is in the Bible, there is an explanation for it. And the two accounts of the suicide of Judas are in the Bible." Criswell added, "Textual criticism is a wonderful science in itself. It is not ephemeral, it's not impertinent. It's dynamic and central..."

### III. Manuscript problems (textual criticism)

#### A. Suggested sources for further reading

1. *Biblical Criticism: Historical, Literary and Textual*, by R.H. Harrison
2. *The Text of the New Testament: Its Transmission, Corruption and Restoration* by Bruce M. Metzger
3. *Introduction to New Testament Textual Criticism*, by J. H Greenlee

# APPENDIX THREE

## BRIEF DEFINITIONS OF GREEK GRAMMATICAL TERMS

Koine Greek, often called Hellenistic Greek, was the common language of the Mediterranean world beginning with Alexander the Great's (336-323 B.C.) conquest and lasting about eight hundred years (300 B.C.- A.D. 500). It was not just a simplified, classical Greek, but in many ways a newer form of Greek that became the second language of the ancient near east and Mediterranean world.

The Greek of the New Testament was unique in some ways because its users, except Luke and the author of Hebrews, probably used Aramaic as their primary language. Therefore, their writing was influenced by the idioms and structural forms of Aramaic. Also, they read and quoted the Septuagint (Greek translation of the OT) which was also written in Koine Greek. But the Septuagint was also written by Jewish scholars whose mother tongue was not Greek.

This serves as a reminder that we cannot push the New Testament into a tight grammatical structure. It is unique and yet has much in common with (1) the Septuagint; (2) Jewish writings such as those of Josephus; and (3) the papyri found in Egypt. How then do we approach a grammatical analysis of the New Testament?

The grammatical features of Koine Greek and New Testament Koine Greek are fluid. In many ways it was a time of simplification of grammar. Context will be our major guide. Words only have meaning in a larger context, therefore, grammatical structure can only be understood in light of (1) a particular author's style; and (2) a particular context. No conclusive definitions of Greek forms and structures are possible.

Koine Greek was primarily a verbal language. Often the key to interpretation is the type and form of the verbals. In most main clauses the verb will occur first, showing its preeminence. In analyzing the Greek verb three pieces of information must be noted: (1) the basic emphasis of the tense, voice and mood (accidence or morphology); (2) the basic meaning of the particular verb (lexicography); and (3) the flow of the context (syntax).

### I. TENSE

- A. Tense or aspect involves the relationship of the verbs to completed action or incomplete action. This is often called "perfective" and "imperfective."
  - 1. Perfective tenses focus on the occurrence of an action. No further information is given except that something happened! Its start, continuation or culmination is not addressed.
  - 2. Imperfective tenses focus on the continuing process of an action. It can be described in terms of linear action, durative action, progressive action, etc.
  
- B. Tenses can be categorized by how the author sees the action as progressing
  - 1. It occurred = AORIST
  - 2. It occurred and the results abide = PERFECT
  - 3. It was occurring in the past and the results were abiding, but not now = PLUPERFECT
  - 4. It is occurring = PRESENT
  - 5. It was occurring = IMPERFECT
  - 6. It will occur = FUTURE

A concrete example of how these tenses help in interpretation would be the term "save." It was used in several different tenses to show both its process and culmination:

1. AORIST - "saved" (cf. Rom. 8:24)
2. PERFECT - "have been saved and the result continues" (cf. Eph. 2:5,8)
3. PRESENT - "being saved" (cf. I Cor. 1:18; 15:2)
4. FUTURE - "shall be saved" (cf. Rom. 5:9, 10; 10:9)

C. In focusing on verb tenses, interpreters look for the reason the original author chose to express himself in a certain tense. The standard "no frills" tense was the AORIST. It was the regular "unspecific," "unmarked," or "unflagged" verb form. It can be used in a wide variety of ways which the context must specify. It simply was stating that something occurred. The past time aspect is only intended in the INDICATIVE MOOD. If any other tense was used, something more specific was being emphasized. But what?

1. PERFECT TENSE. This speaks of a completed action with abiding results. In some ways it was a combination of the AORIST and PRESENT TENSES. Usually the focus is on the abiding results or the completion of an act (example: Eph. 2:5 & 8, "you have been and continue to be saved").
2. PLUPERFECT TENSE. This was like the PERFECT except the abiding results have ceased. Example: John 18:16 "Peter was standing at the door outside."
3. PRESENT TENSE. This speaks of an incomplete or imperfect action. The focus is usually on the continuation of the event. Example: I John 3:6 & 9, "Everyone abiding in Him does not continue sinning." "Everyone having been begotten of God does not continue to commit sin."
4. IMPERFECT TENSE. In this tense the relationship to the PRESENT TENSE is analogous to the relationship between the PERFECT and the PLUPERFECT. The IMPERFECT speaks of incomplete action that was occurring but has now ceased or the beginning of an action in the past. Example: Matt. 3:5, "then all Jerusalem were continuing to go out to him" or "then all Jerusalem began to go out to him."
5. FUTURE TENSE. This speaks of an action that was usually projected into a future time frame. It focused on the potential for an occurrence rather than an actual occurrence. It often speaks of the certainty of the event. Example: Matt. 5:4-9, "Blessed are...they will...."

## II. VOICE

- A. Voice describes the relationship between the action of the verb and its subject.
- B. ACTIVE VOICE was the normal, expected, unemphasized way to assert that the subject was performing the action of the verb.
- C. The PASSIVE VOICE means that the subject was receiving the action of the verb produced by an outside agent. The outside agent producing the action was indicated in the Greek NT by the following prepositions and cases:
  1. a personal direct agent by *hupo* with the ABLATIVE CASE (cf. Matt. 1:22; Acts 22:30).
  2. a personal intermediate agent by *dia* with the ABLATIVE CASE (cf. Matt. 1:22).
  3. an impersonal agent usually by *en* with the INSTRUMENTAL CASE.
  4. sometimes either a personal or impersonal agent by the INSTRUMENTAL CASE alone.

- D. The MIDDLE VOICE means that the subject produces the action of the verb and is also directly involved in the action of the verb. It is often called the voice of heightened personal interest. This construction emphasized the subject of the clause or sentence in some way. This construction is not found in English. It has a wide possibility of meanings and translations in Greek. Some examples of the form are:
1. REFLEXIVE - the direct action of the subject on itself. Example: Matt. 27:5 "hanged himself."
  2. INTENSIVE - the subject produces the action for itself. Example: II Cor. 11:14 "Satan himself masquerades as an angel of light."
  3. RECIPROCAL - the interplay of two subjects. Example: Matt. 26:4 "they counseled with one another."

### III. MOOD (or "MODE")

- A. There are four moods in Koine Greek. They indicate the relation of the verb to reality, at least within the author's own mind. The moods are divided into two broad categories: that which indicated reality (INDICATIVE) and that which indicated potentiality (SUBJUNCTIVE, IMPERATIVE and OPTATIVE).
- B. The INDICATIVE MOOD was the normal mood for expressing action that had occurred or was occurring, at least in the author's mind. It was the only Greek mood that expressed a definite time, and even here this aspect was secondary.
- C. The SUBJUNCTIVE MOOD expressed probable future action. Something had not yet happened but the chances were likely that it would. It had much in common with the FUTURE INDICATIVE. The difference was that the SUBJUNCTIVE expresses some degree of doubt. In English this is often expressed by the terms "could," "would," "may," or "might."
- D. The OPTATIVE MOOD expressed a wish which was theoretically possible. It was considered one step further from reality than the SUBJUNCTIVE. The OPTATIVE expressed possibility under certain conditions. The OPTATIVE was rare in the New Testament. Its most frequent usage is Paul's famous phrase, "May it never be" (KJV, "God forbid"), used fifteen times (cf. Rom. 3:4, 6, 31; 6:2, 15; 7:7, 13; 9:14; 11:1, 11; I Cor. 6:15; Gal. 2:17; 3:21; 6:14). Other examples are found in Luke 1:38, 20:16, Acts 8:20, and I Thess. 3:11.
- E. The IMPERATIVE MOOD emphasized a command which was possible, but the emphasis was on the intent of the speaker. It asserted only volitional possibility and was conditioned on the choices of another. There was a special use of the IMPERATIVE in prayers and 3rd person requests. These commands were found only in the PRESENT and AORIST tenses in the NT.
- F. Some grammars categorize PARTICIPLES as another type of mood. They are very common in the Greek NT, usually defined as verbal adjectives. They are translated in conjunction with the main verb to which they relate. A wide variety was possible in translating participles. It is best to consult several English translations. *The Bible in Twenty Six Translations* published by Baker is a great help here.

- G. The AORIST ACTIVE INDICATIVE was the normal or "unmarked" way to record an occurrence. Any other tense, voice or mood had some specific interpretive significance that the original author wanted to communicate.

IV. For the person not familiar with Greek the following study aids will provide the needed information:

- A. Friberg, Barbara and Timothy. *Analytical Greek New Testament*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1988.
- B. Marshall, Alfred. *Interlinear Greek-English New Testament*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1976.
- C. Mounce, William D. *The Analytical Lexicon to the Greek New Testament*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1993.
- D. Summers, Ray. *Essentials of New Testament Greek*. Nashville: Broadman, 1950.
- E. Academically accredited Koine Greek correspondence courses are available through Moody Bible Institute in Chicago, IL.

## V. NOUNS

- A. Syntactically, nouns are classified by case. Case was that inflected form of a noun that showed its relationship to the verb and other parts of the sentence. In Koine Greek many of the case functions were indicated by prepositions. Since the case form was able to identify several different relationships, the prepositions developed to give clearer separation to these possible functions.
- B. Greek cases are categorized in the following eight ways:
  1. The NOMINATIVE CASE was used for naming and it usually was the subject of the sentence or clause. It was also used for predicate nouns and adjectives with the linking verbs "to be" or "become."
  2. The GENITIVE CASE was used for description and usually assigned an attribute or quality to the word to which it was related. It answered the question, "What kind?" It was often expressed by the use of the English preposition "of."
  3. The ABLATIVE CASE used the same inflected form as the GENITIVE, but it was used to describe separation. It usually denoted separation from a point in time, space, source, origin or degree. It was often expressed by the use of the English preposition "from."
  4. The DATIVE CASE was used to describe personal interest. This could denote a positive or negative aspect. Often this was the indirect object. It was often expressed by the English preposition "to."
  5. The LOCATIVE CASE was the same inflected form as the DATIVE, but it described position or location in space, time or logical limits. It was often expressed by the English prepositions "in, on, at, among, during, by, upon, and beside."
  6. The INSTRUMENTAL CASE was the same inflected form as the DATIVE and LOCATIVE cases. It expressed means or association. It was often expressed by the English prepositions, "by" or "with."
  7. The ACCUSATIVE CASE was used to describe the conclusion of an action. It expressed limitation. Its main use was the direct object. It answered the question, "How far?" or "To what extent?"

8. The VOCATIVE CASE was used for direct address.

## VI. CONJUNCTIONS AND CONNECTORS

- A. Greek is a very precise language because it has so many connectives. They connect thoughts (clauses, sentences, and paragraphs). They are so common that their absence (asyndeton) is often exegetically significant. As a matter of fact, these conjunctions and connectors show the direction of the author's thought. They often are crucial in determining what exactly he is trying to communicate.
- B. Here is a list of some of the conjunctions and connectors and their meanings (this information has been gleaned mostly from H. E. Dana and Julius K. Mantey's *A Manual Grammar of the Greek New Testament*).
1. Time connectors
    - a. *epei, epeidē, hopote, hōs, hote, hotan* (subj.) - "when"
    - b. *heōs* - "while"
    - c. *hotan, epan* (subj.) - "whenever"
    - d. *heōs, achri, mechri* (subj.) - "until"
    - e. *priv* (infin.) - "before"
    - d. *hōs* - "since," "when," "as"
  2. Logical connectors
    - a. Purpose
      - (1) *hina* (subj.), *hopōs* (subj.), *hōs* - "in order that," "that"
      - (2) *hōste* (articular accusative infinitive) - "that"
      - (3) *pros* (articular accusative infinitive) or *eis* (articular accusative infinitive) - "that"
    - b. Result (there is a close association between the grammatical forms of purpose and result)
      - (1) *hōste* (infinitive, this is the most common) - "in order that," "thus"
      - (2) *hiva* (subj.) - "so that"
      - (3) *ara* - "so"
    - c. Causal or reason
      - (1) *gar* (cause/effect or reason/conclusion) - "for," "because"
      - (2) *dioti, hotiy* - "because"
      - (3) *epei, epeidē, hōs* - "since"
      - (4) *dia* (with accusative) and (with articular infin.) - "because"
    - d. Inferential
      - (1) *ara, poinun, hōste* - "therefore"
      - (2) *dio* (strongest inferential conjunction) - "on which account," "wherefore," "therefore"
      - (3) *oun* - "therefore," "so," "then," "consequently"
      - (4) *toinoun* - "accordingly"
    - e. Adversative or contrast
      - (1) *alla* (strong adversative) - "but," "except"
      - (2) *de* - "but," "however," "yet," "on the other hand"
      - (3) *kai* - "but"
      - (4) *mentoi, oun* - "however"
      - (5) *plēn* - "never-the-less" (mostly in Luke)
      - (6) *oun* - "however"
    - f. Comparison

- (1) *hōs, kathōs* (introduce comparative clauses)
- (2) *kata* (in compounds, *katho, kathoti, kathōsper, kathaper*)
- (3) *hosos* (in Hebrews)
- (4) *ē* - "than"
- g. Continuative or series
  - (1) *de* - "and," "now"
  - (2) *kai* - "and"
  - (3) *tei* - "and"
  - (4) *hina, oun* - "that"
  - (5) *oun* - "then" (in John)
3. Emphatic usages
  - a. *alla* - "certainty," "yea," "in fact"
  - b. *ara* - "indeed," "certainly," "really"
  - c. *gar* - "but really," "certainly," "indeed"
  - d. *de* - "indeed"
  - e. *ean* - "even"
  - f. *kai* - "even," "indeed," "really"
  - g. *mentoi* - "indeed"
  - h. *oun* - "really," "by all means"

## VII. CONDITIONAL SENTENCES

- A. A **CONDITIONAL SENTENCE** is one that contains one or more conditional clauses. This grammatical structure aids interpretation because it provides the conditions, reasons or causes why the action of the main verb does or does not occur. There were four types of conditional sentences. They move from that which was assumed to be true from the author's perspective or for his purpose to that which was only a wish.
- B. The **FIRST CLASS CONDITIONAL SENTENCE** expressed action or being which was assumed to be true from the writer's perspective or for his purposes even though it was expressed with an "if." In several contexts it could be translated "since" (cf. Matt. 4:3; Rom. 8:31). However, this does not mean to imply that all **FIRST CLASSES** are true to reality. Often they were used to make a point in an argument or to highlight a fallacy (cf. Matt. 12:27).
- C. The **SECOND CLASS CONDITIONAL SENTENCE** is often called "contrary to fact." It states something that was untrue to reality to make a point. Examples:
  1. "If He were really a prophet which He is not, He would know who and of what character the woman is who is clinging to Him, but He does not" (Luke 7:39)
  2. "If you really believed Moses, which you do not, you would believe me, which you do not" (John 5:46)
  3. "If I were still trying to be pleasing to men, which I am not, I would not be a slave of Christ at all, which I am" (Gal. 1:10)
- D. The **THIRD CLASS** speaks of possible future action. It often assumes the probability of that action. It usually implies a contingency. The action of the main verb is contingent on the action in the "if" clause. Examples from I John: 1:6-10; 2:4,6,9,15,20,21,24,29; 3:21; 4:20; 5:14,16.

- E. The FOURTH CLASS is the farthest removed from possibility. It is rare in the NT. As a matter of fact, there is no complete FOURTH CLASS CONDITIONAL SENTENCE in which both parts of the condition fit the definition. An example of a partial FOURTH CLASS is the opening clause in I Pet. 3:14. An example of a partial FOURTH CLASS is the concluding clause in Acts 8:31.

## VIII. PROHIBITIONS

- A. The PRESENT IMPERATIVE with MĒ PARTICLE often (but not exclusively) has the emphasis of stopping an act already in process. Examples: "stop storing up your riches on earth. . ." (Matt. 6:19); "stop worrying about your life. . ." (Matt. 6:25); "stop offering to sin the parts of your bodies as instruments of wrongdoing. . ." (Rom. 6:13); "you must stop offending the Holy Spirit of God. . ." (Eph. 4:30); and "stop getting drunk on wine. . ." (5:18).
- B. The AORIST SUBJUNCTIVE with MĒ PARTICLE has the emphasis of "do not even begin or start an act." Example: "Do not even begin to suppose that. . ." (Matt. 5:17); "never start to worry. . ." (Matt. 6:31); "you must never be ashamed. . ." (II Tim. 1:8).
- C. The DOUBLE NEGATIVE with the SUBJUNCTIVE MOOD is a very emphatic negation. "Never, no never" or "not under any circumstance." Examples: "he will never, no never experience death" (John 8:51); "I will never, no, never. . ." (I Cor. 8:13).

## IX. THE ARTICLE

- A. In Koine Greek the definite article "the" had a use similar to English. Its basic function was that of "a pointer," a way to draw attention to a word, name or phrase. The use varies from author to author in the New Testament. The definite article could also function
1. as a contrasting device like a demonstrative pronoun;
  2. as a sign to refer to a previously introduced subject or person;
  3. as a way to identify the subject in a sentence with a linking verb. Examples: "God is Spirit" (John 4:24); "God is light" (I John 1:5); "God is love" (4:8,16).
- B. Koine Greek did not have an indefinite article like the English "a" or "an." The absence of the definite article could mean
1. a focus on the characteristics or quality of something;
  2. a focus on the category of something.
- C. The NT authors varied widely as to how the article was employed.

## X. WAYS OF SHOWING EMPHASIS IN THE GREEK NEW TESTAMENT

- A. The techniques for showing emphasis vary from author to author in the New Testament. The most consistent and formal writers were Luke and the author of Hebrews.
- B. We have stated earlier that the AORIST ACTIVE INDICATIVE was standard and unmarked for emphasis, but any other tense, voice or mood had interpretive significance. This is not to imply that the AORIST ACTIVE INDICATIVE was not often used in a significant grammatical sense. (Example: Rom. 6:10 [twice]).



### C. Word order in Koine Greek

1. Koine Greek was an inflected language which was not dependent, like English, on word order. Therefore, the author could vary the normal expected order to show
  - a. what the author wanted to emphasize to the reader;
  - b. what the author thought would be surprising to the reader;
  - c. what the author felt deeply about.
2. The normal word order in Greek is still an unsettled issue. However, the supposed normal order is:
  - a. for linking verbs
    - (1) verb
    - (2) subject
    - (3) complement
  - b. for transitive verbs
    - (1) verb
    - (2) subject
    - (3) object
    - (4) indirect object
    - (5) prepositional phrase
  - c. for noun phrases
    - (1) noun
    - (2) modifier
    - (3) prepositional phrase
3. Word order can be an extremely important exegetical point. Examples:
  - a. "right hand they gave to me and Barnabas of fellowship." The phrase "right hand of fellowship" is split and fronted to show its significance (Gal. 2:9).
  - b. "with Christ" was placed first. His death was central (Gal. 2:20).
  - c. "It was bit by bit and in many different ways" (Heb. 1:1) was placed first. It was how God revealed Himself that was being contrasted, not the fact of revelation.

### D. Usually some degree of emphasis was shown by

1. The repetition of the pronoun which was already present in the verb's inflected form. Example: "I, myself, will surely be with you. . ." (Matt. 28:20).
2. The absence of an expected conjunction, or other connecting device between words, phrases, clauses or sentences. This is called an asyndeton ("not bound"). The connecting device was expected, so its absence would draw attention. Examples:
  - a. The Beatitudes, Matt. 5:3ff (emphasized the list)
  - b. John 14:1 (new topic)
  - c. Romans 9:1 (new section)
  - d. II Cor. 12:20 (emphasize the list)
3. The repetition of words or phrases present in a given context. Examples: "to the praise of His glory" (Eph. 1:6, 12 & 14). This phrase was used to show the work of each person of the Trinity.
4. The use of an idiom or word (sound) play between terms
  - a. euphemisms - substitute words for taboo subjects, like "sleep" for death (John 11:11-14) or "feet" for male genitalia (Ruth 3:7-8; I Sam. 24:3).
  - b. circumlocutions - substitute words for God's name, like "Kingdom of heaven" (Matt. 3:21) or "a voice from heaven" (Matt. 3:17).

- c. figures of speech
    - (1) impossible exaggerations (Matt. 3:9; 5:29-30; 19:24)
    - (2) mild over statements (Matt. 3:5; Acts 2:36)
    - (3) personifications (I Cor. 15:55)
    - (4) irony (Gal. 5:12)
    - (5) poetic passages (Phil. 2:6-11)
    - (6) sound plays between words
      - (a) "church"
        - (i) "church" (Eph. 3:21)
        - (ii) "calling" (Eph. 4:1,4)
        - (iii) "called" (Eph. 4:1,4)
      - (b) "free"
        - (i) "free woman" (Gal. 4:31)
        - (ii) "freedom" (Gal. 5:1)
        - (iii) "free" (Gal. 5:1)
  - d. idiomatic language - language which is usually cultural and language specific:
    - (1) figurative use of "food." (John 4:31-34)
    - (2) figurative use of "Temple." (John 2:19; Matt. 26:61)
    - (3) Hebrew idiom of compassion, "hate." (Gen. 29:31; Deut. 21:15; Luke 14:36; John 12:25; Rom. 9:13)
    - (4) "All" versus "many." Compare Isa. 53:6 ("all") with 53:11 & 12 ("many.") The terms are synonymous as Rom. 5:18 and 19 show.
  - 5. The use of a full linguistic phrase instead of a single word. Example: "The Lord Jesus Christ."
  - 6. The special use of *autos*
    - a. when with the article (attributive position) it was translated "same."
    - b. when without the article (predicate position) it was translated as an intensive reflexive pronoun—"himself," "herself" or "itself."
- E. The non-Greek reading Bible student can identify emphasis in several ways:
- 1. The use of an analytical lexicon and interlinear Greek/English text.
  - 2. The comparison of English translations, particularly from the differing theories of translations. Example: comparing a "word for word" translation (KJV, NKJV, ASV, NASB, RSV, NRSV) with a "dynamic equivalent" (Williams, NIV, NEB, REB, JB, NJB, TEV). A good help here would be *The Bible in Twenty-Six Translations* published by Baker.
  - 3. The use of *The Emphasized Bible* by Joseph Bryant Rotherham (Kregel, 1994).
  - 4. The use of a very literal translation
    - a. *The American Standard Version* of 1901
    - b. *Young's Literal Translation of the Bible* by Robert Young (Guardian Press, 1976).

The study of grammar is tedious but necessary for proper interpretation. These brief definitions, comments and examples are meant to encourage and equip non-Greek reading persons to use the grammatical notes provided in this volume. Surely these definitions are oversimplified. They should not be used in a dogmatic, inflexible manner, but as stepping stones toward a greater understanding of New Testament syntax. Hopefully these definitions will also enable readers to understand the comments of other study aids such as technical commentaries on the New Testament.

We must be able to verify our interpretation based on items of information found in the texts of the Bible. Grammar is one of the most helpful of these items; other items would include historical setting, literary context, contemporary word usage, and parallel passages.