

# NEW TESTAMENT SURVEY

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## I. INTRODUCTION.

Among Christians there has always been the conviction that a broad knowledge of the Bible is necessary for one's basic education and for preservation from error.

Bible survey is fundamental to all Bible study. If one is expected to comprehend any part or doctrine of the Scriptures, he must first know what they teach as a whole. Each book is a part of the whole, and can be fully understood only when it is seen in relation to the entire stream of divine revelation that begins with Genesis and ends with Revelation. And the message of the New Testament can best be apprehended when one has some comprehension of the world into which it first came.

[Terms: New Testament (Greek **diatheke**) = "**covenant**". Luke 22:19-21, the New Covenant. (Replaces the Old Covenant--Exodus 24:1-8, the establishment of God's blood covenant with Israel.) Hebrews 9:6-13, the end of the Old Covenant and issuance in of the New Covenant.]

## II. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND.

### A. Important Dates and Events:

1. **586 BC . . . Jerusalem and Temple destroyed.**  
Temple plundered, walls of city leveled, population taken captive into Babylon (cf. Jer. 39:4-10), and the 70-year period of Babylonian captivity begins. Synagogue worship began during period of Babylonian captivity. No Temple (and no sacrifice)! The faithful Jews formed congregations, appointed teachers, and the study of the law became a substitute for sacrifices, etc. According to Josephus, synagogues began between 606 and 536 BC. (From 586 BC until 1947 AD, the Jews were under foreign dominion.)
2. **538 BC . . . Fall of Babylon.**  
Cyrus, King of Persia captures Babylon by diverting the Euphrates, and marching his armies in on the dry riverbed. Beginning of Medo-Persian era of domination.
3. **536 BC . . . Jews allowed to return to homeland and rebuild.** (Most Jews decided to stay in Babylon.) After overcoming numerous obstacles, opposition and many delays, Temple rebuilt and worship resumed in 516 BC (cf. Ezra 2:2; Neh 7:6-7).
4. **331 BC . . . Greek rule begins over Palestine with conquests of Alexander the Great.** Beginning of "Hellenism", the absorption of Greek culture, art, language, morality, and worldliness by Jews. LXX (Septuagint) published during this period. According to tradition, completed by 72 elders in 72 days. Became widely distributed by time of Christ. The Bible of the early Church.
5. **324 BC ...The death of Alexander the Great at the ripe of age of 32**
6. **250 BC . . . Approximate date the Septuagint (LXX) produced.**
7. **63 BC . . . Roman rule begins in Palestine** with the conquests of Roman General Pompey. Rome establishes law and order with an "iron fist".  
[NOTE: Though Rome had become the supreme military power, "Hellenism" (the Greek influence) was firmly established. Greek slaves, many of whom were more learned than their masters, became part of Roman households. Often, they were not only employed in menial tasks, but ere teachers, physicians, accountants, managers and overseers of farms and estates. The famous Greek universities of Athens, Rhodes, Tarsus and other

cities were attended by aristocratic young Romans who learned to speak Greek, which became the language of culture, diplomacy and refinement. While Rome conquered with their might, the Greeks conquered with their culture. So thorough was their Hellenic victory that Rome itself became a Greek speaking city. Greek customs and manners were adopted, Greek architecture became commonplace, and the Greek language became the language of the Court and the common people. In this manner, with a universal language as a means of communication, the world was prepared for the rapid communication of the Gospel. Furthermore, Rome established a system of roads (still extant), which enabled the Gospel to spread quickly after the death of Christ.]

8. **44 BC . . . Julius Caesar assassinated.**
9. **37 BC . . . Herod the Great becomes king.**  
One of the bloodiest figures of ancient times. Jealous over the popularity of Aristobulus the High Priest, Herod had him drowned. Murdered his wife's uncle, then murdered his wife, Mariamne. Remorseful, but fearing plots on his life, he ordered the execution of his mother-in-law, Alexandra. In **21 BC**, Herod married another Mariamne. Ordered the execution of his first two sons by first wife. Then murdered his son, Antipater. Herod was so blood thirsty, Augustus said he would rather be Herod's god than his son.
10. **19 BC . . . Herod rebuilds the Temple.** The Temple had fallen badly into decay after being rebuilt under Zerubbabel some 500 years previous. Various wars and plunderings had reduced it virtually to ruins. It had been decimated by wars with the Syrians under Antiochus Epiphanes (175-163 BC); by Pompey (63 BC) who had laid a 3-month siege to the city and then ravaged it; Crassus plundered it again in 54 BC, and Herod himself damaged it in 37 BC when he stormed Jerusalem. This Temple, rebuilt on its original site for the third time, would be the Temple of Jesus' day.
11. **5 BC . . . The birth of Jesus.**
12. **4 BC . . . Herod's death.** This was the Herod who ordered the Bethlehem massacre (Matt. 2:1-18).
13. **4 BC - AD 39 . . . Herod Antipas rules.**  
Jesus referred to him as "that fox" (Luke 13:32), or more exactly, "that vixen" (undoubtedly due to his slyness, craftiness, and vindictiveness). By religion, Jew (he attended the feast of the Passover, Luke 23:7). Murderer of John the Baptist (Matt. 14:1-12;

Mark 6:14-29; Luke 3:19), and the Herod before whom Jesus was tried (Luke 23:7-12).

14. **29 AD . . . Approximate date Jesus Crucified, buried, resurrected.**
15. **37-44 AD . . . Herod Agrippa rules.**  
Devoted to Judaism, became one of Christianity's first persecutors. Executed James (the brother of John and son of Zebedee, Acts 12:20, and arrested Peter, who escaped only by supernatural intervention (cf. Acts 12:1-11).
16. **44 AD . . . Herod Agrippa dies suddenly** (Acts 12:20-23).
17. **54 AD . . . Nero becomes Emperor of Rome.**  
"The great persecutor" of Christians. Murdered his mother. Set fire to Rome (64 AD) in order to clear the way for his new palace, and blames Christians. Great persecutions of the Church began. Tradition say both Peter and Paul were martyred during this persecutions.
19. **70 AD . . . Jerusalem destroyed** by Roman General Titus (as prophesied by Jesus in Luke 21:20-24). Israel is scattered to the four corners of the world, and ceases to exist as a nation. Not to be "reborn" until 1948.

## **B. The Rise of the Jewish Sects between the Testaments:**

These sects do not exist in the Old Testament, but appear suddenly in the New Testament. Where do they come from? They arose during the 400-year inter-testament period.

1. **Chasidim** (Hasideans).  
Orthodox Jews who opposed the Hellenization of Palestine. Strict adherents to the letter of the law, they chose to allow themselves to be slaughtered rather than to lift a hand to defend themselves on the Sabbath day.
2. **Essenes** (lit. "pious ones").  
A monastic, ascetic order of men. Rejected temple worship, were zealous for the law. Had own priesthood, opposed Hellenization. Theologically similar to Pharisees. Lived in Quman area, where Dead Sea scrolls found. Never mentioned in Gospels.
3. **Pharisees** (separated ones).

Largest and most influential of the sects in New Testament times. Separatists or Puritans, opposed Greek influences, and separated themselves from the more worldly Jews. Zealous for the law. Attached great value to oral law and traditions which they observed scrupulously. Believed in angels, spirits, immortality of the soul and resurrection of the body. Meticulous in the practices of fasting, tithing, prayers, Sabbath keeping, etc. (cf. Matt. 23:23; Luke 12:42; Matt. 12:1-2). Though Pharisaism tended toward self-righteousness and hypocrisy, not all Pharisees were hypocrites. Some were good men (Joseph of Arimathea, Nicodemus), and its moral and spiritual standards were high in comparison with the average of their day. Of all Jewish sects, only Pharisaism survives. It was the foundation of modern, orthodox Judaism.

4. **Sadducees** ("Righteous Ones").  
The "liberals" or "modernists" of their day. Did not believe in the resurrection (Acts 23:8; Matt. 22:23), angels, immortality, the supernatural or spirits. Less numerous than the Pharisees, but possessed more political clout and were the governing group in the civil life of Judaism under the Herods. Controlled the Jewish Sanhedrin. High priest was always a Sadducee. Did not believe in the inspiration of the Old Testament Scriptures, except for the Pentateuch. Did not oppose Hellenism. Jesus never had many run-ins with the Sadducees. Unlike the Pharisees, they did not survive the destruction of Jerusalem by Rome.
5. **Herodians** (Matt. 22:16; Mark 3:6).  
Jewish political group devoted to furthering the cause of the Herod government.
6. **Maccabeans.**  
A priestly family that led a successful revolt against the Syrian rulers of Palestine in **167 BC**. Palestine remained independent under Jewish rule from **167 to 37 BC**. (See I and II Maccabees (Apocrypha) for history of first two centuries before Christ.)
7. **Zealots.**  
A group of fanatical nationalists who advocated violence as a means of liberation from Rome. One of Christ's disciples was formerly a zealot (Luke 6:15). They opposed Roman occupation of their land, refused to pay taxes, or to give allegiance to any flag or authority except God. Employing terrorist tactics, led an unsuccessful revolt against the Romans in **70 AD**, and were largely responsible for the destruction of Jerusalem and Israel, when in **70 AD**, in order to quell the uprising, the Roman General Titus

destroyed the entire city, crucified thousands of Jews, and scattered the remnant throughout the world.

8. **Sanhedrin** (often translated "council", Matt. 26:59; Mark 14:55, 15:1; Luke 22:66, etc.).  
The Jewish High Court, comprised of 70 elders and the High Priest. (Supposedly, 24 elders or lay leaders, 24 chief priests, 22 scribes, and the High Priest.) The highest officer was always a Sadducee. Although it had no basis in Scripture, it was the supreme religious, judicial and administrative court of the Jewish people.
9. **Synagogue.**  
Arose during Babylonian captivity. Tradition says started by Ezekiel. Wherever any 10 male Jews lived, they could start a synagogue.
10. **Scribes** ("to write").  
An office. Considered to be the guardians of the law, scribes were a class of learned men who made the study of the law and its exposition their professional occupation (these were the "lawyers" and "doctors" of the law). Scribes copied the Scriptures, and Jewish writings.
11. **Samaritans.**  
Descendants of surviving Israelites in Northern Kingdom (cf. 2 Kings 17:4-6, 24-26; John 4:19-22), who intermarried with Gentiles, and built own temple. Half Jews who believed only in the Pentateuch. Because of their "mongrel-blood", despised by the Jews.

### III. THE HOLY BIBLE AND OTHER SACRED BOOKS/ WRITINGS (LITERATURE). [Holy Bible (Latin: **Biblia Sacra**, holy or sacred books).]

#### A. Non-Canonical Literary Productions:

1. **The Talmud** (Hebrew: **to study, learn**).  
A large collection of Jewish writings comprised of two main elements:
  - a. **The Mishnah.**  
The oral law (sometimes called "the second law") as it was known up to the second century AD.
  - b. **The Gemara.**  
The interpretation of the oral law which the scholars of Babylon and Jerusalem produced between the beginning of the third century AD and the end of the fifth century.

To this day, the Talmud is the standard of Orthodox Judaism, regulative of faith and of ritual practice. It sets the interpretation of the law and is often more directly influential on beliefs and on life than is the Old Testament itself.

2. **The Apocrypha** (Greek: "hidden" or "secret").  
A collection of writings produced during the 400 year inter-testament period which were not accepted as inspired Scripture. These works could be read for information, educational, moral and historical purposes, but were not to be regarded on a par with the Bible.

**Apocryphal books include:**

- a. **I Esdras.**
- b. **II Esdras.**
- c. **Tobit.**
- d. **Judith.**
- e. **The Rest of Esther.**
- f. **The Wisdom of Solomon.**
- g. **Ecclesiasticus.**
- h. **Baruch.**
- i. **The Song of the Three Holy Children.**
- j. **The History of Susanna.**
- k. **Bel and the Dragon.**
- l. **The Prayer of Manasses.**
- m. **I Maccabees.**

n. **II Maccabees.**

While the rest of the apocryphal literature is considered inaccurate and fanciful, **I Maccabees** is considered an accurate and straightforward historical account of the revolt of Judas ben Mattathias and his sons in **168 BC**, that terminated in the defeat of the Syrians, and the rededication of the Temple (The Feast of the Dedication or the Festival of Lights, **Hannukah**).

[NOTE: The apocryphal books were included in the **LXX**, and are included in the Roman Catholic Bible. (Catholics consider them to be on an equal par with Scripture.) However, Christians have always universally rejected these books (considering them non-canonical).]

3. **The Pseudepigrapha** (False Writings).\*

A body of ancient writings which were excluded from the Old Testament, the Apocrypha, and the New Testament. Most were written under assumed names claiming to be famous men, i.e., Enoch, Thomas, Peter, etc.

a. **Old Testament Pseudepigraphal Books** include:

- (1) **The Book of Jubilees.**
- (2) **The Testament of the Twelve Patriarchs.**
- (3) **The Testament of Job.**
- (4) **The Life of Adam and Eve.**
- (5) **The Martyrdom of Isaiah.**
- (6) **The Book of Enoch.**
- (7) **The Assumption of Moses.**
- (8) **III Maccabees.**
- (9) **IV Maccabees.**
- (10) **The Apocalypse of Ezra.**
- (11) **The Apocalypse of Baruch.**
- (12) **The Sibylline Oracles.**

b. **Some New Testament Pseudepigraphal Books** include:

- (1) **The Aquarian Gospel.**
- (2) **The Gospel of Nicodemus.**
- (3) **The Gospel of Joseph the Carpenter.**
- (4) **The Gospel of Philip.**
- (5) **The Gospel of Thomas.**
- (6) **The Gospel of Barnabas.**
- (7) **The Gospel of Truth.**
- (8) **The Ebionite Gospel.**



(9) **The Passing of Mary.**

\*May sometimes be referred to as "The Lost Books of the Bible".

**B. Content and Literary Nature of the New Testament:**

1. **Content.**

The content of the New Testament consists of the revelation of God's New Covenant through the recorded words of Jesus Christ and of His followers. It comprises 27 distinct pieces of writing by eight different authors. These documents were written over a span of over half a century (probably from about 45 AD to 100 AD). The 27 books are not arranged chronologically (they were not written in the order in which they appear in the New Testament), i.e. Matthew was not written first.

2. **Literary Character.**

The books of the New Testament are arranged according to subject matter.

a. The first five books of the New Testament are historical in character. All of them narrate a story. The four Gospels sketch the life and works of Christ from different viewpoints, while Acts is a continuation of the book of Luke, and carries on the story of Jesus' followers after the close of His earthly life.

b. The following books are largely **doctrinal**:

- (1) **Romans.**
- (2) **I Corinthians.**
- (3) **II Corinthians.**
- (4) **Galatians.**
- (5) **Ephesians.**
- (6) **Philippians.**
- (7) **Colossians.**
- (8) **I Thessalonians.**
- (9) **II Thessalonians.**
- (10) **Hebrews.**
- (11) **James.**
- (12) **I Peter.**
- (13) **II Peter.**
- (14) **Jude.**
- (15) **I John.**

Most of these were written in the form of letters to churches for the purpose of instruction them in the elements of Christian belief and in the practice of Christian ethics.

c. The following books can be considered **personal**:

- (1) **I Timothy.**
- (2) **II Timothy.**
- (3) **Titus.**
- (4) **Philemon.**

And perhaps,

- (5) **II John.**
- (6) **III John** (cf. "Gaius")

Why account personal letters as Scripture? Because the early church did! These letters too, are inspired by God. their subject matter is important, and they were considered public documents since the persons addressed were engaged in church leadership. Therefore, they were accepted by the early church as Scripture and circulated by them.

d. Revelation, the last New Testament book, is considered **prophetic**. It deals with the present, the past (albeit briefly), and the future. Because of its highly symbolic style, involving visions and supernatural disclosures, it is also classed with **apocalyptic** literature.

3. **New Testament books may also be classified by authorship** as follows:

- (1) Matthew wrote **Matthew.**
- (2) Mark wrote **Mark.**
- (3) Luke wrote **Luke** and **Acts.**
- (4) John wrote five books:
  - (a) **John.**
  - (b) **I John.**
  - (c) **II John.**
  - (d) **III John.**
  - (e) **Revelation.**
- (5) James wrote **James.**
- (6) Jude wrote **Jude.**
- (7) Peter wrote two books:
  - (a) **I Peter.**
  - (b) **II Peter.**

- (8) Paul wrote fourteen books:
- (a) **Romans.**
  - (b) **I Corinthians.**
  - (c) **II Corinthians.**
  - (d) **Galatians.**
  - (e) **Ephesians.**
  - (f) **Philippians.**
  - (g) **Colossians.**
  - (h) **I Thessalonians.**
  - (i) **II Thessalonians.**
  - (j) **I Timothy.**
  - (k) **II Timothy.**
  - (l) **Titus.**
  - (m) **Philemon.**
  - (n) **Hebrews.**

**REMEMBER:** The New Testament does not appear in the order in which it was written. The **first** (oldest) book of the New Testament is **James (45 AD)**. The **last** was **Revelation (90-96 AD)**. The **first Gospel** to be written was **Mark (50 AD)**, also the shortest Gospel, the **last Gospel** was **John (90-96 AD)**.

4. **Chronological Order of the New Testament Books** (when they were written).

- (a) James - 45 AD.
- (b) Galatians - 48 AD.
- (c) I and II Thessalonians - 50 AD.
- (d) Mark - 50 AD.
- (e) I Corinthians - 55 AD.
- (f) II Corinthians and Romans - 56 AD.
- (g) Matthew and Luke - 60 AD.
- (h) Ephesians, Colossians, Philippians, Philemon - 60/61 AD.
- (i) Acts - 61 AD.
- (j) I Timothy and Titus - 62 AD.
- (k) I Peter - 64 AD.
- (l) Hebrews - 65 AD.
- (m) II Peter, Jude, II Timothy - 67 AD.  
(II Timothy was Paul's last book. He was martyred shortly thereafter, approx. 67 AD.)
- (n) John, I, II, and III John, Revelation - 90/96 AD.

C. **Languages in New Testament Times:**

There were four chief languages of the Roman world: **Latin, Greek, Hebrew and Aramaic.**

While Latin was the language of Classic Roman literature, it was largely displaced by Greek, which was spoken by the vast majority of the population. Even in Palestine Greek was prominent, and was undoubtedly used by Jesus and His disciples whenever they had to deal with Gentiles.

Aramaic was the predominant tongue of the Near East (Syrians and Jews). While the New Testament itself was written in Greek, numerous Aramaic expressions are found in it, such as "Abba" (Rom. 8:15), "Maranatha" (I Cor. 16:22). Classical Hebrew (to which Aramaic was closely related) had been a dead language since the time of Ezra. By the time of Christ, the average Jew could neither read, write, nor understand Hebrew.

When Jesus was crucified, the inscription over the Cross of Christ was written "in Hebrew (Aramaic), and in Latin, and in Greek" (John 19:20, cf. Beck, N.T.).

Because some Aramaic words are found in the Greek New Testament, some liberal critics suppose the whole New Testament was originally written in Aramaic, and later translated into Greek. We reject this theory for the following reasons:

1. There is absolutely no evidence to support the theory. There are no Aramaic scrolls or letters extant. The whole theory is based on conjecture.
2. Not all (by the time the Gospels were written) could read Aramaic, but all could read Greek.
3. Aramaic words can be expected in the New Testament because they spoke Aramaic. We commonly use words from other languages in our own. For example:
  - a. **Rapture** is from the Latin, "**rapturo**" (cf. I Thess. 4:17).
  - b. **Baptize** is a Greek word.

#### **D. Authors of the New Testament:**

1. All of the New Testament authors were Jews, with the exception of Luke.
2. Three (Matthew, Peter and John) were disciples of Jesus and members of the apostolic band.
3. James and Jude were both half-brothers of Jesus. (The James who wrote the book of James was the brother of Jesus and not the Apostle James.)

4. Luke and Paul, while not part of the original band, were will known to those who were, and wrote with the same divine inspiration.

## **E. The New Testament Canon:**

### **1. Introduction.**

Why canonize the New Testament?

- a. To preserve the original and inspired writings.
- b. To prevent non-canonical books from "slipping in".

The 27 book that comprise our New Testament are the same books the early church used and recognized as inspired Scripture. In **90 AD**, the 39 Old Testament books were pronounced canonical by the Jews. They rejected the Apocrypha. The Council of Carthage (**397 AD**) officially pronounced that the 27 New Testament books we now have are inspired Scripture. (Of course, no books could be made canonical by the pronouncement of any council.)

### **2. The True Test of Canonicity/Divine Inspiration (II Tim. 3:16-17).**

What determined whether a book was inspired?

- a. Was is **written by an apostle?** Some were not: Luke, Acts, and Mark, but they were disciples of the apostles.

[NOTE: Not all letters written by the apostles were preserved by God. John and Paul both wrote many letters. God preserved the ones He wanted to comprise our Bible.]

- b. **Usefulness.** Paul speaks of a III Corinthians. Early leaders like Peter and John (as well as Paul) wrote many letters. God preserved the ones that were useful to us.
- c. **Doctrine.** It had to be harmonious with the other books in Scripture, both Old and New Testament.
- d. **What did the apostles themselves consider inspired?** What about their disciples, and the early church?
- e. **The inner witness of Christians.**

The selection of the books of the Bible was divinely inspired and directed.

- \* 39 Old Testament books are accepted as inspired by both Jews and Christians.
- \* 27 New Testament books are accepted as inspired by Christians.
- \* 14 books found in the LXX are known as the apocrypha. These books are accepted by Roman Catholics, Anglicans, and Eastern Orthodox.
- \* Many, many Pseudepigraphal books.

### 3. **The Three-Fold Evidence of Divine Inspiration.**

#### a. **Intrinsic Content.**

The central subject of all New Testament literature is the person and work of Jesus Christ. Furthermore, there is a "supernaturalness" about the New Testament books. Others had claimed to be the Messiah, and other books had been written claiming to be from God, but while those false writings and false messiahs quickly faded away, Christianity and its literature persisted and grew more powerful. Romans 1:16-17, the Word of God is the "power of God". Its super-naturalness is seen in the transforming effect it has on people's lives, personalities and values, and its power is demonstrated in the moral nature (i.e., godliness) of those who embrace it.

#### b. **Internal Testimony.**

What do the New Testament books say of themselves? Galatians 1:11-12; I Thessalonians 2:9,13; II Peter 3:15-16.

#### c. **External Testimony.**

The universal acceptance of these documents by the early church, who considered them inspired Scripture.

#### IV. THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW (60 AD).

##### A. Author:

**Matthew Levi**, a publican (tax collector).

1. Called by Jesus to be one of the twelve apostles (Matt. 9:9; 10:3). Also called **Levi, son of Alphaeus**, (cf. Matt. 9:9-13 with Mark 2:14-17; Luke 5:27-32).
2. Little is known of Matthew except for his name and occupation. After being mentioned as an apostle in Acts 1:13, he disappears from the pages of the Bible. According to one church tradition, Matthew dies a natural death in either Ethiopia or Macedonia. Other accounts record that he was nailed to the ground and beheaded for his faith in Ethiopia, about 70 AD ("Martyrs' Mirror").

[NOTE: Nowhere is this Gospel is Matthew explicitly called its author, but all early church writers who discuss the authorship universally credit it to Matthew.]

##### B. Purpose (Two-fold)

1. To **connect** the Old Testament revelation with the New Testament revelation ( a good reason why Matthew comes first, even though it was not written first).
2. To **demonstrate**, on the basis of Old Testament Scriptures, that Jesus is the Messiah.

##### C. Unique Characteristics:

1. Written to Jews to present Jesus as the Messiah.
2. Like all Jewish histories, Matthew goes into genealogies (cf. Chapter 1).
3. Matthew devotes a large portion of his Gospel to prove that Jesus was the fulfillment of Old Testament prophecies. Some 60 times in Matthew the phrase is found, "**That it might be fulfilled....**" No other Gospel uses that phraseology. Also, Matthew quotes 19 Old Testament books in his Gospel, and is constantly connecting the Old Testament to the New.

4. The prominence of the phrase, "**the kingdom of heaven**" appears 33 times in Matthew, and appears in no other Gospel. The term, "the kingdom" appears 52 times in Matthew. Other Gospels use "the kingdom of God" but none use "**the kingdom of heaven**". Matthew makes it expressly clear that Jesus is King (cf. Ch. 2:2).
5. Matthew has the most complete account of the **Sermon on the Mount** (Chs. 5-7).
6. Appearance of the term "church" (**ecclesia**), which is unique in the Gospels. While it occurs 68 times in the Epistles, 23 times in Acts, 20 times in Revelation, and three times in the four Gospels, all three of those occurrences are in Matthew (cf. 16:18; 18:17 twice). The church is the doorway into the kingdom! And the church is an assembly of believers who will go and preach the kingdom!
7. Matthew and Luke are the only Gospels that record the account of Jesus' birth (Matt. Chs. 1-2; Luke Chs. 1-2).
8. Matthew is the Gospel of the King! The royalty of Christ is prominent. Matthew's genealogy shows His royal lineage. In Chapter 2:2, He is declared to be born "King of the Jews". Eight times He is called the "son of David" and His triumphant entry into Jerusalem has kingly significance (Ch. 21:4-9).

#### **D. Incidents, Parables and Miracles Peculiar to Matthew:**

1. **Incidents Peculiar to Matthew.**
  - a. The visit of the Magi (Ch.2:1-12). [Luke 2 records the visit of shepherds.]
  - b. The massacre of the infants (Ch. 2:16).
  - c. Flight into Egypt (Ch. 2:13-15).
  - d. The resurrection of the saints at the crucifixion of Christ (Ch. 27:52).
  - e. Bribing the guards (Ch.28:11-15).
2. **Parables Peculiar to Matthew.**
  - a. Tares (Ch. 13:24-30, 36-43).
  - b. Hidden treasure (Ch. 13:44).
  - c. Pearl of great price (Ch.13:45-46).
  - d. Dragnet (Ch. 13:47).
  - e. The laborers in the vineyard (Ch.20:1-16).
  - f. The two sons (Ch.21:28-32).



- g. The ten virgins (Ch.25:1-13).
- h. The talents (Ch.25:14-30).

3. **Miracles Peculiar to Matthew.**

- a. The two blind men (Ch. 9:27-31).
- b. The dumb demoniac (Ch. 9:32-33).
- c. The coin in the fish's mouth (Ch.17:24-27).

**E. Christ's Teaching in Matthew:**

Matthew is a teaching Gospel. It records five sizable discourses by Jesus (3/5 of Matthew's Gospel is discourse).

- 1. The **Sermon on the Mount** (Chs. 5-7).
- 2. The **call and instruction of the 12 apostles** (Ch.10).
- 3. The **parables of the kingdom** (Ch.13).
- 4. The **meaning of forgiveness** (Ch. 18).
- 5. The **consummation of the ages** (Chs. 24-25).

Matthew is the most lengthy of the Gospels, having 28 chapters (Mark has 16, Luke 24, and John 21).

**F. Outline of Matthew:**

- 1. **Introduction** (Chapters 1-2).
  - a. Genealogies (Ch.1).
  - b. Birth of Christ (Ch.2).
- 2. **Christ's Life and Ministry** (Chapters 3-25).
  - a. The ministry of John the Baptist (Ch.3).
  - b. The baptism and temptation of Jesus (Ch.4).
  - c. The sermon of the mount (Chs. 5-7).
  - d. Ministry and miracles (Chs. 8-9).
  - e. Instruction to the 12 apostles (Ch.10).
  - f. Discourse on John the Baptist (Ch. 11:1-19).
  - g. Questions and controversies (Ch. 11:20 - Ch. 12:50)

- h. Parables of the Kingdom (Ch. 13).
- i. Beheading of John the Baptist (Ch. 14:1-13).
- j. Healings and miracles (Ch. 14:14-36).
- k. Various miracles, teachings, and the establishment of the church (Chs. 15-17).
- l. Teaching on offenses and forgiveness (Ch.18).
- m. Teaching on divorce and remarriage (Ch. 19:1-12).
- n. The children and the rich young man (Ch.19:13-30).
- o. Parables, prophecies, teaching and healing (Chs.20-22).
- p. The seven woes (Ch. 23).
- q. Prophecies of the future (Chs. 24-25).
- r. The conclusion of the Gospel, last days in Jerusalem (Chs. 26-28).
  - (1) Betrayal, last supper, and trial (Ch.26:1-Ch.27:25).
  - (2) Crucifixion and burial (Ch. 27:26-66).
  - (3) Resurrection and instruction to disciples (Ch.28).

## V. THE GOSPEL OF MARK (50 AD).

### A. Author:

#### **John Mark.**

1. Relatively little is known about Mark, though his name appears some ten times in the New Testament (sometimes in Greek spelling **Marcus**). Nowhere does the book mention him by name.
2. Early church history and tradition identifies him as John Mark, the son of a well-known Christian family in Jerusalem. His mother, Mary, is mentioned in Acts 12. She was a friend of the apostles and prayer meetings were held in her home. It may have been the "headquarters" of the early Jerusalem church, for Peter sought it out immediately upon his release from jail. It may even have been the location of the "upper room" where Jesus and the disciples ate the Last Supper, and where the disciples prayed when Pentecost fell. If so, Mark was well acquainted with the leaders of the church virtually from its inception.
3. Mark was an assistant and understudy of Paul, Barnabas, and perhaps Peter. The date of his birth is unknown, but he is thought to have been about ten years younger than the apostles, making him about 20 at the time of Jesus' death.
4. His first appearance is thought to be in Mark 14:51-52, and the first definite reference to him is Acts. 12:12.
5. His first missionary journey--Acts 13:5, 13 (cf. Acts 12:12), John=Mark.
6. Mark was the source of a "split" between Paul and Barnabas (Acts 15:36-41), but was later fully reinstated to Paul's favor (II Tim 4:11).
7. Mark was a cousin to Barnabas (Col.4:10, where he is recommended by Paul to the church at Colossae), and is named as a "fellow-laborer" (Philemon 24) by Paul.
8. Mark was saved under Peter's ministry (I Peter 5:13), and is believed to have written his Gospel from Rome.

9. According to church tradition, Mark founded the churches of Alexandria, and was martyred in Rome in Nero's eighth year (about **60-61 AD**).

**B. Purpose:**

**To emphasize the great works of Jesus!**

There are only two references to the Old Testament, and was specifically addressed to Gentiles. (Each of the Gospels were written to stress different points, though they all say the same.)

**C. Unique Characteristics:**

1. Mark's Gospel is **concise**. It is brief and direct. It is the shortest of the Gospels.
2. Mark's **extensive treatment of the last week** preceding the crucifixion, and including the crucifixion (cf. Chs. 11-16).
3. The **large number of miracles** recorded in Mark (18, about the same number recorded in Matthew and Luke).
4. In contrast, **Mark has only four of the parables**, compared to 18 in Matthew and 19 in Luke.
5. The **appearance of an unidentified young man** in Chapter 14:51-52 -- the only account of this young man in the Gospels. Who is he? Tradition says it was John Mark, the writer of Mark himself!
6. The **vividness of detail** in Mark. His descriptions are colorful and picturesque (i.e., "green grass" Ch. 6:39).
7. Mark **gives no genealogy** as does Matthew and Luke. But since it was written for Gentiles, a genealogy would mean nothing to them. **Neither** is there an **incarnation narrative** (as in Matthew and Luke), **no star, angels** appearing to shepherds, **magi, boyhood incidents**, or mention of **pre-existence** (as in John).
8. There are **only 13 verses of introduction** in Mark, and then it jumps immediately into Jesus' works and ministry (compared to 76 verses of introduction in Matthew and 183 in Luke).

9. Mark is **the only Gospel to stress Jesus' withdrawals from the crowds** in order to pray, fast, be alone with the Father, etc. Whenever He returned, it was with great power, anointing and wisdom (Chs 1:35; 6:31-32).
10. The **major discourses of Jesus are deleted** making it the shortest Gospel.
  - a. The entire **Sermon on the Mount** (which belongs between verses 39-40 of Chapter 1).
  - b. The **parables of the Kingdom** in Matthew 13 are only a shadow in Mark.
  - c. The **commission and instruction of the twelve apostles** take up all of Matthew 10, but get only seven verses in Mark.
  - d. The **seven woes** to the Scribes and Pharisees in Matthew 23 go unmentioned in Mark

Mark is more the gospel of **what Jesus did**, rather than **what Jesus said**.

11. **Rapidity of action.** Twelve of the sixteen chapters begin with "And". The clear, pointed style of the Gospel and its crisp action would appeal to the Roman mind.

#### **D. Key Information:**

1. **Key Idea.**  
**The Works of Jesus.**
2. **Key Verse.**  
**Mark 10:45:** "For even the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many."
3. **Key Word.**  
**"Euthios,"** translated "immediately, straitway, forthwith, anon." is used 42 times, more times than in all the rest of the New Testament (eight times in the first chapter alone). It conveys the thought that however varied and detailed Jesus' ministry may have been, He was always hurrying toward some unseen goal which He alone envisioned.

**E. Outline of Mark:**

1. **Introduction and Preparation** (Chapters 1:1-13).
2. **Galilean Ministry** (Chapter 1:14 - Chapter 9:50) (about 1-1/2 years duration).
  - a. Jesus ministers with popularity (Ch. 1:14-Ch. 3:12).
  - b. Jesus ministers with opposition (Ch.3:13 - Ch.7:23).
  - c. The training of the twelve apostles (Ch.7:24-Ch.9:50).
3. **The Journey to Jerusalem** (Chapter 10).
4. **His Work, Suffering, and Death in Jerusalem** (Chapters 11-16).
  - a. Final days in Jerusalem (Chs. 11-13).
  - b. The passion narrative (Chs. 14-15).
  - c. Resurrection (Ch. 16:1-13).
  - d. The Great Commission (Ch. 16:14-20).

## **VI. THE GOSPEL OF LUKE (60 AD).**

### **A. Author:**

#### **Luke.**

1. All we know for certain is that Luke was Greek, a physician and a scholar, having both education and culture.
2. The content of Luke's Gospel is a literary work of art.
3. He is mentioned by name in three other New Testament books:
  - a. **Philemon 24:** Paul called him a "fellow laborer in the Gospel."
  - b. **Colossians 4:14:** Luke is referred to as "the beloved physician."
  - c. **II Timothy 4:11:** Luke is seen to be a faithful companion of Paul. References to him are found in the "we sections" of the book of Acts (cf. Acts 16:10, 16-17, 20:6ff, and throughout the remainder of Acts).
4. The place of Luke's authorship is unknown. Guesses include Rome, Caesarea, Asia Minor, and Alexandria.

### **B. Purpose:**

Luke 1:1-4. That's Luke's friend, Theophilus, might know for certain that the things which he has heard about Jesus are true. Luke's writings are the only ones written by a Gentile to a Gentile.

### **C. Unique Characteristics:**

1. The birth account of John the Baptist (Ch.1:5-25, 57-80).
2. The great detail in the birth of Christ narrative (Ch. 1:26-56).
3. The account of the angels appearing to the shepherds (Ch. 2:8-20).
4. The only childhood of Christ incident recorded (Ch.2).
5. Much poetry (especially Chs. 3-4), and the poetic prophecy of Chapter 1:42,46.

6. Extensive references to the prayers of Jesus. Six are recorded in Luke:
  - a. At His baptism
  - b. After cleansing the leper.
  - c. Before calling the twelve
  - d. At His transfiguration.
  - e/f. His two prayers from the cross.
7. The only Gospel recording these prayers (Ch. 11 "importunity"; and Ch. 18, the "unjust judge", teaching persistence and perseverance in prayer.
8. Luke's teaching on total discipleship (Ch. 9:23; Ch.14:26-35).
9. Genealogies (Ch. 3). Luke starts with Jesus, and traces His lineage back to Adam. [Matthew starts with Abraham, and progresses to Jesus. (Most conservative scholars believe that Luke's' genealogy is of Mary, and Matthew's is of Joseph.)]
10. The teaching on the intermediate state of the soul (Ch. 16:19-31).
11. The story of the encounter with Zacchaeus (Ch. 19:1-10).
12. The mocking of Jesus by Herod (Ch. 23:8-12).
13. The Emmaus Road narrative (Ch. 24:13-32).
14. The great emphasis on the doctrine of the Holy Spirit. There are more references to the Holy Spirit in Luke than in Matthew and Mark combined.

**D. Miracles, Parables and Bible Characters Peculiar to Luke:**

1. **Miracles Peculiar to Luke.**
  - a. The miraculous draught of fishes (Ch. 5:1-9).
  - b. The widow's son raised from death (Ch. 7:12-15).
  - c. The woman with the "spirit of infirmity" (Ch. 13:11-17).
  - d. The man with "dropsy" (Ch. 14:1-6).
  - e. The healing of the ten lepers (Ch. 17:11-19).



f. Restoration of man's ear (Ch. 22:50-51).

2. **Parables Peculiar to Luke.**

a. The two debtors (Ch.7:41-43)/

b. The good Samaritan (Ch. 10:30-37).

c. The rich fool (Ch. 12:16-21).

d. The barren fig tree (Ch.13:6-9).

e. The prodigal son (Ch. 15:11-32).

f. The unjust steward (Ch. 16:1-13).

g. The parable of the Pharisee and the publican (Ch. 18:9-14).

h. The parable of the ten pounds (Ch. 19:11-27).

3. **Bible Characters Peculiar to Luke.**

a. Zacharias and Elisabeth (Ch. 1).

b. Simeon (Ch. 2:25-35).

c. Anna (Ch.2:36-38).

d. Zacchaeus (Ch. 19).

e. Cleopas (Ch.24) (One of the two disciples on the Emmaus Road).

**E. Theme:**

**The character and purpose of Jesus as Savior.**

**F. Key Verse:**

Luke 19:10, "For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost."

**G. Outline of Luke:**

1. **Introduction** (Chapter 1:1-4).

2. **Nativity and Childhood of Jesus** (Chapter 1:5 - Chapter 2:52).
3. **The Ministry of John the Baptist** (Chapter 3).
4. **Jesus' Temptation in the Wilderness** (Chapter 4:1-13).
5. **Jesus' Galilean Ministry** (Chapter 4:14 - Chapter 9:50).
6. **The Journey to Jerusalem** (Chapter 9:51 - Chapter 19:44). This journey occupies two chapters in Matthew, one in Mark, and ten to Luke. Seven times we are told He "set his face towards Jerusalem."
7. **Final Days in Jerusalem** (Chapter 19:45-Chapter 22:53).
8. **Jesus' Trial and Crucifixion** (Chapter 22:54 - Chapter 23).
9. **Resurrection and Commission** (Chapter 24).

## **VII. THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES (61AD).**

### **A. Author:**

#### **Luke the Evangelist.**

1. Early church historical accounts and tradition unanimously ascribe the authorship of Acts to Luke. Irenaeus, one of the early Church Fathers (**180 AD**) quotes Acts as having been written by Luke.
2. It is addressed to the same person as Luke (Theophilus, Acts 1:1-3) and is a continuation of that Gospel.
3. The author was obviously a traveling companion of the apostle Paul (cf. "we" and "us", Chs. 16:10, 16-17; 20:6ff; 27:1ff, etc.).
4. Acts is written in the same high literary style of Luke, revealing that its author was well educated, well traveled, and a keen observer.

### **B. Purpose:**

Luke 1:1-4; Acts 1:1-3.

1. Acts is a continuation of the history of the Gospels. Not other New Testament book "bridges the gap" between the Gospels and the more sophisticated, organized church of the epistles. Thus, it provides invaluable insight into the history and development of the early church.
2. The doctrinal and spiritual value of Acts is immeasurable. The teaching of the early church is preserved for us in the speeches it records, and the missionary zeal of the first century Christians constitutes a pattern for every successive generation of Christians to follow.

### **C. Unique Characteristics:**

1. Acts records the actual origin of the church predicted by Jesus Christ (Ch. 2, cf. Matt. 16:18).
2. Acts records the historical background of many of Paul's epistles.
3. Acts reveals the ministry of the Holy Spirit and the methods and principles of early Christians in the organization and evangelization of the church.

4. Acts is the only historical link between the ministry of Jesus and the advanced form of Christianity found in the Epistles.
5. Chronologically, Acts covers the time period from the crucifixion (about **29 AD**) to the close of Paul's first imprisonment (about **60-62 AD**).

**D. Outlines of Acts:**

Acts is constructed around the outline of geographical development given by Jesus in Chapter 1:8, "Ye shall be my witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth."

1. Acts can be logically outlined as follows:
  - a. **Introduction** (Chapter 1:1-11).
  - b. **Witnesses in Jerusalem** (Chapter 1:12- Chapter 8:3).
  - c. **In All Judea and Samaria** (Chapter 8:4 - Chapter 12:25).
  - d. **The Uttermost Parts of the Earth** (Chapters 13-28).
    - (1) Paul's first missionary journey (46-47 AD) (Ch.13:1- Ch.15:35).
    - (2) Paul's second missionary journey (Ch. 15:36 - Ch. 18:22).
    - (3) Paul's third missionary journey (Ch.18:23 - Ch.21:16).
    - (4) Paul's trip to Rome (Ch.21:17 - Ch. 28:31).
2. Acts can also be **outlined by the personalities** that appear in it. Certain men are the dominant characters in each chapter. For instance:
  - a. Peter (Chapters 1 - 5).
  - b. Stephen (Chapters 6 - 7).
  - c. Barnabas, Philip, and Saul of Tarsus (chapters 8-12).
  - d. Paul (Chapters 13-28).

3. Peter and Paul Outline: There are numerous interesting parallels between Peter and Paul in the book of Acts. Yet another way to outline the book is to divide it almost down the center, title the first half "Peter's Ministry" (Chapters 1-12) and the second half, "Paul's (Chapters 13-28).

a. Under Peter's Ministry.

- (1) Jerusalem was the center of activity.
- (2) Peter's discourse at Pentecost reproduced (Ch. 2:14-40).
- (3) Healed lame man (Ch. 3:1-10).
- (4) Brought judgement on Ananias and Sapphira (Ch.5:1-11).
- (5) Released supernaturally from prison (Ch. 5:19-21, Ch.12:1-11).
- (6) The influence of Peter's shadow (Ch. 5:15).
- (7) Tabitha raised from death (Ch.9:36-42).
- (8) Peter imprisoned (Ch. 12).
- (9) Ends with general rejection of the Word by the Jews of the homeland.
- (10) Tradition says Peter put to death under Nero, shortly after the great fire, about **64 AD**.

b. Under Paul's Ministry.

- (1) Antioch of Syria was the center of activity.
- (2) Paul's discourse at Antioch of Pisidia reproduced (Ch. 13:16-42).
- (3) Healed lame man (Ch. 14:8-10).
- (4) Brought judgement on Elymas the Sorcerer (Ch. 13:6-11).

- (5) Released supernaturally from prison (Ch 16:19-30).
- (6) The influences of Paul's handkerchief (Ch. 19:11-12).
- (7) Eutychus raised from death (Ch. 20:9-12).
- (8) Paul imprisoned (Ch.28).
- (9) Ends with general rejection of the Word by Jews of the dispersion.
- (10) Tradition says martyred under Nero's persecutions, about **67-68 AD**.

## **E. General Information:**

### **1. Comparison of Peter and Paul.**

Both Peter and Paul were leaders, one to the Jews, and one to the Gentiles. While Peter labored largely in Jerusalem, Paul labored in the Gentile world. Both stressed the work of the Holy Spirit (Ch. 2:38, Ch 19:2-6), and both made the doctrine of the resurrection a primary focus of their preaching (Peter 2:24-36; 3:15, 26; 4:2; 5:30; 10:40-41] -- Paul 13:30-37; 17:3; 17:3,18,31; 24:15, 21; 25:19,26; 8,23). Peter was the champion of the early church in Jerusalem, Paul the founder of the first Gentile churches. Yet, there was no competition or antagonism between the two, nor was the work of either confined to one class of hearers. Peter brought the Gospel to the house of Cornelius, a Gentile (Chapter 10), and Paul preached to the Jews at every opportunity.

### **2. Comments on Book of Acts.**

- a. Acts is not an exhaustive account of all of the events that transpired in the growth of the early church. Its main narrative records the mission that took the Gospel northward toward Antioch to Asia Minor and thence to Macedonia, Achaia, and Rome.
- b. Acts enables us to see how the early church grew. It reveals the patterns of first century church life, and in it we see the power, purity, organization, methods, discipline and objectives of the early Christians.

## F. Chronology of Acts:

While it is impossible to form an exact chronology, the following is sufficient to approximate most of the dates:

1. Formation of the Church  
in Jerusalem (Acts 2) . . . . . AD 30
2. Stoning of Stephen,  
Dispersion of the Church (Acts 7,8) . . . . . AD 31 or 32
3. Conversion of Saul (Acts 9) . . . . . AD 31 or 32
4. Paul's first visit to Jerusalem  
after his conversion . . . . . AD 34 or 35
5. Conversion of Cornelius,  
the Gentile (Acts 10) . . . . . between AD 35 & 40
6. Reception of Gentile  
at Antioch (Acts 11) . . . . . about AD 42
7. Paul's second visit to  
Jerusalem (Acts 11:27-30) . . . . . AD 44
8. Paul's first missionary journey,  
Galatia (Acts 13,14) . . . . . AD 45-48
9. Council at Jerusalem (Acts 15) . . . . . about AD 50
10. Paul's second missionary journey,  
Greece (Acts 16,17,18) . . . . . AD 50-53
11. Paul's third missionary journey,  
Ephesus (Acts 19-20) . . . . . AD 54-57
12. Paul reached Ephesus (Acts 19) . . . . . AD 54
13. Paul left Ephesus (I Cor 16:8) . . . . . June AD 57
14. Paul in Macedonia (I Cor. 16:5-8) . . . Summer & Fall AD 57
15. Paul in Corinth, three months  
(Acts 20:2-3) . . . . . Winter AD 57-58
16. Paul left Philippi (Acts 20:6) . . . . . April AD 58

17. Paul reached Jerusalem (Acts 20:16) . . . . . June AD 58
18. Paul in Caesarea  
(Acts 24-26) . . . . . Summer AD 58 to Fall AD 60
19. Paul's voyage to Rome  
(Acts 27-28) . . . . . Winter AD 60-61
20. Paul in Rome for two years . . . . . AD 61-63

[NOTE: If this chronology is accurate, Acts would have been written about **63 AD.**]



## THE PAULINE EPISTLES

### VIII. INTRODUCTION.

#### **Background Information on the Life of Paul:**

Most of the information about Paul found in the Bible comes from the book of Acts. Some information about his life is found in his Epistles, but many events have gone unrecorded (II Cor. 11:24-28).

- A. Paul was born about **1 AD** (Jesus was born about **5 BC**, making Paul five years younger than Jesus).
- B. Paul was born "Saul", in Tarsus, of the tribe of Benjamin (Phil.3:5).
- C. Paul was formerly a Pharisee and the son of a Pharisee. He was a Rabbi and a teacher of the law (Acts 23:6; Phil. 3:5).  
  
[NOTE: Paul was not a Pharisee of the self-righteous, hypocritical kind. He was of the earnest, zealous, sincere and truth seeking sort, such as Gamaliel and Nicodemus (cf. John 3).
- D. Paul was a freeborn Roman citizen (Acts 22:28), considered a great privilege in New Testament times.
- E. Studied in Jerusalem as a lad under Gamaliel, who was considered the greatest Old Testament teacher of all times (Acts 22:3; 26:4-5).
- F. First appears in Bible in Acts 7:58. Here he is seen to be already "zealous of the Law", and a leader among those who murdered Stephen.
- G. His dramatic conversion, Acts 9 (about 31-32 AD; some chronologies have it as late as 35 AD). At any rate, Paul was between 30-35 at his conversion. Next to the work of Christ Himself, the conversion of Saul was probably the most important event in the history of Christianity, for it removed one of Christianity's most active enemies, and it transformed him into its foremost propagator.
- H. There are three full accounts of Paul's conversion experience in Acts (Acts 9, 22, and 26).
- I. A tent-maker by trade, Acts 18:3. The Rabbis required that all young men learn a trade/skill. It was not enough to merely be educated, one also had to be skilled in some trade or profession. Gamaliel said, "Learning of any kind, unaccompanied by a trade, ends in nothing and leads to sin." Remember, Jesus was a carpenter! Paul is the greatest figure in the New

Testament apart from the Lord, and was a tent-maker. The Jews had a tremendous work ethic (see also I Cor. 9:14).

- J. There is a three year gap in Paul's life between Acts 9:22-23. See Galatians 1:11-18.
- K. In Acts 9:30 Paul went to Tarsus and remained there for six years.
- L. In Acts 13, some 14 years after his conversion, he was called out to be an apostle by the Holy Spirit (Acts 13:1-4; Gal. 2:1-2).
- M. During his ministry, Paul went all the way from Spain to Rome establishing churches. (Rom. 15:24,28).
- N. Paul wrote 14 out of the 27 New Testament books.
- O. Paul signed his epistles (Hebrews is the exception), though he often employed a secretary to write them (II Thess. 3:17; Col. 4:18; I Cor 16:21).
- P. Paul never married.
- Q. Paul had a sister living in Jerusalem, whose son once saved his life (Acts 23:16, cf. vss. 12-24).
- R. According to tradition, Paul was beheaded in Rome (**67-69 AD**) under the persecutions of Nero.

## IX. THE BOOK OF GALATIANS (48 AD).

Referred to as "**The Epistle of Christian Liberty.**" Paul's first Epistle. Also called "**The Epistle of Righteous Indignation**" (cf. Gal. 1:6-9; 3:1; 5:1-4).

### A. Theme:

Justification by faith and Christian freedom and liberty. Christian freedom must be balanced with obedience!

### B. Purpose:

1. To **counteract the false teaching and influence** of the Judaizers. Who were the Judaizers? A heretical sect that taught, that although Jesus is Lord and the Messiah, and that it was necessary to believe on Him, it was also necessary to keep the various Old Testament laws (circumcision, etc.) in order to be saved. Thus, they obscured the essential Christian doctrine of **justification by faith alone without works.**
2. To defend his apostleship.
3. To restore his fundamental message of justification by faith alone without the works of the law.
4. To show that Jesus' teaching results in moral living and bearing the fruits of the spirit.

### C. To What Were the Galatians Turning?

1. They were seeking to be **justified by the law** (Ch. 5:4)
2. They were **getting caught up in religious observances** (Ch. 4:9-10).
3. They were **yielding to the idea that the rite of circumcision was necessary** (Ch. 5:2 and Ch. 6 :12).
4. They were going to **add to the work the Holy Spirit had done** with works of the flesh (Ch. 3:3).
5. They were **turning towards Judaistic observances** and the keeping of the law of Moses (Ch. 4:21).

D. Contrasts in Galatians:

1. Law and grace.
2. Works and faith.
3. Flesh and spirit.
4. Old Covenant and New Covenant.
5. Works of the flesh and fruit of the spirit.
6. Freedom and bondage.
7. Servants and sons.
8. Blessings and cursings.
9. Mt. Sinai (symbolic of law) and Mt. Zion (symbolic of grace).

E. Key Verses:

Galatians 3:9-14:

<sup>9</sup> So then they which be of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham.

<sup>10</sup> For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse: for it is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them.

<sup>11</sup> But that no man is justified by the law in the sight of God, it is evident: for, The just shall live by faith.

<sup>12</sup> And the law is not of faith: but, The man that doeth them shall live in them.

<sup>13</sup> Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree:

<sup>14</sup> That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the spirit through faith.

Galatians 5:1:

"Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage."

F. **Outline of Galatians:**

1. **Paul's Defense of His Apostleship** (Chapters 1-2).
2. **The Superiority of New Testament Grace and Liberty over Old Testament Legalism and Bondage** (Chapters 3-4).

3. **Practical Applications to the Church at Galatia** (Chapter 5).
4. **Practical Exhortations to the Church at Galatia** (Chapter 6).

## **X. I and II THESSALONIANS.**

Both written from Corinth, about **50 AD** (only a few months apart) (Acts 18:1,11). The Thessalonians Epistles (with the exception of Galatians) are the earliest of Paul's letters. The Thessalonian church was established by Paul on his second missionary journey (Acts 17:1-9).

### **A. I Thessalonians (50 AD):**

#### **1. Purpose:**

The report brought by Timothy and Silvanus occasioned the writing of this Epistle (Acts 18:5; I Thess. 3:6). Having been forced to leave Philippi, Thessalonica, and Berea because of the hostile opposition of fanatical Jews (Acts 16-17), Paul went to Corinth and received reports that his Thessalonian converts were standing firm in the faith. This letter was written from a sense of relief. The Epistle was also intended to remind the Christians of the way the apostles had behaved while in their midst, refusing to accept maintenance, working hard, etc., in order that nothing could be said detrimentally of their ministry or message.

#### **2. Content of I Thessalonians (Three-fold)**

- a. **Praise** for the steadfastness of the Thessalonian Christians who were under severe persecution by the Jews (I Thess. 3:1-4; II Thess. 1:3-4)
- b. **Admonishment and exhortation** to continue in their faith in spite of the opposition they were receiving (I Thess. 4:1-12).
- c. The **correction** of certain errors and misunderstandings that had arisen among them (I Thess. 4:13-18).

#### **3. Main Doctrinal Theme.**

**The return of Christ** (both I and II Thessalonians).

#### **4. Outline of I Thessalonians.**

The book is broken into five short chapters, each of which ends with a reference to the Lord's return (Chs. 1:10, 2:19; 3:13; 4:16-17; 5:23).

- a. **Introduction and Commendation** (Chapter 1).
- b. **Paul's Founding of the Church** (Chapter 2).
  - (1) Their motive (vss. 1-6).
  - (2) Their conduct (vss. 7-12).
  - (3) Their message and unselfish concern for souls (vss. 13-16).
- c. Timothy's Strengthening of the Church (Chapter 3).
  - (1) Paul's concern of them (vss. 1-5).
  - (2) Timothy's follow-up work among them (vss. 6-8)
  - (3) Paul's continuous prayers for them (vss. 9-13).
- d. Practical Exhortations and Applications (Chapters 4-5)
  - (1) Conduct and calling (Chapter 4:1-12).
  - (2) Challenge and comfort (Chapter 4:13-Chapter 5:11).
  - (3) Unity and constancy (Chapter 5:12-28).

## **B. II THESSALONIANS (50 AD):**

The interval between the first and second Epistle could not have been a long one, a few months at most, and probably only a few weeks.

**[NOTE: Chapter 2 is the clearest teaching in all the Bible concerning the anti-christ and the great apostasy.]**

1. **Purpose.** (Two-fold)
  - (a) To **correct** some misconceptions concerning the first Epistle to the Thessalonians. Some aspects of Paul's first letter were apparently misunderstood, so he wrote again to give clarification.
  - (b) To **counter** possible false letters reportedly written by Paul (Ch.2:1-2).
2. **Outline of II Thessalonians.**

- (a) **Encouragement in Persecution** (Chapter 1).
- (b) **The Day of the Lord and the Man of Sin** (Chapter 2).
- (c) **Exhortations and Instructions** (Chapters 2:13-3:15).
- (d) **Benediction and Closing Words** (Chapter 3:16-18).

## **XI. I Corinthians (55 AD).**

Written from Ephesus, where Paul stayed for over two years (cf. I Cor. 16:8; Acts 19:8,10).

### **A. Purpose** (Three-fold).

1. To address certain contentions which had arisen in the church. What were these contentions?
  - a. The **spirit of faction** had crept in among them (Ch. 1:10-12).
  - b. **The disputes** within the church were being brought before the pagan courts (Ch. 6:1-8).
2. To **rebuke** them for allowing immoral conduct in their midst (Ch.5:1-13).
3. To answer the numerous questions the Corinthian Church had asked him in a letter (cf. Ch. 7:1).

Note the phrase often repeated, "Now concerning..." as Paul addressed each of these questions:

- a. Marriage (Ch. 7:1-24).
- b. Virgins (Ch. 7:25-39).
- c. Things offered unto idols (Ch. 8:1-13).
- d. Order in the church and observance of the ordinances (Ch. 11:2-34).
- e. The gifts of the Spirit (Chs. 12:1-14;40).
- f. The resurrection (Ch. 15:1-58).
- g. The collection for the saints (Ch. 16:1-3).

### **B. General Information on the City of Corinth:**

1. Corinth was the **largest, most important city** of Greece at the time of Paul.
2. Corinth was a **prosperous center of commerce and industry**, with a population estimated between 100 - 500,000. Many were transients (sailors, businessman, politicians, etc.), which liberated Corinth from the inhibitions of normal, settled society.
3. Worse yet was the fact that Corinth was a **center of pagan worship** (the temple of Aphrodite alone employed over 1,000 priestesses who functioned as "religious prostitutes").
4. **Morals were so corrupt** that the term "Corinthian morals" became a byword even in the pagan Roman world, and Corinthians were usually depicted as drunkards on the Roman stage. (This is why Paul emphasized the sanctity of the body, morality, marriage, order, etc., in his first letter to the Corinthians.)

C. **Unique Characteristics:**

1. It was **not Paul's first letter to the church** there (cf. I Cor. 5:9). The first letter, undoubtedly brief and limited in its scope, was not preserved for us.
2. It is **the most varied of all of Paul's Epistles**. It covers more ground (topics) than any other book Paul wrote. In it Paul discusses:
  - a. **Division/schism.**
  - b. **Love.**
  - c. **Spiritual gifts.**
  - d. **Finance.**
  - e. **Meats offered to idols**
  - f. **Headcovering.**
  - g. **Ordinances.**
  - h. **Marriage.**
  - i. **Church discipline.**
  - j. **The resurrection....and more!**
3. It is **one of the most practical books** in the New Testament, revealing very practical instructions for Christian living, principles of behavior, order, etc.
4. **The "delivering unto Satan,"** as a form of church discipline (Ch. 5:5; also seen in I Tim. 1:20).



5. Contains the most comprehensive **teaching on the gifts of the Spirit** in all the Bible (Chs. 12-14).
6. Contains the **most thorough teaching** in the Bible on **the doctrine of the Resurrection** (Ch.15).
7. Contains the only reference in the Bible on the subject of the headcovering (Ch. 11:1-16).
8. Contains **the strange** reference to "**baptism for the dead**" (Ch.15:29).

**D. Outline of I Corinthians:**

1. **Introductory Remarks** (Chapter 1:1-9).
2. Dealing with **Problems** in the Church (Chapters 1:10-6:20).
  - a. **Factions, friction, and fights** (Chs 1:10-4:21).
  - b. **How to deal with immorality** (Ch. 5).
  - c. **How not to deal with each other** (Ch. 6).
3. **Dealing with Practical and Doctrinal Questions** (Chapters 7:1-15;58).
  - a. Concerning **marriage** (divorce, virgins, etc.) (Ch.7:1-40).
  - b. Concerning **things sacrificed to idols** (Chs. 8-10).
  - c. Concerning **conduct of women** in the church (Ch.11:1-16).
  - d. Concerning the **ordinances** (Ch. 11:17-34).
  - e. Concerning **spiritual gifts** (Chs 12-14).
  - f. Concerning the **resurrection** (Ch. 15).
  - g. Concerning **giving** and conclusion (Ch. 16).

## **XII. II CORINTHIANS (55-56 AD).**

Written just a few months after the first Epistle. Tradition says it was written from Philippi (chronologically, it may fit somewhere between Acts 20:1-6).

### **A. Purpose (Three-fold)**

1. To **defend himself** from the occasional criticism of the Judaizers coming from within the Corinthian Church.
2. To **vindicate his ministry and authority** from the slanders and accusations of his enemies.
3. To **prepare the way** for his visit, so the offerings would be received for him to take to the poor saints in Jerusalem.

### **B. Unique Characteristics:**

1. This is **an intensely personal letter**. While I Corinthians was corrective, instructional and doctrinal, II Corinthians expresses the personal feelings, concerns and emotions of the apostle Paul.
2. It is **the least methodical** of his Epistles. The structure of this letter is not as clear cut and systematic as his other writings. This too, reflects its personal rather than instructional nature.
3. This Epistle gives us unique **insight into Paul's personal life**, his trials and persecutions (Chs. 1:8-10; 6:3-10; 11:22-33).
4. It contains a **unique reference to Paul's revelations** (Ch. 12:1-6).
5. Contains reference to **Paul's "thorn in the flesh"** (Ch. 12:7-10).
6. **The Trinitarian ending** (Ch. 13:14).

### **C. What was Paul's "Thorn in the Flesh" (II Cor. 12:7)**

1. Commentators have speculated over this question for centuries. Theories include:
  - a. Paul suffered from a strange, recurring, malarial type sickness.
  - b. Paul suffered intense depression.
  - c. Paul had a rare eye disease.

... and there are others.

2. All such theories are impossible to substantiate and difficult to reconcile with Scripture. Here are three reasons why Paul's thorn could not have been sickness:
  - a. We know that Paul exhibited incredible stamina and strength, enduring terrible hardships, deprivation, etc. (cf. II Cor. 11:24-28). It is inconceivable that he could have accomplished all he did while suffering any of the wide variety of physical ailments commentators suggest.
  - b. The term "thorn in the flesh" was commonly used in the Old Testament to refer to one's enemies (cf. Numb. 33:55; Joshua 23:13). It is obvious in these references that the Canaanites were the "thorns". This figure of speech would be quite familiar to Paul, who was an Old Testament scholar. [NOTE: It is figurative language, much as our own expression, "He is a pain in the neck."]
  - c. The Greek term translated "messenger" (II Cor 12:7) is used 188 times in Scripture. In 181 verses it is translated "angel". In seven verses, it is rendered "messenger". In every passage, without a single exception, it refers to a person (even angels are personal beings). Never does it refer to sickness, disease, or anything impersonal.
3. The only logical and Scriptural conclusion one can draw, is that Paul's thorn in the flesh was those enemies (perhaps the Judaizers) who chased, tormented, and persecuted him throughout his ministry. Certainly such determined detractors can keep one from being "exalted above measure" (II Cor, 12:7).

#### **D. The Accusations Brought Against Paul:**

1. That he **walked "according to the flesh"** (Ch. 10:2).
2. That **he was cowardly**, writing strong, authoritative letters but having a weak personal presence (Ch. 10:10).
3. **He demeaned himself** by working and did not conduct his ministry with proper dignity (Ch. 11:7).
4. That he was not one of the original apostles, and therefore was **unqualified to teach them** (Chs. 11:5; 12:11-12).

5. He was accused of being **boastful** (Ch. 10:8, 15), **deceitful** (Ch. 12:16), **fleshly** (Ch. 10:2), and they insinuated that he might be embezzling the funds entrusted to him (Ch. 8:20-23).

The accusers were apparently Jews (Ch. 11:22) who professed to be "ministers of Christ (Ch. 11:23), who had cleverly used recommendations from other churches (Ch. 3:1) to obtain teaching liberties among the Corinthians. They were domineering and haughty (Ch. 11:19-20), but unwilling to do pioneering work or suffer for Christ (Ch. 11:23-ff). They were "false brethren".

#### **E. Outline of II Corinthians:**

1. **Salutation and Explanation of Personal Conduct** (Chapters 1:1-2:13).
2. **The Glory and Suffering of the Christian Ministry** (Chapters 2:14- 7:4).
3. **Gratitude for God's Comfort and Consolation** (Chapter 7: 5-16).
4. **Principles of Giving in the New Testament Dispensation** (Chapters 8:1-9:15).
5. **Paul Contrasts His Ministry with that of False Apostles** (Chapters 10:1 - 13:14).

### **XIII. ROMANS (56 AD).**

Tradition says written from Corinth (cf. Acts 20:3), but also possible from Philippi.

#### **A. Background Information:**

1. Romans is the **longest, most elaborate** and **most theological** of the Epistles. Its scope is universal, setting forth a theological discussion of justification by faith.
2. Unlike Galatians, which was probably quickly written with much emotion, Romans was the **product of much deep thought**, anointed by the Holy Spirit.

3. This Epistle was not written to combat a particular error, but rather to **present the truth** of justification by faith.
4. Written in **preparation for Paul's visit to Rome** (Ch. 1:14-15, cf. 15:31-32; Acts 19:21-22). Paul was not in Rome prior to writing this Epistle, but he had a great desire to go there. Though he established most of the churches in Europe, he did not establish the church in Rome. Contrary to Roman Catholic teaching Peter did not establish the church in Rome either. Who actually did it is unknown, but it is believed to have been founded by some of the converts made on the Day of Pentecost, who returned home evangelizing their cities (Acts 2:9-10).
5. **Rome was the capital city of the world** at that time, having a population of approximately 1 million.
6. Paul had in hand **an offering** which the churches at Macedonia and Achaia had taken up **for the poor at Jerusalem** (Ch. 15:26) and was on the way to Jerusalem to deliver it (Ch. 15:25). His intentions were to deliver the offering to Jerusalem, and then go to Rome, hoping to use it as a "base" for a ministry into Spain (Ch. 15:24, 28,32).
7. Paul assured the church in Rome that **he had often planned to visit them**, but had thus far been hindered from doing so (Chs. 1:13-15; 15:22). Nevertheless, he intended to be with them soon (Ch. 15:23-32).
8. **Paul had numerous friends in Rome** (Ch. 16:1-24), all of whom he longed to see.
9. The Epistle was **delivered to the church by Phoebe**, one of the faithful women disciples of the Lord who was traveling in that direction (Ch. 16:1).
10. The church in Rome was probably **a small one**, consisting mostly of Gentiles (Ch. 1:13).

**B. Theme:**

**Justification by faith.**

**C. Key Verses:**

Romans 1:16-17.

<sup>16</sup> For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.

<sup>17</sup> For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith.

**D. Content:**

Romans gives a fuller, more systematic view of Christian theology than any other Epistle. It is didactic in nature. It is called "The Epistle of the Epistles" because all major doctrines are discussed in it. This is the book in which most of the strong doctrinal teaching of the New Testament originates.

**E. Doctrines Discussed in Romans:**

1. **Depravity of man.**
2. **Election.**
3. **Grace.**
4. **Justification by faith.**
5. **Predestination.**
6. **Law and works.**
7. **Sanctification.**
8. **Imputation.**
9. **Adoption.**
10. **Christian ethics.**

Romans is an excellent example of the integration of doctrine with strong missionary purpose. It is possible to have both a teaching and a missionary emphasis.

**F. Outline of Romans:**

1. **Doctrinal** (Chapters 1-8).
  - a. **The Doctrine of Sin (Hamartiology)** (Chs. 1:1-3:20).
    - (1) **The Sin of the Gentiles** (Ch. 1).
      - (a) **Idolatry** (Ch. 1:18-23).
      - (b) **Immorality** (Ch. 1:26-28).
    - (2) **The Sin of the Jews** (Ch. 2).
      - (a) **Pride** (Ch. 2:1, 17-22).

(b) Hypocrisy (Ch. 2:1, 17-22).

(3) The Sin of the Whole World (Ch. 3; cf.vss. 10, 19).

b. The Doctrine of Justification (Soteriology = Salvation)  
(Chs. 3:21-5:21).

c. The Doctrine of Sanctification (Chs. 6-8).

2. **Prophetical** (Chapters 9-11).

This section contains the clearest teaching in the Bible on these subjects:

a. Election.

b. Grace.

c. Law.

d. Works.

e. The Present Rejection but Final Restoration of Israel.

3. **Practical** (Chapters 12-16).

a. Ethical and practical matters. It reveals the proper conduct of the Christian toward the state, the church, his enemies, his brothers, etc. (Chs. 13-15).

b. Salutations (Ch.16).

## **THE PRISON EPISTLES**

### **XIV. INTRODUCTION.**

The Prison Epistles (Philemon, Colossians, Ephesians, and Philippians) were written by Paul while imprisoned in Rome, in 60-61 AD (believed to be written between Acts 28:16-31). Paul spent at least four years in custody, two in Caesarea (Acts 24:26) and at least two in Rome (Acts 28:30).

### **XV. PHILEMON.**

#### **A. Background Information:**

A personal letter to Philemon, who was apparently a Christian business man and slaveowner (common at the time) (vs. 16), in Colossae. One of his slaves, Onesimus, ran away to Rome, a crime that was punishable to

by death. There he encountered Paul, who led him to Christ. Verses 9 -13 indicate that a strong sense of friendship developed between the apostle and the slave, and Paul wrote this letter to Philemon to urge him to forgive Onesimus, and to receive him back as a brother in Christ, and to extend to him the same love and kindness that he would have extended to Paul himself (vss. 8-9, 15-16, 20-21). He reminds Philemon of a debt that he owed to Paul (probably of gratitude) (vss. 17-19), and concludes with a greeting and benediction (vss. 23-25). (See also Colossians 4:3, 18; Ephesians 3:1; 4:1; 6:20).

**B. Theme:**

**A basic lesson on forgiveness.**

**C. Unique Characteristics:** (Two-fold)

1. Philemon is the **shortest of Paul's Epistles.**
2. Philemon **reveals the attitude of the early church towards social ills** (slavery), i.e., non-resistance. The Christian church was not involved in social causes, no matter how worthy they may have been.

**D. Outline of Philemon:**

1. **Address and Greetings** (Verses 1-3).
2. **Recognition of the Fine Christian Character of Philemon** (Verses 4-7).
3. **Request for the Kind Reception of Onesimus** (Verses 8-21).
4. **Personal Conclusion** (Verses 22-25).

## **XVI. COLOSSIANS.**

Sometimes referred to as "**The Twin Epistle**" because of its close resemblance to Ephesians. Paul had probably never been to Colossae (Col.2:1), but maintained communication with them through Epaphras (Ch. 1:7; 4:12).

**A. Purpose:**



**To combat the error of Gnosticism** which was being spread by false teachers in the church. Gnostics claimed to have a higher revelation and greater spiritual knowledge than other Christians. They practiced a rigid asceticism, observed strict distinctions between clean/unclean foods (Ch. 2:20-23), denied the supremacy of Christ, and taught that there are many intermediaries between God and man (cf. Ch. 2:18--angels).

**B. Theme:**

**Christ is pre-eminent.** He alone is Savior (Ch. 1:14), the image of God (Ch. 1:15), the fullness of the Godhead in bodily form (Ch. 2:9), the Creator (Ch. 1:16-17), and Sustainer of all things (Ch. 1:17), and the Head of the church (Ch. 1:18).

**C. Key Verses:**

Colossians 2:8-9.

<sup>8</sup>Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ.

<sup>9</sup>For in him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily.

**D. Outline of Colossians:**

1. **Introduction** (Chapter 1:1-11).
2. **Doctrinal Teaching** (Chapters 1:12-2:23).
  - a. Instructions (Ch. 1).
  - b. Corrections (Ch. 2).
3. **Practical Teachings** (Chapters 3:1-4:6).
  - a. Personal Conduct and Character (Ch. 3:1-17).
  - b. Christian Responsibility to Others (Chs. 3:18-4:6).
4. **Conclusion** (Chapter 4:7-18).

**XVII. EPHESIANS.**

Perhaps the most profound Epistle in the Bible, containing two very profound prayers (Ch. 1:15-23 and Ch. 3:14-19). It is a general, non-personal Epistle, probably intended for distribution throughout the region. It contains no personal greetings and is considered a sister Epistle to

Colossians (both written by Paul about the same time, and both delivered by Tychicus and Onesimus (cf. Colossians 4:7-9; Ephesians 6:21).

**A. Theme:**

**The church** (specifically mentioned nine times).

**B. The Goal of the Church:** (Ch. 4:3, 11-14)

1. The Unity of the Faith.
2. The Knowledge of the Son of God.
3. The Measure of the Stature of the Fullness of Christ.

**C. Key Thoughts:**

1. The Believer's Inheritance (Ch. 1:3).
2. The Believer's Position (Ch. 2:6).
3. The Believer's Walk. The Christian is to:
  - a. Walk in obedience (Ch. 2:10).
  - b. Walk worthily (Ch. 4:1).
  - c. Walk not as others (Ch. 4:17).
  - d. Walk in love (Ch.5:2).
  - e. Walk as children of light (Ch.5:8).
  - f. Walk circumspectly (Ch. 5:15).

**D. Key Phrase:**

**"In Christ"** (appears 36 times in Ephesians).

**E. Outline of Ephesians:**

1. **Doctrinal** (Chapters 1-3).
  - a. Predestination/Election of the Church (Ch. 1:1-14).
  - b. Paul's Prayer for the Church (Ch. 1:15-23).

- c. Creation of the Church (Ch. 2:1-10).
  - d. The Unity of Jew and Gentile in Christ (Ch.2:11-12).
  - e. Paul's Revelation of the "Mystery" (Ch. 3:1-13).
  - f. Paul's Prayer for the Church to Experience the Fullness of God (Ch. 3:13-21).
2. **Practical** (Chapters 4-6).
- a. Practical and Moral Instructions and Exhortations (Chs. 4-6).
    - (1) Be in harmony with God's purpose for the church (Ch. 4:1-10).
    - (2) The purpose of the five-fold ministry (Ch. 4:11-16).
  - b. Responsibilities (Chs. 5-6).
    - (1) Husbands and wives (Ch. 5:22-23).
    - (2) Children (Ch. 6:1f).
    - (3) Slaves and masters, etc.
  - c. The Armor of God (Ch. 6).

## **XVIII. PHILIPPIANS.**

### **A. Background Information:**

Another of the Prison Epistles (Ch. 1:12-13), most likely from Rome. While some have conjectured that it was written during Paul's imprisonment in Caesarea (Acts 24:27), references to "the household of Caesar" make it more likely from Rome (Chs. 1:13; 4:22). It is the most personal letter not written to an individual. It contains no rebukes, and was not intended to combat error, heresy or wrong practices.

Philippians is called, "**The Epistle of Christian Joy**" and is the most joyful book in the Bible (16 times Paul says "joy, rejoice," etc.).

The church at Philippi was founded by Paul (Acts 16:9-40), and a close friendship developed between the apostle and the church there (cf. Ch. 4:15-16 where he commends their support of him). It was the first church established in Europe.

The city itself (Philippi) was named after Philip of Macedonia, father of Alexander the Great. Considered a "miniature Rome," it was called the "Gateway to Europe".

**B. Two Predominating Topics:**

1. **The Gospel.** There is to be:
  - a. Fellowship in (Ch. 1:5).
  - b. Confirmation of (Ch. 1:7).
  - c. Progress of (Ch. 1:12).
  - d. Worthy of (Ch. 1:27).
  - e. Service in (Ch. 2:22).
  - f. Labor in (Ch. 4:3).
  - g. Beginning of (Ch. 4:15).
2. **Joy.** (This concept appears not less than 16 times.).

**C. Two Outstanding Passages:**

1. **Philippians 2:5-11.**
2. **Philippians 3:2-15.**

[NOTE: Philippians contains one of the most unique passages in the Bible (along with John 1) dealing with the Doctrine of the Incarnation (Ch. 2:5-8).]

**D. Outline of Philippians:**

1. **Introduction and Explanation of Paul's Circumstances** (Chapter 1).
2. **Kenosis Passage and Exhortations** (Chapter 2).

3. **Cautions and Paul's Goal** (Chapter 3).
4. **Exhortations and Thanksgiving** (Chapter 4).

## **THE PASTORAL EPISTLES**

### **XIX. INTRODUCTION.**

The Pastoral Epistles (I and II Timothy and Titus) were letters from Paul to Timothy, who was pastor of the church in Ephesus, and Titus, who was pastor at Crete. The letters deal with pastoral care, duties and responsibilities, qualifications for ministry, and matters of church function, worship, conduct, and order. While full of instruction for all believers, the message of the pastorals have special relevance to those who serve in five-fold ministry offices.

These Epistles were written late in Paul's life. They were written after the recorded events in the book of Acts, indicating that Paul was eventually freed from the imprisonment he had been in at the time Acts closed. The Pastoral Epistles cover a time span of about five years (62-67 AD). I Timothy and Titus were written earliest (about 62-64 AD), and II Timothy was the last Epistle written by the apostle Paul before his death. Paul seemed to know that he would not live much longer (II Timothy 4:6). Though his first hearing had ended favorably (Ch. 4:17), no one had come to his defense (vs. 16), and his accusers were unrelenting (vs. 14). Paul realized that his condemnation and execution would be only a matter of time.

According to church tradition, Paul was beheaded outside of Rome by order of Nero about 67-68 AD.

### **XX. I TIMOTHY.**

#### **A. Background Information:**

1. Timothy was born in Lystra (Acts 16:1) of a Jewish mother and a Gentile father. His mother, Eunice, and grandmother, Lois, were devout Jews who had converted to Christianity and brought Timothy up in the Word of God (cf. II Tim. 1:5; 3:14-15; Acts 16:1).
2. Timothy, along with Luke, was one of Paul's closest companions (cf. Acts 16:1-3; I Tim. 1:2). He had stayed with Paul throughout most of his ministry, and was with the apostle during his first imprisonment (Col. 1:1; Philemon 1). Paul missed him greatly and

wrote to ask him to return to him during his second and final imprisonment. (II Tim. 4:9-13, 21). Timothy was a faithful companion of Paul's.

3. Timothy was also a minister in his own right. He began pastoring at a young age, probably about 30 (I Tim. 4:12). He apparently suffered recurring attacks with infirmities (I Tim. 5:23), and had himself suffered imprisonment (Heb. 13:23), but was released.
4. According to tradition, after pastoring in Ephesus for many years, he was stoned to death by enraged idolaters, about 98 AD.

**B. Purpose:** (Three-fold)

1. **To exhort Timothy to persevere** amidst a difficult calling in a city especially hostile to the Gospel. Paul reminded Timothy often of the responsibility of his calling (Chs. 1:18, 4:6, 12,16; 5:21; 6:11,20), as if to discourage him from giving up on the work.
2. **To instruct the young pastor** in matters of church order, function, and ministry.
3. **To charge Timothy** to keep pure the greatest trust ever delivered to men, the ministry of the Gospel, which was constantly being attacked by false teachers (Ch. 6:3-8). Four times in this Epistle Paul charges Timothy to guard the faith that has been entrusted to him (Chs. 1:18-19; 4:6-11; 6:13-16; 6:20).

**C. Unique Characteristics:**

1. I Timothy is an **intensely personal** Epistle written in a very casual (though deeply emotional), conversational style that reveals the close friendship between writer and recipient.
2. Its emphasis on **sound doctrine** (cf. Chs. 1:9-10; 4:6, 13, 16; 6:1,3):
  - a. Paul had previously warned the Ephesian Church that "grievous wolves" would emerge among them, and ravage the church unsparingly (Acts 20:29-30). Now they had appeared in full force and were probably the main source of Timothy's problems (I Tim. 1:3-11).
  - b. It reveals, more than any other Epistle (with the possible exception of II Timothy) that **it is the pastor's responsibility to keep the Gospel pure**, uncompromised,

and entirely free from the corruptions of error and false doctrines that would weaken the Gospel, hindering or halting its saving power (cf. Chs. 1:18-20; 4:1-16; 6:3-5, 20-21).

- c. It reveals that, not merely human, but **demonic forces are behind the errors**, false teachings, wrong doctrines and heresies that plague the church (I Tim. 4:1-5).
3. The often-repeated phrase, "**This is a faithful saying**" (Chs. 1:15; 3:1; 4:9).
4. Paul's repeated "**charge**" to Timothy and the church (Chs. 1:3, 18; 5:7, 21; 6:13,17).
5. The exhortation to **pray for leaders and government** (Ch. 2:1-4).
6. **Prohibition of women teachers** (Ch. 2:9-15).
7. "**Wine**" for Timothy's "**oft infirmities**" and for his "stomach's sake" (Ch. 5:23).
8. Paul's **emphasis on "the faith"** (Chs. 1:19; 3:9, 13; 4:1,6; 5:8; 6:10,12,21).
9. The unique **warning about the love of money** (Ch. 6:6-10).
10. Paul's four imperatives: **Flee, Follow, Fight, Keep** (Ch. 6:11-14).

#### **D. Outline of I Timothy:**

1. **Introduction and Explanation of Why the Letter was Written** (Chapter 1).
2. **The Assembly and its Conduct** (Chapters 2-3).
  - a. Concerning Order in the Church [Women's Conduct and in Public Prayer] (Ch. 2).
  - b. Qualifications of Deacons and Elders (Ch. 3).
3. **Warnings Against False Prophets and Teachers** (Chapter 4:1-10).
4. **The Minister's Conduct** (Chapters 4:11- 6:21).

## **XXI.**

### **TITUS.**

Written shortly after I Timothy, about 62-64 AD.

#### **A. Background Information:**

1. Titus was a Greek, who had been converted under Paul's ministry (Ch. 1:4; Gal. 2:3). He became a faithful and capable minister, who Paul left in Crete (Ch. 1:5) to complete the establishment of the church there and to rectify its errors.
2. Titus is mentioned by name or referred to 13 times in Paul's Epistles.
3. We know that Titus also ministered for a time in Dalmatia (II Tim. 4:10), which is modern Yugoslavia. However, according to church history, Titus lived out his life as Bishop of Crete and died there at a ripe old age.

#### **B. Purpose:**

1. **To instruct Titus** to finish setting the church in proper order, and install qualified leadership there (Ch. 1:5-9).
2. **To establish the young church** in faith, proper doctrine, and godly living (Ch.2-3).
3. **To warn** against false teachers (Chs. 1:10-16; 3:9-11).
4. **To urge** Titus to meet Paul in Nicopolis as soon as Artemas or Tychicus could relieve him of his duties in Crete (Ch. 3:12).

#### **C. Emphasis: (two-fold)**

1. **Sound Doctrine** (teaching) (Chs. 1:9; 2:1).
2. **Good Works** [mentioned six times] (Chs. 1:16; 2:7, 14; 3:1,8,14).

While Paul is careful to mention that salvation is not earned by good works (Ch. 3:5), he insists that the Christian must be faithful to maintain good works.

#### **D. Unique Characteristics:**



1. The thorough and **specific qualifications for ministers** outlined by Paul (Ch. 1:5-9; cf. I Tim, 3:1-13).
2. The careful instruction on **proper roles for older men** (Ch. 2:1-2), **older women** (Ch. 2:3-4), **young women** (Ch. 2:4-5), **young men** (Ch. 2:6-8), and **servants** (Ch. 2:9-10).
3. While I Timothy exhorts us to pray for our governments, Titus urges us **to obey them** (Ch. 3:1-2; cf. Rom. 13).
4. The **theological content of the Epistle**. Though Titus (as well as I and II Timothy) are intensely personal letters, they are also profoundly theological. This small book deals with such doctrines as:
  - a. The **Personality of God** (Chs. 2:11; 3:6).
  - b. **Christ as Savior** (Chs. 2:13; 3:6)
  - c. The **Holy Spirit** (Ch. 3:5).
  - d. The **Trinity** (Ch. 3:5-6).
  - e. The **Deity of Christ** (Ch. 2:13; cf. I Tim. 3:16).
  - f. The **Atonement** (Ch. 2:13).
  - g. **Justification by faith** (Ch.3:5).
  - h. **The Return of Christ** (Ch. 2:13).
5. Contains two passages considered the closest thing to a "**formulated creed**" found in the New Testament (Chs 2:11-14; 3:4-7).

**E. Outline of Titus:**

1. **The Appointment of Elders** (Chapter 1:1-9).
2. **Dealing with False Teachers** (Chapter 1:10-16).
3. **Practical Instructions concerning the Regular Conduct of the Church** (Chapter 2).

4. **Admonitions to Titus and Various Instructions** (Chapter 3).

## XXII. II TIMOTHY.

The apostle Paul's last book, written shortly before his death.

### A. Background Information:

1. The great fire in Rome occurred in **64 AD**, leveling much of the city. Though believed to have been started by Nero himself, blame was shifted to the Christians, considered a secretive and dangerous sect [that drank blood (Communion), would not serve in the military or sacrifice to the Roman gods, and believed in the destruction of the world by fire].
2. A terrible, inhuman persecution of Christians began. Believers were put to death in the most cruel ways possible. Thrown to lions and other wild beasts, crucified, impaled, wrapped in the skins of animals and thrown into the arena to be torn apart by dogs, tied to tall stakes and covered with molten tar to be set afire in order to light Nero's Arena as human torches, etc.
3. According to tradition, it was during these persecutions that both Paul and Peter were martyred.
4. II Timothy was written by Paul from prison, as he awaited the sentence of death he was sure to shortly befall him.

### B. Purpose:

1. **To assure** Timothy of the apostle's continual prayers for him, and to exhort him to preach the Word without fear or compromise even in the face of such severe persecutions (Chs. 1:8; 2:1-7; 4:1-5, etc.).
2. **To instruct** Timothy to preserve the faith by passing it on to faithful men who will carry the Gospel to the next generation (Ch. 2:1-7).
3. **To warn** against the coming time of great apostasy ( Ch. 3).
4. **To issue a solemn charge** to Timothy to preach the Word faithfully, and to persevere in his calling (Ch. 4:1-5).

**C. Unique Characteristics:**

1. This Epistle contains the **last recorded words** of the apostle Paul. They are sentimental and personal (Ch. 1:1-4), tinged with sadness (Ch. 1:15), yet resounding with confidence in Christ (Ch. 4:6-8).
2. Contains one of the clearest statements in the Bible concerning the **Diving inspiration of Scriptures** (Ch. 3:16-17).
3. **Reveals the pastor's responsibility** to make the church a school of training and preparation for the equipping of the saints for ministry (Ch. 2:2; cf. Eph. 4:11-16).
4. Extensive reference to **end-time spiritual peril** and apostasy (Ch. 3:1-9).
5. Paul's **solemn charge** to Timothy (Ch. 4:1-8), which should be studied carefully by everyone in ministry or in preparation for ministry.
6. **The testimony of Paul's life's work** (Ch. 4:6-8). What an epitaph!

**D. Outline of II Timothy:**

1. **Personal Encouragement to Timothy** (Chapter 1).
2. **Admonition to be a Good Soldier of Christ** (Chapter 2).
3. **Warnings Against the Coming Apostasy**, and the Satanic Control of the World (Chapter 3).
4. **Paul's Solemn Charge to Timothy**, and an Admonition to Preach the Word Faithfully (Chapter 4).

## **THE GENERAL EPISTLES**

### **XXXIII. Introduction.**

The General Epistles (Hebrews, James, I and II Peter, and Jude) are thus classified because they were intended for a wide and "general" audience, rather than a local or specific one.

## XXIV. Hebrews (65 AD).

### A. Background Information:

1. This Epistle was written to Jewish Christians who were being persecuted for their faith in Christ during the terrible Neronian persecutions. These Christians probably lived in Rome (where the persecution was most severe), which is indicated by the phrase, "they of Italy salute you" (Ch. 13:34). This was most likely a greeting from Italian believers no longer living in Rome.
2. Another view is that the Epistle was written to the Jewish Christians of Palestine. Whoever the intended recipients were, they were obviously undergoing great persecutions and wrestling with severe discouragement in their faith.
3. Allusions to the priesthood imply that the Temple was still standing at the time this Epistle was written.

### B. Authorship:

1. No author's name is affixed to this Epistle (only Hebrews and John's Epistles have no signature attached). Whoever the author was, he was well known to the recipients (Ch. 13:18-24). The Epistle is written in excellent literary style, and the author was scholarly in his usage of classical Greek. He was not an immediate disciple of Christ (Ch. 2:3), but was extremely well versed in the Old Testament. Views of its authorship include:
  - a. Luke.
  - b. Philip.
  - c. Barnabas (Tertullian).
  - d. Apollos (suggested by Martin Luther).
2. Early traditions record that Clement of Alexandria (second century) stated that Paul wrote Hebrews in Hebrew, and that Luke then translated it into Greek (Luke was a Greek scholar).

Some evidences of Pauline authorship are:

- a. **In thought and theology**, the Epistle seems like Paul's all the way through. Doctrinally, it accords with the Pauline Epistles. Its theme, like Romans and Galatians, is salvation by faith through the sacrifice of Christ.

- b. The term "**Brother Timothy**" was commonly used by Paul (Ch. 13:23; cf. Col. 1:1; I Thess. 3:2; II Cor. 1:1; Philemon 1).
- c. The quotation of Habakkuk 2:4 (Heb. 10:38) "**The just shall live by faith**" is also quoted by Paul in Romans 1:17 and Galatians 3:11.
- d. The **Eastern Church** always considered the **Epistle** the product of Paul.
- e. **Clement of Alexandria and Origen ascribed its authorship** to Paul. On the whole, the traditional view is that Paul wrote Hebrews. But even if its authorship is uncertain, its inspiration is sure.

**C. Purpose:**

- 1. **To prepare** the Jewish Christians for the soon approaching fall of Jerusalem. Many of these converted Jews still were attached to the Old Testament rites and sacrifices. They may have believed that Christ was soon to make Jerusalem, their beloved city, the center of His new world empire. Instead, Jerusalem, the Temple, and their nation were soon to be destroyed, and their people scattered. This Epistle was to show them that animal sacrifices had been superseded by a far better, once for all sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ.
- 2. **To encourage** the Jewish Christians being persecuted (Chs. 10:32-36; 12:4), and to show them the superiority of Christianity over Judaism, and to warn them against returning to the legality and bondage of Judaism.

**D. Unique Characteristics:**

- 1. Hebrews was written in a **high, more classical form of Greek** than other Epistles (with the exception of Luke's).
- 2. **It uses more names and titles of Christ** than any other Epistle (over 20). For example:
  - a. Christ is the **Apostle** (Ch. 3:1).
  - b. The **Brightness of the Father's Glory** (Ch.1:3).
  - c. The **Captain of Salvation** (Ch. 2:10).
  - d. The **Author and Finisher of Our Faith** (Ch.12:2).
  - e. The **First Begotten** (Ch. 1:6).

- f. The **Forerunner** (Ch. 6:20).
  - g. The **Great Shepherd** (Ch. 13:20).
  - h. The **Heir of All Things** (Ch. 1:2).
  - i. The **Image of God** (Ch. 1:2).
  - j. The **High Priest** (Ch. 4:14).
  - k. **Jesus Christ** (Ch. 7:17).
  - l. **Jesus, the Son of God** (Ch. 4:14).
  - m. The **Minister of the Sanctuary** (Ch. 8:2).
  - n. The **Priest** (Ch. 7:17).
  - o. The **Surety** (Ch. 7:22).
  - ...and others.
3. It **gives profound insight** into the present ministry and priesthood of Christ (Ch. 7:24-25).
  4. In studying the Old Testament, it is an **excellent guide to the meaning of typology** and to understanding the lasting significance of the Levitical ritual.
  5. Contains **the only New Testament reference to Melchizedek** (Chs. 5:6, 10; 6:20; 7:1-10).
  6. **It contains the greatest "Faith Chapter"** in the Bible (Ch. 11).
  7. **It contains more warnings about the dangers of apostasy** than any other New Testament book (Chs. 1:1-3; 3:7-19; 4:7; 6:4-6; 10:26-29, 31).
  8. It **contains the "Let us" passages**, positive exhortations to a higher state of spiritual maturity, i.e., "Let us...
    - a. **Fear** (Ch. 4:1).
    - b. **Give diligence** (Ch.4:11).
    - c. **Hold fast** (Chs. 4:14; 10:23).
    - d. **Draw near** (Chs. 4:16; 10:22).
    - e. **Press on** (Ch. 6:1).
    - f. **Consider one another** (Ch. 10:24).
    - g. **Lay aside every weight** (Ch. 12:1).
    - h. **Run the race** (Ch. 12:1).
    - i. **Have grace** (Ch. 12:28).
    - j. **Go forth** (Ch. 13:13).
    - k. **Offer up** (Ch. 13:15).

**E. Key Word:**

**Better** (cf. Chs. 1:4; 6:9; 7:7, 19,22; 8:6; 9:23; 10:34; 11:16, 35,40; 12:24).

The entire theme of the Epistle is built around the word "**better**", which is used repeatedly to demonstrate the superiority of the revelation of Christ over the revelation of the law. It declares from the first verse to the last, that **JESUS IS BETTER** than anything the law, Moses, or angels could provide. This book is referred to as "**The Epistle of the Better Things**".

**F. Outline of Hebrews:**

1. **Christianity is Based on a Better Revelation** [It is better than the law] (Chapters 1-4:13).
  - a. Christ is better than the prophets (Ch. 1:1-3).
  - b. Christ is better than the angels (Chs. 1:4 - 2:18).
  - c. Christ is better than Moses and Joshua (Chs. 3:1-4: 13).
2. **Christianity has a Better Priesthood** (Chapters 4:14 - 10:39).
  - a. Christ is a better high priest than Aaron (Chs. 4:14 - 7:28).
  - b. Christ ministers a better covenant (Ch. 8).
  - c. Christ ministers a better sanctuary (Ch. 9:1-12).
  - d. Christ offers a better sacrifice (Chs. 9:13 - 10:18).
  - e. Christ's ministry is based on better promises (Ch. 10:19-39).
3. **Christianity has a Better Basis--FAITH** (Chapter 11), as Contrasted to Law.
4. **Admonitions to Endurance and Holiness** (Chapters 12-13).

**XXV. JAMES (45 AD--The earliest New Testament Writing).**

**A. Author:**

Church tradition has always held that James, the brother of the Lord (Mark 6:3), not James the apostle, authored this Epistle.

1. James was apparently the pastor of the first church in Jerusalem (cf. Acts 15:13-ff, where he speaks and appears in leadership). James also appears in a leadership role in Acts 12:17 and 21:18. According to John 7:2-8, James was not among the earliest believers. He was either converted later during the Lord's ministry, or he was converted when Jesus appeared to him after his resurrection (I Cor. 15:7). That he rose quickly to a place of leadership, prominence and respect in the early church is evidenced by Peter's request as soon as he was released from prison, "go tell James" (cd. Acts 12:17, indicating that James was in leadership). On Paul's third missionary journey, he went to see James (mentioned in Gal. 2:9).
2. According to tradition, he spent so much time on his knees in prayer that they became hard and calloused like a camel's knees.
3. The historian, Josephus, says that James was pushed from the pinnacle of the Temple, stoned, and finally beaten to death with a club by enraged Jews in **62-63 AD**.
4. Called by his countrymen, "James the Just" because of his exemplary life. So holy was his life, that all Jerusalem said that their beloved city was destroyed (in 70 AD) by God taking vengeance upon James' death.

**B. Background Information:**

1. Probably written to Jewish Christians who were living outside of Palestine (Ch. 1:1, 2:19,21). These early believers may have been among those forced to scatter during the persecutions that claimed Stephen's life (Acts 8:1), which would explain the Epistle's immediate references to trials and persecutions (Ch.1:2-4; cf. 5:7-12), and the authoritative tone of the Epistle. James, the pastor of the Jerusalem Church, was addressing his own scattered sheep.
2. The overall picture of the book indicates that it was written very early (about 45 AD) before Christianity became completely independent of Judaism, hence the reference to the synagogue (KJV, "assembly") in Chapter 2:2. The book is very Jewish in character, with Abraham mentioned as "our father" (Ch. 2:21) and numerous references to Old Testament personalities.

**C. Purpose:**



1. **To comfort and exhort** these believers who were already undergoing terrible persecutions (Chs. 1:2; 5:7-8, 11).
2. **To correct any misconceptions** they may have held concerning the nature of saving faith.
3. **To emphasize that true faith** does not exist in a vacuum. It is always accompanied by good works.

**D. Emphasis:**

Throughout all five chapters of this book, true faith and right living are emphasized. Real faith is:

1. **Tried** (Ch. 1:2-16).
2. **Active** (Ch. 1:19-27).
3. **Loving** (Ch. 2: 1-12).
4. **Demonstrated by good works** (Ch. 2:14-26).
5. **Disciplined in its use of the tongue** (Ch. 3:1-12).
6. **Desirous of God's wisdom** (Ch. 3: 13-18).
7. **Submissive to God** (Ch. 4:1-12).
8. **Confident in God** (Ch. 4:13-17).
9. **Selfless** (Ch. 5:1-6).
10. **Patient** (Ch. 5:7-12).
11. **Trusting and diligent in prayer** (Ch. 5:13-20).

**E. Unique Characteristics:**

1. Probably the first New Testament book written (45 AD).
2. For such a short Epistle (only five chapters), James covers an extremely wide variety of subjects dealing with the practical application of one's faith to everyday life. It has been labeled, "The New Testament Book of Proverbs".
3. Contains few references to Jesus by name (cf. Ch. 1:1; 2:1; 5:8,11,14), but contains more allusions to the teachings of Christ (including at least 15 references to the Sermon on the Mount) than all other New Testament Epistles combined.
4. The authoritative tone of the Epistle. It contains only 108 verses, and over half of them are imperatives or commands.
5. It emphasizes, probably more than any other Epistle, the relationship of good works to saving faith. This emphasis, misunderstood by some, caused some to want to exclude James

from the Canon of Scripture (thinking it contradicted Paul's teaching on salvation by faith alone, without works). Martin Luther called it "a straw Epistle". [James also emphasizes faith (Chs. 1:5-8; 5:14-15).]

6. The thorough reference to the tongue as a source of great trouble in the church and in one's personal life (Ch.3:1-12).
7. Its sober warning and denunciation of the rich (Ch. 5:1-6).
8. Its reference to "the prayer of faith for healing" as a customary practice of the church (Ch. 5:14-15).

**F. Key Verse:**

**James 1:22.**

<sup>22</sup>"But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves."

**G. Outline of James:**

1. **Dealing with Trials and Temptations** (Chapter 1:1-18).
2. **Proper Christian Conduct Within the Congregation** (Chapter 1:19- 3:18).
3. **Proper Christian Conduct Outside the Congregation** (Chapter 4).
4. **Warning to the Rich** (Chapter 5:1-6).
5. **How to be Healed, and Conclusion** (Chapter 5:7-20).

**XXVI. I PETER (64 AD).**

**A. Author:**

Written by the apostle Peter, this is the first of his two Epistles (Ch. 1:1, II Peter 1:1), and was written with the assistance of Silvanus (Greek name for Silas) (Ch. 5:12). Written from "Babylon" (Ch. 5:13), but which Babylon? There are three possibilities:

1. Historic Babylon on the Euphrates in Mesopotamia, where there was a settlement of Jews, and where Peter could have possibly founded a church.
2. Babylon, a town in Egypt.
3. Spiritual Babylon--Rome (cf. Rev. 14:8; 17:5).

Though there is no Biblical evidence of it, tradition says it was written from Rome, where Peter ministered for a short time near the end of his life.

## **B. Background Information:**

1. Peter was born "Symeon" (Hebrew) or "Simon" (Greek).
2. Father's name, "Jona" (John 1:42); brother named "Andrew" (John 1:40-41).
3. Jesus renamed him "Cephas" (Aramaic), or "Peter" (Greek "Petros", meaning "a rock or stone") (John 1:42). No other man in the New Testament has this name.
4. A fisherman with his brother, Andrew, and partners with James and John, the sons of Zebedee (Luke 5:1-11). These are the first four mentioned as apostles in Matthew 10:2.
5. Peter is the most prominent of the 12 apostles in the Gospels, and wherever they are listed by name, Peter is mentioned first (cf. Matt. 10:2; Mark 3:16; Luke 6:14; Acts 1:13).
6. Peter was one of the three apostles especially favored by Christ (Peter, James and John). Jesus took only them:
  - a. Into the **house of Jairus** (Mark 5:37; Luke 8:51).
  - b. To the **Mount of Transfiguration** (Matt. 17:1; Mark 9:2; Luke 9:28).
  - c. With Him **in His agony** in the garden (Matt. 16:37; Mark 14:33).
7. Peter is a very colorful and human picture in the New Testament. He was married (Mark 1:30), and by the time I Corinthians was written, it was generally known that Peter's wife traveled with him when he went out to preach (I Cor. 9:5).

8. Peter is last mentioned in the book of Acts in Chapter 15's Council at Jerusalem. Little is known of his remaining years until his Epistles were written. According to tradition, Peter, at 70 years of age, was crucified upside down, outside of Rome, during the Neronian persecutions, about **67-68 AD**.

**C. Purpose:**

To encourage the believers who were undergoing terrible persecutions (Ch. 1:6-7). That their trials were severe is indisputable since Peter mentions "suffering" at least 16 times in this short letter, the sufferings of Christ (cf. Ch. 2:21-24), as well as that of the believer (Chs. 3:9-18, 4:1, 12-19).

**D. Unique Characteristics:**

1. Five times **the sufferings of Christ** are mentioned (Chs. 2:23; 3:18; 4:1, 13; 5:1).
2. **The numerous imperatives.** Peter's Epistle is a continuous chain of commands, i.e.:
  - a. **Be holy.**
  - b. **Be sober.**
  - c. **Love one another.**
  - d. **Rejoice.**
  - e. **Be watchful.**
  - f. **Humble yourselves.**  
(cf. Chs. 2:13, 17-18; 3:1, etc.)
3. Peter's reminder that **suffering is not unusual for the Christian**, just as Christ Himself suffered (Ch. 1:6-7; 2:18-24; 3:9-5L11). More than any other Epistle, it reveals the Christian's response to unjust persecution and suffering.
4. **His emphasis on holiness** (Ch. 1:13-21), the necessity of the pure Word (Ch. 2:1-3); and the pilgrim life (Ch. 1:1; 2:11-12).
5. Contains **one of the truly unique passages in the Bible** (Ch. 3:18-22), considered by many to be one of the most difficult passages to interpret in all the Bible.

**E. Key Information:**

1. **Key Words.**

While Paul was known as the "Apostle of Faith," and John as the "Apostle of Love," Peter was the "Apostle of Hope."

- a. **Hope** (Ch. 1:3, 13, 21).
- b. **Holiness** (Ch. 1:15-16).

2. **Key Message.**

Perhaps this Epistle's greatest message is showing Christians how to live out their redemption, godly and victoriously, in the midst of a world hostile to godly living.

**F. Outline of I Peter:**

1. **The "Living Hope"** and What Goes with It (Chapters 1:1-2:10).
2. **The "Pilgrim Life"** and How to Live It (Chapters 2:11-4:11).
3. **The "Fiery Trial"** and How to Bear It (Chapter 4:12-19).
4. **Final Exhortations and Conclusion** (Chapter 5).

**XXVII. JUDE (67 AD).**

**A. Author:**

**Jude**, the brother of James (leader of the church at Jerusalem), and the half-brother of the Lord (Mark 6:3). He does not name himself among the apostles (vs. 17). There is no indication as to where it was written, but probably was intended for the Jewish churches of Palestine, and written just before the fall of Jerusalem.

**B. Purpose:**

**To combat Gnostic heresy.**

- a. Jude declared that his purpose was to urge the believers to "contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered unto the saints" (vs. 3).
- b. Apparently, some false teachers had crept into the church and were "turning the grace of our Lord into lasciviousness, and denying our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ" (vs. 4). Jude must have been

dealing with a type of antinomianism, which humanized Christ (detracting from His deity), deified man, and turned grace into a license to sin. This was the exact opposite of the legalistic error that permeated other churches (cf. Galatians).

### C. Unique Characteristics:

1. Jude is almost identical to II Peter, which has led some to suppose that Peter's second Epistle was written first, and that Jude "copied" most of the material for his Epistle from it. This view dates Jude sometime after Jerusalem's fall, between **70-80 AD**.
  - a. However, the similarities only prove a common inspiration! Many Biblical books are very similar (the Synoptic Gospels, for instance, and Psalms 14 and 53 are almost identical).
  - b. Such similarities simply reveal that Peter and Jude were both anointed by the same Holy Spirit! Besides, since Peter was one of the leading apostles of the early church, it is not unlikely that Jude, at some time, sat under Peter's ministry, and was influenced by him (we are all, in some way, the products of our predecessors).
2. The use of three Old Testament **examples of divine judgment** upon evildoers:
  - a. The **destruction of the unbelievers** in the wilderness (vs 5).
  - b. The **angels who left their first estate** (vs. 6).
  - c. **Sodom and Gomorrah** (vs. 7).
3. Jude's vigorous **denunciation of false teachers** and their evil works is one of the most thorough indictments in the New Testament (vss. 4-19). These men were:
  - a. **Sexually immoral** (vss. 4,8,16,18).
  - b. **Rebellious** (vss. 8, 10-11).
  - c. **Arrogant** (vss. 8,16).
  - d. **Greedy** (vs. 11).
  - e. **Shameless** (vss. 12-13).
  - f. **Spiritually barren** (vss. 12-13).
  - g. **Murmurers and complainers** (vs. 16).
  - h. **Apostate** (twice dead) (vs. 12,19).

4. Jude's **quotation of apocryphal literature**. Verse 14 is a direct quotation of the "Book of Enoch" and the reference to the dispute between God and the devil for the body of Moses is mentioned in "The Assumption of Moses". Does Jude's quotations from these books make them authoritative or inspired? No! Paul quoted from the Greek poet Aratus, while preaching in Athens (Acts 17:28), but only to make a point or illustrate a principle. The Apocryphal books were well known to Jude's Jewish audience, just as the Greek poets were well known to Paul's audience. They were simply a source, drawn from to illustrate a point.
5. Jude's **usage of the term, "ungodly"** (six times--four times in verse 15 alone)!
6. Jude's reference to the **great personal value of praying in tongues** (vs. 20, cf. I Cor. 14:15).
7. Contains perhaps the **most encouraging benediction** in the New Testament (vss. 24-25).

**D. Key Verse and Theme:**

**Verse 3.**

"We should earnestly contend for the faith...."

**E. Outline of Jude:**

1. **Salutation and Warning Against Heresy** (vss. 1-4).
2. **The Certainty of Judgment** (vss. 5-11).
3. **Evildoers Described** (vss. 12-18).
4. **How Christians Should Walk** (vss. 19-23).
5. **Closing Salutation** (vss. 24-25).

**XXVIII. II PETER (67 AD).**

**A. Author:**

**Peter's** second letter to these readers (Ch. 3:1), thus, probably written to the same believers as I Peter (cf. I Pet. 1:1). His last Epistle before being martyred (tradition says, in Rome, about **67-68 AD**). The apostle obviously anticipated the nearness of his death (Ch. 1:13-14).

**B. Background Information:**

While his first Epistle addressed the terrible suffering and persecution being experienced by the church, this one addresses the great spiritual danger arising from right within the church, that of false teachers (Ch. 2:1-22).

**C. Purpose:**

1. **To warn** about the errors of the false teachers who were influencing the church (Ch. 2:1-3).
2. **To remind** them of the divine origin of the Scriptures (Ch. 1:19-21).
3. **To encourage** the Christians about the certainty of the Lord's coming, even though it seems prolonged (Ch. 3:1-13).
4. **To exhort** them to holy living (Ch. 3:14-18).

**D. Unique Characteristics:**

1. The Greek is somewhat different between I and II Peter, leading some to believe that Peter was not really the author of II Peter. However, this is easily explained in that Peter employed a secretary to pen his first Epistle (I Peter 5:12), and probably penned this one himself.
2. I Peter 1:2 and II Peter 1:2 are **virtually identical**, which is also further proof of Peter's authorship.
3. Contains one of the **chief texts on the "Inspiration of Scripture"** in the New Testament (Ch. 1:19-21; cf. Ch. 3:15-16).
4. Contains one of the **longest and strongest warnings** about false teachers in the New Testament (Ch. 3).
5. Contains one of the Bible's **outstanding references to "the day of the Lord"** (Ch. 3:1-13).



6. Contains (with Jude) the only reference to the present state of certain fallen angels (Ch. 2:4; cf. Jude 6), and the future fiery judgment of the earth (Ch. 3:10-13).

**E. Key Word:**

**"Know"** or **"Knowledge"** (appear 16 times in three chapters). Peter wanted to show that the antidote to false knowledge (that reported by the false teachers) was true knowledge. Six times he refers to the knowledge of Christ.

**F. Outline of II Peter:**

1. **Admonition to Spiritual Growth** (Chapter 1).
2. **Warning Against False Teachers and Heresy** (Chapter 2).
3. **An Exhortation to Prepare for the Day of the Lord** (Chapter 3).

### **THE JOHANNINE LITERATURE (90 - 96 AD)**

#### **XXIX. BACKGROUND INFORMATION (JOHN THE APOSTLE).**

- A.** Written by **John the Apostle** (not John the Baptist), son of Zebedee.
- B.** **Formerly, a fisherman** with his brother James (cf. Matt. 4:21), James was put to death under the reign of Herod Agrippa in Acts 12:1-2 (approximately **44 AD**).
- C.** **Except for Paul, John wrote more books of the New Testament** than anyone else (five in all--John, I, II, and III John, and Revelation).
- D.** **John may have first been a disciple of John the Baptist** (John 1:35-40).
- E.** Salome was probably Mary's sister, making **John and Jesus** first cousins (cf. Matt. 27:55-56; Mark 15:40; John 19:25).
- F.** **John was one of the three "intimates" of Christ** (Peter, James and John were with the Lord with Jairus, on the Mount of Transfiguration, and in His agony in the Garden).
- G.** Of the twelve apostles, **John was perhaps the closest of all to Jesus** (John 13:23 and 19:26). He is the one Jesus "loved". The fact is, some people are closer to the Lord than others!

- H. John was **present at the trial of Jesus** and was known to the High Priest (John 18:15-16).
- I. James and John were nicknamed **by the Lord, "the Sons of Thunder"** (Mark 3:17). Why? Probably because they were ready to rebuke the man casting out devils (Luke 9:49), and to call down fire on the cities of Samaria (Luke 9:52-54).
- J. John alone **received the great, end-time "Revelation"**.
- K. John alone **was not martyred**. He lived to be very old, and died at the end of the first or in the early second century.
- L. John was known as the **"Apostle of Love"**.

### **XXX. THE GOSPEL OF JOHN (90-96 AD).**

#### **A. Author:**

1. Although this Gospel is unsigned (all of John's writings are unsigned, with the exception of Revelation), all early tradition and the church fathers attribute this Gospel to John the Apostle.
2. John was an "eyewitness" (Chs. 1:14; 19:35). Obviously, John was so well known to those he wrote, that he knew that they would know he wrote it.

#### **B. Purpose:**

1. John wrote both to convince the unsaved to believe on the Lord, and to strengthen the faith of those who were already believers.
2. According to ancient sources, John was eventually released from exile on Patmos, and lived the remainder of his years in Ephesus. There, he was asked to write a "Spiritual Gospel" to refute grievous errors circulating about the nature, person and deity of Christ. John, anointed by the Holy Spirit, penned this profound theological work that settles for all time the truth about Christ.

#### **C. Unique Characteristics:**

1. John's Gospel is **altogether different from the Synoptics**. They are historical, the Gospel of John is theological. John alone deals with the pre-existence and eternity of Christ.

2. John **deals almost exclusively with Jesus' ministry in Jerusalem and Judea**, and records much there that the Synoptics omit. (John mentions five visits of Christ to Jerusalem.)
3. John's Gospel **was written much later than the others** (all of his books were written between **90-96 AD**).
4. John is **easily the most popular Gospel**, and usually the first book translated into a foreign language.
5. John's Gospel **contains no parables**, and only seven miracles (five of which are not recorded elsewhere).
6. The word "**believe**" is used almost 100 times!
7. John's **emphasis of "truth"** (appears almost 30 times). For example:
  - a. Jesus is the truth (Ch. 14:6).
  - b. The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of truth (Ch. 14:17).
  - c. God's Word is truth (Ch. 17:17).
  - d. The truth will:
    - (1) Cleanse us (Ch. 15:3).
    - (2) Deliver us (Ch. 8:32).
    - (3) Is the opposite of Satan's nature and work (Ch. 8:44-47, 51).
8. **Other words prominent** in this Gospel are:
  - a. Word.
  - b. Light.
  - c. Flesh.
  - d. Know.
  - e. Darkness.
  - f. Love.
  - g. Witness.
  - h. World.
9. While the Synoptics stress the "miracles" of Christ, **John calls them "signs"** which prove that Jesus is who He says He is--the Messiah (cf. Chs 2:11; 11:47).

10. **The "I Am" Passages.** The claims of Jesus are set forth in seven major "I Am's":

- a. The Bread of Life (Ch. 6:35).
- b. The Light of the World (Chs. 8:12; 9:5).
- c. The Door (of the Sheepfold) (Ch. 10:7).
- d. The Good Shepherd (Ch. 10:11,14).
- e. The Resurrection and the Life (Ch. 11:25).
- f. The Way, the Truth, and the Life (Ch. 14:6).
- g. The True Vine (Ch. 15:1).

**D. Key Verse:**

**John 20:31.**

"But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name."

[NOTE: Also reflects John's purpose in writing the Gospel.]

**E. Outline of the Gospel of John:**

John utilizes many unique titles of Christ. He represents Jesus throughout his Gospel as:

1. **The Logos (Word)** (Ch. 1:1,2,14).
2. **The True Light** (Ch. 1:7-9).
3. **The Lamb of God** (Ch. 1:29) (This term is used only by John).
4. **Messiah** (Ch. 2:11).
5. **The Suffering Servant** (of Isaiah 53) who must be "lifted up" (Ch. 3:14).
6. **The Giver of the Water of Life** (Ch. 4:14).
7. **The Son (and Messiah) of God** (Ch. 5:17).
8. **The Bread of Life** (Ch. 6:35, 48).
9. **The Baptizer in the Holy Ghost** (Chs. 1:33, 7:37-39).
10. **The Light of the World** (Ch. 8:12).

11. **The Pre-Existent Son** (Ch. 8:53-58).
12. **The Son of God** (Ch. 9:35-38).
13. **The Good Shepherd** (Ch. 10:11,14).
14. **Deity** (Ch. 10:30).
15. **The Resurrection and the Life** (Ch. 11:25).
16. **The King of Israel** (Ch. 12:11-13).
17. **The Master and Lord** (Ch. 13:13-14).
18. **The Comforter** (Ch. 14:16).
19. **The Way, the Truth, and the Life** (Ch. 14:6).
20. **The True Vine** (Ch. 15:1).
21. **The One Sent from Heaven** (Ch. 16:5, 28).
22. **The High Priest** (Ch. 17) (He prays for His disciples, and for us, vs. 20).
23. **The Savior and King** (Chs. 18:36-37; 19:14-19).
24. **Lord and God** (Ch. 20:28).
25. **The Christ, the Son of God** (Ch. 20:31).
26. **The Resurrected Savior, Author of Innumerable Miracles** (Ch. 21:25).

## **XXXI. THE EPISTLE OF I JOHN (90-96 AD).**

### **A. Author:**

While John's name does not appear on this Epistle, its authorship is attributed to him for the following reasons:

1. **History.**

Numerous second century witnesses (Papias, Irenaeus, Tertullian, Clement of Alexandria) declare that it was written by John, the Lord's apostle.

2. **Internal Evidence.**

Note Ch. 1:1 with John 1:1, 5:13 with John 20:31. John was an eyewitness, Ch. 1 :1-3 with John 1:14 and 19:35. Only John refers to Christ as the "Logos" (Word).

The recipients of the Epistle are not named, but it is believed to have been a "circular letter," intended to be read and circulated throughout the Asian churches. It is unusual in that no greetings, no mention of anyone by name, no place or event is mentioned.

**B. Theme:**

"**God is love**" (I John 4:8).

**C. Purpose: (Two-fold)**

1. **To warn against false prophets and teachers** and to repudiate their errors. (Apparently, the Gnostic heresy was making inroads in the churches.)

2. **To exhort and assure the believers** of Him in whom they believed.

**D. Unique Characteristics:**

1. John's vigorous **denunciation of the false teachers** (Chs. 2:18-19, 22-23,26; 4:1,3,5).

2. John's **five "tests"** whereby we can know if we have eternal life, i.e.:

a. The test of **truth** (Chs. 1:1-3; 2:21-23; 4:2-3, 15; 5:1,5,10,20).

b. The test of **obedience** (Chs. 2:3-11; 5:3-4).

c. The test of **holy living** (chs. 1:6-9; 2:3-6, 15-17,29; 3:1-10; 5:2-3).

d. The test of **love** (towards God and others) (chs. 2:9-11; 3:10-11, 14, 16-18; 4:7-12, 18-21).

- 12).
- e. The test of the **Spirit's witness** (Chs. 2:20, 27; 4:13; 5:7-12).
3. John's focus on **the incarnation** and the cross of Christ.
  4. The usage of the **same themes and terms** as his Gospel, i.e.:
    - a. Light.
    - b. **Truth.**
    - c. **Believe.**
    - d. **Know.**
    - e. **Love.**
    - f. **Witness.**... and others.
  5. It is the **only Epistle** that speaks of Christ as our "**Advocate with the Father**" (Greek **parakletos**) if we sin (Ch. 2:1-2; cf. John 14:16-17, 26; 15:26; 16:7-8).
  6. John sets **forth the humanity of Jesus**, refuting the error of the docetic Gnostics (Ch.4:1).
  7. John **reveals** that there are **many "anti-Christ's" in spirit** (Chs. 2:18,22; 4:3,7), as well as a literal anti-christ (Ch. 2:18).

**E. Key Word:**

**"Know"** (we know is used 13 times, cf. Chs. 2:3, 5, 29; 3:14,16,19).

**F. Outline of I John:**

1. **Walking in the Light** (Chapter 1).
2. **Walking in Love** (Chapters 2-3).
3. **Testing the Spirits** (Chapter 4).
4. **The Confidence of Faith** (Chapter 5).

**XXXII. THE EPISTLE OF II JOHN.**

**A. Author:**

In this Epistle, John identifies himself as "the elder" (vs. 1), probably referring, not only to his advanced age, but also to the great respect accorded him as the last surviving original apostle.

Addressed to "The Elect Lady and her Children" (vs. 1). Greek authorities state it could also be accurately translated, "Lady Electa" or "The elect Cyria." The real identity of the addressee is unknown, though it could refer to a personal friend of John's, or could be a figurative reference to a local church.

**B. Purpose:**

The group to whom this Epistle was addressed was in peril due to the influence of false teachers. John wrote to warn "the elect lady and her children" to be more discerning as to whom they allowed into their homes (churches) to teach (vss. 7, 10-11).

**C. Unique Characteristics:**

1. This Epistle is much the same in its emphasis and doctrinal content as John's first letter. It addresses the same **danger of denying Christ's humanity** (vs. 7), and further asserts the need to abide in the truth (vss. 4,9).
2. It is the **shortest book** in the entire New Testament (only 13 verses).
3. As does I John, it sets forth the **necessity of caution and discernment** regarding the receiving of unknown ministers. The time is so short, and there are so many deceivers, it is vital that the local church and all Christians be very discerning as to what ministers they follow and support (vss. 7-11; cf. I John 4:1-6).

**D. Key Verses:**

**Verses: 9-11.**

<sup>9</sup> Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, that not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son.

<sup>10</sup> If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed:

<sup>11</sup> For he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds.



**E. Outline of II John:**

1. **Salutation** (vs.. 1-3).
2. **Exhortation to Walk in Love and Obedience** (vss. 4-6).
3. **Call to Vigilance and Discernment** (vss. 7-11).
4. **Conclusion** (vss. 12-13).

**XXXIII. THE EPISTLE OF III JOHN.**

**A. Author:**

A personal letter, non-theological in content, addressed to Gaius, a leader or pastor in the church, from **John, "the Elder"** (vs. 9-10).

**B. Purpose:**

This letter deals with the **proper attitude toward receiving itinerant ministers**, and affording them hospitality as they travel about preaching and teaching. It names Diotrephes, apparently another leader in the church, as a prideful troublemaker who resisted John's authority and treated the traveling ministers John sent to them unkindly (vss. 9-10).

**C. Unique Characteristics:**

It provides brief but valuable insight into some of the functions of the early church in regard to leadership, the relationship of the aged apostle to the church, but especially in regard to traveling ministers/missionaries.

**D. Key Verse:**

**Verse 2.**

"Beloved, I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth."

**E. Outline of III John:**

1. **Greeting and Commendation of Gaius** (for his example of hospitality and walking in the truth) (vss. 1-8).
2. **Diotrephes Reproved** (vss. 9-11).

3. **The Good Example of Demetrius Commended and Conclusion**  
(vss. 12-14).

**XXXIV. REVELATION (90-96 AD)**  
(Greek: "Apocalupsis" -- "to unveil, uncover, reveal).

**A. Author:**

Addressed to the "Seven Churches of Asia" (Ch. 1:4), it is the only Epistle signed by **John** (Ch. 1:4).

**B. Background Information:**

Written from Patmos, site of an ancient penal colony for political prisoners sentenced to hard labor in the mines (Ch. 1:9).

**C. Theme:**

**The Lord Jesus Christ.**

1. His three-fold declaration and challenge, "I come quickly" (Ch. 22:7, 12, 20) reiterates His promise to the churches (Ch. 2:16; 3:11) and makes the whole book a sober warning to the world, and an encouragement to believers.
2. Contrary to the teaching of Dominionism, "Kingdom Now" and Restorationism, the book of Revelation declares that the world at large will not improve with the passing of time, and that all men will not turn to Christ in repentance and faith. While the last generation will be highly advanced, cultured and prosperous, it will also be utterly godless (Ch. 18:1-5). In fact, the last organized act of humanity will be an armed, defiant rebellion against Christ (Ch. 20:7-10).
3. In no other passage of Scripture is God's final judgment of sinners more terrible depicted (Ch. 20).

**D. Purpose:**

1. **To address the churches**, on the behalf of Christ, who had strayed from apostolic doctrine and morality in order to rebuke them and call for their repentance.

2. **To encourage the believers** to be faithful, even unto death if necessary, in the face of mounting persecution.
3. **To declare** the things that were shortly to come to pass (Ch. 1:1).

**E. The Four Views of Interpretation of Revelation:**

**1. The Historical View.**

Revelation outlines in symbolic form the entire course of church history, from Pentecost to the present, and to the future coming of Christ. The judgments of the book are symbolic, i.e.:

- a. The breaking of the seals represents the breaking up of the Roman Empire.
- b. The plague of locusts from the bottomless pit represented the Islamic invasions, etc. (Ch. 9:1-12)

Symbols portrayed events in history, however, those who hold this view disagree among themselves about what the individual symbols mean.

**2. The Preterist (Past) View.**

- a. All of Revelation has already been fulfilled with the persecutions of Christians by ancient Rome, Nero, Antiochus Epiphanes, etc. All of the imagery of seals, trumpets, vials, etc. have no bearing on future events.
- b. This view is held by many liberals who reject the idea of predictive prophecy.

**3. The Spiritual (Idealist/Symbolic) View.**

A symbolic picture of the spiritual conflict between Christ and Satan, good and evil, Christianity and paganism. The book is not to be taken literally. The symbols, judgments, millennium, etc., are not to be identified as historic events either past, present or future, but rather are used to portray spiritual truths, such as the ultimate triumph of good over evil.

**4. The Futurist View (The Correct One).**

Chapters 1 through 3 refer to the conditions that applied at the time John wrote (or that the seven churches represented seven church

ages), but Chapters 4 through 22 are all future prophecy yet to be fulfilled.

Beginning with the phrase, "the things which must come to pass hereafter," the remainder of the book deals with the seven year period known as "The Great Tribulation," and concludes with the return of Christ (Ch. 19), the judgment of the wicked and establishment of His Millennial Kingdom (Ch. 20), and the Eternal State (Chs. 21-22).

**F. Unique Characteristics:**

1. Appropriately, Revelation is the last book of the Bible, closing the Canon and history of the New Testament.
2. It is the only book of the New Testament entirely devoted to prophecy, the vast majority of it, yet future.
3. It promises a blessing to those who read/hear it (Ch. 1:3), but direly warns those who would add to it or take away from it (Ch. 22:18-19).
4. **It depicts Christ** as both the **worthy, sacrificial Lamb** (Ch. 5), and the **returning, vengeful Lamb** (Chs. 6-19).
5. Its use of the term, "**In the Spirit**" to **introduce each of the four great visions** of the book:
  - a. **First Vision** (Chs. 1:10-3:22).  
  
Reveals Jesus the Lord of the church, commending faith and patience, rebuking apathy and error, etc.
  - b. **Second Vision** (Chs. 4:2-16:21).  
  
Reveals the tribulation judgments (seven seals, trumpets, bowls or vials).
  - c. **Third Vision** (Chs. 17:3-21:8).  
  
Reveals the overthrow of Babylon, harlot religion, corrupt world systems/governments, etc., and defeat of Anti-christ and Satan.
  - d. **Fourth Vision** (Chs. 21:10-22:5).

Reveals the establishment of New Jerusalem and the eternal blessedness of God's people.

6. The continuous use of graphic imagery, symbolism, and numbers (seven churches, seals, vials, trumpets, Spirits of God; 24 elders, 144,000, 1,000 year millennium, 3 1/2 years, etc.).
7. While it alludes to the Old Testament some 400 times, there are **no direct Old Testament quotations**.
8. It is the only book of the New Testament to **give an organized forecast of the future events of earth**, the establishment of Christ's Kingdom on earth, and the new heavens and earth.

**G. Outline of Revelation:**

1. **Past** (Chapter 1) ("hast seen", Ch. 1:19).  
**John's Vision of the Glorified Christ** (Ch. 1).
2. **Present** (Chapters 2-3) ( John's Present, the Seven Churches, the "things which are", Ch. 1:19).  
**Christ's Message to the Seven Churches** (Chs. 2-3).
3. **Future** (Chapters 4-22) (The "Things Which shall be Hereafter", Ch. 1:19).
  - a. **The Great Tribulation** (Chs. 4-19).
    1. **The Seven Seals Judgments** (Chs. 4-7).
    2. **The Seven Trumpet Judgments** (Chs. 8-11).
    3. **The Woman, Manchild, and Devil Cast down to Earth** (Ch. 12).
    4. **Death and Resurrection of Anti-christ, and the Mark of the Beast** (Ch. 13).
    5. **The 144,000 Overcomers**.
    6. **The Seven Bowl(or Vial) Judgments** (Chs. 15-16).
    7. **The Fall of Babylon** (Chs. 17-18).

8. **Christ's War with Anti-christ** (Ch. 19).
- b. **The Judgment** of the **Wicked** and the **Millennium** (Ch. 20).
- c. **Visions of the New Heavens and Earth** (Chs. 21-22).

**With the Lord's final promise,**

**"I COME QUICKLY,"**

**the New Testament comes to an end.**

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