

THEOLOGICAL ASSUMPTIONS REVELATION

- I. The Necessity of Revelation
- II. The Possibility of Revelation
- III. The Reality of Revelation
 - A. General Revelation
 - 1. Definition: “God’s communication of himself to all persons at all times and in all places.” Erickson, Christian Theology, v. 1, p. 153.
 - 2. Areas of General Revelation
 - a. Nature--Ps 19:1-4; Rom 1:18-20; Acts 14:14-18
 - b. History—Isa 45:1; the Israelites; Acts 17:26-28
 - c. Conscience—Rom 2:12-16
 - 3. Purpose of General Revelation—to demonstrate God’s eternal power and divine nature, His providential care for man, and His righteousness (via conscience--Rom 2)
 - 4. Limitations of General Revelation
 - B. Special Revelation
 - 1. Definition: “God’s particular communications and manifestations of himself to particular persons at particular times, communications and manifestations which are available now only by consultation of certain sacred writings.” Erickson, Christian Theology, v. 1, pp. 153-54.
 - 2. Purpose of Special Revelation—to show what God has done in history to reconcile sinful man to Himself in Christ
 - 3. Methods of Special Revelation
 - a. Through actions—the Exodus; Fall of Jerusalem
 - b. Through speech—“this is what the Lord says,” Eph 3:2-6
 - c. Ultimately through the Incarnation—Heb 1:1-4; Jn 1:1,14,18
- IV. Our Response to Revelation
 - A. Don’t allow God’s Word to be discredited in your mind.
 - B. Study and live by God’s Word

INSPIRATION

Introduction

Definition—"By inspiration of the Scripture we mean that supernatural influence of the Holy Spirit upon the Scripture writers which rendered their writings an accurate record of the revelation or which resulted in what they wrote actually being the Word of God."—Erickson, Christian Theology, v.1, p. 199.

I. Key References Affirming the Inspiration of Scripture

A. Affirming the Old Testament

1. II Sam. 23:2—David
2. Mt. 22:43—Jesus speaking about David
3. Mt. 5:17-19—Jesus speaking of authority of Old Testament
4. II Tim. 3:15 & 16—Paul speaking of the inspiration of the OT
5. I Pet. 1:10-12—OT prophets speaking of Christ's suffering
6. II Pet. 1:19-21—OT prophets carried along by Holy Spirit
7. Heb. 1:1—God spoke through the prophets

B. Affirming the New Testament

1. Jn. 14:10—Jesus spoke the words God gave Him
2. Jn. 14:26 & 16:13—Jesus promised that the apostles would be guided by the Holy Spirit
3. I Cor. 2:10-13—Paul claimed to speak in words taught by the Spirit
4. II Pet. 3:15-16—Peter refers to Paul writing "with the wisdom God gave him."

II. Observations Regarding Inspiration

A. The Scriptures were not dictated.

B. The writers' personalities were respected.

1. Variety of style
2. Variety of vocabulary
3. Research—Luke 1:1-4
4. Creativity—Ps. 119, an alphabetic acrostic

C. The inspiration of Scripture explains the unity of the Bible.

III. Our Response to the Inspired Word of God

- A. Trust, study, understand, apply, and share it
- B. Start well and finish well with the Word

THE JEWISH BACKGROUND OF JESUS' DAY

Factors Unifying Judaism (based on *Encountering the NT*, pp 36-38)

1. The Jews' monotheism and sense of uniqueness among the nations of the world
2. Their conviction that God had placed them in Palestine—the Promised Land
 - Challenge of the Roman occupation
 - Challenge of Jesus
3. Widespread Messianic expectation
 - Mt. 16:22ff—Peter
 - Jn. 6:14-15—feeding of the 5,000
 - Acts 5:35-37, 21:37-38
4. The Synagogue united especially the Jews of the Diaspora but also those in Palestine.
Four functions:
 - School
 - Worship
 - Court
 - Social Functions
5. The Torah and the traditions of the elders united most Jews.
6. The temple, the priesthood, and the festivals.
 - The 3 main feasts that drew crowds to Jerusalem were
 - Passover/Unleavened Bread—recalls the Exodus
 - Pentecost/Weeks—a harvest festival
 - Tabernacles—recalls living in tents during the wilderness wandering
 - Challenge of Jesus—Jn 2:19 (destroy this temple) & 4:21-24 (woman at the well)
 - Challenge of the church—Acts 7 (Stephen), I Pet 2:4-10 (Peter), Hebrews

Religious Groups (pp38-44)

1. Pharisees

- Name—"separated ones"; about 6,000
- Authority—Scripture (Torah, Prophets, Writings) & oral traditions
- Beliefs—many similar to Christian (Mt. 23:3)
- Influence—leaders in synagogue (Jn 7:49)
- Two schools—Hillel and Shammai (Acts 22:3--Gamaliel and Paul)
- Scribes (professional interpreters & teachers of the law). Most scribes were Pharisees, but not all Pharisees had the scholarly skills to be scribes.

2. Sadducees

- Authority—only the Torah
- Beliefs—did not believe in most of the things the Pharisees did—angels, immortality, resurrection from the dead, etc. (Mt 22:23-33; Acts 23:6-8)
- Influence—priestly aristocracy/political power (Jn 11:48); high priest presided over the Sanhedrin, composed of both Sadducees and Pharisees
- Herodians—influential Sadducees who supported the Herodian dynasty and by implication the Romans
- Disappearance after the fall of Jerusalem in AD70

3. Zealots

- Devoted to overthrowing the Romans
- Sicarii may have been a wing of Zealots
- Simon, one of Jesus' apostle (Lu 6:15)

4. Essenes

- Name—perhaps means "the pious"; about 4,000
- Communal living near the Dead Sea
- Beliefs—anti-temple & priests; Messianic expectations; saw themselves as the righteous remnant; devoted to Scripture
- Dead Sea Scrolls
- Opposed and defeated by the Romans

5. Samaritans

- Mixed population both racially and religiously—result of Assyrian conquest (2 Kgs 17:29-33)
- Ezra didn't allow them to help rebuild the temple in Jerusalem, so they set up their own temple on Mt. Gerizim (Ezra 4:3-4; Jn 4:19-22)
- Animosity between Jews and Samaritans (Jn 4:9; Lu 10:25-37)

JESUS' CONTROVERSIES WITH THE PHARISEES

(from *Christ the Controversialist* by John R. W. Stott)

1. Controversy over authority: Scripture vs. Tradition (Mk 7:1-13;p Mt 15:1-9)
2. Controversy over the purpose of Scripture: Means vs. End (Jn 5:39-40, 45-57)
3. Controversy over the means of salvation: God's Grace vs. Man's Works (Lu 18:9-14)
4. Controversy over morality: Inward vs. Outward (Mt 5:20ff; 15:1-20; 23:23-28; Lu 16:14-15; Mk 2:23-3:6)
5. Controversy over contact: Association vs. Isolation (Mt. 9:9-13; Mk 1:40-45; Lu 7:36-50; Jn 4:5ff)
6. Controversy over ambition: God's Praise vs. Man's Praise (Jn 5:44; Mt 6:1-6, 16-18, 23:5-12; Jn 8:50, 17:1-5; Mt 5:16)

THE SYNOPTIC PROBLEM

The first three Gospels have much material in common, sometimes word for word, but John is significantly different. Matthew, Mark, and Luke are called the Synoptic Gospels. Synoptic="seeing together." When a comparison of content is made, 91% of Mark's Gospel is found in Matthew, while 53% of Mark's gospel is found in Luke. Mark has only 82 verses of unique material.

Examples of unique material:

- Wise Men—only in Matthew
- Shepherds—only in Luke
- Parable of the seed growing secretly—only in Mark

Examples of common material:

Matthew and Luke have the most material in common. Most are sayings of Jesus rather than narrative passages.

- Jesus' Lament over Jerusalem—Matthew and Luke
- Jesus walking on the water—Matthew and Mark
- Healing of the demoniac in the synagogue—Mark and Luke

Examples of material common to all three:

Some passages share the same wording, while others do not even though they cover the same events.

- Temptation of Jesus
- Feeding of the 5,000 (also in John)
- Transfiguration

Suggested Solutions (see *NIV Study Bible*)

1. Use of oral tradition
2. Use of an earlier Gospel, now lost
3. Use of written fragments (Luke 1:1-4)
4. Mutual dependence
5. Use of two major sources—Mark and Q (Quelle=German for source) used by Matthew and Luke for most of their Gospels.
6. Priority and use of Matthew
7. Combination of most of the above

The early church was well aware of the Synoptic Problem. Augustine (354-430) was the first to advocate the priority of Matthew (see chapter 11.) This was the common position until the late 18th century. It has been championed again in recent years by John Wenham, who gives Matthew a very early date. Discussion and debate continue.

Trustworthiness of the Gospels

Although the Gospels sometimes agree word for word, sometimes they present varying details in their accounts of the life and teaching of Jesus. Their accounts, however, should be understood as complementary not contradictory.

1. See the textbook p. 59—opening paragraph.
2. The writers made different emphases depending on their audience and purpose. Compare Paul's varied accounts of his own conversion in Acts 22:2-21 and 26:4-18.
3. There were many eyewitnesses (Lu 1:2; 1 Cor 15:6).
4. The eyewitnesses must have told the stories and teaching over and over again.
5. Many written accounts were drawn up very early (Lu 1:1).
6. The time lapse between Jesus' life and the writing of some Gospels seems to have been relatively short.
7. Jesus promised the Holy Spirit would remind His disciples of what He had taught them (Jn 14:26).
8. The disciples took great care to preserve the teaching and works of Jesus (Lu 1:3 and 1 Cor 7:10, 12).

THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW

AUTHOR

1. External Evidence

The Church Fathers are united in their view that Matthew was the author.

- Papias (early 2nd century): “Matthew composed the *Logia* in the Hebrew tongue and everyone interpreted them as he was able.”
- Later writers (Irenaeus, Pantaenus, Origen) assert Matthew’s authorship of a Gospel in the Hebrew language.
- The title “According to Matthew”: was attached as early as A.D. 125.

Modern doubts are based on:

- The Gospel is anonymous.
- The Gospel supposedly reflects a later time
- The apostle Matthew would not have used Mark

2. Internal Evidence

The account of Matthew’s call (9:9-13) uses the name Matthew and omits the pronoun “his” with house. Mark & Luke use Levi and include the pronoun.

The author’s organizational skill matches the probable mentality of a tax collector.

It is the only Gospel to include an account of Jesus paying the temple tax (17:24-27) and to use the more precise name of a coin in the dispute over paying tribute (22:19).

3. Conclusion

Early tradition and incidental detail within the Gospel point to Matthew’s authorship. Arguments against it are not insurmountable. If Matthew was not the author, his identity remains unknown.

READERS, PURPOSE, AND DATE

1. A Jewish readership is indicated by references to Jewish customs without explanation, concern to show Jesus as the Messiah, regard for the Davidic and Abrahamic ancestry of Jesus, and the numerous quotations from the Old Testament. The Gospel probably originated either in Palestine or Syria.
2. Since Matthew does not explicitly state his purpose, it must be inferred from the topics he discusses and the way they differ from their treatment in the other Gospels. At the very least Matthew wants to show Jesus as the all powerful

divine Messiah, the fulfillment of God's plan of salvation for Jews and Gentiles alike (see textbook, pp66ff) for full development).

3. Probably written before AD70 even if dependent upon Mark.

STRUCTURE

1. Narrative and discourse. The narrative sections alternate with the following discourses:
 - Chs. 5-7 Principles of the Kingdom
 - Ch. 10 Preaching of the Kingdom
 - Ch. 13 Parables of the Kingdom
 - Ch. 18 Fellowship of the Kingdom
 - Chs. 23-25 Warnings and Consummation of the Kingdom

“And it happened when Jesus finished . . .” This verbal marker occurs after every major block of teaching (7:28, 11:1, 13:53, 19:1, 26:1).
2. Numerical Groups
 - Threes: 3-fold division of the genealogy (1:17); 3 illustrations of righteousness, 3 prohibitions, & 3 commands (6:1-7:20); 3 groupings of 3 miracles (8:1-9:34); 3 “greater thans” (12:6, 41, 42); 3 parables (21:28-22:14); 3 questions (22:15-40).
 - Sevens: grouping of fourteen in the genealogy (1:17), 7 parables (13), and 7 woes (23).
3. General Structure. It is apparent that Matthew was seeking to depict the main aspects of Jesus' life and teaching. The importance of the narrative sections must not be overlooked. While some sections show particular facets of Jesus' ministry (his healing activity, his controversies with opponents), all carry the story to its climax in His death and resurrection.

CHARACTERISTICS

1. Orderliness and conciseness. There is a balance of narrative and discourse. Several accounts are much more concise than those of Mark.
2. Interest in the Messiah. Matthew shows that Jesus is the long-expected Messiah who fulfilled O.T. prophecies and who authoritatively interpreted the O.T., stressing the nature of true righteousness. Matthew uses the phrase “Kingdom of Heaven” (Kingdom=reign/rule).
3. Interest in the church. Matthew alone attributes the word *ecclesia* to Jesus. The two references (16:18; 18:17, 18) are therefore important.
4. Interest in eschatology. This appears not only in chapters 24-25 but also in some of the parables in chapter 13.
5. Interest in universalism. Christ came to save Gentiles as well as Jews. This is evident from first to last—from the genealogy to the Great Commission!

THE GOSPEL OF MARK

AUTHOR

1. Early Christian testimony strongly supports Mark's authorship. Papias and others assert that Mark was the author of the Gospel,
2. Early church connected Mark with Peter in its writing. Peter mentioned 20 times in the Gospel. The tradition that Mark was Peter's interpreter is supported by a comparison of the Gospel with Peter's speeches in Acts, especially Acts 10:34-43. Mark's framework conforms to the skeletal outline of the apostolic preaching.

Acts 10

"good news" (v.36)

"God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit: (v. 38)

"beginning in Galilee" (v.37)

"He went around doing good and healing all who were under the power of the devil" (v.38)

"We are witnesses of everything He did . . . in Jerusalem" (v.39)

"They killed Him by hanging Him on a cross" (v. 39)

"God raised Him from the dead on the third day" (v. 40)

Mark

"the beginning of the good news" (1:1)

the coming of the Spirit on Jesus (1:10)

the Galilean ministry (1:16-8:26)

Jesus' ministry focuses on healings and exorcisms

the ministry in Jerusalem (chs. 11-14)

focus on the death of Christ (ch. 15)

"He has risen! He is not here" (16:16)

Carson and Moo, *An Introduction to the New Testament*, 2nd ed., p.193

3. Mark's identity:
 - Also called John Mark
 - Worked closely with Peter (1 Pet. 5:13)
 - Cousin of Barnabas (Col. 4:10)
 - Traveled with Paul and Barnabas (Acts 13:5)
 - Member of a wealthy family in Jerusalem (Acts 12:12-14)
 - Disappointed Paul but later worked with him in ministry (Acts 13:13, Col. 4:10, 2 Tim. 4:11)
4. The young man of Mark 14:51, 52 is possibly the Gospel writer himself. The brief account could have been omitted without breaking the thread of thought. None of the other Gospel writers report the event.

DATE AND PLACE OF WRITING, RECIPIENTS

1. Early tradition supports a Roman origin and audience for the Gospel. The reference to Mark in 1 Pet. 5:13 associates him with Peter and Rome, assuming that “Babylon” is that city.
2. Internal evidence is compatible with Roman readership.
 - The translation of Aramaic expressions (3:17; 5:41; 7:11, 34; 14:36; 15:34) and explanation of Jewish customs (7:2-4; 15:42)
 - The explanation of Greek expressions with their Latin equivalents (12:42, 15:16)
 - The use of other Latin terms rather than their Greek equivalents (4:21; 12:14; 15:39,44)
 - The reference to Rufus in 15:21, who must have been known to the readers as well as the writer. Perhaps same Rufus as in Rom. 16:31Although the evidence is not conclusive, it is compatible with a Roman setting.
3. The book may have been written anytime from the 40s to the 60s.

PURPOSE

In the opening sentence Mark declares his intention to write an account of the good news of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. Jesus’ identity and power are revealed throughout the book by his encounters with others as He heals, calls, confronts, amazes, teaches, predicts, and as He dies as the Suffering Servant and is raised in triumph!.

STRUCTURE

Papias claimed that although Mark wrote accurately, yet he was not concerned to report all events in strict chronological sequence. Nevertheless, Mark’s material does appear to be in general chronological order. Mark, however, seems to be much more interested in convincing his readers that Jesus is rightly understood as the compassionate Servant, suffering Savior and all powerful Sovereign who reigns victorious even over death!.

The Gospel probably ends with 16:8. Although a longer ending appears in the vast majority of manuscripts, there are some important manuscripts and internal evidence which suggest that it was not part of the original document. A later shorter ending is not well attested.

CHARACTERISTICS

1. Gospel for the Gentiles. Only a few OT quotations. Jesus is “Son of God,” “Son of Man,” and Redeemer. Son of Man was Jesus’ favorite way to identify Himself.
2. Gospel of action. Jesus is a man on the move, deeply involved in the lives of others. The word “immediately” occurs 42 times.
3. Gospel of the “Messianic Secret” only in Mark. Jesus commanded individuals not to tell others about Him: demons (1:25, 32-34; 3:11-12); some healed of diseases (1:44; 5:43; 7:36); His disciples regarding His Messiah-ship until after the resurrection (8:29-30; 9:9-10, 31-32).
4. Gospel of personal reactions. Mark describes with candor the emotions of Jesus, His disciples, His audiences, and His critics.

THE GOSPEL OF LUKE

AUTHOR

External Evidence. The Gospel is anonymous, but the consistent testimony of the early church is that Luke is the author.

Internal Evidence

1. A Gentile
 - In Col 4:10-14 Luke and others are mentioned after 3 Jewish companions of Paul who are said to be his only Jewish companions.
 - One tradition identifies Luke as “an Antiochian of Syria.” He displays a good knowledge of the church at Antioch.
 - He quotes the Septuagint rather than the Hebrew text, and in Acts 1:19 describes Hebrew as “their language.”
2. A doctor
 - In Col. 4:14 Luke is described as “the beloved physician.”
 - There are some medical terms in his writing.
 - He has special concern for the ill: contrast Luke 8:43 with Mark 5:26. See also Lu. 4:23 “Physician, heal yourself.”
3. An educated man
 - Necessary to be a doctor
 - The prologue itself (1:1-4)—evidence of a literary work
 - His excellent Greek vocabulary and style—about 800 words in Luke-Acts are found nowhere else in the NT
4. A historian
 - Places the story of Jesus and the expansion of Christianity in a world setting with many references to secular and political events and to Roman administration of his day
 - Sees events he reports not as isolated but as part of a greater context
 - Archeological evidence shows Luke to be an accurate historian
 - In his prologue he indicates that he was not an eyewitness, but states that his research was thorough and careful.
5. Paul’s companion
 - The “we” sections of Acts indicate that the author was a traveling companion of Paul.
 - 16:10-18—Troas to Philippi
 - 20:5-21:18—Philippi to Jerusalem
 - 27:1-28:16—Caesarea to Rome
 - Luke was with Paul during both of his Roman imprisonments
 - First imprisonment—Col. 4:10-14, Philemon 24
 - Second imprisonment—2 Tim 4:11 “Only Luke is with me.”

PURPOSE, RECIPIENT, AND DATE

1. Luke states in his prologue that he is writing to assure Theophilus of the truth of what he had been taught regarding Jesus (and the development of the early church if we include Acts). The title “most excellent” seems to indicate he was a real person—a Roman official or at least a man of high rank. He may have been Luke’s patron since a dedication of this nature was common at that time. Although dedicated to Theophilus, the Gospel would have been distributed to other educated readers.
2. The apologetic note struck in Acts also suggests a Roman readership. Repeatedly the Christian faith is shown not to be subversive to the interests of the state. It should be noted that in the Gospel, Pilate, a Roman governor, three times declares Jesus innocent (Lu 23).
3. The Gospel probably should be dated in the late 50s or early 60s just prior to the writing of Acts.

STRUCTURE

1. Luke employs the same general framework as the other Synoptics. There are, however, many variations in detail. His birth narratives are more full than Matthew’s; he gives considerable attention to both the birth of Jesus and John the Baptist.
2. Luke’s account of the Galilean ministry is similar in structure to that of Matthew and Mark but is much shorter. Compare Lu. 4:14-9:17 with Mt. 4:12-16:12 and Mk. 1:14-8:26.
3. Luke, however, devotes far more attention to Jesus’ journey from Galilee to Jerusalem than either of the other Synoptics. Luke’s account extends from 9:51 to 19:27, almost 10 chapters while Mark gives it only 1 chapter (10) and Matthew only 2 chapters (19-20). This section contains much material (including many parables—see NIV Study Bible, p 106) that is unique to Luke. It is arranged in such a way as to focus attention on Jerusalem in preparation for the events of Passion Week. He gives little indication of the location of the events.
4. The passion narratives are similar to those of Matthew and Mark, but again with some difference of detail. Luke’s resurrection narratives all take place in Judea. He is the only Gospel writer to report the ascension.

CHARACTERISTICS

1. **Comprehensive coverage.** Luke's Gospel begins with the birth narratives and closes with ascension. It is longer than the other Synoptics and especially in its account of the last journey to Jerusalem. It is the longest book in the NT. With Acts Luke's literary contribution constitutes more than 1/4 of the New Testament.
2. **Universality.** Luke's outlook in the Gospel and Acts is dominated by the universality of the gospel—"and all mankind will see God's salvation"(Lu 3:6 quoting Isa. 40:3-5); "I will pour out my Spirit on all people" (Acts 2:17 quoting Joel 2:28). The Gospel is packed full of examples that the good news of Jesus is for all who respond in faith regardless of race or social position: (1) Samaritans; (2) Gentiles; (3) social outcasts; (4) the poor; (5) women; and (6) children.
3. **Jesus' concern for individuals.** Whereas Matthew focuses on Jesus and the kingdom, Luke concentrates on Jesus and people. He employs vivid character sketches.
4. **Prayer.** Luke reports 9 prayers of Jesus, only two of which are found elsewhere. Two parables peculiar to Luke deal with prayer (15:20-24; 16:24, 27-28).
5. **Money.** Luke emphasizes Jesus' teaching about money—that His disciples should not love money and should be good stewards. John's warning (3:10-14), parable of rich fool (12:13-21), parable of the shrewd manager (16:1-13), parable of the rich man and Lazarus (16:19-31), and Jesus' encounter with Zacchaeus (19:1-10).
6. **Joy.** The Gospel opens (1:47) and closes (24:52-53) with rejoicing. Words expressing joy occur frequently (1:14, 44, 47; 10:21) as well as words such as leaping for joy (6:23) and laughter (6:21). The parables of chapter 15 stress this note as does the story of Zacchaeus. Luke alone records the canticles of praise: the *Magnificat* of Mary (1:46-55), the *Benedictus* of Zechariah (1:68-79), the *Gloria in Excelsis* of the angels (2:14) and the *Nunc Dimittis* of Simeon (2:29-32).
7. **Holy Spirit.** The text is liberally sprinkled with references to the Spirit from the annunciations to the promise of power on high. See textbook, p.90.

THE GOSPEL OF JOHN

AUTHOR AND PLACE OF WRITING

External Evidence

About 180 A.D. Irenaeus wrote, “John, the disciple of the Lord, the same who reclined upon His breast, himself also published his Gospel, when he was living in Ephesus in Asia.” He states that John remained there until the time of the emperor Trajan (98-117 A.D.). Irenaeus’ testimony is important because he had been a student of Polycarp who in turn had been a disciple of the apostle John. Other external evidence supports John’s authorship.

Internal Evidence

1. The Gospel claims to have been written by an eyewitness (1:14; 19:35; 21:24, 25). A variety of details suggest an eyewitness account, for example six water jars (2:6), the number of fish caught and distance of the boat from the shore (21:8, 11).
2. The writer identifies himself as “the disciple whom Jesus loved” (13:23; 19:26; 20:2; 21:7, 20).
3. The content of the Gospel indicates it was written by a Palestinian Jew. It reveals accurate and detailed knowledge of
 - Jewish customs before the fall of Jerusalem: purification rites (2:6), libation and illumination rites at the Feast of Tabernacles (8:12)
 - Jewish history: building of the temple, hostility toward Samaritans, hierarchy and high priests
 - Palestinian geography: Hebrew name of pool near the Sheep Gate and that it had 5 porches; Hebrew name of a paved areas outside the Praetorium
4. By process of elimination of other Apostles, the author is the Apostle John.
5. Additional information about John
 - He and James were sons of Zebedee (Mk 1:19, 20), nicknamed “sons of thunder (Mk 3:17) who wanted to call fire down from heaven on a Samaritan village (Lu 9:52-54)
 - He and James were Peter and Andrew’s fishing partners
 - He and James asked to have the important seats when Jesus came into His kingdom (Mk 10:35-45)
 - One of the 3 in Jesus’ inner circle of disciples (Mk 5:37-40; 9:2; 14:33)
 - While on the cross Jesus entrusted Mary into his care (Jo 19:25-27)
 - He became a pillar of the Jerusalem church (Gal 2:9-10)

DATE

The traditional date is in the 90s A.D., although earlier and later dates have been suggested.

PURPOSE AND READERS

1. The stated purpose is evangelistic (20:30-31).
2. A possible subsidiary apologetic purpose is worthy of mention: to refute Docetic Gnosticism, which denied the humanity of Jesus. Compare the prologue (1:1-18) and the insistence on the reality of Jesus' death (19:28-37) with 1 John.
3. The readers seem to have included Gentiles since Jewish customs are explained (4:9, 25; 6:1; 6:4; 7:37; 19:31).

STRUCTURE

1. The textbook p. 97 provides an insightful overview of the contents, emphasizing both Jesus' signs (2:11; 20:30) and glory (1:14; 17:24).
2. The number 7 is emphasized: 7 miracles, 7 discourses, 7 "I Am's"
3. Key words which occur many times: "witness" and "believe"

RELATIONSHIP TO THE SYNOPTICS

1. John's relationship to the Synoptics continues to be debated. It's possible he wrote to supplement them, although scholars are divided on this question. In any case, 90% of the material in John is not found in the other Gospels. While the Synoptics focus on the Galilean ministry (Luke also on the journey to Jerusalem), John reports on Jesus' activity in Jerusalem and Judea. He reports 5 visits to Jerusalem (2:13; 5:1; 7:2, 10; 10:22-23; 12:1, 12), indicating that Jesus' ministry covered 3 years (A.D. 27- Passover 30). The Galilean ministry of the Synoptics fits into John's framework between 5:1 and 7:2.
2. The different language attributed to Jesus in John's gospel may be accounted for by Jesus' audience (religious leaders in Jerusalem rather than the people of Galilee). Also compare Mk 9:37 with Jn 13:20 and note the language of Mt 11:27.

CHARACTERISTICS

1. An abundance of great themes: life, light, darkness, faith, truth, remaining, flesh, hour, world
2. Emphasis on the deity and humanity of Jesus. His deity is affirmed in 1:18 and by the signs He performed and the "I Am's." His relationship to God is also stressed via the titles "the Son of God" or "the Son." A number of passages focus on His humanity (1:14, etc). See textbook, p. 99.
3. Many discourses with little action. Although there is some movement, John is concerned to probe the significance of the events he reports.
4. Teaching on the Holy Spirit: 3:8; 4:24; 7:39; chs 14-16
5. A unique look into the empty tomb--the position of the grave clothes (20:1-9)

ACTS

I. Introduction

A. The title

B. The purpose of Acts

1. Luke's stated purpose (Luke 1:1-4)
2. Further apologetic suggestions (F. F. Bruce com. on Gk text, 3rd ed., p22)
 - Defense against Judaism
 - Defense against paganism
 - Defense against political accusations

C. The date of Acts—early 60s

D. Authorship

1. External evidence—early church fathers unanimously say that Luke wrote Acts
2. Internal evidence—the vocabulary and style of “we” sections matches the vocabulary and style of the rest of Acts

E. Sources

1. Luke an eyewitness of some events (“we” sections--ch. 16 etc.)
2. Careful research—other eyewitnesses (Luke with Paul in Jerusalem)
3. Selective in content

F. Speeches

1. Types of speeches
 - Evangelistic—Paul at Athens (ch 17)
 - Deliberative—Jerusalem Council (ch 15)
 - Apologetic—rioting crowd (ch 22)
 - Apologetic/polemic—Stephen to Sanhedrin (ch 7)
 - Pastoral—Paul to Ephesian elders (ch 20)
2. Reliable accounts
3. Why these speeches are included

Ch 2—beginning of church	Ch 10—Gospel to Gentiles
Ch 3—triggered persecution	Ch 13—preaching in Hellenistic synagogue
Ch 7—Gospel spread to Samaria & Gentiles (ch 8 & 11)	Ch 14—Gospel to uneducated pagans
	Ch 17—Gospel to educated pagans

G. Structure

1. Key=ch. 1:8
2. Early chapters inside/outside
3. Parallels between Peter and Paul
 - Raised one person from the dead
 - Miraculous release from prison
 - Healed a cripple

- Extraordinary miracles (5:15 & 19:11-12)

H. Time Covered

Approximately AD30-60

I. Cutting through the hermeneutical haze

1. The problem—what’s normative and what’s not
2. Some guidelines
 - Repeated patterns and themes
 - What is prescribed in speeches
 - What is confirmed in the Epistles

II. Overview of Acts: tracing the development of the apostolic church

Acts 1:8 provides the key to understanding the direction in which the early church developed—Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, the ends of the earth. The primary thrust of these words, however, when spoken to Jews would not have been simply geographical but ethnic; Acts traces the expansion of the gospel from narrow Jewish nationalism to a world religion open to all regardless of race or nationality.

Stage One: The Jewish Church, chs. 1-7

1:6-8	Narrow nationalistic view of apostles corrected by Jesus
2:39	Peter unaware of the implications of his own proclamation that the gospel was for those “far off”
2:5ff	Earliest church composed of Jews and proselytes
6:5	Nicolaus, a proselyte, one of those chosen to serve the poor widows

Stage Two: The Samaritans (mixed race—Jew and Gentile), ch. 8

8:1-13	Gospel received by Samaritans
8:14-25	Samaritans received by Jewish Christians

Stage Three: The Gentiles, chs. 8-28

8:26-40	Through the Ethiopian eunuch (a Proselyte of the Gate?) the Gospel goes to Africa (Coptic Church)
9	Conversion of the Apostle to the Gentiles (Paul)
10	Gospel goes to the Gentile centurion Cornelius and others
11:1-18	Resistance among Jewish believers to accepting Gentiles
11:19ff	Establishment of Gentile church in Antioch
12	Persecution of Jerusalem leaders (perhaps partially due to their acceptance of Gentiles)
13	The Spirit’s call to the Gentile mission
13-14	The mission begun
15	The mission opposed
16-28	The mission continued and expanded
28:30-31	Paul preaching and teaching openly and unhindered

ROMANS

THE CHURCH AT ROME

The origins of the church are unknown. The church was probably started by Jews who were present on the Day of Pentecost. The Christian community in Rome seems to have been substantial. It's possible that the expulsion of the Jews from Rome in A.D. 49 was related to the preaching of the gospel. The church was significant enough for Nero to blame Christians for the fire in A.D. 64.

DATE AND PLACE OF WRITING

It is generally agreed that Paul wrote Romans in about A.D. 57 from Greece and more specifically from the vicinity of Corinth.

OCCASION AND PURPOSE, READERS

The occasion seems to be associated more with Paul's desire to visit Rome and his evangelistic vision than with the needs of the Roman church, although the latter can not be excluded. Paul felt that his work in the eastern Mediterranean was now finished and it was time to break new ground in the west, particularly Spain. After returning to Jerusalem to deliver the collection, he planned to visit Rome and have the Roman Christians help him on his way to Spain (Rom. 15:14-33).

There is uncertainty about the reasons for which Paul wrote the letter. Discussion focuses on why so much of the letter is a doctrinal treatise. Taking into account both explicit statements and the content of the letter, Paul's purposes were:

1. To prepare for his visit to Rome and ministry with them
2. To ask them to assist him with his journey to Spain
3. To inform the readers of his understanding of the gospel—a gospel which embraces both Jews and Gentiles. This would deepen their understanding of the biblical foundations and practical outworking of this universal gospel and enrich their life together. It would also pave the way for his visit and their support.

The content of Romans is closely related to the nature and emphases of Paul's mission as Apostle to the Gentiles. In 1:13 he acknowledges that the Roman church is largely Gentile. In introducing the letter he speaks repeatedly of the gospel (1:1, 2, 9, 15, 16,17), and twice he writes of "my gospel" (2:16; 16:25). [*In Galatians 1:11-12 he states that he received his gospel by revelation from Jesus Christ.*] In the opening paragraph of Romans he draws attention to his God-given mission to take news of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles. Twice more he emphasizes his mission to the Gentiles – in 15:14-22 and the benediction in 16:25-27. In the letter he shows how a Jewish Messiah promised in the Hebrew Scriptures offers salvation to Gentiles and Jews and shows how they can and should live together in peace. Throughout the letter he often discusses Jew/Gentile issues and repeatedly states that salvation is offered to all (1:16; 3:22; 5:18; 11:32; 16:26).

OVERVIEW OF CONTENT

- Both Jews and Gentiles need the gospel (1:1-3:20)
- Both are made right with God and become children of Abraham through faith in Christ (3:21-4:25)
- Both share in the benefits of the gospel (5:1-8:39)
- Both have problems relating to widespread Jewish rejection of Christ (9:1-11:36)
- Both are called to a righteous life of love and harmony (12:1-15:13)
- Both are part of Paul's plans for the immediate future (15:14-33)
- Both are included in the greetings and the benediction (16)

CONTENT OF ROMANS

INTRODUCTION 1:1-17

Greeting 1:1-7

Thanksgiving and desire to visit Rome 1:8-15

Statement of theme 1:16-17

I. The Need for God's Righteousness 1:18-3:20

A. The Gentiles under the wrath of God 1:18-32

1. The reason for God's wrath 1:18-23
2. The revelation of God's wrath 1:24-32

B. The Jews under the wrath of God 2:1-3:8

Paul smashes the following arguments used to support the Jews' righteousness.

1. The belief that the Jews were a chosen people to whom God would display partiality in judgment 2:1-11
2. The belief that the Jews were secure in relation to God because of their possession and knowledge of the law 2:12-24
3. The belief that the Jews' standing with God was secure because of the covenant seal of circumcision 2:25-29

C. The indictment of all humanity 3:9-20, 23

- II. The Provision of God's Righteousness 3:21-4:25
 - A. Righteousness is received through faith in Christ 3:21-31
 - 1. The law and prophets testify to righteousness by faith 3:21
 - 2. Righteousness by faith in Christ is God's gift 3:22-26
 - 3. Righteousness by faith leaves no room for human pride 3:27-31
 - B. The Old Testament witnesses to righteousness by faith 4:1-25
 - 1. Abraham was counted righteous because he believed God, and David was righteous because he was forgiven 4:1-8
 - 2. Abraham was not counted righteous because of circumcision which was given later as a sign of righteousness by faith 4:9-12
 - 3. Abraham was not made righteous through the law which was given more than four centuries later 4:13-15
 - 4. Abraham, having been justified by faith, is the father of all who believe 4:16-25
- III. The Benefits of God's Righteousness 5:1-8:39 (Anders Nygren—4 freedoms) (**peace, access, joy, hope, Holy Spirit, love, reconciliation, life**)
 - A. Freedom from the wrath of God 5:1-21
 - 1. Saved from the present & future dimensions of God's wrath 5:1-11
 - 2. Rescued from the Fall through Christ 5:12-21
 - B. Freedom from sin 6:1-23
 - 1. Emancipated from sin through union with Christ in baptism 6:1-14
 - 2. Set free from sin to become slaves of God 6:15-23
 - C. Freedom from the law 7:1-25
 - 1. Liberated from the law through our death with Christ 7:1-6
 - 2. The law's promotion of sin 7:7-13
 - 3. The law's inability to promote righteousness 7:14-25
 - D. Freedom from death 8:1-39
 - 1. Freed from death through the Spirit of Life 8:1-17
 - 2. Patient endurance of life's trials through the hope of glory and the help of the Spirit 8:18-30
 - 3. Assurance of righteousness and reconciliation 8:31-39

IV. Israel's Rejection of God's Righteousness 9:1-11:36

In chapters 2 and 3 Paul found it necessary to expose the sinful failure of the Jews despite their spiritual advantages. Now he takes up the problem of their most tragic failure: their rejection of the Messiah for whose coming God had been preparing them through the centuries (Jn. 1:11). Does this indicate a failure of God's plan? Not at all, says Paul, as he argues that (1) God in His sovereignty has chosen those who believe in Christ to be the children of promise; (2) the Jews must bear the blame for their rejection of the gospel; and (3) Israel's rejection is neither entire nor final.

A. The problem posed 9:1-5

B. Paul's arguments 9:6-29

1. God in His sovereignty has chosen those who believe in Christ to be the children of promise. 9:6-29
 - a. It is the children of the promise, not those of natural descent, who are regarded as Abraham's offspring (illustrated by God's choice of Isaac and Jacob). 9:6-13
 - b. Mercy and wrath are exercised by God's sovereign decision as shown by Israel's Scriptures 6:14-29
2. Israel herself is to blame for her failure to receive God's righteousness 9:30-10:21
 - a. Israel has pursued the righteousness of law-keeping rather than righteousness by faith 9:30-10:4
 - b. Israel has failed to see how righteousness is attained 10:5-13
 - c. Israel is without excuse 10:14-21
3. Israel's rejection is neither entire nor final 11:1-32
 - a. A remnant of Israel remains 11:1-10
 - b. Israel's stumbling has opened the way for Gentile salvation 11:11-24
 - c. "All Israel" will be saved 11:25-32

C. Praise for God's wisdom and ways 11:33-36

V. The Practice of God's Righteousness 12:1-15:13

A. A living sacrifice 12:1-2

B. Relationships within the Christian community 12:3-13

1. Humble service through the exercise of God's gifts 12:3-8
2. Loving service 12:9-13

- C. Relationships with those outside 12:14-13:7
 - 1. Responding to persecution 12:14-21
 - 2. Submission to the governing authorities 13:1-7
- D. The centrality of love 13:8-10
- E. The purifying power of hope 13:11-14
- F. Liberty and love in questions of conscience 14:1-15:13
 - 1. Unity maintained by refraining from judgment 14:1-12
 - 2. Unity maintained by the loving surrender of one's rights 14:13-23
 - 3. Unity maintained by following Christ's example 15:1-13
- VI. The Fellowship of God's Righteousness 15:14-16:27
 - A. Fellowship experienced through shared mission 15:14-33
 - B. Fellowship experienced through showing honor, affection and concern 16:1-27

INTRODUCTION TO 1 CORINTHIANS

THE CORINTHIAN CHURCH

1. It was established by Paul during his second missionary journey (Acts 18:1-18a). He spent about 18 months in the city (Acts 18:11) from about AD50-52.
2. Its membership seems to have been primarily Gentile given the nature of its problems, although there were some Jews in the church.
3. It was characterized by immaturity (I Cor. 3:1ff), independence (I Cor. 1:2, 4:17, 7:17, 11:16, 14:33), and pride (I Cor. 3:18, 4:7, 8 & 18, 10:12, 14:37).

PAUL'S RELATIONS WITH THE CORINTHIANS

1. The church was founded by Paul in about AD50-52 (Acts 18:1-18a/Gallio).
2. After leaving Corinth, Paul completed his second missionary journey (Acts 18:18-22). On his third journey he returned to Ephesus (Acts 19) where he heard of immorality in the Corinthian church.
3. Paul wrote a letter on immorality now lost (I Cor. 5).
4. Paul received a report from Chloe's people (I Cor. 1:11) and a letter presumably carried by representatives (I Cor. 16:17-18) asking certain questions (I Cor. 7:1 especially; also 7:25, 8:1, 12:1, 16:1, 16:12).
5. I Cor. was written by Paul about AD55 from Ephesus (I Cor. 16:8).
6. Paul received word about further problems at Corinth.
7. Paul made a painful visit to Corinth (II Cor. 2:1-2).
8. Paul wrote a painful letter to Corinth (II Cor. 2:3-4, 7:8ff). This letter is probably lost, although some think that II Cor. 10-13 was part of it.
9. Paul sent Titus to bring about reconciliation between the Corinthians and himself. Titus was successful (II Cor. 7:5-16).
10. II Cor. was written by Paul from Macedonia--possibly autumn 56.
11. Paul made a final, happy visit to the church (Acts 20:1-3; Romans 16:1, 23ff).

OCCASION AND PURPOSE OF I CORINTHIANS

Paul received information about the church from the household of Chloe (1:11) and a letter from the Corinthians (7:1 etc. see above) which may have been carried by Stephanus, Fortunatus, and Achaicus (16:17) who no doubt supplied further details. The church was experiencing a number of problems: factions including opposition to Paul, sexual immorality, lawsuits, questions regarding marriage and divorce, the eating of food offered to idols, disorderly worship, and denial of the resurrection of the dead.

Paul's purpose in writing was:

1. To address the behavioral problems in the church.
2. To answer questions raised by the Corinthians in their letter to him.
3. To correct doctrinal misunderstandings, especially regarding the resurrection.

CONTENT OF 1CORINTHIANS

Greeting and Thanksgiving 1:1-9

I. Division in the Church 1:10-4:21

Among other key issues, the divisions depreciated the cross of Christ and included opposition to Paul.

II. Morality and Marriage 5:1-7:40

- ❑ Incest 5:1-13
- ❑ Lawsuits among believers 6:1-11
- ❑ Sexual immorality 6:12-20
- ❑ Marriage, divorce, separation, celibacy, remarriage 7:1-40

III. Food Offered to Idols (Exercise of Christian Liberty) 8:1-11:1

Three issues

Three guiding principles:

- ❑ The principle of liberty limited by love for one's brother 8:1-9:23;
See also 10:31-11:1
- ❑ The principle of self-discipline 9:24-10:13
- ❑ The principle of doing all to the glory of God 10:31

IV. Public Worship 11:2-14:40

- ❑ Veiling of women participating in worship 11:2-16

- ❑ Desecration of the Lord's Supper 11:17-34
- ❑ Spiritual gifts 12:1-14:40
 - The worth of tongues evaluated by:
 - (1) The Spirit-guided confession "Jesus is Lord" 12:1-3
 - (2) The wide variety of gifts 12:4-31
 - (3) The edification of the church 14:1-19
 - (4) Evangelism 14:20-26

Three principles for the exercise of spiritual gifts:

- (1) Love 13:1-14:1a
- (2) Edification of the whole body 12:7, 25, 26; 14:5, 12, 26 etc.
- (3) Fitting and orderly 14:26-40

V. The Resurrection 15:1-58

- ❑ The certainty of the resurrection 15:1-34
- ❑ An explanation of the bodily resurrection 15:35-53
- ❑ The celebration of victory over death 15:54-58

VI. Collection and Paul's Future Plans 16:1-12

Concluding exhortations, greetings, signature, and benediction 16:19-24

INTRODUCTION TO 2 CORINTHIANS

OCCASION AND PURPOSE

Paul wrote our 1 Corinthians from Ephesus to address a number of problems in the Corinthian church including opposition to himself (see especially 1 Cor. 1-4). Learning of continuing problems he made a brief, painful visit to the church (2 Cor. 2:1-2) where he was apparently insulted by the ringleader of the opposition against him (2 Cor. 2:5-10). Paul returned to Ephesus from which he wrote a painful/sorrowful letter (2 Cor. 2:4; 7:8) which he sent with Titus. Paul left Ephesus and waited anxiously for Titus –first in Troas, then in Macedonia. Titus eventually arrived with news that the majority of the church had submitted to Paul's authority (2 Cor. 7:5-16) and that they had disciplined the offender. Paul wrote II Corinthians in response to Titus' positive report. To complicate the situation, at some point after the writing of I Corinthians Jewish "Christians" arrived in Corinth, probably claiming to be representatives of the Jerusalem church. They carried letters of recommendation and emphasized the importance of the Jewish law (2 Cor. 3). These false apostles boasted in their Jewish credentials (11:13-23) and tried to undermine Paul's integrity and apostleship.

An alternative view is that Paul wrote chapters 1-9 but before sending the letter learned of renewed opposition in the church. In response he added chapters 10-13 with their marked difference of tone. According to this view the latter chapters were written to the whole church and not just a recalcitrant minority.

Paul's purpose was:

1. To express his relief and joy at reconciliation with a majority of Corinthians.
2. To encourage the renewal of the collection for the poor Jerusalem Christians.
3. To defend his apostolic authority and warn a resistant minority who were still under the influence of Paul's Jewish opponents.

THE UNITY OF THE LETTER

Some have doubted the unity of the letter, focusing attention on several passages alleged to be interpolations. Each passage, however, can be satisfactorily explained in its present context, demonstrating that Paul was a master of adding a parenthesis and then returning to the main point without getting lost.

CONTENT OF 2 CORINTHIANS

Greeting and Thanksgiving for God's Comfort and Deliverance 1:1-11

I. Paul's Response to Titus' Good News of Reconciliation with the Corinthians 1:12-7:16

Paul's Integrity and Concern for the Corinthians 1:12-2:13

- His integrity defended in relation to his change of plans 1:12-2:4
- His concern for the disciplined offender 2:5-11
- His deep concern for the Corinthians 2:12-13

Paul's Apostolic Ministry 2:14-7:4

- A ministry of triumph because of sincere dependence on God 2:14-17
- A ministry which is validated by its converts 3:1-3
- A ministry of God-given competence and of boldness because of the glory of the new covenant 3:4-18
- A Christ-centered ministry of sincerity and self-effacement grounded in a genuine conversion experience initiated by God 4:1-6
- A ministry of courageous suffering founded on an unshakable faith (1) in the reality of God's power which brings inner renewal and (2) in the certainty of the Christian hope 4:7-5:10
- A ministry based on the right motives 5:11-17
- A God-given ministry of reconciliation 5:18-6:2

- A ministry which commends itself in every way as an instrument of the Holy Spirit and the power of God 6:3-10
- A ministry marked by genuine pastoral concern 6:11-7:4
 - Note Paul's appeal to abandon idolatrous associations 6:14-7:1

Paul's Relief and Joy at News of Reconciliation with the Corinthians 7:5-16

- Note his previous anxiety and his current joy and confidence

II. Paul's Exhortation to Renew the Collection for the Jerusalem Poor 8:1-9:15

Motives for contributing to the collection 8:1-11a

Guidelines regarding the amount to be given 8:11b-15

Administration of the collection 8:16-9:5

Manner of giving 9:6-11

Results of the collection 9:12-15

III. Paul's Defense of His Apostolic Authority, Attack on the False Apostles, and Warning to the Remaining Opponents 10:1-13:14

Defense of his apostolic authority and field of service 10:1-18

Paul's fears for the Corinthians and his "foolish" boasting 11:1-12:12

- Knowledge
- Financial policy
- Lineage
- Sufferings
- Visions, revelations, and thorn in the flesh

Paul's "tough love" advice to the Corinthians in preparation for his third visit 12:13-13:14

GALATIANS

AUTHOR

Paul's authorship has never been seriously questioned.

DESTINATION

The destination of Galatians is debated because the term "Galatians" may refer either to the ethnic Galatians in the north or to the Roman province of Galatia which would also include the southerners of various races. The theories have been labeled the North Galatian theory and the South Galatian theory. Of the two the South Galatian theory seems to fit best with Acts. Acts reports Paul's missionary work in southern Galatia, but none in the north.

DATE AND PLACE OF WRITING

There is no consensus regarding the date and place of writing. One's conclusions depend on the view taken regarding the destination of the epistle and on the relation of Paul's visits to Jerusalem reported in Galatians to those reported in Acts.

Those who accept the North Galatian theory hold that it was written between AD 53 and 57 from Ephesus or Macedonia. Some who accept the South Galatian theory hold that it was written in 48 or 49 from Syrian Antioch after Paul's first journey and before the Jerusalem Council. Others believe that it was written between 50 and 53 from Corinth or Syrian Antioch after the Jerusalem Council.

OCCASION / PURPOSE

Some Judaizers were disturbing the Galatian churches by their insistence that Gentile believers should be circumcised and keep the Jewish Law. Paul says that they were doing this to avoid being persecuted by unbelieving Jews (6:12). *Acts reports the violent opposition of the Jews in southern Galatia to the gospel preached by Paul and Barnabas (Acts 13-14).* The Judaizers attacked Paul's apostleship and his message, thus threatening the Christian position that salvation is by grace through faith and not by keeping the Law.

Paul's purposes in writing are

1. to defend his apostleship
2. to reaffirm the gospel of grace
3. to make clear that his doctrine of freedom in Christ does not lead to license but to a Spirit-guided life of love and godliness

OVERVIEW OF CONTENT

In the opening verse Paul stresses that his apostleship is from Jesus Christ and God the Father. He does not include his usual introductory thanksgiving for the readers. Instead he condemns anyone who perverts the gospel of Christ (1:6-9).

1. Paul's personal arguments regarding his gospel and apostleship 1:11-2:21
 - Paul's gospel was received by direct revelation from Jesus Christ and his apostleship was received from God. 1:11-16a
 - His gospel was not received from any man but it was approved by the pillars of the Jerusalem church. 1:16b-2:10
 - His confrontation with Peter at Antioch is clear evidence of Paul's apostolic authority and the truth of his gospel. 2:11-21
2. Paul's arguments from Christian experience and Scripture 3:1-4:31
 - The Galatians had received the Holy Spirit by believing the gospel not by observing the law. 3:1-5
 - The Hebrew Scriptures teach that both Jews and Gentiles are made right with God by faith and not by keeping the law. 3:6-4:7
 - Key points relate to:
 - Abraham
 - The curse of the law and Christ's redeeming death
 - The priority of the promise over the Mosaic law
 - The purpose of the law was to expose sin and lead us to Christ
 - Paul's fears for his readers and their close relationship with him 4:8-20
 - The allegory of Hagar and Sarah 4:21-31
3. Paul's exhortation to live a life of responsible freedom in Christ 5:1-6:18
 - Stand firm to avoid the danger of embracing Judaism and thereby falling away from grace 5:1-12
 - Use your freedom responsibly to live a Spirit-guided life and not indulge the sinful nature. 5:13-26
 - Fulfill the law of Christ through your sympathy for others' burdens and your generosity. 6:1-10
 - Paul's final warning and motives 6:11-18

INTRODUCTION TO EPHESIANS

AUTHORSHIP

Paul's authorship of Ephesians was not questioned until the late 18th century. Since that time there has been considerable controversy over its authenticity. There are 5 basic arguments against Pauline authorship: linguistic, stylistic, literary, historical, and doctrinal. Each of these arguments, however, has been found wanting under close scrutiny. There is substantial evidence supporting the traditional view that Paul wrote the book. Evidences include: (1) the letter claims to have been written by Paul—see 1:1 and 3:1; (2) the epistle's structure is characteristic of Paul—greeting, thanksgiving and prayer, doctrinal exposition, ethical teaching, final greetings, and benediction; (3) the agreement in theology with that found in epistles unquestionably written by Paul—examples are mankind apart from God, unity of Jew and Gentile in Christ, ministry of the church, and Christian ethics; (4) the early church accepted Paul as author; (5) the early church did **not** take forgeries lightly—even when from good motives.

DESTINATION

The destination of Ephesians remains an enigma despite years of investigation by scholars. Since the second century the epistle has borne the title “to the Ephesians” and (with the single exception of Marcion) has been regarded as having been addressed to the church at Ephesus. Yet this view is difficult to maintain for three reasons: (1) the absence of the words “in Ephesus” from the oldest Greek manuscripts, including P46 which dates from around AD 200; (2) the testimony of early Christian writers; (3) the impersonal nature of the letter (3:2; 4:21; 6:23-24). Certainly personal greetings would have been included if the letter had been written to Ephesus where Paul spent 3 years.

About AD 140 Marcion suggested on the basis of Col. 4:16 that the letter was originally addressed to the Laodiceans. This is unlikely because (1) we possess no manuscript with a Laodicean address and (2) the epistle is silent with regard to any problems in the church there.

The impersonal nature of the letter suggests what has been called the circular theory. That is, it was addressed to a number of churches rather than just one. It seems best to regard Ephesians as an encyclical destined originally for the churches of the Roman province of Asia.

DATE AND PLACE OF WRITING

The date and place of writing are bound up with the relationship of Ephesians to Colossians and Philemon. The subject matter of Ephesians and Colossians is very closely related, and both letters were carried by the same messenger, Tychicus. As with Colossians and Philemon, there are three possibilities for the place and date of composition: (1) Ephesus in the middle 50's; (2) Caesarea in the late 50's and (3) Rome in the early 60's.

Paul was a prisoner at the time of writing (3:1; 4:1). The book of Acts records only two imprisonments of any length, one at Caesarea (chapters 23-26) and the other at Rome (chapter 28). It does not report an Ephesian imprisonment. This hypothesis is based on an ambiguous statement in I Corinthians 15:32. Evidence favoring the Roman imprisonment is gathered from both Colossians and Philemon since their close connection is not disputed. Evidence includes: (1) the fugitive slave Onesimus was more likely to flee to Rome than Caesarea; (2) access to Paul was much more likely in Rome, where he had his own living quarters; and (3) Paul expected to be released and asked Philemon to prepare lodging (v22). In Caesarea his only expectation was to go to Rome to appear before Caesar. Therefore, the book was probably written from Rome in the early 60's.

OCCASION AND PURPOSE

The occasion and purpose of Ephesians are difficult to establish because of the doubt concerning the identity of the recipients and therefore their circumstances. There are, however, two clues which help. One is the situation of Paul at the time of writing; the other is the close tie between Ephesians and Colossians. Together these factors suggest that Paul first wrote the apologetic Colossian letter. Then, being in prison and having time to meditate, he reflected on its doctrines and developed them in a general fashion, omitting the polemical element. This view fits well the ponderous, non-controversial mood of Ephesians and also accounts for its close similarity in thought to Colossians.

In this case, the writing was occasioned by the apostle's own meditation and his desire to set forth these profound truths for the benefit of the readers. Paul's purpose, then, was to expound the significance of Christ's work and cosmic reign as they relate to the church in order that his readers might understand better the nature, ministry, and life of the church within the purpose of God.

CONTENT OF EPHESIANS

GREETINGS 1:1-2

I. Praise for God's unifying purpose and blessings in Christ 1:3-14

The purpose stated: "To bring all things in heaven and on earth together under one head, even Christ" (NIV). Three key ideas are present: restoration, unity, and the headship of Christ. 1:9-10

The blessings are:

- ❑ God has chosen believers 1:4
- ❑ God has adopted believers 1:5-6
- ❑ God has redeemed (forgiven) believers 1:7
- ❑ God has revealed His cosmic purpose in Christ to believers 1:8-10
- ❑ God has given believers the Holy Spirit, assuring them of their relationship to God and their inheritance 1:11-14

II. Thanksgiving and prayer for the readers 1:15-23

Note God's power revealed in Christ's unifying cosmic reign 1:20-23

III. God's salvation and its unifying effects 2:1-3:21

A. Believers saved by God's grace and power 2:1-10

Note the unity which believers have with Christ in vss 5-6; "made alive with Christ, raised up with Christ, and seated with Christ in the heavenly realms." This parallels the experience of Jesus as described in 1:20-21.

B. The Gentiles united with the Jews in the people of God 2:11-22

1. The Gentiles' previous plight 2:11-12
2. The unifying, reconciling ministry of Christ 2:13-18
3. The Gentiles' new status 2:19-22

Note the 3 metaphors indicating unity: political, family, building

C. Paul's role in the salvation of the Gentiles 3:1-13

1. The basis for Paul's ministry to the Gentiles 3:1-7

Note the unity language of vs 6—heirs together, members together of one body, sharers together

2. The nature of Paul's ministry to the Gentiles 3:8-13

Note vss 10-12: The church "appears to be God's pilot scheme for the reconciled universe of the future . . ." (F. F. Bruce, NICNT)

D. Prayer for greater spiritual strength and love (an essential for unity) 3:14-21

Note the emphasis on unity in vs 18

IV. The practical fulfillment of God's purpose in the church 4:1-6:20

A. Appeal to maintain the unity of the church 4:1-6

B. Growth toward unity of faith through gifts exercised in love 4:7-16

C. Unity through abandoning the disintegrating ways of the world 4:17-5:20

Note that unbelievers are separated from the life of God (4:18) and believers are to walk in love 4:25-5:2

D. Domestic unity through loving leadership and willing submission 5:21-6:9

1. Principle of domestic submission stated 5:21
2. Unity between husband and wife 5:22-33
3. Unity between parents and children 6:1-4
4. Unity between master and slave 6:5-9

E. Unity maintained through conflict with evil spiritual forces 6:10-20

Note the reference to the gospel of peace (vs 15), praying for all the saints (vs 18), and the mystery of the gospel (vs 19)—unity of Jews and Gentiles in Christ (3:6).

FINAL GREETINGS 6:21-24

INTRODUCTION TO PHILIPPIANS

AUTHORSHIP AND UNITY

Few have questioned Paul's authorship of this letter which claims to be from him (1:1) and which reflects his known circumstances and thought. Although some have questioned the unity of the letter (noting the abrupt change of tone in 3:1), the majority of scholars hold Philippians to be a single, unified letter.

PHILIPPI AND THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE CHURCH

The city was named after the father of Alexander the Great, King Philip II of Macedon. In 42 BC Philippi became a Roman military colony. In 27 BC it received a change of status involving benefits in the area of governance and taxation. Also the citizens were regarded the same as citizens of Italian cities. This strong Roman presence is no doubt reflected in Paul's reference to "citizenship in heaven" in 3:20. Luke described Philippi as "a Roman colony and the leading city of that district of Macedonia" (Acts 16:12). It was a prosperous city as evidenced by the presence of Lydia, who was a seller of purple. Acts 16:6-40 reports the establishment of the church.

DATE AND PLACE OF WRITING

The traditional view that Paul wrote the letter from Rome c. AD61 is supported by Paul's circumstances as a prisoner (1:7, 13-14, 17) and contact with the "praetorian" (palace guard—NIV, 1:13). Ephesus and Caesarea have also been suggested, although there is little support for the latter.

OCCASION AND PURPOSE

The letter was occasioned by the arrival of Epaphroditus bearing a financial gift for Paul and news of the progress and problems of the Philippian church. Paul wrote to the church for the following reasons:

1. To thank them for their gifts to him and for sending Epaphroditus to assist him (4:10-18)
2. To explain why he was sending Epaphroditus back to them (2:25-30)
3. To explain plans to send Timothy to them (2:25-30)
4. To explain how his own circumstances as a prisoner had advanced the gospel and encouraged others (1:12-26)
5. To urge them to live in unity in their relationships, work, and witness (1:27; 2:1-12; 4:2-3)
6. To warn them against false teaching: the Judaizers (3:1-16), and the enemies of the cross (3:17-21).
7. To encourage them to stand firm in the face of persecution (1:27-30; 4:4)

THREE KEY CONCEPTS: unity, joy, gospel,

CONTENT OF PHILIPPIANS

Greeting 1:1-2

Note the use of the word “all” and reference to overseers and deacons

Thanksgiving and Prayer for the Readers 1:3-11

Note the emphasis on partnership in the gospel, unity (“all” in verses 3, 7, 8) and love, and righteousness through Christ.

Paul’s Assessment of His circumstances 1:12-26

- A. His imprisonment has advanced the gospel 1:12-14
- B. His imprisonment has resulted in others preaching from right and wrong motives 1:15-18
- C. His imprisonment will turn out for his deliverance, Christ’s exaltation, and the progress and joy of the readers 1:19-26

Exhortations to Unity and Mutual Concern 1:27-2:18

- A. Be united and courageous in the face of opposition 1:27-30
- B. Imitate the love and humility of Christ Jesus who put the interests of others before His own 2:1-11
- C. Live as blameless children of God, remembering Paul’s example of self-sacrifice 2:12-18

Plans for and Commendation of Timothy and Epaphroditus 2:19-30

- A. Timothy 2:19-24
- B. Epaphroditus 2:25-30

Warnings and Encouragements 3:1-4:1

- A. Beware of the Judaizers who advocate righteousness by keeping the law; instead hold to the righteousness that comes from God 3:1-16
- B. Beware of the enemies of the cross (either Judaizers or libertines); instead remember Paul’s example and our heavenly hope 3:17-4:1

Appeals and Appreciation 4:2-20

- A. Appeals for unity, dependence on the Lord, pure thinking and conduct 4:2-9
- B. Appreciation for the readers’ concern and gifts 4:10-20

Final Greetings 4:21-23

INTRODUCTION TO COLOSSIANS

AUTHORSHIP

Paul's authorship of Colossians was not in doubt until the mid 19th century. Today some question Paul's authorship on the basis of vocabulary, style, and doctrine. None of these arguments, however, is persuasive, and its authenticity is widely accepted.

Apostolic authorship of Colossians is strongly supported by its connection with Philemon. Archippus is named in both Phm. 2 and Col. 4:17. With one exception the names of those sending greetings are the same (Col. 4:10-14 and Phm. 23-24). Also, it would be most unlikely that an imitator would send the letter to such an unimportant place as Colosse.

DESTINATION

Colosse was located on the Lycus River, about 100 miles east of Ephesus. It was once a large and important city situated at the point where two major roads met. By the first century, however, it was only a small market town overshadowed by near-by Laodicea and Hierapolis.

Paul does not know the readers personally (1:4, 2:1). The church was apparently started by Epaphras (1:7; 4:12). He was probably converted during Paul's ministry in Ephesus. In any case he was deeply concerned with their spiritual progress (4:12).

DATE AND PLACE OF WRITING

Paul was in prison when he wrote Colossians (4:3, 10, 18). Assuming the Roman imprisonment (rather than Ephesus or Caesarea), the letter was written in the early 60s. Both Colossians and the letter to Philemon were carried to Colosse by Tychicus and Onesimus, (although Tychicus is not mentioned in Philemon).

OCCASION AND PURPOSE

The letter was occasioned by Epaphras' coming to Paul with a report on the situation in the Colossian church. It contained some encouraging developments (Col. 1:4-8) but also news of the introduction of false teaching into the church.

The purpose was to establish the church more firmly in their faith by refuting false teaching. There were two closely related aspects to the false teaching:

- (1) Doctrinal error which challenged the person and work of Christ
- (2) Practical error concerning the character of the Christian life.

COLOSSIAN HERESY

There is no firm agreement regarding the exact nature of the false teaching since it must be inferred from what Paul writes in response to it. Three aspects of the teaching are an emphasis on:

- (1) the powers of the spirit world (1:16-20, 2:10,15 & 18) which led to a depreciation of the person and work of Christ
- (2) ritual observances (2:11, 16-17) and strict asceticism (2:20-23)
- (3) hollow and deceptive philosophy (2:4, 8, and 18). Note the use of the words knowledge, wisdom, understanding, and mystery.

The ceremonial elements (especially circumcision) appear to be Jewish. Others may be aspects of incipient Gnosticism or some cult. A few scholars believe the heresy can be accounted for solely by Judaism. The more generally accepted view is that it is an example of syncretism—a combination of Jewish and other elements.

Paul's response to these errors is to stress:

- (1) the deity of Christ and His supremacy in creation and reconciliation (1:13-20, 2:9)
- (2) holiness is to be found not in rituals and asceticism but in devotion to Christ and the death of our sinful nature
- (3) true wisdom is not found in human philosophy but in God's revealed mystery (1:25-27) and more specifically in Christ, "in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge" (2:2-3)

RELATION TO EPHESIANS

Even a superficial reading of Colossians and Ephesians reveals that they are closely related in doctrinal and ethical content. There are many similarities in expression and even the order of subject matter. It is widely accepted that Colossians was written before Ephesians. Unlike Colossians, Ephesians is not polemical; it is more reflective as the apostle meditates on God's great plan not only for the church but the whole cosmos.

CONTENT OF COLOSSIANS

- I. Greeting, Thanksgiving and Prayer for the Readers 1:1-14
- II. The Supremacy and All-Sufficiency of Christ 1:15-23
- III. Paul's God-given Ministry to the Gentiles 1:24-2:7
- IV. A Warning Against False Teaching 2:8-23
- V. An Exhortation to Holy Living 3:1-4:6
- VI. Final Greetings 4:7-18

PHILEMON—INTRODUCTION AND CONTENT

INTRODUCTION

AUTHORSHIP

Philemon is included in the earliest extant lists of Paul's letters (Marcion and the Muratorian Fragment). Complaints in the 4th century focused on its supposed triviality not on its genuineness.

DATE AND PLACE OF WRITING

The letter seems to have been written at the same time as Colossians in the early 60's from Rome, although some have argued that it was written from Ephesus.. Paul was a prisoner (Phm. 1,9,19). Col. 4:9 identifies Onesimus as coming from Colosse. It appears that the two letters were carried by Tychicus and Onesimus (Col. 4:7-9). With one exception (Jesus called Justus) those sending greetings are the same in both letters (compare Col. 4:10-14 with Phm 23-24).

OCCASION AND PURPOSE

Onesimus, a slave, had run away from his master Philemon. It appears he had stolen from his master (vss 18-19). (Runaway slaves were subject to severe punishment, including execution). Onesimus met Paul and under his influence and teaching became a Christian (v 10). He is now prepared to return to Colosse, so Paul writes to Philemon to ask him to receive Onesimus back as a brother in Christ (v 16). Possibly Paul even hints that Philemon might release Onesimus and allow him to work with Paul (vss 12-14,21).

CONTENT

Greeting 1-3

Thanksgiving and Prayer 4-7

Note the introduction of themes mentioned later:

- ❑ Love 5, 7, 9
- ❑ Fellowship 6 (*koinonia*--sharing); 17 (*koinonios*--partner)
- ❑ Refreshment 7, 20

Appeal for Onesimus 8-21

Note the motives for Philemon to welcome Onesimus back:

- ❑ Paul's relationship with Philemon
- ❑ Paul's relationship with Onesimus
- ❑ Onesimus' new relationship with Philemon

Request for hospitality 22

The "you" in vss 22 and 25 is plural.

Greetings and blessing 23-25

1 & 2 THESSALONIANS

AUTHOR

Paul's authorship of both letters is supported by internal claims and characteristics, as well as early Christian writers. (See textbook, p. 328.) Still, some have questioned Paul's authorship (more the second letter than the first) on the grounds of alleged differences of vocabulary, style, and teaching on eschatology. These arguments, however, have not convinced current scholars, the majority of whom accept Paul as the writer.

THE FOUNDING OF THE CHURCH AT THESSALONICA—Acts 17:1-9

1. Paul's choice of Thessalonica is in keeping with his missionary strategy to evangelize key cities on major trade routes which were centers of Roman administration, Hellenistic civilization, and Jewish influence.
2. The scope of Paul's evangelistic work
 - ❑ In the synagogue resulting in the conversion of Jews, god-fearing Greeks, prominent women Acts 17:2-4
 - ❑ Other contacts, resulting in the conversion of idol-worshippers 1 Thess. 1:9
3. Jewish-instigated opposition and Paul's departure Acts 17:5-11a

THE DATE AND PLACE OF WRITING

1 & 2 Thessalonians were written about AD 51 from Corinth. This conclusion is based on statements in 1 and 2 Thessalonians and Acts and on the date of Gallio's proconsulship, which he probably assumed early in the summer of AD 51.

OCCASION AND PURPOSE OF 1 THESSALONIANS

Silas and Timothy (Acts 18:5) arrive in Corinth bringing news of the Thessalonians. Paul is pleased with the church's progress (chapter 1) but there are issues to be addressed. These include a possible slanderous attack on Paul himself by unbelieving Jews, persecution of the new converts by Gentiles, insufficient understanding of Christian morals, erroneous views related to the second coming, and lack of respect for leaders.

Paul's purpose in writing, then, was to

1. Affirm his integrity and ministry
2. Encourage the new believers in the face of persecution
3. Give instruction regarding godly living
4. Correct misunderstandings about Jesus' return

5. Encourage respect for the church's leaders.

OCCASION AND PURPOSE OF 2 THESSALONIANS

Paul's first letter seems to have been successful in accomplishing some of its aims but not all. 2 Thessalonians was written to

1. Further encourage the believers to endure continuing persecution
2. Correct a further misunderstanding regarding the Lord's return
3. Encourage the readers to be faithful and work for a living.

CONTENT OF 1 AND 2 THESSALONIANS

1 THESSALONIANS

Greeting 1:1

- I. Thanksgiving for the Thessalonians 1:2-10
 - A. Thanksgiving that they welcomed the gospel 1:2-6
 - B. Thanksgiving for their example to Christians in Macedonia and Achaia 1:7-10
- II. Paul's Assessment of His Mission Work at Thessalonica 2:1-16
 - A. His pure motives 2:1-6
 - B. His financial independence 2:7-9
 - C. His exemplary conduct 2:10-12
 - D. His thanksgiving for the Thessalonians' commendable and courageous response 2:13-16
- III. Paul's Present Relationship to the Church 2:17-3:13
 - A. His desire to return 2:17-18
 - B. His joy in them 2:19-20
 - C. His sending of Timothy to them 3:1-5
 - D. His joy at Timothy's report 3:6-10
 - E. His prayer for them 3:11-13
- IV. An Exhortation to Christian Living 4:1-12
 - A. General exhortation 4:1-2
 - B. Sexual purity 4:3-8
 - C. Brotherly love 4:9-10
 - D. Earning a living 4:11-12
- V. Problems Regarding Christ's Return 4:13-5:11

- A. The fate of believers who die before the Parousia 4:13-18
 - B. The time of the Parousia 5:1-2
 - C. The moral and spiritual imperative of the Parousia 5:3-11
- VI. Exhortation Regarding Life in the Christian Community 5:12-22
 - A. Relating to leaders 5:12-13
 - B. Relating to all 5:14-15
 - C. Relating to personal spiritual disciplines 5:16-18
 - D. Relating to worship and conduct 5:19-22

Concluding Prayer, Instructions, and Benediction 5:23-28

2 THESSALONIANS

Greeting 1:1-2

- I. Thanksgiving and Prayer for the Thessalonians 1:3-12
 - A. Thanksgiving for their faith, love, and perseverance 1:3-4
 - B. God's judgment—relief for the saints and punishment for the deliberately disobedient 1:5-10
 - C. Prayer that they may be worthy of God's calling 1:11-12
- II. Problem Regarding Christ's Return 2:1-12
 - A. The Day of the Lord has not yet come, despite deceitful claims that it has 2:1-2
 - B. The man of lawlessness must come first 2:3-10a
 - C. The fate of the followers of the man of lawlessness 2:10b-12
- III. Further Thanksgiving and Prayer 2:13-17
 - A. Thanksgiving for God's choice of the Thessalonians 2:13-14
 - B. Exhortation to stand firm and hold to Paul's teaching 2:15
 - C. Prayer for their encouragement and strength 2:16-17
- IV. Exhortations 3:1-15
 - A. A request for prayer, recognizing the Lord's faithfulness 3:1-5
 - B. A warning against idleness and being a busybody 3:6-15

Concluding Prayer, Authentication, and Benediction 3:16-18

THE PASTORAL EPISTLES

DESIGNATION

Since I & II Timothy and Titus are concerned with Paul's instructions to the two men regarding the care of churches, they are known as the Pastoral Epistles. This description was first used by D.N. Berdot in 1703 and popularized by Paul Anton in 1726.

DATE AND PLACE OF WRITING

The Pastorals' description of Paul's missionary activities and those of his coworkers do not fit in well with the account in Acts. A number of historical references in Paul's letters support the view that Paul was released from his first Roman imprisonment, went on a 4th missionary journey, was again imprisoned at Rome and this time put to death. The common testimony of the early church is that the apostle was executed by Nero who committed suicide in June of AD 68.

Paul's first Roman imprisonment was c AD 60-62. Assuming his release, the 4th journey and letters of I Timothy and Titus would be dated c AD 63-65 and II Timothy c AD 67 shortly before Paul's death. I Timothy was probably written from Macedonia (I Tim. 1:3). Titus may also have been written from Macedonia or perhaps Greece as Paul was en route to Nicopolis (Titus 3:12). Paul wrote II Timothy from Rome (II Tim. 1:17).

AUTHORSHIP

Many scholars reject Paul's authorship of the Pastorals based on 4 factors: historical references, the church situation, doctrine, and linguistic details.

Note that the early church would not accept forgeries even if they were well-intentioned. See Carson, Moo, and Morris, An Introduction to the New Testament, pages 367-371.

OCCASION AND PURPOSE

I Timothy

During his fourth missionary journey Paul left Timothy to care for the church in Ephesus. Although Paul did expect to return (I Tim. 4:13-14), he apparently felt it was necessary to write Timothy regarding certain matters. He wrote:

- (1) to encourage Timothy to carry out his task
- (2) to advise Timothy about how to deal with false teaching
- (3) to give instructions about the administration of the affairs of the church.

Titus

Paul's 4th missionary journey also took him to Crete where he established several churches (1:5). The apostle then left Titus to complete the unfinished work. He wrote (1) to guide Titus in the appointment of elders and the instruction of various groups in the church

- 2) to warn against false teaching
- (3) to ask Titus to meet him in Nicopolis.

II Timothy

Paul was in prison in Rome expecting execution. With only Luke at his side, Paul wrote to Timothy

- (1) to urge him to faithfulness in proclaiming, guarding, and suffering for the gospel
- (2) to warn him of the terrible days yet to come
- (3) to urge him to come to Paul quickly.

CONTENT OF I TIMOTHY

Greeting—1:1-2

- I. God's Glorious Gospel and Its Advocates 1:3-20
 - A. Paul's mandate to Timothy to confront false teachers of the law 1:3-11
 - B. Paul's experience of the Lord's grace 1:12-17
 - C. Paul's charge to Timothy to remain faithful 1:18-20
- II. Instructions Regarding Worship and Order in the Church 2:1-3:16
 - A. The importance, scope, and spirit of prayer 2:1-8
 - B. The dress and demeanor of Christian women 2:9-15
 - C. The qualifications of church leaders 3:1-13
 - 1. Overseers 3:1-7
 - 2. Deacons 3:8-13
 - D. The reason for these instructions 3:14-16
- III. Instructions Regarding the Threat of False Teaching 4:1-16
 - A. A description of the false teaching 4:1-5
 - B. How to deal with false teaching 4:6-16
- IV. Instructions Regarding Various Groups in the Church 5:1-6:2
 - A. Older and younger people 5:1-2
 - B. Older and younger widows 5:3-16
 - C. Elders 5:17-25
 - D. Slaves 6:1-2
- V. Instructions Regarding Various Issues 6:3-19
 - A. False teachers 6:3-5
 - B. Love of money 6:6-10
 - C. Timothy's mission and motives 6:11-16
 - D. The rich 6:17-19

Final Appeal and Benediction 6:20-21

CONTENT OF TITUS

Greeting 1:1-4 Note the emphasis on faith, truth, and godliness

- I. Titus' Task of Organizing the Churches on Crete 1:5-16
 - A. The task stated 1:5
 - B. The appointment of elders 1:6-9
 - C. The confrontation of false teachers 1:10-16
- II. Instructions Regarding the Behavior of Various Groups in the Church 2:1-15
 - A. Older men and women 2:1-3
 - B. Younger women and men 2:4-8
 - C. Slaves 2:9-10
 - D. Theological motives for godly living—God's grace seen in the cross and the second coming 2:11-15
- III. Instructions for All and for Titus 3:1-11
 - A. Christian conduct in the community 3:1-2
 - B. More theological motives for godly living—the gracious and transforming work of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit 3:3-7
 - C. Titus to stress these things and avoid false and useless teaching 3:8-11

Personal Requests, Greetings, and Benediction 3:12-15

CONTENT OF II TIMOTHY

Greeting 1:1-4

- I. A Charge to Exercise Ministry Fearlessly and Faithfully 1:5-14
 - A. Timothy's sincere faith 1:5
 - B. Timothy's God-given gift to be exercised in power, love, & self-discipline 1:6-7
 - C. Paul's example of suffering founded on his confidence in the power and grace of God 1:8-12
 - D. Timothy to guard the gospel 1:13-14
- II. Paul's Current Situation 1:15-18
 - A. Paul's imprisonment

- B. The unfaithfulness of the Asians contrasted with the faithfulness of Onesiphorus
- III. Specific Directions to Timothy 2:1-26
- A. Hand on Paul's teaching to reliable and qualified men 2:1-2
 - B. Endure hardship 2:3-13
 - 1. Consider vocational illustrations 2:3-7
 - 2. Remember Jesus' resurrection 2:8
 - 3. Take note of Paul's suffering 2:9
 - 4. Consider the promise of reigning with Christ and its alternative 2:10-13
 - C. Guard the truth and deal with false teaching 2:14-26
 - 1. Teach the truth, anxious always for God's approval 2:14-15
 - 2. Don't engage in senseless discussions & warn others not to either 2:14,16,23
 - 3. Remember that the church is stable, although there are some unclean and disruptive people in it 2:17-20
 - 4. Keep your heart and life pure 2:21-22
 - 5. Instruct others, including opponents, with courtesy and optimism 2:23-26
- IV. Predictions of Ungodliness in the Last Days, Signs of Which are Already Evident 3:1-9
- A. A picture of future godlessness 3:1-5
 - B. The false teachers 3:6-9
- V. An Exhortation to Steadfastness in the Gospel 3:10-17
See especially 3:14. Two reasons for steadfastness in the gospel message:
- A. Confidence in those who taught him the gospel 3:10-14
 - B. Confidence in Scripture 3:15-17
- VI. A Final Charge to Preach the Gospel 4:1-8
- A. Because Christ is coming in judgment 4:1
 - B. Because the time is coming when people will not listen 4:3-4
 - C. Because Paul's departure is near 4:6-8

Personal Requests and a Warning 4:9-15

A Final Testimony and Farewell 4:16-22

Theological Motives for Godly Living (Titus)

1. Looking Back—God's grace revealed in Jesus' death 2:11, 14
2. Looking In—the renewing work of the Holy Spirit 3:5-6
3. Looking Out—a good witness 2:5, 8, 10
4. Looking Forward—Jesus' second coming/ eternal life 2:13; 3:7

Paul's Final Instructions to Timothy Regarding the Gospel (2 Timothy)

1. Suffer for the gospel 1:8 etc.
2. Guard the gospel 1:13-14 etc.
3. Entrust the gospel 2:2
4. Continue in the gospel 3:14 etc.
5. Preach the gospel 4:2

HEBREWS

AUTHORSHIP

- Not Paul: absence of normal greeting; different vocabulary, style, and rhetoric; absence of characteristic words (ex. “Christ Jesus”); description of the author in 2:3 doesn’t fit Paul.
- Suggestions: Luke, Barnabas, Apollos, & others
- What we do know
 - The author was likely a Hellenistic Jewish Christian who was a second-generation believer (2:3).
 - The author had a thorough grasp of the Septuagint version of the O.T. None of his quotes is from the Hebrew.
 - The author was a man. A Greek participle referring to the author in 11:32 is masculine singular, translated in the NIV by the words “to tell.”
 - The author was well educated, given his vocabulary and style.

DATE AND PLACE OF WRITING

The letter was almost certainly written before AD 70. Statements in 8:13 and 10:1-2 support the view that the Jerusalem Temple had not yet been destroyed. The textbook suggests the letter could have been written anytime between the 40s and 60s.

READERS

Judging by the content of the letter, the readers were Jewish Christians who were being tempted to revert to Judaism. Where they lived is uncertain. The two leading suggestions are Palestine and Rome (see 13:24).

OCCASION AND PURPOSE

The readers were being tempted to abandon their faith in Christ and return to Judaism and its ceremonial practices. The author wrote to urge them to remain faithful to Christ. The reasons for reverting to Judaism appear to be the shame of living outside the mainstream of Judaism (13:11-14) and possibly fear (ch. 10-11).

MAJOR THEMES

- The absolute supremacy and sufficiency of Christ
- The obsolescence of the old covenant (8:13) and sanctuary and its sacrifices, priests, etc.
- The need for faithfulness in view of the danger of drifting away/falling away from Christ and the salvation found only in him. Four passages: (1) 2:1-4 (2) 3:12-14 and 4:1-2; (3) 5:11-6:8; (4) 10:26-31
- Eschatology

JAMES

AUTHORSHIP

The author was probably James, the Lord's brother. After Jesus appeared to him following his resurrection, James' skepticism was replaced by faith. He became a pillar of the Jerusalem church and was eventually martyred in AD 62.

READERS, DATE, PURPOSE

The readers are most likely Jewish Christians who live outside Palestine, although the description of 1:1 ("the twelve tribes scattered among the nations") may possibly be understood to include Gentile believers as well. Some date the letter before AD 50; others near the end of James' life. The textbook recognizes the uncertainty and suggests sometime between the late 30s and early 60s. James wrote to teach and encourage his readers.

CHARACTERISTICS

- The use of two forms of OT literature—prophecy and wisdom (see textbook, 338-339).
- James' teaching at several points echoes the teaching of Jesus, especially the Sermon on the Mount. (See textbook, 340.)

MAJOR THEMES

- Dealing with trials and temptations 1:3-18
- True faith will express itself in works 1:19-2:26
- Overcoming dissensions in the church 3:1-4:12
- A Christian view of life 4:13-5:20

1 PETER

AUTHOR

The letter claims to have been written by “Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ” (1:1), who was also an eyewitness of Christ’s suffering (5:1). This is supported by the unanimous testimony of the early church. Still, many today reject this view. One of the main reasons given is that the Greek is too good for a Galilean fisherman. This, however, is not sufficient reason to doubt apostolic authorship. Peter may have been more proficient in the language than some assume or may have developed greater proficiency over the years as he traveled and ministered. Also, Silvanus (Silas) may have assisted in writing (5:12).

READERS

- Christians in the northern and central provinces of Asia Minor—Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, & Bithynia.
- It appears they were largely Gentile Christians in view of (1) the sins warned against – 4:3 and (2) their transformation from being “not a people” to being “the people of God” – 2:10.
- They were being persecuted. Four specific references are 1:6-7; 3:13-17; 4:12-19; 5:8-11.

DATE AND PLACE OF WRITING

1 Peter was probably written about AD 63, just before the Neronian persecution during which Peter was martyred according to early tradition. Some suggest that it was written during the reign of Domitian (c 90-100) or Trajan (c 110) when there were also persecutions. The arguments for a later date, however, are not compelling, so there is no reason to reject the earlier date which is supported by the testimony of the early church.

The place of writing is described as “Babylon” (5:13) and should be understood as Rome since it was used this way by both Jewish and Christian writers of the time (textbook, 345 & footnote #1, p.405). In Revelation 14, 17 & 18 (especially 17:9-11) John applies this infamous name to the imperial city. Note that Silas and Mark are with Peter (5:12-13).

OCCASION & PURPOSE

The readers are experiencing persecution. Peter writes, then, to encourage them to stand firm in the face of persecution & to testify to them that the message of God’s grace which they have embraced is unquestionably true (5:12).

MAJOR THEMES

- Christians are strangers in the world and therefore can expect to be persecuted
- Christians are God’s chosen and beloved people
- Christians believe in a message which is completely true & amazingly precious
- Christians have a living hope because of Jesus death and resurrection
- Christians should live a godly & joyful life in this hostile world

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

What does 1 Peter say about

1. the persecution of the readers(nature, reasons, good that comes from it)?
2. Christians as God's chosen and beloved people (relationship words)?
3. the truth and value of the gospel which the readers embraced?
4. the Christian hope (what do believers look forward to)?
5. the death, resurrection, ascension of Jesus as it relates to suffering ?
6. how & why Christians should live a holy life?
7. submission (does not mean being considerate)?
8. love and joy ?
9. Judgment of believers and unbelievers?

A PARTIAL OVERVIEW OF SUBMISSION IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

Wives	Husbands	Eph.5:22-33; Col. 3:18-19; I Pet. 3:1-7; I Cor.11:3-16 Equality and submission
Children	Parents	Eph.6:1-4; Col. 3:20-21
Slaves	Masters	Eph. 6: 5-9; Col.3:22-4:1; I Pet. 2:18-25
Christians	Government	Rom. 13:1-7; I Pet. 2:13-17
Christians	Elders	I Pet. 5:1-7; Heb. 13:17; I Thess. 5:12-13
Christ/Son	God/Father	I Cor. 11:3 & 15:28 Hebs. 5:7-8; Phps 2:6-8 John 12:49-50, 14:31 & 15:9-10 Equality and obedience

Since voluntary submission between equals characterizes the Son's relationship to the Father, it is obviously a **positive principle** rather than a negative one as perceived by our culture.

These relations are all different from each other—some very different. There is a huge difference between the relationship of husband/wife when compared to master/slave or Christians/government. It is important to note that the closest analogy of Christ's relationship to the church is husband to wife.

The reasons given for submission are also different. Obedience to the Lord is a common reason. There is a sharp contrast, however, between submitting to the government out of fear of judgment and the voluntary submission of a wife to her husband based on creation and supported by the husband's loving care for his wife.

2 PETER

AUTHOR

- The author claims to be “Simon Peter, a servant and apostle of Jesus Christ,” (1:1). He expects to die soon as Jesus predicted (1:13-14; see Jn. 21:18-19), and he was a witness of Jesus’ transfiguration (1:16-18).
- Many doubt Peter’s authorship because (1) the Greek is significantly different from that of 1 Peter and (2) some of the content is thought to betray a later date. The differences of language, however, may be the result of intentional imitation of “Asiatic Greek” popular at the time. The content does not require a later date.

DATE AND PLACE OF WRITING

The letter was probably written from Rome, although we can’t be sure. Since Peter was martyred during the reign of Nero, the date would have to be before AD68. A common suggestion is a date in the mid 60s.

READERS

2 Peter 3:1 refers to an earlier letter. If, as is likely, this is 1 Peter, then the letter is addressed to the same people.

OCCASION AND PURPOSE

Aware of his approaching death, Peter writes to encourage his readers to hold confidently to the gospel message and to live by it (1:3-4; 1:12-14; 3:1-2; 3:17-18)

MAJOR THEMES

- The truth of the Word of God – prophecies, apostolic teaching, eyewitness testimony, & Paul’s writings
- The need for Christian growth
- The danger of false teachers and false doctrines
- The certainty of a new heaven and a new earth, the home of righteousness

JUDE

AUTHOR

- The author claims to be “Jude, a servant of Jesus Christ and a brother of James.” (v. 1) Like his brother he did not believe in Jesus during his ministry (Jn. 7:1-5) but came to believe after Jesus’ resurrection appearance to James (I Cor. 15:7)
- Some do not believe Jude is the author because of (1) the good quality of the Greek and (2) the content is thought to indicate a later date. These objections, however, are answerable with the same arguments as those relating to 1 & 2 Peter.

DATE AND PLACE OF WRITING

Uncertainty surrounds the date and place of writing. The text book tentatively places it in Palestine sometime from the 60s to the 80s (p. 353). The date depends to a large extent on the relationship of Jude to 2 Peter.

JUDE AND 2 PETER 2

The striking parallels between Jude and the second chapter of 2 Peter call for explanation. Three suggestions are offered (1) Jude borrowed from Peter (2) Peter borrowed from Jude (3) both used a common source.

OCCASION AND PURPOSE

Immoral teachers had invaded the church. They were perverting the grace of God by using it as a license for immorality and denying Jesus Christ (v. 4). Jude writes, then, to warn his readers to stand against these evil men and to “contend for the faith once for all entrusted to the saints” (vs. 3).

MAJOR THEMES

- Christians should guard against false teachers and false teaching
- Christians should build themselves up in the faith by depending on God and his Word

SPECIAL FEATURES

- Jude’s use of non-biblical sources:
In v. 9 the dispute between the archangel Michael and Satan comes from *The Assumption of Moses* according to Clement of Alexandria and Origen. The quotation in verses 14-15 is from *1 Enoch*.
- Jude’s special connection to 2 Peter. See chart.
- Jude’s doxology is one of the best known in the New Testament.

1, 2, 3 JOHN

AUTHOR

According to the early church all three letters were written by the apostle John. Writers in the late first century and early second allude to 1 John, and later writers explicitly state that the letters were from the hand of the apostle. The author of 1 John doesn't identify himself but speaks with obvious authority. In 2 & 3 John he calls himself simply "the elder"—a term also used by Peter in 1 Peter 5:1. The use of the article, "the elder" draws attention to his well known position of leadership. There are many similarities of vocabulary, theme, and style with the Gospel of John.

DATE AND PLACE OF WRITING

All three letters are thought to have been written toward the end of John's life during his ministry at Ephesus and the surrounding area as described by some church fathers. This would suggest a date late in the first century during the 80's or 90's. Many scholars opt for the early to mid 90's.

READERS

1 John There is no indication of the identity of the readers or where they lived. The lack of specific greetings, etc., raises the possibility that the letter was circular in nature, addressed to several churches. If so, then it may have been sent to the churches of the Roman province of Asia (see Rev. 2 & 3)

2 John The letter is addressed to "the chosen lady and her children", which is almost certainly a designation for a specific church, rather than a wealthy Christian woman who hosted a church in her home (as Lydia probably did—Acts 16). Note that John uses the same language when he sends greetings from those who are with him: "The children of your chosen sister send their greetings." (v 13) Also the Greek word for "church" is feminine, and the verbs and reflexive pronoun ("watch yourselves" etc) in v 8 are plural.

3 John The letter is written to a specific person, Gaius, about a problem in a specific church.

OCCASION AND PURPOSE

Early forms of Gnosticism were being introduced into the church by false teachers. This dangerous heresy held that spirit was good and matter was evil. Therefore the Gnostics denied the humanity of Christ. Their heresy took one of two forms. One was that Christ only seemed to have a body (Docetism—from *dokeo* meaning "it seems"). The other taught that Christ (or the Spirit) came on the human Jesus at his baptism but left him to suffer alone on the cross (Cerinthianism – named for Cerinthus it's founder). Gnosticism led in two opposing directions regarding the treatment of the body—asceticism and moral license. The latter is an issue in 1 John. A third issue (besides Christology and morals) is the false teachers' lack of love. As the "enlightened elite" with special knowledge, they looked down on ordinary Christians. Gnostic is from the Grk word *gnosis* = knowledge).

1 John The purposes are (1) to warn the readers of the heretics /antichrists—2:18-27 and (2) to assure them that they have eternal life in Jesus Christ—5:13—compare John 20:30-31. The word “know” is used about 40 times in this short letter.

2 John The purposes are (1) to warn against the heretics –v 7-11 and (2) to encourage the readers to love one another and to be obedient—v4-6.

3 John The purpose is to commend Gaius for hosting John’s messengers and, indirectly, to warn the dictatorial Diotrephes who is opposing John.

MAJOR THEMES

1 John

- The danger of false teaching
- Assurance of eternal life in Jesus Christ based on three tests
 - Christology—belief that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh (4:2)
 - Love—God & your fellow Christians, NOT the world
 - Conduct—live a righteous life like that of Jesus

2 John

Essentially the same as 1 John plus a warning not to host the false teachers and thus share in their sin

3 John

- The importance of being faithful to apostolic teaching
- The problem of dealing with a dictatorial church leader

SOME KEY VERSES

1 John 2:1-2—Jesus the atoning sacrifice for believers and the whole world

1 John 2:15-17—Don’t love the world or anything in the world

1 John 3:19-20—Assurance for an over-sensitive conscience

1 John 5:11-12—He who has the Son has life!

REVELATION

AUTHOR

The author identifies himself four times as John (1:1, 4, 9; 22:8). There is strong (although not unanimous) support of the early church for the Apostle John as the author of Revelation. Like Dionysius of Alexandria and later Eusebius, many current scholars reject John's authorship on grounds such as the theology, style, and Greek.

DATE AND PLACE OF WRITING

Irenaeus states that John wrote Revelation near the end of Domitian's reign (AD 81-96). Many scholars date the book c AD 95. Some suggest the reign of Nero but the later date seems more likely. The author states that when he received this revelation he was on "the island of Patmos because of the word of God and the testimony of Jesus" (1:9).

OCCASION AND PURPOSE

When Revelation was written Christians were beginning to be persecuted. Domitian insisted on being recognized as "Lord and God". The enforcement of the emperor cult meant that believers encountered state sponsored hostility as they declared that Jesus- not Caesar- was Lord. John's purpose then was to encourage Christians to remain faithful even to death, knowing that God was in control. In his sovereignty he would ensure the comfort and salvation of the saints and the final victory over evil.

METHODS OF INTERPRETING REVELATION

- **Preterist.** The prophecies were fulfilled in the days of the Roman Empire. This may be seen as a pattern of God's dealing with other oppressive worldly powers in the course of history.
- **Continuous-historical.** Revelation predicts in chronological sequence the events of the Christian era.
- **Futurist.** Almost all prophecies are yet to be fulfilled at the end of the age.
- **Idealist (Philosophy of history).** The visions portray the continuous conflict and victory of Christian forces over evil but have no specific historical fulfillment.
- **Eclectic.** The prophecies find their first fulfillment in the Roman Empire and their final fulfillment in its powerful and godless counterpart at the end of the age. Judgment on godless governments during the intervening period may also be included.

MILLENIAL VIEWS (Based on the reference to a thousand years in 20:1-3)

- **Historic premillennial**—persecution, Christ's return, first resurrection (of believers), Christ's lengthy visible reign on earth, final resurrection and last judgment, eternity
- **Amillennial**—persecution, Christ's return, general resurrection, final judgment, eternity. This view holds that there is no literal 1,000 years but that the millennium describes the entirety of church history

- **Dispensational premillennial**—This relatively recent view involves the rapture of the saints, the tribulation and restoration of Israel, Armageddon, Christ’s millennial reign, Satan’s final rebellion, eternity.
- **Postmillennial**—The millennium is equated with the age of the church. The Great Commission is fulfilled, righteousness and justice fill the earth, then Christ returns.

See the textbook for more details (pp. 361-362).

STRUCTURE OF REVELATION AND ITS SIGNIFICANCE

Although complex in many ways, the overall structure of the book is fairly clear. Carson and Moo, *An Introduction to the New Testament* (pp 698-700) outline it as follows:

- Prologue 1:1-20
- Messages to seven churches 2:1-3:22
- A vision of heaven 4:1-5:14
- The seven seals 6:1-8:5
- The seven trumpets 8:6-11:19
- Seven significant signs 12:1- 14:20
- The seven bowls 15:1-16:21
- The triumph of Almighty God 17:1- 21:8
- The new Jerusalem 21:9-22:9
- Epilogue 22:10-21

Speaking of the visions of the seals, trumpets and bowls, the textbook (361) states “Many commentators see these three series of visions running parallel to each other, with each ending in a vision of the second coming (the seals ending in 6:12-17; the trumpets ending in 11:15-18; the bowls ending in 16:17-21).”

SOME GUIDELINES FOR STUDYING APOCALYPTIC LITERATURE

- Remember to interpret apocalyptic literature from the standpoint of its original recipients. It was written for them and carried a message of encouragement and hope for them.
- Remember that the visions and symbols are figurative and should not be taken literally.
- Look for explanations of figurative language in the text. Examples:
 - Rev. 1:20—seven lampstands=seven churches
 - Rev. 5:8—golden bowls of incense=the prayers of the saints
 - Rev. 12:9—the great dragon=the devil, Satan
 - Rev. 17:18—the woman-the great city
 - Rev. 19:8—fine linen=the righteous acts of the saints
- Study the Old Testament passages to understand the figurative language/symbols drawn from them. Examples:

○ The tree of life	Rev. 2:7; 22:2	Gen. 2:9
○ The rod of iron	Rev. 2:27	Ps. 2:8-9
○ The living creatures	Rev. 4:7ff	Ez. 1:10; 10:14
○ The four horsemen	Rev. 6:1ff	Zech. 6:1-8
○ The first & second beast	Rev. 13:1-18	Dan. 7:3, 17
- Look for the symbolic use of numbers, especially 7 (see NIV intro); also 12 and its multiples; 666; 3 ½ years=42 months=1260 days=time, times, and half a time; and a thousand years.
- Don't miss THE BIG PICTURE. Example: Revelation
 - The sovereignty and final victory of God
 - The sympathy and justice of God
 - The prospect of everlasting fellowship with God and the Lamb