

NEW TESTAMENT SURVEY

PREFACE TO NEW TESTAMENT SURVEY

This course of study is designed to equip the student of the Scriptures in the knowledge of the New Testament. The purpose of this study is to provide a background to this section of the Word of God and an overview of all of the books of the New Testament.

The goal of the course is that the student would be strengthened as a disciple of Jesus, familiar with all of the writings of the New Testament, and prepared to use this part of the Scriptures in ministry to others. May the Lord bless each one who studies His Word and may the Holy Spirit give illumination in the understanding of His truth that in all things God would be glorified.

Martin Laoshi

NEW TESTAMENT SURVEY

I INTRODUCTION

A. The Two Testaments

1. The Old Testament-the thirty-nine books of the Hebrew Scriptures.
2. The New Testament-the twenty-seven books of the New Testament of our Lord.
3. Note: The Jews do not refer to the thirty-nine books as the “Old Testament”. Instead, they use the term, “The Law and the Prophets” or “The Scriptures”.
4. But the thirty-nine books of the Hebrew Bible are identical to the thirty-nine books of the
Christian Bible.
5. The word “testament” comes from a Latin word (testamentum) which means: “ a will”. A testament is defined as “ a legal document providing for the disposition of a person’s property, especially personal property, after death; a will”.
6. The word “covenant” is also used to refer to the Old and New Testaments. The Greek word “diatheke” which in ordinary Greek means “testament”, was used in the Greek version of the Old Testament (Septuagint) as the equivalent of the Hebrew word for “covenant”.
7. The Old Testament teaches us of several covenants that God made with various people: Noah (Gen. 9:9), Abraham (Gen.17), Israel (Exodus (19), and David (2 Samuel 7).
8. The Old Testament also prophesied of a “New Covenant” in Jeremiah 31:31-34. (cf. also Daniel 9:24-27)
9. This New Covenant was inaugurated or ratified by our Lord Jesus Christ. (Luke 22:20, 1 Cor. 11:25, Hebrews 8:6, 9:15, 12:24)
10. The Old Covenant has ended but the Old Testament remains as part of the inspired Word of God. (Matt. 5:17-18, Luke 24:27, 44-47; 2 Timothy 3:16)

11. It is in Jesus Christ that God fulfills His promises. (Gal. 3:14, 4:4-6)

12. The relationship of the Old and New Testaments is easily understood by a simple principle: "The Old is by the New explained, the New is in the Old contained".

B. The Books of the New Testament (NT)

1. The books of the New Testament, like the books of the Old Testament, were written by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. (2 Tim. 3:16-17, 2 Pet. 1:20-21)

2. The writers of the books of the NT were chiefly apostles of Christ, but there were also others chosen by the Holy Spirit for this work. (examples: Matthew, John, Paul, and Peter were all apostles, while Mark, Luke, James, and Jude were not.)

3. There are other things that were written about Christ and could be written about Him, but all that the Holy Spirit wanted to reveal to us about Jesus is found in the NT. (cf. Luke 1:1-2, John 16:13-15, 20:30, 21:25)

4. The books of the NT were all written in the first century after the death, resurrection, and ascension of Christ. (The first book may have been Mark and the last book Revelation)

5. The canon of the NT was compiled over several centuries and fully recognized by the church in the 4th century AD. (the word "canon" comes from a Greek word meaning "rule".)

6. "The authority of the NT, for which it should be believed, does not depend upon the testimony of any man or church, but wholly upon God (who is truth itself), who is the author of it; therefore it should be received because it is the Word of God." (Confession of Faith)

7. The books of the NT include: the four gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John), the Acts of the Apostles, the Epistles of Paul (Romans to Philemon), Hebrews, James, the two Epistles of Peter, the three Epistles of John, Jude, and Revelation.

8. No other "gospels" or books belong to the canon of the NT because they are uninspired and the writings of men without any authority for the church. (example: "Gospel of Thomas")

C. The Language of the New Testament

1. The NT was originally written in the Greek language. The writers used “Koine” Greek which means “common”. This was the language of the people.
2. The NT has been translated into numerous languages all over the world as it is the will of God for people everywhere to hear His Word and understand His truth.
3. There are countless manuscripts of the NT in existence today along with various fragments of ancient papyri dating from the 3rd century.
4. Translations of the NT are not inspired by the Holy Spirit but can be compared with the original Greek for accuracy and clarity.
5. Translations of the NT have had a powerful influence on societies and impacted cultures for the glory of God. (examples: Luther’s German Bible, William Tyndale’s NT, the “Union” version of the Chinese Church)
6. Our fervent desire as students of the NT should be to learn, love, and obey this part of God’s Holy Word. (Ps. 119:18)

II BACKGROUND OF THE NEW TESTAMENT (before we survey and examine the NT, we should know something about the background of the NT)

A. The Intertestamental Period (from Malachi to Matthew)

1. The last book in our Old Testaments is the Book of Malachi. Although the Hebrew OT is the same as ours, the last book in the Hebrew OT is 2 Chronicles.
2. Malachi was written about 430 BC, so there were over 400 “silent years” in which there was no new revelation from God.
3. However, God was sovereignly at work to prepare the world for the coming of Jesus.
4. The Jews had returned from captivity in Babylon to rebuild the temple in Jerusalem. (cf. Ezra, Nehemiah, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi). Some Jews remained in Persia. (Esther)
5. Alexander the Great (334-323 BC) conquered the east and sought to create a new world united by Greek language and culture. (Hellenization)
6. His kingdom divided at his death into two dynasties: the Ptolemies in Egypt and the Seleucids in Syria and Mesopotamia. These two fought for control of Palestine.
7. A Syrian king named Antiochus Epiphanes rose up against the Jews and sought to

destroy their religion by persecution, prohibitions, desecration of the holy place and idolatry.

8. A heroic family known as the Maccabees fought against this evil ruler and cleansed the temple from defilement. They established an independent Judah under the Hasmonean dynasty.

9. This lasted until Roman rule began in 63 BC under Pompey who took control of the city of Jerusalem and provoked the Jews with new blasphemies.

10. Herod the Great became the Roman ruler of Palestine in 37 BC and ruled at the time of Christ's birth. (Matt. 2:1)

B. The World of the New Testament

1. Several countries and peoples are in view in the NT. (Palestine or Israel, Syria, Greece, Asia Minor, Italy, etc.)

2. The NT focuses on countries bordering on the eastern part of the Mediterranean Sea, to the east and to the north. There is geographical movement from the OT to the NT.

3. The apostle Paul desired to travel to Spain (Rom. 15:24, 28) but we do not know for certain if he preached the gospel in that country.

4. The activities of many of the apostles are unknown to us. Peter may have visited Rome (1 Pet. 5:13). Matthew is believed to have gone to Syria. Thomas appears to have gone to India and, some believe, even to China.

5. The NT makes it abundantly clear that the good news of Jesus Christ is to be preached in all the world to every people. (Matt. 24:14, Matt. 28:19-20, Luke 24:44-47, Acts 1:8) There is every reason to believe that the apostles and early believers took the great commission seriously and sought to obey the Lord's words wherever they went. (Acts 8:4)

C. The Greek-Roman world

1. The Roman empire and influence is the background to the NT world. (Luke 2:1)

2. Augustus Caesar (meaning "Exalted Emperor"), 27 BC-14 AD, was the first and greatest Roman emperor. He put an end to bloody civil wars and restored peace and order (Pax Romana-Roman peace). He also ushered in the golden era of Roman literature and architecture.

3. Beside the emperor, there were also various governors of areas. (Luke 2:2, 3:1)

- 4.. The peoples of the Roman empire included: Greeks, Romans, Egyptians, and Syrians, people with different histories, religions, and languages. (Acts 14:11, 21:37, Rev. 5:9)
5. Travel was common and places like Alexandria, Corinth, and Rome attracted people. Many traveled mainly by ships. (Acts 16:11, 18:18, 21; 20:6, 13; 27: 1-44)
6. The Greeks were leaders in learning and culture. The Greek language was spoken, written, and used throughout the empire, and even in Rome itself.
7. Having this one common language was a great help for the spread of the gospel.
8. The major cities of the time were: Rome, a city of several million with great commerce and wealth; Corinth, a key location for merchandise going from east to west and also notorious for its vice; Ephesus, the capital of Asia Minor which was famous for the temple of Artemis (Acts 19:35); Antioch in Syria, the third city of the empire with a population of 800,000; and Alexandria, the chief city of Egypt, the second city of the empire, famous for its library.
9. Sports were common in the larger towns. The Romans loved violent and bloody kinds of games. Greeks were fond of racing and wrestling. (The apostle Paul alludes to these games in his epistles. cf. 1 Cor. 9:24-27.)
10. Slavery was an accepted way of life. (cf. Eph. 6:5-9, Col. 3:22-25, Philemon, 1 Per. 2:18-25) Slaves were captured in wars and the slave trade flourished. Some slaves were well-educated and enjoyed certain freedoms.
11. There was a great social divide between the rich and the poor.
12. Philosophies were common throughout the empire. Some philosophers had their own academies, while others wandered around to different places. The chief question the philosophers sought to answer was: "In what does man's true happiness consist?" The philosophers were considered to be "shepherds of souls". (note: the word "philosophy" comes from two Greek words, philo-love, and sophia meaning wisdom).
13. Some of the schools of philosophy were: the Cynics, (from Latin, cynicus, doglike) who withdrew from society to live near nature and were severely critical of others; the Stoics, (from Greek- stoa, portico, the porch where Zeno the founder of the philosophy taught) who believed that men should be free from all passion, that the world is one entity, and that we should submit to divine reason; the Epicureans, (from Epicurus, their leader) who believed that the highest attainment was the enjoyment of pleasure (Acts 17:18); the Sceptics, (from Greek skeptesthai, to examine, consider) who doubted the possibility of sure knowledge; and the Eclectics, (from Greek eklego, to pick out, or select) who taught that the ideal philosophy comes from selecting the best from each of the schools of thought.

14. These schools or philosophies show that people were looking for answers and spiritual meaning to life. They were dissatisfied and yearning for something more.

15. In religion, atheism was almost unknown. Most people believed in a god or many gods. (Acts 17:16, 23; 1 Cor. 8:5-6). There were old gods like Zeus and Apollo that were worshipped and also new religions from other parts of the empire that were embraced by people. There were also what were called “mystery religions” like the cult of Serapis. In addition, many dabbled into astrology and sorcery. (Acts 8:9). Emperor worship was also very popular and ultimately resulted in the persecution of Christians who refused to bow.

16. Thus we can see that Christianity came into contact with many competitors throughout the Greek and Roman world. But wherever the gospel was preached, it called men and women to repentance and faith in Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord. (Acts 20:21, 26:17-18)

D. The Jewish world

1. Palestine (or Israel) consisted of three parts: Judea, Samaria, and Galilee. (Judea is in the southern part, Samaria is in the central area, and Galilee is in the north)

2. The people of Israel were largely farmers and fishermen. It had always been an agrarian society. (agrarian, from Latin agrarius, land, field)

3. Jerusalem was the center of worship with the temple of Herod. This was the capital of the “Holy Land”.

4. The Jews were often idolatrous in the OT despite being the “chosen people” . (Deut. 7:6) Yet their monotheism (Deut. 6:4) distinguished them from the polytheistic world.

5. The Jews observed their annual religious feasts as well as worshipping on the Sabbath in the synagogue. The synagogue (Gr. sunagoge-gathering together) had developed while the Jews were in captivity in Babylon as a means of regular worship and the preservation of their religious traditions while in exile. The emphasis in the synagogue was on prayer, praise, and the teaching of the Torah (Heb. law).

6. The scribes were the teachers of the Law and the interpreters of the Jewish traditions. (Ezra 7:6, 10; Matt. 23:1-7)

7. The Sanhedrin was the council or court of law consisting of seventy lawyers and priests under the high priest. (Matt. 26:57-59, Acts 4:5-7, 6:8-15). The Romans were the ruling of the country but they gave this body of people a measure of independence and the right to rule on a number of religious and social questions.

8. The Jewish traditions were written in the Talmud. (Hebrew talmud, learning) Rabbinical traditions for many Jews were more important to them than the Word and commandments of God. (Matt. 15:1-9)

9. The Pharisees were a most conservative religious sect that began as a pious movement but deteriorated into one of mere traditions. The word Pharisee means “separated ones”. They confessed belief in angels and the resurrection of the dead. (Acts 23:8)

9. The Sadducees (from their founder Zadok, a priest) were more liberal and rationalistic denying the resurrection of the dead and only believing in the authority of the Five Books of Moses. They denied a final judgment would take place.

10. The Essenes are not specifically mentioned by name in the NT but were a monastic community which lived by the Dead Sea and made copies of the Scriptures for reading and study. They appear to have called themselves “The Sons of Light”.

11. The Zealots were a group of political revolutionaries who believed in the violent overthrow of the Roman government. One of Jesus’ own disciples, Simon the Zealot, (Luke 6:15) had been involved with this movement before his conversion to Christ.

12. Not all Jews lived in Palestine. Many lived in the “Diaspora” (dispersion) outside of the country. More than a million Jews lived in Babylonia. True Jews recognized that the exile was a mark of divine judgment upon Israel for her sins. (Lev. 26, Deut. 28)

13. The Jews of the “Diaspora” kept the sabbath, made pilgrimages to Jerusalem (Acts 2:5-11), and paid their temple taxes faithfully.

14. Jews and Gentiles had difficulties with each other. Jews appeared strange and very exclusive to the Gentiles because of their adherence to the Law. Gentiles were regarded as unclean and immoral by the Jews who referred to them as “dogs”. (Matt. 15:26)

15. Some Gentiles however were attracted to the worship of the Jews and became “proselytes” to Judaism through circumcision. Others attended synagogue services but did not become full converts. These were called “God-fearers”. (Acts 10:1-2, 35; 13:16)

17. The Greek Septuagint version of the OT exerted a great influence. It was produced in Alexandria by seventy translators and thus abbreviated as LXX (Latin for seventy). This became the Bible that could be read everywhere and was used by the early church as their OT.

III THE GOSPELS

A. Introduction

1. The word “gospel” comes from the Greek word “euaggelion” meaning “good news”.
2. The gospel is the good news of salvation through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. (Luke 2:1-11, Rom. 1:16-17, 1 Cor. 15:3-4)
3. In non-biblical Greek, the word “gospel” was used to describe the occasion for rejoicing in the world over the birth of an emperor.
4. But it is in Jesus Christ that we learn the true meaning of the word “gospel”. The whole of the NT is centered and revolves around His person and work.

B. The Four Gospels

1. In the NT, we find four accounts of the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus. They are not four different gospels but four books which tell the story of Jesus, each according to the particular author of the book.
2. The first three of the gospel accounts are called the Synoptic Gospels, from the Greek word, sunopsis, meaning “to view together”. Matthew, Mark, and Luke have certain similarities and agree with each other in many ways. Yet each is also unique and has its own particular theme.
3. The Gospel of John is different than the others with many discourses of our Lord that are not recorded in the Synoptic Gospels. John does not begin with the birth of Jesus but takes the reader back into “the beginning” with Jesus as God. (John 1:1-3)
4. It is believed by many scholars that the Gospel of Mark is the first and oldest of the gospel accounts and that John’s is the last of the four.
5. Other believe that the Gospel of Matthew was written first and that Mark and Luke drew from it. (note: 91% of Mark is found in Matthew)
6. The fact that the four gospels agree in such a marvelous way is a strong testimony to their faith in Christ and the inspiration of the Holy Spirit in them.

C. The Gospel of Matthew

1. The Gospel of Matthew is the gospel of the King and his Kingdom. (Matt. 1:1, 2:1-2, 3:1-2, 4:17, 5:1-3, 6:10, 12:28) His great purpose is to show that Jesus is the Messiah who was prophesied in the OT.
2. The Author-Matthew or Levi was a disciple and apostle of Jesus who had previously

served the government as a publican or tax-collector. (Matt. 9:9, Luke 5:27)

3. Date-Matthew was likely written sometime in the 50's or 60's A.D. Much of the dating is based on various assumptions as to which gospel account was written first.

4. Readers-his first readers appear to have been Jewish as he emphasizes OT prophecy and its fulfillment in Jesus, uses the expression "kingdom of heaven" rather than "kingdom of God", and assumes a familiarity with Jewish customs. However, Matthew also shows God's concern for the Gentiles in numerous places (2:1-12, 8:5-13, 13:38, 15:21-28, and Matt. 28:19-20)

5. Birth Narratives-Matthew 1-2 records the virgin birth of Jesus (1:18-25) and the visit of the Magi (2:1-12), followed by Jesus' flight into Egypt (2:13-17), the murder of the babies of Bethlehem by Herod (2:16-18), and the settling of Jesus and His family in Nazareth (2:19-23). The latter four events are only in Matthew.

6. The Public Ministry of Jesus-begins with His baptism by John the Baptist at the Jordan River in which all three Persons of the Trinity are involved. (3:13-17) Jesus was not baptized because He was in need of repentance (3:2-8), but because of His desire to be identified with His people who He came to save and "to fulfill all righteous". (3:15)

7. Temptation-Jesus was tempted by Satan after fasting for forty days and nights. Satan sought to draw him away from his reliance on His Father and obedience to His will, but Jesus drove him away by the powerful use of the written Word of God. (4:4, 7, 10) This is the sword of the Spirit which we also must use in spiritual warfare. (Eph.6:17)

8. The Five Discourses-Matthew arranges his material with an "artistic touch". This is shown in the five discourses or "manuals" that are found in his gospel.

a. The Sermon on the Mount (Matt. 5-7)-which is one of the most famous of all of the teachings of Jesus and also one of the most misunderstood.

1. Some have thought it is intended for people who will live in the future and not now, others take some of its concepts and teach that if everyone would simply live by these words the world would become different as a result.

2. Jesus never intended that His words would be understood in this way, for He tells His disciples that they are "the salt of the earth" and "the light of the world" (5:13-16) and that there are many people who will not obey His words and will go to hell. (Matt. 7:21-23)

3. it is obvious that every Christian should take the words of Jesus very seriously and seek to live by His kingdom rule in the power of the Holy Spirit. Jesus calls His followers to a far higher standard of righteous living than the most religious of the Jews.(5:19-20)

4. The Sermon contains the Beatitudes (5:1-12), various admonitions (5:13-20, 6:1-7:23), and Jesus' teaching contrasted with that of the Jewish tradition. (5:21-48)

b. The Teaching for the Twelve (Matt. 10)

1. Jesus commissioned His disciples to go and proclaim the gospel of the kingdom and prepared them for what to expect in their ministries. (10:5-26)

2. The call is for true discipleship and love for Jesus above all others as His cross bearing followers. (10:37-38)

c. The Parables of Jesus (Matt. 13)

1. Jesus spoke in parables in fulfillment of prophecy and to reveal the secrets of the kingdom to His disciples. (13:10-17)

2. Matthew 13 contains seven parables of the kingdom: the sower (13:1-9, 18-23), the wheat and the tares or weeds (13:24-30, 36-43), the mustard seed (13:31-32), the leaven (13:33), the hidden treasure (13:44), the pearl of great price (13:44-45), and the net (13:47-50).

d. Teaching on Kingdom greatness, discipline, and forgiveness. (Matt. 18)

e. The Olivet Discourse (Matt. 24-25)

1. Jesus' prophetic teaching in response to the question of His disciples about the destruction of the temple. (24:1-3)

2. Two events are in view in the discourse: the coming destruction of the temple in Jerusalem and the Second Coming of Christ.

3. As with the teaching of the twelve (Matt. 10). Jesus again prepares his disciples for times of persecution and opposition from the unbelieving world. (24:4-13) False prophets, false Christs, and great tribulation will come before the Lord's return. (24:15-28)

4. Christ's coming will be sudden, visible, and momentous. (24:29-31)

5. Spiritual alertness and readiness are essential for disciples as seen in the parables of the servants (24:45-51), the ten virgins (25:1-13), and the talents (25:14-30).

6. The final judgment will be a day of separation, evaluation, and eternal destination. (Matt. 25:31-46)

9. The Death and Resurrection of Jesus (Matt. 26-28)

a. Matthew's account of the gospel brings us to the the Last Supper (26:17-30), the agony in Gethsemane (26:36), the arrest of Jesus and denial by Peter (26:57-75), the Lord's suffering "under Pontius Pilate" (27:1-26), and His crucifixion and burial. (27:27-66)

b. Matthew shows how Christ's death was the fulfillment of OT prophecy (27:34-46, cf. Ps. 22:1-18) and that it was accompanied by supernatural signs. (27:51-53)

c. The devotion of the Galilean women at both the cross and the tomb is emphasized. (27:55-56, 61; 28:1-10)

10. The Great Commission (28:18-20)

a. Matthew concludes his account with Jesus as King with "all power in heaven and on earth". His disciples are commissioned to go to all the nations of the world with the gospel to make disciples of others, assured that the Risen Christ is with them to empower them.

D. The Gospel of Mark

1. Mark's gospel focuses on Jesus as the Servant. (Mark 10:45)

2. Author-John Mark (Acts 12:25, 13:5; 2 Tim. 4:11) who was not an apostle but a servant of the Lord. He is considered to be the interpreter of Peter. (cf. Mark 1:15 with Acts 10:34-43)

3. Date-perhaps early 50's or 60's AD.

4. Recipients-Gentile readers who were unfamiliar with Jewish customs. (7:2-4, 15:42). It has been suggested that Mark may have written to believers in Rome.

5. Style-Mark provides a swift moving account of the ministry of Jesus with an emphasis on His works more than His words. The word "immediately" is used frequently. (1:10, 12, 18, 20, 21, 28, 31, 42; 2:2, 8, 12, etc.) Several major teachings are included: kingdom parables (4::1-34), the source of defilement (7:1-23), and marriage and divorce (10:1-12).

6. Areas of Jesus' ministry in Mark: Galilee (1:14-9:50), Judea and Perea (10), Jerusalem (11-14).

7. The account of the suffering and death of Jesus is very similar to that of Matthew (14:32-15:47). Some additional details are provided in Mark. ((14:51-52, 72; 15:28, 43)

8. There are questions about the true ending of Mark's gospel in chapter 16. The traditional ending is in Mark 16:9-20. However, some have questioned whether this is the actual end of Mark since vv. 9-20 are not found in some early Greek manuscripts. But they are found in the majority of the manuscripts and to end the chapter at 16:8 would seem to be very strange.

9. Mark also records the ascension of Jesus into heaven and his enthronement at the right hand of God as prophesied in Ps. 110:1 as well as His continual work with His disciples as they proclaimed the good news. (16:19-20)

10. Four teachings emphasized in Mark: servanthood (1:29-31, 10:42-45), discipleship (2:14, 8:34-38, 9:38-41, 10:28-31), the cross (8:31, 9:31, 10:33), and Jesus as Son of God. (1:1, 11; 3:11; 5:7; 9:7; 12:6; 15:39)

E. The Gospel of Luke

1. The Gospel of Luke is the gospel of the Son of Man with its emphasis on the humanity of Jesus and His compassion for all kinds of people, both Jews and Gentiles.

2. Like the Book of Acts, Luke is written to Theophilus, (Luke 1:3, Acts 1:1) whose name means "one who loves God". He appears to have been a Gentile of high position and influence, but we know nothing more about him.

3. Author-Luke is not mentioned by name in this gospel, but was a physician (Col. 4:14) and close friend of the Apostle Paul who traveled with him on missionary journeys (Acts 16:10-17; 20:5-15; 21:1-17; 27:1-44), and who was with him in his final time in prison. (2 Tim. 4:11) He was likely a Gentile and his Greek vocabulary and style of writing is outstanding.

4. Date-it was likely written around 59-63 AD, but some have suggested a later date.

5. Purpose-as stated in Luke 1:1-4 was to write an orderly account of the good news that believers in Christ would "know the certainty of the things they had been taught". Luke was a careful historian who wrote by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit after researching the facts.

6. Major Themes in Luke:

a. The gospel is good news for all people. (Luke 2:9-11, 3:6, 4:18-19, 24:46-47)

b. The Holy Spirit. (1:15, 35, 41, 67; 2:25-27; 3:16, 22; 4:1,14, 16-19; 11:13; 12:12, etc.)

c. Jesus in prayer (3:21, 5:16, 6:12, 9:18, 28-29; 22:32, 41; 23:34, 46)

d. Jesus' concern for women, the poor, outcasts, and sinners. ((7:11-17, 36-50; 17:11-19; 21:1-4, 23:39-43)

e. Joy. (1:14, 44, 47, 58; 2:10, 15:7, 10; 24:32)

f. The Son of Man. (6:5, 22; 9:22; 18:8, 31; 19:10; 21:27)

g. The danger of riches. (12:15-21; 16:14-15, 19-31; 18:18-25)

h. True discipleship. (9:57-62, 12:22-53, 14:25-33)

7. Some teachings unique to the Gospel of Luke (not in the other Synoptics)

a. The annunciations by Gabriel to Zacharias and Mary. (1:5-38)

b. The Song of Mary (1:39-56)

c. The prophecy of Zacharias. (1:67-80)

d. Jesus' birth in Bethlehem, the angels and shepherds. (2:1-20)

e. The circumcision and presentation of Jesus. (2:21-24)

f. Simeon and Anna. (2:25-38)

g. Jesus at twelve years old (2:41-52)

h. Jesus' first sermon at Nazareth. (4:16-30)

i. The Sermon on the Plain (6:20-49)

j. The Parable of the Good Samaritan. (10:25-37)

k. The Parable of the Great Supper. (14:15-24)

l. The Parable of the Lost Sheep, the Lost Coin, and the Prodigal Son (15:1-32)

m. The Parable of the Unjust Steward. (16:1-13)

n. The rich man and Lazarus. (16:19-31)

o. The Parable of the persistent widow. (18:1-8)

p. The Parable of the Pharisee and the Publican. (18:9-14)

q. Jesus' prayer for the forgiveness of His crucifiers. (23:33-34)

r. The story of the thief on the cross. (23:39-43)

F. The Gospel of John

1. The Gospel of John is the gospel of the Son of God with an emphasis on the deity of Christ. (1:1-18)

2. Author-the writer refers to himself as “the disciple whom Jesus loved”. (13:23, 19:26, 20:2, 21:7, 20, 24). John is not specifically mentioned by name in this gospel account, but early church leaders like Irenaeus and Tertullian state that the Apostle John was the author.

3. Date- a late date is generally assigned such as 85 AD. This would mean that John is the last of the four gospels and written when the apostle was very old.

4. Purpose-of this gospel account is found in John 20:30-31, “And truly Jesus did many other signs in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name”. The gospel of John has an evangelistic purpose to show who Jesus is and what he has done, that people might come to faith in Him and have eternal life. (cf. 1 John 5:13)

5. The author is well acquainted with the customs of the Jews (2:6, 7:2 and ff., 18:28) and occasionally gives a translation of words deriving from the language used by the people in Palestine (Aramaic) which seems to suggest that he was not writing to people who were familiar with that language. (1:38, 9:7, 19:17)

6. John has many examples of eyewitness accounts in his gospel account, including both the cross and the resurrection. (John 19: 25-27, 33-35; 20:1-9, 21:24)

7. Teachings unique to the Gospel of John:

a. The Prologue. (1:1-18)

b. Jesus as the Lamb of God. (John 1:29-36)

c. Jesus’ first miracle: turning water into wine. (John 2:1-11)

d. Jesus’ teaching on the new birth. (John 3:1-8)

e. The great declaration of God’s love in giving His Son. (John 3:16-17)

f. Jesus and the woman at the well. (John 4:1-30)

- g. The Bread of Life discourse. (John 6:25-59)
 - h. Jesus' promise of the Holy Spirit indwelling believers. (John 7:37-39)
 - i. The woman taken in adultery. (John 8:1-11)
 - j. The healing of the man born blind. (John 9:1-41)
 - k. The Resurrection of Lazarus. (John 11:1-44)
 - l. Greeks coming to worship Jesus. (John 12:20-36)
 - m. The upper room discourse. (John 13-16)
 - n. Jesus' high priestly prayer for His disciples. (John 17)
 - o. Jesus' confession before Pontius Pilate. (John 18:28-38, 19:1-11)
 - p. Jesus' appearance to His Thomas. (John 20:24-29)
 - q. Jesus' appearance to His disciples at the Sea of Tiberias. (John 21:1-14)
 - r. The restoration of Peter after his denial of Christ. (John 21:15-19)
8. The Gospel of John emphasizes that Jesus is the great "I am". (John 8:58, with 6:35, 48, 51; 8:12, 23-24; 10:9, 11, 14; 11:25; 14:6, 15:1hj)
9. John gives us the detailed teaching of Jesus on the Person and Work of the Holy Spirit. (John 14:16-18, 25-26, 15:26; 16:5-15)
10. The total emphasis is on the unique relationship of the Son of God to His Father. (John 3:34-35, 5:19-30, 36-37; 6:38-39, 7:16-18, 8:29, 38, 54-55; 10:34-38, 12:44-50, 14:7-11, 20-21, 23-24; 15:9, 24; 16:15, 28, 31-32; 17:1-5, 21-26)
11. In no other part of the New Testament are the depth and height of the gospel of Christ so fully presented as in John. Martin Luther, the German reformer called it: "The Gospel-in chief".

IV THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES

A. Author-is Luke as seen from comparing Acts 1:1 with Luke 1:1-4. Luke does not mention himself by name in this history but there are a number of places where the pronoun "we" occurs which indicates that Luke was among those he is writing about in those sections. (Acts 16:10-17, 20:5-21:18, 27:1-28:16) Acts demonstrates that Luke

was a careful and detailed historian with his information about times, places, people, cultures, and events.

B. Date-some believe that an early date such as 63 AD is likely but others suggest a later dates such as 70 AD.

C. Title-in the original Greek is “Praxeis” which means “deeds or acts”. The very title is a reminder to us that the Christian faith is one of action by the power of the Holy Spirit flowing from faith in the risen Jesus. (Acts 1:4-8) Although all of the apostles are mentioned by name in Acts 1:13, most of them are not mentioned again in the rest of the book. The main emphasis is on the acts of Peter (chapters 2-5, 8:14-25, 10-12) and Paul (9, 13-28). Of the other apostles, only John and James are specifically referred to (3:1-3, 4:13, 12:1-2) while the acts of Stephen (6-7) and Philip (8) are reported.

D. Places-Jerusalem is the focus of the early chapters (1-7) until Philip the evangelist takes the good news to Samaria. (8:4-13) Philip also witnessed to an Ethiopian eunuch (8:26-40) which likely paved the way for the gospel in that country. Antioch in Syria comes into view in Acts 11:19-26 and after this becomes the missionary church of the book of Acts. (13: 1-4, 15:36-41)

E. Purpose-the author’s purpose is to show the expansion of the early church from its starting point in Jerusalem (Acts 1:8, 12) to the city of Rome (Acts 28:17-31). The gospel travels through Galatia, Asia Minor, Macedonia, Greece, and Italy. Luke also provides a defense for the faith by recording a number of times in which the apostles were called to give these before hostile audiences. (4:5-12, 5:27-32, 7:1-60, 17:22-31, 22:1-21, 24:10-12, 26:12-24) The author shows how the gospel advanced despite severe opposition and sufferings. (5:40, 7:59, 8:1-3, 9:1, 13:50, 14:19-20, 16:22-24, 21:31-34)

F. Style-as with the gospel of Luke, the author uses a wide vocabulary and good literary style adapting his language to the particular situation he is describing. He employs classical Greek and also makes use of Aramaisms in describing events in Palestine. It has been observed that “nowhere in ancient literature is there an account of a shipwreck superior to Luke’s with its nautical details”. (27)

G. Messages-Acts records several apostolic sermons which all proclaim that Jesus Christ is risen from the dead. (Acts 2, 3, 4, 5, 10, 13, 17) This same Jesus has been exalted as Lord and has poured forth the Holy Spirit to enable His apostles and church to do his work. (2:33-36) People everywhere are urged to repent and believe the good news. (2:38, 3:19, 16:31, 17:30-31)

H. Peoples-although the gospel at first is sent to the Jews, the day of Pentecost provides a preview of its international outreach as Jews from every nation hear the magnificent works of God in their own languages. (2:5-11). Afterward, the gospel is preached to Samaritans (Acts 8:4-8) and then to Gentiles (10) showing that it is indeed good news for all people. When the Jews stubbornly oppose the message of salvation

in Christ, the apostles turn to the Gentiles in fulfillment of OT prophecy (13:46-48, with Isa. 49:6) Acts concludes with the apostle Paul in Rome announcing to unbelieving Jews that “the salvation of God has been sent to the Gentiles, and they will hear it”. (28:28)

I. Patterns of practice-for evangelism and church life are seen throughout the Book of Acts: Christ-centered preaching (2:22-36), church fellowship (2:42-47), prayer (4:23-31), ministry (6:1-7), every believer evangelism (8:4), teaching (11:26), disaster relief (11:27-30), mission (13:1-4), ministry training (13:5, 19:9), teamwork (20:4), communion (20:7), and hospitality (20:16).

J. Remarkable conversions-are seen in Acts: 3000 saved in one day (2:41), vast multitudes frequently coming to Christ (4:4, 5:14, 6:7, 8:6, 9:35, 42; 10:21, 24), the great enemy of the gospel, Saul of Tarsus, coming to Christ (9:1-20), the Philippian jailer and his household (16:25-34), and many Corinthians, a city notorious for vice. (18:8)

K. Baptisms-Luke records several baptisms which occurred quickly after faith in Christ (2:41, 8:12, 9:18, 10:48) and were by immersion as seen in the case of Philip and the eunuch from Ethiopia. (8:35-38)

L. Major events in Acts

1. Jesus giving the geography of the great commission. (1:8)
2. The ascension of Jesus into heaven. (1:9-11)
3. Pentecost and the effusion of the Holy Spirit. (2:1-36)
4. The martyrdom of Stephen. (7:55-60)
5. The conversion of Saul. (9:1-9)
6. The gospel to the Gentiles (10)
7. The origin of the church at Antioch (11:19-26)
8. The missionary journeys of the Apostle Paul (13-28)
- 9 The Jerusalem Council on the question of law and grace (15)
10. The gospel to “Europe” (16:6-10)
11. The gospel to Rome (23:11-28)

V ROMANS

A. The thirteen epistles of Paul are: Romans, 1 and 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, 1 and 2 Thessalonians, 1 and 2 Timothy, Titus, and Philemon. (some believe that Paul also wrote Hebrews but the authorship of that epistle is uncertain.)

B. The chronological order of Paul's epistles is likely: Galatians, 1 and 2 Thessalonians, 1 Corinthians, Philippians, 2 Corinthians, Romans, Colossians, Philemon, Ephesians, Titus, 1 and 2 Timothy. (FF Bruce)

C. Romans-was likely written in 57 AD from the city of Corinth on Paul's third missionary journey. (20:2-3) The apostle expresses his desire to visit the church in Rome (1:8-15, 15:22-23) and also to travel as far as Spain to preach the gospel. (15:24-28) It is not known whether or not he reached that country as he had hoped

D. Theme-of this epistle is the gospel of Christ which the apostle systematically unfolds in all of its depth as "the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes". (1:16) In some ways, Romans could be rightly called: "The Gospel according to Paul".

E. Major Doctrines-Romans is filled with strong theological teaching: The doctrine of sin (1:18-3:20); the doctrine of justification by faith (3:21-5:21), the doctrine of sanctification (6), the doctrine of indwelling sin in a believer (7), the doctrine of the indwelling Spirit (8:1-11), the doctrine of adoption (8:12-17), the doctrine of glorification (8:18-30), the doctrine of predestination (8:29-30), the doctrine of God's eternal love for His people (8:31-39), and the doctrine of election and God's purpose for Israel (9-11).

F Mission emphasis-this epistle is more than a theological treatise, it is a manifesto for missions to the nations. We see this in 1:5, "Through Him we have received grace and apostleship for obedience to the faith among all nations for His name", and again in the benediction of Romans 16:25-27 where the apostle writes in v.26 that the gospel is now being "made known to all nations". Paul also writes of the joy of Jews and Gentiles coming together in one worshipping community in Christ in fulfillment of OT prophecies (15:8-12) and tells of his personal ministry aim "to preach the gospel, not where Christ was named, lest I should build on another man's foundation, but as it is written: 'To whom He was not announced, they shall see; and those who have not heard shall understand'". A proper grasp of this epistle will not only strengthen one's doctrinal understanding, it will also inspire a vision for missions to the world.

G. Practical teaching-as with all of Paul's epistles, Romans also includes numerous words of practical teaching. Believers are exhorted to live godly lives of complete consecration to God (12:1-2), serve Him with their spiritual gifts (12:3-8), work out their faith in daily living (12:9-21, submit to governing authorities (13:1-7), show love to others (13:8-10), put on Christ (13:11:14), be considerate of others who are different (14), and live in unity. (15:1-7)

H. Use of OT-the epistle contains many OT passages which the apostle uses to argue his points (3:10-18, 4:3, 7-8; 7:7, 8:36) and also to show how God has fulfilled His purposes. (9:25-29m 33; 10:6-8, 11, 13, 15, 18-21; 11:8-10, 26-27)

I. Israel-despite Israel's rejection of Christ and opposition to the good news of salvation by faith in Him, the apostle assures his readers of God's sovereign purpose for His ancient covenant people in both the present remnant of believers "according to the election of grace"(11:5-7) and the future salvation of Israel. (11:26-27)

J. Outline of Romans

1. The true Christian minister. (1:1-17)
2. Why sinners need Christ. (1:18-32)
3. The judgment of God upon the self-righteous. (2)
4. Universal guilt before God. (3:1-20)
5. Christ's righteousness and redemption. (3:21-31)
6. Justification by faith. (4:1-5:21)
7. Sanctification in Christ. (6:1-23)
8. The struggle with indwelling sin. (7:1-25)
9. No Condemnation in Christ and no separation from Christ. (8)
10. Israel and the gospel. (9-11)
12. Practical Christianity. (12-16)

VI CORINTHIAN EPISTLES

A. First Corinthians

1. The city of Corinth-in Greece had a population of over 600,000 people. It was a place that was a cosmopolitan and commercial center on the Isthmus of Corinth. Though not a university town, it was nevertheless a place of culture whose people were very interested in philosophy. It was city of much false religion with temples to various Greeks gods and goddesses such as Apollo and Aphrodite. There was also a Jewish synagogue in Corinth. (Acts 18:4)

2. Immorality-Corinth was most well-known for its sexual immorality. The expression that someone was “behaving like a Corinthian” meant that they were engaging in sexual sin. Prostitution was associated with the worship of Aphrodite.

3 The church-in Corinth was planted by the evangelistic labors of the apostle Paul, along with his co-workers, Aquila and Priscilla, and Silas and Timothy. (Acts 18:1-10) Paul stayed there for eighteen months ministering to the believers and proclaiming the good news to others. (18:11) The church was very gifted but full of strife and division. (1 Cor. 1:10-12, 3:1-4) Immorality, lawsuits between believers, abuse of the Lord’s Supper, imbalance in the area of spiritual gifts, and denials of the future resurrection of the body were some of the problems plaguing the church. (5:1-8, 6:1-8, 11:17-34, 14:1-40, and 15:1-58)

4. Purpose-the apostle’s purpose in writing to the church was to address these problems and provide correction for them. It is an epistle that focuses on the need for spiritual maturity in Christ and personal sanctification.

5. Date-as one on Paul’s earlier epistles, it was likely written around 55 AD, probably from Ephesus.

6. Love-one of the greatest chapters in all of the Bible is found in this epistle: 1 Cor. 13. In this we learn that love is the most important thing of all in the Christian life and the church.

7. Outline of First Corinthians

1. A Gifted Church. (1:1-9)
2. Divisions and Disorders in the Church. (1-6)
3. Marriage, Liberty, and Worship. (7-11)
4. Spiritual Gifts. (12-14)
5. The Doctrine of the Resurrection. (15)
6. Closing Exhortations. (16)

B. Second Corinthians

1. Date-55 AD, later in the same year in which 1 Corinthians was written but from the area Macedonia. (2:13, 7:5)

2. This epistle has been called “the most revealing” and personal of all of Paul’s letters in

which he opens his heart to the church and encourages them to respect his authority as an apostle. Apparently some false teachers (2 Cor. 11:13-15) were seeking to discredit him by spreading lies about him and his teaching. Paul responds with firmness but gentleness asserting his apostolic authenticity and authority.

3. Unity-some have alleged that 2 Corinthians is actually made up of two letters written by Paul, consisting of what we find in chapters 1-9 and what we read in chapters 10-13. The latter section is thought by some to have been the closing portion of a “severe letter” which was written to respond to the problems in the church. However, the epistle itself reveals a unified structure and purpose, which has always been recognized by the church.

4. Titus, who is never mentioned in the Acts of the Apostles, is referred to in this epistle (2:13, 7:6-7, 13-15; 8:6, 23; 12:18). Titus was the bearer of this epistle to the church. (8:16-17) and a trusted co-worker of the apostle Paul. Titus in turn brought news of the church in Corinth back to the apostle. (7:6-7) He appears to have been a person with organizational skill as evidenced by Paul’s assigning him the responsibility to organize the collection of relief funds for poor believers in Jerusalem (8:1-7) and also his later ministry duties at Crete. (Titus 1:5, 2:1, 3:1)

5. Outline of Contents

a. Autobiography of Paul’s Apostolic Ministry (1-7)

b. Directions for Collection for believers (8-9)

c. Defense of Paul’s Apostolic Ministry (10-13)

6. Summary-2 Corinthians is a personal look into the life of Paul and his ministry as an apostle of Christ. It teaches us that gospel ministry is a call to proclaim the message of reconciliation through the cross of Christ (5:12-21) and to experience suffering in following Him. (1:5-10, 4:7-10, 6:1-10, 11:22-33, 12:7-10)

VII GALATIANS

A. Date-Galatians is thought to be the earliest of all Paul’s epistles and may have been written as early as 48 AD, although some say between 51-53 AD.

B. Two theories about the Galatians

1. North Galatia-the older view which teaches that this epistle was written to churches which were planted on Paul’s second missionary journey. (Acts 16: 1-6).

2. South Galatia-a view widely believed to be the correct one which teaches that Galatians was written to churches in the southern area of the Roman province of Galatia that Paul had visited on his first missionary journey. (Acts 13:13-14:24-Antioch. Iconium, Lystra, and Derbe)

C. Purpose-the apostle's purpose in writing to these churches was to address the problem of their departure from the gospel of Christ (1:6-10). Apparently some believing Jewish legalists from Jerusalem had visited the churches of Galatia and sought to impose the law of Moses upon these believers by teaching them to be circumcised and to observe the Jewish calendar. (4:9-10, 5:7) Paul exposes this addition to the gospel as a different gospel (1:6-7) and explains that justification is by faith in Jesus Christ apart from the works of the law. (2:16, 3:10-14) To turn to the law is to depart from Christ who has fulfilled the law and redeemed us from its curse by His death (3:13). To defect from the gospel into a form of legalism is to leave the liberty of Christ and to be enslaved again in bondage. (5:1) The centrality of the cross and the doctrine of justification by faith are powerfully set forth in this epistle of grace. (6:14)

D. Historical impact-Galatians has been called "Luther's book" because of the impact it had upon Martin Luther at the time of the Reformation (16th century).

E. Outline of Galatians

1. Apostolic authority and anathema on "other gospels". (1:1-10)
2. Paul's conversion and call to apostleship. (1:11-24)
3. Paul's visit to Jerusalem with Barnabas and Titus. (2:1-10)
4. Paul and Peter at Antioch. (2:11-21)
5. The Law and Christians. (3:1-14)
6. The Law and the promise. (3:15-29)
7. Sonship and slavery. (4)
8. Christian liberty and love. (5:1-15)
9. Life in the Spirit not the flesh. (5:16-25)
10. Bearing burdens and boasting in the cross. (6)

VIII PRISON EPISTLES

(The Prison Epistles of Paul consist of: Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, and Philemon.)

A. Ephesians

1. Although the words “in Ephesus” appear in Eph. 1:1, it is thought by many that this letter was sent as a “circular” epistle to both the Ephesians and other churches in that area. The city of Ephesus was the most important city in Asia Minor and the home of the temple of Diana (Artemis, Acts 19:23-31). Paul lived in Ephesus for three years and established a school there for training disciples. (Acts 19:9-10) He also preached the gospel “publicly and from house to house” in this city, calling people to repentance from their sins and faith in Christ. (Acts 20:20-21) A review of his ministry there with the elders of the church is found in Acts 20:17-38. However, only one individual is mentioned by the apostle in this epistle (Tychicus, 6:21), and no specific problems in the church are addressed which seems to indicate that it was indeed a circular letter, perhaps originally sent to Ephesus but also intended and applicable to other churches as well.

2. Date-probably around 60 AD when Paul was in prison in Rome. (3:1, 4:1, 6:20)

3. Teaching-this is one of the richest sections of the NT as the apostle teaches about God’s eternal purpose in Christ, the believer’s position and blessings in Him, and the new creation of the church. The first three chapters are doctrinal while the last three focus on practice.

4. Outline of Ephesians

a. God’s eternal purpose. (1)

b. God’s way of reconciliation. (2)

c. The unsearchable riches of Christ (3)

d. Christian unity. (4:1-16)

e. Darkness and Light. (4:17, 5:17)

f. Life in the Spirit in marriage, family, and work. (5:18-6:9)

g. Spiritual warfare. (6:10-20)

5. Key teachings in Ephesians

a. Union with Christ-”In Him”. (1:3, 4, 6, 7, 10, 11)

b. Election, predestination, adoption, and redemption. (1:4-7)

- c. The sealing of the Holy Spirit. (1:13-14)
- d. God's amazing grace to sinners. (2:1-10)
- e. The church as the "new creation" in Christ. (2:11-22)
- f. The mystery of Jews and Gentiles united in one body in Christ. (3)

B. Philippians

1. The city of Philippi was the Roman colony in Macedonia. It was named after Philip II, the father of Alexander the Great. The citizens of Philippi were very proud of their Roman citizenship and a prosperous people who often spoke Latin. There were few Jews in the city which explains why there was not a synagogue there. (Acts 16:12-13) The city was located on the Via Egnatia, the main highway leading to Rome from the eastern provinces.

2. Paul's ministry in Philippi is seen in Acts 16:12-40. After receiving the "Macedonian Call" to come there (Acts 16:9-10), Paul, Silas, Timothy, and Luke traveled there to preach the gospel. Lydia, a business woman from Thyatira was converted along with her family. (Acts 16:13-15) However, Satanic opposition soon manifested itself in the form of a demon-possessed slave girl involved in fortunetelling. When this spiritual bondage was ended by the authoritative command of the apostle, a violent assault followed against Paul and Silas, leaving them severely beaten and imprisoned. But God miraculously delivered them from prison by means of a midnight earthquake resulting in the salvation of the jailer and his whole family. This was the humble beginning of the church at Philippi.

3. Date-possibly early 55 AD, but some favor a later date of 61 AD at the time Paul was in prison in Rome. (Acts 28:14-31) By this time, the church was fully organized with both overseers and deacons. (Phil. 1:1)

4. Purpose-to thank the church at Philippi for their fellowship in the gospel and support of his ministry (1:3-5, 4:10-20), to update the church on his imprisonment (1:12-27), to urge the believers to unity through humility (1:27, 2:1-5, 4:2-5), and to warn them against the dangers of both legalism (3:1-2) and antinomianism (3:18-19).

5. Christology-this epistle contains some of the richest Christology in Paul's epistles. The apostle states that his greatest desire is to live for Christ and be with Christ (1:21-23), he exhorts believers to follow Christ's astounding humility from Godhead's glory to the death of the cross (2:6-8), he asserts the Lordship of Christ over all (2:9-11), he longs to know more of Christ (Phil. 3:8-10), and expresses his confidence that through Christ he can do all things. (4:13)

6. Joy-one of the great themes of Philippians is joy in the Lord. The word joy and various forms of it are found in every chapter. (1:4, 18, 25-26; 2:2, 16, 3:1, 4:1, 4:4) Though Paul was imprisoned for the faith, this did not diminish his joy in the Lord.

7. Outline of Philippians

- a. Thanksgiving and prayer for the church. (1:3-11)
- b. Paul's report on his imprisonment. (1:12-26)
- c. Exhortations to the believers for living and serving. (1:27-2:18)
- d. Two co-workers commended. (2:19-30)
- e. Apostolic warnings and encouragements. (3)
- f. Words of practical counsel on unity, joy, prayer, and thoughts. (4:1-9)
- g. Thanksgiving for the gift of the church. (4:10-20)

C. Colossians and Philemon

1. Date-60 or 61 AD. Paul did not plant the church in Colosse which was located in the Lycus Valley in Asia Minor, near Laodicea and Hierapolis. (cf. Col.4:13) This church was likely the result of the labors of Epaphras, a "fellow servant" of Paul in the gospel ministry.(1:7, 4:12) Epaphras may have been one of Paul's students at the "school of Tyrannus" in Ephesus for two years. (Acts 19:9-10)

2. Philemon should be studied with Colossians as Philemon was a Christian in Colosse who had a church in his house. (Phm. 2)

3. Purpose-the epistle to the Colossians was written to encourage the church there with sound doctrine as it was under attack from a false teaching which has been described as "The Colossian Heresy". It seems to have been an early forerunner of a later heresy known as "Gnosticism". The heresy in Colosse was a mixture of Jewish and pagan ideas with an emphasis on ceremonialism or legalism (2:16-17), mysticism or secret knowledge (2:18),angel worship (2:18), ascetic practices (2:21-23), and human philosophy (2:8). The apostle strongly refutes this heresy by exalting Christ and teaching His all-sufficiency as the image of God (1:15), the Creator and Sustainer of all things (1:16-17), the head of the church (1:18), the firstborn from the dead (1:18), the fullness of God in bodily form (1:19, 2:9), and the reconciler by His death on the cross (1:20-22). The supremacy of Christ is displayed throughout this epistle. Some of the richest Christology in the NT is found in Colossians.

4. Outline of Colossians

- a. Thanksgiving for the church and prayer for spiritual growth. (1:3-12)
- b. The supremacy of Christ. (1:13-23)
- c. The mystery of Christ. (1:24-2:5)
- d. The fullness of Christ. (2:6-15)
- e. Freedom and union in Christ. (2:16-3:4)
- f. The new life in Christ. (3:5-17)
- g. Christian living at home and work. (3:18-4:1)
- h. Christian graces and encouragements. (4:2-18)

5. Philemon-was a slave owner in Colosse but also a Christian who had been wronged by one of his slaves, Onesimus. (18) Apparently Onesimus was converted through the words of the apostle Paul and had become a very useful person in the work of Christ. (10-11) Paul wrote to Philemon to urge him to forgive Onesimus and receive him as a brother in Christ. (15-17) Though a brief epistle, it contains very important principles for living out the Christian life.

6. Outline of Philemon

- a. Greetings and prayer. (1-7)
- b. A plea for Onesimus. (8-21)
- c. A request and greetings. (22-25)

IX THE THESSALONIAN EPISTLES

A. First Thessalonians

1. Location-was a seaport town in Macedonia located at the junction of the Egnatian way. It was the capital and largest city of Macedonia, with a population of 200,000. The apostle Paul preached the gospel here on his second missionary journey and the church there was born. (Acts 17:1-4). However, he was forced to flee quickly from the city because of severe persecution from the Jews. (Acts 17:5-9)

2. Purpose- This first epistle to the church was written after Timothy reported to Paul on the progress of the Thessalonians faith and love. (1 Thess. 3:6) Paul's love for them is evident as he writes and he encourages them to persevere in their afflictions (:3:3-4),

live holy lives in the midst of an immoral culture (4:1-8), and continue to love one another. (3:12, 4:9) It is evident that there were some questions that the believers had concerning the Second Coming of Christ. The apostle provided instruction for them concerning this momentous event. (4:13-18, 5:1-11) The epistle concludes with a series of stirring exhortations. (5:12-22) and a closing prayer. (5:23-28)

3. Date-This was one of the earliest of all of Paul's epistles and was likely written around 51 AD from Greece.

4. Outline of First Thessalonians

- a. Thanksgiving for the faith, love, and hope of the believers. (1:1-10)
- b. The apostolic review of his ministry among them and desire to see them again. (2:1-20)
- c. Paul's love for the church and prayers for them. (3:1-13)
- d. Exhortations to holiness, love, and quiet lives marked by good conduct. (4:1-12)
- e. Teaching about the Lord's return and the resurrection of believers in Christ. (4:13-18)
- f. Teaching concerning the Lord's return in relation to unbelievers and how Christians should live in view of it. (5:1-11)
- g. Various encouragements and concluding prayer. (5:12-28)

B. Second Thessalonians

1. Date-this epistle was written shortly after the first one, perhaps only six months later. The apostle Paul wrote it to provide more encouragement to the church and give additional teaching concerning Christ's coming. Some of the believers had apparently become lax in their work and were thinking wrongly about the advent of the Lord. Paul warns them and urges them to keep busy and not be disorderly. (3:6-15)

2. Apostasy-Paul tells the church that the Lord will return and bring judgment on sinners who are disobedient and unrepentant. (1:7-10) This will not occur however, until there is a great apostasy from the faith and the man of sin (the Antichrist) is revealed. (2:1-5) This enemy of the Lord will be destroyed at the coming of Christ (2:6-8) and all who believe the lie about him will perish in their sins. (2:9-12) Paul gives thanks for God's choice of believers and urges them to stand firm in the word. (2:13-15)

3. Prayers-this epistle contains some wonderful examples of Paul's prayers. (1:3, 11-12; 2:16-17, 3:5, 17)

4. Outline of Second Thessalonians

- a. The shining testimony of the church despite its suffering.(1:3-4)
- b. The Lord's return and judgment upon unbelievers. (1:5-10)
- c. Prayer for the fulfillment of God's purpose in their lives. (1:11-12)
- d. The Lord's return and the Antichrist. (2:1-12)
- e. Thanksgiving and prayer. (2:13-3-5)
- f. Warnings about disorderly conduct. (3:6-15)
- g. Prayer and benediction. (3:16-18)

X PASTORAL EPISTLES (1 and 2 Timothy and Titus)

A. First Timothy

1. Timothy was a close companion of Paul and a fellow "bondservant" of Jesus Christ who labored with the apostle in the ministry of the gospel. (2 Cor. 1:1, Phil. 1:1, Col. 1:1) Paul refers to him as his "son" in the faith" (1 Tim. 1:2) and "beloved son" (2 Tim. 1:2) which may indicate that he was converted to Christ through the preaching of the apostle. Timothy was from Lystra, the son of a Jewish believer named Eunice and an unbelieving father. (Acts 16:1) The apostle chose him to accompany him and Silas on his second missionary trip. Timothy was later sent to several churches to minister to the believers and encourage them in the faith. (1 Cor. 4:17, Phil. 2:19, and 1 Thess. 3:2)

2. Purpose-in this epistle, we learn that Timothy was left at Ephesus by Paul in order to command some heretical teachers not to teach unorthodox doctrine (1 Tim. 1:3) and also to organize the life of the congregation there according to the directions given by the apostle. (3:14-15) Guidelines are given for important areas of church life, including: prayer (2:1-8), women in worship (2:9-15), overseers and deacons (3), and the care of widows. (5:3-16)The false teaching, which was a blend of early Gnosticism and Jewish legalism, is dealt with in 1:3-11, 4:1-8, and 6:3-5. These teachers loved to argue about words and tell stories invented by men rather to preach Christ and the true gospel . They claimed to have a superior kind of knowledge (6:20) which is a common prideful attitude of false teachers but they actually knew very little at all.

4. Style-some have sought to deny the Pauline authorship of this epistle, on the basis of differences in style and vocabulary. The word "godliness" which occurs eight times in this epistle and twice in the other Pastoral epistles, is not used anywhere else by Paul. But this is not a valid argument against the authorship of Paul since he could have easily used new words in a different spiritual context to write to Timothy.

5.. Date-1 Timothy was probably written between 63-65 AD.

6. Outline of First Timothy

- a. Dealing with false teachers. (1:1-11)
- b. God's amazing grace to Paul. (1:12-17)
- c. An exhortation to Timothy. (1:18-20)
- d. Instruction for prayer and worship. (2)
- e. Qualifications for overseers and deacons. (3:1-13)
- f. The mystery of godliness. (3:14-16)
- g. The Spirit's warning about false teachers. (4:1-5)
- h. Methods for ministry. (4:6-16)
- i. Ministry to various groups of people. (5-6:2)
- j. Marks of false teachers and how to avoid them. (6:3-16)
- k. Words for the rich and final exhortations. (6:17-21)

B. Second Timothy

1. Second Timothy was Paul's final epistle and was written from prison in Rome.. The first imprisonment of the apostle in Rome is recorded in Acts 28:17-31. Apparently he was released from prison after this and traveled again to preach the gospel before being once again put in prison for the faith, most likely in a cold and lonely dungeon. (4:13)

2. Purpose-Paul writes to again encourage Timothy in his ministry and calls upon him to be willing to suffer for the gospel. (1:8-12, 2:3) He exhorts him to hold fast to the faith and to be a servant of the Lord who depends on God to give people who oppose the truth the repentance they need. (1:13, 2:24-26) He warns of stressful times that will arise in the last days (3:1-9) and how people will no longer endure sound doctrine. (4:3-4) But Paul points Timothy to the "God-breathed" Holy Scriptures as the rule of his life and ministry (3:16-17)and urges him to faithfully preach the Word. (4:1-2) The epistle reveals Paul's loneliness and desire for fellowship. (4:9-16)

3. Date-between 66 and 67 AD.

4. Outline of Second Timothy

- a. Thanksgiving for Timothy and challenge to bold ministry for Christ. (1:1-14)
- b. Deserters and an encourager. (1:15-18)
- c. Endurance in grace and avoiding false teachers. (2:1-23)
- d. The character of a servant of the Lord. (2:24-26)
- e. Marks of the last days. (3:1-9)
- f. Marks of a true minister of Christ. (3:10-4:5)
- g. Paul's final words. (4:9-22)

C. Titus

1. Titus was a Gentile believer (Gal. 2:3) who was likely converted through Paul's ministry. (Titus 1:4) He became a trusted fellow servant of the apostle and was sent to different places to serve the churches. (1:5, 2 Cor. 7:13, 8:6, 16-17) He was evidently a very gifted and capable leader who was able to adapt to various situations in his service for the Lord. He is last mentioned as having gone to Dalmatia (2 Tim. 4:10) and area which is now part of eastern Europe.

2. Purpose-this epistle was written to Titus at Crete after he had been sent to handle some difficulties in the churches there. Crete is a large island in the Mediterranean Sea. It is thought that Paul and Titus preached the gospel there after the apostle was released from his first imprisonment in Rome. (Acts 28) Titus remained there with the assignment to organize the churches under the ministry of the elders (1:5-9) and to encourage the various believers on the island to live exemplary Christian lives. (2:1-10, 3:1-2, 8). Good works are strongly emphasized (2:7,14, 3:1, 8, 14), not as the basis of faith but as the outflowing of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and His redemptive work on the cross. (2:11-14, 3:4-6).

3. Date-probably between 63 and 65 AD.

4. Outline of Titus

- a. The faith of God's elect. (1:1-4)
- b. Qualifications for elders and why they are needed. (1:5-16)
- c. Exhortation for various people in the church. (2:1-10)

d. The grace of God for salvation in Christ. (2:11-14)

e. Duties of the ministry (2:15-3:11)

f. Final words (3:12-15)

XI HEBREWS

A. Authorship-the author of Hebrews is not certain. The internal evidence is that he was a Jewish believer thoroughly versed in the OT and someone who had suffered for his faith. (10:34) The traditional view is that the author was the apostle Paul but several authors have been suggested as possibilities, including: Apollos, Luke, Silas, and Barnabas.

B. Destination-some believe it was written to Hebrew believers in Palestine while others think it was written to Jewish Christians in Rome. (10:32-33, Acts 18:2)

C. Purpose-the author wrote to demonstrate the superiority of Christ over all that came before Him (1:2, 2:9, 3:1, 4:14, 12:1-2), to show the superiority of Christianity over the Mosaic Judaism of the Old Covenant (8:7-13, 10:11-18, 12:18-24), and to encourage those who had professed faith in Christ but who were now lapsing back into their former practices due to the difficulties they had encountered as Christians. (6:1, 10:36-39, 12:12-15)

D. Time of writing-Hebrews was written before 70 AD when the temple was still standing and the sacrifices of the Old Covenant were still being offered. (10:11, 13:10-11)

E. Use of OT-there are forty quotes from the OT in Hebrews, plus numerous references to OT laws and types which now have been superseded by Christ and the New Covenant. Hebrews provides an example of how Paul, Apollos, and others ministered from the Scriptures to Jewish people by expounding and applying the Bible in a Christ-centered way. (Acts 17:1-4, 18:5, 18:24-28)

F. Outline of Hebrews

1. Christ is greater than the prophets. (1:1-3)

2. Christ is greater than angels. (1:4-2:18)

3. Christ is greater than Moses. (3:1-4:2)

4. Christ is greater than Joshua. (4:3-14)

5. Christ is greater than Aaron and the Levitical priests. (4:14-7:28)

6 Christ is the mediator of a New Covenant that is better than the Old Covenant. (8:1-13)

7. Christ has offered up a better sacrifice than all of the OT sacrifices. (9:1-10:18)

8. Exhortations to believers to draw near in worship and persevere in faith. (10:19-39)

9. Examples of faith from OT. (11)

10. Encouragements to practical holiness and Christian living. (12:1-13:25)

XII JAMES

A. James-was not an apostle but was a brother of the Lord who after His resurrection and ascension became a leader in the church at Jerusalem. (Acts 12:17, 15:13-21, 21:18-25) But he identifies himself simply as “James a bondservant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ”. (1:1) Later historians such as Clement of Alexandria and Josephus say that James died as a martyr for the faith at the hands of the Jews in 62 AD.

B. People addressed-James writes to “the twelve tribes scattered among the nations”. (1:1) This does not refer to Jews in general who had been dispersed among the nations because of their sins, but Christians who had been scattered because of persecution. It may be a specific reference to the believers who were forced to leave Jerusalem after the death of Stephen. (Acts 8:1-4, 11:19) That the “twelve tribes” refers to believers is clear from 2:1 and 5:7-8.

C. Date-James was a very early epistle and was likely written before 50 AD. The word “church” occurs only once in this epistle (5:14) and the gathering place of the believers is called a “synagogue”. (2:2) Remarkably, neither the cross or the resurrection of Jesus are referred to, although there seems to be an allusion to Jesus’ death in 5:6.

D. Purpose-James writes to believers to strengthen their faith in the Lord and to encourage practical Christianity. He makes many allusions to Lord’s teachings in the Sermon on the Mount. (1:5-6, 22; 2:14, 3:12, 4:9, 11; 5:2, 10, 12) James demands a “faith with works”. (2:14-26) Because of this, some have mistakenly thought that James and Paul teach two different things. (cf. Romans 4:1-8, Gal. 2:16, 3:10-12). But James and Paul do not have a quarrel, for James is simply calling for a faith that is living and real as does Paul. (Eph. 2:10, Tit.3:4-8). As has been observed: “If you have the faith of Paul, you will have the works of James”. James has sometimes been referred to as the “Proverbs of the New Testament” because of its emphasis on wisdom and righteous living.

E. Outline of James

1. The value of trials and the source of temptations. (1:1-18)

2. Hearers and doers of the word. (1:19-27)
3. Beware of favoritism. (2:1-13)
4. Faith and works. (2:14-26)
5. The problem of the tongue. (3:1-12)
6. Two kinds of wisdom. (3:13-18)
7. Worldliness and how to cure it. (4:1-10)
8. The sin of evil speaking. (4:11-12)
9. Submitting your plans to the Lord. (4:13-17)
10. Warnings to the rich. (5:1-6)
11. The importance of patience. (5:7-12)
12. Praying for various needs. (5:13-18)
13. Restoring an erring believer. (5:19-20)

XIII THE EPISTLES OF PETER

A. First Peter

1. Author-the apostle Peter (1:1) who appears to have written this epistle “with the help of Silas”. (5:12) This seems to indicate that Silas may have either been an interpreter for the apostle Peter or the actual agent in writing his words. Peter mentions that he was in Babylon when he wrote (5:13) which may be referring to literal Babylon in Mesopotamia or Rome. It has been suggested that Peter may have used the word “Babylon” to hide his actual location from Nero since Christians were being called “evildoers” (2:12) and were also blamed for the burning of Rome.

2. Recipients-the apostle writes to “the elect sojourners” of the Dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia. As an apostle to the Jews (Gal. 2:7), this refers to Jewish Christian believers but also may include Gentile readers as well. These believers were suffering persecution for their faith in Christ. (1:6, 2:12, 21; 3:14, 17; 4:12-16) Peter writes to encourage them in their faith and conduct that they might be people of exemplary character in the face of tribulations from a godless world.

3. Style and vocabulary-Peter's style is "good literary Greek" which suggests the help of Silas. He writes to exhort not to give a detailed exposition of various doctrines. There are over sixty words in the original Greek of this epistle that are not found elsewhere in the NT. Peter's themes are varied but there is a recurring thread of "suffering and glory" that is seen throughout the epistle. (1:11, 3:18-22, 4:13-14, 5:1, 4, 10-11) In all things, he writes to the Christians to inspire them with hope. (1:3, 7, 13, 21)

4. Date-somewhere between 62 and 68 AD. Tradition says that Peter was martyred for the faith as our Lord prophesied (John 21:18-19) between 64 and 68 AD.

5. Outline of First Peter

a. A Eulogy to God for His grace in Christ. (1:1-12)

b. Exhortations to holy living. (1:13-2:3)

c. The new chosen people of God. (2:4-12)

d. Submission in the Christian life. (2:12-3:7)

e. Suffering and serving. (3:13-4:19)

f. Elders and young people. (5:1-11)

g. Final words of grace. (5:12-14)

B. Second Peter

1. This epistle was also written by the apostle Peter, who uses his full name "Simon Peter". The author mentions his approaching death very personally as foretold by the Lord (1:14) refers back to his personal experience on the "holy mountain" as an eyewitness of Jesus (1:16-18), and also writes of "our beloved brother Paul" (3:15-16). He also refers to this as his "second epistle" (3:1) which is an obvious reminder of his first letter to the elect of the Dispersion. (1 Pet. 1:1-2)

2. Similarities between 2 Peter and Jude-it has been noted that several verses in these two epistles are very similar. (2:4-17 with Jude 5-19) Some have suggested that one of the sacred writers borrowed from the other as this was common in ancient writings. But it is also important to see that there are also differences between 2 Peter and Jude. Peter has fallen angels, the flood in Noah's time, Sodom and Gomorrah, Lot, and Balaam, while Jude refers to God's judgment on unbelievers who left Egypt, fallen angels, the perverse sinners of Sodom and Gomorrah, Michael the archangel, Cain, Balaam, and Korah; and Enoch. It is obvious that both books are inspired by the Holy Spirit and given to the church to warn her against heretics who would come and distort the true teaching of the gospel by their sinful and wicked lives.

3. Style-some have noted a difference of style between the first and second epistles of Peter but there are also similarities. One explanation for stylistic difference is that Silas was Peter's helper in the first epistle but not the second. It may be that the second epistle is written more in Peter's own style.

4. Purpose-the apostle's concern is to encourage believers to grow in grace, warn against false teachers, and remind of the promise of the second coming of Christ and the climactic conclusion of human history that will occur when Jesus returns.

5. Date-likely between 64-68 AD. (see Date of First Peter)

6. Outline of First Peter

a. Exhortation to spiritual growth in the Christian life. (1:1-11)

b. Peter's impending death and reason for writing. (1:12-15)

c. The truth of the Word of God. (1:16-21)

d. The deceit, destruction, and depravity of false teachers. (2)

e. The certainty of Christ's coming and a call to holy lives in view of this. (3)

XIV THE EPISTLES OF JOHN

A. First John

1. Author-although John never mentions his name in his epistles, it is obvious from internal evidence that he is the writer. The following comparison of verses makes this abundantly clear: 1 John 1:1 with John 1:1,14; 1 John 1:4 with John 16:24; 1 John 1:6-7 with John 3:19-21; 1 John 2:7 with John 13:34-35; 1 John 3:8 with John 8:44; 1 John 3:14 with John 5:24; 1 John 4:6 with John 8:47; 1 John 4:9 with John 1:14, 18; 3:16; 1 John 5:9 with John 5:32, 37; and 1 John 5:12 with John 3:36. Early church fathers such as Irenaeus and Tertullian asserted that the apostle John wrote this epistle.

2. Recipients-the geographical location and group of people to which the first epistle was sent are not mentioned by the apostle. He addresses the "little children" (2:1, 12, 13, 28, 3:7) and also "fathers" and "young men" (2:13,14). He states in 5:13 that he has written to believers in the Son of God. John lived in later years in Ephesus, so it is likely that he wrote to Christians living in Asia Minor. (cf. Rev.1:4)

3. Style-John writes in his characteristic simple style of Greek but with authority and clarity to encourage believers and warn of dangers that they face. (2:15, 28; 3:14-15; 4:1, 5:21)

4. Purpose-The apostle had two main purposes in writing this epistle: first, to alert believers to those who were trying to deceive them with their heretical teachings (2:26); and second, to encourage believers in the area of their assurance of salvation. (5:13) The heretics that he describes in this epistle were a group known as “Gnostics” (Gr. gnosis, knowledge) who claimed to have an advanced or superior kind of spiritual knowledge than others. They held to false views of Jesus, stating that He was not truly human but only seemed to be (the Docetics) and that “the divine Christ came on Jesus at His baptism and then left Him at the cross”. (the Cerinthians) They also held to lax views of living and made allowances for sinful behavior. John denounces these apostates as “Antichrists” (2:18, 4:1-3) and declares that they are “children of the devil”. (3:8,10) The apostle also writes much about love which he teaches is best demonstrated by actions and obedience to God’s commands. ((2:5, 3:16-18, 4:7-8, 20-21; 5:1-3)

5. Date-likely somewhere between 85 and 95 AD.

6. Outline of First John

a. The Incarnation. (1:1-4)

b. Fellowship with the Father and the Son. (1:5-2:2)

c. The tests of knowing God. (2:3-29)

d. The children of God and the children of the devil. (3:1-15)

e. The actions of love. (3:16-24)

f. Testing the spirits. (4:1-6)

g. The imperative of love. (4:7-5:5)

h. The certainty of God’s witness. (5:6-13)

i. Confidence in God in prayer. (5:14-17)

j. Closing assurances and warning. (5:18-21)

B. Second John

1. This brief epistle was written by John to the “elect lady” who may have been a woman named Cyria whose children were also believers (1, 4). Or it may be a reference to a local church in Asia Minor with which the apostle was acquainted.

2. The same similarities which are found in First John with the Gospel of John are also found in Second John. (cf. 2 John 5 with John 13:34-35; 2 John 6 with John 14:23; 2 John 12 with John 15:11 and 16:24) John is concerned again with Antichristian teachings which deny the Person and doctrine of Christ. (7-9) As these Christians met in homes, as many also do today, it was important for them not to welcome these false teachers into their homes or fellowships where their heretical teachings could wrongly influence others.

3. Date-around the same time as First John, 85 to 95 AD.

4. Outline of Second John

a. Greetings of love in truth. (1-3)

b. Walking in love. (4-6)

c. Warnings against deceivers. (7-11)

d. Expressions of fellowship. (12-13)

C. Third John

1. This third letter of John is written to Gaius, a beloved brother in Christ, who was known for his Christian hospitality to believers who traveled to various places preaching the good news of Christ. (1, 5-7)

2. Two other individuals are mentioned in the epistle: a domineering leader by the name of Diotrephes who was a gossip and guilty of abusing authority in the church by excluding brothers who were hospitable (9-10), and Demetrius, who was a brother with a good testimony that was known to all. (12)

3. Date-the same as the other Johannine epistles, 85-95 AD.

4. Outline of Third John

a. Greetings and commendation of Gaius. (1-8)

b. The behavior of Diotrephes exposed (9-11)

c. The testimony of Demetrius. (12)

d. Expressions of fellowship. (13-14)

XV THE EPISTLE OF JUDE

A. Author-Jude was the brother of our Lord, like James (Mt. 13:55), although he identifies himself as “a servant of Jesus Christ and brother of James”. (1) The name Jude is a form of the name Judah or Judas.

B. Recipients-those addressed are described as “those who have called, who are loved by God the Father, and preserved in Jesus Christ”. (1) No geographical destination is given but some have suggested Antioch in Syria although this is not certain.

C. Purpose-it appears from v.3 that Jude’s original intention was to write to these believers about the salvation they shared in common with one another. However, the Holy Spirit led him to write instead to exhort them to contend earnestly for the Christian faith in the face of heretical attacks by immoral and godless sinners who had slipped into the church to teach a distorted view of grace. (3-4) The last epistle in the NT thus reveals a similar concern to several others that precede it. (cf. Colossians, 2 Peter, Epistles of John)

D. Similarities to 2 Peter-(see notes on 2 Peter-2.) Jude may have been the first written but it is not certain. Both epistles are written to warn of a similar heresy: an early forerunner of later Gnosticism.

E. Use of non-canonical literature-in Jude 9 and 14, the writer makes use of books that do not belong to the inspired canon of the OT: “The Assumption of Moses” and “The Book of Enoch”. For this reason, it was not accepted by some at first but was later recognized as inspired and authentic. The words as we have them in Jude are all given by the Holy Spirit.

F. Date-likely as early as 65 AD although some suggest a later date around 80 AD.

G. Outline of Jude

1. The writer and reason for the epistle. (1-4)
2. Warnings of the wicked and the judgment of God. (5-16)
3. Exhortations to believers. (17-23)
4. Doxology. (24-25)

XVI REVELATION

A. Author-identifies himself as “His servant John” . (Rev. 1:1) The word “servant” is the Greek word “doulos” meaning “bondservant” or “slave”. The traditional view is that this John is the apostle John who also wrote the Gospel and Epistles of John. John informs the churches in Asia Minor (1:4) that he was exiled to the isle of Patmos (1:9), a small island in the Aegean Sea which was fifty miles south of Ephesus. As one who was suffering for the faith of Christ, he wrote to encourage believers in various churches to be faithful to the Lord even amidst severe persecution in days when emperor worship was on the rise.

B. Recipients-the seven churches of Asia Minor (1:4, 2:1-3:22). There were actually more than seven churches in Asia Minor (cf. Acts 20:6, Col. 4:13, 16) but “seven” is a number that is used throughout the book to indicate completion. (1:4, 12, 16; 4:5; 5:1, 6; 8:2, 10:3)The fact that the churches are different in the problems they face and the solutions they are given by the Lord to overcome them reminds us that each church is unique in the eyes of the Lord with its own special conditions and circumstances.

C. Style-it is important to see that Revelation is written in “apocalyptic” language. The name of the book is actually “The Apocalypse (Gr. apokalupsis, unveiling) of Jesus Christ.”Apocalyptic language was a symbolical style of language frequently used by the prophets.This means that the vision and teaching of Revelation is highly figurative. Sometimes, the symbols are explained by John. (1:20, 13:18, 17:5, 18; 21:9-10) Caution must be used to avoid literalism when symbolism is intended.

D. Date-of the Revelation is thought to have been around 95 AD near the time of John’s other writings. This was during the reign of the Roman emperor Domitian which was a time of severe persecution. Some have suggested an earlier date during the reign of Nero (54-68 AD).

E. Interpretation-there are four main schools of interpretation of the Revelation.

a. Preterists-believe that the book refers to things that are past and have been fulfilled in the destruction of Jerusalem and the fall of Rome.

b. Continuists-believe that the prophecies are a picture of progressive events in history with some already fulfilled and others yet to be fulfilled.

c. Futurists-believe that the first three chapters are historical and chapters 4 and following are future events related to the return of Jesus.

d. Idealists-see the whole book as a picture of the ultimate triumph of good over evil, the triumph of the reign of God in Christ. over Satan, sin, and the powers of darkness.

F. The theme-of Jesus Christ as the Lamb who was slain but who now is victorious and worthy of worship and praise is central to the book of Revelation. (5:-14, 6:1, 7:9-17, 11: 15, 12:10-11, 14:1-5) The danger is to become enamored with the symbols and not see

Christ as the Lion and the Lamb.

G. Outline of Revelation

1. John on Patmos. (1:1-10)
2. Jesus among the seven lampstands. (1:10-3:22)
3. The Throne Room and the Lamb. (4-5)
4. The Seven Seals (6:1-8:1)
5. The Seven Trumpets. (8:2-11:19)
6. The Dragon, the Beasts, and the Lamb. (12-14)
7. The Seven Bowls. (15-16)
8. Babylon and her fall. (17:1-19:5)
9. The Marriage Supper of Lamb and Christ's return. (19:6-21)
10. The Thousand Years. (20)
11. New Heavens and a New Earth. (21-22:5)
12. Jesus' Last Words and John's Warning. (22:6-21)

