

NEW TESTAMENT SURVEY: AN OUTLINE

**BY
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New Testament for the South Pacific**

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INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this brief work is to give you a basic overview of the New Testament. Included in this birds-eye-view are general facts regarding the Bible as a whole and the New Testament in particular. I also introduce some basic concepts about interpretation and canon.

From there I go into areas of the historical and cultural context where the New Testament took its form. It is important to anchor the words of the New Testament into the events, history, social structures, culture, and places of this world.

I give a basic background and outline of each of the books of the New Testament. Included in the background is the author of the book, the immediate intended audience, occasion of writing, and the date and place it was written. There is a selected list of over 90 excellent evangelical resources at the end. The ebook is about 118 compact pages in all.

An outline of the life of Christ is given, the ministry of the early disciples explored, and the history of early church expansion is unfolded.

The text is written in outline form, as it consists of my New Testament lecture notes. It may seem somewhat choppy, but it boils down the essential facts of the New Testament.

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

I was born and raised on a cattle ranch in central Idaho, USA. The closest village was about a 30 minute drive, and its population was about 150 people. While working after spending a short hitch in the Army, I went to work on road construction in central Oregon. That is where a pastor led me to Christ in 1965.

I decided to try college, and eventually completed a bachelor's degree (B.A.) in psychology, and master's degree (M.Ed.) in counseling from the University of Portland. Finding some success at higher education, I took a one year certificate course at Multnomah School of the Bible, and finished up with a master of divinity (M.Div.) in pastoral studies at Western Conservative Baptist Seminary. From there I completed my Ph.D. in church administration at California Graduate School of Theology (1978), and a doctor of ministry (D.Min.) in cross cultural studies at Faith Evangelical Lutheran Seminary in Tacoma, Washington.

God gave me time pastoral ministry for eight years, and from there I started teaching. First, I serve as director of pastoral studies and taught Bible, counseling, and church history at International College and Graduate School of Theology in Honolulu, Hawaii.

From there, I had the opportunity to establish a Bible school and Seminary in the Kingdom of Tonga, South Pacific. That project started in 1985. There I served for eight years as the South Pacific director for Faith Evangelical Lutheran Seminary and Polynesian Missions. I kept my hand in teaching courses in theology, Bible, missions, apologetics, etc. I also was guest lecturer for International School of Theology – Asia (Campus Crusade in Manila).

In 1998 the Lord moved me back to the Pacific Northwest, USA where I still lecture for Faith Evangelical Seminary (they changed their name), and teach several courses in psychology and sociology at a local community college. I also picked up credentials for counseling. My Filipina wife of eight years, Esmie, is a graduate of Faith Evangelical Seminary, University of the East (Manila), and University of Washington. She is an accountant and office manager.

We both tend to this website, and travel to Tonga and the Philippines to establish the work of Newman International, LLC.

The next page deals with how to become a Christian. The Apostle, John, wrote, "Many other signs therefore Jesus also performed in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; but these have been written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you may have life in His name" (John 20:30, 31).

Consequently, it is good for me to deal with first things first, and make sure that I fulfill the purpose of the New Testament in obedience to Jesus Christ.

HOW TO BE SAVED

The Bible gives us the message (gospel) of how to be saved. By this we mean how to gain forgiveness for our sin and how to gain eternal life. Summarized below are the steps for salvation as presented in the Bible. We invite you to receive Christ as Savior.

AGREE

1. Agree in your heart with God that you are a sinner in need of His salvation, "For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23).

KNOW

2. Know in your heart that there is a penalty to your sin, "for the wages of sin is death" (Romans 6:23a).

BELIEVE

3. Believe in your heart that Christ died on the cross and rose from the dead to pay the penalty for your sins and to give you eternal life, "But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (Romans 5:8).

"Being justified as a gift by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus" (Romans 3:24).

"For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life" (John 3:16).

"But the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Romans 6:23).

RECEIVE

4. By faith pray to God. Tell Him you believe the above in your heart and ask Him to save you through Jesus Christ. Remember that God is more concerned with the attitude of your heart rather than your exact words.

"For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, that no one would boast" (Ephesians 2:8, 9).

"If you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you shall be saved; for with the heart man believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses resulting in salvation" (Romans 10:9, 10).

“Behold, I (Jesus) stand at the door (of your heart) and knock; if anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him, and will dine with him, and he with Me” (Revelation 3:20).

“But as many as received Him (Jesus), to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name, who were born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God” (John 1:12, 13).

ASK

The following is a suggested prayer:

Heavenly Father, I admit to you that I am a sinner in need of your salvation. I believe that Christ died on the cross and rose from the dead to pay for my sins and go give me eternal life. I believe that only through Christ can I be saved. I ask for and accept by faith your free gift of salvation. Please come into my heart and be my Savior and Lord. Thank you for doing so. In Jesus' name, amen.

SURVEY OF THE NEW TESTAMENT: AN OUTLINE

PART ONE: INTRODUCTION AND CONTEXT OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

I. INTRODUCTION AND CONTEXT.

A. THE PURPOSE OF THE BIBLE.

The purpose of the Bible is to bear witness of one God who is the Creator and Sustainer of the entire universe. This witness is through Jesus Christ, the Messiah of the Old Testament, the Redeemer of sinful mankind. The story of the Bible is a progressive unfolding of one central theme: the provision of redemption for sinful, fallen mankind through the person of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, who is the incarnate God of the universe. The Old Testament tells of the preparation for Christ; the New Testament tells of the manifestation and explanation of Christ.

B. THE NAME NEW TESTAMENT.

1. The title indicates a contrast between the "New" and "Old" testament. The Old Testament was Sacred Scriptures inherited from Judaism by the Church. The Greek word "new testament" (*kaine diatheke*) is better translated "new covenant" and was first used by Jesus when He instituted the Lord's Supper: "This cup is the new testament in my blood" (Heb. 9:15), "the new testament in my blood (Luke 22:20), "This is my blood of the new testament" Matt. 26:28).

2. The New Testament is referred to as "new covenant" (Hebrews 9:15) in sharp contrast with the first or old covenant (2 Cor. 3:14; 6-17). The meaning of covenant is that of an agreement set down by God and cannot be altered, and which man can accept or reject. This new covenant fulfills and replaces the old covenant by its provision of a blood sacrifice sufficient to erase all sin (Heb, 9:11-15), and provide an inner motivation as opposed to regulation of outward conduct (Jer. 31:31-34; Heb. 10:14-25).

The old Mosaic covenant between God and Israel has been abolished (2 Cor. 3:11, 13). Christians have release from the moral law portion of Mosaic Covenant (Eph 2:15; Rom 7:6, 7; 2: Cor. 3:14) and release from the dietary and ceremonial portion of that old covenant (Col 2:16). Our standard of behavior is Jesus Christ (Rom 8:29; Col 1:28-29), which was established with the New Covenant.

3. The Old Testament is the "Book of Adam" (Gen. 5:1), the covenant of works that ends in a curse (Mal. 4:6 cf. Gal. 3:10). The New Testament is the "Book of Jesus Christ" (Matt.1:1), the covenant of grace that ends in a blessing (Rev. 22:14, 21).

C. GENERAL FACTS

1. Time covered: the birth of Christ to the new heaven and earth.
2. Authors: written by eye witnesses of Christ or by their contemporaries: Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, Paul, James, Peter, Jude.
3. When written: between the years of about 50 A.D. to 95 A.D.
4. Number of books: 27.
5. General arrangement:
 - (a). History (5)
 - (i). Life of Christ (4)
 - (ii). History of primitive Church (1)
 - (b). Teaching (21)
 - (i). Pauline Epistles (14)
 - (ii). General Epistles (7)
 - (c). Prophecy (1)

D. CHRIST THE KEY TO THE BIBLE.

1. Anticipation of Christ's coming.

- (a). It was necessary.
 - (i). Because mankind was sinful and in need of redemption -- he needed a priest.
 - (ii) Because mankind was ignorant -- he needed a prophet.
 - (iii) Because mankind was anarchistic -- he needed a king.
- (b). It was prepared.
 - (i) Prophesied in the prophecies as the ideal prophet.
 - (ii) Typified in the ceremonies as the ideal priest.
 - (iii) Magnified in the promises as the ideal king.
 - (iv). Unfolded in history through the nation Israel and the line of Judah.
- (c). It was recorded in the Old Testament.

2. Realization of Christ's coming (4 Gospels).

- (a). Christ the prophet.
He is exhibited as the perfect prophet who speaks the Word of God in truth.
- (b). Christ the priest.
He is exhibited as the ideal priest who offers the one perfect sacrifice.
- (c). Christ the king.
He is exhibited as the ideal king.

3. Explanation of Christ's coming (Acts - Revelation).

- (a). Provision of redemption.
Christ meets mankind's need of redemption and priest in His sacrifice.
- (b). Provision of information.

- Christ meets mankind's need of a prophet in the message of the epistles.
- (c). Provision of leadership.
Christ meets mankind's desire and need for a king by the incoming kingdom disclosed in the Revelation.

E. FACTORS USED TO PREPARE THE WORLD FOR CHRIST.

"But when the fullness of time was come, God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the law to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons" (Gal. 4:4).

God used four factors, or controlled circumstances, to prepare the world for Christ's Advent. (Note: adapted from unpublished class notes of Dr. William F. Kerr, Western Conservative Baptist Seminary.)

1. The prophetic Scriptures.

- (a). In the Law.

Christ was born of a woman (Gen. 3:15; Gal. 4:4); the seed of Abraham (Gen. 12:1-3; Gal. 3:16); of the tribe of Judah (Gen. 49:10; Rev. 5:5); a prophet like Moses (Deut. 18:18; Acts 3:22).

- (b). In the Prophets.

Christ was born of a virgin (Isa.7:14; Mt. 1:22, 23); in Bethlehem (Micah 5:2; Lk. 2:4, 5); introduced by prophesied forerunner (Isa. 40:3; Lk. 1:17); the suffering servant (Isa. 53:3-5).

- (c). In the Writings.

Christ was hated without a cause (Psa. 69:4; John 15:23-25); rejected by the rulers (Psa. 118:21-23; Matt.21:42); put to death by crucifixion (Psa. 22:1, 14, 15; Matt.27:46).

2. The partisan sects of Judaism.

- (a). The Pharisees -- stress on law.

They were legalists; they adapted the law to every area of life and layered tradition upon tradition so that tradition was more important than the Law. Worship was ritual and heart attitude was dead (Matt. 15:1-3; Luke 11:43, 44). Legalism pointed the need of a Savior which was met by Christ (Luke 18:9-14). On the positive side, they believed in the supernatural.

- (b). The Sadducees -- stress on reason.

They were the rationalists. They had great wealth, political power, were materialistic, and rationalized their faith for convenient living. They were skeptical toward religion, considered the Mosaic Law as sacred but did not believe it literally and discarded its application to life. They denied the future life. They were unsatisfied in their heart (Matt. 22:23, 38).

- (c). The Essenes -- stress on experience.

They were the mystics, monastic, lived in communes, were vegetarians and were governed by two ideals: peace and purity. They were Pacifists. However, withdrawal from society could not save them.

3. The pagan secularism.

(a). Decadence of the period.

Sin abounded: orgiastic and revolting pagan worship, degraded view of women, infidelity, adultery, homosexuality, abortion, infanticide, violence, gluttony (Rom. 1:24-28). The days cried for a Savior, like today!

(b). Pronouncements of the philosophers.

Men were desperate for salvation and distraught with the world, again, like today.

4. The political status of the world.

(a). Roman law.

The contribution of Rome was law. With it they ruled the civilized world and established it in order and peace, the necessary "soil" for the gospel to be planted and nourished. Their extensive highway system facilitated transportation -- five major highways extended from Rome to the borders of their Empire.

(b). Greek language.

Greek was the common language of the Empire. Weisman: "Greek Judaism with the Septuagint had ploughed the furrows for the Gospel seed in the western world."

(c). Hebrew legacy.

They believed in one God, had synagogues in every major town which were the public place for worship and became centers for early preaching (Acts 13:13-49). A Greek translation of the Old Testament, the Septuagint, was the Bible of the Jews of the Diaspora. They had a strong faith in God, the future life, worship, prayer and a Messianic expectation. They offered a vital alternative to bankrupt paganism.

The historian Angus said in his Environment of Early Christianity: "Christ appeared at the time when all the striving and hopes of all people were converging to a focus, when the majority of mankind were hungering for religious support, when East and West had been wedded, when men were expecting a new era, when the philosophy of Greece and the religious consciousness of the Hebrew were pointing toward a new Revelation. Christ came at the one time in history when all civilized lived, as it were, under one roof, when the happiness of mankind depended on the will of one, when all were able to communicate in one language, when men were unanimous as to the perils and needs of the world, when there was peace on earth, when there was 'one empire, one universal language, one civilization, a common development toward monotheism, and a common yearning for saviours.'"

F. OUTLINE OF THE NEW TESTAMENT.

1. Manifestation of Christ.

The life of Christ on earth.

(a). Gospel of Matthew: Christ the Royal Messiah, King, to the Jews.

- (b). Gospel of Mark: Christ the Mighty Servant of Jehovah, to the Romans.
- (c). Gospel of Luke: Christ the Son of Man, the Perfect Man, Savior of the World, to the Greeks in general.
- (d). Gospel of John: Christ the Logos, the incarnate Son of God, Savior of the World, to the world in general.

2. Propagation of Christ.

The Acts of the Apostles. This is the story of the beginning and expansion of Christ's church. It includes the primitive church, the transition from Judaism to the Church, and expansion from Jerusalem to the uttermost parts of the world.

3. Explanation of Christ.

(a). The Pauline Epistles.

(i). Listed by order.

- Romans: justification by faith.
- 1 Corinthians: church reform and conduct.
- 2 Corinthians: Paul's authority.
- Galatians: Salvation by grace, Christian liberty.
- Ephesians: The church, Christ's Body.
- Philippians: the mind of Christ, Christian experience.
- Colossians: Christ's pre-eminence.
- 1 Thessalonians: Christ's return, doctrine of the last things.
- 2 Thessalonians: Day of the Lord.
- 1 Timothy: church life.
- 2 Timothy: holding the truth.
- Titus: church order.
- Philemon: love exemplified in social relationships.
- Hebrews: priesthood of Christ, doctrine of types, superiority of Christ over Judaism.

(ii) Listed by emphasis.

- Eschatological.
 - 1 Thessalonians.
 - 2 Thessalonians.
- Anti-Judaism.
 - Galatians.
 - 1 Corinthians.
 - 2 Corinthians.
 - Romans.
- Personal and Christological
 - Colossians
 - Ephesians
 - Philemon
 - Hebrews.
- Pastoral.
 - 1 Timothy.

- 2 Timothy.
- Titus.
- Prison.
 - Ephesians.
 - Philippians.
 - Colossians.
 - Philemon.

(b). General Epistles.

- (i) James: Christian ethics, behavior, faith and works.
- (ii) 1 Peter: hope, grace, suffering and glory.
- (iii) 2 Peter; last days, knowledge.
- (iv) 1 John: fellowship, walking in love and light.
- (v) 2 John: truth.
- (vi) 3 John: hospitality.
- (vii) Jude: apostasy, contending for the Faith.

4. Consummation of Christ.

The Revelation: unveiling of Christ.

- (a). Fore view of the Church: 2:1-3:22.
- (b). Tribulation: 4:1-19:10.
- (c). Millennium 20:1-10.
- (d). Eternal state 20:11-22:21.

G. THE WORLD OF THE NEW TESTAMENT.

The geography and events of the New Testament took place primarily in modern Israel, Italy, Greece, Turkey, Syria, Jordan and the Mediterranean Sea. The Roman Empire of 2000 years ago was the birthplace of Christianity. From there it quickly expanded to other regions. I now describe the cultural conditions of the time.

1. The political world.

(a). The world of Rome.

(i) At the start of Christianity, the entire civilized world (with few exceptions) was under the power of the vast empire of Rome. It stretched from the Atlantic to the Euphrates; the Danube to the Sahara desert. The empire took its name from the capital city of Italy which was founded in 753 B.C. The Roman state grew from a tiny community comprising a collection of local villages ruled by a king to a republic in the beginning of the 5th century. Through various alliances and military victories they ruled over the entire Italian peninsula by 265 B.C.

Their next phase of world conquest involved two centuries of military struggle with Carthage and its great empire. The climax was in 146 B.C. when the Roman general, Scipio Aemilianus, defeated the city of Carthage and razed it to the ground. The booty included North Africa and Spain. Macedonia, Achaia, Pergamum, Asia Minor all came under Rome's roof. In 63 B.C. Pompeii organized Syria into a province and annexed Judea.

Rome as a republic died and the Roman Empire was born in 27 B.C. Politically, the senate lost control of the state, and Julius Caesar (102-44 B.C.) stepped into the vacuum. He was the last of a series of commanders who for a century used the army to impose political solutions to breakdowns of law and order. He is known as the father of the Roman Empire. In our calendar, the month of July bears his name.

Caesar assumed absolute and eventually established a perpetual dictatorship on 14 February 44 B.C. He was assassinated on March 15 by a few senators who wanted to restore the republic. The group, who stabbed Caesar to death with daggers, was led by Marcus Brutus. They did not gain power, however, as it passed into the hands of Mark Anthony, Lepidus and his heir Octavius.

Eventually Lepidus was pushed out of contention and the empire was divided into the East, ruled by Antony, and the West led by Octavian. Antony became too reliant on Egypt and its Queen, Cleopatra. Octavian was able to convince the Roman senate that Antony was planning to make Alexandria the capital of the empire.

Antony and Octavian then went to battle against each other in 31 B.C. at Actium in Greece. Antony was defeated and eventually committed suicide with Cleopatra. Octavian became the sole ruler of the empire. In 27 B.C. he took the name Augustus Caesar and the republic became the empire. Caesar became the dynastic name of all the emperors down to Hadrian (A.D. 117-138). He was the first emperor and ruled from 27 B.C. to A.D. 14; thus, he ruled at the birth of Christ. He had a good rule and brought peace and prosperity.

(ii) The next emperor was Tiberius (14 B.C. - A.D. 37) He was impartial and had wisdom in his policies but because of domestic problems and conspiracies against him he grew distant, haughty, suspicious and finally very cruel. The Germans also drove Rome South of Rhine. Christ's public ministry occurred during his rule (Luke 3:1).

(iii) Next Caligula mounted the throne (A.D. 37-41). He was very popular first but soon developed severe mental problems. He demanded to be worshipped, squandered public money, resorted to violent means to replenish it, and finally his tyranny ended in his assassination.

(iv) Claudius became the next emperor (A.D. 41-54). He was an able ruler and developed the Roman bureaucracy to make the government more efficient. He invaded Britain. However, he was against foreign cults and under his rule the Jews were expelled from Rome -- which perhaps might have been Christian Jews -- and that was what caused Aquilla and Priscilla to leave Rome (Acts 18:2). Missionary expansion occurred during his rule (Acts 18:2).

(v) Nero, who had married Octavia, the daughter of Claudia, next ascended to the throne (A.D. 54-68). For about five years he ruled very well because of good advisers. He resented the interference of his mother, Agrippina, and had her murdered in A.D. 59. He was an artist and not a very talented executive. His extravagance finally drained the public coffers and he resorted to oppression to replenish it.

A large part of Rome was destroyed by fire in A.D. 64. Nero is thought to have torched the inferno to make room for a new palace. At any rate, Christians were blamed and the first state persecution of Christians broke out. Tradition says that Peter and Paul were slain during this persecution, which was probably confined to only the city of Rome. Nero's troops finally revolted against him and he was killed. great missionary expansion occurred during his rule (Acts 25:11, 12).

(vi) Galba ruled next (A.D. 68). The Army enthroned Galba, who was quickly murdered by his adopted son Otho who did not wish to wait to assume the throne.

(vii) Otho (A.D. 69) had a very short lived rule. Vitellius the legate of Germany marched against Rome killed Otho and took his place.

(viii) Vitellius (A.D. 69) could not control the army or the government and Vespasian, the general of the Roman armies to the east was exalted to emperor. At the time Vespasian was involved in the siege of Jerusalem. He left his son, Titus, in charge of the siege, traveled to Egypt to cut off the food supply to Rome and sent his lieutenant, Mucianus, to capture and sack Rome and kill Vitellus.

(ix) Vespasian (A.D. 69 - 79) was a frugal and vigorous ruler who made the treasury solvent through taxes and built the famous Coliseum. He died in 79 A.D. and left the office to his co-regent and son, Titus. He ruled during the destruction of Jerusalem (A.D. 70).

(x) Titus (A.D. 79-81) had completed the reduction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70. He was ruling when the volcanic eruption of Mt. Vesuvius destroyed Pompeii and Herculaneum. He was very popular as an emperor.

(xi) Domitian (A.D. 81-96), the brother of Titus, rose to power by senate confirmation as Titus had not left a son to succeed him. Domitian sought to raise the moral level of Rome by restraining corruption and promoting Roman religions and suppressing foreign religions including Christianity. He demanded worship for himself. He was finally assassinated.

(xii) Nerva (A.D. 96-98) was a man of older years; his administration was kindly and free from violent internal tension.

(xiii) Trajan (A.D. 98-117) succeeded Nerva. Trajan was a soldier, A Spaniard by birth and was aggressive and energetic. The book of revelation was probably penned during his reign, ending the New Testament era.

(xiv) Rome ruled her empire through a system of provincial governments. When a country or city-state was captured it was regarded as a province and was granted relative freedom but remained subject to Rome. If the province was peaceful a proconsul (Acts 13:7) ruled who was responsible to the Roman Senate. They were appointed yearly.

More troublesome provinces were governed by Prefects, Procurators or Propraetors who were appointed by and responsible to the Emperor. At the time of Christ

Palestine was under the Procurator Pontius Pilate (Mt. 27:11). Armies were also stationed in the more turbulent provinces such as Palestine.

Roman colonies were also begun at strategic places within the provinces to stimulate unity and loyalty to Rome. Land was given to healthy individuals on relief roles and army veterans. One example is Philippi which was made a Roman colony by Mark Antony in 42 B.C. (Acts 16:12). Other colonies included Corinth, Antioch (Psidian), Lystra, Troas, Syracuse, Ptolemais and Iconium. Colonies had autonomous local governments. How the colonies functioned can be seen in Acts 16:12-40).

2. The Hellenistic World.

(a). The culture of Greece was diffused throughout the Roman Empire. The Greeks were the teachers, physicians, accountants and overseers while in most cases being slaves of the Romans. The Greek universities at Athens, Rhodes, Tartus and others were attended by young aristocratic Romans. Greek became the language of culture and diplomacy, and also the trade language throughout the Empire. Even Rome became a Greek speaking city.

(b). Alexander the Great.

Philip of Macedonia molded the Macedonians into a military state. In a span of 20 years he organized mountain peasants and shepherds into an army of unusual capabilities. They subjected the Greek city - states. Upon his death (337 B.C.) his aggressive son Alexander took over. Like his father, he was a military genius and had been raised in Greek culture, even under Aristotle.

In 334 B.C. he invaded Asia Minor and defeated the Persian armies at the battle of the Granicus River. Alexander again routed the Persians at the battle of Issus. From there he marched through Syria into Egypt where he founded the city of Alexandria. With Egypt and Syria under his control, Alexander finally crushed the Persian army at Arbela. He then quickly occupied Babylon, Susa and Persepolis, the capitals of Persia. He later expanded his borders to the Indus River in India. His influence brought the Greek language and culture to his conquered world. Alexander contracted fever and died in 324 B.C. at the young age of 32. His kingdom was partitioned and divided to his generals.

- (i). Ptolemy took Egypt and southern Syria.
- (ii). Antigens took northern Syria and west Babylonia.
- (iii). Lysimachus held Thrace and western Asia Minor.
- (iv). Cassandra claimed Macedonia and Greece.
- (v). Seleucids I wrested control from Antigonus and Lysimachus in about 301 B.C.

The hostilities between the Seleucidae of Syria and Ptolemies of Egypt kept Palestine in constant conflict because the armies kept traveling up and down its land. Battles were fought in this corridor with Palestine first going to one power then to the other.

(c). The Seleucidae influence.

In about 200 B.C. Antiochus III gained control of Palestine. He attempted to Hellenize the Jews which resulted in the Macabbean revolt and the revival of the Jewish commonwealth. The Seleucid dominion lasted until 63 B.C. when Pompeii made Syria a Roman province.

The influence of the Seleucids was of major importance in that Antioch (the third largest city in the Roman Empire) became a melting pot for the East and the West. Greek language, literature and culture were concentrated in the city. From there they were widely disseminated in all directions by traders, visitors, military people, students and others.

(d). The Ptolemy influence.

Cleopatra's death in 30 B.C. marked the end of the Ptolemy reign. Rome annexed Alexandria. A great library was built there and the librarian/scholars initiated the study of Greek grammar and textual criticism. The Jewish Hebrew Scriptures were translated into Greek, the Septuagint, which became the popular Bible of the Jews. This translation was made between 250-100 B.C.

3. The silent 400 years summarized.

The last book in the Old Testament, Malachi, was written about 400 B.C. The time between the finish of the Old Testament and the birth of Christ is sometimes called the 400 silent years because no Scripture was written during that time, and no Scripture addresses that particular time period. In order to fill in that historical blank, from the Bible's point of view, we list below the major national players and events of the time which relate to Bible lands.

(a). The Persian era. The Persians ruled the Jews from the Babylonian Captivity until 332 B.C. Palestine was but a tiny province. There was relative peace and prosperity.

(b). The Greek era. This period followed Alexander's conquest. Palestine was opened up to the Greek influence of language, culture and philosophy. The Jews were treated well under Alexander (332-301 B.C.).

(c). The Ptolemaic (Egypt) era (301-198 B.C.). Hellenism was disseminated throughout Palestine. The Ptolemais favored the Jews. The Alexandrian Jews became mostly Hellenized while Palestine Jews remained traditional.

The term "Hellenized" refers to the resulting influence of Greek language, culture, religion and population on the ancient world located in the Mediterranean basin. Hellenistic people were those who spoke Greek and followed Greek culture but themselves were not Greek by race. Greek contact with surrounding cultures had a long history, beginning about 1400 B.C. It greatly increased after Alexander the Great conquered Palestine. In the early church much conflict arose between Hellenized Christians and others more closely aligned with Jewish customs and practices (cf. Acts 6:1; 9:29).

(d). The Seleucid (Syria) era (198-166 B.C.). Antiochus IV enforced Hellenization and attempted to destroy the Jewish religious practices. He had a reprobate priest sacrifice a pig on the Jewish altars which sparked the Maccabean wars. The revolt was led by Mattathias and his five sons. The oldest son, Judas the Maccabee, took leadership after the death of his father, Mattathias.

(e). The Macabbean (Hasmonean) era (163-63 B.C.). Palestine won independence in 143 B.C. The temple was cleansed and rededicated. The two great parties rose in Judaism: Pharisees and Sadducees -- as well as the Essenes.

(f). The Roman era (63 B.C. - A.D. 135). Rome ruled Palestine through procurators after Titus conquered Jerusalem in A.D. 70.

(g). The Herodian era (37 B.C. - A.D. 44). Herod the Great and his three sons ruled as Roman governors. They ruled during the life and ministry of Christ and on into the church age. During the Roman period the major power rested in the High Priest who was in a real sense the political leader of the Jews.

4. The religions of the day.

(a). The Graeco-Roman Pantheon type. Roman religion evolved from animism and fused with the Greek Pantheon. This merger and religious form was in decline by the time of Christ, though many worshippers could be found for the many deities such as Jupiter, Zeus, Juno, Neptune, etc. An example is Artemis (Diana) of Ephesus (Acts 19:27-35). Animism holds that all objects (mankind, animals, stones, trees, etc.) have a life or soul which may exist separate from the object.

The gods were in clusters, each god having distinct individuality. For example, Apollo was the sun god who presided over music, was the example of calm, clear reason and light.

(b). Emperor Worship. The Imperial cult grew out of the increasing ascription of superhuman honors and powers to the Roman emperor and the desire to centralize the loyalty of the various peoples to him. The state and the emperor were the focal point of worship.

(c). The Mystery Religions. These highly experiential religions appealed to the desire for a more personal faith. In common they all were formed around a god who died and was resuscitated. They filled the quest for personal immortality, social equality and personal outlet.

(d). The Occult Worship. The beliefs were magical and superstitious and held that the whole world was inhabited by spirits and demons who could be cajoled into doing one's bidding if only the correct formula or rite was employed (see Acts 8:9-24; 13:6-11; 9:19).

(e). The Philosophies. The result of empty ritualism or ignorant superstition is for thoughtful men to abandon religion. In an attempt to explain the universe they resorted to philosophy which is to organize into systematic form all existing knowledge of the Universe and

to merge it with human experience. The major philosophies of the day were Platonism, Gnosticism, Neo-Platonism, Epicureanism, Stoicism, Cynicism, Scepticism. Brief definitions are as follows.

Platonism: From Plato (427-347 B.C.). He was active in Athens and a disciple of Socrates. Plato emphasized the reality of the ideal or concept rather than empirical things -- things perceived with the senses. He taught that actual things are copies of ideas which are the real objects of true knowledge and can be understood by the soul. Platonism had strong influence on Christian theology.

Gnosticism: This movement emphasized that special higher truth existed but which only enlightened ones could receive from God. They taught that matter is evil and denied the humanity of Jesus Christ. This philosophy was really a collection of occultic, pagan religions and drew from some of Plato's concepts. Paul attacks many of their concepts in his epistle to the Colossians, and probably refers to it in 1 Timothy 6:20. Gnosticism forms the ground for much of the present day New Age movement. It is evolutionary and pantheistic.

Epicureanism: This philosophy was founded by the Greek Epicurus (341-270 B.C.). He believed that pleasure and happiness is the good end of all morality and ethics. Genuine pleasure, he said, is from prudence, honor and justice.

Stoicism: Zeno (340-265 B.C.) is considered the founder of this school of thought. The name comes from the *Stoa Poikile* (Painted Porch) where he taught in Athens. Zeno stressed the rational over the emotional. He said wise men should be free from passion, joy, grief and pain. Religiously, Stoics were pantheistic. Ethically, they stressed moral earnestness and duty. Both the Epicureans and Stoics are mentioned in Acts 17:18.

Cynicism: Cynics believed virtue is the only good. Virtue is grounded in self-control and independence. They became violent critics of the social customs and the philosophies of the day. They were great fault finders, believing that human conduct was grounded in self-interest.

Skepticism: This Greek philosophy believed that real knowledge of things is impossible -- that all knowledge is uncertain.

In one form or another, these philosophies are still with us today. In referring to these philosophies, Paul tells us that the wisdom of the world cannot lead us to God and that He has made it foolish. The wisdom and salvation of God is found in Christ (1 Cor. 1:18-31), and revealed to us through Scripture (1 Cor. 2:6-16).

5. The literature of the day.

(a). The Apocrypha. These 14 books were written between the close of the Old Testament canon and the New Testament. They were never in the Hebrew O.T. The Septuagint and Latin Vulgate included them. The Roman Catholic Church officially declared 11 of them to be part of Scripture at the Council of Trent in A.D. 1546. Protestants deny them to be canon and believe that no doctrine should be established on them. The Apocrypha books are

useful for historical background and instruction on life. The Jews, Jesus and the New Testament church never recognized them as canon (see Luke 24: 44, 45). The term "canon" refers to those books considered to be sacred scripture and that are to be included in the Bible.

Books of Apocrypha are:

- (i). I Esdras.
- (ii). 2 Esdras.
- (iii). Tobit.
- (iv). Judith.
- (v). The remainder of Esther.
- (vi). The Wisdom of Solomon.
- (vii). Ecclesiasticus.
- (viii). I Maccabees.
- (ix). 2 Maccabees.
- (x). Baruch.
- (xi). The Song of the Three Children.
- (xii). Story of Susanna.
- (xiii). Bel and the dragon.
- (xiv). The Prayer of Manasses.

(b). The Pseudepigrapha. These "false writings" are religious works written under false claim of authorship during about 200 B.C.--A.D. 200. One person would write a book but would attribute its authorship to someone else such as Adam, Moses, etc. This body of literature was never considered canon. A reference to the book of Enoch is in Jude 14.

- (i). Assumption of Moses.
- (ii). Ascension of Isaiah.
- (iii). Book of Enoch.
- (iv). Book of jubilee.
- (v). Sibylline Oracles.
- (vi). Psalms of Solomon.
- (vii). Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs.

(c). The Targums. These documents are free renderings of the Old Testament Scriptures into Aramaic, the Palestine common language during the post-exilic era.

(d). The Talmud. This body of literature is based on the Torah (the Law of Moses) and consists of Hebrew laws regarding civil and canonical matters. It is a summary of the rabbis' thinking from 300 B.C. -- A.D. 500. There are three divisions of this body:

- (i). Mishnah: traditional oral laws derived from the Torah.
- (ii). Gemara: a commentary on the legal traditions of the Mishnah.
- (iii). Midrash: these are sermons expounding the Hebrew O.T. and were used in the earliest synagogue meetings. They were written in Hebrew and Aramaic.

(e). The Septuagint. This is the Hebrew O.T. translated into Greek.

(f). Early Patristic literature. These are books that are not canon, but were written by the early Church Fathers.

(i) Clement of Rome. A Greek letter written by a church leader from the church in Rome to Corinth in A.D. 95-96.

(ii) Ignatius wrote a group of letters to his friend Polycarp the Bishop of Smyrna dated somewhere between A.D. 98-117.

(iii). Polycarp has a letter to the Philippians that still survives. He was martyred in about A.D. 155-168.

(iv). The Didache. This is a book on Christian teachings that dates perhaps back to A.D. 120.

(v). Papias, the bishop of Hierapolis, wrote a five volume set entitled "Exposition of the Oracles of the Lord." Only fragments remain. Probably A.D. 130 is the date.

(vi). Barnabas (perhaps the apostle) wrote an epistle. The date is unsure -- probably before A.D. 130 -- and the work is anonymous.

(vii) The Shepherd of Hermas was written earlier than A.D. 140.

(g). The Dead Sea Scrolls. These writings are a collection first found in caves near the Dead Sea and Qumran in 1947. They were probably written by an Essene community. Some findings are complete scrolls, including a copy of Isaiah. Many partial scrolls and thousands of fragments exist. There is much controversy surrounding their meaning and exact relationship to the New Testament. The various writings date from about 325 B.C. to A.D. 70.

6. Judaism and its Institutions.

(a). The word Judaism occurs only twice in the Bible (Gal. 1:13-14), and there in reference to the belief and life of the Jews. Judaism is the religion of the Jews, but it is different than the religion of the Old Testament. Judaism began with the Babylonian captivity which was a watershed mark in the history of Hebrew life and religion (587 B.C.).

Before the captivity both Israel and Judah were deeply involved with the pagan cultic practices of surrounding religions. After the captivity they returned to a type of religious observances grounded in the ancient covenantal ideals of the O.T. In Babylon they were forced to a non-sacrificial religion. Ezekiel was a leader in the formation of Judaism. He shared the spiritual ideas of Jeremiah and further developed them.

In order to preserve their national and religious identity the exiles stressed those religious customs that could be carried out on an alien soil - for example, memorial celebrations, feasts, circumcision, ancient laws of purity, Sabbath keeping, reading of the Law, open-air services, house meetings.

(b). The pattern of the Jewish community that returned to Jerusalem (538ff. B.C.) was a theocracy. A theocracy is the government of a state by the immediate direction of God; thus, government run by priests and ministers as representatives of God. Between 520-515 B.C. the temple was rebuilt in Jerusalem under the leadership of Haggai and Zechariah.

Malachi (450 B.C.) indicates that abuses had crept into the temple worship and religion of theocracy.

(c). Under Ezra revival and reform occurred (458 B.C.; Neh. 8:8) and the priesthood was purified. He placed great stress on the primacy of the Torah (Law of Moses, Pentateuch) which he taught not as a law code but a set of principles applied to every aspect of life. Ezra is considered the "father" of Judaism.

Opposition to Ezra's reforms occurred during the Greek period. Hellenization brought secular culture pressure against Judaism. The Samaritans and rich priestly classes added to the pressure to dilute Judaism in its good spiritual form. To counteract this corrupting influence of Judaism, the concept of the theocratic ideal was widened and strengthened through such institutions as the priesthood and groups that are explained below:

(d). The high priesthood played an important role in preserving Judaism. It represented the most advanced and influential levels of government. The high priest was the spiritual leader and representative of the state. He controlled a hierarchy of priests, Levites and temple officers. The major emphasis of Judaism was the keeping of the Law.

The Scribes (priests) became the interpreters and keepers of the Torah. Their interpretations (traditions) acquired an authority of their own. Unfortunately, their interpretations were different than the Bible which led to summary condemnation by Jesus:

"Then some Pharisees and scribes came to Jesus from Jerusalem, saying, 'Why do Your disciples transgress the tradition of the elders? For they do not wash their hands when they eat bread.' And He answered and said to them, 'And why do you yourselves transgress the commandment of God for the sake of your tradition?'" (Matt. 15:1-3; cf. Matt. chapter 23).

Scribes used the synagogues as their major area of influence.

(e). The Sanhedrin. This aristocratic, native supreme court functioned in both civil and religious areas until the fall of Jerusalem (A.D. 70). It is thought that the Great Synagogue of the Ezra-Nehemiah period (450-400 B.C.) evolved into the 70 member Sanhedrin in about 250 B.C. High priests presided over the body. In the time of Christ there may have been two Sanhedrins: one political, the other religious.

f. The Pharisees. In the second century B.C. another group of devoted teachers arose that were known as the Pharisees. Well established by 135 B.C., they were strict separatists and accepted oral tradition of the law as containing equal authority as the law itself. They were legalists who adapted the law to every area of life and layered tradition after tradition so that the tradition was more important than the Law.

Worship was ritual and heart attitude was dead (Matt. 15:1-3; Luke 11:43,44). Legalism pointed to the need of a Savior which was met by Christ (Luke 18:9-14). On the positive side, they believed in the supernatural. They considered the entire Old Testament as Scripture (Torah, Prophets, and Writings).

They taught that if people carried out all the requirements of the law and traditions they would gain salvation. Having great popularity with the masses they challenged the authority of the priestly scribes. By New Testament times they were the largest and most influential sect.

During the early Roman times and during the New Testament era they lost leadership control of the Jewish religious institutions to the Sadducees. They remained leaders of Jewish piety and orthodox theology, and led in opposition against Gentile influence. Of all the sects of Judaism, the Pharisees alone survived. They became the foundation of modern orthodox Judaism, following the models of morality, ceremony and legalism.

(g). The Sadducees arose about the same time as the Pharisees and gained great influence. They were made up of priestly aristocratic families and had influence over national life at an intellectual and political level and were better equipped than the Pharisees to combat the effect of Hellenism. Sadducees were the rationalists who had great wealth, political power, were materialistic and rationalized their faith for convenient living. They were leaders of social culture and favored tolerance and conformity to Gentile influences.

Insisting that only the Law was authoritative, they rejected any doctrine that could not be proved by the Torah. Denying the supernatural, they were skeptical toward religion, considered the Mosaic Law as sacred but did not believe it literally and disregarded its application to life. They denied the future life and were unsatisfied in their heart (Matt. 22:23,38). Sadducees were a minority, but gained control of the high priesthood about 125 B.C. and maintained power until Jerusalem was destroyed by Titus in A.D. 70, after which they disappeared from the scene.

(h). The Samaritans were also an early section of Judaism. During the invasions into Palestine by the Assyrians and Babylonians (732-586 B.C.), many Jews were deported. They were replaced by peoples of other captured lands. Through intermarriage a mixed religious and racial group arose. The Samaritans founded temple worship on Mt. Gerizim (about 25 miles north of Jerusalem) and accepted only the Torah as Scripture. They broke from Judaism during the reforms of Ezra. The great point of contention between the Jews and the Samaritans was the location of the true place of temple worship: mount Gerizim or Mount Zion in Jerusalem.

(i). The Essenes flourished at the time just preceding the ruin of Jerusalem, A.D. 70. Their origin dates to probably 150 B.C. They were mystics, living a monastic, communal life whose communities were self contained. They were vegetarians and were governed by two ideals: peace and purity. They broke from Judaism, but theologically agreed with Judaism. Today it is known as the Qumran community, and their writings comprise the contents of the famous dead sea scrolls.

(j). The Zealots were a group of fanatical freedom fighters not a religious sect. They were actively antagonistic to Gentile rule over Jews and gained inspiration from the bloody exploits of Judas Maccabeus, a great freedom fighter of about 165 B.C. They stressed

violent liberation from Rome, advocated rebellion and refused to pay taxes. Zealot influence led to the revolt that destroyed Jerusalem. Maybe they were connected with the "Assassins" mentioned in Acts 21:38.

Simon, one of Jesus' disciple was a former zealot (Luke 6:15; Acts 1:13). The Zealots first appeared in Galilee about 40 B.C. A revival of Zealot power occurred in many parts of the Roman Empire in A.D. 115-117 and led to the victorious uprising led by Simon Bar Kochba (A.D. 132-135). It was finally subdued by Roman legions. No further activity is noted of the Zealot party.

k. The temple. The original temple of Solomon was destroyed when Jerusalem was burned by Nebuchadnezzar in 586 B.C. The second temple was rebuilt by those Jews returned from captivity, and was completed in 516 B.C. (Ezra 6:13-15).

In 168 B.C. Antiochus Epiphanes plundered and desecrated it by placing within it an altar of Zeus and offering sacrifices. Three years later Judas Maccabeus cleansed and repaired the temple. It was still standing in 63 B.C. when Pompeii captured Jerusalem. The temple was robbed by Crassus in 54 B.C. Herod the Great took Jerusalem in 37 B.C. and burned some of the temple structures, however the main building was not badly damaged. He later started the rebuilding of the temple in 20 B.C., a project that was finished in A.D. 62 or 64. In New Testament times the temple was the main center of worship in Jerusalem. It was destroyed by the Romans in A.D. 70.

(l). Education took on an important meaning during the Babylonian captivity. It was centered and developed in the synagogue and functioned to keep national, cultural and spiritual identity intact while in a foreign land. Elementary school was made mandatory in Palestine by one Simon ben Shatach in about 75 B.C. The instruction was limited but thorough. Children were taught religion at home before going to the synagogue school. Schooling focused on religious training and vocational education. Original thinking and scientific learning were frowned on. Girls were trained at home in household arts.

(m). The feasts and festivals of Israel.

- Weekly Sabbath
- Seventh New Moon, or Feast of Trumpets.
- Sabbatic year, that is, every seventh year.
- Year of Jubilee.
- New Moon.
- Feast of Passover and Unleavened Bread.
- Pentecost, or Feast of Weeks.
- Day of Atonement.
- Feast of Booths (Tabernacles).
- Feast of Purim.
- Feast of Dedication.

The last two were postexilic in origin.

(n). The synagogue. This common institution which means "a gathering" has its origin in the Jewish homes in Babylon. Synagogues developed into formal gatherings for instruction, public worship and prayer and took the place of temple worship after the Babylonian captivity. Social and educational functions were centered in the synagogues and they became the usual point of contact for Christian evangelistic purposes (Acts 17:1-3). The Old Testament Scriptures were preached each week, with monotheism and expectation of a Messiah being proclaimed (cf. Acts 13:13-49).

(o). The prophetic Scriptures. A great expectation of a coming Messiah was instilled in the Jewish mind. The theme ran throughout the OT Scripture and was significantly brought into focus during the prophetic revelations of the Babylonian captivity.

(p). The Hebrew legacy. The Jews believed in one God, had synagogues in every major town, a Greek translations of the OT, the Septuagint, a strong faith in God, the future life, worship, prayer. They offered a vital alternative to bankrupt paganism.

(q). The Dispersion. The scattering of the Jews is known as the Dispersion (James 1:1; I Peter 1:1; John 7:35). From the time of the captivity more Jews resided outside Palestine than inside the land. Many Jews left the Palestine and because of commercial interests went to dozens of countries.

As early as 1000 B.C. under David and Solomon, Jews were travelling the world shipping lanes for business reasons. King Hiram from Tyre (a Phoenician center) taught the Jews to build and sail ships as far as Tarshish (a Phoenician colony of S.W. Spain) and Ophir (near the Arabian Sea). (See 1 King 5:9; 9:26-28; 10:11,22; 2 Chron. 9:21; 20:35,36; Isa. 23; Jonah 1:3).

According to Harvard professor, Barry Fell, the ships of Tarshish in that time period were trading with the Celts as far away as North America (see America B.C., by Barry Fell). No doubt Jewish sailors and merchants were involved in some way. Evidence of Jewish populations in China date back before 250 B.C., and many Jewish colonies flourished along the silk routes extending from China, India to Europe (see Disciplining the Nations, by Richard R. DeRidder).

The knowledge of the one, true God went with the Jews as they traveled and settled, bringing worldwide expectations of a Messiah. The mighty, sovereign hand of God can be seen as He was paving the way for the Gospel of Christ (Jer. 29:1-7; 31:10 cf. Gal.4:4).

7. The Social World of the New Testament.

(a). The Jewish Society. A wealthy self-perpetuating aristocracy existed, comprised primarily of the religious families of the priesthood and main rabbis. The Hasmonean clan had dominated that Jewish society since their rise to power following 165 B.C. The Hasmoneans were descendants of Mattathias, the leader of the Jewish war of independence that began in 165 B.C.

The Herod dynasty came to power in 37 B.C., yet Hasmonean priesthood virtually ruled Judea. They controlled the business traffic of the temple taxes. Some men such as Nicodemus probably were wealthy land owners who rented out their farms. The majority of Jews, however, were poor. They were farmers, artisans, fishermen and businessmen. Slavery was practiced somewhat, but the vast majority of Jews were freemen.

(b). Pagan society. A wealthy aristocracy also lived throughout the Roman Empire. They owned land and controlled public lands. They also exploited newly conquered provinces. Businessmen acted as government contractors and as speculators gained enormous wealth. Their luxury however, weakened the aristocracy and discouraged the lower classes who gained little for all their toil. Slavery existed, built on the use of military captives from Roman conquests.

The result was a crushing of the middle classes as they could not meet the competition of slave labor and were forced out of work. They swelled into homeless and foodless mobs in the cities. They were dependent on the state for their existence. The poor people (plebes) were a pitiful group, worse off than the slaves who at least had food and shelter.

The slaves made up a large part of Roman society, perhaps as much as 50%. Many were doctors, accountants, teachers and skilled craftsmen. They did the farm work, worked as household servants and clerks in stores. Much corruption existed in the oppressed classes. Many slaves were able to purchase their freedom or else were given it by their masters. They were known as "freedmen." The criminal class of society was great. They were made up of unemployed who worked every kind of criminal device to get money.

(c). Cultural attainments.

(1). Literature. Under the emperor Augustus there was a literary revival in Rome. This was the golden age of Roman poetry with Virgil, Horace and Ovid leading the way. Seneca wrote philosophic essays and drama. Petronius wrote a novel still with us today. Pliny the Elder wrote his Natural History. Quintilian majored on Grammar and rhetoric. Tacitus, Suetonius and Josephus wrote history. Martial and Juvenal were bitter critics of the manners and morals of society, particularly the corruption of high Roman society.

(2). Art and Architecture. Rome expanded rapidly producing much construction. Many wonderful roads, bridges, aqueducts, theaters, and baths were built and many remain today. They were skilled in the use of bricks and cement. They built many statues that generally represented people rather than ideas.

(3). Music and drama. Entertainment was geared to please the mobs rather than stimulate intellectual thought. The Roman drama contributed to the moral downfall of the empire. The plots were coarse, cheap and shameless. Musical instruments included stringed instruments, flutes, brass wind instruments, drums and cymbals. The most popular were the lyre and the harp. Religious practices and processions included music.

(4). The Arena. This cruel place pitted men against men and beast alike. It was brutal in its bloodshed. The participants were usually trained gladiators who were slaves, prisoners of war, criminals, volunteers who wanted glory and wealth - and Christians who were thrown to the lions. These violent spectacles were promoted by the emperor or those seeking public office. The stage glorified and appealed to obscenity and lust; the arena appealed to brutality and violence.

(5). Languages. The chief languages in the Roman empire were four: Latin, Greek, Aramaic and Hebrew. The law courts and Roman literature were in Latin which was also popular in North Africa, Spain, Gaul, Italy and Britain. Greek was the cultural and trade language of the empire. Greek was spoken in Palestine and was used by Jesus and His disciples when dealing with Gentiles. Aramaic was the main language used in the Near East (the countries at or near the east end of the Mediterranean Sea).

Hebrew was not understood by the common people and was only used by the learned rabbis as a theological language. Latin, Greek, and Aramaic were all popular languages in Palestine at the time of Christ (John 19:20). Greek is the language of the New Testament, and the Jews used the Septuagint (LXX), a Greek translation of the Old Testament.

(6). Science. Romans were not very interested in mathematics and scientific pursuits, and their science showed little originality or intellectual curiosity. What they had they borrowed from others. Knowledge for navigation and the engines of war for example, were borrowed from the Greeks. In the empire, however, geometry, mechanics, physics, astronomy were well advanced. Geography did advance during the period, and medicine flourished in various world centers. For example, the University of Tarsus had a hospital in the Aesculapius. A school of Greek medicine was started in Rome. The Jews were not interested in speculative science, but confined themselves to ethical and religious themes.

(7). Schools. Public schools were not started until Vespasian (A.D. 69-79). The training of the children started with a slave who was charged with teaching the child the first lessons and then conducting them to and from one of the private schools in town. The Roman boy was under the supervision of the tutor until he became a young man with adult responsibilities. The studies were reading, writing, arithmetic.

Later the students learned from the Greek and Latin poets. Then they would learn oratory: how to compose and deliver a speech. The wealthy students who desired, studied in Greek universities in Athens, Rhodes, Tarsus, and Alexandria. Students could also attend lectures from travelling philosophers. The Jews learned to read and write from the Old Testament and those who wanted to be scholars went to study with some great rabbi. Paul, for example, studied under Gamaliel (Acts 22:3).

(8). Morality. Although there are many good people in any society, the general moral climate was very bad throughout the empire (Romans 1:18-3:20). Crime was great. There was corruption in politics, debauchery in pleasure, fraud in business, deceit, and superstition in religion. Life was cheap and murder was common. Divorce was easy. Infanticide was usual.

d. The economic world.

(1). Agriculture. The Roman empire included the lands surrounding the Mediterranean basin. In those days, the coastal areas were fertile. Great farms grew cattle, vegetables and fruits. There were large estates in Italy that were rented out by the owners to tenant farmers and share-croppers. Agriculture abounded in Britain, Gaul (Spain, France) and Germany. There were some large irrigation projects.

(2). Large industry was not important. Small shops were the rule, and machinery as we know it today was unknown. The mass production of cheap goods was virtually impossible. Various goods were produced in particular localities. For example, copper vessels came from Campia, linen and paper from Egypt, the best earthenware from north Italy. Furniture and household goods were generally made locally by the village blacksmith or carpenter. Luxury goods were imported. Gold, ivory and rare woods came from Africa and the East. Pearls and jewels were shipped from India. Furs arrived from central Asia and Russia. Silk came from China. Though there were many good roads, the animal drawn vehicles were slow and cumbersome and subject to attack from bandits. Water shipping was done during the summer months.

(3). Finance. The standard coins for the empire were the denarius and the old aureus, or pound. One pound equaled 40 denarii. One denarii was the ordinary day's wage for a working man (Matt. 20:2). Many cities had the right to mint their own coins and the coins from a captured country were never retired. Consequently, the money changers did a thriving business. Banks were usually private companies who did borrowing, lending discounting of notes, issued letters of credit and foreign exchange. Many times private individuals supplied funds to the banks who were just agents. The usual interest rate varied between 4 - 12%. Money lending was a common way of making money (Matt 25:15; Luke 19:13).

(4). Transportation and Travel. Rome had excellent roads, the best in the world until the advent of the modern automobile. Roads were straight, made cuts through hills and bridged the streams and valleys. The topsoil was removed and layers of material made the fills. The tops were paved with stone, and their width was seldom more than 15 feet. Some roads are still in use today. The highways stretched out in every direction from Rome to its frontiers, linking the empire together.

Armies and commerce moved with ease. The vehicles ranged from foot traffic to donkey, horses, mules, light carriages. Inns were placed at intervals to provide food and shelter. Most commercial transport was done by water routes. The Mediterranean Sea abounded in good ports, the largest being at Alexandria where great shipments of Egyptian grains were shipped to Rome. Some of the merchant ships were 200 feet long. Some carried up to 1200 passengers in addition to cargo. They were driven by sails but carried oars so that the crew could maneuver the ship in an emergency. Warships were lighter and faster and were generally driven by oars pulled by galley slaves. Some had several banks (tiers) of oars, even up to 10 banks. Sails were also used. Barges were used on the inland rivers and canals where freight was transported.

8. The land of Palestine

The tiny land of Palestine has great importance on world history. It is located in SW Asia. It is between Syria and the Lebanon mountains on the north, Jordan and the Arabian Desert to the east, Egypt and the Sinai Peninsula to the south and the Mediterranean Sea to the west. Palestine was a tiny, narrow land bridge between the powerful nations of Mesopotamia and Asia Minor to the north and the great civilizations of Egypt to the south. Armies, travelers and traders did not want to travel through the desolate Arabian desert to the east nor the ocean to the west; thus, they traveled through the narrow strip of land called Palestine.

There were two main routes of travel from north to south. One was the Great Trunk Road which descended from Damascus to The Sea of Galilee, Megiddo and on west of the Jordan River down near the coastal region to Egypt. The King's Highway descended from Damascus east of the Jordan Valley, through Moab, Edom and finally to the Gulf of Aqaba.

The land averages about 70 miles wide (east and west) and 150 miles long (north and south). During the Davidic-Solomonic times the boundaries went roughly from the Euphrates River to the border of Egypt and contained a total population of 2-3 million people. Palestine is first mentioned in the Bible in Genesis 10:15-20.

There are two mountain ranges running north and south which makes four valley or plain areas between the Mediterranean and Arabian Desert. Several mountains in the north run to 4,000 feet in elevation. Mount Hermon rises to a snowy 9,101 feet. The Jordan Valley is a deep north to south drainage, starting at the foot of Mt. Hermon at an elevation of 1,700 feet above sea level. It descends quickly through the Sea of Galilee to the Dead Sea whose surface is 1,290 feet below sea level. The Dead Sea itself is 1,300 feet deep and is the lowest spot on the earth's surface.

There is great variety of climate differences running from the cold mountain ranges to hot desert conditions. There are two basic seasons: summer and winter. Winters, from November to April, are moist, rainy and mild. Summers, from May to October, are hot and rainless.

Several famous cities are in Palestine. Jericho, in the Jordan plain NE of Jerusalem, is one of the oldest cities, dating to prehistoric times. It is first mentioned in Scripture at the time of Joshua (Josh 3:16).

Jerusalem is the holy city for three great world religions: Christianity, Judaism and Islam. Its name means "founded by (god) Shalem" which is the Canaanite god of twilight. Jerusalem is known as Beth-Shalem, Zion, Jebus, Mount Moriah and City of David. The earliest recorded name is Urushalim, meaning "foundation of Shalem." Later the writer of Hebrews (Heb 7:2) interpreted "Salem" to mean "peace" because of the closeness to "Shalom." The city sits 2500 feet above sea level and 18 miles west of the north end of the Dead Sea. It is first mentioned in the Bible as Salem (Gen 14:18). Jerusalem was first occupied by 3500 B.C.

Sidon and Tyre are two ancient cities that date back to about 2000 B.C. They are located on the Mediterranean Sea, North of Jerusalem and in modern Lebanon. They were

famous for their maritime adventures and as centers of trade. Jesus mentioned the cities (Matt. 11:20-22) and Paul spent some time there (Acts 21:3-4).

With this brief, compact overview of the New Testament world, we turn to some essential information to know in order to understand the Book.

PART TWO: ISSUES OF INTERPRETATION AND CANON

II. ISSUES OF INTERPRETATION AND CANON

It is important to understand how to interpret the New Testament. To that end we now turn. Several issues are important.

A. FOUNDATIONAL CONCEPTS OF GOD'S MESSAGE TO MAN.

First, we must understand God's process in giving us the Bible.

1. Selection of writers.

God carefully selected and prepared those who were to be the human instruments who would, under the leadership and supervision of the Holy Spirit, be the human authors of the Bible. They would receive and record the Word of God.

2. Revelation.

(a). General revelation: through nature (Romans 1:18-21; Psa. 19); providence (Romans 8:28); preservation of Universe (Col. 1:17); miracles (John 2:11); conscience (Romans 2:14-16). General revelation is sufficient to alert men to their need and condemn him if rejected. If men accept general revelation God will bring further truth that they may be saved (Acts 10:3-6).

(b). Special revelation: through direct communication (Acts 22:17 - 21); Christ (John 1:14,18); Bible (1 John 5:9-12). Special revelation is specific and points to salvation.

3. Inspiration of Scripture.

Inspiration is the work of God governing the writing of specifically selected human authors so that they wrote and recorded God's exact revelation to man without error in the words of the original autographs (cf. 2 Tim 3:16; 2 Peter 1:21,22).

4. Transmission of Scripture.

Transmission refers to God's supervision of the passage of the Bible down through the centuries.

There are in existence over 5,000 copies of the early New Testaments' manuscripts in the Greek. The science of New Testament textual criticism is to determine by evaluation and comparison what the pure original text actually said.

5. Translation of Scripture.

Translation is to express in a target language, while retaining the original sense, that which is preserved in the parent Greek and Hebrew Text.

6. Illumination of Scripture.

This is the Holy Spirit making clear the meaning of the written revelation in the Bible.

7. Interpretation of Scripture.

This refers to extracting and clarifying the true meaning of Scripture as expressed in the original language.

8. Application of Scripture.

Application means to make the Scripture relevant to our attitudes, behavior, feelings, relationships, belief systems and course of life.

9. Proclamation of Scripture.

Once we apply the text to our own lives and life situations, then we must proclaim God's message on to others.

B. ASSUMPTIONS OF INTERPRETATION SUMMARIZED.

1. Literal interpretation.

This refers to the usual, normal, customary usage of words and principles of interpretation as applied to various types of literature. This method allows for symbols, metaphors, figures of speech, literary forms, etc.

The traditional, historic church used the literal method of interpretation. In contrast, the modern liberal church does not. Liberals choose to twist and interpret the Bible to make it agree with or justify the modern, secular viewpoints of mankind.

2. Verbal, plenary inspiration.

This means that all Scripture is inspired by God who superintended the writers so they wrote without error in the original autographs. Plenary means all parts of the Bible. Verbal means inspiration even to the forms of the words. Inspiration is limited to the 39 books of the Old Testament and the 27 books of the New Testament as contained in the Protestant Bible.

3. Contextual occurrence.

Scripture must be interpreted in light of its context: historical, geographical, cultural, language and immediate/ wider Scriptural context.

4. Grammatical importance.

Scripture must be interpreted by using consistent, accepted rules of grammar. The aim is to make clear the meaning of the text at the time and circumstance of the writing.

5. Scriptural harmony.

Interpretation must be in harmony with the whole Bible, by comparing Scripture with Scripture.

6. Universal principle.

The objective is to determine the universal principles involved which are applicable to any culture or time in history.

7. Theological truth.

Interpretation should unfold a theological truth, a statement about God and man from which theological systems can be constructed.

8. Practical truth.

One examines Scripture to find practical principles that can be applied to the church and personal lives today.

9. Parables.

Parables (which are numerous in the Gospels) are illustrations or figures of speech taken from everyday life and are used to make plain a moral or spiritual truth. Normally they are constructed to communicate a single truth. Jesus used them for two purposes: to make clear a truth, to obscure truth from those who had no spiritual concern.

10. Interpretation in a nutshell.

- (a). What does the selected text say?
- (b). What does the selected text mean?
- (c). What does the selected text mean to me?

C. CONCEPTS OF VERBAL, PLENARY INSPIRATION SUMMARIZED.

1. Evidence for verbal/plenary inspiration.

- (a). God is the author, Scripture is the product of His creative breath (2 Tim. 3:16).
- (b). Men were moved by the Holy Spirit (the how), (2 Peter 1:20,21).
- (c). Specific commands were given to them by God (Exodus 17:14; Jer. 30:2).

- (d). The use of quotations by New Testament writers (Mt. 15:4; Acts 28:25).
- (e). Jesus' use of the Scripture (Mt. 5:17; John 10:35; Luke 24:27,44,45).
- (f). The N.T. asserts that other parts of the N.T. are Scripture (I Tim. 5:17; 2 Peter 3:16).
- (g). Writers were conscious of writing God's Word (I Cor. 2:13; I Peter 1:11-12).
- (h). Note: exhaustive research was conducted which produced the exact historical truth (Luke 1:1-4).

2. Evidence for inerrancy.

- (a). Trustworthiness of God's character (John 17:3; Romans 3:4). He is holy and perfect and cannot lie (Heb. 6:18); therefore, God could not deceive us by saying that Scripture is true if it contained error and untruth.
- (b). The teachings of Christ (Mt. 5:17; John 10:35).
- (c). Arguments based on a word or form of word (Gal. 3:16 "seed"). Paul's argument is based on a singular form of the word from the Old Testament; therefore, he must have believed in the exact accuracy of the very words of Scripture.
- (d). The Holy Spirit guided the writing process so the end product was without error.

D. CONCEPT OF CANONICITY SUMMARIZED

1. **Defined:** The "Canon of Scripture" refers to those writings that make up the Bible and constitute the norm for the Christian Faith. Canon = rod, ruler = standard or model.
2. **Major issue:** which is that revelation given by the inspiration of God (2 Tim. 3:16); how is that inspiration demonstrated; how can we recognize inspiration?
3. **Promise of Christ:** He authenticated the O.T. and promised the activity of the Holy Spirit in teaching future truth (Luke 24:44; John 16:13 -15). The Apostles stated they received revelation (1 Cor. 2:9,10) and Jesus said when revelation ceased (22:18,19).
4. **Test of canon:**
 - (a). Apostolic or Prophetic origin: was it written or backed by an Apostle?
 - (b). Witness of the Holy Spirit: an assurance given to believers when the Word is heard or preached. This is a part of the teaching ministry of the Holy Spirit (John 10:3.4.16 see also Romans 8:16; Acts 5:32; John 16:7-15; I John 4:6).
 - (c). Recognition by the Church: was there a reception, acceptance by the early church at large? This is an application of "b" above.
 - (d). Content: was the book of sufficient spiritual character? Did it center on the person and work of Christ? Did it agree doctrinally with other Scripture?

(e). Inspiration: did the book give internal evidence of inspiration?

5. Key consideration of Canon.

- (a). Scripture is self- authenticating and the church councils only "recognized" their inspiration and authority -- the councils did not "pronounce" the books inspired of God.
- (b). God guided the councils so the canon was recognized.
- (c). The Canon was closed at the completion of the book of Revelation. See Rev. 22:18,19; 2 Peter 1:3; Prov. 30:6; Jude 3; Hebrews 1:1,2; 2:1-4; John 4:25 cf. John 14:26; 15:15.

Expositors Greek Testament on Hebrews 1:2: "The contrast in the new revelation is implied in the word *ελαλησεν* (has spoken) indicating that the work was once for all accomplished." Lenski calls "has spoken" an aorist of finality. See also F.F. Bruce in his Commentary on Hebrews.

6. History of the Canon of Scripture.

- (a). The Old Testament was settled in the 5th century B.C. by Ezra and the Great Synagogue; it was recognized by Christ (Luke 24:44,45).
- (b). The period where the Apostles claimed authority for their writings (I Thess. 5:27; Col. 4:16).
- (c). The post Apostolic period in which all the N.T. books were recognized by the church at large except Hebrews, 2 Peter, 2,3 John.
- (d). The Council of Carthage (A.D. 397) listed, recognized all 27 canonical N.T. books.¹

E. LANGUAGE OF THE NEW TESTAMENT.

The New Testament is written in what is known as *Koine* Greek, the language of the common people in the Hellenistic period (300 B.C. -- A.D. 500). The Greek language began in about 800 B.C. or earlier as in the works of Homer and Hesiod. It is still a living language. Greek can be generally classified into "classical Greek" which was the language of the city-state of Athens. This type was Attic, a branch of the Ionic dialect.

During Alexander's conquering of the civilized world, different dialects and peoples merged and the Greek language blended into what is known as the *Koine* Greek.

F. THE NT TEXTS ARE RELIABLE.

The question arises regarding the accuracy of the New Testament. Are the documents reliable history? The answer is yes. The NT is trustworthy for at least the following reason.

1. The writers were able to write accurate history. They lived during the time when the Bible events actually happened. The writers wrote as eyewitness or from the accounts of

¹ Recommended reading on the Canon of Scripture includes F.F. Bruce, The Canon of Scripture (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1988).

eyewitnesses. All the New Testament was written in the first century. James, the first letter, could have been written within 12 years from the death of Christ -- A.D. 45-49. Most letters were written in the 50's and 60's. John's writings were written in the 80's and 90's.

2. The writers intended to write accurate history. The literary genre is history. The writers were real men who wrote down what they genuinely believed to be true and at a time near the events they recorded.

3. The writers did write accurate history. When checked with external evidence, the New Testament is correct as to dates, names, cities, events and other information one expects to find in a historical account.²

G. THE SYNOPTIC PROBLEM

1. The Synoptic Gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke) are called "synoptic" because they have a close interrelation in content and way of expression. The name "synoptic" is from "syn" (together) and "*Optanomai*" (to see). They take a common view of the life of Christ.

2. None of the Gospels are complete accounts of what Jesus did (John 20:30; Lk.1:1; Mk.1:1). Each Gospel was selective in line with the unique purpose of the individual writer and is complete in the sense of accomplishing the intent of the writer.

3. The so-called "synoptic problem" then deals with the differences and similarities in the Gospel accounts. It is said by some that since there are differences in the same account in different Gospels, then they were not written by one author, but many. One main difference is that the order or sequence of appearance in the text varies. Another difference is that an event may appear in two Gospels but not the other.

4. The answer to this threat to the integrity of the New Testament is that the differences and similarities are because of different purposes that call for different methods and different sources. Jesus said that the same things many times; thus, the exact phrasing could be slightly different.

5. The Gospels are honest attempts to order the life of Jesus for teaching and evangelistic reasons. They are the core of apostolic preaching and are arranged into different structures under the direction of the Holy Spirit for different purposes. The content clearly indicates a common pool of information, subject of writing, inspiration of Scripture. (For a brief, excellent survey of the "synoptic problem" see Merrill Tenney, New Testament Survey, pp. 131-139).

Following is a summary of the Synoptic Problem taken from Eta Linnemann, Is There a Synoptic Problem? (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1992).

PROBLEM STATED:

² On the reliability of the NT, see F.F. Bruce, The New Testament Documents Are They Reliable? (Leicester: Inter-Varsity Press, 1943).

It is claimed by traditional scholars that all four Gospels are independent eye-witnesses accounts of the life of Christ. They are eyewitness reports or based on eyewitness reports. Differences between Gospel accounts are explained as the normal differences among eye-witnesses. Liberal scholars discount the traditional view and adhere to the following "problem," the so called "Synoptic Problem."

Problem defined: The similarities and differences between the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke present a problem. If each Gospel is an independent account of the life of Jesus, the three should not be so exactly similar. On the other hand, if they are dependent or related, then they cannot be independent accounts.

The only way this problem can be solved, liberals say, is to assume a literary dependence between the three accounts. The authors, then, must have copied from each other or else written from common written sources.

SUGGESTED SOURCES (by liberals).

1. The Gospels all come from a proto-gospel, a single original gospel no longer in existence.
2. The Gospels come from earlier collections of writings.
3. The Gospels owe their existence to various oral traditions that make up a proto-gospel.
4. The Gospels are the result of interdependence (copying) among the Synoptic writers. Much emphasis is placed on this explanation.

NEGATIVE RESULTS ON THE NEW TESTAMENT AS THE WORD OF GOD.

1. Assuming literary borrowing places the borrower at a temporal distance from the events he relates. The result is no longer an eyewitness account. There is a layer of tradition or something else wedged in between the writer and the actual event.
2. The three-fold independent witness of the three synoptic Gospels is reduced to one.
3. Literary dependence makes every sentence more or less a falsification of what was originally stated. The Gospel accounts become merely a reworking of a distant original.
4. The integrity of the NT is called into question, because it is no longer what it claims to be: independent accounts of the life of Christ.

PROBLEMS WITH THE LIBERAL EXPLANATIONS.

1. The literary dependence theory is not proven. It is not fact. The "problem" is an assumption, a manufactured problem.
2. There are other explanations for similarities in the Gospels. The Gospel of Christ was preached orally through the empire. Some probably kept notes and diaries. There was a common oral body of information, thus there should be similarities.

Furthermore, the Gospel writers knew each other, were with Christ together, thus, similarities should occur. They probably compared each other's notes.

3. Some studies indicate there is no literary dependence. In other words, the "Synoptic Problem" does not exist.

4. The traditional view has been groundlessly discriminated against.

5. In spite of the liberal assertions, the verbal similarities in the synoptic Gospels are comparatively small and extend chiefly to identical accounts of Jesus' words and to specific and unalterable vocabulary that is required by the nature of what is being related.

THE TRUE ORIGINS OF THE GOSPELS.

1. The authors wrote from different perspectives to different audiences with different purposes. Material was selected to support the writer's thesis and appeal to the audience.

2. The Holy Spirit superintended the research and writing process to insure accuracy. Matthew wrote his eyewitness accounts as one of the 12 Apostles (Mark 2:14; Matt. 9:9; 10:3; Acts 1:13).

Mark wrote the eyewitness accounts of the Apostle Peter. He was a close friend and probably convert of Peter (1 Peter 5:13). Eusebius records in his history that Papias (A.D. 60-130) was a disciple of John and companion of Polycarp. Papias says Mark was the interpreter of Peter, and that "he was careful of one thing, not to omit any of the things which he had heard, and not to state any of them falsely."³

Luke carefully researched his Gospel. He states: "Inasmuch as many have undertaken to compile an account of the things accomplished among us, just as those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and servants of the word have handed them down to us, it seemed fitting for me as well, having investigated everything carefully from the beginning, to write it out for you in consecutive order, most excellent Theophilus; so that you might know the exact truth about the things you have been taught" (Luke 1:1-4).

The Apostle John wrote his Gospel from his own first hand, eyewitness experience.

3. The reason there are four Gospels involves a legal principle (Deut 19:15) which requires two or more witnesses to an event. Therefore, the Gospels are complementary as to purpose and give added credibility to the story of Jesus.

4. The foundation of the Gospels is this: the Gospels are the recollection of eye-witnesses, written directly by eye-witnesses or heard from eye-witnesses by the writer.

³ Philip Schaff and Henry Wace, eds., Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Vol. I, 2nd series. 1890-95. Reprint (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1976), pp. 172,173.

5. There is no folk tradition layered between Jesus and the Gospels. The Synoptic Gospels are independent accounts, written within the lifetime of the Apostles, some 17 to 30 years after the Resurrection of Christ.

- Matthew was written by an Apostle, a direct eyewitness.
- Mark wrote the recollections of Peter, an Apostle and direct eyewitness.
- Luke recorded the direct testimony of direct eye-witnesses.
- John was a direct eyewitness.

H. FORM CRITICISM.

Before the coming of modern biblical criticism in the 18th century, the church believed in the historical reliability of the Bible. Starting with the Enlightenment, the Bible came under question and was treated like any other religious book of human making. The trustworthiness of Scripture was rejected and an antsupernatural world view was accepted. Three main tools for NT studies came about: form criticism, redaction criticism and literary criticism. The latter two are further developments of the first. Rudolf Bultmann made NT form criticism popular. Five assumptions underpin Form Criticism in its attempt to explain the origins of the New Testament.

1. Form Criticism believes the Synoptic Gospels form a particular kind of literature known as folk literature, tales, sagas that contain stories of concern and importance to a particular people.

2. Form Criticism believes the Gospels are non-objective reflections of the community life and faith of the early church. The historical Christ cannot be known as He is merely a mythical being interpreted for us by the church. In other words, the Form Critic claims the Gospels are not real history but stories made up by various editors and writers in the early church and which reflected their own subjective faith.

3. The individual segments of oral tradition were eventually laced together by the evangelists (editors) at random and at their own whim or fancy. This gives the modern critic the right to give them any setting or interpretation he wishes. These segments (units) are of various kinds, or, forms.

4. The Gospels are creations that arise out of specific community situations or life situations (*sitz em leben*) of the early church and not in the actual history of Jesus.

5. The purpose of the process of Form Criticism is to separate the original segments of the tradition from those portions added later by the editors in the church. The careful study of the editing process and various forms can produce this distinction, according to the modern critic. There are said to be five forms.

- a. Pronouncement stories: short incidents that terminate in a famous saying.
- b. Miracles stories.
- c. Stories about Jesus.
- d. Sayings of Jesus.
- e. The passion story.

Form Criticism may be of value to identify forms of literature in the Gospel story. However, its shortcomings are many and harmful for a sound approach to understanding the Gospels. Following are several reasons why.

1. The genuine, primitive teachings of the Gospels were not rare, as says Form Criticism. Those teachings did not need to be invented and added to the Bible by the church in later years. The available material was abundant, definite and detailed. Jesus spoke hundreds of times to thousands of people and in a systematic manner to a core of followers for three years.

2. Form Critics differ greatly among themselves as to the actual forms. Some even say the Gospels are not subject to the standard forms because the Gospels are different from the kind of folk literature from which the literary forms are derived. Much confusion exists.

3. The loyal followers of Jesus would not have ascribed to Him that which did not originate with Him. If they did try to make up stories, they would have been discredited by thousands of other Christians of the early church who did know the correct historical stories.

4. Form Critics say there was lack of interest in biographical material about Jesus. That is why the “editors” of the New Testament had to make up stories about the life and sayings of Christ. This is wrong. Jesus was the grandest interest that occupied the early church. The writers were not just interested in recording their own existential experiences, as says the critic, but rather their occupation was with the true history of Jesus. They made clear distinctions between their own words and those of Jesus.

5. Form Criticism makes the Christian community at large the creator of the Gospels as opposed to individuals. This runs counter to the testimony of Scripture in express statements and patterns of inspiration.

6. The greatest fault of Form Criticism is its antisupernatural bias. As a result, they cannot believe the miracles in the New Testament or anything that speaks of the supernatural interacting in history. For example, this means that any miracle automatically must be classed as non-history and treated as a myth. Unfortunately, this antisupernatural approach is the starting point of their biblical research. Eta Linnemann writes:

“Research is conducted *ut si Deus non daretur* (“as if there were no God”). That means the reality of God is excluded from consideration from the start, even if the researcher acknowledges that God could bear witness of himself in his Word.”⁴

Rudolf Bultmann writes: “The cosmology of the New Testament is essentially mythical in character...Man’s knowledge and mastery of the world have advanced to such an extent through science and technology that it is no longer possible for anyone seriously to hold the New Testament view of the world.”⁵

⁴ Eta Linnemann, Historical Criticism of the Bible, Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1990), p. 84.

⁵ Rudolf Bultmann, Kerygma and Myth, (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1961) pp. 1, 4.

PART THREE
THE APOSTOLIC PERIOD:
JESUS TO JOHN TO A.D. 100

III. THE APOSTOLIC PERIOD: JESUS TO JOHN (TO A.D. 100).

A. THE LIFE OF CHRIST.

1. **Jesus came in the fullness of time (Gal. 4:4).** In Him was manifested what was the noblest and most spiritual in the longings of both Jew and Gentile. The world was what was the noblest and most spiritual in the longings of both Jew and Gentile. The world was prepared as never before or after - the need for a Savior was real and evident; the perfect provision was offered through Christ. As to the details of the life of Christ we are locked up largely to the four Gospels, which themselves give much information. The four Gospels picture Christ in a four-fold manner and these portraits show how He meets four major needs of man.

(a). Political. The Jews were looking for a political savior; thus, Christ is pictured in Matthew as the Messiah, the King, the One who would restore political fortunes of Israel and bring in the kingdom age (Jer. 23:5; Zech 9:9; Matt. 27:37). Man needs a leader, thus Christ is the ideal leader, the king who provides perfect leadership.

(b). Governmental. Mark points his Gospel to the Romans who were the men of good government and those who accomplished great deeds through leaders. To them, Jesus is pictured as the Servant of the Most High who did great miracles and deeds (Isa. 42:1; Zech. 3:8; Mark 10:45).

(c). Intellectual. Luke appealed to the Greeks who sought wisdom and the arts. Jesus is pictured as the perfect man. Luke wrote in a scholarly form (Zech. 6:12; Luke 19:10). Man is ignorant, he needs a prophet, someone who knows and speaks truth. Christ is that perfect prophet.

(d). Spiritual. John displays Christ as God, the One through whom the world could experience the fulfillment of its spiritual needs (Isa. 9:6; 40:9; John 20:30,31). Man is a sinner in need of redemption, a priest to minister sacrifice on his behalf. Christ is that perfect, ideal priest who met man's spiritual need of redemption through the one perfect sacrifice.

2. Christ is presented as the pre-incarnate Word.

(a). John presents Christ as the eternal, pre-existent one who comes from the infinite past. He relates Christ to the Godhead, the Word (Logos) who eternally existed with God, was God, was light, creator, revealer of God, was made flesh and dwelt among men (John, chapter one).

(b). Philo and his logos. Alexandria had become a focal point for the philosophical and theological thought and literary activity of the day. Philo (c. 20 B.C. --c. A.D.

53) was among the finest intellects and his work had great impact upon Christianity. He was born into a wealthy, aristocratic family and enjoyed the finest educational privileges of Alexandria. Philo was a master of Greek philosophy and literature, but he was a Jew. He thought the Greeks had taken from Jewish literature that which was best in Greek thought. Philo thought it was his duty to harmonize the best Greek philosophy and the Jewish Scripture. His reasoning was that if Scripture could be placed into Greek modes of thought and rightly interpreted it would have great impact upon mankind. Problems of significant import and influence, however, resulted from the teachings of Philo.

(i). Philo's own views of life were fundamentally those of the Greek philosophers, primarily a mixture of Pythagoreanism, Platonism, Aristotelianism, Stoicism. The Hebrew Scriptures largely took a back seat to Greek philosophy.

(ii). Philo interpreted the Scriptures in such a way as to bring them into conformity with what was agreeable with Greek philosophy. He did not see the Scriptures as simple, literal narration of God dealing with his people.

(iii) In order to accomplish this feat, Philo used the allegorical system of biblical interpretation, a system used for centuries by the Greeks in their interpretation of Homer. This system is common with any esoteric system of religion. In this method, Philo rejected the literal interpretation of the Scriptures and said the true spiritual meaning of any passage was obscure, hidden underneath the literal, surface statements and stories of Scripture. The duty of the exegete, he taught, was to dig out the true meaning which lay beneath the obvious, to spiritualize the Scripture.

An allegory is the description of one thing under the image of another. It is a veiled expression in a figurative story. The meaning is not expressly stated. Allegory is prolonged metaphor in which, normally, a series of actions are symbolic of other actions.

A metaphor, to continue with our definition, is a figure of speech in which one thing is spoken of as if it were another, but suggesting a likeness or analogy between them. Examples include, "the whole world's a stage," "the ship plows the sea," "a volley of oaths." The famous Christian classic, Pilgrim's Progress, is an example of an allegorical story.

(iv). This allegorical system invented by pagan Greeks and embraced by the Alexandrian Jews was later adopted by the church and dominated, for the most part, exegesis until the Reformation. The result was much fanciful and erroneous Bible interpretation. Exceptions to this system of hermeneutics were the Syrian school of Antioch and the Victorines of the Middle Ages who used the literal (though not the "letterism" of the Jews) hermeneutic system which was later adopted by the reformers.

We are not saying that allegory is a wrong way to communicate, or that it should be banned from literature. We do say, however, that it is wrong to apply the system as a way of interpreting the Bible which is meant to be taken literally.

(v). Most critical on early Christian doctrine was Philo's doctrine of the "Logos" where he attempted to combine the ideas of Jewish, Platonic and Stoic teachings to merge together a complex, composite picture of the perfect Mediator between the eternal and the ephemeral (short lived or transitory). His doctrine had marked influence on later theologians concerning the doctrine of Christ, particularly John's presentation in his Gospel. Philo's Logos falls short of the New Testament view in several respects.

- (aa). The need for an incarnation is absent.
- (bb). The need for an atonement is absent.
- (cc). The need for a divine-human savior is absent because sin is only human ignorance and salvation is only enlightenment.
- (dd). The Logos of Philo evidently was not a person as such, but only an idea personified.

3. Jesus is presented in His birth and childhood.

(a). In His genealogy Christ is seen as descending from David, through Solomon to Joseph so as to be the legal heir to the throne of David. His line also descended from David through his other son, Nathan, down through Mary, thus, Christ was the physical descendant of David, Abraham, and Adam.

(b). Little is told of Christ 's childhood. Given are the visit of Joseph and Mary to Bethlehem, the birth of Jesus, visit of angels and wise men, flight to Egypt . We are told that Jesus grew in strength, wisdom, stature and favor with both men and God.

4. Christ is presented in ministry.

(a). Christ was announced by John the Baptist as the promised Messiah, was baptized, underwent temptation by Satan and entered into public ministry for a duration of about three years. His ministry can be divided into six phases.

- (i). Early Judean ministry.
- (ii). Galilean ministry to the selection of the twelve.
- (iii). The northern Galilean ministry.
- (iv). The Perean ministry on the way to Jerusalem.
- (v). The Passion week.
- (vi). From resurrection to Ascension.

(b). The work of Christ involved teaching and works of power to certify His Person and message (John 30:30, 31). He offered Himself as Messiah to the Jews (Matthew 27: 11, 29, 37), was rejected by His own (John 1:11; 19:14,15), was crucified, rose from the dead and lived among His disciples for 40 days, commanded them to preach the gospel throughout the entire world while establishing His church as they went, and then ascended to Heaven (John 19-21; Matthew 28:19-20; Acts 1:1-11).

(c). A contemporary opinion of the character and influence of Jesus Christ. The Jewish historian, Josephus (about A.D. 37 - post 100), wrote the following (Flavius Josephus, Antiquities of the Jews):

"Now there was about this time Jesus, a wise man, if it be lawful to call him a man, for he was a doer of wonderful works, a teacher of such men as receive the truth with pleasure. He drew over to him both many Jews, and many Gentiles. He was (the) Christ. And when Pilate, at the suggestion of the principal men amongst us, had condemned him to the cross, those that loved him at the first did not forsake him; for he appeared to them alive again the third day, as the divine prophets had foretold these and ten thousand other wonderful things concerning him. And the tribe of Christians, so named from him, are not extinct at this day."

B. THE MINISTRY OF THE APOSTLES.

1. From Pentecost to the apostle Paul.

(a). Upon orders from Christ, the disciples returned after His Ascension to await the coming of the Holy Spirit. They spent much time in prayer and selected a replacement to the traitor, Judas. As they were gathered on the day of Pentecost (fifty days after the Passover) along with a multitude of people from surrounding nations, the Holy Spirit came upon them in a spectacular fashion - tongues like fire. They began to preach the gospel in previously unlearned languages, the languages of foreigners among them. Peter preached and 3,000 were saved (Acts 2:41). This group constituted the first Christian church. From that point the church exploded in terms of growth.

(b). The church in Jerusalem was made up of many new enthusiastic converts who shared community, witnessed with boldness, studied the Scriptures with zeal, prayed with power, and were of one heart. Soon their numbers reached such that better organization was needed. Chosen to administer the feeding and care of the church were Steven and six others, the first church officials. Steven himself was a great Bible teacher and Philip, another official, was mighty in evangelism. Many Jewish priests became Christians. Steven, wise in the Scriptures and bold in his preaching, came under attack by the Jews for blasphemy against Moses and God. Eventually he was murdered, an event significant for three reasons.

- (i). His death was the first Christian martyrdom.
- (ii). His death introduced a persecution in Jerusalem against Christian which resulted in their being scattered to other areas, taking the Gospel with them.
- (iii). His death served as the spark that ignited the career of Saul of Tarsus to persecute Christians with great zeal.

(c). Much evangelism took place in the Samaritan villages. Philip explained the gospel to the Ethiopian eunuch, an official of the court of Queen Candace. He became a Christian and joyfully carried the gospel back to Ethiopia, south of Egypt.

2. From Paul's conversion to the Jerusalem council (A.D. 35-52).

(a). The conversion of Paul. Persecuting the church with vengeance, Paul was on assignment to Damascus to seek and exterminate the religion of Christ. On the road to Damascus He met the glorified Jesus and underwent a most dramatic conversion that forever changed his life - rather than a destroyer of the church he became perhaps its most dynamic crusader. He served as an evangelist, writer, preacher, missionary, Bible teacher.

(b). The church had difficulty in expanding itself beyond its Jewish bounds, a problem that plagued them for many years. Paul went directly to the gentiles. Peter was led to the family of Cornelius, a God-fearing centurion, (a Roman military officer) and was convinced that the gospel was to go to the gentiles. With some difficulty he persuaded the apostles and brethren in Judea.

(c). The scattered "lay-people" from Jerusalem evangelized Phoenicia, Cyprus and Antioch. Barnabas was dispatched to Antioch to confirm and ground the new converts in the Word. Paul was summoned to Antioch to help Barnabas and they set the foundation for one of the finest early centers for Christianity. Antioch was a Hellenistic city in NW Syria. Situated on the Orontes River about 20 miles from the sea, it was the third greatest city of the Greco-Roman world with a population of about 800,000 by the fourth century A.D. Antioch straddled one of the most important land routes between Asia Minor, Syria and Palestine. Not only did the city have a fine harbor, great palace, wide boulevards, parks, but it was the only city with street lights! The cosmopolitan population had an eclectic intellectual and religious spirit. Believers were first called Christians here.

(d). The conversion of many gentiles brought conflict to the church, specifically, how does the Mosaic Law apply to the gentiles? The issue was finally brought to the fore at the council of Jerusalem (Acts 15). The issue was decided in favor of the Apostle Paul in that the Jewish Law did not apply to gentile believers. Other teachers were sent back to Antioch from the Jerusalem council (Judas and Silas) to confirm the decision. The matter was not settled, however, and the conflict kept festering. The so called "Judaizers" continued to press the issue. Paul even came into opposition with Peter and Barnabas (Gal. 2:11-21).

(e). The first organized missionary outreach occurred at the church of Antioch with Paul and Barnabas commissioned as the first sent missionaries. They left Antioch traveled to Cyprus, sailed to the coast of modern Turkey, walked inland preaching the gospel with much success and opposition. They returned to Antioch after organizing the new converts into local churches and appointing elders to look after the spiritual interests of the churches. The "appointment" of elders is described (Acts 14:23) in the Greek word, "*cheirotoneo*," which means to elect by stretching out the hand. Evidently the congregations participated in the selection of elders. The organization was of the simplest kind, patterned after the example of the Jewish synagogues. Paul's pattern of evangelistic effort was to begin preaching in the synagogues wherever he might be. Normally some would be converted, break off and a local church would be established. The apostles took great care to ground the new converts in the Faith.

3. From Jerusalem Council to Nero's persecution (A.D. 52-64).

(a). The Jerusalem council is historically important in that one sees a highly organized church in action. Included were apostles, elders and brethren who act together. Apostles expressed opinion, brethren assented with consideration given to all opinions. Delegates from Antioch were sent to the mother church in Jerusalem over a doctrinal issue. Decisions were made with conclusions written and delivered by appointed representatives; yet, the conclusions had no arbitrary, binding force on the church at Antioch.

One can see, then, church government at work within the local churches, yet there existed a staunch interdependent bond between several local congregations. A significant degree of independence for local churches was carefully acknowledged. The central issue was doctrinal purity and unity.

(b). Paul's second missionary journey. Paul and Barnabas were led to organize another missionary venture. Disagreement arose between them over taking Mark with them. Mark had returned home, on the first journey, before the mission was completed. The resolution was that two missionary parties would go rather one. Paul traveled overland through Asia Minor, revisiting Derbe, Iconium, Lycaonia, Antioch. He was hindered from going north further into Galatia, and moved onward to Troas, on the coast of the Aegean Sea.

While there the troupe received the "Macedonian call" and crossed the strait of water to plant the first church on European soil, Philippi. From there they evangelized southward through Macedonia, went through Athens and ended up at Corinth where that very important church was started. Paul eventually sailed to Ephesus, down the coast, across the sea to land at Caesarea in Palestine. From there he returned to home base at Antioch. His influence spread, churches were built, people were saved, and growth was rapid.

(c). Paul's third missionary journey. On his third evangelistic thrust, Paul left Antioch and traveled generally the same route as the second trip. Upon return to Palestine, however, he went down to Jerusalem, ran afoul of the Judaizers, ignited a riot and was almost killed. The Roman army placed him under protective custody in Caesarea. Making his appeal to Caesar, Paul was taken by sea back to Rome to stand trial before Caesar. He never went to trial, was released for a short time, engaged in church planting work, and was recaptured and killed by Nero about A.D. 66.

(d). Paul did amazing things. Roland Allen in his book Missionary Methods: St. Paul's or Ours? says of Paul's methods:

"In little more than ten years St. Paul established the Church in four provinces of the Empire, Galatia, Macedonia, Achaia, and Asia. Before A.D. 47 there was no Churches in these provinces; in A.D. 57 St. Paul could speak as if his work there was done ... This is truly an astonishing fact. That Churches should be founded so rapidly, so securely, seems to us today, accustomed to difficulties, the uncertainties, the failures, the disastrous relapses of our own missionary work, almost incredible. Many missionaries in later days have received a larger number of converts than St. Paul; many have preached over a wider area than he; but none have so established Churches. We have long forgotten that such things could be ...To -

day if a man ventures to suggest that there may be something in the methods by which St. Paul attained such wonderful results worthy of our careful attention, and perhaps of our imitation, he is in danger of being accused of revolutionary tendencies."

(e). The apostle Peter, though prominent in the first of Acts, drops from the record. Evidently he traveled and ministered in much the same territory as Paul. He probably did mission work among the Jews of Syria. Paul indicates that Peter worked among the Corinthians (I Cor. 9:5). It is not known if Peter spent time in Rome. Paul did not mention Peter in the former's prison epistles. Peter's epistles are addressed to the churches of Asia Minor. He had a wife who traveled with him.

(f). The ministry of James, the brother of Jesus. James probably did not become a follower of Jesus until after His resurrection. He became zealous. After Peter left Jerusalem to minister among the gentiles, James rose as the leader of the Jerusalem church and remained there until his death. He did commit to the fact that gentiles need not keep the Jewish law; however, he felt bound to keep the law and to require other Jewish converts to do the same (cf. Acts 1: 17-26).

It is said that after Paul was sent to Rome, James was asked by the Jews concerning Jesus. James' confession was so powerful that many became saved, an event so fearful to the Jews that they hurled James from the pinnacle of the temple and stoned him to death. The high priest, Annas, assembled the Sanhedrin to secure James' condemnation, it is said.

(g). The labor of other apostolic men is uncertain. There are traditions preserved but reliable absolute information is absent regarding all the Apostles. John ministered in Asia Minor at Ephesus where he wrote his books. He was banished to Patmos because of his Christian testimony where he wrote Revelation. Strong traditions say he died a natural death at an old age during the reign of Trajan (A.D. 98-117).

Jude, the brother of Jesus, probably stayed with the Jerusalem church. Andrew, Matthew and Bartholomew perhaps labored in the region of the black Sea, with Andrew traveling to Russia. Philip was in Asia minor. Thaddeus and Simon went to the East as far as India.

It is said that Thomas, who refused to take the gospel to the East, was captured and sent as a slave to India. A king named Gundaphorus put him in charge of building a palace. Spending too much time in witnessing and not enough building, Thomas was placed in jail. Eventually he was able to witness to the king who was converted. There is a group of "Thomas Christians" who worship in India in an ancient church claimed to have been established by Thomas.

However, the Thomas Christians (Mar Thoma) believe that Thomas arrived at present day Kerala in about A.D. 52. Kerala is on the southwest coastline of India. There was a Jewish settlement living there made up of Jews scattered from Jerusalem by the captivity of 586 B.C. Thomas won several to Christ, and established many churches. From there he traveled to

the east coast of India, and died a martyr's death at a place now known as Mylapore. Today the Thomas Christians are a thriving group.

Mark founded the church in Alexandria, according to Coptic Orthodox tradition. Following his separation from Paul, Barnabas labored for at least a short while on the island of Cyprus. James the Greater could have gone to Spain. Nothing more is known of Apollos, the learned Jew from Alexandria. Nothing more is known of Luke. Silvanus drops from history. Timothy seems to have ministered at Ephesus and is said to have been a bishop there with Domitian finally putting him to death. Titus is associated with the island of Crete.

4. From Nero's oppression to John's death (A.D. 64-100).

(a). The persecution of Nero. Christians did not suffer (except for minor incidents) from the hand of the state until Nero. Nero was brilliant in mind, gifted in poetry and music, genial, humane -- to begin with. Then he turned into a cruel monster. In A.D. 55 he ordered the murder of his brother, followed up with the assassination of his mother, wife, Octavia, and the death by personal abuse of his second wife, Popoea. He craved praise and popular applause, and was given over to unbridled vice and atrocities of every kind.

In the summer of A.D. 64 he turned his fury upon Christians. He started by burning of 14 of the city's 15 precincts. It is said that Nero shifted the blame to Christians to avert suspicion from himself. Some Christians were covered with skins of wild beasts and torn to bits by pack of dogs. Others were slain by the cross or in flames. Many were burnt after sunset as torches to light the darkness. According to Tacitus, Christians were slaughtered not for any crime, but to "gratify the cruelty of an individual." Though Nero did not issue a decree to exterminate Christianity, the influence and momentum of persecution spread throughout the empire.

(b). The destruction of Jerusalem A.D. 70. The relationship of the Jews and Rome varied. Some Emperors caused much animosity such as Caligula who ordered his image to be erected in the Jewish temple. Others were moderate, though their governors were corrupt. In A.D. 66 a Jewish uprising broke out in Caesarea which resulted in the death of 20,000 Jews. This provoked a general rebellion on the part of the Jews with multitudes going to their death.

The general, Vespasian, was sent to quell the uprising. Jerusalem resisted for a long time and finally Vespasian became emperor in A.D. 69. With an army of 80,000 the son of Vespasian, Titus, besieged Jerusalem. Hundreds of thousands of Jews flocked to the city from the countryside, even from as far as the Mesopotamia. They clung on with fanatical zeal and suffered famine, pestilence, cannibalism and the fury of the Roman army -- who violently put them to death as section after section of the city fell. Some say over one million were slain and 100,000 were taken captive. The temple was destroyed and Israel as a theocracy ended. This terrible destruction related in four important ways to Christianity.

(i). It clearly marked the end of the old dispensation of Judaism. The Jerusalem Christians had great pride in observing the Jewish ceremonial law, even thinking themselves to

be the only true Jews now that they had accepted the Messiah. The destruction of the temple and the ceremonies gave great impetus to Paul's preaching and Christianity as being gentile.

(ii). The event was seen by Christians as divine punishment upon Israel for their rejection and murder of the Messiah.

(iii). The catastrophe was a direct fulfillment of Christ's predictions (Matt. 21:43; 23:37,39; Lk. 21:20-24; 19:43-44).

(iv). Judaism had lost favor with Rome and could no longer use political means to oppose Christians.

(c). The Domitian persecution (A.D. 81-96). Vespasian devoted his rule to running the empire and building useful public works. Though perhaps one million rebel Jews were slain (Josephus), they were treated well after their rebellion was put down. Titus was kindly towards the Jews and Christians like.

Domitian, the son of Vespasian and Flavia Domitilla who followed Titus, ruled with cruel, suspicious, arrogant bent. He demanded worship and assumed titles "God," "Lord and God," "Jupiter," etc. He promoted state religion and considered secret religious groups as garden plots where seeds of treason grew. He sought to destroy them. Christians suffered greatly, particularly those in Rome during the last two years of Domitian's rule. Even Christians who were within the Roman aristocracy suffered. The banishment of the Apostle John to the island Patmos was a result of this persecution. John wrote Revelation during this time.

(d). Literature of the time. The New Testament was completed during this era. Other writings include the epistles of Clement of Rome to the Corinthians and perhaps the Didache and The Shepherd of Hermas.

5. The construction of the Christian church.

(a). The early church was greatly influence by the synagogue in terms of organization. The word "church" became a technical term describing the "called out" ones belonging to Christ. The churches were self-governing and independent, yet interdependent. There was normally a plurality of elders with one being president and who exercised oversight over the congregation. The membership was made up of baptized believers. There is no indication that baptism took the place of circumcision, thus making it needful for infants.

(b). The universal priesthood of the believer was understood by the New Testament church. The officers of the apostolic churches were: apostles, prophets, teachers, evangelists, elders, (bishops), and deacons. The elders were to administrate discipline, settle disputes among Christians, conduct public services, execute the ordinances, supervise the charities and have general oversight of the church community. The permanent head of the elder board became the bishop of the second century which was a position like our modern pastor. In the later churches that were fully organized there existed two boards working side by side: elder and deacon. The latter assisted the former in the carrying out of the ministry of the church.

(c) Two ordinances were practiced in the early church: baptism and the Lord's Supper. Baptism was, in the New Testament church, by immersion as seen in the meaning of the word, description of the experience, symbolism. This observation is confirmed by scholars across the denominational spectrum: John Calvin, Adam Clark, Philip Schaff, J.B. Lightfoot, Martin Luther, Theodore Beza, Turretin, George Whitfield, Justin Martyr, Tertullian, Gregory, Basil, Ambrose, etc. (see Edward T. Hiscox, The New Directory for Baptism Churches).

6. The worship of the apostolic church.

The worship of the apostolic church was free and informal. Many kept the Jewish Sabbath services and Mosaic ritual but also celebrated the Christian Sunday. This union finally weakened with the resistance of the Jews and finally the destruction of the Temple. They worshipped in the Temple, an upper room, Jewish synagogues, private houses, catacombs (underground burial places). In the first half of the third century Christians began building houses of worship. The various factors of the worship service were:

- (a). The preaching of the Gospel with the central teaching of Christ crucified and risen.
- (b). The reading of the Old Testament with practical exposition and application. Lessons from the New Testament followed.
- (c). The exercise of prayer. Prayer was not a uniform liturgy but came freely from the heart as the Christians were moved by the Spirit in relation to special needs and situations (cf. Acts 4). They covered every significant part of private and public life with prayer. They followed the hours of daily prayer practiced in the Jewish Synagogue: 9 A.M., 12 noon, 3 P.M.
- (d). The singing of songs. The songs were a type of prayer in the form of poetry. They were inspirational, devotional, educational, comforting, thankful, and praising.
- (e). A confession of faith was expressed. Peter gave the first testimony which was that Jesus was the Christ, the Son of the Living God.
- (f). The ordinances were administered.

7. Methods of Christian evangelism.

The early Christians were fundamentally missionaries. Each considered it imperative to personally spread the faith that had saved them. Following are the means they used.

- (a). They witnessed to friends and family, who also rejected them many times for their faith.
- (b). Public preaching on street corners was an accepted method among the Oriental cities and villages. Christians used this method.
- (c). Workers spread the gospel among fellow workers.
- (d). Direct missionary efforts faded after Paul. The spread of Christianity was by the movement of workers throughout the empire, either for better jobs or by persecution. The Christians upon arriving in a new location set up new centers of Christian influence.
- (e). The enthusiastic manner of the Christians, proclamation of future salvation, meeting the felt needs of people, stressing the equality and worth of men, personal holy living, and their abundant charity drew multitudes of the depressed classes to the Christians.

(f). Early Christians were forced many times to operate in secret. The Jews persecuted them and at various times the Romans. This varied from time to time and place to place. The unsaved were not invited to the church services. Many times public services could not be held.

8. Forms of heresy in the apostolic church.

"Wherever," it is said, "God builds a church the devil builds a chapel close by." Three types of false teachings erupted in the church and became more fully developed in later eras.

(a). The Judaizing perversion. This is the mixing of Judaism with Christianity, law with grace. In the end Christ is merely a prophet, like another Moses, and His divine nature is overlooked. In later centuries this teaching took the name of Ebionism and was more fully developed.

(b). The paganizing (gnostic) perversion. This was a mixture of pagan ideas and practices. The freedom in the gospel is reduced to antinomian licentiousness. Simon Magus was the first representative (Acts 8:10). This influence later spread through the empire in the several schools of Gnosticism.

(c). The syncretistic perversions. From the early attempts by Philo to merge Judaism with Greek philosophy came the move to merge Christianity in the same manner with Judaism, paganism or some combination of both. Normally the product came out as some mysticism mixed with ascetic holiness, or perhaps the opposite extreme, antinomian licentiousness.

9. The spread of the apostolic church.

(a). The base of the church. One major proof of the supernatural nature of the church is the fact that it exists at all. The church started with 150 timid believers in an upper room in Jerusalem. They had no central organization, financial base, powerful friends, and political apparatus. Their leader was dead (though in heaven, in reality), He left no books and was unknown beyond His little group. The barriers against the church included the machinery of organized religion (Jewish and other), the military and political might of Rome and rabid Jewish fanaticism.

(b). The expansion of the church. By the end of Acts the tiny sect of Christians had become a world religion. The gospel had gone to Rome and was solidly established in nearly every major city in the eastern part of the empire. The goal of the church was world evangelism (Acts 1:8). Some of the early believers were scattered by persecution to Phoenicia, Cyprus and Antioch.

On the day of Pentecost there were congregated Jews and proselytes from fifteen regions of the empire. Egyptians were present in Jerusalem to hear Peter's sermon (Acts 2:5, 9-11) and they probably founded the church in that land, though the Coptic Orthodox

church claims that Mark did in A.D. 42. No one knows for certain how far the gospel had spread by A.D. 100. In light of the strategic centers of Christianity in Antioch, Rome, Corinth, and other places, Paul could probably say with validity the following:

(i). "from Jerusalem and round about unto Illyricum, I have fully preached the gospel of Christ" (Romans 15:19).

(ii). The gospel had been preached "to every creature which is under heaven" (Col. 1:23).

(iii). The faith of the church at Rome was "spoken of throughout the whole world" (Rom. 1:8).

C. STATUS OF THE WORLD AT CHRISTIANITY'S INCEPTION.

1. General. During the Hellenization impact, Asia, Indian and Europe were drawing closer communication ties. The first nomadic confederation in Mongolia initiated migrations which resulted in ties with all the peoples of Eurasia.

2. India. Chandragupta Maurya, king of Magadha (reigned c. 321-297 B.C.) consolidated much of India, an effort finally achieved by his grandson, Asoka (reigned c. 274-36 B.C.). The rule was known as the Mauryan empire. Asoka became a Buddhist and was committed to Buddhist missionary efforts. Buddhism was founded by Siddhartha Gautama (c. 566-486 B.C.) in NE India. Chiefly by Asoka's efforts it spread northward into Tibet, China and Japan. Southward it moved into Ceylon and S.E. Asia where it now has its most powerful centers.

Until A.D. 30 it required Greek shippers three years for a round trip to India. At that time, however, a captain named Hippalos discovered that by using the monsoon winds to cross the Indian Ocean the round trip could be made in less than one year. This feat revolutionized sea travel from Rome to India. Within the year over 100 ships per season set out for India to trade.

Hinduism also has its roots in India. It is the oldest living, organized religion, dating to about 1500 B.C., just shortly before Moses organized the Jews. The worship of the true God, however, goes back to Adam. Hinduism is mostly confined to India except as individual Hindus have moved to other regions. Jainism, 599 B.C., was another religion also established in India.

3. China. China was unified in 221 B.C. at the hand of Shih Huang-ti who founded the Ch'in dynasty. He divided the country into provinces, forced the acceptance of a uniform script, built the Great Wall and established a road system within China. He attempted to suppress Confucianism. His heir was unable to maintain rule and the dynasty fell into the rule of the Han dynasty in 202 B.C. This dynasty lasted until A.D. 220. Confucianism was accepted as an official ideology.

A sea-going expedition by an emperor of this dynasty sailed 3,000 miles from northern China, through the Straits of Malacca, rounded the Malayan peninsula, then plowed north 1,200 miles to India. The emperor, Wu, traded gold and silk for gems, pearls, and rock

crystals. He returned the same way he came. The year was 140 B.C. Because of inner turmoil in China, the trade route was discontinued. China withdrew from the outside world for 300 years. Along with Confucianism (551 B.C.), China gave birth to Taoism (604). Shintoism (660 B.C.) was founded in Japan.

4. Central Asia. The refugees driven out from China into Mongolia formed a federation called Hsiung-nu. They became strong, made a treaty with China and set out to expand their dominion westward over the steppe. Peoples fleeing their advance fled southward to settle in modern Afghanistan. Successive waves of military ventures kept the area in confusion. In 106 B.C. the Chinese armies moved into the areas. The Kushan brought stable rule to the Afghanistan and Pakistan region. Other Iranian tribesmen driven out by the Hsiang-nu were also known as the Parthians, who governed a stable kingdom from 171 B.C. until A.D. 226.

5. Europe. After the second Punic war, when Hannibal was defeated by the Roman, Scipio, Rome ruled Spain all to herself (202 B.C.). Spain became a major source of mineral wealth: gold, silver, copper, tin, iron, lead.

The Celts lived in France, whose name was changed to Gaul in the days of Julius Caesar. The Celts, immigrants from perhaps the ancient Iranians, fanned out into Germany, Britain, Ireland and Spain. Their ships plowed the seas as far north as North America. They probably learned their seaman skills from the Phoenicians who were the builders of the "ships of Tarshish." Finally they fell to Rome in 58-50 B.C. Britain and Germany soon came under the domination of Rome.

6. Americas. Migrations from the Mesopotamia to the Mongolian region eventually crossed the Bering Sea land bridge and downward into the Americas. The land bridge existed during the Ice Age when the water level in the oceans was lower, thus exposing greater land masses.⁶ By cultural and linguistic analysis, remarkable evidence has been produced to demonstrate the existence of Celtic, Egyptian, Phoenician civilization in North America - probably as early as 1000 B.C. and up to the time of Julius Caesar.⁷ The destruction of the ocean going Celtic navy by Caesar put an end to trade and interaction between the two land areas, and knowledge of the Americas dropped from the European consciousness until Columbus.

7. Oceania (the Pacific Ocean region). The bulk of traditional and popular thought has origin of the Oceania peoples as immigrants from East Asia, crossing the Malaysian Strait during Ice Age. From a comparative language study there is much evidence that the Pacific peoples are descendants of the Libyan people of North Africa. The Libyan seamen were used by the Egyptian Pharaohs even after Alexander the Great (the Ptolemaic period) to mine gold as far away as Sumatra.

⁶ Henry Morris, *The Genesis Flood* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House), p. 256.

⁷ Barry Fell, *America B.C.* (New York: Pocket Books), pp. 90-94, 139-142, 159, 171, 181-188, 193, 218, 253-256, 268, 279-284.

The Libyan seamen traveled deep into Pacific area and many of them settled there. Serious scholarship maintains that language analysis discloses that early Polynesian inscriptions are Libyan by alphabet and language, that Polynesian tongues include the existence of Greek words (a Greek dialect used by Libyans) and similarities with the Anatolian Sea Peoples (from whom the Libyans descended)!⁸ Long sea voyages would have been possible because the technology to build large ocean going vessels was available since the time of Noah's ark which was about 450' long and could hold 45,000 sheep sized animals plus their food and "range." By contrast, Columbus' voyage to America consisted of only 88 men on three ships, and two of those ships were 50' long!⁹

It is also worthy to note the opinions of Moulton, the great scholar and missionary to Tonga, "When, moreover, the Bible was being translated a second time, the translator (Moulton) confined himself to the Hebrew original as the basis of his operations. In the process he was struck, from time to time, with the fact that the Hebrew original and the Tongan equivalent were almost identical."¹⁰

In another place it is said of Moulton: "But, in the course of his many hours of wrestling with Hebrew and Tongan equivalents, the resemblance of many of the words in form, amounting to actual identity, came home to him with great force and confirmed his own previous opinion that the Tongans were originally a Hebrew people."¹¹

Having now covered the historical and cultural context of the New Testament as a whole, I now direct your attention to the 27 individual writings that make up the New Testament. At this point it might be helpful to review the organization and content.

One way to organize the books is say that the Gospels through Acts are primarily history. The second division is the teachings of Christ as taught by the Pauline Epistles and General Epistles. The final division is the book of The Revelation, which is prophecy. There is overlap in these divisions, but the contents can be generally divided this way.

Another way of organizing the content is fourfold division. The first is the manifestation of Christ (the Gospels), the propagation of Christ (Acts), the explanation of Christ (the Epistles), and the consummation of Christ (Revelation). I refer you back to the first pages of this ebook to review in more detail.

From this point, I will examine in brief detail each of the New Testament books.

⁸ Ibid. p. 176.

⁹ Ibid. p. 110.

¹⁰ J. Egan Moulton, Moulton of Tonga, (London: The Epworth Press, 1921), p. 40

¹¹ Ibid., pp. 165-66.

PART FOUR: NEW TESTAMENT BOOKS SUMMARIZED

IV. NEW TESTAMENT BOOKS SUMMARIZED

THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW

BRIEF CONTEXT OF MATTHEW

I. BACKGROUND INFORMATION.

A. The Gospel of Matthew bridges the gap between the Old and New Testament and is thought by some to have been the first Gospel written, though others suggest Mark as being the first. The Gospel was written for the Jew and presents Jesus Christ as the promised Messiah, the King.

B. The Apostle Matthew is the writer, according to the early Church Fathers and internal evidence, though there are no direct claims from internal biblical sources. Matthew was a Hebrew who knew the Old Testament very well, was a tax-gatherer, somewhat wealthy and an astute theologian. He preached 15 years in Palestine and then went to the Ethiopians, Macedonians, Syrians and Persians.

C. The date of writing was around A.D. 50-70.

D. The original languages: perhaps written first in Aramaic and later translated into Greek by Matthew because of popular demand.

E. Theological purpose: four questions are asked and answered.

1. Is Jesus of Nazareth the Messiah of the Old Testament? The answer is yes (see Matt. 2:2; 21:5; 27: 11, 29, 37; cf. John 19:14,15).

2. Why did Jesus fail to bring in the promised messianic kingdom? He was rejected by Israel (see John 19: 14,15).

3. Will that kingdom ever be in place? The answer is yes (see Matt. 24:3, 29-31, 36).

4. What is God's purpose today? The answer is to build His Church (see Matt. 16:18; 28:18-20).

F. Two major categories of information: *“The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham”* (Matt 1:1).

1. The King and His kingdom: He is related to the Davidic Covenant (2 Samuel 7) which concerns Israel.

2. The Church: He is related to the Abrahamic Covenant (Genesis 12) which concerns the whole world.

II. NOTEWORTHY OBSERVATIONS.

A. The first thing mentioned: Christ's genealogy.

1. As the book was written to the Jew the legal right of Christ's kingship must be established before any other claim will be heard. His legal right to the throne of David is first displayed as coming from Abraham through David to Joseph, the legal father of Christ.

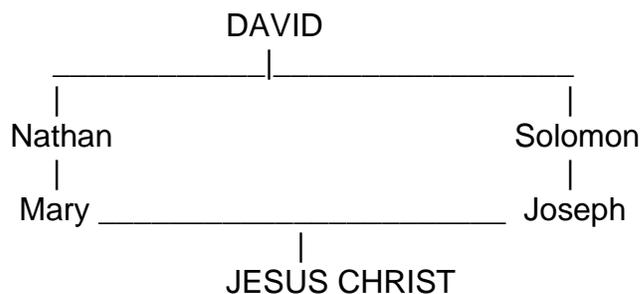
Abraham was given the promise of a land to be inhabited by a nation descended from him (Gen 12:1-3), and David was promised an eternal throne upon which his son should rule that nation in that land (2 Samuel 7:12-16). The promise did not, however, guarantee uninterrupted dominion but only the eternal right to rule. Christ now rules from heaven. Upon His second advent He will assume His rightful place on the throne of David (Matt. 25: 31).

2. An apparent problem arises regarding Jesus right to rule on the throne of David. We note the statement by Jeremiah (Jer. 22:30) concerning Jeconiah (Matt. 1:11): *"Thus saith the Lord, write ye this man childless, a man that shall not prosper in his days: for no man of his seed shall prosper, sitting upon the throne of David, and ruling any more in Judah."* The question comes, how can Christ rule as the Messianic king since a curse was placed on the line? Several things can be noted:

a. Jeremiah's statement referred to the occupation and blessing while actually on the throne, and no physical descendant ever has occupied the throne of David since the curse.
b. The line of ruler ship did descend through Jeconiah and his offspring.
c. However, Jesus was not a physical descendant of Jeconiah so as to receive the curse, but He was the legal descendant to receive the right to rule as King through the dynasty of David.

d. Jesus was a physical descendant of David through another son, Nathan (Luke 3:31), which was through Mary's lineage (Mt. 1:16).

e. Thus, Jesus traces His right of legal succession to the throne of Israel through Joseph, and His physical connection to David through Mary.



3. The covenants are mentioned: Abrahamic Covenant (Genesis 12:1-3), Davidic Covenant (2 Samuel 7).

4. The genealogy did not list every individual in the line, which was not required by Jewish reckoning. Why Matthew mentioned 14 is uncertain.

B. As the king, Jesus assumes authority saying, "Ye have heard that it hath been said of old time...but I say unto you" (5:21,22). He assumed authority above their law. His word is supreme authority. Again, Jesus said: "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth" (Matt. 28:18).

C. Jesus exercises full authority (Matt. 28:18) when He pronounces woe upon those who reject His claims (Matt. 23:1-36).

D. The keynote of Matthew is the "Kingdom of Heaven." This expression occurs over 32 times in this Gospel and nowhere else in the New Testament. It means the rule of the heavens over the earth in the hands of Jesus who is the son of David and absolutely under the control of heaven. The Jews were looking for this Messianic Kingdom to be established on earth. A Jewish authority writes:

"One of the most enduring and pervasive beliefs in the Jewish religion has been the doctrine of the Messiah...The Jewish concept of a Messiah as a human, God elected Redeemer for Israel--and, coincidentally, for all of mankind through the intermediation of Israel...It pictures him as God's Messenger--the human instrumentality of the Divine Will--who will, at the appointed hour, be sent by God to redeem Israel from its overlong martyrdom of suffering, humiliation, and oppression...The predetermined mission of the Messiah was definitive and clear: the establishment of God's Kingdom on earth...when brotherhood, peace, and justice would usher in the eternal Sabbath for Israel, and for the rest of mankind as well, provided it accepted the belief in One God and his Torah."¹²

John the Baptist announced the presence of this kingdom (Matt. 3:2,3). The Jews, however, rejected this kingdom with Jesus as Messiah and it has been delayed until the second coming of Christ (Matt. 25:31). The nature of this kingdom today is explained in the parables of Matt. 13 (See John 19:14, 15: Matt. 21: 5, 9 27:11, 29, 37).

E. The kingdom was present from Matt. 3:2 and John's announcement until the rejection of the King in Matt. 12:1-45 (Note verse 14) and the proclamation of a new brotherhood (Matt. 12:46-50). Note the contrast of Christ's first commission in which His disciples were to go only to the house of Israel (Matt. 10:5-7) with the Great Commission in which the disciples were to go into all the world to all the ethnic groups (Matt. 28:18-20).

F. In Matthew we are told Jesus was born King of the Jews (Matt. 27:11,22); in Luke it reads "born a Savior." In Matthew He was crucified because He said He was the King of the Jews; in John He said He was the Son of God.

G. The Kingdom of God and the Kingdom of Heaven are not synonymous. The Kingdom of Heaven is only in Matthew. The two terms are sometimes used interchangeably, the difference being determined by the context. Generally, the Kingdom of God refers to God's rule wherever it exists. The Kingdom of Heaven refers to God's rule in respect to earth.

¹² Nathan Ausubel, The Book of Jewish Knowledge, (New York: Crown Publishers, 1964), pp. 280-81.

Various views have been held over the years concerning the relationship between the church and the kingdom. Augustine equated the church and the kingdom, which amounted to giving the church absolute authority on earth. A kingdom must have three elements: a ruler, people who are ruled, a realm of ruler ship and the exercise of that rule. There are seven types of kingdoms mentioned in the Bible.

1. There are the Gentile kingdoms of the world (Daniel 1:1).

2. There are the kingdoms of Israel and Judah.

3. Satan is said to be ruler of the kingdoms of this world (Matt. 4:8,9; John 12:31). The unsaved are his subjects (Eph 2:1-3).

4. God is ruler of the universal kingdom (1 Chronicles 29:11; Psalm 145:13), exercising rule over the world's nations (Psalm 96:13; Dan. 2:37). Satan's temporary, limited rule was gained by default on Adam's part. God is in the process of reclaiming that rule. Satan rules by the permission of God. Angels are included within this universal rule. God's rule is eternal and always has and will be in effect. The church is part of God's universal kingdom in the sense that He designed it, brought it into existence, rules over it, and it takes a place with everything else God has created and rules over.

5. The Bible teaches there to be a spiritual kingdom which includes all the saved of all time. Entrance into this kingdom is by the experience of the new birth (John 1:12; 3:3-5; Matt. 6:33; 19:16,23,24). Christ is the ruler. In this present age the true church made up of born again believers is equivalent to the idea of the spiritual kingdom.

6. The Bible teaches of a messianic kingdom, a literal, earthly kingdom. Christ will rule over this kingdom from the throne of David (2 Sam. 7:12-16; Luke 1:32-33). This rule will extend worldwide and to all peoples during the millennial kingdom which will commence with Christ's second coming (Isa. 24:23; Rev. 19:11-16; 20:1-6). The church is distinct from the messianic kingdom.

7. Jesus taught of a mystery kingdom in Matthew 13. It was a mystery in the sense of never before having been disclosed to mankind. This kingdom began with Christ's first advent and will end at His second advent (Matt 13:39,40). God rules over the people of earth who have related themselves in some way to "Christendom." Several things may be noted about this present mystery kingdom.

a. The mystery kingdom is not the messianic kingdom because the latter was already known in OT times.

b. The mystery kingdom is not the spiritual kingdom because it contains unsaved people as well as the saved.

c. The mystery kingdom is not the universal kingdom because it is not eternal, which is the case of the universal kingdom.

d. The mystery kingdom is not the church but includes the church under its umbrella, an umbrella which covers true believers, false believers, rejecters of Christ, opponents of Christ.

H. The Broad Sweep of Matthew

1. Preparation of the King (1:18).
2. Announcement of the King (3:2,3).
3. Commencement of the King (4:17).
4. Proclamation of the Kingdom (10:5-7) Jews only.
5. Rejection of the King (11:20; 12:14).
6. Shift from Messianic Kingdom to whole world (12:50).
7. Interim program announced (13:11).
 - a. Church predicted, announced (16:13).
 - b. Future Messianic Kingdom promised (25:31).
8. Assassination of the King (27:11, 22).
9. Commissioning of interim program (28:18-20).
10. Institution of interim program (Acts 2)
 - a. To Jews - (Acts 2:14; chapter 10).
 - b. To Gentiles (Acts 11:18).

I. An Outline of the Gospels.

- I. Period of Preparation.
 - A. John's birth.
 - B. Christ's birth, childhood until 12 years old.
 - C. The King announced, tested, approved.
- II. Period of Beginning Messianic labor.
 - A. Jerusalem leaders offended.
 - B. Welcome in Galilee.
- III. Year of Great Public Favor (Matt. 4-7; Luke 6).
- IV. Crucial Rejection by Israel (Matt. 15; Mark 7; John 6).
- V. Facing the Cross -- from Galilee.
- VI. His Sacrifice.
- VII. His Resurrection and Commission.

III. BRIEF OUTLINE OF MATTHEW.

- A. The Preparation of the King (1:1-4:16).
 1. The genealogy of the King (1:1-17).
 2. The birth of the King (1:18-2:23).
 3. The baptism of the King (3:1-17).
 4. The temptation of the King (4:1-11).
- B. The Public Ministry of the King (4:12-16:20).
 1. His preaching started (4:12-17).
 2. His message, workers, method (4:17-25).
 3. His kingdom teaching: Sermon on the Mount (Chapters 5-7).
 4. His power demonstrated (Chapters 8-9).

5. His kingdom proclaimed by His disciples (Chapter 10).
 6. His kingdom program rejected (Chapter 11).
 7. His altered Program (Chapter 12).
 8. His present mystery kingdom on earth -- parables (Chapter 13).
 9. His Further Rejection as Messiah (13: 53-16: 12).
 10. His Revelation of the Church (16: 13-20).
- C. The Suffering and Death of the King (16:21-27:66).
1. The momentum against the King (16: 21-25:46).
 - a. Predictions of His suffering, death and resurrection (16:21-28).
 - b. Transfiguration of Christ (17:1-13).
 - c. Miracles and teaching (17: 14-20-20:34).
 - d. Triumphal entry of Christ into Jerusalem (21:18-22:14).
 - e. Nation of Israel rejected, in parable form (21:18-22:14).
 - f. Attempted entrapment of Christ (22:15-46).
 - g. Judgment on scribes, Pharisees, Jerusalem (Chapter 23).
 - h. Signs of the second coming of Christ (Chapters 24-25).
 2. The sacrifice of the King (Chapters 26-27).
 - a. The Passover (26:1-35).
 - b. The garden of Gethsemane (26:36-46).
 - c. The betrayal by Judas (26:47-56).
 - d. The trial (26:57-27:10).
 - e. The presentation before Pilate (27:11-26).
 - f. The crucifixion, death, burial (27:27-66).
- D. The Conquest of the King (Chapter 28).
1. His resurrection (28:1-15).
 2. His Great Commission (28:16-20).

THE GOSPEL OF MARK

BRIEF CONTEXT OF MARK

I. BACKGROUND INFORMATION.

A. EMPHASIS.

This Gospel was directed mostly to the gentiles -- primarily Roman readers. Whereas to the Jew matters of prophecy were important, from the point of view of the Roman the idea of divine power, work, law, conquest and universal sway were important credentials. Mark is the Gospel of action. The word "straightway" (*eutheos*) is used 84 times in the New Testament. 44 of these are in the Gospel of Mark. Mark gives more space to miracles. The book is deed oriented. It is the "street preacher" Gospel. It presents Christ as the mighty worker, the faithful servant of the Lord, which also is the book's theme.

B. AUTHOR

The writer is Mark, son of a wealthy woman and who was close to Peter (I Peter 5:13). He wrote under Peter's influence. Justine Martyr (c. A.D. 100-165), an early Christian apologist who defended the Faith, calls the Gospel of Mark, "Memoirs of Peter." Papias (c. A.D. 60-c. 130) was a hearer of John and companion of Polycarp. He states that Mark was writing for Peter.

Though Mark failed in his early ministry (Acts 15:39), he became a solid church leader (Col. 4:10-11). He probably founded the church at Alexandria, Egypt and died a martyr's death. He also ministered in Rome. Mark's first name was John. His mother's name was Mary, whose house in Jerusalem was one of the meeting places of the Christians. This suggests comfortable circumstances. He was a cousin of Barnabas.

C. MARK'S MINISTRY

Mark accompanied Paul and Barnabas to Antioch on their first missionary journey. At Perga he left them and returned to Jerusalem. Paul disliked his action so much that he refused to take him on his second journey, and Mark went with Barnabas. Perhaps Paul thought Barnabas was guilty of nepotism, that Mark was only a rich kid who could not take it when the going got tough! At any rate, two missionary teams were sent rather than one and the compassion of Barnabas helped forge a mighty soldier of the Faith in the person of Mark.

The breach between Paul and Mark was completely healed, however, for later we find Mark with Paul at Rome, one of the faithful few who stood by Paul. He is honored "fellow-worker" and a great "comfort" to him, and "useful for ministering" (Acts 13:5,13; 15:37,39; 2 Tim. 4:11).

D. DATE AND PLACE OF WRITING.

The Gospel was written in Rome either in the A.D. 50s or 60s. The book was written before A.D. 70 because the destruction of Jerusalem was still future (13:2). Mark received the facts of the life of Jesus from the Apostle Peter, who became a close friend and tutor. 258 of 678 verses contain Christ's words which is about 42% (cf. Matthew 60%. Luke 51%. John 48%).

II. NOTEWORTHY OBSERVATIONS.

A. There is no genealogy given in Mark. The reason probably is that the servant does not hold his position by virtue of his ancestry but of his qualifications as a servant. There is no record of His origin or birth, no mention of His boyhood, no reference to Bethlehem, no account of His youth. He is just a Servant, and as the Servant this Gospel presents Him going at once about His serving. He is the Servant of God, not man. As a true servant should be, He is found in the Gospel through Mark "straightway" at the work He was sent to accomplish.

B. There are four parables in Mark and all are concerned with service. He is never called "Lord" in Mark until after the resurrection. There is continuous, unbroken service and activity in this Gospel. All the chapters except three begin with the word "and." And He did this and He did that, and He did the other. He was ready to serve at any time, ready to leave His meals, ready to move at any moment's notice, always found as a true servant should be found. There is no "Our Father" in Mark.

III. BRIEF OUTLINE OF MARK.

- I. Christ's Preparation for Ministry (1:1-13).
 - A. Ministry of John the Baptist (1:1-8).
 - B. Christ's baptism and temptation (1: 9-13).

- II. Christ's Galilean Ministry (1:14-8:26).
 - A. His preaching (1:14-20).
 - B. His great power (1:21-3:12).
 - C. His personnel and parables (3:13-4:34).
 - D. His mighty expressions of power (4:35-8:26).

- III. Christ's Closing Ministry (8:27-10:52).
 - A. Peter's confession (8:27-33).
 - B. The cost of discipleship (8:34-9:1).
 - C. The Transfiguration of Christ (9:2-13).
 - D. The demon possessed Boy (9:14-29).
 - E. Christ's prediction of His death and resurrection (9:30-32).
 - F. The Issue of great leadership (9:33-41).
 - G. Christ's teaching about hell (9:42-52).
 - H. Christ's teaching on divorce and remarriage (10:1-12).
 - I. The need for a childlike faith (10:13-16).
 - J. Teaching on wealth and eternal life (10:17-31).
 - K. Teaching on selfish ambition (10:35-45).
 - L. The story of blind Bartimaeus (10:46-52).

IV. Christ's Passion and Death (Chapters 11-15).

A. Christ's public presentation (Chapters 11-12).

1. His triumphal entry (11:1-11).
2. His cursing the fig tree (11:12-14).
3. His cleansing of the temple (11:15-19).
4. His teaching on prayer and faith (11:20-26).
5. His authority challenged (11:27-33).
6. His parable of the vineyard (12:1-12).
7. His teachings about taxes and resurrection (12:13-27).
8. His greatest commandments (12:28-34).
9. His deity (12:35-37).
10. His condemnation of pride (12:38-40).
11. His teaching on giving: widow vs. rich (12:41-44).

B. Christ's teaching: Olivet Discourse - future things (Chapter 13)

C. The unfolding of Passover (14:1-52).

1. The conspiracy of priests and scribes (14:1-2).
2. The anointment of Christ by Mary of Bethany (14:3-9).
3. The conspiracy of Judas against Jesus (14:10-11).
4. The Last Supper (14:12-25).

D. The trials and crucifixion of Christ (14:53 - Chapter 15).

1. Christ's trial before Caiaphas (14:53 - 65).
2. Peter's denial (14:66-72).
3. Christ before Pilate (15:1-15).
4. Christ abused by Roman soldiers (15:16-20).
5. Christ crucified (15:21-32).
6. The death and burial of Christ (15:33-47).

V. Christ's Resurrection and Ascension (Chapter 16).

- A. His empty tomb (16:1-8).
- B. His appearances (16:9-11).
- C. His great Commission (16:15-18).
- D. His Ascension (16:19-20).

THE GOSPEL OF LUKE

BRIEF CONTEXT OF LUKE

I. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

A. THE AUTHOR.

1. The early Christian tradition is unanimous in assigning the authorship of the third Gospel to Luke, a Greek speaking, educated medical doctor (Col 4:12-14). He possibly was born in Antioch of Syria and practiced medicine in Philippi. He was not an eyewitness to the ministry of Christ. He probably was converted in Antioch by those who fled Jerusalem, perhaps even led to Christ by Paul. He did public, itinerant missionary work and was one who answered the Macedonian call (Acts 16:13,17).

2. Luke was a Greek, and a friend and companion of Paul (Acts 16:10-17; 20:5; 21:18; 27:1; 18:16) whom he accompanied on part of his missionary journey with Philemon. He accompanied Paul to Rome and remained with him during his imprisonment. During Paul's second imprisonment Luke was his only companion, showing beautiful devotion to the Apostle (2 Tim. 4:11). Very little more is known of Luke. An anti-Macedonian prologue to Luke's Gospel claims he remained without a family and died at the age of 84 in Bocotia, Greece. He is author of this Gospel and the Acts of the Apostles. Luke was the first great church historian and literary apologist for Christianity (Luke 1:1-4).

3. The emphasis is that this is the Gospel for the Greeks who idolized humanity; thus, the humanity of Jesus is stressed -- the "Son of Man." He is pictured as the ideal man, the perfection of manhood. The book was written about A.D. 60 and the place of writing is uncertain, probably Caesarea or Rome or both.

B. THE DISTINCTIVES.

1. The medical thrust is unique. Luke's medical background is evident from his use of medical terms (e.g. 4:38; 7:15; 14:2; 18:25), and unusual interest in the accounts of the healing and diagnosis and cures (e.g. 4:38; 5:12; 8:55; 22:50). He shows a deep interest in the sick, the afflicted, and the poor, indicating his great sympathy.

2. The infancy narratives receive focus. Luke records the inner thoughts of Mary, the announcement to Zacharias and Mary, the songs of Elizabeth and Mary, the birth and childhood of John the Baptist, the birth of Jesus, circumcision of Jesus, His presentation in the Temple and the only details of the childhood of Jesus.

3. Luke had a very special interest in individuals.

4. He showed an unusual interest in the prayer life of others.

5. He contributed much concerning the place and work of women.

6. He had interest in poverty and wealth.

7. His poetic temperament led him to record the beautiful hymns of the nativity: "Magnificat (1:46-55)," "Benedictus (1:68-79)," "Nunc Dimittis (2:29-32)."

C. THE THEME.

The Gospel of Luke places attention on Christ, the Son of Man, the Perfect Man, and Savior of the World.

II. NOTEWORTHY OBSERVATIONS.

A. Christ's genealogy is here traced back to Adam. It does not stop at David or Abraham as in Matthew, but goes back to the first man, because in Luke, Jesus, as the Son of Man, embraces all men everywhere.

B. This Gospel especially portrays Him as praying. He is in this Gospel, as man is and should be, the dependent one. Today we are in danger of becoming independent of God. Thinking we can manage for ourselves, it is not until we find ourselves in difficulties that we begin to pray. But, He, the Perfect Man, is found in Luke's Gospel continually upon His knees.

C. In Luke 9:6 Christ's disciples preached everywhere. This is because as the Son of Man, He has come for all men. In Matthew, as the Messianic King of the Jews, Jesus sent His disciples out with the prohibition, "Go not into the ways of the Gentiles." The selection of material from Jesus' life was made in light of the specific audience and purpose of the individual Gospel writers.

D. Humanity stands at the front in Luke's Gospel. The parables begin with the words "a certain man." In comparison, Matthew, the kingly Gospel, starts the same parables with "The kingdom of heaven is like..."

E. In Luke we see Christ's tender sympathy for mankind. He wept over Jerusalem, healed the ear of Malchus, and took note of the thief on the cross.

F. Luke records in part the Sermon on the Mount, but omits allusions to the "old times" and references to the "law and the prophets." Matthew emphasized the Jewish flavor and history. In Luke, Christ is the Son of Man coming to the whole race, and the race as such had not "old times" and no "law and the prophets" in the same sense of Jewish history.

G. Samples of Christ's teachings in Luke:

1. On the Messiah 1:26ff.
2. Insight on abortion: when life begins (1:41,44).
3. On temptation (4:1-13).
4. On evangelism (5:1-11).
5. On prayer (5:16; 6:12; 10:2; 22:40).
6. On perspective in life (10:17-20).
7. On priorities in life (10:27).
8. On heaven (15:7,10).
9. On money (16:13-15).
10. On the spiritual afterlife in Hell (16:19-31).
11. On faith (22:31)
12. On the Bible (24:27,44,45).
13. On the Great Commission (24:46-48).

III. BRIEF OUTLINE OF LUKE.

I. The preparation of Jesus Christ (1:1-4:13).

- A. Introduction to the book (1:1-4).
- B. Childhood of John and Jesus (1:5-2:52).
 - 1. The birth of John proclaimed (1:5-25).
 - 2. The birth of Jesus proclaimed (1:26-56).
 - 3. The birth of John Baptist (1:57-80).
 - 4. The birth of Jesus (2:1-38).
 - 5. The childhood of Jesus (2:39-52).
- C. Christ's ministry proclaimed (chapter 3).
 - 1. The baptism of Jesus (3:1-22).
 - 2. The genealogy of Jesus (3:23-38).

II. The Ministry of Jesus Christ (4:1-19:48).

- A. His ministry in Galilee (4:1-19:48).
 - 1. Jesus was tempted by Satan (4:1-13).
 - 2. Jesus introduced His ministry (4:14-30).
 - 3. Jesus demonstrated His authority and power (4:31-6:11).
 - 4. Jesus selected His disciples (Apostles) (6:12-49).
 - 5. Jesus' activity in ministry (7:1-9:50)
- B. His ministry in Judea & Perea (9:51-19:48).
 - 1. Jesus was rejected by the Samaritan (9:51-56).
 - 2. Jesus was rejected by the men of the world (9:57-62).
 - 3. Jesus commissioned the 70 disciples (10:1-24).
 - 4. Jesus gave parable of the good Samaritan (10:25-37).
 - 5. Jesus taught Mary and Martha about priorities (10:38-42).
 - 6. Jesus taught the disciples to pray (11:1-13).
 - 7. Jesus was rejected by nation Israel (11:14-36).
 - 8. Jesus was rejected by the Jewish religious leaders (11:37-54).
 - 9. Jesus taught about hypocrisy (12:1-12).
 - 10. Jesus taught about greed (12:13-35).
 - 11. Jesus taught about faithfulness (12:35-48).
 - 12. Jesus taught about division and signs (12:49-59).
 - 13. Jesus taught about repentance (13:1-9).
 - 14. Jesus taught about hypocrisy (13:10-17).
 - 15. Jesus taught about the kingdom (13:18-35).
 - 16. Jesus taught about different kinds of people (chapter 14).
 - 17. Jesus taught about soul-winning (15:1-10).
 - 18. Jesus taught about the prodigal son (15:11-31).
 - 19. Jesus taught about wealth (16:1-18).
 - 20. Jesus taught about Hell (16:19-31).
 - 21. Jesus taught about various principles (17:1-19:27).
 - 22. Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem (19:28-48).

III. The Suffering and Death of Jesus Christ (20:1-23:56).

- A. Christ confronted by Jewish leaders (20:1-8).
- B. The parable of the vineyard (20:9-18).
- C. The religious leaders tried to entrap Jesus (20:19-40).
- D. Christ stated his authority (20:41-47).
- E. Christ taught on giving: poor widow versus rich (21:1-4).
- F. Christ taught on His second coming (21:5-38).
- G. Christ and a final time with His disciples (22:1-46).
- H. Christ's arrest, trial, murder (22:47-23:56).

IV. The Resurrection and Ascension of Christ (Chapter 24).

- A. The empty tomb (24:1-12).
- B. Christ's appearance to the Emmaus disciples (24:13-35).
- C. His resurrected body and life (24:36-43).
- D. The Great Commission (24:44-49).
- E. The Ascension of Christ (24:50-53).

THE GOSPEL OF JOHN

A BRIEF CONTEXT OF JOHN

I. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

A. There is agreement that the Gospel of John was written by the Apostle John, even from the days of the Church Fathers (Theophilus of Antioch, c. A.D. 180; Origen, c. A.D. 250; Tertullian, c. A.D. 220; Irenaeus, c. A.D. 200; Clement of Alexandria, c. A.D. 220). Early enemies of Christianity also agreed to John's authorship (e.g. Porphyry and Julian the Apostate). The date of writing probably is A.D. 85-90.

B. John the Apostle was a son of Zebedee and Salome and the older brother of James who was martyred under Herod Agrippa. His was a well to do family (Mark 15:40,41). They were fishermen by occupation. John the Baptist pointed out Jesus as the Lamb of God to the Apostle John and Andrew. While John was fishing with James, Jesus called them to follow Him. Jesus called them Boanerges, sons of thunder, because of a trait of vehemence in their character. They belonged to the inner circle of Christ's friends.

C. John was the disciple "whom Jesus loved." He was one of the three close friends to Jesus, the other two being James and Peter. John was present when Jesus raised Jairus' daughter, at the transfiguration, and in Gethsemane. Jesus, on the cross, commended His mother to John's care. After the Ascension, John was one of the 120 in the upper room. After the Pentecost he labored at Ephesus, and finally was exiled to Patmos for the Word of God and the testimony of Jesus. He probably was freed, and returned to Ephesus where he died.

D. John wrote five New Testament books: the Gospel, three epistles, and the Revelation. In his Gospel John records the self-revelation of Jesus as the incarnate Son of God, and Savior of the world. He states the aim of his writing in chapter 20:30,31, "but these (things) have been written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you may have life in His name."

E. The presentation of Christ is Him as The Word (Logos). The purpose of the Gospel is evangelistic: that men might believe in Christ so as to obtain eternal life and escape everlasting punishment. John's approach was to set forth the person and work of Christ plus what is man's requirement for salvation along with the consequences of unbelief. His proof was the miracles performed by Jesus (20:30,31). Belief is mentioned 98 times. This book gives the clearest explanations of the plan of salvation (cf. 1:12, 13; 3:15,16,18, 36; 5:24; 6:37, 40,47).

II. NOTEWORTHY OBSERVATIONS.

A. There is not a human genealogy given in John, no human mediator: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God... and the Word became flesh and dwelt among us" (John 1:1). In Matthew Jesus was born King of the Jews. In Luke, He was born the Son of Man. In John, Jesus, being God, became incarnate and continued as the "I AM."

B. John keeps the power and majesty of Deity in the foreground. For example, he did not record the agony and bloody sweat in the garden. At Christ's arrest He introduced Himself as "I AM" and the soldiers were hurled to the ground -- they were in the presence of God! Many private and personal interviews are in the gospel, each pointing to Christ as God. Four major signs are given, unique to this Gospel, that show His Deity: the healing of the nobleman's son from a distance, the power over nature seen in His walking on the sea, the healing of the man born blind, and raising Lazarus from the dead.

C. Some say that Christ never claimed to be God. There exist, however, in John four occasions in which He claimed to be God.

1. In 3:13 He claimed equality of place, that is, He claimed to be on earth and in Heaven at the same time.

2. In 5:18. He claimed equality of nature with God. The Jews wanted to kill Him because not only did He break the Sabbath, but He said that God was His own Father in a unique way that could not be applied to normal humans. They understood Christ to claim to be God.

3. In 8:58. He claimed equality of existence with God with the statement, "Before Abraham was, I AM." Moses had asked God the question, "...The God of your fathers hath sent me unto you: and they shall say to me, What is His name? what shall I say unto them? And God said unto Moses, I AM THAT I AM: and He said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel. I AM hath sent me unto you... this is my name forever, and this is my memorial unto all generations" (Exodus 3:13-15).

"I AM" is the inner meaning of Yahweh which is translated as meaning I am the One who is. It points to God's self existence. Jesus assumes this name of God, a bold claim of Deity and an action clearly understood as such by the Jews (John 8:59). The Greek word Jesus used is *eimi* which is the verb "to be."

4. In 10:30. Jesus claims equality of essence with God by saying "I and my Father are one."

D. The Gospel of John gives the way of eternal life: "...that believing, ye may have life in His Name" John 20:31. One cannot be saved by obeying the command of a king as Matthew pictures Christ, nor by imitation of the perfect man as Luke shows Christ. One is saved by believing in Jesus Christ, the Son of God as John reveals Him.

Believe (Gr. πιστεωω, *pisteuo*) means to be convinced of something, to trust, to rely on, to believe, to be persuaded of, to place confidence in. Believe means we are to be convinced of the truth in question. One dictionary defines *pisteuo* as "belief in a special sense, as faith in the Divinity that lays special emphasis on trust in his power and his nearness to help, in addition to being convinced that he exists and that his revelations or disclosures are true...God and Christ are objects of this faith."¹³

¹³ William F. Arndt and F. Wilbur Gingrich, A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1957), p. 666.

After salvation one finds new, eternal life and the power to obey, the ability to imitate and the strength to serve. The four Gospels have in common the record of the cross and resurrection. They all close with the missionary program to go into the entire world and preach the gospel to all creation.

III. BRIEF OUTLINE OF JOHN.

- I. Introduction: the Person of Christ (1:1-18).
- II. Witnesses to the Person of Christ (1:19-2:11).
 - A. Witness of John the Baptist (1:19-34).
 - B. Witness of Christ's disciples (1:35-51).
 - C. Witness of Christ at wedding in Cana (2:1-11).
- III. The Public Ministry of Jesus Christ (2:12-12:50).
 - A. Christ cleansed the Temple (2:12-25).
 - B. Christ witnessed to Nicodemus (3:1-21).
 - C. John the Baptist gave testimony (3:24-36).
 - D. Jesus led many Samaritans to salvation (4:1-42).
 - E. Jesus healed the official's son (4:43-54).
 - F. Christ revealed as the author and sustainer of life (Chapters 5-6).
 1. Jesus healed the sick man (5:1-18).
 2. Christ's authority in the resurrection of mankind (5:19-29).
 3. Christ presented as the Son of God (5:30-47).
 4. The miraculous feeding of the 5,000 (6:1-15).
 5. The miracle of walking on water (6:16-21).
 6. Christ: the Bread of Life from Heaven (6:22-71).
 - G. Christ opposed by many (chapters 5-6).
 1. Opposed by his family (7:1-9).
 2. His sermon at the temple brought opposition (7:10-36).
 3. A second sermon brought opposition (7:37-53).
 4. Entrapment: the woman taken in adultery (8:1-11).
 5. Jesus the spiritual light of the world (8:12-59).
 6. Healing of the blind man on the Sabbath (Chapter 9).
 7. Jesus as the Good Shepherd (chapter 10).
 8. Lazarus raised from the dead (chapter 11).
 9. Jesus' feet anointed by Mary of Bethany (12:1-11).
 10. Triumphant entry of Jesus (12:12-19).
 11. Some Greeks seek Jesus (12:20-36).
 12. The Bible judges men (12:37-50).
- IV. Christ's Private Ministry to His Own (chapters 13-17).
 - A. Christ ministering at the Last Supper (Chapter 13-14).
 1. Washing of the disciple's feet (13:1-20).
 2. Christ predicts His betrayal (13:21-35).
 3. Christ predicts Peter's denial (13:36-38).

4. Christ instructs on heaven and His return (14:1-14).
 5. Christ promises the coming of the Holy Spirit (14:15-26).
 6. Christ gives His peace (14:27-31).
- B. Christ ministers by further instruction (chapters 15-16).
1. Instruction on fruitfulness (15:1-17).
 2. Instruction on the hatred by the world (15:18-27).
 3. Jesus warns of persecution (16:1-6).
 4. Promise of the Holy Spirit (16:7-15).
 5. Promise of His death, Resurrection, second return (16:16-33).
- C. Christ ministers through His high priestly prayer (chapter 17).
- V. The Crucifixion of Jesus Christ (chapters 18-19).
- A. The arrest of Christ (18:1-11).
 - B. The trial of Christ before Annas (18:12-23).
 - C. The trial of Christ before Caiphas (18:24-27).
 - D. The trial of Christ before Pilate (18:28-19:16).
 - E. The murder of Christ by crucifixion (19:17-37).
 - F. The burial of Christ (19:38-42).
- VI. The Resurrection of Jesus Christ (chapters 20-21).
- A. The empty tomb (20:1-10).
 - B. The appearance to Mary Magdalene (20:11-18).
 - C. The appearance to the disciples, minus Thomas (20:19-25).
 - D. The appearance to the disciples, with Thomas (20:26-31).
 - E. The appearance to the seven disciples (21:1-14).
 - F. Christ's interchange with Peter (21:15-25).

ACTS OF THE APOSTLES

I. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

A. The writer.

Dr. Luke, the physician was the human instrument God used to write this book. The evidence for Luke's authorship is as follows. The same writer penned both Luke's Gospel and Acts (Luke 1:3; Acts 1:10). The passages written in third person "we" (16:10-17; 20:5--21; 27:1--28;16) indicate that the writer was a close companion and traveler with Paul and eyewitness to the events. Close analysis of this evidence identifies Luke as the companion and eliminates all other fellow missionaries of Paul. Colossians 4:14 and Philemon 24 affirm that Luke was a physician, and the generous use of medical terms in Acts points to a person with a medical background as the writer (1:3, 7ff.; 9:18,33; 13:11).

B. The book.

Acts is a continuation of the Gospel of Luke. Several important factors are given.

- (1). Acts is a history of the spread and growth of the early church throughout the world.
- (2). Acts shows the transition from God's chief instrument in the world being Judaism to the use of the Christian Church and gentiles.
- (3). Acts is a manual on missionary methods.
- (4). Acts serves as an example (picture) of early church life.
- (5). Acts is a continuation of the work started by Jesus Christ.
- (6). Acts displays the sovereignty of God at work in His Church.
- (7). Acts has as its great theme the spreading of the gospel to the entire world.
- (8). Acts underscores the major definite purpose of the Christian church (1:8; 10:42; 15:14-18; 19:10, 20,26; 26:16-18; 28:28-31).
- (9). Acts provides the historical context with which to understand the Epistles.

C. Prominent features of Acts.

- (1). Jesus Christ: active, interested, purposeful, and powerful.
- (2). Holy Spirit: His activity, indwelling believers, ministry to the church.
- (3). Church: its power, its reality, a new institution, visible and invisible.
- (4). Numerous places mentioned.
- (5). Numerous people mentioned.
- (6). Centrality of the resurrection and the gospel preaching.
- (7). Stress on Peter in the first half (1-12); Paul in the second half (13-28).

D. The book outlined.

- (1) Into two sections according to the dominance of Peter, then Paul.
- (2) Into three sections according to Acts 1:8; gospel to Jerusalem (1-7); gospel to Judea and Samaria (chapters 8-11:18); gospel to the uttermost part of the world (11:19-28).

(3). Into four sections: gospel to Jerusalem (1-7); gospel in Judea and Samaria (8:1--11:18); gospel to the uttermost parts of the world (11:18--21:18), Paul the prisoner for the gospel (21:19--28:31).

E. The chief verse is 1:8. The date of writing is about A.D. 61. The intended reader was Theophilus.

II. NOTEWORTHY OBSERVATIONS.

The name "The Acts of the Apostles" does not fit the contents of the book, as only Peter and John of the original twelve apostles are spoken about. It might better be called "The Acts of the Ascended Lord" rather than "The Acts of the Apostles."

The importance of the Acts is seen in the following facts:

1. It records the advent of the Holy Spirit like the Gospels record the advent of Christ. It is not meant that the Holy Spirit was not always in the world, but that He is now come with a different mission than ever before.

2. It is the connecting link between what has gone before and the Epistles that follow. The Bible would be incomplete without the book of Acts. In the Old Testament the Father is seen at work for men with the promise of the coming Son. In the Gospels the Son is seen at work with the promise of the coming of the Holy Spirit. In the book of Acts the Holy Spirit is seen at work through men with the promise of the coming Christ in His glory.

The Gospels tell of what Jesus was doing and teaching before the cross, Resurrection and Ascension. The Acts, beginning where the Gospels end, tells what He continued to do and teach. Matthew closes with the Resurrection of Christ and the missionary program. Mark closes with the Ascension of Christ and the missionary program. Luke closes with the promise of the coming of the Holy Spirit and the missionary program. John closes with the promise of the second advent of Christ and the missionary program. Acts opens with all these--the Resurrection, Ascension, the promise of the Holy Spirit, the promise of the second advent, and the missionary program.

The purpose of the book of Acts is to show what Jesus continued to do and teach as the ascended Lord. The book marks the temporary rejection of Israel by Christ and the transition to the church.

Acts does not give a full account of the Apostles. For instance, there is no record of Paul going to Arabia, the epistle to the Galatians records that. There is no account of the Gospel going to Egypt and to Babylon, First Peter tells us that. There is no account of the founding of the church at Rome, the epistle to the Romans makes it clear that there was a church there. There is no account of various voyages and shipwrecks of Paul, we read that in Corinthians.

The purpose of the book of Acts, therefore, is not to give a full account of the Apostles, but to show the acts of the ascended Lord as a great Worker, the acts of the Holy Spirit as the power, and the acts of the believers as the instruments. To remember this will help us in all our

Christian service and activity. Christ is the worker, the Holy Spirit is the power, and the believers are the instruments.

This is the reason why so much is said in the Bible of surrendering or yielding unto Him. The Spirit of God is not a great divine influence that we are to lay hold of and use, but a Divine Person who desires to lay hold of us as instruments through which He can work. The more surrendered or yielded we are the better work He can do through us. The Holy Spirit dwells in the Body of Christ, the Body through which He does His work, and that body is the Church. Christ, we can say with reverence, cannot do His work on earth today apart from the members of His Body.

Therefore, yielding to God is not a vague, mystical, indefinite spiritual experience or exercise which brings only happy emotions to the heart. There will be actual service wherever surrender is found. He will lay hold of the yielded and surrendered person and through that one will do His own work in the world.

III. SEQUENCE OF TIME AND EVENTS

1. The gospel in Jerusalem (1--8:13; A.D. 30(?) -35).

- (a). Ascension of Christ .
- (b). Day of Pentecost.
- (c). Birth of the Church.
- (d). Three persecutions in the Church.
- (e). Murder of Stephen.

2. The gospel in Judea/Samaria (8:4--11:18; A.D. 36-41).

- (a). Evangelist Philip in Samaria.
- (b). Conversion of Paul.
- (c). Paul in Damascus, Jerusalem, Tarsus.
- (d). Peter in Caesaria.

3. The gospel to the world (11:19--21:18; A.D. 42-58).

- (a). Start of the Antioch Church.
- (b). Paul located in Antioch.
- (c). Peter jailed, James killed.
- (d). Missionary journey one.
- (e). Jerusalem council.
- (f). Missionary journey two.
- (g). Missionary journey three.

4. Paul the prisoner for the gospel (21:19--chapter 28; A.D. 58-63).

- (a) Paul arrested in Jerusalem.

- (b) Paul transferred to Caesarea.
- (c) Paul transported to Rome.
- (d) Paul in house arrest -- preaching the gospel...

IV. BRIEF OUTLINE OF ACTS

- A. The Gospel in Jerusalem (1:1 -- 8:3).
 - 1. The ministry of Jesus on earth (1:1-11).
 - 2. Matthias, the replacement of Judas (1:12-26).
 - 3. The Day of Pentecost (2:1-47).
 - 4. The impact of the Day of Pentecost (2:37-47).
 - 5. Miracle healing of the crippled beggar by Peter and John (3:1-11).
 - 6. Peter's sermon on repentance (3:12-26).
 - 7. First persecution against the church (4:1-37).
 - 8. Internal purging of the church: Ananias and Sapphira (5:1-11).
 - 9. Second persecution of the church: by high priest (5:12-42).
 - 10. Problems of church growth: helpers to serve tables (6:1-7).
 - 11. The death of Stephen (6:8--8:3).

- B. The Gospel in Judea and Samaria (8:1--11:18).
 - 1. The church scattered by persecution (8:1-4).
 - 2. The preaching of Philip (8:5-40).
 - 3. The conversion of Paul (9:1-31).
 - 4. Peter prepared to evangelize the gentiles (9:32--10:22).
 - 5. Peter preaching to Cornelius (10:23-48).
 - 6. Peter's defense for giving Gospel to gentiles (11:1-18).

- C. The Gospel to the Uttermost Part of the World (11:18--21:18).
 - 1. Start of the church at Antioch (11:19-30).
 - 2. Christians pressured and persecuted by Herod (12:1-25).
 - 3. The first missionary journey (13:1--14:28).
 - a. Commissioning the missionaries: Barnabas and Saul (13:1-3).
 - b. Evangelism in Cyprus (13:4-12).
 - c. Evangelism in Galatian cities (13:13--14:20).
 - d. Missionaries return and report to Antioch (14:21-28).
 - 4. The Jerusalem council: heresy counteracted (15:1-35).
 - 5. The second missionary journey (15:36--18:22).
 - a. Barnabas and Paul disagree: teams selected (15:36-40).
 - b. Revisit of regions previously evangelized (15:41--16:5).
 - c. The call to Macedonia (Europe) (16:6-10).
 - d. Evangelism at Philippi (16:11-40).
 - e. Missionary work at Thessalonica, Berea, Athens (17:1-34).
 - f. Missionary work at Corinth (18:1-17).
 - g. Missionaries to Ephesus, return home to Antioch (18:18-22).
 - 6. The third missionary journey (18:23--21:26).
 - a. Missionary work in Ephesus (18:23--19:41).
 - b. Missionary work in Greece (20:1-5).

- c. Missionary work: Troas and Ephesian elders (20:6-38).
- d. Paul's return voyage to Palestine (21:1-14).
- e. Paul's return to Jerusalem (21:15-26).

D. Paul the Prisoner for the Gospel (21:19-28:31).

- 1. Paul's arrest in Jerusalem (21:27-40).
- 2. Paul's defense to the mob in Jerusalem (22:1-23).
- 3. Paul taken to Caesarea (22:24--23:15).
- 4. Paul's defense to Felix (24:1-27).
- 5. Paul's defense to Festus (25:1-12).
- 6. Paul's defense to Agrippa (25:13--26:32).
- 7. Paul on to Rome: ocean voyage and shipwreck (27:1-44).
- 8. Paul's ministry on remote island, Malta (28:1-10).
- 9. Paul's arrival and ministry in Rome (28:11-31).

EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS

I. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

A. Background.

1. Romans is the first of the 21 Epistles in the New Testament. Thirteen of these 21 were written by Paul, and are generally called the Pauline Epistles. The Epistles are the specific documents written to give instructions to the church, the new organism/organization planned and designed by God, and now being created and unfolded within history. The O.T. was instruction to Israel and written to the Jew (though it is written for the benefit and welfare of Christians as well).

The Gospels record the life of Christ in history. The Acts record the historical genesis of the church. The Epistles are actual letters written to the church or individuals within the church giving instructions on theology, duty, conduct, purpose, plan, structure, relationship and anything else the church needs to know to conduct the Lord's business during this age.

2. Paul, the writer of Romans, was born at Tarsus, in Cilicia, Asia minor (Acts 21:39; 22:3). He was of Hebrew parents, a Pharisee (Acts 23:6) and was a citizen of Rome. Paul received a Jewish education, learned the craft of tent making and may have attended a Greek university in Tarsus. He was sent to Jerusalem to study under Gamaliel (Acts 22:3).

At Stephen's death he was present. He was a leader in the persecution of the Christians. He was converted on the way to Damascus to persecute Christians. Then he spent three years in Arabia for meditation and receiving revelation from Christ and returned to Damascus. He fled to Jerusalem from the hatred of the Jews and from there traveled to Tarsus. He served the church there for a year.

Directed by the Holy Spirit he became the Great Apostle for the Gentile world. He made three great missionary journeys to spread the Gospel in the Gentile world. Opposition by the Jews led to his imprisonment in Jerusalem. His appeal to Caesar as a Roman citizen led to his journey to Rome and his trial and acquittal. Probably after visiting Asia and Macedonia he was rearrested at Nicopolis, condemned, and beheaded under the rule of Nero.

3. With his Hebrew religion, his Greek culture, and his Roman citizenship, he was divinely prepared to be the chief of the Apostles, a mighty instrument for the spread of the Gospel and the extension of the Church.

4. Rome, at this time, with its suburbs, was a city of about 800,000 people of various races. The Jews, who numbered some 30,000, were despised and sometimes dreaded. The city, founded in 745 B.C., was the capital of the Roman Empire. Nero was on the throne.

5. The Church at Rome originated probably through converted Jews after returning from Jerusalem at the time of Pentecost. The majority of the members were Gentile Christians (Acts 2:10).

6. The occasion for the writing of the epistle to the Romans was Paul preparing the way to visit Rome. He wrote the epistle from Corinth (A.D. 58), and sent the letter by Phoebe, a

deaconess of Cenchræa. Paul later went to Jerusalem with the collection for the poor saints, was arrested and taken to Rome as a prisoner.

7. The great theme of this letter is justification by faith alone. This doctrine is set forth in a very systematic fashion. It can be viewed as the first Christian systematic theology.

II. BRIEF OUTLINE OF ROMANS.

I. Introduction and Theme (1:1-17)

- A. Greeting (1:1-7)
- B. Thanksgiving and prayer (1:8-12).
- C. Purpose of Paul's life (1:13-15).
- D. Gospel defined (1:16-17).

II. Condemnation of the Human Race (1:18--3:20).

- A. Condemnation to the pagans: the wise men (1:18-32).
- B. Condemnation to the moral man (2:1-16).
- C. Condemnation to the Jew: the religious man (2:17--3:8).
- D. Condemnation to all men (3:9--20).

III. The Righteousness of God Provided For Mankind (3:21--5:21).

- A. Righteousness of God explained (3:21-31).
- B. Righteousness of God illustrated in Abraham (4:1-25).
- C. Result of God's righteousness: peace, hope, love, reconciliation (5:1-11).
- D. God's grace is greater than sin's curse (5:12-21).

IV. God's Sanctification for the Believer (Chapters 6-8).

- A. Our union with Christ as basis for sanctification (Chapter 6).
- B. Relationship between the Law and sanctification (Chapter 7).
- C. The outworking of salvation (Chapter 8).

V. God's Salvation for Nation Israel (Chapter 9-11).

- A. Israel's past position and selection (9:1-29).
- B. Israel's mistakes and rejection: righteousness by Law (9:30--10:21).
- C. Israel's future restoration (11:1-36).

VI. Practical Outworking of our Salvation (Chapters 12-15).

- A. Personal growth by submission and transformation (12:1,2).
- B. Outworking of spiritual gifts (12:3-8).
- C. Personal relationships (12:9-21).
- D. Believers relationship to government (13:1-7).
- E. Love the fulfillment of the Law (13:8-10).
- F. Holy living (13:11-14).
- G. Christian liberty (Chapter 14).
- H. Imitation of Christ (15:1-13).

VII. Paul's Messages and Farewell (15:14--16:27).

FIRST EPISTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS

I. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

A. Corinth is a city in Greece located on a narrow, four mile wide strip of land separating the Aegan and Adriatic sea, and northern and southern Greece. The city was destroyed in 146 B.C. by the Romans and rebuilt in 46 B.C. This made the Corinth about 100 years old at the time of Paul's visits. Corinth was a Roman capital of its province and was about the fourth largest city in the Roman empire with a population of somewhere between 100,000 and 700,000 people.

B. Most of the shipping of the Mediterranean world passed through the narrow isthmus by Corinth, and all the land commerce from North and South had to go through the city. Beside the shipyards and docks there was agriculture around the city with green fields, olive groves and vineyards. Smaller ships were towed across the isthmus on a tramway. For the larger ships the cargo was unloaded, packed across and loaded on a waiting ship on the other side.

C. Corinth was a city where all the brutality of the West embraced the sensuality of the East. It had a very mobile population made up of scholars, laborers, gamblers, slaves, and athletes. The city was without an established tradition and aristocracy.

D. Corinth was the most immoral city probably in the world at that time. For example, 1,000 prostitutes were assigned to the temple of Aphrodite (the goddess of love). Travelers in the Roman world had a saying that to behave like a Corinthian meant to lead low, shameless, and immoral lives-- and this in the eyes of a pagan world! At nights the city teemed with vice, drunkenness, and sin of all kinds (cf. 1 Cor. 6:9-11; Romans 1:18-32).

E. Corinth was also the location of the Isthmian games (held every two years) which were second only to the Olympic games (held every four years). These games were great games and included races, wrestling, boxing, discus, javelin, chariot races, wild beasts fighting, gladiators, trials of strength, jumping, horse races, and art, music and poetry contests. People from all over the world attended these games, and even Nero (the emperor who killed Paul, and burned Rome) participated in them. The city had a 20,000 seat outdoor theater.

F. Corinth was also a religious center of Greece. Along with the temple of Aphrodite and Apollos, and others in Corinth, the area flourished with wild erotic mystery religions. The most famous were the ones celebrated at Eleusis and Samothrace. Eleusis is only a few miles from Corinth. The ecstatic Delphic oracles were obtained only a few miles from Corinth.

II. Author, theme, purpose.

A. The author was Paul who was writing from Ephesus. The date was A.D. 56. The historical record of Paul founding the Corinthian church some five years earlier is in Acts 18:1-18. Paul is writing to bad reports he has heard about the church, and to reply to several questions brought to him by a delegation from Corinth. The purpose can be summarized:

1. Rebuke various conditions and practices in the local church.
2. Answer specific practical questions from the Corinthians.
3. Instruct on the doctrine of the resurrection.

B. The theme of this epistle is the emphasis on the practical life of the local church at Corinth. Great stress is placed upon the need for unity and proper Christian conduct within the Christian community. Problems were great in the Corinthian church. They were caused by the clash between the conduct and concepts of Christianity and paganism. The solution to these problems forms the content of the letter of First Corinthians. The conditions of the church at Corinth can best be described by the words: selfishness, division, criticism, and toleration of evil. The common root of the problem was spiritual immaturity.

III. BRIEF OUTLINE OF FIRST CORINTHIANS

I. Defilement of the Corinthian Church (chapters 1-6).

- A. Position of the church in Christ (1:1-9).
- B. Pronouncement against division (1:10--4:21).
 1. Problem of divisions (1:10-17).
 2. Reasons for divisions (1:18--2:26).
 3. Results of division (chapter 3).
 4. Paul's example of spiritual service (chapter 4).
 5. Problems of church discipline (chapters 5-6).

II. Delicate Matters in Personal Living (chapters 7-10).

- A. Priorities of marriage and divorce (chapter 7).
- B. Principles of Christian liberty (chapters 8-10).
 1. Foods offered to a pagan god (chapter 8).
 2. Paul's example (9:1-14).
 3. Instruction in Christian liberty (chapter 10).

III. Disorder in Public Worship (chapters 11-14).

- A. **Various practices in public worship (chapter 11).**
 1. The role of women (11:1-16).
 2. The practice of communion (11:17-34).
- B. **Place of spiritual gifts (chapters 12-14).**
 1. The use and purpose of spiritual gifts (chapter 12).
 2. Love superior to the gifts (chapter 13).
 3. The purpose of tongues (14:1-25).
 4. The regulation of the gifts (14:26-40).

IV. Doctrine of Resurrection (chapter 15).

- A. Proclamation of Christ's resurrection (15:1-11).
- B. Importance of the resurrection (15:12-19).
- C. Sequence of the resurrection (15:20-28).
- D. Practical benefit of the resurrection (15:29-34).
- E. Nature of the resurrected body (15:35-50).

F. The event of resurrection described (15:51-58).

V. Directives and Personal Matters (chapter 16).

A. Giving for special collection (16:1-4).

B. How to determine God's will (16:5-9, 12).

C. Personal relationships in the church (16:13-24).

SECOND EPISTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS

I. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

A. Following his first letter, Paul had visited the church at Corinth because the problems addressed in that letter were still causing trouble (2 Co 2:1; 12:14; 13:1,2). After this visit, Paul wrote a second "stern but sorrowful" letter (2:4) which Titus delivered to Corinth (2:13; 7:6,16,23; 12:18). This second letter has been lost to the church.

Paul went on to Macedonia where Titus met him after the delivery of the second letter. Titus reported of repentance on the part of the Corinthians which brought much joy to Paul. From Macedonia Paul penned this second epistle (this letter, which is actually the third) to the Corinthians. Paul followed this letter up with his final visit recorded in Acts 20:1-4.

B. Second Corinthians was written to follow up the first letter. Paul was somewhat uneasy about its reception. He had written rather sternly about the divisions in the church and the case of incestuous person. He feared that they might resent what he had written and the cause of the Gospel might suffer on the account of it. Even the report of Titus does not relieve him of anxiety. The church as a whole had taken kindly to his previous letter and had repented. Paul rejoiced in that. His enemies, the Judaizers, however, had increased their efforts to undermine Paul's apostolic authority and claimed that he was changeable and cowardly, and had not shown himself an Apostle by his works.

C. Paul wrote this letter, therefore, for a threefold purpose: to express his gratitude and joy for the way in which the majority of the Christians had received his first letter, to remind them again of the financial collection and to defend his apostleship against Judaistic opponents. This epistle is one of the most personal, least doctrinal, and least systematic of the Pauline epistles. The theme is the defense of Paul's authority. The date of writing is A.D. 57.

D. Some important themes are found as follows:

1. Ministry as supernatural (4:4; 11:3,4, 13-15).
2. Motivation (4:16-18).
3. Judgment seat of Christ (5:10).
4. Heaven at death (5:8).
5. The Christian's new nature (5:17).
6. The Christian's new purpose (5:20).
7. Substitutionary Atonement (5:21).
8. The thought life (10:3ff.).

II. BRIEF OUTLINE OF SECOND CORINTHIANS

I. Introduction to the Epistle (1:1-11).

- A. Salutation to readers (1:1-2).
- B. Goodness of God (1:3-11).

II. Follow up on the Problem at Corinth (1:12-2:13).

- A. Concerning his plans to go to Corinth (1:12-2:4).
- B. Forgiveness to the repentant backslider (2:5-13).

III. The Greatness of the Ministry (2:14-6:10).

- A. The victory of the ministry (2:14-17).
- B. The measure of successful ministry (3:1-3).
- C. The certification of the ministry (3:4-18).
- D. The supernatural nature of the ministry (4:1-7).
- E. The pressure of the ministry (4:8-18).
- F. The motivation for ministry (Chapter 5).
- G. The character needed for ministry (6:1-10).
- H. Purity needed for ministry (6:11-7:1).
- I. Attitude toward the flock (7:2-16).

IV. Special Collection for Needy Saints in Jerusalem (Chapters 8-9).

- A. Example of the Macedonian churches (8:1-6).
- B. Reasons for giving (8:7-15).
- C. Principles for giving (8:16-9:5).
- D. Rewards for giving (9:6-15).

V. Paul's Apostleship Defended (10:1-12:18).

- A. Paul commended by God (10:1-18).
- B. False apostles describe (11:1-15).
- C. Paul's suffering as an apostle (11:16-33).
- D. Paul's vision in heaven (12:1-10).
- E. Paul's unselfishness in ministry (12:11-18).
- F. Paul's urging their repentance (12:19-13:14).

EPISTLE TO THE GALATIANS

I. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

A. Paul has been considered the author of Galatians, except for a few radical critics. Evangelicals fully accept Paul as the author. Internal evidence includes his name as writer in 1:1 and 5:2. Most of chapters one and two are autobiographical and agree with the course of Paul's life as recorded in Acts. The theology is consistent with Paul. External evidence includes the second and third century testimony of church leaders such as Irenaeus, Clement of Alexandria and Origen. The early heretics, such as Marcion (second century), maintained Pauline authorship.

B. This letter is addressed to the Galatian churches. Galatia (2:2; 3:1) was in what is now central Turkey. North central Galatia was established when the Gauls migrated from western Europe through Italy and Greece. The key cities are Ancyra, Pessinus and Tavium. South central Galatia was established by the Romans in 25 B.C. and included the cities of Antioch, Iconium, Lystra and Derbe. A debate has existed for centuries as to which part of Galatia (north or south) Paul was writing.

If Christians in north Galatia were the target, then the epistle was written on the third missionary journey, early from Ephesus (about A.D. 53) or later (A.D. 55) from Macedonia. The argument for this view is that Paul seems to use Galatia to refer to north Galatia (Acts 16:6; 18:23). The churches would then have been evangelized during the second missionary journey.

If Christians in south Galatia were the intended readers, then the epistle was written just after the first missionary journey probably from Antioch about A.D. 49. This would make it Paul's earliest epistle. The Jerusalem council (Acts 15) would have convened just after the epistle.

The main evidence for the south Galatia theory is that the Jerusalem council was not mentioned in the letter; yet, the decision of that council related directly to the central issue of this letter. Other evidence is that there is no record of churches being started in north Galatia, but there is in south Galatia (Acts 13,14). Also Barnabas is mentioned (but not introduced; Gal. 2:1,9,13) and he only traveled with Paul on the first journey; thus, only the Christians in south Galatia would have known him. The balance of evidence seems to favor the south Galatia theory.

C. Assuming the south Galatia view, Paul and Barnabas returned to Antioch from their first journey, having planted churches in south Galatia (Acts 13, 14). Peter came to Antioch to fellowship with the missionaries. Several other Jews from the Judaistic party may have come with Peter or at a later date (Acts 15:1,2; Gal.2:11,12,13). In face of Peter withdrawing from Gentile Christians because of peer pressure from the Judaizers, Paul rebuked him for his hypocrisy (Gal 2:11). No small controversy arose!

In the meantime, the Judaizers had infiltrated the churches of south Galatia and denied Paul's apostolic authority. They taught that circumcision according to the Law of Moses was

necessary for salvation (Acts 13:45,50; 14:2,4,5,19; 15:1,2,5). Paul reacted to the situation with quick vigor, rebuking Peter and writing the letter to the Galatians. The incident initiated the following Jerusalem council recorded in Acts 15:6-35.

The Judaizing perversion was the mixing of Judaism with Christianity, law with grace. The end result of this mixing is that Christ becomes merely a prophet, like another Moses, and His divine nature is overlooked. In later centuries this teaching took the name of Ebionism and was more fully developed.

D. The purpose of the letter is twofold: to defend Paul's apostolic authority and to expose the Judaistic error and defend the doctrine of justification by faith. The epistle is very much like that to the Romans which demonstrates there exists no justification by the works of the law. Salvation is by grace through faith (Rom. 3:28; Eph. 2:8,9). The Mosaic Law is not binding on Christians, nor has keeping it ever been a way of salvation.

The epistle is one of the most controversial writings of Paul. It abounds in strong feelings and strong argument. The contrasts are striking: grace and ritual, faith and works, fruits of the Spirit and works of the flesh. All religions that promote salvation by works are condemned by this epistle. Paul forcefully proclaims that we are both saved and sanctified by faith.

This letter is one of Paul's most influential. His letter to the Romans is considered an expansion of Galatians. The latter played a key part in the Protestant Reformation of later centuries, being called the "cornerstone of the Protestant Reformation." Martin Luther was fond of the book, calling it "his wife." Luther's commentary on Galatians was widely read by the common people.

II. BRIEF OUTLINE OF GALATIANS

I. Introduction and occasion of letter (1:1-10).

- A. Statement of Paul's credentials (1:1-5).
- B. Statement of problem (1:6-10).

II. Paul's Authority Demonstrated (1:11-2:21).

- A. Received directly from Christ (1:11-24).
- B. Confirmed by Jerusalem church (2:1-10).
- C. Demonstrated in rebuke to Peter (2:11-21).

III. Justification by Faith Expounded (3:1--4:31).

- A. Vindicated by experience (3:1-5).
- B. Appealed to from Abraham (3:6-9).
- C. Proven by the Law of Moses (3:10-12).
- D. Defended from the work of Christ (3:13-14).
- E. Declared permanent over Law (3:15-18).
- F. Defined by the purpose of the Law (3:19-25).
- G. Delineated by the believers position (3:26-29).
- H. Illustrated from civil law (4:1-7).
- I. Urged by personal testimony (4:8-20).

J. Argued from Old Testament allegory (4:21-31).

IV. Justification by faith in Christian Experience (chapters 5-6).

- A. The issue of Christian liberty (5:1-12).
- B. The issue of sins of the flesh (5:13-15).
- C. The issues of deeds of the flesh vs. fruit of the Spirit (5:16-26).
- D. The issue of a sinning Christian (6:1-5).
- E. The issue of giving, sowing, reaping (6:6-10).
- F. Summary (6:11-18).

THE PRISON EPISTLES

Introduction to the Prison Epistles.

This group of letters written by Paul is made up of Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians and Philemon. As a group, they deal more with general teachings and less with individual questions than do the earlier "travel epistles." They reflect a church maturing rapidly. They indicate that the second generation Christians were emerging but were sliding into spiritual complacency. The readers had been grounded in the elements of the faith and now needed more teaching to enlighten, stabilize and motivate them.

The historical period covering the epistles can be found in Acts, chapter 20-28. Conservative scholars agree that the epistles were written during Paul's first Roman imprisonment. That the letters indicate being written from prison is seen from Eph. 3:1; Phil. 1:7; Col. 4:10; Philem. 9. Evidence shows Tychicus was bearer of the letters to Ephesus and Colossae (Eph. 6:21; Col. 4:7) and that he had a companion on the journey named Onesimus (Col. 4:9) who was the subject of Philemon; thus, Ephesians, Colossians and Philemon must have come from the Apostle Paul at the same time and place.

Probable outline of Paul's final years:

1. Paul returned from his third missionary journey and was imprisoned at Caesarea for two years (Acts 24:26,27).
2. Paul was transferred to Rome where he was kept in or near the barracks of the Praetorian Guard or in rented quarters at his own expense for two more years (Acts 28:30). The Guard was a special body of about 9,000 troops assigned to the emperor in Rome. They were distinct from the regular army or the Roman police (Phil. 1:13).
3. Paul wrote Ephesians, Colossians, Philippians and Philemon while in Prison at Rome in the year A.D. 61.
4. Paul was released from prison, made several trips and wrote 1 Timothy and Titus. He was released probably because his accuser did not choose to press charges against him before Caesar and lost their case by default (Acts 24:1; 28:30).
5. Paul was rearrested, wrote 2 Timothy and was martyred in perhaps A.D. 66.

EPISTLE TO THE EPHESIANS

I. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

A. The Ephesian epistle is a doctrinal treatise in the form of possibly a circular letter directed to the churches in Asia Minor. It was written by Paul in about A.D. 61 from Rome where Paul was being held prisoner. The letter was carried concurrently with Colossians and Philemon.

B. Ephesians is the most impersonal of Paul's letters. It was written after many churches had come into existence and Paul had time to contemplate the meaning of the new organism called the "church." Ephesians is the one writing in the N.T. in which the word "church" refers to the universal church. The book is not directed to novices in the Christian Faith, but to more mature saints. Aristarchus, Epaphras, Luke, Demas and Mark were with Paul at the time of writing.

C. Christianity probably came to Ephesus with Aquila and Priscilla when Paul made a brief stop there on his second missionary journey (Acts 18:18, 19). On his third journey he stayed in the city about three years, founded a Bible college and the gospel spread throughout all Asia Minor (Acts 19:10). The city was a commercial, political and religious center. After Paul, Timothy pastored the church for a time (1 Tim. 1:3). Later John made the city his headquarters.

D. The purpose of the letter is that the Apostle had just written a letter to Colossae directed to correct specific error with the use of certain themes. With these thoughts still fresh in his mind he wrote them down in a general way in a letter to be circulated to a variety of churches throughout Asia minor, and delivered probably first to Ephesus. The purpose is twofold: 1. to disclose the mystery of the universal church; 2. to remind the believers to walk worthily in their daily life to conform to their new position in Christ "in the heavenlies" (1:3, 20; 2:6; 4:1--5:33; 6:12-20).

E. The major theme of Ephesians is God's eternal purpose to establish and complete Christ's body, the church. This epistle contains high and complex truth about the church, but nothing about practical church order.

II. BRIEF OUTLINE OF EPHESIANS

- I. Introduction and Greeting (1:1-2).
- II. The Church's Sovereign, Eternal Calling (1:2-14).
- III. Prayer for Spiritual Insight (1:15-23).
- IV. Individual Position of Church Members (2:1-10).
- V. Corporate Position of Church (2:11-22).
- VI. The Mystery of the Church (3:1-13).
- VII. Prayer for Spiritual Experience (3:14-20).
- VIII. Conduct of the Church in Unity (4:1-6).
- IX. Christ Equipping His Church (4:7-16).
- X. The Church Walking in Holiness (4:17--5:17).
- XI. The Church in its Family Life (5:22--6:4).
- XII. The Church in the Market Place (6:5-9).
- XIII. The Church in Spiritual Warfare (6:10-20).

EPISTLE TO THE PHILIPPIANS

I. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

A. Philippi was a city in Macedonia, named after Philip the Second. After the Roman conquest, a Roman colony settled there. The privileges of such a colony attracted many to settle there, and it became the chief city of Macedonia.

B. The church at Philippi was founded by Paul on his second missionary journey. Lydia, the young girl, and the jailer were some of his converts. Most of the members were Greek and Roman Gentiles. The fact that there was no synagogue indicates that there were few Jews. Paul visited the church after its initial planting. Paul wrote the epistle in A.D. 61.

C. The Philippian church was: 1. diligent in the work of the Lord; 2. faithfully devoted to Paul; and 3. liberal in its financial giving toward him. It was an ideal church, full of love, generosity and commitment to the cause of Christ.

D. The occasion for the writing of this Epistle was the sickness of Epaphroditus of Philippi, who had brought Paul a financial contribution from the Philippian church to Rome. Epaphroditus had fallen sick, and after his recovery he was anxious to go home. Paul uses the opportunity to send a letter to his beloved Philippians to: 1. acknowledge the gift; 2. to warn against error; 3. to exhort them to be joyful in adverse circumstances; and 4. to tell about his own personal situation and testimony.

E. It is the most personal of Paul's letters, and shows his great love for them. It is a love letter between a faithful church planter and his converts. There are two dominant topics and themes: the Gospel (1:5,7,12,16, 27; 2:22; 4:3,15) and joy (1:3,4,18, 25, 26; 2:2,17,18; 3:3; 4:4,10).

F. Some highlights:

1. The Praetorian guard (1:13).
2. Incarnation of Christ (2:5-11).
3. Christian living (2:12,13).
4. Priorities of life (3:8).
5. Perfection (3:12).
6. Resurrection and identity (3:20,21).
7. Worry (4:1-9).
8. Money (4:10-19).
9. Purpose in life (1:21).
10. Heaven at death (1:23).

G. Selected comments and analysis.

1. Regarding the preaching Christ regardless of our circumstances (1:12-30), we are to preach Him with pure motives and conduct ourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel. Our character and motives should match our message. Our purpose in living is to exalt Christ. We expect suffering, yet respond with joy.

2. Living life humbly (2:1-30) is to be united on one goal and walk in love. Christ is our example. He is of the same nature as God. As God, Christ did not give up any attributes as God, but voluntarily limited their exercise. The result was His exaltation. We are to humbly work out (not for) our salvation in humility with faithfulness (2:12,13).

3. Regarding the example of Timothy and Epaphroditus, there were several main marks of their ministry. They sought the interests of Christ first. Christ's interests were His people. The two were soul-winners (2:22) who served at great personal cost. They were faithful.

4. Regarding the priorities of life in chapter three we learn several things.
- a. To worship correctly we worship in the Spirit, not the flesh.
 - b. From Paul's example we are to seek the righteousness of Christ through faith and to know Christ in our personal experience.
 - c. We are to live faithfully to the light (knowledge) we have.
 - d. We are to follow the example of good biblical men to learn patterns for spiritual success. Paul is one example. There are many bad examples to avoid.
 - e. We are to keep in mind our position as Christians.
 - (1). Our citizenship is in Heaven.
 - (2). We have a mighty Savior to protect us and transform us to His image.
 - (3). Christ has all power and rule over all that exists.
 - (4). We have the promise of a future resurrected body
5. There are several principles to keeping peace in our heart and mind from chapter four.
- a. We are to work in harmony for the gospel.
 - b. We are to rejoice in Christ.
 - c. We are to be patient, knowing that Christ is near and interacting in our situation.
 - d. We are to refuse and reject anxiety.
 - e. We are to pray with thanksgiving, not indulging in fretful despair.
 - f. We are to keep our mind on the positive events of life.
 - g. We are to act out Christian living.
 - h. Through Christ, we are to be satisfied with whatever material goods and situation He has given us.
 - i. We are to give generously to the gospel work and God will supply our material needs (not wants).

III. BRIEF OUTLINE OF PHILIPPIANS

I. Introduction and Thanksgiving (1:1-11).

- A. Two offices: Overseer, deacon (1:1).
- B. Thanksgiving expressed in prayer (1:2-11).
 - 1. Gratitude for their faithfulness (1:2-8).

2. Request for their sanctification (1:9-11).

II. Preaching Christ Regardless of Circumstances (1:12-30).

- A. Preaching Christ in Prison (1:12-14).
- B. Motivation in Preaching (1:15-26).
- C. Conduct Worthy of the Gospel (1:27-30).

III. Living Life in Humility (2:1-30).

- A. Live humbly: not selfish, conceited (2:1-11).
- B. How to walk in humility (2:12-12-18).
- C. Examples of Timothy and Epaphroditus (2:19-30).

IV. Setting Life's Priorities Right (chapter 3).

- A. Worship rightly: in the Spirit, not the flesh (3:1-3).
- B. Paul's example in Christian living (3:4-14).
- C. Paul's exhortation to holy living (3:15-21)

V. Keeping Peace in Heart and Mind (chapter 4).

- A. Peace among Christian workers (4:1-4).
- B. Experiencing personal peace (4:5-9).
- C. Experiencing peace in our circumstances (4:10-23).

EPISTLE TO THE COLOSSIANS

I. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

A. Colossae was a city of Phrygia in Asia Minor. Originally on a trade route, it was an important city, but when the road shifted it lost its significance. It was located in a beautiful area.

B. The church at Colossae was probably founded by Epaphras. Paul himself never preached there. The church consisted of Gentile Christians, as is evident from the fact that no reference to any Jews is made in the Epistle. Philemon was a member of this church.

C. The occasion for writing of this Epistle by Paul in A.D. 61 was the information brought by Epaphras that the Judaistic Christians had come to overthrow the faith of the Colossian Christians. A peculiar false teaching had crept into the church which boasted of mysteries, secret knowledge and wisdom which discounted Christ. The most outstanding passage deals with Christology; that is, who is Jesus Christ (1:14-22).

D. Whereas the enemy in the book of Galatians attacked the work of Christ, the false teaching in the book of Colossians attacked His Person. The theme is the pre-eminence of Christ. The false teaching in Colossians taught angel worship (2:18) asceticism (2:18-23) and meaningless religious ceremonies (2:11-17).

According to the false teachers, Christ was only one of a series of angelic or demi-god go-betweens that one must go through to attain the "fullness" of God. Paul's crushing answer to this heresy was: Christ is the fullness of God (1:9; 2:9), the Lord of creation and Head of the church.

The false teaching was a mixture of Jewish legalism (2:11,16), Greek philosophy and Oriental mysticism (cf. 2:18-23). A beginning form of Gnosticism can be detected in the letter. The letter is excellent to counter many of the beliefs of the New Age movement.

E. There are three vital truths revealed to us.

1. The Person of Christ (1:15-23; cf. 1:19; 2:9).
2. The goal of Christian service (1:28-29).
3. The authority of the Bible (2:8; 3:16)

F. Selected comments.

1. Regarding Paul's prayer for the Colossians we learn two things: it had thanksgiving (1:3-8) and requests (1:9-14).

a. In his thanksgiving, Paul was grateful for their faith, love, hope and their reception of the gospel from Epaphras.

b. In his requests, Paul asked God:

-For their knowledge of God's will.

-For their pleasing walk with God.

-For their increase of knowledge of Christ.

- For their strength.
- For their faithfulness and joy.
- For their thanksgiving to God who qualified, delivered and transferred them from darkness to the kingdom of Christ with redemption and forgiveness.

2. There are several key points to learn about who is Christ (1:15-23).
 - a. Christ is the image of God.
 - b. Christ is the head of the Church.
 - c. All the fullness of God dwells in Him.
 - d. In Christ we have our reconciliation.
 - e. Christ rules all authority.
 - f. Christ sustains all creation.

3. Many practical points on Christian living are given (3:1--4:6).
 - a. Set mind on things above (3:2).
 - b. The Christian's life is hidden in Christ (3:3)
 - c. Be renewed in the image of Christ (3:10).
 - d. Put on love (3:14).
 - e. Let the Word of Christ richly dwell within (3:26; cf. Eph. 5:18).
 - f. Do all in the name of Christ (3:17).
 - g. Live godly in the home (3:18-21).
 - h. Live responsibly in the market place (3:22--4:1).
 - i. Be devoted to prayer (4:2-4).
 - j. In Christian witness (4:5,6):
 - Pray.
 - Be wise in conduct.
 - Look for and take advantage of opportunities.
 - Be gracefully informed on how to talk to people about the gospel in both manner and content of one's presentation.

II. BRIEF OUTLINE OF COLOSSIANS

I. Introduction and Thanksgiving (1:1-14).

- A. Greeting (1:1-2).
- B. Thanksgiving for the faithfulness of the Colossians (1:3-8).
- C. Prayer for the Colossians continued growth (1:9-14).

II. The Exalted Position of Christ (1:15-2:33).

- A. The Person, position and work of Christ (1:15-23).
- B. Paul's purpose is proclaiming Christ (1:24-29).
- C. Christ is greater than human philosophy (2:1-10; cf. 2:3,8).
- D. Christ is greater than legalistic religion (2:11-17).
- E. Christ is greater than mystic religion (2:18-19).

F. Christ is greater than ascetic religion (2:20-23).

III. The Exalted Walk in Christ (3:1-4:6).

A. Our focus on Christ (3:1-4).

B. Character development (3:5-17).

C. Family and work relationships (3:18-4:1).

D. Our prayer life (4:2-4).

E. Our personal witness (4:5,6).

IV. Final Personal Instructions From Paul (4:7-18).

FIRST EPISTLE TO THE THESSALONIANS

I. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

A. Thessalonica was the capital of one of the four districts of Macedonia. It was a large industrial center. The Jews had a synagogue there. The majority of the Christian churches were Gentile Christians.

B. The church at Thessalonica was founded by Paul on his second missionary journey (Acts 17:1-14). He was driven from the city by persecuting Jews. He passed on to Berea and Athens. From Athens Paul sent Timothy back to Thessalonica to encourage the new Christian converts (1 Thess. 3:1-2). Later, Timothy joined Paul at Corinth and had reported on conditions at Thessalonica (3:6). From Corinth Paul wrote the two letters to the Thessalonians in A.D. 51.

C. The occasion for the writing of this letter was the condition of the church. Paul was forced to leave the church after being there only a very short time. The result was a lack of experienced Christian leadership in the church. Though persecuted they clung to their faith. Yet there were some faults to be corrected. Main issues addressed are:

1. Paul had been slandered and needed to defend himself (2:9-10).
2. Some neglected their daily work under the expectation of the nearness of Christ's second coming (4:11,12).
3. Some heathen practices persisted (3:2-3; 4:1-12).
4. Anxiety was felt for those who had died (4:13-18).
5. Some friction existed among the church officers (5:12-15).

II. BRIEF OUTLINE OF FIRST THESSALONIANS

I. Church Planting in Thessalonica (chapters 1-2).

- A. The reception by the Thessalonians (chapter 1).
- B. Paul's manner of church planting (chapter 2).
 1. His hard work and integrity (2:1-12).
 2. Opposition to his work (2:13-20).

II. Paul's Plan to Follow-up (chapter 3).

- A. Paul's plan to send Timothy (3:1-5).
- B. Timothy's good report (3:6-8).
- C. Paul urging toward spiritual growth (3:9-13).

III. Practical Matters Discussed (chapters 4-5).

- A. Instruction on sexual matters (4:1-8).
- B. Instruction on personal relationships (4:9-12).
- C. Instruction on the return of Christ (4:13-18).
- D. Instruction on the Day of the Lord (5:1-11).
- E. Instruction on assorted duties (5:12-28).

SECOND EPISTLE TO THE THESSALONIANS

I. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Second Thessalonians was written by Paul soon after the first, and also from Corinth in A.D. 51. Some information had come to Paul concerning the conditions in the church. The persecutions seemed to have grown worse, and wrong conceptions about the time of Christ's second coming were entertained, so that some again were idle and others anxious. Hence Paul wrote this letter to encourage them in their persecution, to write about the second advent, and to motivate them to a quiet, sober, and diligent life.

The outstanding passage in this Epistle is that concerning the Lawless One, the Antichrist. Other verses telling of the Antichrist include Daniel 9:27, Matthew 24:15, and Revelation 11:7; 13:1-10.

II. BRIEF OUTLINE OF SECOND THESSALONIANS

I. Introduction and Greeting (1:1-2).

II. Encouragement in their Affliction (1:3-12).

- A. Paul's commendation to them (1:3-4).
- B. Paul's statement of God's future vindication (1:5-12).

III. Doctrinal Clarification on Christ's Second Coming (chapter 2).

- A. The day of the lord has not yet come (2:1-2).
- B. Sequence of the Day of the Lord (2:3-12).
- C. Second coming relative to believers (2:13-17).

IV. Encouragement to Christian Living (chapter 3).

- A. Prayer request by Paul (3:1-2).
- B. God as source of Paul's strength (3:3-5).
- C. Instruction to live an orderly life (3:6-18).

THE PASTORAL EPISTLES

The Pastoral Epistles were written by the Apostle Paul to two of his closest friends, Timothy and Titus. These men were young pastors, protégés of Paul who had worked with him in church planting. Paul had led Timothy to Christ. Paul wrote the epistles to help these two young men carry out their pastoral responsibilities, to hold fast to the doctrine of the Faith, oppose false teachers, give attention to the needs of their flock, especially the aged and widowed. 1 Timothy and Titus were written between Paul's two Roman imprisonments (A.D. 64-66) while 2 Timothy was written while Paul was in prison (2 Tim. 1:16,17) for the last time just before his death (A.D. 67, 68).

In 1726 Paul Anton used the term "Pastoral Epistles" which was a reference to 1, 2 Timothy and Titus. This grouping of epistles deals with questions on church order, soundness in the faith and discipline. They are a fair basis for measuring the state of the church in the seventh decade of Christianity.

FIRST EPISTLE TO TIMOTHY

I. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

A. Timothy was the son of a Greek father and a Jewish mother, Eunice. Both his mother and his grandmother, Lois, were Christians, perhaps converted on Paul's first missionary journey. Timothy was instructed in the new faith and soon became active in Christian work. When Paul met him on the second missionary journey, Timothy was well reported of by the brethren at Lystra and Iconium.

Paul decided to take Timothy as an assistant. Timothy was ordained to be an evangelist by Paul and the church elders. In order not to offend the Jews, Timothy was circumcised. He was Paul's co-laborer in Galatia, Troas, Philippi, Thessalonica, Berea, and Corinth.

B. In the next stage of his career, Timothy is found with Paul at Ephesus. After that the two went to Corinth, to Asia, and perhaps to Jerusalem. He was with Paul at Rome at the Apostle's imprisonment, and finally placed in charge of the church at Ephesus, where this pastoral Epistle reached him. He was a young man of modesty and self-denial, physically delicate, and often ailing, a favorite spiritual son of Paul, and a worthy servant of Jesus Christ. The letter was written by Paul from prison in Rome in A.D. 63.

C. Timothy's position at Ephesus was a difficult one:

1. Timothy was to resist prominent men in the church. These men were false teachers: ascetics and deniers of the resurrection of the body.
2. Timothy was to appoint elders.
3. Timothy needed to organize the church. Being young and timid, Timothy needed encouragement in Paul's absence.

D. The theme is twofold: to Timothy it was "fight the good fight" (1:18); to the church it was on how to behave in the house of God (3:15).

II. BRIEF OUTLINE OF FIRST TIMOTHY

I. Greetings of Paul to Timothy (1:1-2).

II. Paul's Motivation of Timothy (1:3-20).

- A. Timothy's task at Ephesus (1:3-11).
- B. Paul's personal testimony of the gospel (1:12-17).
- C. Paul's commission to Timothy (1:18-20).

III. Regulations for Church Worship and Organization (2:1-4:16).

- A. The sphere and stress of public prayer (2:1-8).
- B. The station of Christian women (2:9-15).
- C. Requirements for church officials (3:1-13).
- D. The nature of the church (3:14-16).
- E. Threatening dangers to the church (4:1-16).

IV. Personal Instruction to the Pastor (5:1-6:21).

- A. Relating to various groups of people (5:1-2).
- B. Regulating the widows (5:3-16).
- C. Dealing with elders (5:17-20).
- D. Manner of ministry (5:21-25).
- E. Concerning masters and slaves (6:1-2).
- F. False teachers described (6:3-5).
- G. Warning about wealth (6:6-10).
- H. The objectives of a Godly man (6:11-16).
- I. Concerning rich people (6:17-19).
- J. Commitment to the ministry (6:20-21).

SECOND EPISTLE TO TIMOTHY

I. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

A. Second Timothy is Paul's last letter. It was written after he had been arrested a second time. While setting in a Roman prison in A.D. 66, Paul expects to soon suffer martyrdom. Many of his friends have left him. Only Luke is with him. He longs for Timothy. He is at the end of his career and sees the crown ahead. Before his departure to Heaven, Paul desires to encourage his spiritual son, Timothy. He urges him to hasten to Rome to his side. Two of the striking passages of this Epistle are Paul's victorious look backward and forward (4:6-8); and the strongest proof passage for the inspiration of the Scripture (3:16-17).

B. Following his release from prison (when he wrote the prison Epistles). Paul toured the churches in Asia with Timothy and Titus. Paul left Timothy at Ephesus (1 Tim. 1:3) to take charge of the church and settle some internal problems. Paul then traveled to the island of Crete for a short ministry and left Titus to shepherd the believers there (Titus 1:5). Paul's interest in Crete was probably stimulated by his limited contact with it while under escort as a prisoner to Rome. God placed the desire in Paul's heart to return and pursue this church planting, missionary venture. It may be too much to say that Paul and Titus started the work in Crete, but the Faith was not well established.

C. When Paul left for the mainland he wrote a letter to strengthen his lieutenant who was still at work on the island. Paul expected Titus to join him at Nicopolis, a city of the Epirus section of Greece (Titus 3:12). Paul visited at least the following cities: Ephesus (1 Tim. 4:20), Miletus & Corinth (2 Tim. 4:20), Crete (Titus 1:5), Nicopolis (Titus 3:12), Troas (2 Tim. 4:13).

D. Paul's last imprisonment: Paul was in prison at Rome (2 Tim. 1:17), no one stood with him at his first hearing (2 Tim. 4:16), Demas had deserted him (2 Tim. 4:10), Luke was still with Paul (2 Tim. 4:11), Tychicus had gone on his errand to Ephesus (2 Tim. 4:12), Paul's accusers had become very vicious (2 Tim. 4:14), Paul was quite sure he was close to death (2 Tim. 4:6,7) and would not survive the winter (2 Tim. 4:21). In his hour of death, Paul's heart and concern was still in the ministry: that the gospel might continue to get out to lost sinners and churches might be strengthened!

E. The theme is 2:3: be a good soldier of Jesus Christ.

II. BRIEF OUTLINE OF SECOND TIMOTHY

I. Paul's Thanksgiving for Timothy (1:1-4).

- A. Greeting.
- B. Gratitude.

II. The Motivation to Ministry (1:4-18).

- A. Boldness (1:4-12).
- B. Faithfulness (1:3-18).

III. The Nature of the Ministry (2:1-3:17).

- A. Hardship (2:1-13).

B. Leadership (2:14-26).

C. Stewardship (3:1-17).

IV. The value of the Ministry (4:1-22).

A. The charge (4:1-5).

B. The reward (4:6-22).

EPISTLE TO TITUS

I. BACKGROUND INFORMATION.

A. Titus was a Greek, a convert of Paul (Gal. 2:3; Titus 1:4). Not much is known about him. He accompanied Paul to the Council at Jerusalem (Acts 15:12). This gave offense to the Judaizers, but the church agreed with Paul not to circumcise him. He was sent by Paul to Corinth to correct certain abuses. He returned with a report to Paul and was sent back with the second Epistle to the Corinthians (2 Cor. 7:6,7; 8:6, 16).

Paul wrote to Titus to encourage him, guide him in the administration of the church, and to warn him against teachers who taught false doctrine. The letter was written between Paul's two stays in the Rome prison. He wrote the letter in A.D. 65 from Macedonia or Nicopolis.

Titus was left in Crete to superintend the work on that island, and later he is said to have gone to Dalmatia, northwest of Macedonia. Tradition says He finally returned to Crete and lived out his life there. The leading idea in this Epistle is the importance of good works worked out in the Christian's life.

B. Chief contents include:

1. The requirements for pastor (1:5-9).
2. Teachings to several age groups (2:1-8).
3. How to relate to civil government (3:1-2).
4. The relation between good works, Holy Spirit and spiritual rebirth (3:5).
5. The Deity of Christ (2:13).
6. The blessed hope of the Christian (2:13).

II. BRIEF OUTLINE OF TITUS

I. Greeting (1:1-4).

II. Organization of Pastoral Leadership (1:5-16).

- A. Appointments of leadership (1:5).
- B. Qualifications of leadership (1:6-9).
- C. Necessity of leadership (1:10-16).

III. Instruction in Christian Living (2:1-3:11).

- A. Various groups considered (2:1-10).
- B. Motivation of the blessed hope (2:11-15).
- C. Good deeds encouraged (3:1-8).
- D. Argumentative people rejected (3:9-11).

IV. Concluding Remarks (3:12-15).

EPISTLE TO PHILEMON

I. BACKGROUND INFORMATION.

A. Philemon was a member of the wealthy class in society and a member of the church at Colossae. He had slaves, there was a church in his house, and he was kind to the saints. He was most probably a convert of Paul during the latter's ministry at Ephesus, since this letter intimates personal acquaintance. He was a very active convert. Apphia was probably his wife, and Archippus his son. Paul was a prisoner at Rome when he wrote this personal letter to Philemon about Onesimus.

B. Onesimus was a slave of Philemon. He had probably stolen money from Philemon and ran away. He fled to Rome where he met Paul and was converted. Paul would gladly have kept Onesimus for the work, but sent him back to his master, Philemon, along with this letter. Onesimus ought, as a Christian, to seek the forgiveness of his master. Onesimus means profitable, useful. His conversion made him such.

C. This letter is not an attack against slavery, but it gives guidelines on how Christians could practice their faith within that wicked system. Some say that Onesimus was freed and later became a pastor of the church in Ephesus. The date of writing is A.D. 61, the writer is the Apostle Paul and the place of writing is Rome.

II. OUTLINE OF PHILEMON.

I. Introduction (1-7).

There is a salutation and thanksgiving for Philemon's Christian love and faith.

II. Paul's Plea for Onesimus (8-21).

Paul has authority as an apostle to command Philemon in respect to Onesimus, but rather appeals on the basis of love. He tells of the change in Onesimus and appeals to Philemon to receive him as a brother in Christ. Paul suggests that Philemon would do even beyond what he said, probably suggesting that Philemon should set his slave free. Paul is willing to pay what Philemon lost.

III. The Conclusion (22-25).

There is a request for lodging, a salutation, and benediction. The spirit of Christianity speaks against slavery.

EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS

I. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

A. Hebrews' author is unknown. From earliest times opinion has been divided. The Epistle is very much like Paul's Epistles, yet there are differences. The writer was not one of the original Apostles, as is evident from chapter 2:3, where it mentions having received the Gospel from others. The omission of any address is also unlike Paul.

B. Various authors have been suggested by those who deny that Paul wrote it. The most plausible suggestion is that of Barnabas, the mediator between the Jewish Christians and Paul. Others have suggested Apollos, Luke, Clement, Silas, Aquilla and Priscilla. The book is anonymous. Origen's said God only knows who wrote the book. That observation still holds true.

C. It is addressed to Jewish Christians. The letter's content reflects:

1. The danger of apostasy: lapsing back into Judaism.
2. Persecution from the outside and from the Jews.
3. Disappointment in their expectation of the speedy return of Christ led to spiritual feebleness and the beginning of apostasy. Hence, the author:
 - Warns them against this danger.
 - Exhorts them to be loyal to Christianity.

D. The writer's method of remedy is to show the superiority of Christ over Judaism. The date is somewhere between A.D. 64-68.

E. One very troublesome section is 6:4-8 where it speaks of losing our salvation. Several interpretations have been offered.

1. One view is that Christians can lose their salvation. The problem with this view, however, is that it proves too much. Why? Because if Christians can lose their salvation, then they can never get it back again (6:6).

2. Another view is that only professing believers are involved. These are those who have only tasted salvation but not actually received salvation. They have fallen away from the knowledge of truth, but they have never fully believed the truth. The problem with this view is that these people have become "partakers" of the Holy Spirit which seems to indicate salvation.

3. A third view is seen in light of the context of Hebrews, which are people turning back from Christ to the old animal sacrifices of Judaism to cover their sin. Here the thought is that if they reject the sacrificial atonement of Christ as the only means of salvation, there exists no other means or system of salvation (cf. 10:26-31 with 6:4-8). Animal sacrifices and good works are bankrupt regarding gaining salvation. Christ is the only way possible to get forgiveness of sin.

4. The fourth view is called the hypothetical position. Here the idea of Christians losing salvation is only hypothetical. Perhaps it could be explained by holding the verses next to John 10:27-30 which states that nothing can snatch us out of our Father's hand. In other words, this is a clear statement that the believer cannot lose their salvation. How can one reconcile this truth with Hebrews 6:4-6?

One explanation is this: Christians can fall away and lose their salvation if left to their own strength. However, Christians will not fall way and be lost because they are kept by the power of the Holy Spirit.

F. Some important passages.

1. The completion of revelation in Christ (1:1,2).
2. The role of angels (1:13,14).
3. The nature of the Bible (4:12)
5. The nature of prayer (4:15,16).
6. The new covenant (8:6-13).
7. The one time all sufficient sacrifice of Christ (10:10-14).
8. The faith hall of fame (chapter 11).
9. The heavenly city (12:22-24).
10. God will never forsake us (13:5,6).

II. BRIEF OUTLINE OF HEBREWS

I. Superiority of Jesus Christ (chapters 1-4).

- A. Christ is greater than the prophets (1:1-4).
- B. Christ is greater than the angels (1:5--2:18).
- C. Christ is greater than Moses (3:1-6).
- D. Christ is the greatest object of faith (3:7--4:16).

II. Superiority of Christ's Priesthood (chapters 5-10).

- A. Christ has greater credentials than the high priests (5:1-10).
- B. Readers are exhorted to remain faithful to Christ (5:11--6:20).
- C. Christ is greater than the order of Melchizedek (7:1--8:13).
- D. Christ has the greater priesthood (9:1-10-18).

III. Superiority of a Life of Faith in Christ (10:19--13:25).

- A. The believer's position is secure in Christ (10:19-39).
- B. Examples of faith from the Old Testament (chapter 11).
- C. Believers have a different focus in life (12:1-2).
- D. Christians are disciplined by God (12:3-11).
- E. Believers relationships with others (12:12-17).
- F. Christians have a unique spiritual orientation (12:18-29).
- G. Christians have a new perspective while on earth (13:1-6).
- H. Christians have new spiritual duties (13:7-25).

EPISTLE OF JAMES

I. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

A. The general epistles.

The early church called several books the "General," "Catholic," or "Universal" epistles. The reason is that with the exception of 2 and 3 John they were not addressed or confined to a single locality.

B. The background of James.

1. James, the author of this epistle was the half brother of the Lord, the head of the church in Jerusalem in the apostolic age. At first unbelieving, he was led to faith in Christ probably by an appearance of the risen Lord. From the first organization of the church at Jerusalem James appears as its head. Paul, for example, after his conversion reported to him and Peter at Jerusalem (Galatians 1:18,19). James was not an Apostle. He took the leading part in the council at Jerusalem, and was highly respected by the whole Church (Acts 15:13).

2. The Epistle is addressed to "the twelve tribes which are in the dispersion." These were Jewish Christians that lived outside of Palestine. It deals with conditions that were generally prevailing at that time, a time of persecution and temptation and conditions resulting from them. Those persecuted were impatient and doubting and envious of the rich. Their faith was barren. Hence James writes to them to comfort, warn, and exhort them. The Epistle is ethical rather than doctrinal. Practical Christian ethics is the theme.

3. The theme: works are necessary to show faith. The book was written by James A.D. 45-50. Since the Jerusalem council is not mentioned (which was held in A.D. 49), that suggests a date before A.D. 49.

II. BRIEF OUTLINE OF JAMES

- I. The Nature of Trials (1:1-18).
- II. The Nature of the Word (1:19-27).
- III. The Condemnation of Partiality (2:1-13).
- IV. The Relationship between Works and Faith (2:14-26).
- V. The Wickedness of the Tongue (3:1-12).
- VI. The Nature of True Wisdom (3:13-18).
- VII. The Danger of Worldliness (4:1-17).
- VIII. The Need for Patience (5:1-12).
- IX. The Importance of Prayer (5:13-20).

FIRST EPISTLE OF PETER

I. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

A. Peter, an Apostle of Jesus Christ, was the son of a certain John and a brother of Andrew. They were fishermen on the Sea of Galilee, in partnership with Zebedee and his sons. He was a native of Bethsaida, was married, and dwelt with his family at Capernaum.

B. First he was a disciple of John the Baptist, and later led to Jesus by Andrew. Jesus at once gave Simon the surname Cephas, or Peter, Rock. He received three separate calls from Jesus: first, to become a disciple; then to constant companionship; and thirdly, to be an Apostle. Peter was a man of earnestness, courage, and impetuosity. He became the leader and spokesman of the disciples. He was the first one to confess that Jesus is the Christ of God. His denials cause him much suffering.

C. His life falls in three periods: training in personal fellowship with Jesus, leadership in the church (see Acts), and his missionary work among the Jews. He left James in charge at Jerusalem. Finally, he glorified God by a martyr's death.

D. The Epistle is addressed to "the elect who are sojourners of the dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Capadocia, Asia, and Bithynia." From the contents of the Epistle it is evident, also from the known character of the churches of Asia Minor, that the whole body of Christians in that region is meant. These were churches founded and built by Paul.

These churches were suffering hardships and persecutions for Christ's sake, largely from their neighbors in life. Because of this, Peter wrote this epistle of hope. Christians will suffer, but we are to make sure it is for well-doing, for Christ's sake. We suffer patiently and in hope of coming glory.

E. The suffering was not of widespread persecution but of the everyday pressure of living for Christ in a pagan and secular society. It involved riots, being stigmatized as an outcast, the object of local police action, mean slander and social discrimination. The place of writing (Babylon, 5:13) was Rome where Peter spent the last decade of his life, according to tradition. The letter was written by the Apostle Peter (1:1) about A.D. 63. Peter was martyred about A.D. 67 at the bloody hands of Nero. Hope in the midst of suffering is the theme.

F. Facts about suffering include:

1. Our future inheritance gives us hope (1:4,5).
2. The coming of the Chief Shepherd gives us hope (5:4).
3. There is purpose in suffering (1:6,7; 2:19,20; 3:14; 4:14).
4. Suffering can be expected (4:12).
5. Suffering need not be feared (3:14).
6. Suffering should be patiently endured (2:23; 3:9).
7. Suffering is to be received with joy (4:13).
8. Christ's sufferings are the believer's example (1:11; 2:21; 5:1; 4:1,2).
9. Suffering is designed to be in the will of God (4:19).

II. BRIEF OUTLINE OF FIRST PETER

I. God's Salvation: A New Hope (1:1-12)

- A. The nature of our salvation (1:1-9).
- B. The prophet's prediction of our salvation (1:10-12).

II. God's Salvation: a Motive for Holy Living (1:13--2:10).

- A. Living in Holiness (1:13-15).
- B. Living in reverence (1:17-21).
- C. Living in love (1:22-25).
- D. Growing as a Christian (2:1-10).

III. God's Salvation: a Call to Submissive Living (2:11--3:12).

- A. In relation to society (2:11-17).
- B. In relation to work (2:18-25).
- C. In relation to marriage (3:1-7).
- D. Relationships in general (3:8-12).

IV. God's Salvation: a Call to Suffering (3:13--4:19).

- A. The purpose for suffering (3:13--4:6).
- B. The response to suffering (4:7-19).

V. God's Salvation: a Call to Service (5:1-14).

- A. How to shepherd (5:1-5).
- B. Humble oneself before God (5:6-11).
- C. Concluding remarks (5:12-14).

EPISTLE OF SECOND PETER

I. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Second Peter was intended for the same readers as the first. External dangers, such as persecution, are not mentioned. The danger is from within: false knowledge. Heretical teachings on the Lordship of Christ and His Second Coming and the effect of these heresies on practical living in sin are dealt with. Growth in true Christian knowledge, the basis and practice of all Christian virtues, is urged. Important teachings include the inspiration of Scripture, the transfiguration, and the Second Coming of Christ. The author is the Apostle Peter and the book was written A.D. 66 from Rome shortly before the murder of Peter.

II. BRIEF OUTLINE OF SECOND PETER

I. The Nature of the Christian Growth (1:1-21).

- A. The factors in that growth (1:1-4).
- B. The exercise in that growth (1:5-11).
- C. The roots of that growth (1:12-21).

II. The Condemnation of False Teachers (chapter 2).

- A. Traits of false teachers (2:1-3).
- B. The judgment of false teachers (2:4-9).
- C. The works of false teachers (2:10-22).

III. God's Plan for the Future (chapter 3).

- A. The coming of Christ (3:1-13).
- B. The believer's life of diligence (3:14-18).

EPISTLES OF JOHN

FIRST JOHN

I. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

John the Apostle wrote the three Epistles of John (see Gospel of John for background). The striking likeness with John's Gospel in respect to readers, phraseology, and construction of sentences is evident. They may have been written and sent at the same time. The Epistles contain the application of the Gospel to life. The Epistles were probably written from Ephesus in about A.D. 90. The readers were Christians at large. A dominant theme is fellowship. There are warnings against false teachers.

II. BRIEF OUTLINE OF FIRST JOHN

I. Introduction and Purpose (1:1-4).

II. Standards of Fellowship (1:5--2:2).

- A. Walking with Christ (1:5-7).
- B. Confession of sin (1:8-22).

III. How to Walk in Fellowship (2:2--3:27).

- A. Obedience to Christ (2:3-6).
- B. Love for other Christians (2:7-14).
- C. Does not love the world (2:15-17).
- D. Acceptance of the fundamentals of Faith (2:18-27).
- E. A practice of personal righteousness (3:4-10).
- F. A hope fixed on the coming of Christ (3:1-3).
- G. A practical helping of those in need (3:17).
- H. A clean conscience (3:19-21).

IV. Warnings of Fellowship (4:1-21).

- A. Expect and defend against false doctrine (4:1-6).
- B. Love one another (4:7-21).

V. Blessings of Fellowship (chapter 5).

- A. Love with God and Christians (5:1-3).
- B. Overcomer of the world by faith (5:4-5).
- C. Assurance of our salvation (5:6-13).
- D. Answers to prayer (5:14-17).
- E. Victory over persistent sin (5:18-21).

SECOND EPISTLE OF JOHN.

I. BACKGROUND MATERIAL.

The destination of this letter is uncertain. The "chosen lady" may have been an individual or a church. The theme: walk in truth and love.

II. BRIEF OUTLINE.

I. Introduction and encouragement (1-4).

- A. Love in truth.
- B. Know the truth.
- C. Walk in truth.

II. Instruction to love (5,6).

- A. Love is a command.
- B. We are to walk in love.

III. Defend the truth (7-11).

- A. Many deceivers deny the Incarnation.
- B. Christians are to guard against deceivers.
- C. These deceivers are not Christians but only pretenders.

THIRD EPISTLE OF JOHN.

1. BACKGROUND MATERIAL.

This epistle is addressed to a certain Gaius, a willing disciple, given to hospitality. John desires to express his appreciation of the hospitality enjoyed by itinerant brethren, and to condemn the attitude of others who lacked hospitality and exerted selfish ambition.

II. BRIEF OUTLINE

I. The Good Example of Gaius (1-8).

- A. Walking in truth.
- B. John prayed for physical and spiritual health.
- C. Commended for hospitality for traveling evangelists and Bible teachers.
- D. Commended for love.
- E. Supporting evangelists and Bible teachers is to participate in their work.
- F. Christians ought to support Christian workers.

II. The Poor Example of Diotrephes (9-11).

- A. Loved to be first (pride of the church boss).
- B. Rejected leadership and authority.
- C. Wrongly accusing men of God.
- D. Used wicked language.
- E. Rejected traveling workers.
- F. Punished those who wanted to practice hospitality and participate in the work of traveling evangelists and Bible teachers.
- G. His actions were wicked.

III. Introduction of Demetrius (12-14).

EPISTLE OF JUDE

1. BACKGROUND MATERIAL.

Jude was a brother of the well-known James, head of the church of Jerusalem, a half brother of the Lord (Matt. 13:55; Mk. 6:3). Jude was not an Apostle. No more is known of him. Like the other brothers of Jesus, Jude at first did not believe on Him, but after His Resurrection became a follower.

To what particular body of Christians the Epistle is addressed is also unknown. They were exposed to the outbreak of licentiousness, fornication, mockery, ungodliness, pride, and greed, among some false brethren that had crept into the church. In other words, there was the abuse of Christian liberty. Jude urges them to contend for the faith once delivered to the saints and to stand against apostasy. The date was about A.D. 70-80. Jude started out to write about salvation but needed to change topics and speak out in defense against those who were a threat to the Christian Faith.

II. BRIEF OUTLINE AND COMMENT

I. Introduction and Purpose (1-4).

A. Defend the Faith.

The "Faith" is that common body of truths taught by the Apostles and had been once delivered to the Church. It was not to be added to nor subtracted from. This body of theology was so valuable the saints were to defend it with all diligence. The statement also indicates that special revelation was finished in the first generation. The fundamentals of the Christian faith must be defended as well as proclaimed.

B. Subversion of the Faith.

Certain people abused Christian liberty. They were probably of an incipient form of Gnosticism which generally taught that matter was evil but spirit was good. The result was to cultivate the "spiritual" life and let the body do whatever comes naturally, which was to indulge in sin. They denied the Person of Christ.

II. The Condemnation of False Teachers (5-16).

A. Examples from the past (5-7).

1. Those who left Egypt.
2. Those angels cohabiting with women.
3. Citizens of Sodom and Gomorrah.
4. The idea is that if God so judged these workers of evil, He also will the ones of Jude's day. The truth applies for today.

B. Works of the false teachers (8-16).

1. Rebellion against authority.
2. Deceit, greed, selfish, proud, trouble makers, manipulating people for their own self advantage.

3. Their judgment is sure.

III. The Encouragement to Believers (17-24).

- A. Take direction from the Word of God.
- B. Expect false teachers.
- C. Mature in the Christian Faith.
- D. Pray in the Holy Spirit

THE REVELATION

I. BACKGROUND INFORMATION.

A. The revelation, or Apocalypse, means unveiling. This book is so called because it is a disclosure of the future. This revelation is from God, through Christ, through the angel, through John, to the Church. It concerns things which must shortly come to pass. The language of the book is largely symbolic. Some symbols are explained (e.g. 1:20; 17:1, 15). Care must be given to note such words as "like," "as," which point to a comparison rather than a specific identification.

The use of many symbols is required as future events and spiritual realities are described from which the reader has a limited frame of reference to understand. Much of the symbolism is derived from the Old Testament prophets. The "revelation" is the disclosure of the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ.

B. The author is John, the Apostle, who wrote the book while he was in exile on the isle of Patmos, or after his return. He saw the visions while being on the island. Patmos is located off southwest coast of Asia Minor. John was banished from his ministry in Ephesus because of his testimony. This fact indicates that the book was written during the period of Roman persecutions, probably under Domitian (A.D. 81-96), and the struggle for existence of the church.

The emperor demanded worship as lord and god. Christians refusing to worship him were persecuted. Still greater persecutions were in store for them. For their consolation the Lord directed John to address this book to them. The theme of the book is: "I come quickly," and the consolation is the impending judgment on the world with the triumph of Christ.

C. There are four basic ways the book of Revelation has been interpreted.

1. The allegorical (or idealist) view which sees the events as nonliteral, but representing the age old conflicts of great truths of reality such as good vs. evil. This method is used by the Liberal. The disadvantage with this approach is that the interpreter can make the text say anything they want.

2. The preterist (past) view sees the book as early church conflicts presented in symbolic form.

3. The historical view sees Revelation as historically picturing the time between Christ's two advents in symbol form. In other words, it is church history.

4. The futurist view sees Revelation as historically depicting literal events yet to come in history. Usually chapters 1-3 are viewed as giving a panorama of church history (or as conditions in the church at any time in its history), or both of these positions. Chapter 4-18 picture the Great Tribulation. Chapters 19-22 show time and events beyond the Great Tribulation. This is the view taken in this survey.

The difficulty with this method is that the interpreter must assign all the events to a particular time in future history. This is hard since only God knows what the future actually looks like.

D. Jesus Christ is named in seven chief roles.

1. He is the risen, glorified Son of God among the churches as the lightbearers of this present age He judges their state by His Spirit (chapters 2,3).

2. He is the Lamb in heaven (after the rapture of the Churches) publicly invested with authority to carry out the determined preliminary judgments upon men before His personal arrival on earth as Judge and King (chapters 4-19).

3. He comes to earth as King and Lord of Lords in the Great Day of Wrath (19:11-21).

4. He is Christ, reigning with His glorified saints on earth, during one thousand years (20:1-6). He is then "King over all the earth" (Zechariah 14:9).

5. He is the judge upon the Great White Throne, with the holiness, righteousness and absolute truth of Deity. In other words, the absolute Deity of Christ is finally fully unveiled in judgment (20:11-15).

6. He is the Lamb, upon "the throne of God and of the Lamb" through whom, though subjected willingly to the Father (I Corinthians 15:28), the glory and love of His deity will be expressed forevermore (21:22,23; 22:3,4).

7. He is "I Jesus... the root and offspring of David, the bright, the morning star" to his own, His beloved servants (22:16).

II. BRIEF OUTLINE OF REVELATION

I. Introduction and Purpose (1:1-20).

A. The revelation of Christ (1:1-16).

B. The purpose of the vision (1:17-20).

II. Messages to the Seven Churches (chapters 2 and 3).

A. The church in Ephesus (2:1-7).

B. The church in Smyrna (2:8-11).

C. The church in Pergamum (2:12-17).

D. The church in Thyatira (2:18-29).

E. The church in Sardis (3:1-6).

F. The church in Philadelphia (3:7-13).

F. The church in Laodicea (3:14-22).

III. The Throne Room of Heaven (chapters 4 and 5).

A. The rapture of the church (4:1-3).

B. Worship to Christ (4:4-11).

C. Scroll of which Christ was worthy to open (chapter 5).

IV. The Six Seals Judgment (chapter 6).

- A. Seal one: release of the Anti-Christ (6:1-2).
- B. Seal two: open warfare (6:3-4).
- C. Seal three: famine (6:5-6).
- D. Seal four: death (6:7-8).
- E. Seal five: religious persecution(6:9-11).
- F. Seal six: physical destruction (6:12-17).

V. The Great Ministry of Evangelism (chapter 7).

- A. Sealing of the 144,000 Jewish Evangelists (7:1-8).
- B. The multitudes of martyrs in heaven (7:9-17).

VI. The Trumpet Judgments Out of the Seventh Seal (chapters 8 and 9).

- A. Opening of the seventh seal (8:1-6).
- B. Trumpet one: fire from heaven (8:7).
- C. Trumpet two: meteor from heaven (8:8-9).
- D. Trumpet three: fresh water polluted (8:10-11).
- E. Trumpet four: darkness on earth (8:12-13).
- F. Trumpet five: demons from hell (9:1-12).
- G. Trumpet six: one third of mankind slain (9:12-21).

VII. The Bittersweet Little Book (chapter 10).

VIII. The Two Witnesses (11:1-14).

- A. Their Ministry (11:1-6).
- B. Their murder (11:7-10).
- C. Their resurrection (11:11-14).

IX. The Seventh Trumpet: Announcement of Christ Coming (11:15-19).

X. Personages of the Great tribulation (chapters 12 -13).

- A. The Woman as Israel (12:1-2).
- B. The dragon as Satan (12:3-4).
- C. The male child as Christ (12:5-6).
- D. Michael the Archangel (12:7-12).
- E. Satan persecutes Israel by war on earth (12:13-16).
- F. Remnant of Israel (12:16).
- G. The beast as Anti-Christ (13:1-10).
- H. The false prophet as prime minister for Anti-Christ (13:11-18).

XI. The Preview of the End of the Tribulation (chapters 14-15).

- A. The worship of the 144,000 (14:1-5).
- B. The angel preaching the gospel (14:6-8).
- C. Woe on those who worship the Anti-Christ (14:9-13).
- D. The angel harvesters of the earth (14:14-20).

E. Preparation for the bowl judgments (Chapter 15).

XII. The Bowl Judgments Upon the Earth (chapter 16).

- A. Bowl judgment one: sores on those with mark of the beast (16:1-2).
- B. Bowl judgment two: sea life is killed (16:3).
- C. Bowl judgment three: rivers polluted (16:4-7).
- D. Bowl judgment four: men scorched with sun (16:8-9).
- E. Bowl judgment five: darkness upon the beast's kingdom (16:10-11).
- F. Bowl judgment six: Euphrates river dried up (16:12-16).
- G. Bowl judgment seven: destruction (16:17-21).

XIII. Fall of Babylon the Great (chapters 17 and 18).

- A. Religious Babylon (chapter 17).
 - 1. The description given (17:1-7).
 - 2. The explanation given (17:8-18).
- B. Economic Babylon (chapter 18).
 - 1. The fall of Babylon (18:1-3).
 - 2. God's call to separate from Babylon's system (18:4-8).
 - 3. The torment at Babylon's fall (18:9-19).
 - 4. The joy at Babylon's fall (18:20-24).

XIV. The Return of Jesus Christ (chapter 19).

- A. Praise in heaven for Christ's overthrow of Babylon (19:1-5).
- B. The marriage of the Lamb and His Bride (19:6-10).
- C. The descent of Christ to the earth (19:11-16).
- D. The battle of Armageddon (19:17-21).

XV. The Millennial Kingdom (chapter 20).

- A. Satan imprisoned for 1000 years (20:1-3).
- B. The two resurrections (20:4-6).
- C. The battle of Gog and Magog (20:7-9).
- D. Satan & followers cast into lake of fire and brimstone (20:10).
- E. Judgment of the great white throne (20:11-15).

XVI. The Final, Eternal State (chapters 21-22).

- A. The new, holy city: Jerusalem (21:1-8).
- B. The description of New Jerusalem (21:9-21).
- C. Life in the new society (21:22--22:5).
- D. Final words of testimonies (22:6-17).
- E. Prohibition or adding or subtracting from the Bible (22:18-21).

This brings us to the end of the New Testament. I have covered with you the introduction as well as the historical and cultural context of the New Testament. Secondly, I covered issues of interpretation and canon. Next, you and I journeyed into the history of the first century church: the Apostolic period from Jesus to John's death. That is where I covered the ministry of Jesus and the Apostles. Finally, I examined with you the individual books of the New Testament.

The matter remaining is to give you a suggested and selected bibliography, or sources where you can discover much more detail about the wonderful book we call the New Testament.

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