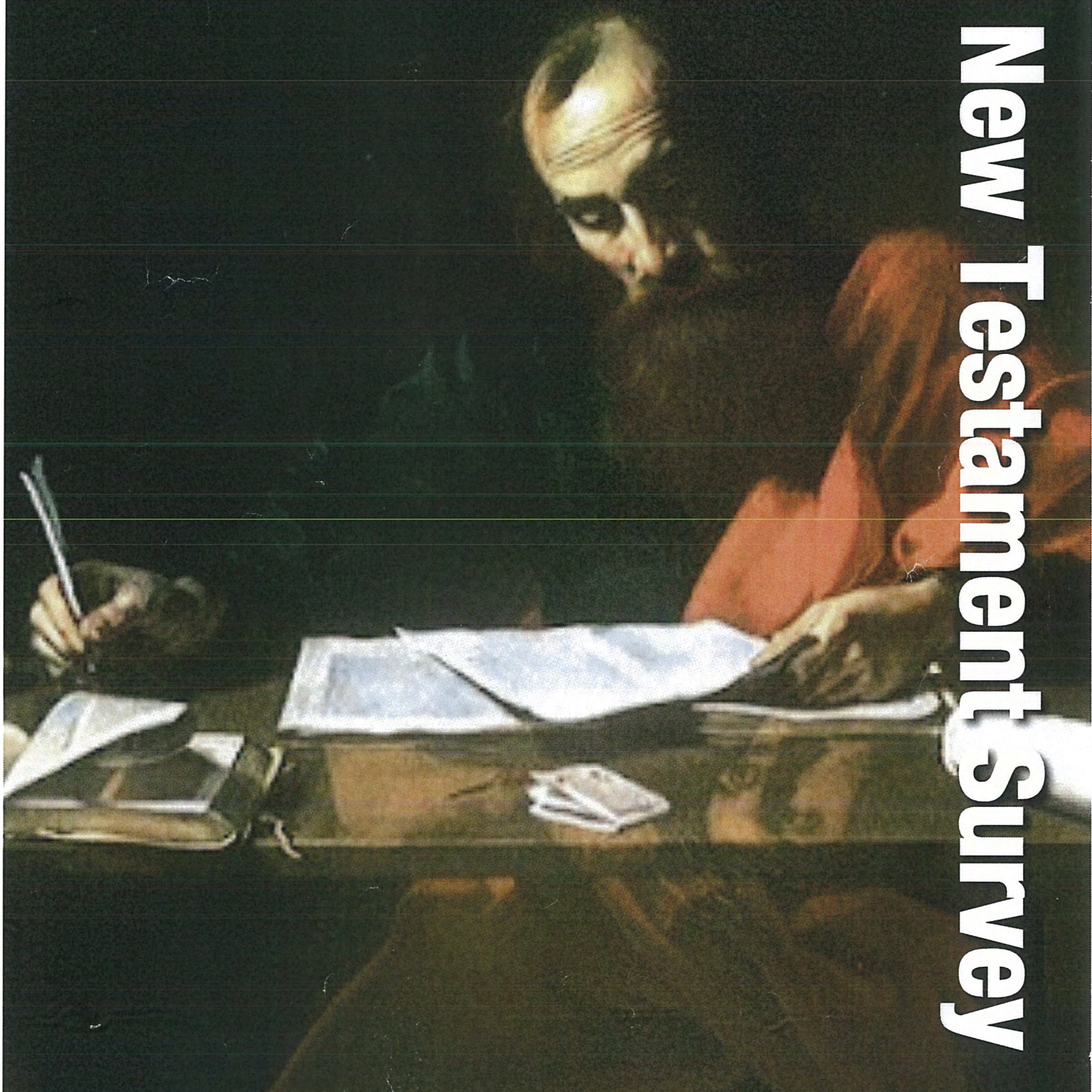


**NTS Volume 2: Galatians–Revelation**  
**Singapore Bible College**  
**Rick Griffith, ThM, PhD**

**New Testament Survey**



# New Testament Survey 2

## Galatians to Revelation

*Singapore Bible College*

Rick Griffith, ThM, PhD

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## Abbreviations

BAGD	<i>A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament &amp; Other Early Christian Literature</i> (by Bauer, Arndt, Gingrich, and Danker)
BKC	<i>Bible Knowledge Commentary</i> (2 vols., eds. Walvoord and Zuck)
c.	About (Latin <i>circa</i> )
ca.	About (Latin <i>circa</i> )
DTS	Dallas Theological Seminary
EBC	<i>Expositors Bible Commentary</i> (12 vols., ed. Frank Gaebelin)
Guthrie	<i>New Testament Introduction</i> (by Donald Guthrie)
Hiebert	<i>An Introduction to the New Testament</i> (3 vols., by D. Edmond Hiebert)
House	<i>Chronological and Background Charts of the New Testament</i> (by H. Wayne House)
LXX	Septuagint (250 BC translation of OT from Hebrew to Greek)
Kümmel	<i>An Introduction to the New Testament</i> (by Werner Georg Kümmel)
NICNT	New International Commentary on the New Testament
TNTC	Tyndale New Testament Commentaries
TTTB	<i>Talk Thru the Bible</i> (Wilkinson and Boa)



## Syllabus

### I. Course Description

A survey of the message of each of the 27 New Testament books, their relationships to each other, introductory issues (author, date, occasion, uniqueness, etc.), and factors in the first century (e.g., chronology and history) that influenced the life and ministry of the early church as well as affect the mission of the church today.

This course will follow a *blended learning* approach. This means that we will survey the NT by two simultaneous means of instruction: (1) *face-to-face classroom learning* via the instructor supplemented by outside reading, as well as (2) *web-based individual learning* via three websites:

- (a) All course PowerPoint and notes can be downloaded at <http://www.biblestudydownloads.com>. This site also has the entire PPT in Chinese and Bahasa Indonesia with portions in other languages.
- (b) The web-based version of the entire course is at Internet Biblical Seminary under "Advanced Studies in the NT" at [www.internetseminary.org](http://www.internetseminary.org). Students can pay about US\$20 via credit card for this option instead of paying S\$55.30 at the SBC Book Centre for the course text.
- (c) Online quizzes and the final exam are at <https://www.sbc.edu.sg/moodle/login/index.php>. If this SBC moodle site says cookies are not enabled, then enable your cookies under "Options." If it still does not work, try <https://www.sbc.edu.sg/moodle>. Online discussions are *optional*.

To get to the SBC website, log on with your normal SBC username and password (or the password sent to you by SBC IT), and then click on the NT Survey course. Read announcements that I have posted, and then take your quiz for that week. For tech issues (e.g., getting online), contact Joshua Tew in the IT department at [joshua@sbcedu.sg](mailto:joshua@sbcedu.sg) (ext. 1509 or HP 91376504). He notes, "Based on recent experience, turning off Norton anti-virus is not effective. Somehow Norton still has some residual effect after it has been turned off. You will need to turn off 'automatic start up of Norton Antivirus during System Startup' through the Norton Antivirus Options window. After doing that, restart your computer and you should be able to access the Quiz after that. You may want to consider Avast antivirus which is free for home use and we have had much better experience with it than Norton."

### II. Course Objectives

By the end of this part of the course the student will be able to...

- A. State the author, date, origin, recipients, occasion, characteristics, argument, and relevance of each NT book.
- B. Place the NT books in chronological order in conjunction with the Book of Acts, Roman history, and Jewish history.
- C. *Teach* the basic content of the course in English and/or prepare for this in one's native language.
- D. Know from experience the value of Internet learning so you will know how to learn via the net.

### III. Course Requirements

- A. Readings (25%): Please stay up on your readings. On each online quiz, you will report if you did your reading since the last quiz. This includes the reading for the day of the quiz. Your reading assignment depends on whether you take the course for certificate (CCTE) or degree credit:
  1. **CCTE**: Evening certificate students read the course notes before each session and then take a different online quiz from degree students (denoted by letter, not number).
  2. **Degree** (BCM, MA, MDiv, GDCS): Degree students must choose *one* of two options:
    - a. **IBS Course**: This course at Internet Biblical Seminary ([www.internetseminary.org](http://www.internetseminary.org)) is called "Advanced Studies in the NT" (NT-302). Sign up under the SBC group. The content is the same as our class, but the IBS course has more detail, interactive questions, and self-check questions. Complete all 16 lessons, including the reading, interactive questions, Life Notebook, and Self Checks (closed book, Bible, & notes but grades not counted). This IBS content covers about half of my 894 pages of class notes, but we can cover only about 25% of the notes in class, so this option can help you go deeper into each book. *Grades for the four online Unit Exams do not count for your course grade, but you may take these unit exams to practice for your Moodle quizzes and/or final exam.* Those taking the IBS option automatically have their Life Notebook as their project. Your *project* grade is based on your Life Notebook but report your *reading* progress on each SBC Moodle site quiz (see below). To enroll at [internetseminary.org](http://internetseminary.org), sign up as a

user under SBC, then go to Students > Shop > Course Catalog and select "Advanced Studies in the NT" (NT-302). Skip the pdf version and the online facilitated version, and in the "Class ID 302" option click on "add to cart" then "continue to checkout." Once it shows your transaction status as "SUCCESS," you are enrolled. Assure that your browser allows popup windows allowed, then go to Learn > Enter My Classes. Click on the Enter Classroom icon in the right ACTION column. Finally, download the NTS IBS Life Notebook Questions.doc from my website NT Survey link at the top of the page at [http://biblestudydownloads.com/NT\\_Survey/NT\\_Survey.html](http://biblestudydownloads.com/NT_Survey/NT_Survey.html). Paste this into your online Life Notebook so you need not type in all the questions.

- b. **Textbook:** Elwell and Yarbrough's *Encountering the New Testament* (Baker, 1998, 2005, 2013). If you choose this option, you will read the entire book, so please buy your own copy. Advantages of this option are the ability to read without needing Internet access, as well as getting a different opinion than that taught in class. However, the textbook does not offer an interactive approach with practice study questions to prepare for the graded quizzes and final exam. It also covers the same content with less depth than the IBS site. Students reading the text also must complete a more difficult course project (see below).

#### IBS ADVANTAGES:

- Consistency with Class: Since the IBS author and course professor are the same (=me), they don't contradict each other
- More comprehensive: Greater depth into each NT book as it covers about 500 pages of our 1000 pages of NT course notes
- Supports Views: I support a perspective on controversial matters instead of just listing views like ENT on many subjects
- Interactive: IBS includes online self-check quizzes, flash player clips, audio, etc.
- Variety: You probably only read books and articles in other courses, so this can be a different and refreshing change
- Cheaper: Free now instead of the normal \$38 while ENT costs about \$40-50
- No Course Project: The Life Notebook applies the courses as your project

#### ENT ADVANTAGES:

- Other viewpoints: The authors give different outlines and emphases than the class/IBS
- Convenience: No wireless access is needed as the textbook can be read anywhere
- Readability: IBS doesn't support iPad very well yet (I don't think!)
- More NT backgrounds: ENT chapter 2 on history, sects, etc. will be distributed to ALL students later, as it is on the final exam
- Shorter: Less reading than IBS (except on Acts) to give time for the project (so less pages to review for quizzes)
- Project: This is required for those who want to do translation, teaching, or writing

- B. **Quizzes** (25%) for degree students are the same whether you do the IBS course or read the *Encountering the NT* textbook (but CTE students have different quizzes). Quizzes must be taken *before* the class period for which they are assigned. Half of the quiz grade will ask if you completed the readings since the last quiz (50 points per quiz) and half will generally comprise five questions (10 points each or 50 points total). There are no makeup quizzes. *I will put the quizzes on the Moodle site (see page 1) one week before they are due—NOT on the IBS site (do NOT take the IBS exams instead of taking the Moodle quizzes!).* No quiz will be allowed after the respective class period begins as the website will lock out further access to this quiz. You should take this quiz by yourself (closed book, closed Bible, closed notes, opened mind). Also, do not wait until just before the quiz closes, as the server cannot handle everyone taking it at the same time. Further, when taking the quizzes or the final exam, do *not* let the timer go all the way down to zero. This will delete all of your answers! Instead, click the "submit my answers" button before the time limit so that your answers will be recorded on the database. Finally, do not discuss quizzes with other students as they may not have taken them yet. For IBS students, their Self-Checks will serve as a form of review and self-assessment, so make take them as closed book, closed "notes." This means you shouldn't be peeking at the other parts of the online lesson as you can do on the normal lesson study questions while you read the interactive lesson. However, these grades will not be recorded and will not count as part of your Life Notebook project grade. Grades are based on the following percentages: 0-59 (F), 60-69 (D), 70-79 (C), 80-89 (B), and 90-100 (A).

- C. **Project** (25%) requirements apply *only for degree students*. Choose *one* of five options:

1. **Translate NTS PPT** into your native tongue in 50-70 NT slides (BCM) or 70-100 NT slides for grad students (MDiv/MABS/MACE/MAIS/MAC/GDIS/GDCS) of the course PPT (OT allowed too). At [http://biblestudydownloads.com/NT\\_Survey/NT\\_Survey.html](http://biblestudydownloads.com/NT_Survey/NT_Survey.html) you can download the files in English (50-70 slides for BCM or 70-100 slides for grad

students). After the course I will upload the newly translated presentations for all to use. For more instructions, please download and read the TBB\_Translation\_Instructions.doc file at the TBB [link](#) below. Your grade sheet is on page 9a.

2. **Translate TBB** for 1 (BCM) or 2 (MDiv/MABS/MACE/MAIS/MAC/GDIS/GDCS) “The Bible...Basically” PPT presentations or Word scripts. We need help in Ao, Bisaya, Burmese, Dutch, French, Hindi, Japanese, Khmer, Kiswahili, Lotha, Malayalam, Mao, Mizo, Nepali, Sinhala, Sumi, Tagalog, Tamil, Tangkhul, Tenyidie, Thai, Vaiphei, and Vietnamese. These should total 50-70 slides (BCM) or 70-100 slides for graduate students. At [http://biblestudydownloads.com/The\\_Bible...Basically/The\\_Bible...Basically.html](http://biblestudydownloads.com/The_Bible...Basically/The_Bible...Basically.html) will find the English TBB materials. Please download the TBB\_Translation\_Instructions.doc file at [this link](#) and read it. Other languages can be downloaded at this site too. As in the project above, I will grade you based on page 9a and then upload the newly translated presentations for all to use.
  3. **Teach** at least 4 NT books in at least 4 sessions (BCM) or at least 6 NT books in at least 6 sessions (SOC/MDiv/MABS/MACE/GDCS) to a group of 5+ people (preferably to the same adults, teens or children, though the kids should be taught the primary 3 version of the course on the NTS website [link](#)). Sessions should be about an hour and can be combined into three 2-hour segments, a day seminar, etc. You may use or edit the PPT already designed for this course, or you may make your own. You are not required to develop more materials, but obviously those who work hard in this area tend to get better grades on the assignment and I would love to have what you may develop to upload for others to use in the future. Teaching can be via the pulpit, home Bible study, cell group, Sunday school class, etc. Alternatively, grad students may teach TBB sessions 1 (Overview), 2 (Map), 3E (Silence), 3F (Jesus), 6 (Open Bible), and 8 (NT) in “The Bible...Basically” seminar (see #2 above). BCM students may omit sessions 2 (Map) and 3E (Silence). Have your students fill in the page 9.1 (not 9.2!) evaluation on the last class session, but you should also submit to me with these a 2-page report that explains what you did, what you learned, who you taught, etc. You may teach in another language but please translate all student evaluation forms for me before submitting them. I will then grade you with the Teacher Report Grade Sheet (p. 9.2), so make sure you fulfill its requirements. Completing teaching by the due date may be difficult to fit into an existing small group calendar, so there is flexibility here as long as you finish teaching by finals week.
  4. **The Life Notebook** is the project for students completing the IBS course (see the page 9b grade sheet). It is an online journal that answers thoughtful, application-oriented questions as opposed to content-based questions that are covered in the interactive IBS format. In total, the student will write over 20 pages. You may want to download and use the NTS IBS Life Notebook Questions.docx file at the top of the NTS [link](#) under “Class Notes.”
  5. **A Research Paper** on the student’s chosen NT theme (but approved by the professor) must be 6-8 double-spaced pages and written according to Turabian and SBC Writing Standards. Use footnoting, not endnotes. Plagiarism will not be tolerated and your own written work from previous papers should be cited as such. The page count does not include a title page, table of contents, and bibliography of 6-8 sources. It will be graded based on page 9d and should follow the guidelines of pages 9e-f. The topic must be broad enough to encompass at least eight NT books, such as the glory of God, redemption, the new covenant, salutations in Paul’s epistles, prayer, worship, geography, some aspect of NT backgrounds that helps us understand Scripture, etc. Pick a theme in the first two weeks of the course and write on it in such a way that will show your understanding of the broad scope of NT theology and NT books.
- D. **Online Final Exam (25%) covers only the course notes.** It has multiple choice, matching, and ordering questions. This is a timed online Moodle exam with up to two hours to complete. It must be finished *before* midnight on the last night of the Final Exam period, so you must start it before 9 PM as the exam ends after 11 PM. Once you start the exam, you cannot view another page on the website or leave the exam or else you will not be able to re-access the exam. You may NOT refer to your Bible or other resources during this exam. Study for it with the study sheets (pp. 382-83).

#### Course Grading Percentages for Each Level

	Degree	CCTE	Audit
Reading NTS Class Notes (CCTE only)	-	50%	-
Reading ENT or Online IBS Course	25%	-	-
Project (translation/teaching/IBS Life Notebook/paper)	25%	-	-
Online Moodle Quizzes	25%	50%	-
Online Moodle Final Exam	25%	-	-

#### IV. Course Bibliography

- \* Books with an asterisk are on reserve in the library.  
 † Books with a cross as well indicate required readings.

Achtemeier, Paul J., with Joel B. Green and Marianne Meye Thompson. *Introducing the New Testament: Its Literature and Theology*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001. 544 pp. hb. US\$22.50 CBD.

Emphasizes the literary features of the NT in an easy yet thorough manner.

“A.D.” 12-hour film produced by Vincenzo LaBella. Edited to 6 hours by Gospel Films, Inc. (PO Box 455; Muskegon, Michigan 49443-0455) available from Visionvideo.com and Christian Book Distributors ([www.christianbook.com](http://www.christianbook.com)) for US\$20 (9-hour version for US\$70).

Religious life was complex when Paul wrote his epistles. Probably the most extreme differences were between Roman religion and Judaism (and those Jews who had embraced Christ as Messiah). The conflicts are well portrayed in this production that cost US\$30 million to film on location in Tunisia, Pompeii, Herculeneum, and Rome. It was televised in the USA in 1984-85. We normally see the last hour when we study 1 Timothy & 1 Peter.

Bailey, Mark, and Constable, Tom. *Nelson's New Testament Survey: Discovering the Essence, Background & Meaning About Every New Testament Book*. Eds. Charles R. Swindoll and Roy B. Zuck. Nashville: Nelson, 2003. 704 pp. hb. US\$37.80

A readable yet scholarly treatment that expositis every passage in the NT. Sidebars and inserts offer other valuable reference material such as lists of the parables of Jesus, the miracles of Jesus, and key theological principles. Constable is Chairmen of the Bible Department and Bailey the President of Dallas Seminary.

BAGD: Bauer, Walter. *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*. 5th ed., 1957. Translated by William F. Arndt and F. Wilbur Gingrich. Revised and augmented by F. Wilbur Gingrich and Frederick W. Danker, 2d ed. Chicago: Univ. of Chicago, 1979.

The standard Greek lexicon, also known as “BADG” in the more recent editions; includes the most up-to-date archaeological findings to determine the meanings of Greek words.

\*Beitzel, Barry J. *The New Moody Atlas of Bible Lands*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Chicago: Moody, 2009. xii+304 pp. SBC Book Centre for S\$71.65 (with student discount).

This major revision of *The Moody Atlas of Bible Lands* (1986) retains the strengths of being evangelical, excellent in both physical geography and historical geography with maps superior to *The NIV Atlas* below, and maps nicely tied in with the text. It also improves on it with many color photographs, 23 new maps, 48 pages of added commentary, plus Scripture and General Indexes. These maps appear in the NLT, ESV, and NIV Study Bibles. However, the revised edition still retains two weaknesses of the first edition: no regional maps and few Scripture references on the maps (though cited in supporting material). Beitzel teaches OT at Trinity International Univ. (TEDS) in Deerfield, IL.

\*Benware, Paul N. *Survey of the New Testament*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Everyman's Bible Commentary. Chicago: Moody, 2001. 352 pp.

A popular, concise, clear, conservative work by a professor of Bible and theology at Moody Bible Institute; helpful historical and religious background to the NT (23 pp.) and brief presentations of NT books around the New Covenant theme. Contains many helpful charts and maps. This book is recommended over the others below, as it is inexpensive and brief, yet accurate and relevant.

Berding, Kenneth, and Williams, Matt, eds. *What the New Testament Authors Really Cared About*. Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2008. 240 pp. US\$20.00 pb.

This short compilation by fifteen evangelical authors organizes the NT by biblical author and reviews each NT book. It has many color pictures and a helpful “Key Words for Review” section concluding every NT book. Each chapter begins with a helpful summary page of the “Who? Why? When? And Where?” of that book, and also explains its theology; however, it has no book charts, few outlines or the argument for any of the books, and only two maps. The editors teach NT at Biola University in La Mirada, CA.

\*Carson, D. A.; Moo, Douglas J.; and Morris, Leon. *An Introduction to the New Testament*. Grand Rapids: Apollos (Zondervan), 1992. 537 pp. SBC Call # 225.6 CAR

Much deeper than Benware or Wilkinson and Boa. Investigates each NT book's authorship, date, sources, purposes, destination, etc.; avoids excessive details about literary forms, rhetorical criticism, and historical parallels; includes chapters on the synoptic problem, the man and letters

of Paul, and NT canon; helpful and extensive name, subject, and Scripture indexes; full bibliography for each biblical book.

Cheney, Johnston M. *The Life of Christ in Stereo: The Four Gospels Combined as One*. Edited by Stanley A. Ellisen. 2d ed. Portland: Western Baptist Seminary, 1971. 275 pp. pb.  
A harmony of the gospels (the four accounts in one continuous chronological narrative). Advocates a 4.5 year ministry for Christ and six denials for Peter.

†\*Elwell, Walter A., and Yarbrough, Robert W. *Encountering the New Testament: A Historical and Theological Survey*. 3d ed. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1998, 2005, 2013. 430 pp. S\$50.30 hb. with CD at the SBC Book Centre (includes student discount).

The nicest layout of NT surveys in its color and CD with more pictures, quizzes, etc. However, it tries to do too much by covering background and survey in a single volume with neither treated in enough detail, though it is good at a popular level. However, one can still use the companion volume, *Readings from the First-Century World* (see below). The second edition adds more footnotes and a subject index but is mostly the same, and the third edition eliminates 16 pages though it chops half of chapter 1, expands other sections, and deletes still others. The goal is to be broadly evangelical. This book is also translated into Chinese, Spanish, Dutch and German.

\*\_\_\_\_\_, eds. *Readings from the First-Century World: Primary Sources for New Testament Study*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1998. 223 pp. US\$20.00 pb.

The companion to *Encountering the New Testament*. Ancient writings from AD 30-600 illuminate the NT and are arranged in canonical order. Includes Scripture, subject, and readings indices. This is a required text for my World of the NT course.

\*Fee, Gordon D., and Stuart, Douglas. *How to Read the Bible for All Its Worth*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1982; London: Scripture Union, 1983.  
Excellent insights on the types of scriptural literature. Not a detailed work on each book.

Geisler, Norman L. *A Popular Survey of the New Testament*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2007. 352 pp. hb. US\$13 CBD.

Includes many color photos, charts, and maps in discussing each NT book and the NT context such as authorship and audience, Gnosticism, slavery, and historical reliability. Geisler has authored, edited, or co-authored more than sixty books and is an evangelical apologist. In 2009, Geisler co-founded Veritas Evangelical Seminary in Murrieta, California. He now serves as Chancellor, distinguished Professor of Apologetics and Theology and occupant of the Norman L. Geisler Chair of Christian Apologetics.

\*Gospel Light Pub. *Reproducible Maps, Charts, Timelines & Illustrations*. Originally *The Bible Visual Resource Book: For Do-It-Yourself Scholars*. Ventura, CA: Gospel Light, 1989. 287 pp. pb.

Great line drawings for classroom use. Written by Keith Kaynor (?—his name is not mentioned).

Griffith, Rick. *Reference Books and Commentaries You Should Buy*. 3rd ed. Singapore: by the author, 2000. 68 pp. S\$5.00 in the SBC Book Centre (what a bargain!).

What I think are the best 5-12 commentaries on each book of the Bible and the best reference books to buy (500+ books surveyed). Helps sift through many study aids to save you money.

Gundry, Robert H. *A Survey of the New Testament*. 4<sup>th</sup> Edition. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2003. 542 pp. hb. US\$31 CBD.

Chapters begin with list, of study goals and end with summary, overview and of people, places, terms to remember, and review questions; illustrative quotes from ancient, nonbiblical literature; this fourth edition has four-color format with more photos and improved maps; Gundry (PhD, Manchester) is a scholar-in-residence and professor emeritus of New Testament and Greek at Westmont College in Santa Barbara, California. His commentary on Matthew caused quite a stir by claiming that Jesus taught much from Jewish Midrash literature.

\*Guthrie, Donald. *New Testament Introduction*. 4th ed. Downers Grove: IVP, 1961, 1964, 1970, 1990. 1161 pp.

A British conservative's rebuttal to liberal arguments against inerrancy, NT authorship, etc. Not light reading and a bibliography of over 100 pages!

\*Hall, Terry. *Bible Panorama*. Wheaton: SP Pub., Victor, 1983 (unfortunately out of print).  
Many excellent diagrams, charts, maps, etc. for the whole Bible; used in these notes.

Harrison, Everett F. *A Short Life of Christ*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1968. 288 pp.  
A brief, conservative commentary on Christ's life.

- \_\_\_\_\_. *Introduction to the New Testament*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964.  
A detailed exposition of each NT book and its background.
- \*Hiebert, D. Edmond. *An Introduction to the New Testament*. 3 vols. Rev. ed. Chicago: Moody, vol. 1: 1975 (298 pp.), vol. 2: 1954, 1977 (381 pp.), and vol. 3: 1962, 1977 (294 pp.).  
Conservative, technical work answering liberal arguments aimed at NT books, but more readable than Guthrie. Hiebert lectures at the Fresno Pacific Biblical Seminary in Fresno, CA.
- Hoehner, Harold W. "A Chronological Table of the Apostolic Age." Th.D. Dissertation, Dallas Theological Seminary, 1964, rev. 1972.  
Provides very exact dates for NT events backed by scholarly research. His chronology is followed in this course with minor variations. See pages 39-41 in these notes.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Chronological Aspects of the Life of Christ*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1977.  
Dates Christ's birth (4 BC), ministry (AD 29-33), and crucifixion (AD 33). His conclusions are summarized in these notes on the handout "Chronology of the Life of Christ" on page 56.
- \*House, H. Wayne. *Chronological and Background Charts of the New Testament*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1984.  
Provides 19 NT studies overhead transparencies. Many are used in this course.
- \*Huddleston, Barry. *The Acrostic Summarized Bible*. Atlanta: Walk Thru The Bible Press, and Nashville: Nelson, 1978; reprint, Grand Rapids: Baker, 1992. \$5 in the SBC Book Centre.  
Creative cartoons used in this course and acrostic memory aids for each book of the Bible.
- \*Jensen, Irving L. *Jensen's Survey of the New Testament*. Chicago: Moody, 1981. 535 pp.  
A beginner's guide in how to study the NT books. Contains many helpful charts.
- \*Niswonger, Richard L. *New Testament History*. Grand Rapids: Academie, Zondervan, 1988. 332 pp.  
A history of Israel from the Greek era (332 BC) to the end of the first century. Chronologically addresses Roman, Jewish, and pagan issues and their influence upon Jesus and the early church.
- Pentecost, J. Dwight. *A Harmony of the Words and Works of Jesus Christ*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1981. 183 pp. pb.  
A companion work to the book below placing the gospel accounts in parallel columns.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *The Words and Works of Jesus Christ: A Study of the Life of Christ*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1981. 629 pp. hb.  
A commentary on the gospel accounts from a dispensational perspective.
- Philips, John. *Exploring the New Testament Book by Book: An Expository Survey*. Grand Rapids: Kregel Academic & Professional, 2009. 336 pp. hb. US\$17 CBD.  
Emphasizes the big picture of the NT in its message and meaning by a respected Bible teacher. Phillips served at Moody Bible Institute for many years and is now retired.
- \*Tenney, Merrill C. *New Testament Survey*. 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1985. 473 pp. US\$22.50 CBD.  
An easy to read, popular summary of NT history and the writing of the NT books. His social, political, economic, and religious background to the NT is quite valuable.
- Vanhoozer, Kevin J. *Theological Interpretation of the New Testament: A Book-by-Book Survey*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008. 256 pp. hb. US\$20 (CBD US\$14)  
Includes a history of interpretation and major theological ideas for each NT book with articles by respected NT scholars. Vanhoozer specializes in NT interpretation.
- Walvoord, John F., and Zuck, Roy B., eds. *The Bible Knowledge Commentary*. Vol. 2: *New Testament Edition*. Wheaton: SP Pub., Victor, 1983. Abbreviated "BKC." 991 pp. hb.  
The best single volume commentary on the NT (my opinion). Volume 1 is an excellent OT commentary. Authored by present or former faculty at Dallas Theological Seminary. Provides the most help on difficult passages (in contrast to many other commentaries which avoid controversial texts). Is theologically consistent (dispensational) throughout. This 2-volume set is also available in Chinese, French, German, Hungarian, Italian, Korean, Russian, and Spanish with portions in Hindi, Thai, and Sinhalese.
- \*Wilkinson, Bruce, and Boa, Kenneth. *Talk Thru the Bible*. Nashville: Nelson, 1983. 522 pp.

Very helpful charts and maps. A very practical guide to the whole Bible by book and from a dispensational perspective. Highly recommended! Note: Although photocopied Walk Thru materials used in this course may say “do not reproduce,” approval to duplicate them has been granted as they are not for profit and clearly identified as Walk Thru materials.

Zuck, Roy B.; and Bock, Darrell L., eds. *A Biblical Theology of the New Testament*. Chicago: Moody, 1994. 487 pp. US\$25.00 hb.

An easy-to-read, synthesis of the theology of each NT writer from an evangelical, premillennial perspective. Contributors are all faculty members of Dallas Theological Seminary but interact with many past and present perspectives other than their own.

## V. Other Matters

- A. Contacting Me: You can contact me at SBC by box L19 or by phone (6559-1513). Also, my home is at 2-302 on the SBC campus, mobile is 9113-7090, and email griffith@sbc.edu.sg. My office hours when I can talk are from 11:00-1:00 on Tuesday and Friday and afternoons on Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday. Let's have lunch too!
- B. Copying Class Notes: Allowed when you give credit where credit is due (unless it makes you rich). You may also copy all course PPT and translate them into other languages.
- C. Course Design: A survey of the New Testament can be studied at least four different ways:
  1. **Sequence** (Scriptural or Canonical) is used by Jensen, Guthrie, Wilkinson & Boa. This way studies the books in the order they appear in the New Testament. Page 21 illustrates this.
  2. **Author** (Biographical) is used by Hiebert (vols. 1, 3) and Berding/Williams. This method addresses all writings by Paul together, then by Luke, by John, by Peter, and by others with only one book (Matthew, Mark, James, Jude, Hebrews). Page 13 provides this methodology.
  3. **Content** (Theological) is used by Hiebert (vol. 2). Page 23 illustrates how this is done.
  4. **Time** (Chronological) is used by Tenney. We will follow this method after studying the gospels and Acts to see the books in their historical context. Page 38 is our outline for this course.

## VI. Course Load

- A. The expected study time for this course is 2 hours for each of 28 sessions = 56 hours
- B. *Encountering the NT* = 300 pages
- C. The study breakdown for the class for graduate students should be approximately:
  - Readings (300 pp. x 3 min./pp. = 15 hours) or IBS course study (15 hours)
  - Quiz study & actual quiz time (5 quizzes x 1 hr./each = 5 hrs.)
  - Project: Translation or teaching (15 hours) or IBS course study (15 hours)
  - Final Exam study (5 hours)

## VII. Internet Advantages: Why will we all take online tests—and some of us take the IBS course?

- A. Interest: My prayer is that you will have *more fun* learning through the website than from a book-alone approach.
- B. Better Learning: Interactive website learning should help you retain the information more than simply reading a textbook.
- C. Equipping Others: I'm convinced that most learning will be via the net within 10-20 years, so being early adopters can help us better train others with this medium in the near future. We must not fear this tool that can so greatly enhance our ministries.
- D. Saves Time: Taking our quizzes and exams online will save us class time that otherwise would be devoted to taking, grading, and collecting paper. You also will have immediate feedback to your quiz and then can discuss questions in class.

**VIII. Course Schedule for degree students in BCM, MA, GDCS, MDiv & SOC**

Note that all readings are due *before* class and that quizzes cover material for the day of class up to the previous quiz.

Session	Date (T/Th)	Class Content	Assignments
1	7 Jan MDiv or 9 Jan GDCS	<u>Unit 1: The Kingdom Is Introduced</u> Syllabus, NT Overview, Synoptic Gospels	Read this syllabus and the online introduction to the course
2	14 Jan MDiv or 16 Jan GDCS	Matthew, Luke	<i>Encountering NT</i> , Chapters 4 & 6 or Online Lessons 1 & 3 <b>Sign up in class on options &amp; project</b>
3	21 Jan MDiv or 23 Jan GDCS	Mark, John Acts (GDCS only as 30 Jan is CNY)	<i>Encountering NT</i> , Chapters 5 & 7 or Online Lessons 2 & 4 <b>Online Quiz 1 by midnight before class</b>
4	28 Jan MDiv	<u>Unit 2: The Kingdom Is Expanded</u> Acts (covered 23 Jan for GDCS)	<i>Encountering NT</i> , Chapters 14-16 or Online Lesson 5
<b>30 Jan</b>		<b>Chinese New Year Break (GDCS)</b>	<b>No class but do session 4 assignments</b>
5	4 Feb MDiv or 6 Feb GDCS	James, Galatians 1 & 2 Thessalonians	<i>Encountering NT</i> , 19-35, 353-358 <i>Encountering NT</i> , 253-271, 327-334 or Online Lessons 6-7 Bring \$20 for volume 2 notes
6	11 Feb MDiv or 13 Feb GDCS	1 & 2 Corinthians	<i>Encountering NT</i> , Chapter 19 or Online Lesson 8 <b>Online Quiz 2 by midnight before class</b>
7	18 Feb MDiv or 20 Feb GDCS	<u>Unit 3: The Kingdom Is Tested</u> Romans	<i>Encountering NT</i> , Chapter 18 or Online Lesson 9
8	25 Feb MDiv or 27 Feb GDCS	Ephesians, Colossians	<i>Encountering NT</i> , Chapter 20 or Online Lesson 10
9	4 Mar MDiv or 6 Mar GDCS	Philemon, Philippians	<i>Encountering NT</i> , Chapter 2 or Online Lesson 11 <b>Online Quiz 3 by midnight before class</b>
10	11 Mar MDiv or 13 Mar GDCS	"AD" video on setting of AD 60s 1 & 2 Peter	<b>Translation, Teaching &amp; Research Paper Projects Due</b> <i>Encountering NT</i> , 361-366 or Online Lesson 12
<b>18, 20 Mar</b>		<b>Mid-Semester Break</b>	<b>No class or assignments</b>
11	25 Mar MDiv or 27 Mar GDCS	<u>Unit 4: The Kingdom Is Victorious</u> 1 Timothy, Titus, 2 Timothy	<i>Encountering NT</i> , 334-344 or Online Lesson 14 <b>Online Quiz 4 by midnight before class</b>
12	1 Apr MDiv or 3 Apr GDCS	Hebrews, Jude	<i>Encountering NT</i> , 347-353, 370-374 or Online Lesson 13
13	8 Apr MDiv or 10 Apr GDCS	1-3 John	<i>Encountering NT</i> , 366-370 or Online Lesson 15
14	15 Apr MDiv or 17 Apr GDCS	Revelation	<b>IBS Life Notebooks Due</b> <i>Encountering NT</i> , 375-385 or Online Lesson 16 <b>Online Quiz 5 by midnight before class</b>
<b>22, 24 Apr</b>		<b>Study Week</b>	<b>No class or assignments</b>
No class	28-30 Apr	Take the Final Exam online between Monday 28 Apr to Wed 30 Apr (10 PM)	Review the Study Tips for the Online Final Exam (notes, 508-9)



## CCTE Course Schedule

### 12 sessions taught for credit in evening school studies

Please use your SBC username and password to take your online quiz before midnight each Wednesday at <https://www.sbc.edu.sg/moodle/login/index.php>. While you should read more than you are quizzed on, quiz questions cover only the underlined pages of the notes on one NT book read for that night (10 questions). Pages 22-25 are optional, but please fill in these charts to review for the quizzes. Note that there are no G & J quizzes. Finally, these quizzes are closed book, closed Bible on the honour system administered by the Holy Spirit. Be honest!

<u>Session</u>	<u>Date (Th)</u>	<u>Topic</u>	<u>Class Notes to Read</u>	<u>Book for Quiz</u>
1	17 July	Syllabus, Overview	4-10, 38, 49, 52	No quiz
2	24 July	Matthew Luke	<u>67-81</u> <u>93-106</u> <i>total pp. tonight:</i> 29	Matthew (Quiz A)
3	31 July	Mark John	<u>82-89f</u> 107-116      22	Mark (Quiz B)
4	7 Aug	Acts	<u>120-131</u> 134-134c, 137-142    22	Acts (Quiz C)
5	14 Aug	James Galatians	267-273, 273p-274b <u>38, 167-174</u> 23	Galatians (Quiz D)
6	21 Aug	1 Thessalonians 2 Thessalonians 1 Corinthians	139, <u>203-210b</u> 211-216 156-158, skim 159-159z    20	1 Thess. (Quiz E)
<b>24 Aug-13 Sept      Mid-Term Break      No Class      No Assignments</b>				
7	18 Sep	2 Corinthians Romans	140, 162-166c 145-154, 155c-155d    36	No quiz
8	25 Sep	Ephesians Colossians Philemon Philippians	<u>175-180</u> 187-193, 201-2 245-253 181-186a      34	Ephesians (Quiz F) (Skip Quiz G)
9	2 Oct	1 Peter 2 Peter	<u>275-280a</u> 284-289      23	1 Peter (Quiz H)
10	9 Oct	1 Timothy Titus 2 Timothy	<u>217-222, 222a-i</u> 241-244h 237-240      31	1 Timothy (Quiz I) (Skip Quiz J)
11	16 Oct	Hebrews Jude	<u>254-266d</u> 310-317b      31	Hebrews (Quiz K)
12	23 Oct	1 John 2 John 3 John Revelation	290-296 297-301 305-309 <u>318-26, 337,</u> <u>340-48, 371-73</u> 39	Revelation (Quiz L)  Optional: 397-400, 421-24, 439, 442-45

# SINGAPORE BIBLE COLLEGE

## “NT SURVEY” OR “THE BIBLE...BASICALLY” COURSE EVALUATION

(for SBC students to have their students complete on the last day of class)

YOUR NAME (OPTIONAL):..... CLASS SIZE: .....

SBC STUDENT TEACHER:..... DATE:.....

Please summarize how you feel about each question and give this to your teacher.

KEY: SD = Strongly Disagree; D = Disagree; U = Uncertain; A = Agree; SA – Strongly Agree.

	SD	D	U	A	SA
The course objectives were clearly explained.					
The course objectives were achieved.					
The teacher was well prepared for each class.					
The course material was effectively presented.					
The teacher gave me some resources for further learning.					
The teacher responded well to students' questions.					
The teacher encouraged students to think for themselves and to express their ideas.					
The teacher was accessible to students outside classes.					
TOTAL					

### COMMENTS:

1. In what ways did you find this course helpful for your personal spiritual growth?
2. In what ways did this course help you better serve Christ?
3. How can this course be improved for future students?
4. Further comments:

## Teaching Report Grade Sheet

Student \_\_\_\_\_ Mailbox \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_  
 Presentation Taught \_\_\_\_\_ Language \_\_\_\_\_

For students teaching either the NT Survey or "The Bible...Basically" seminar, this page assesses mostly the *content* of your report (70% of the grade). The Format grade (the other 30%) addresses English grammar, clarity of writing and presentation, etc.

	1	2	3	4	5
	Poor	Minimal	Average	Good	Excellent
<b><u>Introduction</u></b>					
<b>Class</b> (whom did you teach and in what language?)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Scope</b> (what did you teach in each session?)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Procedure</b> (how did you conduct the sessions?)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b><u>Body</u></b>					
<b>Specifics</b> given rather than general observations	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Challenges</b> faced in teaching addressed adequately	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Improvements</b> suggested in content	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b><u>Application</u></b>					
<b>Action Points</b> given to improve next time teaching	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Personal</b> and transparent (self critical is good)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b><u>Conclusion</u></b>					
<b>Main points or lessons</b> reviewed and/or restated	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Length</b> (2-4 single-spaced pp., w/o unnecessary info.)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b><u>Miscellaneous</u></b>					
<b>Handouts</b> (student's own material included)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Creativity</b> (pictures of class, video clips, quizzes)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Course Evaluations</b> included & responses totaled	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b><u>Form</u></b>					
<b>Format</b> (typed, title page, length, pages numbered)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Submitted</b> in printed form (not emailed to professor)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Spelling</b> and typos fixed, punctuation good, 12 pt. font	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Grammar</b> (agreement of subject/verb and tenses)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Footnotes</b> (not endnotes, if used; biblio. of resources)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Arranged logically</b> (not a collection of thoughts)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

### Summary

Number of ticks per column	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Multiplied by point values of the column	<b>x 1</b>	<b>x 2</b>	<b>x 3</b>	<b>x 4</b>	<b>x 5</b>
Equals the total point value for each column	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

Net points \_\_\_\_\_ minus 3 points per day late (\_\_\_\_\_ points) for Teaching Report grade: \_\_\_\_\_%

**Comments:**

Revised 3 July 2012

## PowerPoint Translation Grade Sheet

Student \_\_\_\_\_ Mailbox \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_  
 Bible Book or Presentation Translated \_\_\_\_\_ Language \_\_\_\_\_

1      2      3      4      5  
 Poor   Minimal   Average   Good   Excellent

### Translation

**Overall content** translated accurately       
**No English** on any slide (design new memory aids)       
 --For example, replace "A Judge Must Judge" or "ARC" with a mnemonic in your language

### Fonts

**Notes page #** in Arial bold 24 point upper right screen       
**Generic fonts** or popular language fonts (e.g, unicode)       
**Sans-serif fonts** used that lack "feet" (e.g., Arial)

### Text

**Text does not overlap** other text, image, or page edge       
**Text shadow** not seen prior to animation appears       
**Text did not need to be enlarged** (should fill the slide)       
**Text has good contrast** with background       
**Text fits text boxes** correctly with extra space on sides       
**Text box colors match** surroundings w/o perimeter lines

### Images

**Images do not overlap** text or edge of page       
**Embedded text in English covered** with translation

### Miscellaneous

**Format** of fonts & background colors same as English       
**Animations** don't need correction; in PPT, not Keynote       
**Slide order** remains the same as the English version       
**Done right the first time** (no email trail with me!)       
**File name translated** with dash & number of slides at end       
**Easy transfer** by CD or Memory Key or Email       
**Sent as one PowerPoint file** (not separate ones or a pdf)

### Summary

Number of ticks per column \_\_\_\_\_  
 Multiplied by point values of the column x 1 x 2 x 3 x 4 x 5  
 Equals the total point value for each column \_\_\_\_\_

Net points \_\_\_\_\_ minus 3 points per day late (\_\_\_\_\_ points) equals % grade of \_\_\_\_\_%

**Comments:**

Revised 5 May 2014

## “The Bible...Basically” Script Translation Grade Sheet

Student \_\_\_\_\_ Mailbox \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_  
 Presentation Translated \_\_\_\_\_ Language \_\_\_\_\_

	1	2	3	4	5
	Poor	Minimal	Average	Good	Excellent

### Translation

Overall content translated accurately	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
No English on any slide (design new memory aids) <small>--For example, replace “A Judge Must Judge” or “ARC” with a mnemonic in your language</small>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

### Fonts & Formatting

Slide Advance Hashes retained	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Consistent Fonts (e.g., Unicode or generic/popular)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Format of headings and margins same as English	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Widow headings avoided	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

### Misc

Done right the first time (no email trail with me!)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
File name <i>translated</i> with dash & number of slides at end	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Easy transfer by CD or Memory Key or Email	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sent as one Word file (not separate ones or a pdf)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

### Summary

Number of ticks per column	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Multiplied by point values of the column	x 2	x 4	x 6	x 8	x 10
Equals the total point value for each column	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

Net points \_\_\_\_\_ minus 3 points per day late (\_\_\_\_\_ points) equals % grade of \_\_\_\_\_%

Comments:

Revised 5 May 2014

## IBS Life Notebook Grade Sheet

Student \_\_\_\_\_ Mailbox \_\_\_\_\_ Project Grade \_\_\_\_\_

For students taking the online Internet Biblical Seminary Course, the first four sections below cover the Life Notebook *content* (70% of the grade). The Format grade (the other 30%) addresses English grammar, clarity of writing and presentation, etc. In general, students need to write at least 10 pages for a B and 20 pages for an A grade. Students must answer all 66 questions in the Life Notebook.

	1	2	3	4	5
	Poor	Minimal	Average	Good	Excellent
<b><u>Clarity</u></b>					
<b>Direct</b> (each answer addresses the proper question)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Specifics</b> given rather than general answers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Color</b> of questions is in red and answers in black	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b><u>Quality</u></b>					
<b>Wide research</b> (interacts with other views & sources)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Individual work</b> (no more than 10% quotations)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Development</b> (proves points, not just lists verses)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Interpretation</b> of passages accurate (exegesis)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b><u>Application</u></b>					
<b>Action Points</b> apply the content to the student's life	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Follow up</b> from previous action points highlighted	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Personal</b> and transparent answers (self critical is good)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b><u>Miscellaneous</u></b>					
<b>Critical Thinking</b> (shows how/why student disagrees)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Depth</b> (answers all 66 questions with sufficient depth)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Length</b> (5-10 lines/question, 20+ single-spaced pages)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Overall content</b> (substance rather than filling space)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b><u>Format</u></b>					
<b>Submitted</b> via email in Word & pages numbered	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Flow</b> and readability of content	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Spelling</b> and typos fixed, punctuation good, 12 pt. font	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Grammar</b> shows agreement of subject/verb & tenses	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Citations</b> given in footnotes instead of endnotes	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Sections</b> clearly stated without orphan headings	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Summary**

Number of ticks per column	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Multiplied by point values of the column	x 1	x 2	x 3	x 4	x 5
Equals the total point value for each column	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

Net points \_\_\_\_\_ minus 3 points per day late (\_\_\_\_\_ points) for Life Notebook grade: \_\_\_\_\_%

**Comments:**

## Research Paper Grade Sheet

Student \_\_\_\_\_ Topic \_\_\_\_\_ Box \_\_\_\_\_

The first four sections below cover the paper's *content* (70% of the grade). The Form grade (the other 30%) is based on Kate L. Turabian, *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*, 8<sup>th</sup> ed. (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 2013). Follow also the *SBC Writing Standards 2014-ed. 12* and the checklist on the next two pages.

	1	2	3	4	5
	Poor	Minimal	Average	Good	Excellent
<b><u>Introduction</u></b>					
<b>Purpose</b> (the paper addresses what issue?)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Scope</b> of the issue defined/narrowed down	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Procedure</b> for addressing the issue introduced	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b><u>Body</u></b>					
<b>Wide research</b> (other views, good sources)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Individual work</b> (no more than 20% quotations)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Key passages</b> addressed adequately	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Development</b> (proves points, not just lists verses)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Interpretation</b> of passages accurate (exegesis)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b><u>Conclusion</u></b>					
<b>Solution</b> given to issue raised in introduction	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Main points</b> reviewed and/or restated	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Length</b> (1/2 to 1 page, w/o unnecessary info.)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b><u>Miscellaneous</u></b>					
(These can be addressed anywhere in the paper)					
<b>Application</b> (shows why the topic is important)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Depth</b> (leaves any questions unanswered?)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Internet</b> not used for more than 20% of sources	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b><u>Form</u></b>					
<b>Format</b> (typed, title page, length, pages numbered)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Spelling</b> and typographical errors, punctuation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Grammar</b> (agreement of subject/verb and tenses)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Footnoting</b> (better than endnoting; biblio. incl.)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Arranged logically</b> (not a collection of thoughts)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Sections</b> clearly stated without orphan headings	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b><u>Summary</u></b>					
Number of ticks per column	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Multiplied by point values of the column	<b>x 1</b>	<b>x 2</b>	<b>x 3</b>	<b>x 4</b>	<b>x 5</b>
Equals the total point value for each column	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Net points _____ minus 3 points per day late (_____ points) equals % grade of _____%					
<b>Comments:</b>					

## Research Paper Checklist

\* Asterisks show the most common mistakes SBC students make on research papers. Give special attention to these areas!  
13th edition (8 July 2014)

### 1. General Format

- 1.1 The most complete and widely used format guide is Kate L. Turabian, *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*, 8th ed. rev. by John Grossman and Alice Bennett (Chicago & London: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1937, 1955, 1967, 1973, 1987, 1996, 2007, 2013). 466 pp.
- 1.2 Areas not answered by Turabian are addressed in the SBC Writing Standards (2014 edition).
- 1.3 Other issues are found in *The Chicago Manual of Style*, 16th ed. (Chicago: Editorial Beni Noaj, 2010) and *The SBL Handbook of Style: For Ancient Near Eastern, Biblical, and Early Christian Studies*, ed. Patrick H. Alexander *et al.* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1999).

### 2. Preliminaries

- 2.1 The title page should follow the typical format in Turabian.
  - 2.1.1 Only the title and the author should be in **bold** with the rest in regular text. Do *not* have all CAPS.
  - 2.1.2 Please include your mail box number after your name.
  - 2.1.3 The same size 12-point Times New Roman font should be used throughout the paper.
- 2.2 The margins should not change (e.g., should not be in outline form) but should be 2.5 cm on all sides.
- 2.3\* Include a Table of Contents.
  - 2.3.1 The Contents page should include only the first page number of each section.
  - 2.3.2 Subtitles within the Contents page should be indented.
  - 2.3.3 Note this is called a "Table of Contents" and not a "Table of Content."
  - 2.3.4 "Table of Contents" should not be an entry on the Table of Contents.
- 2.4 Page numbers should be at the top right in the preliminaries (except no number on Title Page and Table of Contents) and at the bottom centre from the first page to the end.

### 3. Body & Style

- 3.1\* Provide an introduction that summarizes the problem(s) your paper aims to answer.
- 3.2\* Check your grammar for confusion of tense, plural, verb/noun, etc. (cf. section 9)
- 3.3 Use a spell checker if you have one on your computer to avoid careless spelling mistakes.
- 3.4 Double-space the paper throughout in prose form (not outline form).
- 3.5\* Write in the third person rather than the first person ("This author..." and not "I" or "we" or "us").
- 3.6 Follow these guidelines for headings within the text:
  - 3.6.1 Headings should match your Contents page. None of your levels should appear in all capitals.
  - 3.6.2 Headings should not have periods (full stops or colons) after them.
  - 3.6.3\* Headings should not be in outline form (no "I," "II," "A," "1," "a," "-", etc.).
  - 3.6.4 Avoid widow headings (at the bottom of a page without the first sentence of a paragraph).
  - 3.6.5 Don't repeat a heading on the next page even if it covers the same section of the paper.
  - 3.6.6 Each research paper should have at least 2-3 headings or divisions.
  - 3.6.7 In short papers (6-8 pages) without chapters, make (1) main headings **bold** centred, (2) subheadings regular text centred, (3) **bold italicised** left column, (4) regular text left column, and (5) **bold** text that begins an indented paragraph. If only two levels are needed then (2) above may be skipped.
- 3.7\* Do not clutter your paper with unnecessary details that do not contribute to your purpose.
- 3.8\* Make every statement a full sentence within the text (the exception is headings).
- 3.9 Critically evaluate your sources; do not believe a heresy just because it's in print!
- 3.10 Make sure your reasoning is solid and logical.
- 3.11\* Provide a conclusion which solves/summarizes the problem addressed in the introduction

### 4. Abbreviations

- 4.1\* Do not use abbreviations or contractions in the text or footnotes (except inside parentheses).
- 4.2 Cite from 1-3 verses inside parentheses in the text but 4 or more verses in the footnotes.
- 4.3\* Use proper biblical book abbreviations with a colon between chapter and verse.
- 4.4 Do not start sentences with an Arabic number. Write "First Kings 3:16..." (not "1 Kings 3:16...").
- 4.5 Write out numbers under ten in the text (e.g., "three"); abbreviate those over ten (e.g., "45").
- 4.6 "For example" (e.g.) and "that is to say" (i.e.) are abbreviated only within parentheses and each has two periods.

### 5. Quotations

- 5.1\* When quoting word-for-word, use quotation marks and footnote the source. Do not plagiarize!
- 5.2 Use proper quotation formats with single quotation marks within double ones.
- 5.3 Indent block quotes (no quote marks) with 10-point, single-space text of five or more lines (cf. Turabian, 349).
- 5.4\* Avoid citing long texts of Scriptures or other sources so the paper mostly reflects your own thinking.
- 5.5 Provide biblical support for your position rather than simply citing your opinion.
- 5.6 If your source quotes a more original source, then quote the original in this manner: R. N. Soulen, *Handbook*, 18 (cited by Rick Griffith, *New Testament Backgrounds*, 7th ed. [SBC, 1999], 165).



## Research Paper Checklist (2 of 2)

**6. Punctuation**

- 6.1 Periods & commas go *before* quote marks and footnote numbers (e.g., “Marriage,” not “Marriage”.)
- 6.2 Periods & commas go *outside* parentheses (unless a complete sentence is within the parentheses). For example: “Jesus wept” (John 11:35). but never “Jesus wept.” (John 11:35)
- 6.3 A space should not precede a period, comma, final parenthesis, semicolon, apostrophe, or colon.
- 6.4 A space should not follow a beginning parenthesis or beginning quotation mark.
- 6.7 A space should always follow a comma and 1-2 spaces always follow a period.

**7. Footnotes**

- 7.1\* The first reference to a book includes (in this order) the author's *given* name first then family name, title (in *italics* but not in quotes), publication data in parentheses (place, colon, publisher, comma, then year), volume (if more than one), and page number (no “p.” or “pp.”). For example: Ralph Gower, *The New Manners and Customs of Bible Times* (Chicago: Moody, 1987), 233. In footnotes, use a period only *once* at the end of the citation. Indent the first line of each footnote entry.
- 7.2\* Cite later references to the same book but a different page number with only the author's family name (not given name) and new page number. For example: Gower, 166.
- 7.3 If the next citation has the same book and same page number, then type “Ibid.” (This is the Latin abbreviation for “in the same place.”) However, if a different page number is referred to, then “Ibid.” should be followed by a period and comma. For example: Ibid., 64.
- 7.4 If the next citation is by the same author but a different work, type “Idem” (Latin abbreviation for “by the same author”) and a comma before the new book. For example: Idem, *Marriage and Family*, 221.
- 7.5\* Encyclopedia, Bible dictionary, or other book entries with multiple authors under an editor should first cite the article's author, then article title within quotes, book, editor, publication data in parentheses, volume, and page. For example: P. Trutza, “Marriage,” *The Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible*, 5 vols., ed. Merrill C. Tenney (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1975, 1976), 4:92-102. (If needed, look up the author's name after the Contents page by tracing the initials at the end of the article.)
- 7.6 Footnote numbers are raised with no parentheses and go *after* a quotation's punctuation (e.g., period).
- 7.7 Always cite your footnote numbers in sequence rather than using a former number again.
- 7.8 Use only numbers as footnote references (don't use letters or \*#@^%, etc.).
- 7.9 Cite translations in parentheses within the text rather than the footnotes—for example, “trust” (NIV).
- 7.10 Cite book, chapter, and paragraphs of primary (ancient) sources with Arabic numerals and full stops (e.g., “Josephus, *Jewish Antiquities* 18.1.3,” not “Josephus, *Jewish Antiquities*, Book XVIII, Chapter 1, Section 3”).
- 7.11 Page numbers may be added to primary sources in parentheses. For example: *War* 2.1 (Whiston, 44).

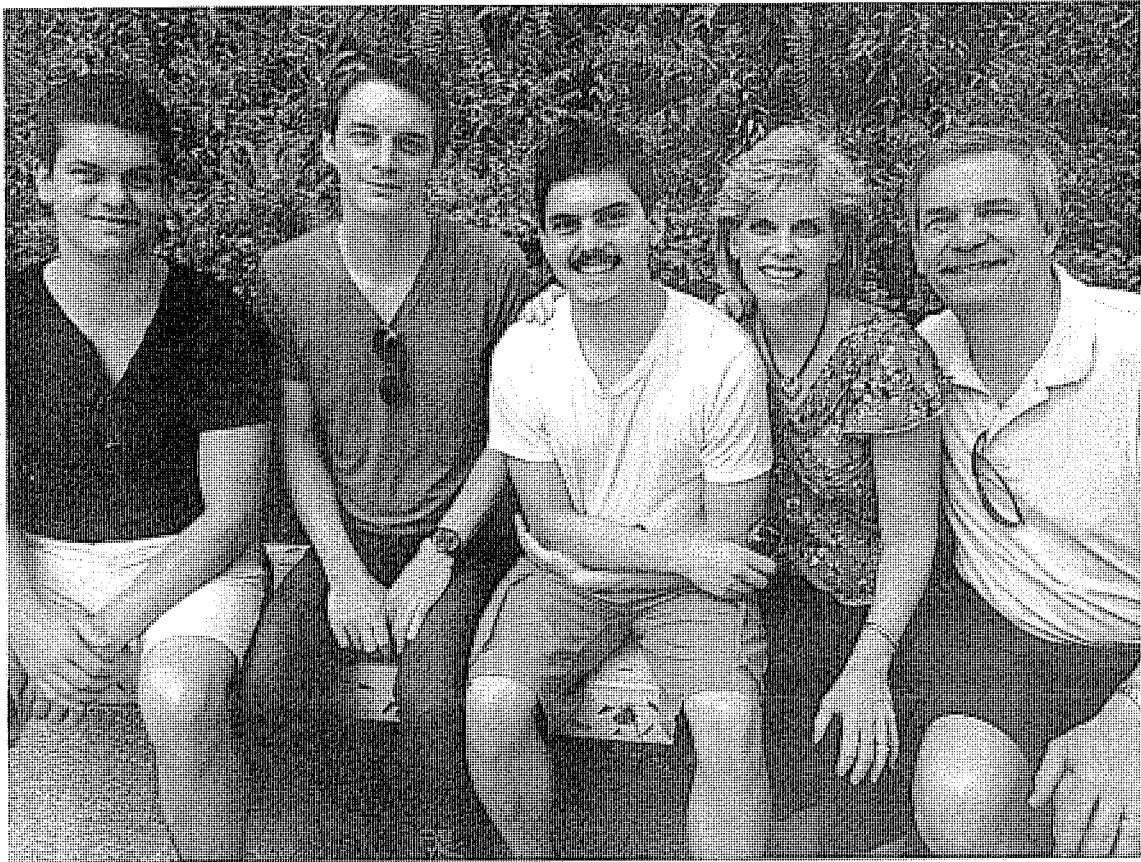
**8. Bibliography**

- 8.1 Alphabetize all sources by family name without numbering the sources.
- 8.2 Make entries single-spaced with the second line indented and with a double space between entries.
- 8.3 Do not cite an author's title in a footnote or the bibliography (no “Dr.,” “Rev.” etc.).
- 8.4 Cite book references differently than in the footnotes by including the author's *family* name first (not given name), title (in *italics* but not in quotes), publication data *without* parentheses (place, colon, publisher, comma, then year), and volume (if more than one). For example: Gower, Ralph. *The New Manners and Customs of Bible Times*. Chicago: Moody, 1987. Use full stops (not commas) after each given name, title, and date; don't use parentheses (but do use them in footnotes). Indent each line after the first line in an entry.
- 8.5\* Encyclopedia, Bible dictionary, or other book entries with multiple authors under an editor should first cite the article's author, then article title within quotes, book, editor, publication data, volume, and page. For example: Trutza, P., “Marriage,” *The Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible*. Ed. Merrill C. Tenney. 5 vols. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1975, 1976. 4:92-102. (You may need to find the author's name after the Contents page by tracing the initials at the end of the article.)
- 8.6 Put the bibliography on a separate page rather than tagging it on the conclusion.
- 8.7 Consult as many sources as you have pages in your paper (e.g., 8 sources for an 8-page paper).
- 8.8\* Include the bibliography even if the professor has assigned the sources.
- 8.9 Primary sources should be listed under the ancient author's name, followed by the translator's name. For example: Josephus. *The Works of Josephus*. Translated by William Whiston...
- 8.10 Primary sources with several or unknown authors should be listed by editor and/or translator's name. For example: Danby, Herbert, trans. *The Mishnah*. Oxford: University, 1933.

**9. Common Grammatical and Spelling Mistakes**

- 9.1 “Respond” (verb) is used for “response” (noun). “The respond” should be “The response.”
- 9.2\* Events in biblical times should be noted in the past tense; keep your tense consistent in the same paragraph.
- 9.3 Write “BC” dates *before* “BC” but “AD” dates *after* “AD” (“AD 70” and “70 BC” but never “70 AD” or “BC 70”).
- 9.4 Always capitalize the words “Christian,” “Bible,” “Christ,” “Word of God,” and “Scripture(s).”
- 9.5 The current trend is to *avoid* capitalization, especially in the adjectives “biblical,” “scriptural,” etc.
- 9.6 Avoid words in all CAPITALS in the text (except acronyms) and *avoid* all CAPS in titles.

## My Biographical Sketch



**Rick & Susan Griffith**  
Stephen (24), Kurt (27) & John (21)

### Background

“Never say ‘never.’” Rick and Susan Griffith both learned this age-old tip the hard way.

Rick recalls sitting in his elementary school classes thinking, “If there’s one thing I’ll *never* become it’s a *teacher*. Imagine saying the same stuff over and over, year after year!”

Yet after trusting Christ in junior high and acquiring a taste for teaching the Word of God, Rick’s attitude began to change. After his business degree at California State University, Hayward, and Master of Theology degree (Pastoral Ministries) and the Doctor of Philosophy degree (Bible Exposition) from Dallas Theological Seminary in Texas, Dr. Griffith soon found himself on the other end of the classroom—and loving it!

Susan, from Yucaipa, California, also learned not to say “never.” As she earned her Bachelor of Arts degree in piano at Biola University, several friends married and worked to put their husbands through three more years of seminary training. “I’ll never do that!” she exclaimed. Soon afterwards she invested three years (1981-1983) singing together with her future husband in the Crossroads, Campus Crusade’s traveling music team in Asia. This nine member Philippines-based group shared Christ in the Philippines, China, Hong Kong, Korea, Japan, Macau, Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia, and Singapore.

In December 1983 Susan’s “never” became a reality. She and Rick were married and like Jacob and Rachel of old, Susan also worked for her mate. During these seven seminary years Rick served as a pastor, corporate chaplain, and International Students church consultant. Susan taught women’s Bible studies and often ministered by singing. Their primary church in Texas is Christ Chapel Bible Church in Fort Worth.

The Griffith family now includes three sons: Kurt (27 yrs.), Stephen (24 yrs.), and John (21 yrs.). During home assignment they minister mainly from the First Baptist Church of Yucaipa, California.

### Ministry

However, since 1991 the Griffiths’ home has been Singapore where Rick serves as Doctor of Ministry Director with 30 other full-time faculty at Singapore Bible College. SBC has about 500 full-time students from 23 countries and 25 denominations, as well as many professionals in the certificate-level Centre for Continuing Theological Education (CCTE). During his first term he taught a variety of courses: Old

Testament Survey, New Testament Survey, New Testament Backgrounds, Eschatology (the study of future things), Evangelism, Pastoral Epistles, Psalms, Homiletics (preaching), Hebrew Exegesis, and four Old Testament exposition courses. For many years he also taught Pentateuch, Gospels, Eschatology (theology of the future), Ecclesiology (theology of the church), and Pneumatology (theology of the Holy Spirit). Now he teaches mostly Bible Exposition classes, including Homiletics, World of the OT & NT, and OT & NT Survey. He has also written three Advanced Studies in the Old and New Testament courses at the Internet Biblical Seminary ([www.internetseminary.org](http://www.internetseminary.org)).

Dr. Griffith loves the variety and strategic nature of his teaching. He invests his life into Anglicans from Sri Lanka, Lutherans from Singapore, Presbyterians from Korea, Conservative Baptists from the Philippines, and missionaries from Campus Crusade, OMF, and Operation Mobilisation—sometimes all in one class! One class had 17 of the 20 students training for ministry outside of Singapore. Nearly all SBC graduates enter pastoral or missionary ministries due to Asia's shortage of trained leaders.

Ministry opportunities abound. Rick and Susan have conducted premarital counseling for students and their home has an open door to students and guests traveling through Singapore. They have sung in evangelistic thrusts and in 1992 also participated in founding International Community School, an expatriate Christian primary and secondary school in Singapore now with 430 students. The Griffiths are missionaries with WorldVenture and Rick serves as the Singapore field leader.

Dr Griffith also enjoys several other partnerships. He also serves as Asia Translation Coordinator for "The Bible... Basically International" seminars; web author & editor, Internet Biblical Seminary; and itinerate professor for 52 trips throughout Asia in places such as Lanka Bible College (Sri Lanka), Myanmar Evangelical Graduate School of Theology, Union Bible Training Center (Mongolia), Jordan Evangelical Theological Seminary, and Biblical Education by Extension training in three restricted access countries.

In 2006 the Griffiths also helped begin Crossroads International Church, Singapore. Here "Dr. Rick" is "Pastor Rick" in his role as pastor-teacher and elder. The church meets at 4 PM on Sundays at the Upper Room of the Metropolitan YMCA at 60 Stevens Road. See [cicfamily.com](http://cicfamily.com) for details.

In 2009 Dr. Griffith began the [biblestudydownloads.com](http://biblestudydownloads.com) website that offers his courses for free download. This includes 5000 pages of course notes in Word and pdf formats, about 400 PowerPoint presentations in English, and hundreds of translations of these by his students into 37 languages. Current languages include Ao, Arabic, Bangla, Bisaya, Burmese, Chin, Chinese, Dutch, English, French, Hindi, Indonesian, Japanese, Kachin, Khmer, Kiswahili, Korean, Lotha, Malay, Malayalam, Mao, Mizo, Mongolian, Nepali, Nias, Paite, Russian, Sinhala, Spanish, Sumi, Tagalog, Tamil, Tangkhul, Tenyidie, Thai, Vaiphei, and Vietnamese.

## Field

Singapore Bible College is strategically located at the "ministry hub" of Southeast Asia, the Republic of Singapore. A small island of only 14 by 26 miles, Singapore is a city-nation located on the tip of the Malay Peninsula in Southeast Asia. The population of this multi-cultural society is 75 percent Chinese, 15 percent Malay and 8 percent Indian. Other groups include Filipinos, Thais, Japanese, Americans, and Europeans. This beautiful island nation, with dynamic growth in churches and missionary force, has been called the "Antioch of Asia." The Singaporean cross-cultural missionary force is increasingly contributing to God's work in overseas ministries.

## Passion

Rick's passion is for God's leaders to preach and live the Word of God. The servant of God's role is clearly given in the following verses:

- Teaching obedience to Christ's teaching is key to our commission to make disciples (Matt. 28:20)
- The priority of the apostles was teaching and prayer (Acts 6:1-16)
- Paul's legacy to Timothy focused on exposition: "Preach the Word" (2 Tim. 4:2-3)

However, recent trends include the following:

- Church people are biblically illiterate—Amos lamented that his day of prosperity had a "famine for hearing the words of the Lord" (Amos 8:11)
- Pastors are doing too many things so they have too little time to feed the flock
- Preachers give empty and simplistic sermons
- Attempting to be "relevant," pastors preach what people want to hear—not what they need

## New Testament Books Classified Doctrinally

<i>Book</i>	<i>Doctrinal Classification</i>	<i>Theme</i>
Matthew	Ecclesiology	Messiah with kingdom authority over the Church
Mark	Eschatology	Deity who models suffering as Servant
Luke	Missiology	Universal Savior ministers in sovereign kingdom progress
John	Soteriology	Deity made man for eternal life
Acts	Missiology	Universal Savior proclaimed in sovereign kingdom progress
Romans	Soteriology	God's righteousness/justification by faith in Christ—not the Law
1 Corinthians	Ecclesiology	Proper functioning of the church
2 Corinthians	Ecclesiology	Defense of apostolic authority
Galatians	Soteriology	Justification by faith
Ephesians	Christology	Jew-Gentile unity shown in love
Philippians	Christology	Results of imitating Christ's attitude
Colossians	Christology	Supremacy/deity of Christ vs. syncretistic heresy
1 Thessalonians	Eschatology	Preparation for the Rapture
2 Thessalonians	Eschatology	Day of the Lord corrections
1 Timothy	Ecclesiology	Church order priorities
2 Timothy	Ecclesiology	Sound doctrine against opposition
Titus	Ecclesiology	Sound conduct against opposition
Philemon	Christology	Forgive others and seek forgiveness
Hebrews	Christology	Christ's superiority over Judaism as high priest
James	Soteriology	Faith revealed through works
1 Peter	Eschatology	Endurance in suffering by God's grace
2 Peter	Eschatology	Knowledge to combat false teaching
1 John	Soteriology	Obedience in love combats incipient Gnosticism
2 John	Missiology	Limits to love
3 John	Missiology	Supporting missionaries
Jude	Eschatology	Contending against pretenders
Revelation	Eschatology	Sovereignty of Christ in future victory

## NT Book Key Words

Below are the NT books with their data in chronological order (following Hoehner's chronology). The next to last column has several blanks since most NT letters were not written during Paul's missionary journeys and prison time. Dates and chronological order are only best guesses and should not be seen as Gospel truth.

#	Date	Book	Key Word	Paul's Journeys & Imprisonments	Doctrinal Classification
1	40s	Matthew	Kingdom		Ecclesiology
2	44-47	James	Works		Soteriology
3	49	Galatians	Justification	1st journey	Soteriology
4	51	1 Thessalonians	Rapture	2nd journey	Eschatology
5	51	2 Thessalonians	Tribulation	2nd journey	Eschatology
6	56	1 Corinthians	Sanctification	3rd journey	Ecclesiology
7	56	2 Corinthians	Apostleship	3rd journey	Ecclesiology
8	56-57	Romans	Righteousness	3rd journey	Soteriology
9	57-59	Luke	Sovereignty I		Missiology
10	60	Ephesians	Unity	1st imprisonment	Christology (Head)
11	61	Colossians	Deity	1st imprisonment	Christology (God)
12	61	Philemon	Forgiveness	1st imprisonment	Christology (Reconciler)
13	62	Philippians	Attitude	1st imprisonment	Christology (Example)
14	62	Acts	Sovereignty II		Missiology
15	62	1 Timothy	Order	4th journey	Ecclesiology
16	64	1 Peter	Suffering		Eschatology
17	64	2 Peter	Knowledge		Eschatology
18	64-68	Mark	Discipleship		Eschatology
19	66	Titus	Conduct	4th journey	Ecclesiology
20	67	2 Timothy	Doctrine	2nd imprisonment	Ecclesiology
21	67-68	Hebrews	Superiority		Christology
22	c. 69	John	Belief		Soteriology
23	75	Jude	Pretenders		Eschatology
24	85-95	1 John	Love		Soteriology
25	85-95	2 John	Limits		Missiology
26	85-95	3 John	Missionaries		Missiology
27	95-96	Revelation	Triumph		Eschatology

# Galatians

<b>Justification by Faith</b>						
<b>Judaizer Attack #1</b> “Paul teaches this doctrine by his own authority!”		<b>Judaizer Attack #2</b> “This is a new teaching contrary to the OT!”		<b>Judaizer Attack #3</b> “Teaching faith alone will encourage a sinful lifestyle!”		
<b>Paul’s Defense:</b> “God called me and the 12 apostles affirmed this”		<b>Paul’s Defense:</b> “Salvation has always been by faith—even in the OT”		<b>Paul’s Defense:</b> “No, justification by faith naturally leads to godly living”		
Biographical		Theological		Practical		
Chapters 1–2		Chapters 3–4		Chapters 5–6		
Upholds Apostleship		Upholds Justification by Faith		Upholds Responsibilities		
Rebuke	Relationships	Affirmed	Illustrated	Balance	Service	Warnings
1:1-9	1:10–2:21	3	4	5	6:1-10	6:11-18
Antioch of Syria						
Fall AD 49 (after first missionary journey)						

**Key Word:** Justification

**Key Verse:** “[We Jews] know that a man is not justified by observing the law, but by faith in Jesus Christ. So we, too, have put our faith in Christ Jesus that we may be justified by faith in Christ and not by observing the law, because by observing the law no one will be justified” (Galatians 2:16).

**Summary:** Paul defends his apostleship and *justification by faith* so that the Galatians would not seek salvation through adherence to the law.

**Application:**

Do you add *any* other requirements for salvation except faith in Christ—baptism, tongues, good works or any other good deed?

The logical result of justification by faith is godliness.

# Galatians

## Introduction

**I. Title** The Greek title for the letter (Ἐπιστολὴ πρὸς Γαλάτας *To the Galatians*) follows the standard form of naming Paul's writings after their recipients.

### II. Authorship

A. External Evidence: The traditional view is that the Apostle Paul wrote Galatians.

1. This finds early support by Polycarp (3:3; 5:1; cf. Kümmel, 198). Marcion also placed the epistle at the top of his list of genuine Pauline epistles (Harrison, 255).
2. Paul's writing of Galatians has largely gone uncontested even among the 19th century German critics of the Tübingen school. The few that do oppose Pauline authorship include Bauer, R. Streck (the Swiss scholar), and the nineteenth century radical Dutch critics (Kümmel, 198).

B. Internal Evidence: The Book of Galatians explicitly mentions Paul as its author (1:1; 5:2). In fact, Paul probably departed from his usual practice of dictating his letters to a secretary by actually penning the epistle himself (6:11; cf. "Characteristics" section below). Most of chapters 1 and 2 are autobiographical (e.g., 1:11f.) and several Pauline themes are evident (e.g., grace, law).

C. Conclusion: Both external and internal evidence point to Paul's authorship (Harrison, 255; Guthrie, 468; Kümmel, 198). Galatians has always been the least challenged of Paul's epistles (Guthrie, 468). There exists not even scant evidence to disprove the genuineness of the Epistle. The Epistle to the Galatians is generally the standard by which other Pauline writings are tested (Bruce, 2).

### III. Circumstances

A. Date: The issue of date is closely associated with the destination of the letter (Bruce, 43-56). Two theories of destination prevail: the North Galatian Theory (adopting the later date) and the South Galatian Theory (generally suggesting an earlier date):

1. External evidence from Marcion suggests that Paul wrote from Ephesus shortly before writing 1 Corinthians (approx. AD 55), thus supporting the later date. However, Marcion's reliability and sources are questionable (Kümmel, 197).
2. Internal evidence infers that the Galatians deserted Paul's teaching just after his first visit (1:6f.), lending more credence to the South Galatian Theory. If the second visit of 4:13 is the one in Acts 16:6, then the epistle is post-Jerusalem Council (AD 53-56; Harrison, 260; Kümmel, 197-198; Betz, 9-12). However, with this later date one would think that Paul would have mentioned the decree of the Jerusalem Council in the letter since both the Council and the epistle address the same theme (requirements of the law for Gentile believers). On the other hand, if the second visit (4:13) was the revisiting of the churches of Acts 14:21 then the letter could be pre-Jerusalem Council (AD 48-49), though it would not need to demand the early date (Guthrie, 458).
3. Conclusion: Arguments for both dates are inconclusive, although the best evidence supports the South Galatian Theory (see below) and the earlier date of about fall AD 49.

B. Origin: The origin of the book of Galatians is not specifically stated and depends upon the identity of the recipients as to whether they lived in North or South Galatia:

1. The Northern Theory says Paul wrote to North Galatia from Ephesus, Corinth, Macedonia, or Rome (Betz, 12).

2. The Southern Theory says that Paul wrote to South Galatia from Antioch or somewhere en route from Antioch to Jerusalem for the Jerusalem Council (Harrison, 260).
- C. Recipients: The epistle specifies its destination as “to the churches of Galatia” (1:2). This makes it the only Pauline letter addressed to a group of churches. Evidently Paul did not have enough time to write each church individually, so a circular letter was sent (Hiebert, 2:71). The greatly debated question is, “Where were these churches?” The two theories of destination hinge largely upon the interpretations of two verses in Acts (16:6; 18:23) that refer to this Galatian region (Bruce, 3-18; Guthrie, 450-457; Harrison, 257-259; Kümmel, 191-193). Both theories agree that the recipients were Gentiles (4:8; 5:2f.; 6:12f.), but the question is, “Which Gentiles?” See notes, 174a (chart) and 138-40, 280a (maps).
1. The Traditional View (North Galatian Theory): Galatians was written to Gallic believers in the territory of Galatia (ethnic Galatia, including the cities of Ancyra, Pessinus, and Tavium) of whom Paul had won to Christ on his second missionary journey (Acts 16:6; p. 139). Advocates include Lightfoot, Betz, Kümmel, and Harrison.
    - a. External evidence (from Acts and history):
      - 1) The Gauls overtook North Galatia from the Phrygians in the 3rd century BC then named the region after themselves (Bruce, 3-8; Guthrie, 450; Kümmel, 191).
      - 2) The characteristics of fickleness, strife, anger, and impulsiveness that Paul denounced in his readers closely parallel Gallic lifestyles (Bruce, 4).
      - 3) Luke describes the South Galatian towns in the province of Galatia in geographical, not provincial terms (Betz, 11).
      - 4) The northern view was the unanimous view of the church fathers (Hiebert, 2:77).
    - b. Internal evidence:
      - 1) Interpreting the visit of Galatians 2:1-10 as the Jerusalem Council visit allows for only the northern view (explained in the Characteristics section).
      - 2) The chronology of Paul's life in the southern view places his conversion at AD 23-30 (Harrison, 262; Hiebert, 2:84), which is too early.
  2. Alternative to the Traditional View (South Galatian Theory): Paul wrote to the Greek believers in the Roman province of Galatia (political Galatia, including the cities of Pisidian Antioch, Iconium, Lystra, and Derbe), whom Paul had won to Christ on his first missionary journey (Acts 13-14; p. 138). Advocates include Ramsay, Bruce, Hiebert, and Guthrie (Griffith too).
    - a. External evidence (from Acts; Guthrie, 452-57):
      - 1) Phrygia and Galatia in Acts 16:6; 18:23 are designated a “region” (singular), not “regions” (plural), so this region can refer to both the districts in the province of Asia (southern part) and the part of Phrygia in the adjoining province of Asia.
      - 2) Assuming the Northern Theory, it would be strange for Luke to say so little about this area in which such a major controversy arose.
      - 3) Paul generally referred to groups of churches by their Roman province (e.g., Macedonia, Achaia, Asia, and Judea). Luke's usage of the term should not be imposed upon Paul.
      - 4) “Galatia” was the best term to describe the various ethnic groups in the south.



## b. Internal evidence:

- 1) Since Paul visited the Galatian churches during his recovery from a bodily illness (4:13) it is unlikely that he traversed the difficult journey off the road to the central plateau on which Northern Galatia was located.
- 2) The mention of Barnabas (2:1, 9, 13) is more natural if the readers knew him. Barnabas accompanied Paul only in South Galatia.
- 3) No mention is made to the verdict of the Jerusalem Council (cf. Acts 15) which would have already occurred, assuming the Northern Theory.
- 4) The letter was written in Greek, a language understood by only the northern people of Ancyra and Pessinus at best (Bruce, 9).
- 5) Peter hardly would have acted as he did (2:11f.) right after the Jerusalem Council.

Conclusion: External evidence is divided. The Northern Theory was virtually unchallenged until the last two centuries, but the evidence from Acts seems to best support the Southern Theory. The Patristic bias for the Northern Theory may be explained by second century evidence that the term “Galatia” had ceased to be used in reference to the southern area; therefore, the Fathers interpreted the term in light of their own day (Hiebert, 2:77).

However, the internal evidence favors the southern view. While the southern view has chronological difficulties, the northern view has the problem of attributing the “again” of Galatians 2:1 to a third (not second) visit. Therefore, the weight of the evidence supports the Southern Galatian Theory.

- D. Occasion: The Galatians had an enthusiastic beginning in the gospel (3:1-5; 4:13-14) which ended (4:15) due to opposition from Jewish false teachers (Judaizers) who had spread their teaching in the churches after Paul established them (1:7b; 4:13-14; 5:7). They proclaimed “another gospel” (1:6-9) associated with the Jewish Torah and circumcision (2:15-21; 3:2-5; 4:21; 5:2-12; 6:12-17). Paul had confronted these Judaizers already in Jerusalem (2:4-5) but this letter was written before the Jerusalem leaders officially disapproved of them at the Jerusalem Council (Acts 15:19-21, 24). Since no official word had yet come from Jerusalem, Paul wrote the churches immediately to combat this false teaching with a defense of his apostleship (chs. 1–2) and the true gospel of justification by faith alone (chs. 3–4), which produces a unique lifestyle based upon freedom in Christ (chs. 5–6).

#### IV. Characteristics

##### A. Literary Characteristics:

1. Structure: Its threefold structure is explained in the occasion section above. This is different from a twofold structure characteristic of other Pauline writings: Romans (1–11, 12–16), Ephesians (1–3, 4–6), Colossians (1–2, 3–4), etc.
2. Mood: A tone of severity appears even in the first verse (which lacks the customary salutation). The letter lacks any words of thanksgiving for or praise of the readers (e.g., they are never referred to as “saints”). However, some touch of affection does appear (4:12-15, 19-20).
3. Unity: Paul vindicates his authority repeatedly (1:1, 11-16; 6:11-16) and defends justification by faith (1:6-10; 2:4, 14; 3:1–5:12), so the unity of the letter has gone virtually unchallenged. It is the most accepted epistle of Pauline authorship.

- B. The Jerusalem visit (2:1-10) has been seen as either Paul's famine visit to aid the depressed church (cf. Acts 11:27-30) or Paul's attendance at the Jerusalem Council (cf. Acts 15:1-29).

1. Advocates of the Jerusalem Council view (Lightfoot, Hendriksen, Hiebert) argue:
    - a. The apostles (2:9) and Titus (2:1-3) are not mentioned in the famine visit.
    - b. Although the apostles acknowledged Paul and Barnabas' Gentile ministry, this is unlikely before their first missionary journey (i.e., before Acts 13).
    - c. It is difficult to see why the Jerusalem Council would need to be called (Acts 15) if the issue of Gentile salvation had already been settled (Acts 11).
    - d. Perhaps the best Council view evidence is the problematic chronology of the southern view that places Paul's conversion between AD 23-30 (1:18; 2:1; Harrison, 262; Hiebert, 2:84).
  2. Advocates of the Famine view (Bruce, Tenney, Duncan) affirm this evidence:
    - a. The visit to Jerusalem "again" (2:1), taken in its most natural sense, refers to Paul's actual second visit following his conversion (Acts 11).
    - b. Galatians 2:1-10 is a private discussion, not the Jerusalem Council assembly of Acts 15.
    - c. The decrees of the Council are totally missing in Galatians 2.
    - d. Peter and Paul's dispute over eating with Gentiles (2:11-21) makes better sense pre-Jerusalem Council.
  3. Conclusion: The southern view has chronological difficulties and the northern view forces the second visit to Jerusalem ("again" in 2:1) to mean a third visit. Both views have problems, but better evidence for the Southern Galatian Theory favors the famine view.
- C. Paul declares at the end of the epistle, "See with what large letters I am writing (ἔγραψα, aorist) to you with my own hand" (6:11). Two views of the aorist prevail:
1. The traditional view sees Paul using an epistolary aorist ("I am writing") where he signs after his normal custom of dictating the bulk of his letter to a scribe (cf. Rom. 16:22; 1 Cor. 16:21).
  2. However, Paul never uses the aorist when writing only a few concluding words, so it seems more logical that he uses the normal use of the aorist ("I wrote"). This means Paul painstakingly wrote the entire letter himself, possibly with large letters due to an eye malady (4:25; Hiebert, 2:89-90).
- D. Galatians is the only Pauline letter written to a group of churches.
- E. This is the first letter of Paul that has been included in the New Testament.

## Argument

Galatians is often called "the Magna Carta of Christian Liberty" since it emphasizes the believer's freedom in Christ. However, it is evident that Paul's purpose was threefold: to defend his apostleship against the Judaizers (chs. 1–2), to defend the essence of the gospel based in justification by faith alone (chs. 3–4), and to give practical exhortations in light of the believer's freedom in Christ (chs. 5–6).

Therefore, Paul's purpose in writing is to convince the Galatians that since they were saved by grace they are free from the Law. As a result, Judaizers who sought to impose upon them a legalistic system based upon the Law should not lead them away from their moorings in Christ.

## Synthesis

### Justification by faith

<b>1–2</b>	<b>Biographical: Defends apostleship</b>
1:1-9	Rebuke
1:10–2:21	Relationship to other apostles
1:10-24	Independence
2:1-10	Interdependence
2:11-21	Indictment
<b>3–4</b>	<b>Theological: Defends justification by faith</b>
3	Affirmed
3:1-5	Galatian's experience
3:6-14	Abraham's experience
3:15-29	Law/Promise vs. faith
4	Illustrated
4:1-11	Domestic: son vs. servant
4:12-20	Historical: personal plea
4:21-31	Biblical: Isaac (Abrahamic) vs. Ishmael (Mosaic)
<b>5–6</b>	<b>Practical: Defends responsibilities</b>
5	Balance
5:1-15	No to legalism/license
5:16-26	Yes to Spirit
6:1-10	Service
6:11-18	Warnings
6:11-13	Against legalists
6:14-17	Against despising him
6:18	Benediction

## Outline

### Summary Statement for the Book

**Paul defends his apostleship and *justification by faith* so that the Galatians would not seek salvation through adherence to the law.**

**I. (Chs. 1–2) Biographical: Paul defends his apostolic authority to counter the allegations of Judaizers who had infiltrated the Galatian churches with their false teaching that he invented justification by faith by his own authority.**

A. (1:1-9) Paul greets the Galatian churches without offering thanksgiving for them then immediately denounces them for abandoning the true gospel for the legalistic false teaching of the Judaizers to communicate how strongly he feels about their departure.

B. (1:10–2:21) Paul defends his apostleship against the false claims of the Judaizers in his independence of and interdependence with the other apostles shown by correcting Peter to affirm that he did not make up justification by faith by his own authority.

1. (1:10-24) He verifies his independence of the other apostles since he received the gospel of grace by revelation directly from Christ and he did not even meet any apostles until three years later.

2. (2:1-10) He affirms his interdependence with other apostles since the famine visit when apostles at Jerusalem approved him even though they taught justification by faith to Jews.

3. (2:11-21) He indicted the chief apostle who contradicted justification by faith when he publicly rebuked Peter for seeking the approval of Jews by withdrawing from eating with Gentiles.

**II. (Chs. 3–4) Theological: Paul affirms and illustrates salvation by faith and not by the Law to counter the Judaizer accusation that justification by faith was a new teaching by showing the Galatians that since they are saved by faith they are free from the Law.**

- A. (Ch. 3) Paul affirms the doctrine of justification by faith by comparing the inferior Law with the superior Holy Spirit and Promise to convince the Galatians that justification is by faith.
1. (3:1-5) Since the Galatians received the Holy Spirit by faith, not the Law, their sanctification must be by the same means, revealing that their own experience affirms salvation by faith.
  2. (3:6-14) Abraham was justified by faith, not the Law, since the Law can save no one, so this doctrine has solid scriptural foundation and therefore is not a new teaching.
  3. (3:15-29) Since salvation was by faith for the 430 years between the final reiteration of the Promise to Jacob and the Law, the coming of the Law did not change this principle but rather led man to faith by revealing sin to lead to Christ.
- B. (Ch. 4) Paul illustrates justification by faith with domestic, historical, and biblical illustrations to convince the Galatians to abandon legalism.
1. (4:1-11) The privileges a son has over a slave pictures the believer's blessing of spiritual religion over the Law as a motivation for the Galatians to abandon legalism.
  2. (4:12-20) Paul reminds the churches of their former commitment to him when he was with them to encourage them to show the same zeal for the truth now.
  3. (4:21-31) Paul interprets figuratively God's blessing on Isaac (Abrahamic Covenant) rather than Ishmael (Mosaic Covenant) to reveal that his readers were operating under the wrong descendant of Abraham by following the Law (cf. p. 174a).

**III.(Chs. 5–6) Practical: Paul applies salvation by faith to Christian living by exhorting a balanced perspective and responsibilities towards others to urge the application of his teaching under the Holy Spirit's direction.**

- A. (Ch. 5) Paul exhorts balance in Christian living between legalism and license to instruct how to live by the Holy Spirit's direction rather than by the sinful nature.
1. (5:1-15) Believers should not live in the extremes of legalism and license in light of their freedom from the Law.
    - a. (5:1-12) Since the Christian is free from the law he should never again be entrapped into a legalistic system.
    - b. (5:13-15) Although believers are free from the Law, they should not use this freedom for selfish pursuits but rather for loving one another.
  2. (5:16-26) Believers should live under direction from the Spirit rather than from the sinful nature.
- B. (6:1-10) Paul exhorts service towards sinning Christians, burdened believers, teachers, and all men so the Galatians would see that freedom from the law does not mean freedom from caring for others.
- C. (6:11-18) Paul closes with a final warning by contrasting the impure motives of the false teachers among the Galatians with his own pure motives to convince them to apply what he has written.

## Contrasting Galatians and Romans

Both Galatians and Romans are known for their common major emphases such as justification by faith (Gal. 2:16; 3:14; Rom. 1:17; 3:21-22), freedom from the Law (Gal. 3:10-13, 23-25; 5:1; Rom. 7:1, 6; 8:2-4), and how the Law reveals sin (Gal. 3:22; Rom. 3:20; 5:20; 7:7). Yet these books remain unique in several ways:

	<b>Galatians</b>	<b>Romans</b>
<i>Influence of Cities</i>	Minor	Major
<i>Number of Churches</i>	Several Cities (Lystra, Derbe, etc.)	Single City (Rome)
<i>Church Founded</i>	AD 48-49 (on first missionary journey)	AD 33-56 (no one knows exactly when)
<i>Founder</i>	Paul	Pentecost converts? or Paul's disciples?
<i>Written</i>	AD 49 from Antioch	AD 56-57 from Corinth
<i>View of Paul</i>	Doubted (but most knew him!)	Credible (but most didn't know him!)
<i>Paul's Opponents</i>	Judaizers	None
<i>Jew-Gentile Relations</i>	Serious rift	Mild criticism of each other
<i>Readers</i>	Mostly Gentiles	Jew-Gentile mix
<i>Theological Errors</i>	Serious: Salvation	Minor: Christian liberty
<i>Theme (Key Word)</i>	Justification	Righteousness (1:17)
<i>Vocabulary &amp; Tone</i>	Simple yet Severe	Technical and Structured
<i>Form</i>	Modified Defense (e.g., no thanksgiving)	Traditional Presentation (e.g., names, greetings...)
<i>OT Quotes</i>	Few (only 12, or 2 per chapter)	Nearly as many as the rest of Paul's epistles (63 total!)
<i>Doctrinal Focus</i>	Narrow: Justification	Broad: Many topics*

\* Natural revelation (1:19-20), universality of sin (3:9-20), justification (3:21-24), propitiation (3:25), faith (4:1-25), Israel (chaps. 9-11), gifts (12:3-8), government (13:1-7), Christian liberty (14:1-15:13)

## Who Are Today's Judaizers?

Scholars generally agree that the teachers who came to Galatia after Paul left taught that faith alone does not save. These teachers insisted on a “faith plus works” formula by adding works of the law as a requisite for genuine conversion—especially the rite of circumcision (5:6). Paul actually never gives them a name. However, since these teachers sought to get the believers to return to the Jewish law, the term “Judaizers” has been coined to describe them.

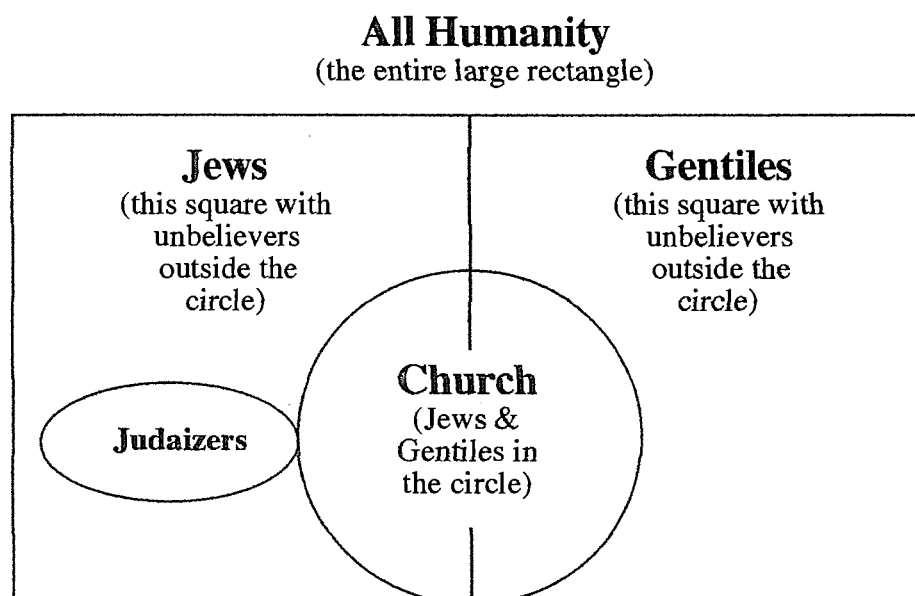
But were these Judaizers at Galatia Jewish Christians or false believers? The consensus among commentators is that they were genuine believers who were simply confused in this area of doctrine (cf. Ronald Y. K. Fung, *The Epistle to the Galatians*, NICNT, 7-9; Kümmel, 298-301; Lightfoot, 27, 52-53; Ridderbos, 15-16). Some factors may support them being believers:

1. The apostles and elders allowed representation of the “circumcision party” at the Jerusalem Council (Acts 15:1, 24). This may argue that these teachers are the same as the Judaizers since they also argued that Gentiles should be required to keep the Law (Gal. 2:12). If so, then the mother church considered them to be Christians and we should probably do the same.
2. These Jewish teachers had no doubt about Jesus being the Messiah, in contrast to the majority of Jews who would not accept Christ as Israel's king.

However, some factors may indicate that the Judaizers were indeed unsaved:

1. Paul says that the Judaizer's was “a different gospel” (NIV) which was really not the gospel at all (1:6-7). Since there is only one true gospel, the Judaizer “gospel” would then be a false teaching that was not Christian after all.
2. Paul described these men in the strongest words possible, pronouncing upon them eternal condemnation (1:8-9). Ascribing hellfire to anyone but unbelievers would seem inappropriate.
3. Paul also refers to them as “false brothers” (2:4).
4. The Jerusalem Council occurred shortly after Paul's letter to the Galatians and it verified Paul's teaching on faith alone (as opposed to the Judaizer view being considered another “evangelical option” or gray area). While Judaizers (i.e., the “circumcision party”) were allowed to attend the meeting, they were soundly defeated.
5. Although the Judaizers did not reject Christ outright as Messiah as did their Jewish brethren, by adding other requisites to salvation they taught a second type of heresy that undermined the nature of the true gospel.

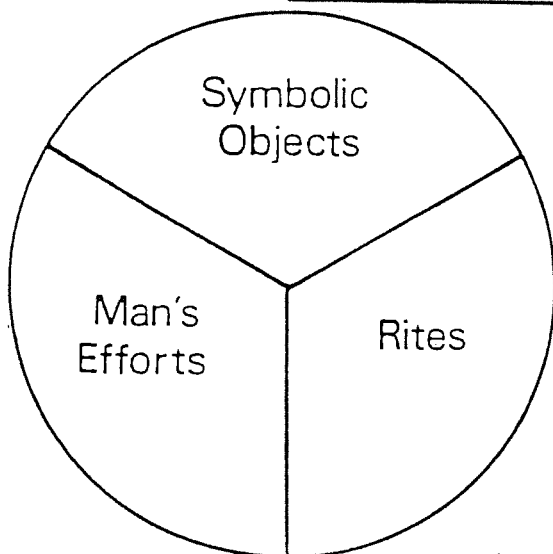
Given the above reasons, this study takes the view that the Judaizers were not actually Christians. Any group that adds to the simple gospel of justification by faith alone cannot be deemed “Christian.” This includes the Catholic Church (which adds works), Church of Christ (which adds baptism), and the True Jesus Church (which adds works, baptism, tongues, footwashing, etc.). This diagram depicts how Judaizers were Jews on the fringes of the church but still outside the body:



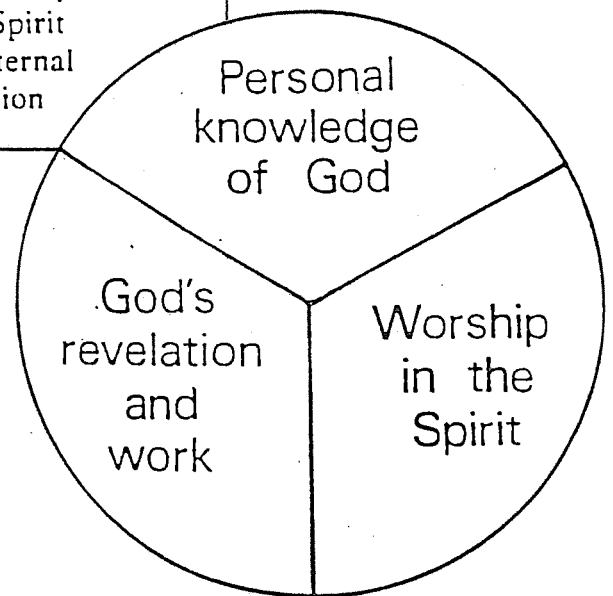
## Ceremonial vs. True Religion

One basic difference between Paul's gospel and the religion of the Judaizers is that Paul taught faith by experience whereas his opponents taught that man is made right by ceremonial religion. These are contrasted in Galatians 4 with the infant-grown son contrast. Note the distinctions between these modes of living in these diagrams from Paul A. Pomerville, *Galatians and Romans* (Brussels, Belgium: International Correspondence Institute, 1976), 95, 96, 98.

<i>Infant</i>	<i>Grown Son</i>
Under guardian (Law)	Enjoys son-with-father relationship (redeemed)
Status: like a slave; rights of sonship not realized	Status: son and heir; full rights given
Under bondage: external authority of the Law	Free: internal authority of the Spirit of God
Immature: in elementary school of the Law with external motivation	Mature: in secondary school of the Spirit with internal motivation



*Ceremonial Religion*



*Religion of Spiritual Experience*

The Gentile Christians in Galatia were in this kind of religion before their conversion. Their worship was a constant effort to please the gods in order to receive their protection or to escape their punishment. They worshiped tangible objects — idols. They had many sacred rites and forms to be observed. They trusted in horoscopes and other signs to guide them. They had their sacred days and seasons and places.

Remember that ceremonial religion gives emphasis to physical things in worship while the gospel emphasizes worship in the Spirit. You can see the conflict between these two types of religion in Jesus' conversation with the Samaritan woman at Jacob's well.

## Faith & Works in the Bible

HERE'S AN ISSUE FOR YOUR SMALL GROUP...

**Which is the most accurate depiction of salvation in the OT and NT?**

*Salvation by...*

OT	Works	Faith + Works	Faith Alone	Faith + Works
NT	Faith	Faith Alone	Faith Alone	Faith + Works

Which verses in the Bible support your answer?

### DISTINGUISHING SALVATION AND SANCTIFICATION

	Man's Role	God's Response	Life of Faith	Restored Fellowship
<b>OT</b>				
<b>NT</b>				



## Salvation in the Old Testament

How were people saved during Old Testament times? Were only Jews saved? How? Was it through the tabernacle and temple sacrifices? Did killing these animals actually forgive sin? These questions will naturally arise in a thinking person’s mind when encountering the OT.

First, salvation has always been by faith and not by works of the Law. This is Paul’s key point in Galatians and Romans and it applies to all times. Paul gives Genesis 15:6 as support: “Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness” (Rom. 4:3; cf. vv. 11, 16-24; Heb. 11). Salvation in all ages is based in God’s grace, not our works (Eph. 2:8-9). The ways He has shown His grace has changed over the ages, but His method of salvation by grace through faith is constant.

OT believers expressed their faith in many ways: worshipping God, offering sacrifices, or doing good deeds, but it was their *faith* that saved—not their sacrifices or worship or deeds. Their faith was placed in God’s provision of a coming Saviour (1 Pet. 1:10-12), though they did not realise that this Redeemer specifically was Jesus Christ. Further, there is no hint that their salvation could be lost.

One may ask, “But doesn’t the OT say sacrifices forgave people?” Leviticus promises Israelites that they “will be forgiven” by sin offerings and guilt offerings (4:20, 26, 31, 35; 5:10, 13, 16, 18; 6:7; 19:22; cf. Heb. 9:13). However, these refer to any *specific* sin rather than forgiveness from *all* sin for salvation; also, ritual without repentant faith was useless (Ps. 40:6-8; Isa. 1:11-20; Jer. 7:21-26).

This parallels our experience some. We are saved from the penalty of sin by faith, just like Jews (and Gentiles identifying with Israel) in the OT—but we show faith by trusting Christ as our past sacrifice rather than look forward to a future sacrifice. We still sin, but 1 John 1:9 promises, “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.” We have *positional* forgiveness for all sins (past, present, and future) and a secure relationship with God. However, confession helps us experience *practical* forgiveness and restoration of our fellowship with Him. In like manner, Job sacrificed for cleansing and restored fellowship while saved (Job 42:7-9).

But why can’t the “blood of bulls and goats...take away sins” (Heb. 10:4)? Sacrifices forgave and cleansed only from external ceremonial impurity (Heb. 9:13), but Christ *removed* all sin and cleansed *internally*. A clear treatment of OT sacrifices is John S. Feinberg, “Salvation in the Old Testament,” *Tradition and Testament*, eds. John S. and Paul D. Feinberg (Chicago: Moody, 1981), 39-77 (adapted below into chart form). Issues 1-3 are the same for OT and NT but 4-5 are different:

	OT Times (Moses to Christ’s Death)	NT Times (Christ’s Death to Today)
<b>Basis of Salvation</b>	God’s gracious provision of the death of Christ since “it is the blood that makes atonement for one’s life” (Lev. 17:11b)	God’s gracious provision of the death of Christ (“without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness” Heb. 9:22)
<b>Requirement of Salvation</b>	Faith in the provision that God has revealed—as a gift (Ps. 51:16-17)	Faith in the provision that God has revealed—as a gift (Gal. 2:16)
<b>Ultimate Content of Salvation</b>	Object of faith is God Himself—prophets exhorted repentance, not sacrifices (Jer. 3:12; Joel 2:12)	Object of faith is God Himself—heroes of faith are cited to exhort faith in God (Heb. 11)
<b>Specific Revealed Content of Salvation</b>	Cumulative content of faith involved sacrifices & promises: animals (Gen. 3:21); Abel’s sacrifice (Gen. 4:4); Abrahamic covenant (Gen. 15), etc.	New content of faith is the shed blood of Jesus Christ (1 Pet. 1:18-21) which removes sin while OT sacrifices merely covered sin
<b>Believer’s Expression of Salvation</b>	Obey moral law, offer animal sacrifices, obey Mosaic law (civil and ceremonial aspects)	Obey moral law, observe Lord’s Supper and baptism, etc. through the Spirit’s enabling (Rom. 8:9)

## The Readers of Galatians

*Summary Concerning the Location of "Galatia"*

	Northern Theory	Southern Theory
<i>Advocates</i>	Lightfoot, Betz, Kümmel, Harrison, John A.T. Robinson	Ramsey, Bruce, Hiebert, Guthrie, Grassmick, Hoehner, Tenney, Benware, Griffith
<i>Age</i>	Traditional View	Newer View (1800s)
<i>Location</i>	North Galatia	South Galatia
<i>Nature</i>	Territory	Roman Province
<i>Describes</i>	Ethnic Galatia	Political Galatia
<i>Cities</i>	Ancyra, Pessinus, Tavium	Pisidian Antioch, Iconium, Lystra, Derbe
<i>Established</i>	Second Missionary Journey (Acts 16:6-8; AD 51-52)	First Missionary Journey (Acts 13-14; AD 49)
<i>Barnabas</i>	Absent (with John Mark)	Present
<i>Gal 2 Ref.</i>	Jerusalem Council (Acts 15)	Famine Visit (Acts 11:27-30)
<i>Date</i>	AD 53-57	AD 48-49
<i>Writing</i>	Paul's third NT letter	Paul's first NT letter
<i>Origin</i>	Ephesus, Corinth, Macedonia	Antioch, en route to Jerusalem
<i>Support</i>	Luke Used Geographical Names Gallic Lifestyles Unanimous Patristic Support	Paul Used Roman Names Paul did Plant Churches Here Mention of Barnabas Paul's Sickness Absence of Jerusalem Council Decree
<i>Problems</i>	Second Visit (2:1) No Support Paul ever Visited North No Mention of Jerusalem Council (Acts 15)	Paul's Dates (1:18; 2:1)

Why does it make any difference whether the book was written to the north or south? If it was to the south, this makes the readers the same people as in Acts 13—14 so that we have the scriptural background for the letter.

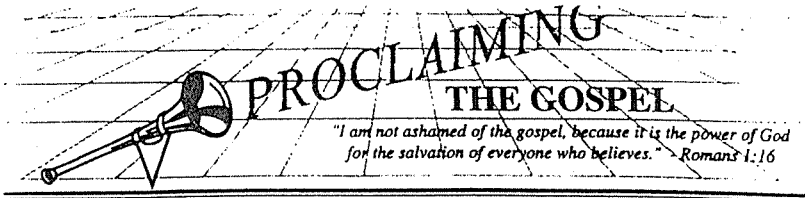
## Covenant Contrasts in Galatians 4:21-31

In the Book of Galatians Paul is arguing for justification by faith against Judaizers who followed up his ministry in these churches with a heretical doctrine of justification by the law (specifically circumcision). In chapter 3 he argues that believers are spiritual sons of Abraham because they, like him, trust God by faith (3:1-15). Also, since the Abrahamic promise preceded the law by 430 years, salvation cannot be in the law—otherwise Abraham couldn't have been saved hundreds of years earlier (3:15-29).

In the next chapter Paul continues his argument for salvation by faith contrasting the Sinai covenant (law) with the covenant of Abraham within which Christians participate. Paul contrasts these diametrically opposing ways of salvation by contrasting Sarah and Hagar through using a figurative teaching technique (v. 24, Gr. ἀλληγορούμενα, from which we get our word “allegory”). This Sarah-Hagar passage is not a true allegory in that true allegories do not point back to historical persons, places, and events. For this reason the NIV translates the word as “figuratively.”

Covenant	Law (24-25)	Abrahamic (28b; cf. 3:16-18)
<b>Son</b>	Ishmael (not specifically named)	Isaac (28)
<b>Mother</b>	Hagar (24-25)	Sarah (not specifically named)
<b>Freedom</b>	Slave (22a, 24b, 31a)	Free (22b, 26a, 31a)
<b>Birth</b>	Ordinary (23a)	Of Promise (23b)
<b>Mount</b>	Sinai in Arabia (24)	Calvary (implied?)
<b>Jerusalem</b>	Present Earthly (25b)	Future (?) Heavenly, Mother (26)
<b>Followers</b>	Children of Hell (implied)	Children of Promise (28b)
<b>Persecution</b>	Persecutor (29a)	Persecuted (29b)
<b>Teachers</b>	Judaizers	Paul & True Evangelists
<b>Salvation by</b>	Works	Faith in Christ
<b>Result</b>	Unsaved	Saved

This account does *not* teach that physical descendants of Ishmael (Arabs) are lost while physical descendants of Isaac (Jews) are saved! Why not? Paul specifically says that his is a spiritualized interpretation of two covenants (v. 24) rather than people. On the other hand, in the same verse he says that those who follow the law are indeed lost and slaves while those who place their faith in Christ are saved and free (cf. v. 31).



PO Box 940871, Plano, TX 75094 by Mike Gendron

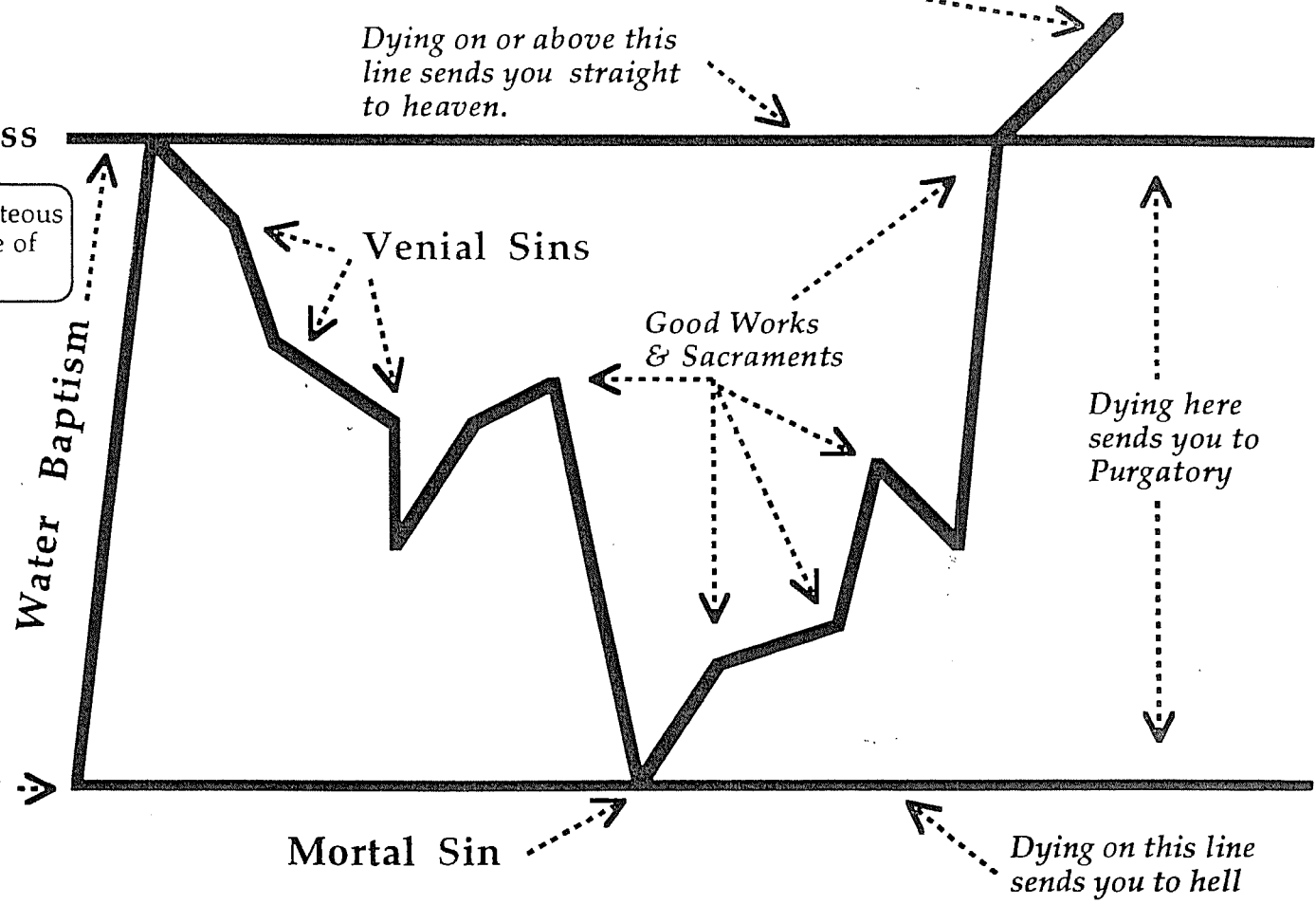
*Those that die with more merit than is necessary for heaven have their extra merit credited to the Vatican treasury. This extra merit is then dispensed through indulgences and Masses to those suffering in Purgatory.*

There is no one righteous, not even one. Romans 3:10

**Self Righteousness**

He saved us not because of righteous things we had done, but because of His mercy. Titus 3:5

*Dying on or above this line sends you straight to heaven.*



Destined for Hell  
Void of Grace

Water Baptism

Venial Sins

Good Works  
& Sacraments

Dying here  
sends you to  
Purgatory

Mortal Sin

Dying on this line  
sends you to hell

**The Catholic View of Justification**

**A Graphic View of Justification in the Roman Catholic Church**

*Dying with God's righteousness qualifies you for heaven.*  
John 5:24

Glorification

Righteousness of God

Philippians 3:9  
Romans 5:17  
2 Corinthians 5:21

Sanctification

Justified

*Justification is a permanent verdict by God that declares a sinner righteous because of his faith in Christ. It enables God to continue to see the sinner as if he were righteous even if he continues to sin. The ground of justification is the righteousness of Christ and therefore sin or good works has no effect on it. A person either has the righteousness of God and is destined for heaven, or he is condemned and is destined to hell. The righteousness of God is given as a gift to those who trust in God's one and only provision for their sin: that Jesus paid the full and complete punishment by dying in their place. See Romans 3:21-26, 4:2-9 and Ephesians 2:1-10.*

Faith in Christ

Destined for Hell  
Spiritually Dead

*Dying without trusting Christ sends you to hell*  
John 12:48

## A Graphic View of Justification According to Scripture

- Mike Gendron  
Proclaiming the Gospel  
PO Box 840871  
Plano, TX 75094  
USA

## Evangelicals and Catholics Together

1 of 2

## THE BEREAN CALL

P.O. Box 7019 Bend, Oregon 97708

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## The Gospel That Saves

Dave Hunt

To gain wider acceptance of the original ECT ("Evangelicals and Catholics Together: The Christian Mission in the Third Millennium," March 29, 1994), nineteen evangelicals (Bill Bright, Charles Colson, Richard Land, Max Lucado, Os Guinness, J.I. Packer, et al.) and fifteen Catholics (Jesuit Avery Dulles, Peter Kreeft, Ralph Martin, Richard John Neuhaus, et al.) have now signed ECT2. It would have us believe that evangelicals and Catholics agree on the gospel.

On the one hand, the document is without significance. *First of all*, the fifteen Catholic signers represent neither their Church nor its 1 billion members. There is a wide range of belief. Many Catholic priests and nuns and leading theologians are into every New Age heresy from mind science to Hinduism and Buddhism.

*Secondly*, the official teaching of the Church of Rome (which claims to be infallible and therefore cannot repent of its errors), and the daily practice of Catholics (who look to their Church for salvation, however it defines and offers it) are untouched by ECT2 and remain as far from the biblical gospel as ever.

*Thirdly*, the document itself admits that many "interrelated questions that require further and urgent exploration" remain. They include among others "the meaning of baptismal regeneration [a Catholic is "born again" in infant baptism and there is no salvation without baptism]; the Eucharist [Christ is being perpetually immolated on Catholic altars as an ongoing sacrifice for sin in denial of the full efficacy of His once-for-all sacrifice on the cross], and sacramental grace ["the merits and graces" Christ won on the cross are "conferred gradually and continually" through the sacraments, i.e., salvation is an ongoing process rather than an accomplished fact]; the historic uses of the language of justification as it relates to imputed and transformative righteousness [the Catholic must acquire enough righteousness to merit heaven and is always in danger of losing it, thus rejecting the truth that God "justifieth the ungodly" on the merits of Christ (Rom 4:5)]; diverse understandings of merit, reward [for the Catholic salvation is

assisted by works]; purgatory [in addition to Christ's suffering on the cross, one must personally suffer for sin in order to be purified for heaven], and indulgences [one can suffer for others, and the wearing of a medal or scapular or saying Hail Marys or a Mass said in honor of the dead can reduce purgatorial suffering]; Marian devotion and the assistance of the saints in the life of salvation...." Every one of these points denies the very unity which is professed by ECT2!

*On the other hand*, the document is a valuable aid to Satan in his preparation of the world and a false church for Antichrist. It gives the appearance of agreement when there is none. ECT2 creates compromise by pretending that the issues separating evangelicals and Catholics are not serious, when actually they mark the divide between heaven and hell. Typical of the contradictions inherent in the document is the

the power of God *unto salvation* to every one that believeth" (Rom 1:16). He also called it "the gospel...by which also *ye are saved*" (1 Cor 15:1-2); and "the gospel of *your salvation*" (Eph 1:13). Clearly, from these and other verses, salvation comes *only* through *believing the gospel*. Christ told His disciples to go into "all the world, and preach the gospel" (Mk 16:15), a gospel which the Bible precisely defines.

Salvation has nothing to do with a church, whether evangelical or Catholic. It comes by the unchangeable, "everlasting" (Rv 14:6) "gospel of God" (Rom 1:1; 15:16; 2 Cor 11:7; 1 Thes 2:2, 8, 9; 1 Tm 1:11; 1 Pt 4:17). Salvation comes on God's terms and by His grace and we negotiate the gospel neither with God nor with one another. "The Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world" (1 Jn 4:14). Salvation is a work of God and His Son. We either believe it or reject it. We don't "dialogue" about it.

It is also called the "gospel of Christ," (Mk 1:1; Rom 1:16; 15:19; 1 Cor 9:12, 18; 2 Cor 4:4; 9:13; 10:14; Gal 1:7; Phil 1:27; 1 Thes 3:2; 2 Thes 1:8). He is the Savior, and salvation is His work, not ours, as the angels said: "For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord" (Lk 2:11). Paul

specifies the gospel that saves: "that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; and that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures" (1 Cor 15:3-4). "I am the door," said Christ: "by *me* if any man enter in, he shall be saved" (Jn 10:9).

The gospel contains nothing about baptism, good works, church membership or attendance, tithing, sacraments or rituals, diet or clothing. If we add *anything* to the gospel, we have perverted it and thus come under Paul's anathema in Galatians 1:8,9!

The gospel is all about what Christ has done. It says nothing about what Christ must yet do, because the work of our redemption is finished. "Christ *died* for our sins." He isn't still dying, as Catholicism maintains. Christ triumphantly declared, "It is *finished*" (Jn 19:30)! Nor does it say anything about what we must do, because we can do nothing. "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us" (Ti 3:5); "for by grace are ye saved, through faith...the gift of God [is] not of works, lest any man should boast..." (Eph 2:8-9).

**...but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ.**

*Galatians 1:7*

statement, "we commit ourselves to evangelizing everyone....Evangelicals must speak the gospel to Catholics and Catholics to Evangelicals..." "working hard to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace"...." If evangelicals and Catholics are both saved and united in the Spirit, then what does "evangelizing" mean?

The Judaizers of Galatians could have signed a similar document. In fact, theirs would have had a much shorter list of issues that "require further and urgent exploration": the relationship of the Law to salvation. The Judaizers affirmed that Christ died for our sins, but they added that to be saved one must also "be circumcised, and keep the law" (Acts 15:1, 5, 24). Instead of signing an agreement with the Judaizers as though their heresy were merely something for "further...exploration," Paul cursed them for preaching another gospel (Gal 1:6-8). But ECT2 makes it seem that the things upon which we differ are inconsequential. ECT2 is an even more deceptive document than its predecessor!

Paul said that "the gospel of Christ...is

## Evangelicals and Catholics Together (2 of 2)

Instead of works, the gospel requires faith. It is the power of God unto salvation to those who *believe*. "Now to him that *worketh not*, but *believeth* on him that justifieth the ungodly, his *faith* is counted for righteousness" (Rom 4:5)... "that whosoever *believeth in him* should not perish, but have everlasting life" (Jn 3:16).

We could hardly make the Catholic position clearer than by quoting New York's Cardinal O'Connor: "Church teaching is that I don't know, at any given moment, what my eternal future will be. I can hope, pray, do my very best—but I still don't know. Pope John Paul II doesn't know absolutely that he will go to heaven, nor does Mother Teresa of Calcutta..." (*The New York Times*, Feb. 1, 1990, B4). Nor does the average Catholic know, because his Church has taught him that he *can't* know he is saved. Official Catholic dogma could not be changed no matter how many ECTs were signed—even by the Pope himself.

Christ says, "I give unto them [My sheep] eternal life; and they shall never perish" (Jn 10:28). Catholicism rejects that offer and instead offers continual installments of grace toward eternal life through the priesthood and sacraments of the Church, through wearing scapulars, earning indulgences, saying Hail Marys and praying to the saints. Such a pathway to heaven makes Christ a liar.

The gospel is a two-edged sword. It declares, "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life." The same verse also says, "and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him" (Jn 3:36). Right here we come to the most difficult part of the gospel to accept: that those who do not believe it are eternally lost—no matter what good works they do.

The reasons for that fact are grounded in both God's love and His justice. God loves us enough to correct us and to stand firm on what He says. Tragically, many parents mistake sentimentality for love and do not mean what they say, and thereby train their children in disobedience. "If you do that once more, I'll spank you [or some other threat]," says Mommy. The child does it again and nothing happens. What Mommy says means nothing. But God says what He means and means what He says.

God's justice requires that the infinite penalty for sin must be paid. In payment we would be separated from God forever, so He became a man through the virgin birth to pay the penalty for us. No one can complain against God. He has proved His love by doing all He could for our salvation. He has Himself paid the penalty and on that basis can be both "just, and

the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus" (Rom 3:26).

Christ pleaded in the Garden, "if it be possible [i.e., if there is any other way mankind can be saved], let this cup pass from me" (Mt 26:39). We know that there is no other way or God would not have required His beloved Son to bear the full brunt of His wrath against sin. That men nailed Christ to the cross would only condemn us. But on the cross, when man was doing his worst to his Creator, Christ paid the penalty for our sins in full.

"How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation" (Heb 2:3)? There is no escape because there is no other way of salvation! Only if we accept that payment on our behalf can we be saved. "[T]here is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we *must* be saved" (Acts 4:12); "what *must* I do to be saved?... Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved" (Acts 16:30-31).

To "believe on the Lord Jesus Christ" includes *who He is* and *what He has done*. Jesus said, "...Ye are from beneath; I am from above...if ye believe not that I AM [this is God's name, Jahweh], ye shall die in your

**...for necessity is laid upon me; yea, woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel!**

*1 Corinthians 9:16*

sins" (Jn 8:23-24). Jesus himself says we must believe that He is God, for He is; and no one less than God could save us. We must believe that the sinless One "died for our sins," and was buried; and that He rose bodily from the grave. Only by believing this gospel are we saved. So says God's Word.

Why couldn't even a Mother Teresa get to heaven by good works? Because we are all sinners; and because once we have broken one of God's commandments we "[are] guilty of all" (Jas 2:10); and "by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight" (Rom 3:20). Keeping the law perfectly from now on could never make up for having already broken it.

For God to grant salvation by any other means than faith in Christ alone would be an insult to the One whom the Father insisted had to endure His wrath as the sacrifice for sin. Furthermore, God would be breaking His own code of justice and going back on His Word. No, even God himself could not save earth's most notable "saint." Christ's blood avails only for repentant sinners.

In expressing concern in these pages for

many heresies, we have tried to confine ourselves to those which impact the gospel and the salvation of souls. It is because the apostles in Jerusalem "walked not uprightly according to the truth of the gospel" that Paul rebuked them (Gal 2:14). Tragically, the gospel is now being challenged and compromised by leading evangelicals! Yes, evangelical leaders who preach the gospel also compromise it. On January 21, 1997 Larry King interviewed Billy Graham on his program:

KING: What do you think of the other [churches]...like Mormonism? Catholicism? Other faiths within the Christian concept?

GRAHAM: Oh, I think I have a wonderful fellowship with all of them. For example....

KING: You're comfortable with Salt Lake City. You're comfortable with the Vatican?

GRAHAM: I am very comfortable with the Vatican. I have been to see the Pope several times. In fact, the night — the day that he was inaugurated, made Pope, I was preaching in his cathedral in Krakow. I was his guest...[and] when he was over here...in Columbia, South Carolina...he invited me on the platform to speak with him. I would give one talk, and he would give the other...but I was two-thirds of the way to China....

KING: You like this Pope?

GRAHAM: I like him very much.... He and I agree on almost everything.

KING: Are you...are you comfortable with Judaism?

GRAHAM: Very comfortable....In New York, they have had me to the Rabbinical Council to...talk with them and Rabbi Tannenbaum, who was a great friend...he gave me more advice and more counsel, and I depended on him constantly, theologically and spiritually and in every way....

KING: Mr. Graham, if you had 30 seconds during the halftime at the Super Bowl, what would you tell the audience?"

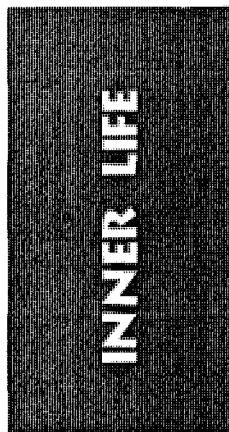
GRAHAM: I would tell them to...think about another game...the game of life, and to be sure they're on God's side, that God loves them and God is interested in them, and they can pray to God, and He'll answer their prayers."

Billy Graham has preached the gospel, souls have been saved, but on this occasion he offered a false gospel without Christ or the Cross—as he did when interviewed by Robert Schuller on "The Hour of Power" some months later. Paul said he had been "put in trust with the gospel" (1 Thes 2:4). So have each of us. Let us be certain that we keep that trust for the sake of the lost and in honor of our Lord who paid the full price for man's redemption! TBC

## Fruit of the Spirit Defined

*Most of us cannot recognize what kind a tree we are looking at by seeing only its leaves and branches. But when we see fruit on it, identifying it is simple.*

*The same is true of Christians. The unmistakable fruit of God's Spirit in our lives is powerful evidence that one has truly trusted Christ. Galatians 5:22-23 notes that this fruit (singular) is love, but love includes the other eight traits as well...*



**Love**

Unconditional and unselfish commitment to others; active service to them

**Joy**

Deep happiness stemming from a personal relationship with God, including a sense of fulfilling His will

**Peace**

Wholeness, tranquility of mind, sense of well-being, based on forgiveness



**Patience**

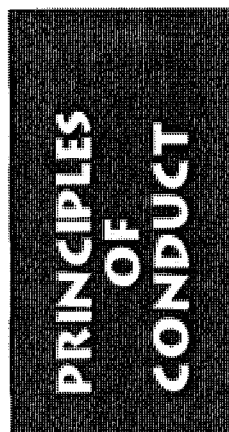
Longsuffering, steadfastness, forbearance, willingness to wait for others like God waits for us

**Kindness**

Excellence of character towards those of fragile nature in personality and need

**Goodness**

Sense of ideal character, righteousness softened by love



**Faithfulness**

Fidelity towards others, reliable since God is reliable towards us

**Gentleness**

Meekness, tamed and trained, submissive to God's will and considerate to others

**Self-Control**

Self-mastery, priority of others' concerns over selfish desires



## Fruit of the Spirit Compared

*"The fruit of the Spirit is love. . ."*

*JOY is love's strength*

*PEACE is love's security*

*PATIENCE is love's endurance*

*KINDNESS is love's conduct*

*GOODNESS is love's character*

*FAITHFULNESS is love's confidence*

*GENTLENESS is love's humility*

*SELF-CONTROL is love's victory*

JOY - LOVE EXALTED

PEACE - LOVE IN REPOSE

LONGSUFFERING - LOVE ENDURING

GENTLENESS - LOVE BEING TENDER

GOODNESS - LOVE SHOWING KINDNESS

FAITHFULNESS - LOVE OVERCOMING

MEEKNESS - LOVE IN SUBMISSION

SELF-CONTROL - LOVE UNDER DISCIPLINE

### L O V E

#### FEELINGS

Joy  
Peace

#### ATTITUDES

Patience  
Kindness

#### CHARACTER

Goodness  
Faithfulness

#### BEHAVIOR

Gentleness  
Self-control

# Does the Law of Moses Apply to Me?

Summarizing the Five Main Views on the Law and the Christian\*

Should you as a Christian tithe? work on Saturday? charge interest to Jews? eat meat and drink milk in the same meal? The Pentateuch addresses these, but believers today debate whether the law applies to believers today. This chart summarizes five views on this crucial issue.

	<b>Theonomic</b> Greg Bahnsen	<b>Reformed</b> Willem VanGemenen	<b>Weightier Issues</b> Walter C. Kaiser	<b>Modified Lutheran</b> Douglas J. Moo	<b>Dispensational</b> Wayne G. Strickland
What is the Law?	Same definition as the views 3-5	God's oral or written instructions since creation	The whole Mosaic law given in the Pentateuch (Genesis to Deuteronomy) but also amplified in the rest of the Old Testament		
Who is the Law for?	The Elect (Israel = Church)	All mankind (Israel = Church)	Believers (Israel and Church)	Believers (Israel and Church)	Israel only (Israel ≠ Church)
Which parts of the Law apply today?  • "Moral law"? (i.e., Decalogue or 10 Commandments)	All moral laws apply to people of God only in every age; therefore, all elect persons since creation should observe either the Jewish Sabbath (Saturday, before Christ) or "Christian Sabbath," (Sunday, after Christ)	All moral laws apply to believers and unbelievers of every age (e.g., all persons—including unbelieving Gentiles since creation—should observe the Sabbath or "Christian Sabbath," being Sunday)	All moral laws that stem from God's character: • 10 Commandments • Leviticus 18–19 (sex) (i.e., Sabbath is required since Israel's nationhood and prohibited sexual practices still apply)	As with dispensationalists, the Mosaic law is abolished in its entirety; however, its moral content provides good guidelines for Christian living, though Christ holds the final say through the ministry of the Holy Spirit in believers today; Sabbath obedience is not consistently applied (?)	God's "moral law" before Moses is now called the "law of Christ" (Gal. 6:2) and governs believers through the Spirit's new covenant indwelling; The Law does not easily divide into "parts" and is done away with in its entirety (Rom. 7:1-6; 1 Cor. 9:19-21; Heb. 8:13), including the Sabbath (Col. 2:16-17)
• Civil laws? (i.e., judicial law)	All apply (e.g., laws today should require death for adultery)	Some apply (e.g., still tithe and don't charge believers interest)	Judicial <i>principles</i> (not laws) apply since moral laws underlie all judicial and ceremonial laws	Only principles apply now as the Mosaic law was given only to Israel	None apply as these regulated Israel alone (but principles such as love and compassion still apply)
• Ceremonial laws?	All five views agree that ceremonial aspects such as the sacrificial system and Jewish priesthood are now fulfilled in Jesus Christ				
What is the relationship of the Abrahamic Covenant to Mosaic Covenant?	Both are God's "covenant of grace." They consist of the same substance of God's saving relationship which makes the MC still apply today	MC was added to the AC; both still apply though they are similar in substance but different in form and purpose	MC was given specifically to Israel but its moral principles are still relevant to all believers under the AC	Like dispensationalists, MC was conditional but AC was not; MC as a temporary framework prescribed terms of obedience for Israel in Law period	MC regulated Israel's life so she could experience the blessings of the AC, but MC is no longer operative as it is fulfilled in Christ

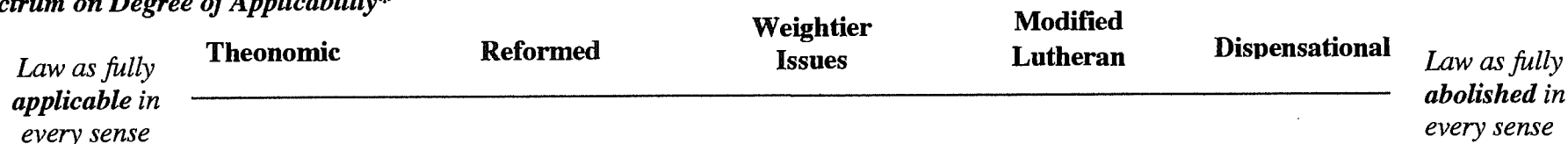
\* This chart summarizes Stanley N. Gundry, ed. *Five Views on Law and Gospel* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996), where each author presents his view and responds to the other four views. Generally speaking, views 1-2 are similar as both are Reformed (stressing continuity between the NT and OT) and these stand against views 3-5 which are alike in stressing discontinuity. In my opinion, the dispensational view has the most to commend it as law in the NT is never broken into component parts and this view clearly distinguishes Israel from the church. Further, it is inconsistent to change the Sabbath (Saturday) to Sunday but not apply the OT penalties for Sabbath-breaking today (i.e., death by stoning; cf. Exod. 31:14-15; 35:2).

## Does the Law of Moses Apply to Me? (2 of 2)

*Evaluating the Five Main Views on the Law and the Christian*

	<b>Theonomic</b> Greg Bahnsen	<b>Reformed</b> Willem VanGemen	<b>Weightier Issues</b> Walter C. Kaiser	<b>Modified Lutheran</b> Douglas J. Moo	<b>Dispensational</b> Wayne G. Strickland
<b>Strengths</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continuity between the OT and NT upheld</li> <li>• Desires ethics to relate to all of life</li> <li>• Sees positive aspects of the law</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continuity between the OT and NT upheld</li> <li>• Notes Mosaic law's foreshadowing of Christ</li> <li>• Sees a convicting role of the law today for unbelievers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Biblical support for some law aspects (i.e., moral) being weightier than others (Matt. 23:23)</li> <li>• Holiness Code of Leviticus 18–19 stem from nature of God</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Accounts for new covenant emphases under the Law of Christ (Gal. 6:2)</li> <li>• Says OT laws repeated in the NT are applicable</li> <li>• Applies law principles today</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Biblical in that Mosaic law began at Sinai and ended with Christ's death as a temporary custodian or tutor (Gal. 3:19, 24-25)</li> <li>• Clearly distinguishes between Israel and church today</li> <li>• Advocates continued guidance in law of Christ</li> </ul>
<b>Weaknesses</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dividing law as moral, civil &amp; ceremonial not biblically supported</li> <li>• Misguided to apply godly commands to unregenerate man</li> <li>• All "law" need not be Mosaic (natural law and law of Christ also exist)</li> <li>• The NT never applies the OT to civil matters</li> <li>• Law condemned man (2 Cor. 3:9)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dividing law as moral, civil &amp; ceremonial not biblically supported</li> <li>• Use of "law" in differing ways inconsistent &amp; confusing</li> <li>• Requiring Sabbath for today contradicts NT (Col. 2:16-17)</li> <li>• Unclear if moral law became law of Christ</li> <li>• Merges Israel and church</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dividing law as moral, civil &amp; ceremonial not biblically supported</li> <li>• Arbitrary to pick and choose which parts of the law are required</li> <li>• Choice of Decalogue and Lev. 18–19 too narrow for moral law</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Seeks to teach the indivisibility of the law while upholding its moral content</li> <li>• Too extreme to claim that the law has absolutely no purpose today</li> <li>• Fails to see the gospel in the OT by demarcating Law and Gospel into distinct, discontinuous eras</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Distinguishing law's revelatory aspects (eternal, revealing God's nature) from regulatory (temporary, ruled Israel) makes distinctions within an inseparable code—if the OT law is essentially a unity, then why divide it into two parts?</li> <li>• The law is not nullified but actually upheld by faith (Rom. 3:31)</li> </ul>

***Spectrum on Degree of Applicability\****



\* Adapted from Lee Hwee Chin, "The Applicability of the Law Today," unpublished research paper for the course "Old Testament Survey," Singapore: Singapore Bible College, 2001), 1.

## Contrasting Galatians and James

The letters of Galatians and James are the first two epistles in our NT, chronologically speaking. This means that they help set the foundation of doctrinal truth for the rest of the correspondence of Paul and the apostles. Both letters were written in the AD 40s when the church was still young in its second decade after Christ's ascension. Both were strong exhortations written to a more general readership than to a single assembly. However, they differ in some notable ways:

<i>Issues</i>	<i>Galatians</i>	<i>James</i>
<i>Probable Date</i>	AD 48	AD 44
<i>Length</i>	6 chapters	5 chapters
<i>Faith for...</i>	Salvation	Demonstration
<i>Written by...</i>	Paul	James
<i>Written to...</i>	Gentiles	Jews (1:1)
<i>Readers' view of Author...</i>	Doubted his authority	Accepted his authority
<i>Audience in a...</i>	Province	Diaspora
<i>Problem...</i>	Heresy	Persecution
<i>False...</i>	Teaching	Living
<i>Subject</i>	We can't see faith	We can see works
<i>Form</i>	Organized, sequential	Repetitive, circular
<i>Outline</i>	Easy to discern	Difficult to discern
<i>Major concern</i>	Theological	Practical
<i>Justification is a...</i>	Technical term	Non-technical term
<i>Justification before...</i>	God	Man
<i>Justification direction</i>	Vertical	Horizontal
<i>Key word</i>	Justification	Works

What other contrasts can you add to these above? Write them on the chart.

The church needs both of these books as together they provide both the theological and practical balance we each need as believers. May you become an expert in both books and subjects!

# Ephesians

Jew-Gentile Unity Shown in Love								
Unity as Equals				Love as Testimony				
Chapters 1–3				Chapters 4–6				
Doctrine				Application				
Position				Practice				
Belief				Behaviour				
Privileges				Responsibilities				
Salutation 1:1-2	Position 1:3-23	Reconciliation 2	Uniqueness 3	Unity 4:1-16	Holiness 4:17-5:20	Submission 5:21-6:9	Reliance 6:10-20	Love 6:21-24
Rome								
Fall AD 60 (first Roman imprisonment)								

**Key Word:** Unity

**Key Verses:** “As a prisoner for the Lord, then, I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received. Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace” (4:1-3).

**Summary Statement:** Paul explains God's mystery—the *unity of Jews and Gentiles* in the Church who are equal positionally—to exhort these two groups at Ephesus to live worthy of this calling through a *unified love* for one another as a testimony to the world.

**Application:**

Do you *really* believe you are equal with other members of the body of Christ?

- Filipino maids?
- Former Muslims (Malays)?
- Believers at Changi Prison?
- Poor churches of India, Myanmar, Bangladesh, etc.?

How do you express your unity with believers who are different from you?

# Ephesians

## Introduction

**I. Title** The title (Πρὸς Ἐφεσίους *To the Ephesians*) is found on *all* Greek manuscripts (cf. Metzger, *The Text of the New Testament*, 37), including the oldest extant manuscript, *p*<sup>46</sup> (ca. AD 200). However, Marcion (AD 140) entitled the letter *To the Laodiceans* which has led some scholars to believe the letter was intended to be a circular epistle to various churches of which Ephesus was chief (Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament*, 601).

## II. Authorship

- A. **External Evidence:** The unanimous position of the early church supported Pauline authorship but has been contradicted with nearly the opposite response among modern scholarship.
1. Ephesians had wide circulation early in the second century as it appeared in the heretic Marcion's canon (ca. AD 140), which only considered Paul's writings authoritative. It also was included among the Pauline writings in the Muratonian canon (ca. AD 180) and the Latin and Syriac versions of the fourth century (Guthrie, 480).
  2. Despite the overwhelming patristic evidence, Ephesians has been perhaps the most disputed Pauline epistle, beginning with Erasmus (16th century) and especially the 19th century radical German schools (Guthrie, 482f.; Kümmel, 357f.; Hiebert, 2:257f.).
- B. **Internal Evidence:** The epistle itself strongly supports Pauline authorship, as it makes this direct claim (1:1; 3:1), has affinities to Colossians in content and vocabulary (Guthrie, 481, 491-92), is consistent with Pauline doctrine, and has Paul's normal structure of greeting, thanksgiving, doctrinal portion, ethical exhortations, closing greeting, and benediction.

Despite the internal evidence for Pauline authorship, many scholars see Ephesians as pseudonymous for several reasons: linguistic and stylistic differences compared to other Pauline writings, the belief that pseudepigraphy was an accepted practice, the impersonal form (e.g., no forms of endearment, lack of greetings to specific individuals) which does not address any concrete situation, the allusions to the author not knowing the recipients (1:15; 3:2; 4:21), the lack of the words "in Ephesus" (1:1) in the oldest manuscripts, the first-person references which "appear forced," and supposed theological differences with Pauline doctrine (Guthrie, 482f.; M. Barth, 38, 41-44; Kümmel, 358f.). However, a closer look at each of these arguments renders them often speculative and certainly inadequate to overthrow the unanimous external evidence and weighty internal factors.

## III. Circumstances

- A. **Date:** Acceptance of Pauline authorship and close affinities to Colossians and Philippians suggest that he wrote Ephesians during the same house arrest from AD 60-62 (cf. Acts 28:30-31). Hoehner dates it in the fall AD 60. Since Philemon was also written during the same confinement, these four letters (Ephesians, Colossians, Philippians, and Philemon) are known as the "prison epistles." The liberal dating (AD 80-100) assumes non-Pauline authorship for the reasons mentioned above.
- B. **Origin/Recipients:** Paul wrote to the Ephesian church while in bondage in Rome, seen in two direct references (3:1; 4:1) and mention of his chains (6:20). Church tradition as well as the text (1:1) and the early title support an Ephesian destination. A textual problem in which some manuscripts (eg., *p*<sup>46</sup>  $\aleph^*$  B\* 424<sup>c</sup> 1739) lack the phrase "in Ephesus" (1:1) is not problematic since all manuscripts contain the title and several good manuscripts do contain the phrase (A  $\aleph^c$  B<sup>3</sup> D F G Byz Latin Syriac Coptic). However, it may be that this letter was written as a circular letter for all of Asia originally sent to Ephesus as the capital city, which could explain the lack of greetings to specific individuals.

- C. Occasion: Paul had invested over two years teaching at Ephesus on his third missionary journey (September 53-early spring 56; Acts 19). Within four years from leaving he was imprisoned in Rome. While there he wrote his epistle to the Colossian church which Tychicus probably carried with the letter to Philemon since Onesimus accompanied him (Col. 4:7-9). It makes sense that since Tychicus would pass through Ephesus en route to Colosse that he could also deliver a letter to the Ephesians (Eph. 6:21-22) unless the Ephesian letter was written one year earlier as proposed by Hoehner. As to why Paul felt the need to address the Ephesian church, this has been variously explained (below).

#### IV. Characteristics

- A. The purpose of the epistle has been explained in many ways:
1. "Ephesians is a manifesto of the love and mission of God to the world of which God's people are to be exponents" (Markus Barth, 1:56).
  2. Other less acceptable purposes which assume non-Pauline authorship are summarized by Markus Barth (1:57f.). It has been interpreted as a cover letter for the rest of the Pauline epistles (E. Goodspeed), a letter countering the competition in Asia Minor by John's and Peter's writings (K. H. von Weizsäcker), a discourse on baptism for new converts (N. A. Dahl), a defense against second century Gnosticism (F. C. Baur), etc.
  3. Believers living in a spiritually beggarly existence must appropriate their wealth in Christ (*TTTB*, 399). Paul's purpose is "to make Christians more aware of their position in Christ and to motivate them to draw upon their spiritual source in daily living: 'walk worthy of the calling with which you were called' (4:1; see 2:10)" (*TTTB*, 402).
  4. His aim is to encourage Jews and Gentiles to demonstrate their love for one another since they are one in Christ (Hoehner, *BKC*, 2:614). This is supported by the eventual loss of their first love for Christ (Rev. 2:4) and the 19 occurrences of the noun or verb for "love" (*ἀγαπάω*, *ἀγάπη*) out of only 107 in all of Paul's writings.
- B. Ephesians contains the most complete description of demonology (2:2; 6:11-16) in all of Paul's writings. Equally important is his emphasis on the person and work of the Holy Spirit (1:13-14; 2:17-21; 3:5, 16-19; 4:3-4, 30; 5:15-21; 6:17-18).
- C. This letter contains more doctrinal and exhortative material in the form of prayers than any other New Testament writing (M. Barth, 1:58-59).
- D. Ephesians has the longest sentences of any NT writing with eight lengthy sentences (1:3-14, 15-23; 2:1-7; 3:1-13, 14-19; 4:1-7, 11-16; 6:14-20), the first of which scholars have thought to be the most cumbersome sentence in the Greek language (Hoehner, *BKC*, 2:616)!
- E. Ephesians gives the fullest explanation of the unity between Jews and Gentiles of any NT writing. This joint-body in Christ is the "mystery" hidden since OT times (3:1-13).

### Argument

A key to the argument of Paul's letter to the Ephesians can be found in the distinction between the many references to two groups designated as "we" (1:11) and "you" (1:13; 2:1). Since the "you" clearly refers to Gentiles (2:11; 3:1) who were far away from God (2:13), by "we" Paul has in mind Jews like himself who are part of the people of Israel and possess the covenants of promise.

This Jew-Gentile distinction is especially important since the original readers of the letter were for the most part Ephesian Gentiles, as they are the only group addressed (1:13; 3:1). Paul, in effect, wrote this epistle to encourage these Gentile believers of their new standing in Christ as equal heirs with Jewish Christians. His passion was that both groups would work together for the Lord as a testimony to the world. The manner in which this purpose is accomplished is to first lay the doctrinal foundation of the Jew-Gentile unity (chs. 1-3), then the practical implications for this new entity of both Jews and Gentiles called the Church (chs. 4-6).

## Synthesis

### Jew-Gentile unity shown in love

<b>1—3</b>	<b>Unity as equals</b>
1:1-2	Salutation
1:3-23	Position
1:3-14	Praise for blessings
1:15-23	Prayer for understanding
<b>2</b>	<b>Reconciliation</b>
2:1-10	Individually
2:11-21	Corporately
<b>3</b>	<b>Uniqueness</b>
3:1-13	Mystery
3:14-21	Prayer for unity in love
<b>4—6</b>	<b>Love as testimony</b>
4:1-16	Unity
4:17—5:20	Holiness
5:21—6:9	Submission/headship in...
5:21	All of life
5:22—6:4	Home
5:22-24	Wives
5:25-33	Husbands
6:1-3	Children
6:4	Fathers
6:5-9	Workplace
6:5-8	Subordinates
6:9	Bosses
6:10-20	Reliance upon God
6:21-24	Love



## Outline

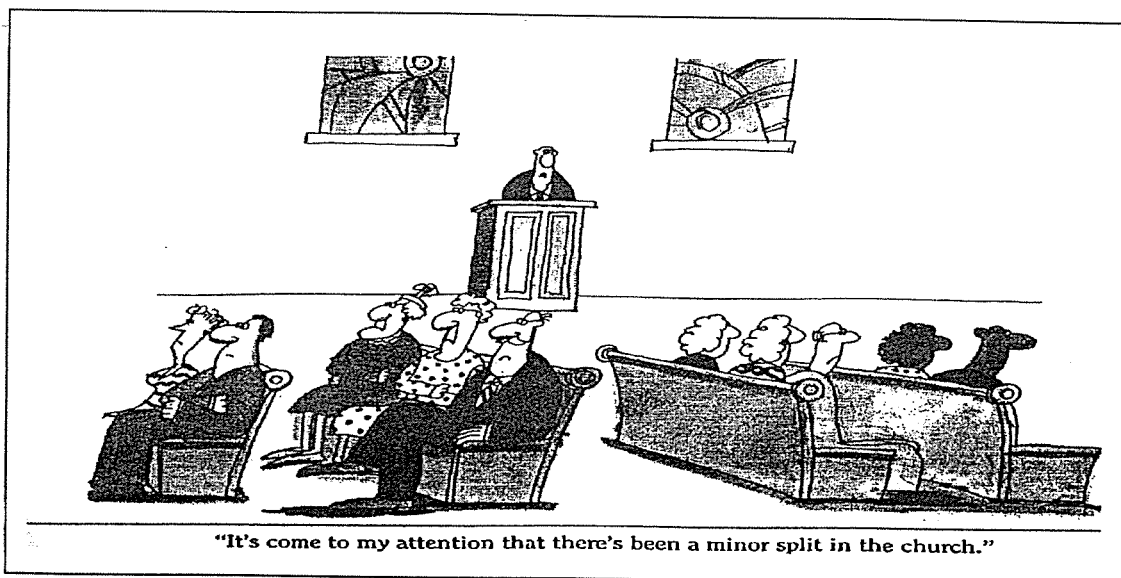
### Summary Statement for the Book

Paul explains God's mystery—the *unity of Jews and Gentiles* in the Church who are equal positionally—to exhort these two groups at Ephesus to live worthy of this calling through a *unified love* for one another as a testimony to the world.

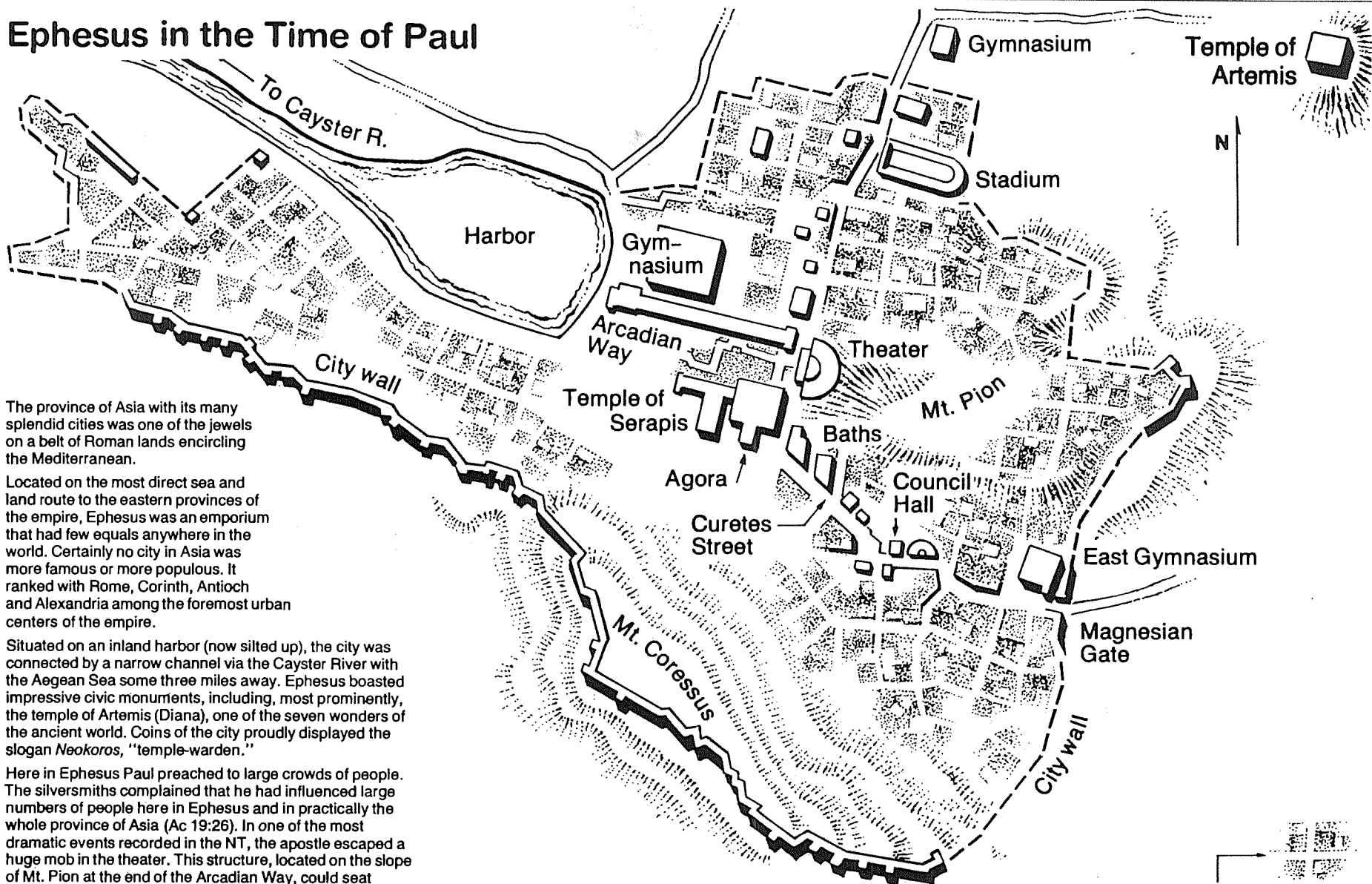
- I. (Chs. 1—3) Paul affirms God's calling of Gentiles into the church as equals to Jewish believers positionally and prays for this union experientially so that God might be given glory.
  - A. (1:1-2) Paul identifies himself as an apostle called by Christ and greets the Ephesian church with a blessing in order to affirm the divine authority of the letter.
  - B. (1:3-23) The present position of the Gentile believers as equal to predestined Jews causes Paul to praise God and pray that the Gentiles might fully comprehend this so as to encourage them to want to get to know Him better.
    1. (1:3-14) Paul praises God that both Jewish and Gentile believers have experienced every spiritual blessing in Christ in order to encourage his Gentile readers that the benefits of their redemption equal those of the predestined Jews.
    2. (1:15-23) Paul prays that the Gentile Ephesian believers would have wisdom and revelation to comprehend their exalted position in Christ as an encouragement for them to get to know God better (cf. v. 17b).



- C. (Ch. 2) The past position of Gentile believers in their depraved state and separation from Israel has been eradicated because of God's love, resulting in the reconciliation of Jews and Gentiles in one body, the Church.
1. (2:1-10) God's work of grace for depraved individuals has brought about a new position which makes them responsive to God by His love, mercy, and grace.
  2. (2:11-21) Jews and Gentiles are now reconciled together in one body despite their former separation since all are saved by grace.
- D. (Ch. 3) Paul describes the unique nature of the Jew-Gentile union and prays for strengthened love among them so that this union might result in unity to the glory of God.
1. (3:1-13) Paul parenthetically describes the mystery never revealed until his ministry that the Church was to be composed of a Jew-Gentile union in order to give his readers an appreciation of the unique privilege they now have due to God's grace.
  2. (3:14-21) Paul prays that his readers would have strengthened power and a deep realization of the tremendous scope of God's love to strengthen the love between his Gentile and Jewish readers in an experiential unity to the glory of God.
- II. (Chs. 4—6) Paul provides practical instruction on Christian living so that his readers would demonstrate their Jew-Gentile unity through love in their daily experience as a testimony to the world.
- A. (4:1-16) Paul exhorts the church to practice the Jew-Gentile unity it has positionally by ministering to one another under gifted people whom God provides so that the church might reach its full potential in Christlikeness.
  - B. (4:17—5:20) Paul exhorts the believers to holiness shown through exchanging their old lifestyles with a righteous walk in the power of the Holy Spirit so that they might be shining testimonies to a depraved world.
  - C. (5:21—6:9) Paul exhorts the believers to submission and headship responsibilities in all of life, including the church, home, and work place to show that every relationship must be transformed by their new life in Christ.
  - D. (6:10-20) Paul exhorts the believers to rely upon God and His defensive and offensive provisions to successfully defeat Satan to instruct them in their inadequacy to proclaim the message of Christ in their own power.
  - E. (6:21-24) Paul's closing remarks encourage the church to request further information from Tychicus and to love one another.



# Ephesus in the Time of Paul



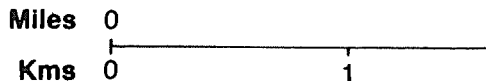
The province of Asia with its many splendid cities was one of the jewels on a belt of Roman lands encircling the Mediterranean.

Located on the most direct sea and land route to the eastern provinces of the empire, Ephesus was an emporium that had few equals anywhere in the world. Certainly no city in Asia was more famous or more populous. It ranked with Rome, Corinth, Antioch and Alexandria among the foremost urban centers of the empire.

Situated on an inland harbor (now silted up), the city was connected by a narrow channel via the Cayster River with the Aegean Sea some three miles away. Ephesus boasted impressive civic monuments, including, most prominently, the temple of Artemis (Diana), one of the seven wonders of the ancient world. Coins of the city proudly displayed the slogan *Neokoros*, "temple-warden."

Here in Ephesus Paul preached to large crowds of people. The silversmiths complained that he had influenced large numbers of people here in Ephesus and in practically the whole province of Asia (Ac 19:26). In one of the most dramatic events recorded in the NT, the apostle escaped a huge mob in the theater. This structure, located on the slope of Mt. Pion at the end of the Arcadian Way, could seat 25,000 people!

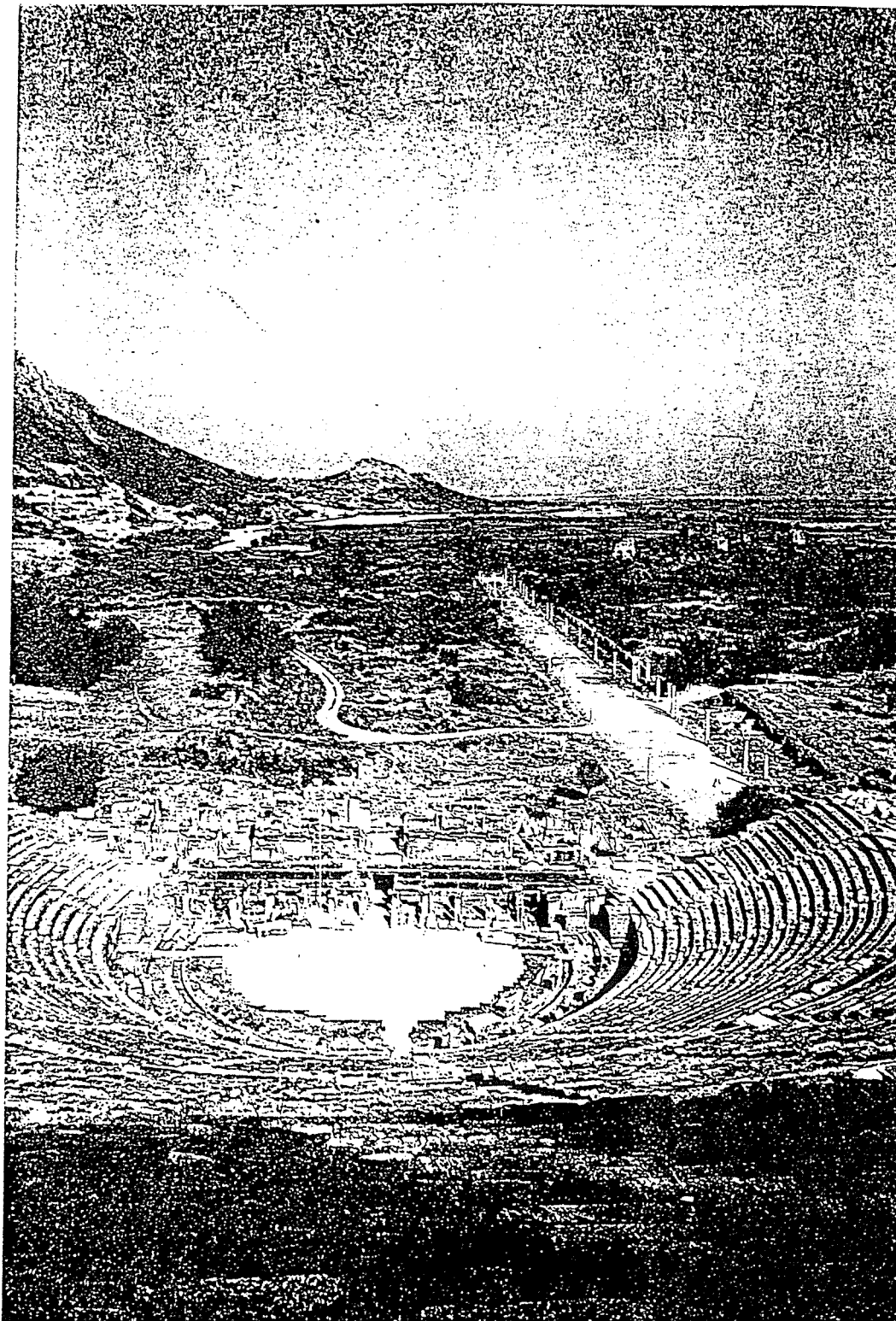
Other places doubtless familiar to the apostle were the Commercial Agora, the Magnesian Gate, the Town Hall or "Council House," and the Street of the Curetes. The location of the lecture hall of Tyrannus, where Paul taught, is unknown.



Side streets (dotted lines) for illustration only—artist's concept

Assumed wall locations — — — — —

## Ephesian Theatre



### 12.22\*

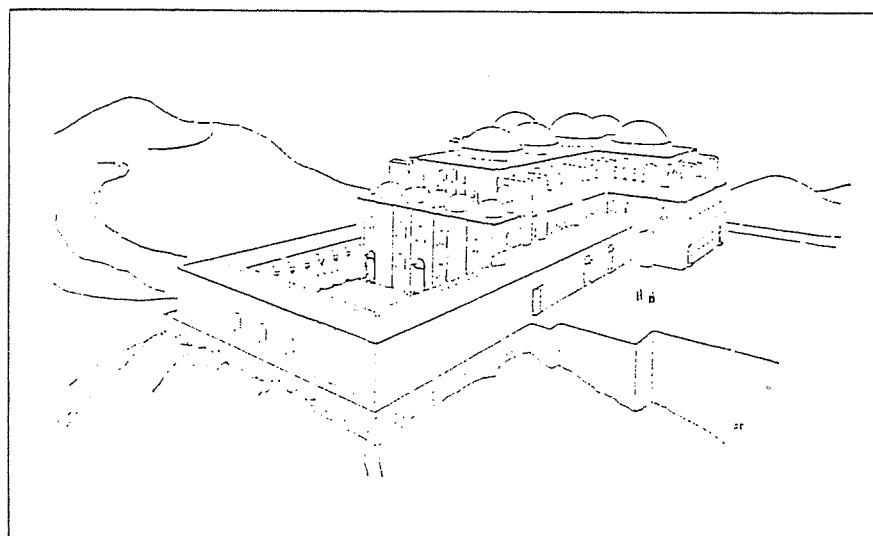
The theatre at Ephesus could seat more than 25,000 people. At the time of the riot described in Acts, a great crowd of Ephesians seized Paul's two companions and dragged them to the theatre, where the city clerk eventually succeeded in quieting the rabble. The Arcadian Way, on the right of this picture, led from the theatre towards the sea, although by Paul's day the harbour was already silting up.

## John at Ephesus

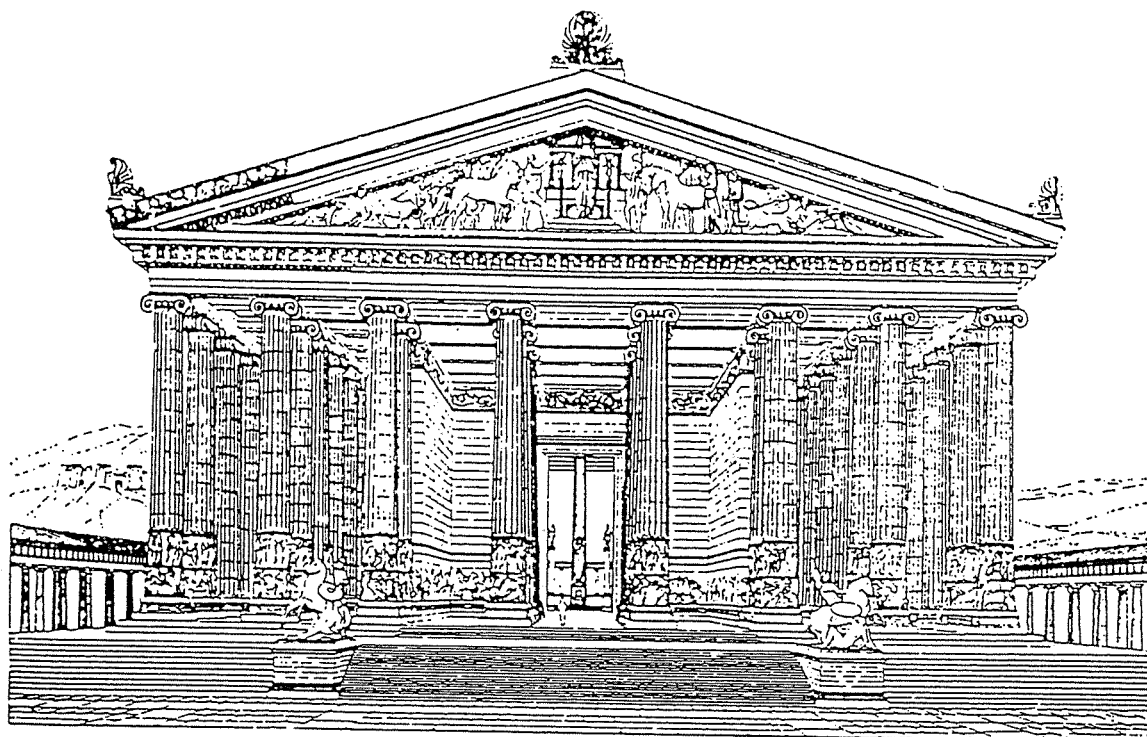


### *The Fortification Walls of the Church of St. John*

While on the cross, Jesus placed his mother Mary into John's care (John 19:26-27). Church tradition records that John fulfilled this request by bringing her to Ephesus where he ministered until his death, except for some time on Patmos where John receive the Revelation.



## The Temple of Artemis



*The Temple of Artemis (Reconstruction)*

### ARTEMISION (THE TEMPLE OF ARTEMIS)

The Temple of Artemis which was considered as one of the Seven Wonders of the World by the writers of the antique world was built in the southwest of the hill called Ayasuluk. Today, only a few pieces of marble and a single column are seen there.

The source of the Artemis cult goes back to Cybele, the mother goddess of Anatolia. The Artemis of Ephesus bears many features of this very old and, at the same time, extremely interesting Anatolian mother goddess. During the excavations, four building phases going back to the 8. th century B. C. other than the present one were identified. The temple of Artemis

was built according to the plans of architect Chersiphron from Crete and his son Metagenes during the first half of the 6. th century B. C. on older temples. On the western side of this temple with the dimensions of 55 m. x 110 m. there are columns with their drums decorated with reliefs given as gift by the Lydian King Croesus.

About two hundred years later after the building of this temple it was burned by a lunatic called Herostratos, who wanted to be mentioned in history, on the night when Alexander the Great was born (356 B. C.). The Ephesians decided to build a larger and more magnificent temple in place of the burned one. The new temple was started to be built on a platform of 3 meters high by the architect Cheiocrates.

Alexander the Great wanted to give

financial aid to the temple which was not completed in 334 B. C. because it was burned on the night he was born. But the proud Ephesians refused this offer with great dignity by saying, "How can a god help to another god?" Although the Temple of Artemis of Ephesus was rebuilt after it was looted and destroyed with the invasion of the Goths in 263 A. D., the temple lost its importance as a result of the spread of Christianity and its remains were used as building material for many buildings for centuries.

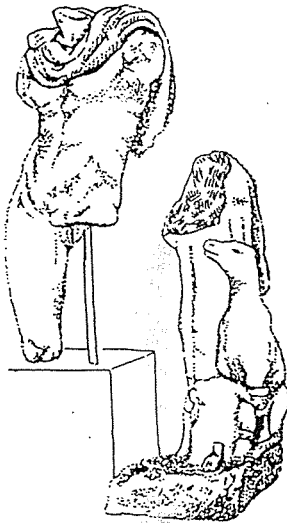
During the excavations made between the years of 1869-1874 by the English engineer J. T. Wood and the excavations made by D. G. Hogarth for the British Museum between the years of 1904-1905 many pieces were sent to England and a few to the Istanbul Archaeological Museum.

## Ephesian Artifacts



### TREASURY ROOM :

Ephesus coins, precious ring stones, and golden ornaments are exhibited in this room.



### BYZANTIAN ARTIFACTS SECTION

#### Ivory Frieze:

On this frieze encircling a round object there are figures of Roman warriors, humans and horses, and a battle is illustrated. The frieze dated to the 2nd century A.C. is darkened in places because of a fire.

#### Garden:

In here various stone artifacts of various periods are exhibited, but necropolis (cemetery) finds take the upper hand. Capitals, inscriptions, funeral stèle and sarcophagus are exhibited.

### TOMB FINDS ROOM

#### Mycenaean Vase:

The vases in the glass cabinet carry an importance as regards the history of Ephesus. They are vases of the Mycenaean Period, dated to 1400 - 1300 B.C. The vase with two handles and an octopus figure has been unearthed in the excavations in front of the citadel gate of the Basilica of St. John.

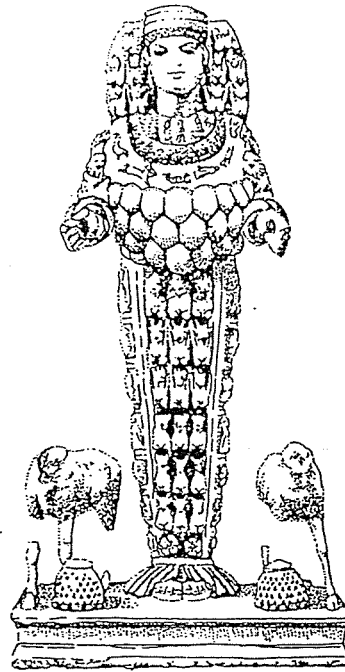
#### Reliefs with Kybele:

The Mother Goddess of Anatolia, Kybele, is exhibited in a corner of the Tomb Room. Kybele is always shown with her lions, and comprises the source of the Artemis Ephesia. Offerings, reliefs and statuettes of Kybele, the Mother Goddess, are dated to the 5th century B.C.

### ARTEMIS ROOM

#### Colossal Artemis Ephesia Statue:

This statue, as graceful and as magnificent as a column, is dated to the 1st century A.D. The animal figures on the statue symbolize the power of the goddess on wild animals, in addition to which motifs of bees, the symbol of Ephesus, have been used. The egg-shaped breasts represent Artemis, the source of fertility and life, in the most beautiful manner.



#### Artemis Ephesia :

This artifact unearthed in the excavations at the Efes City Hall in the year 1956 is the most beautiful and valuable Artemisia Ephesus, and is dated to 124 - 175 A.D. The only difference between this and the other Artemis is the necklace on her breast adorned with zodiac (star and constellation) symbols. It seems to have been gilded from the waist down in its own period. With the illustration of two deers on the side, it is a copy of the wooden statue in the Artemision, considered to be one of the seven wonders of the world.

### EMPEROR CULTS AND PORTRAITS ROOM

#### Frieze of the Temple of Hadrian:

The frieze is made up of four blocks and has been taken from another construction to be put here. The friezes on the blocks relate Androcles and the legend of the founding of Ephesus. The frieze is dated to 3rd - 4th centuries A.D.



Ozcan Atalay, Ephesus (Turkey: Guney Books)

## Our Position in Christ

The current rage in psychological circles focuses on individual self-esteem—how good a person feels about himself or herself. This is not a scriptural emphasis at all. Rather than encouraging us to exalt self, the Bible tells us to deny self (Matt. 16:24), not think too highly of self (Rom. 12:3), and that the heart is desperately wicked (Jer. 17:9)!

We have no reason for good self-esteem. However, we have every reason to walk in confidence due to what *God* thinks of us. While this is taught in many NT books, the book of Ephesians probably emphasizes our position in Christ better than any NT book. Notice how several of the texts below come from Ephesians.

"Understanding your identity in Christ is absolutely essential to your success at living the victorious Christian life!"

### Who am I?

#### I am accepted...

John 1:12	I am God's child.
John 15:15	I am Christ's friend.
Rom. 5:1	I have been justified.
1 Cor. 6:17	I am united with the Lord, and I am one spirit with Him.
1 Cor. 6:19-20	I have been bought with a price. I belong to God.
1 Cor. 12:27	I am a member of Christ's body.
Eph. 1:1	I am a saint.
Eph. 1:5	I have been adopted as God's child.
Eph. 2:18	I have direct access to God through the Holy Spirit.
Col. 1:14	I have been redeemed and forgiven of all my sins.
Col. 2:10	I am complete in Christ.

#### I am secure...

Rom. 8:1-2	I am free forever from condemnation.
Rom. 8:28	I am assured that all things work together for good.
Rom. 8:31-34	I am free from any condemning charges against me.
Rom. 8:35-39	I cannot be separated from the love of God.
2 Cor. 1:21-22	I have been established, anointed, and sealed by God.
Col. 3:3	I am hidden with Christ in God.
Phil. 1:6	I am confident that the good work God has begun in me will be perfected.
Phil. 3:20	I am a citizen of heaven.
2 Tim. 1:7	I have not been given a spirit of fear, but of power, love, and a sound mind.
Heb. 4:16	I can find grace and mercy in time of need.
1 John 5:18	I am born of God, and the evil one cannot touch me.

#### I am significant...

Matt. 5:13-14	I am the salt and light of the earth.
John 15:1,5	I am a branch of the true vine, a channel of His life.
John 15:16	I have been chosen and appointed to bear fruit.
Acts 1:8	I am a personal witness of Christ's.
1 Cor. 3:16	I am God's temple.
2 Cor. 5:17-21	I am a minister of reconciliation for God.
2 Cor. 6:1	I am God's co-worker (1 Cor. 3:9).
Eph. 2:6	I am seated with Christ in the heavenly realm.
Eph. 2:10	I am God's workmanship.
Eph. 3:12	I may approach God with freedom and confidence.
Phil. 4:13	I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.

(From "Living Free in Christ" by Dr. Neil Anderson)

"The more you reaffirm who you are in Christ, the more your behavior will begin to reflect your true identity!" (From "Victory Over the Darkness" by Dr. Neil Anderson)

### My Identity

#### Satan's Lie

You are a sinner because you sometimes sin.

You get your identity from what you have done.

You get your identity from what people say about you.

Your behavior tells you what to believe about yourself.

#### God's Truth

You are a saint (one declared righteous by God) who sometimes sins.

You get your identity from what God has done for you.

You get your identity from what God says about you.

Your belief about yourself determines your behavior.

(Adapted from "Resolving Spiritual Conflicts and Cross-Cultural Ministry" by Dr. Timothy Warner)



## Freedom in Christ

491 E. Lambert Road  
La Habra, California 90631  
Phone (562) 691-9128 Fax (562) 691-4035

## Dispensations in Ephesians

Has God required the same stipulations of all people throughout history? Certainly not! His command not to eat from certain trees in Eden was given only to our original parents, circumcision does not apply today, the sacrificial system is abolished, and believers worship corporately on Sunday rather than the Sabbath. While salvation has always been by faith (Gen. 15:6; Rom. 4), man has shown this faith in different ways in various ages. There have been multiple economies or administrations under which man has lived.

Since Paul's letter to the Ephesians emphasizes the nature of the Church, these economies are spoken of several times in this epistle. A brief look at these verses can help us understand the uniqueness of our own administration (dispensation) in contrast to those preceding it.

Ephesians 3:2-6 is the clearest text that teaches the church age as a dispensation (οἰκονομία):

Surely you have heard about the **administration** (οἰκονομία) of God's grace that was given to me for you,<sup>3</sup> that is, the mystery made known to me by revelation, as I have already written briefly.<sup>4</sup> In reading this, then, you will be able to understand my insight into the mystery of Christ,<sup>5</sup> which was not made known to men in other generations as it has now been revealed by the Spirit to God's holy apostles and prophets.<sup>6</sup> This mystery is that through the gospel the Gentiles are heirs together with Israel, members together of one body, and sharers together in the promise in Christ Jesus (NIV).

The word used here, *oikonomia*, is a compound word from *oikos* ("house") and *nomos* ("law"). The basic idea of a dispensation is that of managing "house laws" as a steward. God has ultimate authority but he delegates duties to man as his steward to fulfill specific responsibilities. When man faithfully carries out these duties he is rewarded. But failure to discharge his responsibilities brings punishment—even a change of dispensation. This word, *oikonomia* (3:2 "stewardship" NASB; "administration" NIV; "dispensation" KJV), is also used repeatedly in the NT in this sense (Luke 16:1-4; 1 Cor. 9:17; Eph. 1:10; 3:2, 9; Col. 1:25; 1 Tim. 1:4; Paul Benware, *Understanding End Times Prophecy*, 87).

Note above that the Church was not even foreseen in the OT (Eph. 3:5). While Gentiles could be saved in the OT times, to do so they needed to become Jews. The idea that they could be God's people without conversion to Judaism was difficult to understand even for the Jerusalem church in the book of Acts. But Paul and other NT apostles and prophets were given revelation of this "mystery" unknown except by divine revelation.

The word for "administration" (NIV for *oikonomia*) is also used in Ephesians 3:9 where Paul notes that God had graciously enabled him "to make plain to everyone the administration of this mystery, which for ages past was kept hidden in God, who created all things." This clearly refers to the church administration.

Ephesians 1:9-10 also notes another dispensation:

He made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His kind intention which He purposed in Him<sup>10</sup> with a view to an **administration** (οἰκονομία) suitable to the fullness of the times, that is, the summing up of all things in Christ, things in the heavens and things on the earth..." (NAU).

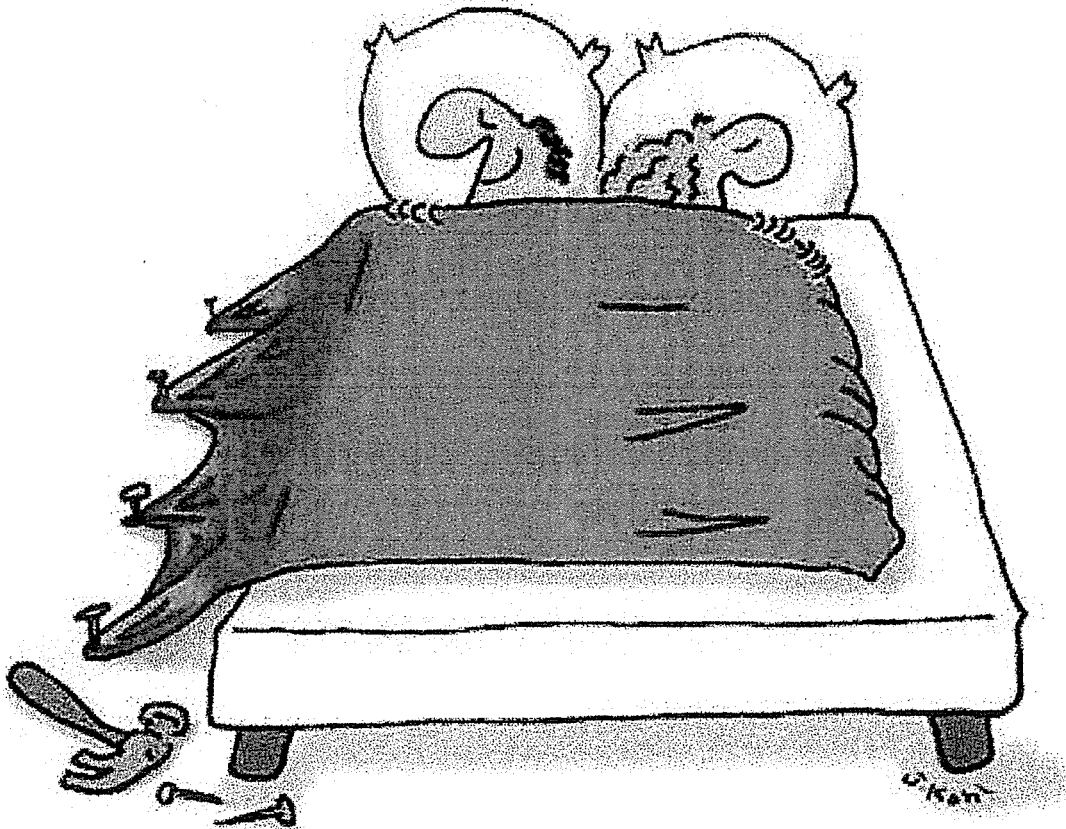
Here is yet another administration when Christ will be the ruler of both heaven and earth in a yet future age (dispensation). Revelation 20:1-6 provides the length of this age as 1000 years, so scholars have called this the millennial rule of Christ. The NIV translation "to be put into effect" literally is "an administration (*oikonomia*, KJV "dispensation") suitable to the fullness of the times" (NAU).

Although not specifically referred to as a dispensation, Ephesians 2:15 notes that a key ministry of Christ was "abolishing in his flesh the law with its commandments and regulations." Thus the law economy was done away with at the death of Christ (cf. Rom. 7:7).

Therefore, Ephesians teaches at least three dispensations: law (2:15), grace (3:2, 9), and the future rule of Christ (1:9-10).



## Eternal Security in Ephesians



Can a Christian lose his salvation? Paul answers this question in his letter to the Ephesians where he speaks of the sealing with the Holy Spirit:

1. Sphere: “The Holy Spirit is the seal. The believer is sealed with or in the Spirit. In Ephesians 1:13 there is no preposition expressed” (Charles C. Ryrie, *The Holy Spirit*, 80). In other words, technically we are not sealed “by” the Spirit but “with” the Spirit.
2. Extent: All believers are sealed. In fact, the believer’s sealing is the basis for the exhortation not to grieve the Spirit (Eph. 4:30; cf. 2 Cor. 1:22).
3. Intent: There exist two purposes of the sealing of Christians:
  - a. *Security*: God has given us His Spirit, so He will also give us our entire inheritance in heaven (Eph. 4:30; 2 Cor. 1:22b), including redemption of our bodies (Eph. 1:13-14).
  - b. *Ownership*: It shows that God owns us (2 Cor. 1:22b, “seal of ownership”)

## What Do You Think of Prayer?

Ephesians speaks of prayer more than any of Paul's epistles. To explore your own ideas on this vital subject, please mark as A, U, or D to show whether you Agree, are Unsure, or Disagree with each of the follow statements on prayer.

1. God does nothing except in response to prayer
2. Prayer is the most important activity for the Christian
3. The only prayer of an unbeliever that God answers is a prayer of repentance
4. The more people praying for you, the better
5. Prayer walks (praying on site) are more effective than praying from far away
6. Christians should try to pray with believers living in sin
7. Prayerlessness is a symptom of self-sufficiency
8. My attitude is a barometer of my prayer life
9. Satan knows the inaudible prayers of our heart (i.e., he can read our minds)
10. Satan counterfeits answers to prayer
11. We should confront principalities and powers in prayer
12. We should pray against demons who control certain geographical areas
13. The type of prayer Satan hates most is praise

# The Christian's Armor

Peter Lord, *The 29-59 Plan: A Guide to Communion with God*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (Agape Ministries, 1982), 35

## THE WEAPONS OF OUR WARFARE

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PUT ON THE FULL ARMOR OF GOD  
then you will be able  
to stand your ground  
against  
the schemes  
of the devil.

Stand firm, I say:

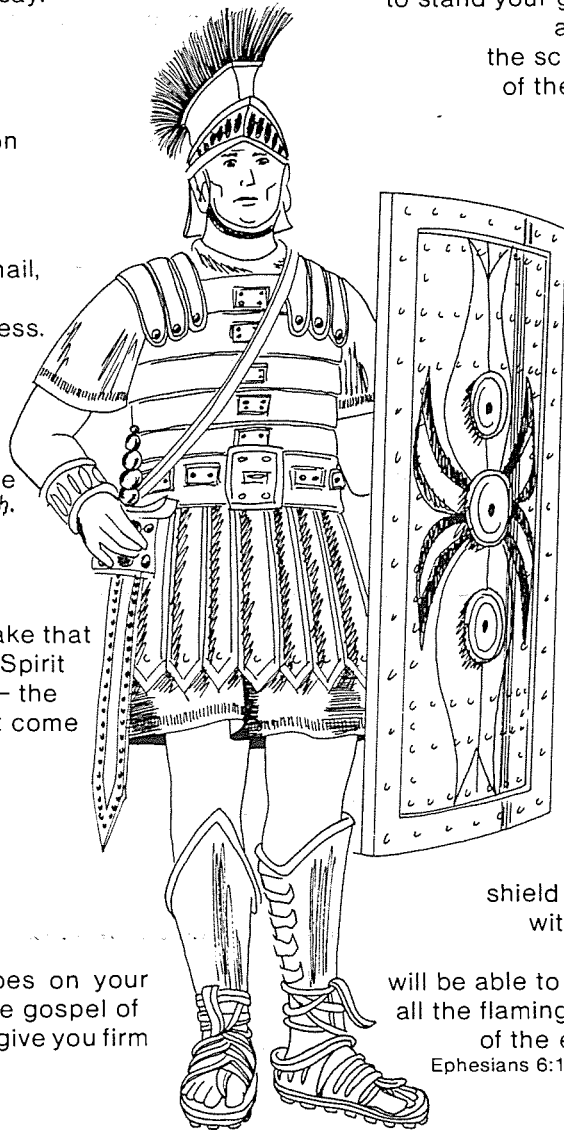
Take salvation  
for helmet.

For coat of mail,  
put on  
righteousness.

Buckle on the  
belt of *truth*.

For sword, take that  
which the Spirit  
gives you – the  
words that come  
from God.

Let the shoes on your  
feet be the gospel of  
peace, to give you firm  
footing.

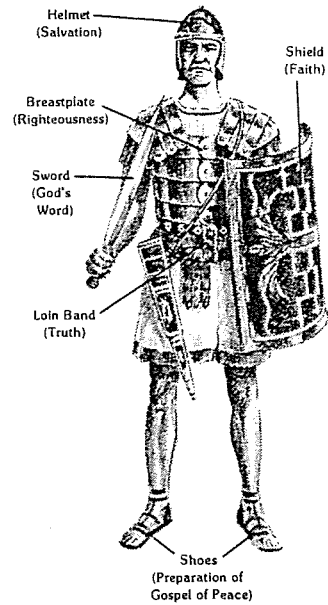


Take  
up  
the  
great  
shield of faith,  
with which  
you  
will be able to quench  
all the flaming arrows  
of the evil one.  
Ephesians 6:11-18 NEB

# The Weapons of Our Warfare

Ephesians 6:10-20 is a key NT passage that shows the nature of our battle with Satan. The first part (6:10-13) notes our dependence upon God for victory which is underscored with the necessity of prayer in the final verses (6:18-20). The central portion of this text (6:14-17) lists six weapons each believer must use against our enemy.

**Small Group Directions:** Study those weapons assigned to your group by filling in the chart below on these weapons. Be sure you discuss the last column by giving some practical ways that we can help one another deploy this weapon with success!



Weapons	Roman Function	Spiritual Meaning	Defends Against Accusations of...	Practical Applications
Belt (14a)	Held up flowing robe and sword	Integrity	Hypocrisy	
Breastplate (14b)	Protected vital organs	Imputed righteousness	Never being able to conquer sin	
Shoes (15)	Gave mobility to fight anywhere	Availability in evangelism	Uselessness in sharing the gospel	
Shield (16)	Extinguished arrows	Faith in God	Inability to fight temptations	
Helmet (17a)	Protected from head injury	Security of salvation	Doubt of salvation	
Sword (17b)	Attacked the foe or defended against attack	God's Word, the Bible	Inadequacy of God's Word (lies about us or God)	

## Thought Questions

- A. What are the practical ways of "putting on" each item (write in last column above)?
- B. Which item of spiritual armor is the strongest for you personally?
- C. Which is the weakest for you?
- D. What commitment to accountability are you making today to help your weakest area?

## Paul's Prayers for NT Churches

*Source Unknown (1 of 2)*

Study the following prayers of Paul for churches under his care, marking this sheet with lines to common themes, circling similar words or concepts, showing contrasts, etc. Look for *how* he prayed for others as well as *what* he prayed for. How does this differ from your own prayers for people you know?

- 1Ths. 3:12-13      May the Lord make your love increase and overflow for each other and for everyone else, just as ours does for you. May he strengthen your hearts so that you will be blameless and holy in the presence of our God and Father when our Lord Jesus comes with all his holy ones.
- 1Ths. 5:23          May God himself, the God of peace, sanctify you through and through. May your whole spirit, soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.
- 2Cor. 13:7          Now we pray to God that you will not do anything wrong. Not that people will see that we have stood the test but that you will do what is right even though we may seem to have failed.
- 2Cor. 13:9          We are glad whenever we are weak but you are strong; and our prayer is for your perfection.
- Rom. 10:1           Brothers, my heart's desire and prayer to God for the Israelites is that they may be saved.
- 2Ths. 1:11          With this in mind, we constantly pray for you, that our God may count you worthy of his calling, and that by his power he may fulfill every good purpose of yours and every act prompted by your faith.
- Col. 1:9-12          For this reason, since the day we heard about you, we have not stopped praying for you and asking God to fill you with the knowledge of his will through all spiritual wisdom and understanding. And we pray this in order that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and may please him in every way: bearing fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God, being strengthened with all power according to his glorious might so that you may have great endurance and patience, and joyfully giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in the kingdom of light.
- Col. 4:12           Epaphras, who is one of you and a servant of Christ Jesus, sends greetings. He is always wrestling in prayer for you, that you may stand firm in all the will of God, mature and fully assured.
- Eph. 1:16-19        I have not stopped giving thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers. I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know him better. I pray also that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints, and his incomparably great power for us who believe. That power is like the working of his mighty strength,

## Paul's Prayers for NT Churches

*Source Unknown (2 of 2)*

How do we often pray for people? We are often too shallow. Perhaps Paul's prayer in Ephesians 1:16-19 can become a good checklist for godly, Word-led prayer for the saints...

- That the eyes of their hearts would be enlightened in order that they would know the hope to which He has called them.
- That they would know the riches of His glorious inheritance in the saints.
- That they would know His incomparably great power for those who believe.
- That out of His glorious riches He would strengthen them with power through His Spirit in their inner being.
- That Christ would dwell in their hearts through faith.
- That they, being rooted and established in love, would have power, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ.
- That they would have power to know this love that surpasses knowledge --that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.
- That their love would abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight, so that they would be able to discern what is best and would be pure and blameless until the day of Christ.
- That they would be filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ --to the glory and praise of God.
- That they would be active in sharing their faith, so that they would have a full understanding of every good thing they had in Christ.

# Philippians

Results of Imitating Christ's Attitude									
Joy			Humility		Protection		Peace		
Chapter 1			Chapter 2		Chapter 3		Chapter 4		
Joy (5x)			Joy (7x)		Joy (1x)		Joy (4x)		
Attitude (1x)			Attitude (7x)		Attitude (8x)		Attitude (4x)		
Suffering			Submission		Salvation		Sanctification		
Salutation 1:1-2	Thanks & Prayer 1:3-11	In Prison Ministry 1:12-30	Exhorted 2:1-4	Exemplified 2:5-30	From Legalism 3:1-16	From Indulgence 3:17-21	With People 4:1-3	With God 4:4-9	Always 4:10-20 - Greetings 4:21-23
Rome									
Early Spring AD 62 (first Roman imprisonment)									

**Key Word:** Attitude

**Key Verse:** "Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus" (Philippians 2:5).

**Summary Statement:** Paul exhorts the Philippian believers to *imitate Christ's attitude* that they may experience joy, humility, and peace to be protected from *false teachers and disunity* in the church.

**Application:** How do you need to show a more Christlike attitude during difficulty?

**Note:** Words for "joy" total 17 times in the letter but words for "attitude" total 20 times.

# Philippians

## Introduction

I. **Title** The Greek for Philippians (Πρὸς Φιλιππησίους *To the Philippians*) follows the standard practice of naming the Pauline Epistles after their recipients.

### II. Authorship

- A. External Evidence: Scholars of nearly all persuasions believe Paul wrote Philippians. The only exception is perhaps F. Baur of the radical 19th century German critics.
- B. Internal Evidence: Philippians claims to be written by Paul (1:1). This is confirmed in the references to his companion Timothy (1:1; cf. Acts 16) and the description the author gives of himself (3:4-6).

### III. Circumstances

- A. Date: Paul mentions his imprisonment (1:14) in Rome (palace guard 1:13), which places the epistle during his first Roman imprisonment (AD 60-62). It is evident that Philippians is the last of the four prison epistles since Ephesians lacks mention of any expected release, and Colossians and Philemon were written at about the same time as Ephesians or shortly afterwards (AD 60-61). Therefore, the best date for Philippians is early spring AD 62. This was just before Paul's release, accomplished in answer to the church's prayers (1:19).
- B. Origin/Recipients: Mention of the palace guard (1:13) and Caesar's household (4:22) indicate that Paul wrote during his Roman imprisonment (not his captivity in Ephesus or Caesarea). Therefore, the letter was written in Rome and sent to the colony of Philippi (1:1b) by Epaphroditus (2:25-30).
- C. Occasion: Paul's "Macedonian Call" on his second missionary journey led to his planting the church at Philippi (Aug.-Oct. AD 50). Lydia, others, and the Philippian jailer responded to the gospel, but then government officials asked Paul and Silas to leave (Acts 16). Paul returned to the city six years later, though probably for just a few days (between June-Nov. AD 56; Acts 20:1, 6). He wrote this epistle to the church six years after this (AD 62), after the church had sent Epaphroditus with a gift (4:18). Epaphroditus almost died of an illness, but when he recovered Paul sent him back to the Philippians with the letter (2:25-30). The immediate reason for writing was to express his affection and thanks for the church's generosity (other purposes are listed in the "Argument" section below). Yet another key purpose was to encourage perseverance (1:27-28; 2:12; 3:13-15; 4:1) against Judaizers who sought to require obedience to the Mosaic law (1:27-28; 3:2-4, 17-19; cf. Acts 15:1-6; Gal. 1:6-9; 2:1-16; 3:1-5; 5:7-10; 6:12-13).

### IV. Characteristics

- A. Philippians is not a systematic treatise of formal doctrine, but it contains the most significant christological passage in the Pauline epistles (2:5-11), cited as an example of humility. This passage is often called the *kenosis* passage since it refers to Christ's emptying (Gr. κενόω, "to empty") His rights (not deity) as God. These seven verses provide profound insights into His preexistence, incarnation, humiliation, and exaltation (*TTTB*, 408).
- B. Although authorship has rarely been debated in regard to Philippians, the unity has been strongly challenged. Some suggest several interpolations written by Paul at a different time. Particularly at issue are: (1) a sudden change in tone from affection to warning and from the posture of fellow worker to an assertion of authority (3:1a verses 3:1b) and (2) the so-called poetic hymn in the midst of prose (2:6-11). The first issue is not significant when one allows Paul a change of disposition as he writes and secondly, the insertion of a well-known or even Pauline "hymn" does not affect the inspiration of the letter.



- C. Central Theme: Philippians is one of the most studied biblical books, resulting in differing ideas on the theme. Here are some examples of the central idea (from least to most likely):
1. Living the Christian life (Robert P. Lightner, "Philippians," *BKC*, 2:647) is offered as a theme but this is too general as it could be said that all NT books exhort Christian living.
  2. Pastoral: Paul's warmth here is unmatched by any other epistle. "He pours out his heart [to these] whom he prizes highly and loves profoundly" (Hendriksen, *NTC*, 39; cf. Lightfoot, 66; Martin, *NCBC*, vii). After all, this was the first church ever in Europe. But this theme does not account for the exhortations and doctrinal content.
  3. Joy: The most popular theme for Philippians is that believers can rejoice despite their circumstances due to Christ (Benware, 222; Wiersbe, *Be Joyful*; Briscoe, *Bound for Joy*; William D. Lawrence, "Overcoming Under the Circumstances," *DTS Video Series*, 1984, 4). Joy amidst trials is an emphasis since the words "joy" or "rejoice" or "glad" appear 17 times in this four-chapter book (1:4, 18 [2x], 25, 26; 2:2, 17 [2x], 18 [2x], 28, 29; 3:1; 4:1, 4a, 4b, 10). Yet this theme downplays its doctrinal elements too much.
  4. The Person of Christ (Alec Motyer, *The Message of Philippians*, *BST*, 22-23) is definitely prominent as His name is noted 70 times or more. The following lists every occurrence of "Christ," "Jesus," "Lord," or pronouns referring to Him in the book:

Characteristics	Chapter 1	Chapter 2	Chapter 3	Chapter 4
Deity (God)		2:6		
Pre-eminent (Lord)	1:2, 20	2:9-11	3:20-21	
Returning in Power	1:6, 10	2:10, 16	3:20-21	4:5
Sacrificial (Cross)	1:29	2:8	3:18	
Savior			3:20	
Glorified Body (Resurrected)			3:10, 21	
Incarnation (man)		2:6-8		
Humble		2:6-8		
Obedient		2:8		
Selfless Interests (Servant)		2:6, 21		
Has a Ministry Plan		2:21, 30		
Provider of Needs				4:19
Helper via the Spirit	1:19			
Answers Prayer	1:19			
Gives Faith to Believe	1:29			
Gives Privilege of Service	1:1, 14-18, 22			
Gives Ability to Glorify Him			3:3	
Gives Affection for Others	1:8	2:29		
Gives Righteousness (Saints)	1:1, 10-11		3:9	4:21
Gives Encouragement		2:19		
Gives Knowledge of Himself			3:8, 10	
Gives Glory to God	1:11			
Gives Grace	1:2			4:23
Gives Comfort to Us		2:1		
Gives Comfort for Others		2:1		
Gives Purpose for Ministry		2:16		
Gives Life	1:21			
Gives Ability to Do Everything				4:13
Gives Joy (Contentment)	1:18, 26	2:29	3:1	4:4, 10-13
Gives Confidence (Ability to Stand)	1:13-14	2:19, 24		4:1, 19
Gives Peace	1:2			4:2, 7
Gives Suffering	1:13, 29		3:10	
Gives Rewards	1:21, 23		3:7-8, 14	
Gives Humility		2:5		
Gives Unity	1:15-17	2:1-2		4:21-22
Gives New Bodies (Resurrection)			3:11, 21	
Gives Christlikeness (Exalts Himself in Us)	1:20, 27	2:5	3:10-14	

5. **Multipurpose** (*TTTB*, 408): Paul had many purposes in composing this epistle to the Philippians: he expresses affection for them (1:7), thanks them for their gift (1:5, 7; 4:10-19), updates them on his missionary work in prison (1:12f.), encourages them in their growth (1:27f.), corrects a problem of disunity in the church (2:1-4, 14; 4:2), encourages them of Epaphroditus' recovery (2:25f.), warns of false teaching (1:28)—especially legalism (3:2-4) and libertinism/antinomianism (3:17-19), and exhorts them to express joy in their trials as he had in his own sufferings (3:1; 4:4).
6. **Imitating the Attitude of Christ**: While Philippians does emphasize the person of Christ, the *application* of this truth is the focus of the book. Having Christ's attitude (or mind) appears to be the most all-encompassing purpose, with 2:5-11 forming the heart of the book (Moisés Silva, *WEC*, 19-20; cf. see "Argument" below). This theme goes deeper than joy (or any other positive characteristic in the book) since it explains *how* one can experience these qualities during difficulty (cf. p. 186k).

## Argument

As good as the above purposes are, none sums up the book as a whole except the last one—the exhortation to have the mind or attitude of Christ. Clearly Christ is the main subject as His name appears 70 times, but some key verbs which convey the idea of imitating His thinking, attitude, or mind appear twenty or more times (φρονέω “think, form opinion, set one's mind on, be minded, or disposed” [BAGD] 1:7; 2:2a, 2b, 5; 3:15a, 15b, 16 [Byz.], 19; 4:2, 10a, 10b; ἡγέομαι “think, consider, regard, lead, guide” [BAGD] 2:3, 6, 25; 3:7, 8a, 8b; σκοπέω “notice, consider” 2:4; 3:17; λογίζομαι “reckon, consider” 3:13; 4:8). This is supported with many “knowledge” terms (esp. 1:9-11; 3:8-10) “which include, but are not restricted to, purely intellectual concerns” (Silva, 20).

Therefore, the concept of imitating Christ's attitude in difficulty appears more times (over 20) than the theme of rejoicing and should be given at least as much weight (3:10). Each chapter bears out this emphasis since having Christ's attitude produces: joy in adversity (ch. 1), humility leading to unity (ch. 2), protection from legalistic or libertine teaching (ch. 3), and peace with God and man in all circumstances (ch. 4). Paul wrote the Philippians to let them know that “as a man thinks, so is he” (Prov. 23:7) and the best thinkers do so with Christ's attitude. Paul states the key verse in this respect in Philippians 2:5, “Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus” (NIV), which begins the heart of the book (2:5-11). A related concept is that of mimicking Paul (3:17; 4:9).

## Synthesis

### Results of imitating Christ's attitude

<b>1</b>	<b>Joy</b>
1:1-2	Salutation
1:3-11	Thanksgiving/prayer
1:12-30	Joy in prison ministry
<b>2</b>	<b>Humility</b>
2:1-4	Exhorted
2:5-30	Exemplified in...
2:5-11	Christ
2:12-18	Paul
2:19-24	Timothy
2:25-30	Epaphroditus
<b>3</b>	<b>Protection</b>
3:1-16	From Legalists
3:1-3	Warning against legalists
3:4-6	Paul's former confidence in the flesh
3:7-16	Paul's present pursuit of Christlikeness
3:17-21	From Libertines
3:17-19	Warning against libertines
3:20-21	Christ's power

4

**Peace**

4:1-3	Peace between two women
4:4-9	Peace with God
4:10-20	Peace in all circumstances
4:21-23	Affectionate greetings

## Outline

### Summary Statement for the Book

**Paul exhorts the Philippian believers to imitate Christ's attitude that they may experience joy, humility, and peace to be protected from false teachers and disunity in the church.**

- I. (Ch. 1) Paul thanks and prays for the Philippians and rejoices over how his imprisonment advanced the gospel to encourage them to see how contending against their persecutors with Christ's attitude will give them joy as well.
  - A. (1:1-2) The reason Paul introduces himself and Timothy as God's servants and greets the Philippian church with a blessing of God's grace and peace is to serve as a foretaste of the warmth and affection in the rest of the letter.
    1. (1:1a) Authors: Paul identifies himself and his co-author Timothy as servants to set a tone of affection (he does not refer to his authority as apostle; cf. Gal. 1:1).
    2. (1:1b) Recipients: The Philippian church (both congregation and leaders) is addressed as having received its holiness in Christ.
    3. (1:2) Salutation: The Father and Son are identified as the Source of favor and harmony.
  - B. (1:3-11) The reason Paul thanks the believers for their gifts and prays that their love would multiply is so that Christ's attitude would produce greater righteousness within them.
    1. (1:3-8) Paul's thanksgiving for the church's partnership through their giving is done affectionately and with the promise of God's blessing on it.
    2. (1:9-11) Paul's prayer is that the church's love would grow in both knowledge and righteousness until the rapture.
  - C. (1:12-30) The purpose Paul rejoices over how his imprisonment advanced the gospel is to exhort the church to rejoice with the same joyful attitude in their own trials (see p. 186c).
    1. (1:12-18a) Paul rejoices that the gospel has reached the Roman guard and others even through those preaching from impure motives to help the church to also rejoice in its own persecutors (cf. p. 186c).
      - a. (1:12-14) The Philippians thought Paul was hindered in proclaiming the gospel while in prison, but rather than it being hindered, it was advanced even farther.
      - b. (1:15-18a) Paul was so selfless that he even rejoiced that some preached the gospel from selfish motives.
    2. (1:18b-26) Paul rejoices that whether he is executed or released from prison doesn't matter since both have their advantages!

### Persecutors

"Aha! You like to share about Jesus?  
I'll imprison you!"

### Paul

"Good! This will give me more time  
to pray, write letters to the churches,  
and share Christ with soldiers  
guarding me."

“Well, then, I’ll *torture* you!”

“Thank you, for in this way I can participate in the sufferings of my Master, Jesus.”

“Oh yeah? Then I’ll *kill* you!”

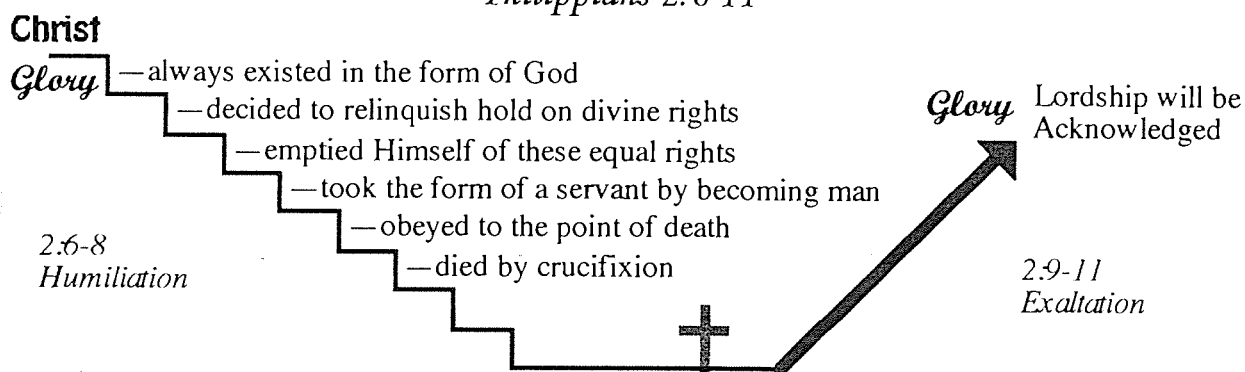
“This is the best option yet, for then you will usher me into his presence!”

3. (1:27-30) Paul exhorts the church to faithfully contend against their own persecutors by living worthy of Christ in unity and rejoicing (assumed).

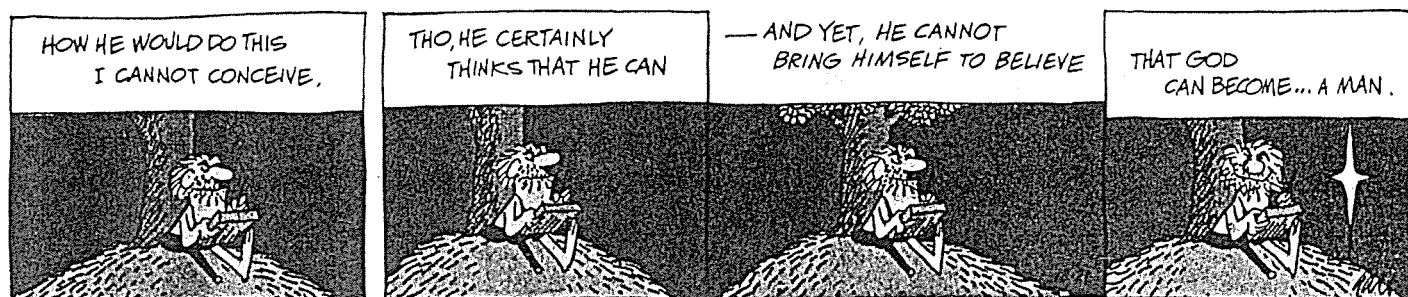
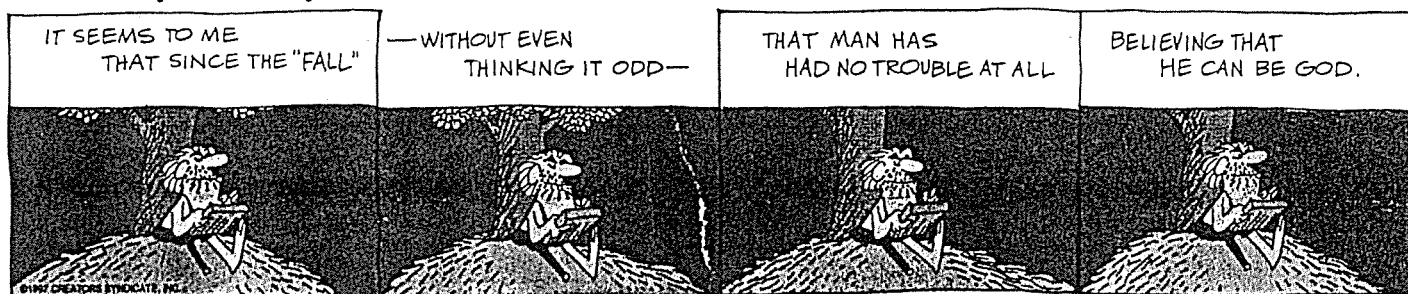
**II. (Ch. 2) Paul presents the *humility* of four individuals (Christ, himself, Timothy, and Epaphroditus) as models of Christ's attitude to exhort the church to unity through the humility of each individual member.**

- A. (2:1-4) Paul exhorts each member of the church to unity through a humble concern for one another to prevent divisions in the church (see p. 186d).
- B. (2:5-30) Paul illustrates how the humility of four individuals contributes to the unity of the body in order that the church might imitate these specific examples of selfless concern.
  1. (2:5-11) Paul exhorts each member of the church to imitate the humility of Christ who relinquished His equal rights with the Father as the ultimate example of humility to alleviate any problems of unity within the congregation.

*Philippians 2:6-11*



**B.C./ by Johnny Hart**



2. (2:12-18) Paul exhorts the church to follow his own example of humility in selfless service for them as a model of Christ's attitude to motivate them to put away divisive complaining even in his absence (see pp. 186e-f).
3. (2:19-24) Paul commends Timothy as an example of Christ's selfless attitude which he just described and indicates his intention to send him to the church to provide for them a living model of Christ's humble attitude so they could learn unity from a godly man.
4. (2:25-30) Paul commends and sends Epaphroditus as a model of Christ's attitude of humility shown in his concern that the church was distressed over his illness in order to encourage the Philippians to demonstrate Christ's humble attitude also.

**III.(Ch. 3) Paul exhorts the church to mimic his pursuit of Christlikeness rather than trust in self-righteousness so that they will be protected from legalistic or libertine teachers by striking a balance between law and liberty.**

- A. (3:1-16) Paul exhorts the Philippians towards Christlikeness by deploring his own former self-righteousness to protect them from legalists (Judaizers denying their flesh) who place confidence in their own righteousness (see p. 186g).
  1. (3:1-3) Paul warns the church against legalists.
  2. (3:4-6) Paul used to be like the Judaizers when he placed confidence in his own seemingly righteous deeds and pedigree (cf. p. 186h).
  3. (3:7-16) Paul renounces his self-righteousness by setting himself up as a model of one who seeks Christlikeness above all else.
    - a. (3:7-11) All his advantages are garbage compared to knowing Christ (see p. 186h).
    - b. (3:12-16) The church should seek Christlikeness like Paul.

\*Have you renounced personal accomplishments to pursue Christlikeness (see p. 186i)?
- B. (3:17-21) Paul exhorts the church towards Christlikeness by reminding them that Christ will give them new bodies to protect them from libertines (antinomians indulging their flesh).
  1. (3:17-19) Libertines live for today by indulging their flesh and thus should be avoided (see p. 186j).
  2. (3:20-21) Believers live for tomorrow by anticipating their glorified bodies.

**IV.(Ch. 4) Paul notes that having Christ's attitude produces *peace* with God and man in all circumstances so the church would rely upon Christ's strength as empowerment for unity and contentment in the church.**

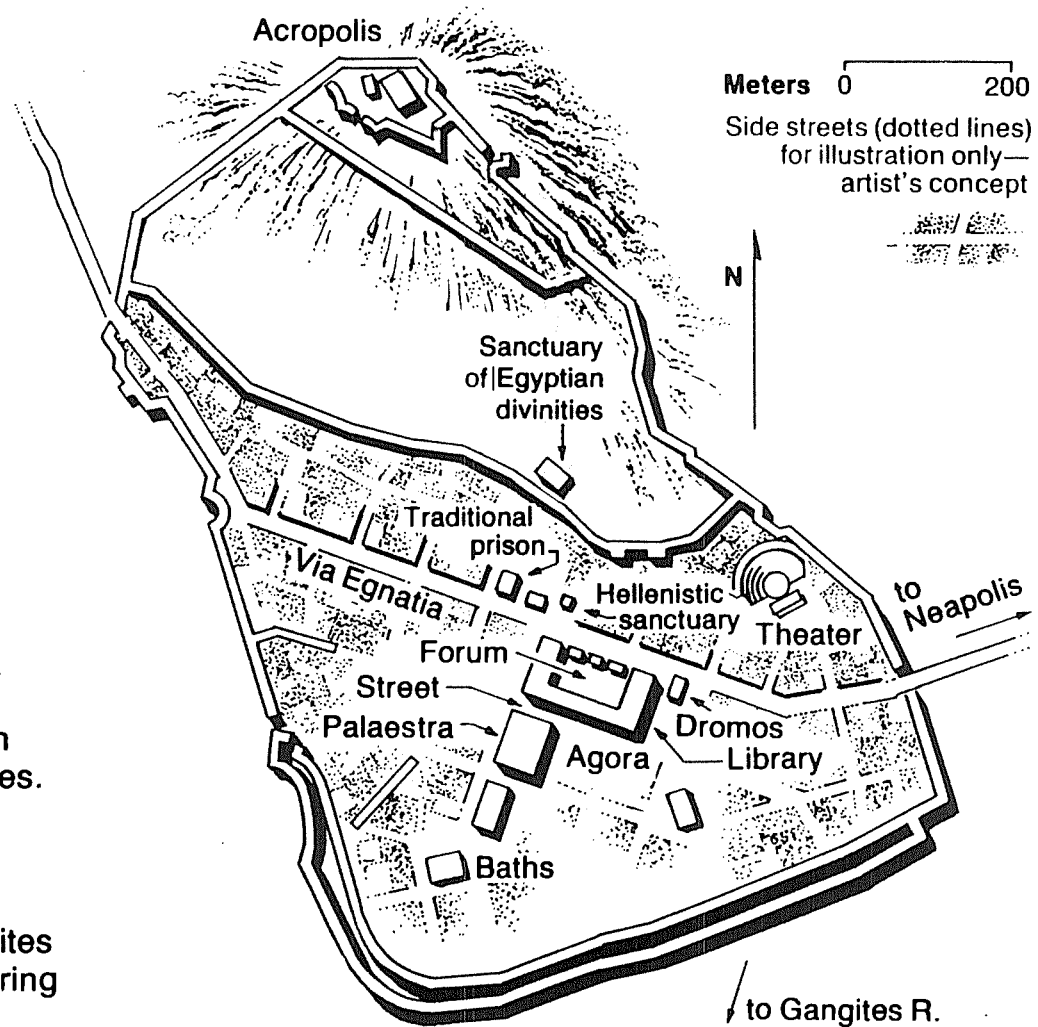
- A. (4:1-3) Paul pleads for peace between two women by having Christ's attitude of standing firm so that unity could prevail in the assembly.
- B. (4:4-9) Paul promises peace with God by following some simple principles.
  1. Rejoice (4:4).
  2. Be gentle with others (4:5).
  3. Pray in all circumstances (4:6-7).
  4. Think about praiseworthy things (4:8-9).
- C. (4:10-20) Paul rejoices with peace in all circumstances to let the believers know that, while he appreciates their gift, his strength and contentment lie in Christ, who is their Source of empowerment as well.
- D. (4:21-23) Paul closes his letter with affectionate greetings to show his deep care for them.

# Philippi in the Time of Paul

The Roman colony of Philippi (*Colonia Augusta Julia Philippensis*) was an important city in Macedonia, located on the main highway leading from the eastern provinces to Rome. This road, the Via Egnatia, bisected the city's forum and was the chief cause of its prosperity and political importance. Ten miles distant on the coast was Neapolis, the place where Paul landed after sailing from Troas, in response to the Macedonian vision.

As a prominent city of the gold-producing region of Macedonia, Philippi had a proud history. Named originally after Philip II, the father of Alexander the Great, the city was later honored with the name of Julius Caesar and Augustus. Many Italian settlers from the legions swelled the ranks of citizens and made Philippi vigorous and polyglot. It grew from a small settlement to a city of dignity and privilege. Among its highest honors was the *ius Italicum*, by which it enjoyed rights legally equivalent to those of Italian cities.

Ruins of the theater, the acropolis, the forum, the baths, and the western commemorative arch mentioned as the "gate" of the city in Ac 16:13 have been found. A little farther beyond the arch at the Gangites River is the place where Paul addressed some God-fearing women and where Lydia was converted.



*Happiness* versus **Joy**

*Happiness*

*Joy*

**External**

**Internal**

**Dependent on  
circumstances**

**Independent of  
circumstances**

**Emotional  
response**

**Act of the will**

**Having what  
you want**

**Wanting what  
you have**

**Euphoria**

**Contentment**

**Effect**

**Cause**

**Result**

**Foundation**

**Inconsistent**

**Consistent**

**Temporary**

**Eternal**

## *Two Ways to Relate to Others*

*Philippians 2:1-4*

### **SELFISH**

### *Selfless*

Produces grumbling  
(2:14)

*Produces joy*  
(2:2a)

Leads to division  
(4:2)

*Leads to unity*  
(2:2b)

Proud  
(2:3a)

*Humble*  
(2:3b)

Considers self better  
than others (2:3a)

*Considers others better  
than self (2:3b)*

Looks out for self  
(2:4a)

*Looks out for others*  
(2:4b)

Imitates Satan

*Imitates Christ (2:5)*



# Results of a Bad Attitude

*Philippians 2:14-16*

**If we complain  
and argue**



**We won't be  
blameless and  
innocent**



**We won't stand  
out with a  
positive impact**



**Those who  
invested in us will  
wish they had  
invested in others**

# Results of a Good Attitude

*Philippians 2:14-16*

**Those who invested  
in us will rejoice that  
their efforts had been  
worth it**



**We will shine  
like stars in the  
universe**



**We will be blameless and  
innocent, children of God  
above reproach**



**If we do everything  
without complaining  
and arguing**

# *Balance in the Christian Life*

<b>LEGALISM</b>	<i>A Godly Balance</i>	<b>Libertinism</b>
<b>Phil. 3:1-3</b>	<b>Phil. 3:4-16</b>	<b>Phil. 3:17-20</b>
Legal = Law Only	Standards and Liberty	Liberty = No Law
Excessive Rules	Only Biblical Rules	License for Everything
Actions are Everything	Actions are Something	Actions are Unimportant
Highly Structured	Some Structure	No Structure
Pharisee-like	Christlike	Glutton-like
“god” is their Traditions	God is Christ	“god” is their Stomach
Starves the Flesh	Controls the Flesh	Indulges the Flesh
Claim of Perfectionism	In Process (3:12-13)	Practice of Fatalism
Think they’ve Arrived	Know they Haven’t	Don’t Care if they Do
Confidence in Flesh (3:3)	Confidence in Christ (3:7)	Confidence in Shame (3:19c)
Righteousness from the Law (3:9a)	Righteousness by Faith (3:9b)	Righteousness Not Pursued (3:19d)
No Movies No TV No Music No Wine for Merit Unclean Foods “Christian Sabbath” Celibacy Required Salvation can be Lost	Wholesome Movies Wholesome TV Wholesome Music No Wine/Moderation Moderation Rest Celibacy for Ministry Eternal Security	All Movies All TV All Music Drunkenness Gluttony Frivolity Sexual Immorality Salvation can’t be Gained

## Paul's Pedigree (Phil. 3:4-6)

***Circumcised the eighth day***

This sign of participation in the Abrahamic Covenant separated Paul from pagans and was performed on him the exact day the OT prescribed (Gen. 17:11-12)

***Of the people of Israel***

Paul was a pure-blooded member of this race chosen by God himself (not even a proselyte, who was often viewed as "second class")

***Of the tribe of Benjamin***

This tribe was one of the smallest, yet it boasted Israel's first king (Saul)—so Paul was not from a disreputable tribe like Dan, Reuben, etc.

***A Hebrew of Hebrews***

Paul did not adopt Greek ways even though he grew up in a Greek city (Tarsus)

***In regard to the law, a Pharisee***

This sect adhered more strictly to the Mosaic law than any sect in mainstream society

***As for zeal, persecuting the church***

Even most Pharisees did not actively seek to do away with Messianic believers

***As for legalistic righteousness, faultless***

Paul followed all 613 Pharisaical laws without exception

# Excrement for Christ

*Phil. 3:7-8*

Paul considered his life's best accomplishments mere "dung" (KJV) compared to knowing Christ. Which of the following items are potential sources of pride in your own life?

## Personal

- \_\_\_\_\_ Occupational position/title
- \_\_\_\_\_ Income level
- \_\_\_\_\_ Power
- \_\_\_\_\_ Education/Degree(s)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Other

## Social

- \_\_\_\_\_ Social position
- \_\_\_\_\_ Friends
- \_\_\_\_\_ Spouse
- \_\_\_\_\_ House
- \_\_\_\_\_ Car
- \_\_\_\_\_ Neighborhood
- \_\_\_\_\_ Country club
- \_\_\_\_\_ Golf/sports
- \_\_\_\_\_ Children
- \_\_\_\_\_ Other

## Spiritual

- \_\_\_\_\_ Church position/title
- \_\_\_\_\_ Tithes, offerings, gifts
- \_\_\_\_\_ Church membership
- \_\_\_\_\_ Ministry experience or giftedness
- \_\_\_\_\_ Bible knowledge
- \_\_\_\_\_ Humility
- \_\_\_\_\_ Other

## Physical

- \_\_\_\_\_ Personal Appearance
- \_\_\_\_\_ Strength
- \_\_\_\_\_ Health
- \_\_\_\_\_ Abilities
- \_\_\_\_\_ Other

*Is your attitude toward these things like Paul's? Are they "rubbish" to you?*

# Modern License

*Philippians 3:18-19*

<i>Text</i>	<i>Interpretation</i>	<i>Mormons</i>	<i>Holy Laughter</i>
<i>Live as enemies of the cross of Christ</i>	They oppose salvation by faith	Salvation by works	Do not preach the cross
<i>Their destiny is destruction</i>	They are unsaved	Claim that all are saved but are not even saved themselves	Claim to be Christians but if so, why don't they preach Christ?
<i>Their god is their stomach</i>	Their real goal is pleasure	Goal is to be a god to have sex with as many celestial wives as possible	Goal is to feel good
<i>Their glory is in their shame</i>	They're proud about things that they should be ashamed of	Temple polygamy is the highest goal	The spiritual heights is to laugh uncontrollably and cluck like a chicken
<i>Their mind is on earthly things</i>	They have "here-and-now" priorities	"Become a god for ego and sex"	"Don't use your mind and you will feel great!"

## Imitating Christ

Mimicking Christ is one of the most practical suggestions of how to live the Christian life. If each of us could simply ask, "What would Jesus do?" in a given situation, our behaviour would radically change for the better.

This challenge is presented in Charles M. Sheldon's book, *In His Steps*, written in 1896—over 100 years ago but still in print (Copyright: Chosen Books, 1984; Grand Rapids: Kregel, 1989; Grand Rapids: Spire [Baker], 1994. 251 pp.). Due to a copyright error, sixteen publishers began publishing it in the US alone and soon it was printed in 45 countries so that a conservative estimate is 22 million copies in circulation—the world's record next to the Scriptures! This fiction depicts what happens when a small group of Christians commit themselves to live as Jesus would for an entire year.

Imitating Jesus is not only the theme of the book of Philippians (2:5). Throughout the New Testament we are exhorted to imitate Christ...

### In His Character

"For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of his Son" (Rom. 8:29)

### In His Joyful Suffering

"You became imitators of us and the Lord; in spite of severe suffering, you welcomed the message with the joy of the Holy Spirit" (1 Thess. 1:6)

### In His Maturity

"until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the stature of Christ" (Eph. 4:13)

### In His Patience

"But for that very reason I was shown mercy so that in me, the worst of sinners, Christ Jesus might display his unlimited patience as an example for those who would believe and receive eternal life" (1 Tim. 1:16)

### In His Perfection

"We proclaim Him, admonishing and teaching everyone with all wisdom, so that we may present everyone perfect in Christ" (Col. 1:28; Matt. 6:33)

### In His Submission to Unjust Suffering

"To this you were called, because Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in His steps" (1 Pet. 2:21)

### In Everything

"He must become greater, I must become less important" (John 3:30)

"...I am in the pains of childbirth until Christ is formed in you" (Gal. 4:19)

"Whoever claims to live in him must walk as Jesus did" (1 John 2:6)

# Colossians

Deity of Christ vs. Syncretistic Heresy					
Supremacy/Deity			Practical Instruction		
Chapters 1–2			Chapters 3–4		
Heretical Living			Holy Living		
Belief			Behaviour		
Greeting & Prayer 1:1-14	Supremacy & Deity 1:15–2:3	Syncretistic Heresy 2:4-23	Position: Union with Christ 3:1-4	Practice: Holiness in Relationships 3:5–4:6	Conclusion 4:7-18
Rome					
Autumn AD 61 (first Roman imprisonment)					

**Key Word:** Deity

**Key Verse:** “For in Christ all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form” (Colossians 2:9).

**Summary Statement:** Paul instructs the Colossian church in the supremacy and *deity of Christ* and exhorts practical outworking of this doctrine in order to fight a *syncretistic heresy* threatening the life and ministry of the church.

**Application:**

Know the New Age movement well so as to teach your church members of its heresies.



# Colossians

## Introduction

**I. Title:** The Greek title (Πρὸς Κολοσσαεῖς *To the Colossians*) follows the normal practice of naming Paul's epistles after their recipients, even though the letter was to be read in nearby Laodicea too (4:16).

### II. Authorship

A. External Evidence: Early Christian writers attributed the authorship to Paul, whereas modern radical critics assume a second century author using Paul's name.

1. Early support for Pauline authorship comes from Justin (*Dialogue* 85.2; 138.2), Marcion (*Dialogue* 84, 85), Irenaeus (*Against Heresies* 3.14.1; ca. AD 185), Tertullian (*De Praescr. Haer.* 7), and Clement of Alexandria (*Strom.* 1.1).
2. Pauline authorship was unquestioned until the 19th century German scholars denied it based upon internal factors. Mayerhoff argued for dependency upon Ephesians and Baur with his Tübingen School considered the heresy combated in the letter as second century Gnosticism.

B. Internal Evidence: Pauline authorship is supported by several factors:

1. The letter claims to have been written by Paul (1:1, 23; 4:18).
2. The similarity of Colossians to Ephesians argues for Pauline authorship in that they were written at about the same time (see comparison in "Characteristics" section).
3. Colossians also has many affinities especially with Paul's letter to Philemon, of which the authenticity is impeccable (Geisler, *BKC*, 2:667). Both books include Timothy's name in the salutation (1:1; Philem. 1); mention Aristarchus, Mark, Epaphras, Luke, and Demas (4:10-14; Philem. 23-24); refer to Archippus' ministry (4:17; Philem. 2); and confirm the sending of the slave Onesimus back to Colosse (4:9; Philem. 10).

### III. Circumstances

A. Date: Colossians was written during Paul's first imprisonment in Rome (Feb. 60-March 62; cf. Acts 28:30; dates in this introduction are from Hoehner, 381-84). The best evidence suggests a specific date of autumn 61.

B. Origin/Recipients: As mentioned above, the epistle mentions Paul's many associates (4:7-17), especially Tychicus (4:7), who carried the Colossian and Ephesian letters (Eph. 6:21) accompanied by Onesimus (4:9) with the letter to Philemon (Philem. 10, 12, 17). This provides evidence that the Ephesian, Colossian, and Philemon letters all had the same origin. The other two books mention Paul's imprisonment (Eph. 3:1; 4:1; Philem. 1, 9) that was in Rome (see Ephesians notes). Therefore, Colossians must have been written in Rome to be sent to Colosse (1:2).

C. Occasion: Paul had never visited Colosse when he wrote this letter. However, during his nearly three-year ministry in nearby Ephesus (Sept 53-May 56; cf. Acts 19) he probably met (and may have converted) Epaphras, who returned to Colosse and founded the church (1:7). Five years later, when Epaphras heard of Paul's imprisonment, he visited the apostle and brought news of their love (1:8).

Epaphras evidently also brought news of a serious heresy plaguing the church. This prompted Paul to pen the epistle to the Colossians for Tychicus to deliver since he was returning to Colosse with Onesimus anyway. The nature of the heresy has been much debated, but the internal evidence

suggests that it was the seedbed for what later developed into Gnosticism in the second century. Its characteristics can be determined from the counterattack levied by Paul in the epistle:

1. Its Jewish nature is evident in its legalistic emphasis on following certain Old Testament laws and ceremonies (2:16-17).
2. It had Greek philosophical roots in a so-called “deeper knowledge” (*gnosis*; 2:2b-4, 8-10) which was revealed only to a special “elite.”
3. The system taught the worship of angels as mediators between man and God (2:18).
4. The heresy denied the deity of Christ (1:15; 2:9), and thus His supremacy (1:15b, 17a) and ability to create (1:16) and sustain the world (1:17).
5. Its ascetic nature had a low view of the body (2:20-23).

It is difficult to peg the Colossian heresy with certainty since Paul nowhere gives a formal expression of its elements, nor does he give it a name. However, the above evidence shows that it was a syncretistic Jewish-Greek-Ascetic-Pagan cult. Nevertheless, Paul's method of combating the heresy is to emphasize the deity and supremacy of Christ—his clear emphasis in the book.

#### IV. Characteristics

- A. Colossians uses a number of terms found nowhere else in the New Testament.
  1. The 35 unique words include “visible” (1:16), “supremacy” (1:18), “fill up” (1:24), “philosophy” (2:8), and “deity” (2:9; Kubo, *A Reader's Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*, 193-97).
  2. Paul redefines terms used by the heretical movement with an orthodox meaning (e.g., *pleroma*, “fullness,” 2:9; and *gnosis*, “knowledge” 2:3; cf. *TTTB*, 413).
  3. While many scholars interpret the use of so many unique words as evidence for non-Pauline authorship, the unique Colossian situation calls for special vocabulary that Paul did not need to use in his other writings (Guthrie, 553).
- B. Paul uses no Old Testament references in his epistle to the Colossians.
- C. Colossians gives the fullest explanation of Christ’s deity of any NT writing. Especially worth noting are (1) “He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn [‘preeminent one’] over all creation. For by Him all things were made...” (1:15), (2) “For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him” (1:19), and (3) “For in Christ all the fulness of Deity lives in bodily form” (2:9).
- D. The twin epistles of Ephesians and Colossians can be compared and contrasted in several ways (adapted and expanded from *TTTB*, 413):

#### Ephesians

#### Colossians

#### Similarities:

Written in prison, carried by Tychicus

Written in prison, carried by Tychicus

Stresses wisdom, knowledge, fullness, and mystery

Stresses wisdom, knowledge, fullness, and mystery

First half—position  
Second half—practice

First half—position  
Second half—practice

**Ephesians**

**Colossians**

Similar passages:

Similar passages:

“In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins...” (1:7)

“in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins” (1:14)

“to be put into effect when the times will have reached their fulfillment—to bring all things in heaven and on earth together under one head, even Christ” (1:10)

“and through Him to reconcile to Himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through His blood, shed on the cross” (1:20)

- 1:15-17
- 1:18
- 1:19-20
- 1:21-23
- 5:22-24 (wives)
- 5:25-33 (husbands)
- 6:1-3 (children)
- 6:4 (fathers)
- 6:5-8 (slaves)
- 6:9 (masters)

- 1:3-4
- 1:27
- 2:12
- 1:16-19
- 3:18 (wives)
- 3:19 (husbands)
- 3:20 (children)
- 3:21 (fathers)
- 3:22-25 (slaves)
- 4:1 (masters)

**Differences:**

Emphasizes the Church as the body of Christ

Emphasizes Christ as the Head of the body

General, universal

Specific, local

Irenic, calm

Polemic, concern

Reflective, quiet

Spiritual conflict

**Argument**

Paul writes the Colossian epistle to deliver the church from a serious heresy threatening its very life since it is attacking the deity of Christ. His response to this cult takes a two-pronged approach. He first establishes the supremacy of Christ as God in order to deal with the theological basis of the false teaching (chs. 1–2). He then provides practical instruction in light of the deity of Christ which, when followed, will put the enemies of Christ to shame as they see holy living in the church (chs. 3–4). Thus the Pauline formula to successfully fight this cult is a holy lifestyle founded in a solid christological foundation. This alone could successfully fight a heresy which is both legalistic/ascetic (not free) and philosophical/ knowledge-oriented (not lifestyle-oriented).

**Synthesis**

**Supremacy/deity of Christ vs. syncretistic heresy**

1–2	<b>Supremacy/deity</b>
1:1-14	Greeting/prayer
1:15–2:3	Supremacy/deity
2:4-23	Syncretistic opposing heresy
2:4-10	“Gnostic”
2:11-17	Legalistic
2:18-19	Mystic
2:20-23	Ascetic

**3-4****Practical instruction**

3:1-4	Position: union with Christ
3:5-4:6	Practice: holiness in relationships
3:5-17	Holy living
3:5-9	Put off
3:10-17	Put on
3:18-4:6	Relationships
3:18-21	Family life
3:22-4:1	Work life
4:2-6	Public life
4:7-18	Conclusion
4:7-15	Commends fellow-workers fighting heresy
4:16-18	Distribute the letter to fight heresy

## Outline

### Summary Statement for the Book

**Paul instructs the Colossian church in the supremacy and deity of Christ and exhorts practical outworking of this doctrine in order to fight a *syncretistic heresy* threatening the life and ministry of the church.**

- I. (Chs. 1-2) Paul establishes the supremacy of Christ over all things as God in order to combat the heretical teachers who had infiltrated the Colossian church with false precepts and practices.**
  - A. (1:1-14) Paul's greeting and prayer for the believers serves as a positive introduction to the church which needs to know of his authority and their enabling to fight heresy.
    1. (1:1-2) Paul greets the Colossian church with his title of apostle in order to establish his spiritual authority before members of the church who would question his teaching within the letter.
    2. (1:3-14) Paul offers a prayer of thanksgiving for the fruitfulness of the Colossians' faith and petition that they would realize their high standing in Christ in order to let them know of God's adequacy in them to fight the false teaching in their midst.
  - B. (1:15-2:3) Paul establishes the supremacy of Christ over all things in His Person as God and in His work as Redeemer so that the believers might realize that his labors on their behalf have not been in vain.
  - C. (2:4-23) Paul explains that he is emphasizing the deity of Christ to show that higher life is in Christ in contrast to the deceptive precepts and practices attacking the church.
    1. (2:4-10) "Gnosticism" is wrong since deity is in Christ.
    2. (2:11-17) Legalism is wrong since reality is in Christ.
    3. (2:18-19) Mysticism is wrong since headship is in Christ.
    4. (2:20-23) Asceticism is wrong since immunity is in Christ.
- II. (Chs. 3-4) Paul provides practical instruction in light of the deity of Christ to shame the enemies of Christ as they see holy living in the church.**
  - A. (3:1-4) Paul affirms the believer's position in union with Christ to provide the basis for a holy (heavenly) living rather than the sinful (earthly) living which characterizes the false teachers.

- B. (3:5–4:6) Paul instructs that the believer's practice affects every area of life and results from union with Christ to exhort the church how to shame its enemies through holy living.
1. (3:5-17) The proper method of holy living is to replace the sins of the old life with virtues of the new life.
    - a. (3:5-9) The first step in holy living is to put off the sins of the old life: sins of the body, materialism, and improper speech.
    - b. (3:10-17) The next step in holy living is to put on the virtues of the new life: proper relationships, forgiveness, love, peace, thankfulness, Scripture meditation, singing, and doing everything for God's glory.
  2. (3:18–4:6) A believer's union with Christ brings about holy living that improves relationships in every area of life.
    - a. (3:18-21) Families improve when wives, husbands, children and fathers obey commands concerning their roles.
    - b. (3:22–4:1) Work is harmonious when slaves work for Christ and masters treat their slaves with fairness.
    - c. (4:2-6) Unbelievers receive a positive witness when believers pray, speak and act with wisdom.
- C. (4:7-18) Paul commends and sends greetings from his fellow-workers who have been faithful in the face of error to affirm that the Colossians do not stand alone in their fight, then he commands distribution of his letter to combat false teaching elsewhere.

Issue	False Teaching at Colosse	New Age Movement	Christianity
Salvation	Christ + Other Ways	Many Ways	Through Jesus Christ alone
Worship	God + Angels	Via Spirit Guides	Through the Holy Spirit
Sanctification	Via Rituals and Ceremonies	Via Enlightenment	Through Holy Living in the Spirit's power
Hope	Uncertain	Reincarnation	Resurrection
Deity	Christ is not God	We are God	Christ is God
Theism	Syncretistic	Many Gods	Trinity
Basis	Human Effort + Secret Knowledge	Human Effort	Christ's Work on the Cross

Adapted from the 1997 Colossians Class Presentation

# Colossians Crossword Puzzle

Adapted from a SBC Class Presentation

Let's see how much you remember. Read the questions and fill up the puzzle.



1.																			
2.																			

1. What type of false teaching filtering into the Colossian church emphasized knowledge?
2. Where was Paul when he wrote the letter?
3. What is the key word for the book of Colossians?
4. Colosse was located in what modern day country?
5. Who probably founded the church at Colosse?
6. What was the chief problem plaguing the church?
7. Who formed the majority of the Colossian church membership?

## The Sabbath in Colosse

An Excerpt from Richard J. Griffith, "The Eschatological Significance of the Sabbath," ThD diss., Dallas Seminary, 1990, pp. 164-171

"Of all of the statements in the New Testament, these verses most strongly refute the Sabbatarian claim for observance of the Jewish Sabbath."<sup>1</sup> Colossians 2:16 expressly forbids observance of the Sabbath day which served as a mere shadow of what was to come, that reality being in Christ (v. 17). Chafer summarized Paul's argument thus, "Having the Substance, the believer is warned against turning to the mere shadow."<sup>2</sup> Throughout Paul's ministry he fought the continued encroachments from Judaizers who sought to place believers under the yoke of the law. Such was the situation with the church at Colosse, which was confronted with infiltrators whose teachings were destroying the believers' freedom under the gospel message and thus threatening a relapse back into Judaism.

Some argue that Colossians 2:16 points not to the regular *weekly* Sabbath, but *yearly and monthly* Sabbaths (i.e., "ceremonial" sabbaths). This is the official Seventh-day Adventist position affirmed in the *Seventh-day Adventist Encyclopedia*:

SDA's . . . have usually held that since the context deals with ritual matters, the sabbaths here referred to are the ceremonial sabbaths of the Jewish annual festivals "which are a shadow," or type, of which the fulfillments were to come in Christ; that although the sequence of terms might appear to class the Sabbath with the ceremonial holy days, the rhetorical form cannot outweigh the facts established elsewhere in the Bible, that the types and symbols extending only to Christ do not include the Sabbath of the Decalogue.<sup>3</sup>

The eminent Seventh-day Adventist scholar Nichol also claims that Colossians 2:16 refers to the ceremonial or annual, not weekly, sabbaths.<sup>4</sup> Nearly all Adventists<sup>5</sup> and even several non-Adventist<sup>6</sup> scholars follow this reasoning. The underlying assumption of this argument is a distinction between the so-called "moral" and "ceremonial" aspects of the Law<sup>7</sup> and the belief that the designation of a weekly σαββάτων as a "shadow" (σκιά; v. 17) is inappropriate:

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<sup>1</sup>M. Martin, 162.

<sup>2</sup>Chafer, *Systematic Theology*, 4:108.

<sup>3</sup>*SDAE*, s.v. "Sabbath," by Neufeld, ed., CRS, 10:1110-1111.

<sup>4</sup>"If Paul here was referring to the weekly Sabbath of the Decalogue, then the only conclusion to reach would be that in the Christian Era there is no weekly holy day of rest. And does Christendom, in general, believe that? No. The sternly enforced Sunday laws of the different Christian lands . . . provide . . . proof . . . that a weekly holy day is proper, right, and Scriptural" (Francis D. Nichol, *Answers to Objections*, 165; cf. 49, 166-70, 190). Unfortunately, rather than dealing with the textual evidence, Nichol appeals to a recent practice arising from the time of the Puritans which considers Sunday the "Christian Sabbath." This imposing of tradition upon exegesis is unacceptable.

<sup>5</sup>Others include Kenneth H. Wood, "The 'Sabbath Days' of Colossians 2:16, 17," in *The Sabbath in Scripture and History*, 338-42; Paul Giem, "Sabbaton in Col. 2:16," *AUSS* 19 (Autumn 1981): 195-210; Donald F. Neufeld, "Sabbath Day or Sabbath Days," *Review and Herald* 148 (April 15, 1971): 13; and especially the official statements of the Adventist movement in *Questions on Doctrine*, 131, and the *SDABC*, Nichol *et al.*, eds., 7:205-6.

<sup>6</sup>Adam Clarke, *Clarke's Commentary*, 6:294; A. R. Fausset, "Colossians," *JFB*, 6:448; Albert Barnes, *Barnes' Notes on the New Testament*, 1070; John Davenant, *An Exposition of the Epistle of St. Paul to the Colossians*, 1:477-88; Glenn N. Davies, "The Christian Sabbath," *RTR* 42 (May-August 1983): 39; de Lacey, "The Sabbath/Sunday Question and the Law in the Pauline Corpus," 182-83.

<sup>7</sup>Wood, "The 'Sabbath Days' of Colossians 2:16, 17," 338. The lack of biblical support for such a distinction has already been addressed earlier in this chapter.

Paul can hardly be referring to the seventh-day Sabbath of the Decalogue, for the Sabbath is not a shadow of anything, it is the reality. Further, although to some extent the Sabbath points forward to the promised rest in Christ (see Hebrews 4), it does not obtain its primary significance from "things to come" but from an event in the past—the creation of the world in six days (Gen. 2:2, 3; Ex. 20:8-11).<sup>8</sup>

Therefore, most Adventists believe that ceremonial sabbaths must be in view since the weekly Sabbath looks *back* to creation whereas the ceremonial sabbaths look *forward* to their fulfillment in Christ.

A second line of reasoning is also used to take away the force of Colossians 2:16. Even if Paul *is* referring to the weekly Sabbath, some Adventists claim that his concern is with a *ritualistic observance* of the day "as part and parcel of the works-righteousness concept of rabbinical Judaism,"<sup>9</sup> not a prohibition of Sabbath observance itself. Likewise, Wood claims that the verse indicates that "sabbaths have no value for salvation."<sup>10</sup> A modification of this ritualistic observance view sees not the Jewish Sabbath in view, but rather pagan "sacred days" based upon astrological movements.<sup>11</sup> O'Brien believes that the Sabbath *is* in view but that Paul prohibits observing it with the wrong (astrological) motive.<sup>12</sup>

A third argument aimed against the meaning of weekly Sabbath here is the use of the plural form "sabbaths." Some believe that this form indicates ceremonial sabbaths.<sup>13</sup> Bacchiocchi acknowledges that the plural form (σαββάτων) is used for the entire week (LXX Ps. 23:1; 47:1; 93:1; Mark 16:2; Luke 24:1; Acts 20:7), so he suggests that it more properly refers to week-days rather than to the Sabbath.<sup>14</sup>

Can these interpretations be sustained? Is Paul really speaking here of ceremonial sabbaths, ritualistic observance of the Sabbath, pagan sabbaths, or even week-days? The best evidence, as most scholars recognize, is that Colossians 2:16 condemns all forms of Sabbath-keeping, including observance of the weekly Sabbath.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>8</sup>Wood, "The 'Sabbath Days' of Colossians 2:16, 17," 33; *SDABC*, Nichol *et al.*, eds., 7:205-6.

<sup>9</sup>*SDAE*, s.v. "Sabbath," by Neufeld, ed., 10:1110.

<sup>10</sup>Wood, "The 'Sabbath Days' of Colossians 2:16, 17," 339.

<sup>11</sup>Eduard Lohse, *Colossians and Philemon*, Herm, 115-16. Samuele Bacchiocchi, "Appendix: Paul and the Sabbath," in *From Sabbath to Sunday*, 339-69, seems to indicate this view as well as the ceremonial view.

<sup>12</sup>Peter T. O'Brien, *Colossians, Philemon*, Word BC, 139.

<sup>13</sup>Clarke, 6:294; Barnes, 1070.

<sup>14</sup>Bacchiocchi, *From Sabbath to Sunday*, 360; *id.*, *The Sabbath in the New Testament*, 116-17.

<sup>15</sup>T. K. Abbott, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistles to the Ephesians and the Colossians*, ICC, 264; Henry Alford, *The Greek Testament*, 3:224-25; F. F. Bruce, *The Epistles to the Colossians, to Philemon, and to the Ephesians*, 113-15; Canright, *Seventh-day Adventism Renounced*, 282-97; H. M. Carson, *Colossians and Philemon*, TNTC, 72 ("weekly festivals"); John Eadie, *Commentary on the Epistle of Paul to the Colossians*, 176-77; Charles J. Ellicott, *St. Paul's Epistles to the Philippians, the Colossians, and Philemon*, 168 ("weekly festival"); William Hendriksen, *Exposition of Colossians and Philemon*, NTC, 123-24; Henry Allen Ironside, *Lectures on Colossians*, 91; R. C. H. Lenski, *The Interpretation of St. Paul's Epistles to the Colossians, to the Thessalonians, to Timothy, to Titus and to Philemon*, 127-28; J. B. Lightfoot, *St. Paul's Epistles to the Colossians and Philemon*, 260; Martin, 162-66; Curtis Vaughan, "Colossians," *EBC*, 11:204; Kenneth Wuest, *Ephesians and Colossians in the Greek New Testament*, in *Word Studies in the Greek New Testament*, 1:210; Rordorf, 135; Congdon, 344-47. William Barclay claims that the verse prohibits Gnostic and Jewish weekly sabbaths (*The Letters to the Philippians, Colossians, and Thessalonians*, DBS, 145).



Ritualistic observance is excluded in that all of the practices mentioned are deemed types. Surely Paul would not refer to empty, ritualistic Sabbath worship as a (divinely ordained) type. Pagan sabbaths also must be excluded for the same reason. The apostle would not say that a heretical, astrological observance was now to be abolished because of the appearance of its antitype. Paul warns the church not to allow others to convince them of the necessity of observing Jewish holy days, irrespective of motivation.

The annual ("ceremonial") sabbaths also cannot be in view. All non-weekly Sabbaths are already mentioned in the verse as they are included under "religious festivals" (ἑορτῆς), so another designation for yearly and monthly Sabbaths in the same phrase would be redundant.<sup>16</sup> This same list of holy days in descending order of time is repeatedly used in the Old Testament, and in each case the Sabbaths refer to the weekly day of rest and worship. The law for daily, weekly, monthly, and yearly offerings is explained in Numbers 28–29<sup>17</sup> then listed in this same order many times elsewhere in the Old Testament.<sup>18</sup> These are the same celebrations mentioned in Colossians 2:16, which argue convincingly against the Adventist claim that they are peculiar celebrations associated with the Colossian heresy. The contention that ceremonial sabbaths must be in view because the weekly Sabbath looks back at creation (not forward to something) is unwarranted. There is no reason the day cannot have both a retrospective and prospective viewpoint. Indeed, the present tense of τῶν μελλόντων ("which are to come") in Colossians 2:17 indicates that the festivals of verse 16 are typological of things *still* forthcoming.<sup>19</sup>

Further evidence that the weekly Sabbath is in view stems from the New Testament usage of the word σαββάτων. This word is used sixty times in the New Testament in both the singular and plural, always referring to the seventh-day Sabbath.<sup>20</sup> While Adventists themselves admit that fifty-nine times it refers to the weekly Sabbath, they still insist based upon "context" that Colossians 2:16 remains the only use of the word for ceremonial sabbaths.<sup>21</sup> Such alleged contextual evidence is lacking. It appears that the normal meaning for σαββάτων has been abandoned to maintain a moral/ceremonial dichotomy within the Law. Bruce adds, "When the sabbath is mentioned in the OT or the NT with no contextual qualification, the weekly sabbath is intended."<sup>22</sup>

Finally, the use of the plural also does not argue for the ceremonial Sabbaths in that it is simply a Hebraism.<sup>23</sup> As such the plural is commonly used in Scripture with a singular sense in

<sup>16</sup>See Congdon, 344-47; Ironside, *Lectures on Colossians*, 91.

<sup>17</sup>Numbers 28:3-4 (daily), 9 (Sabbath), 11 (new moon), 16, 26; 29:1, 7, 12 (five annual feasts).

<sup>18</sup>1 Chron. 23:31; 2 Chron. 2:4; 8:13; 31:3; Neh. 10:33; cf. opposite order (parallel to Col. 2:16) in Ezek. 45:17; Hos. 2:11. The new moon and Sabbath are adjacent in several texts (Amos 8:5; Isa. 1:13; 2 Kings 4:23; Ezek. 46:3), which provides additional weight for the Sabbath referring to the weekly day.

<sup>19</sup>This eschatological meaning is further explored in the final chapter.

<sup>20</sup>Canright, *Seventh-day Adventism Renounced*, 285.

<sup>21</sup>Wood, "The 'Sabbath Days' of Colossians 2:16, 17," 339-40.

<sup>22</sup>Bruce, *Colossians*, 115, n. 105.

<sup>23</sup>Both the singular and plural forms indicate the weekly Sabbath in the New Testament: the singular σαββάτου and plural σαββάτων both stem from the Hebrew שַׁבָּת whereas the plural σαββάτα stems from the Aramaic (ܫܒܬܐ; cf. Acts 17:2; A. T. Robertson, *A Grammar of the Greek New Testament in the Light of Historical*

reference to the weekly Sabbath.<sup>24</sup> The translators of the Septuagint also felt free to employ the exact plural form (σαββάτων) in their translation of the singular שַׁבָּת in the Decalogue itself (Exod. 20:8; Deut. 5:12), as well as in many other passages where the singular weekly Sabbath is in view.<sup>25</sup> Also, assuming Bacchiocchi's "week-day" view, one must wonder how Paul would be condemning the church for an improper use of weekdays, especially in light of the Jewish emphasis in the book. Further, how "week-days" serve as a type is never explained by Bacchiocchi.

Since the weekly Sabbath must be in view here, it remains to ask what Paul says about it. His main purpose is to warn the Colossians not to let anyone judge them regarding the observance of the day. In other words, Paul cautions the church members against anyone convincing them of the necessity of Sabbath observance.<sup>26</sup> He does not declare Sabbath observance wrong *per se*, since Paul's attitude about Sabbath-keeping "is that it, like many other things, does neither harm nor good."<sup>27</sup> However, he does forbid required observance of the day. This is because the Sabbath served as a mere shadow, whereas Christ is the substance (v. 17).

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*Research*, 95, 105; cf. James Hope Moulton, Wilbert Francis Howard, and Nigel Turner, *A Grammar of New Testament Greek*, 4 vols., 2:128, 153; George Benedict Winer, *A Grammar of the Idiom of the New Testament*, 177); "σαββάτα, though plural, means 'a Sabbath day,' being, in fact, a Greek transliteration of the Aramaic, and from its form mistaken for a plural" (Abbott, 264; cf. Lightfoot, 260).

<sup>24</sup>Exod. 31:13; Lev. 19:3; Isa. 56:4; Ezek. 20:12; Matt. 12:5, 10; 28:1; Luke 4:16; Acts 13:14. The misleading translation "sabbath days" (KJV) in Colossians 2:16 does not reflect this usage. Adventists themselves admit that the plural often refers to a succession of weekly Sabbaths (Francis D. Nichol, ["D. F. N." in article] "Sabbath Day or Sabbath Days?" *RH*, 15 April 1971, 13; *SDABC*, Nichol *et al.*, eds., 7:205); nevertheless, for the most part most of them believe follow the *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary* teaching that the reference refers to the ceremonial sabbaths (cf. *SDABC*, Nichol *et al.*, eds., 7:205-6).

<sup>25</sup>For example, τῆ ἡμέρᾳ τῶν σαββάτων in Exod. 35:3; Num. 15:32; 28:9 and simply τῶν σαββάτων in Isa. 58:13 (cf. Alfred Ralfs, *Septuaginta*, 2 vols.).

<sup>26</sup>C. I. Scofield, ed., *New Scofield Reference Bible*, 1194. See also the many sources at footnote 80.

<sup>27</sup>De Lacey, "The Sabbath/Sunday Question and the Law in the Pauline Corpus," 182-83.

# Biblical Evidence for the Doctrine of the Trinity

(adapted from Dr. R. Walter Martin)

## Introduction

“Many people think that the Trinity is impossible to understand, that it is a logical and conceptual impossibility. The cults vehemently deny the Trinity asserting that it is a doctrine of Satan. The non-Christian religions make sport of the doctrine saying that Christians believe in three gods.

“But it *is* possible to understand the Trinity. We may not have exhaustive knowledge of the doctrine. But we can know it enough to state it clearly and understand it deeply. This provides believers with the intellectual base to defend the faith and worship our Triune God.”<sup>1</sup>

## How to Prove the Trinity

1. Begin the investigation into Scripture by starting from scratch, assuming nothing.
2. Demonstrate that the Bible teaches that there is only one God (Isa. 44:6; 1 Tim. 2:5<sup>2</sup>).
3. Correctly define the Trinity: “Within the nature of the one, true God exists three Person(age)s: the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, who share the same attributes, are the same substance (nature, essence or reality) and are in effect the one, true God.”
4. Decide who Jesus is: a lunatic (one who made false claims unknowingly), a liar (one who made false claims knowingly) or who he said he was (one who spoke the truth).<sup>3</sup> Assuming Christ spoke only the truth we must believe what he says. This is recorded in the Bible, so may we use only the Bible as our only authoritative source concerning this doctrine?
5. Show the person the reasonableness of this proposition: If three biblical Persons are all called God and share the same attributes of God, but there exists only one God, they are in effect *the* one, true God. (If this can be demonstrated then the Trinity is true.)
6. The Bible conclusively proves the above proposition in the following passages which identify the same attributes/titles with the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit:

<u>Attribute/Title</u>	<u>Father</u>	<u>Son</u>	<u>Holy Spirit</u>
Called “God” (deity)	<u>2 Pet. 1:17</u> <sup>4</sup>	Heb. 1:6-8 <sup>5</sup>	<u>Acts 5:3-4</u> <sup>6</sup>
Worshipped as God	<u>Matt. 4:10</u> <sup>7</sup>	<u>John 20:28</u> <sup>8</sup>	9
Indwells believers	<u>1 Cor. 3:16a</u> <sup>10</sup>	Col. 1:27 <sup>11</sup>	<u>1 Cor. 3:16b</u> <sup>12</sup>
Is the truth	<u>John 3:33</u> <sup>13</sup>	<u>John 14:6</u> <sup>14</sup>	<u>1 John 5:6</u> <sup>15</sup>
Raised Christ	<u>Acts 3:26</u> <sup>16</sup>	<u>John 10:17</u> <sup>17</sup>	<u>Rom. 8:11</u> <sup>18</sup>
Omniscient (all knowing)	Ps. 139:1-5 <sup>19</sup>	John 16:3 <sup>20</sup>	1 Cor. 2:10-11 <sup>21</sup>
Omnipotent (all powerful)	Matt. 19:26 <sup>22</sup>	Phil. 4:13 <sup>23</sup>	Zech. 4:6 <sup>24</sup>
Omnipresent (everywhere)	Jer. 23:24 <sup>25</sup>	Matt. 18:20 <sup>26</sup>	Ps. 139:7-12 <sup>27</sup>
Has personhood	John 3:16 <sup>28</sup>	John 1:9-18 <sup>29</sup>	John 14:17 <sup>30</sup>
Helper ( <i>Paraclete</i> )	2 Cor. 1:3-6	1 John 2:1	John 14:26 <sup>31</sup>
Forgives sin	Isa. 45:25 <sup>32</sup>	1 John 2:12 <sup>33</sup>	
Forgets sin	Jer. 31:34 <sup>34</sup>	Heb. 8:12	Heb. 10:17 <sup>35</sup>
Immutable (changeless)	Mal. 3:6 <sup>36</sup>	Heb. 13:8 <sup>37</sup>	
Eternal	Exod. 15:18 <sup>38</sup>	John 1:1-2 <sup>39</sup>	
“I Am”	Exod. 3:14	John 8:58 <sup>40</sup>	
“Alpha and Omega”	<u>Rev. 1:8</u>	<u>Rev. 22:13, 16</u>	
“First and the Last”	<u>Isa. 44:6</u>	<u>Rev. 1:17</u>	
Holy	Isa. 6:3 <sup>41</sup>	Mark 1:24 <sup>42</sup>	Luke 11:13

Note: Underlined verses are translated correctly in the Jehovah Witness *New World Translation*.

7. Additional evidence from both the Old and New Testament reaffirms the verses on the preceding chart to support the doctrine of the Trinity:

a. Old Testament Evidence:

- 1) The title *elohim* ("God") always appears in the plural (2570 times!), thus supporting the teaching of Scripture elsewhere that God is more than one Personage (Gen. 1:1ff.).
- 2) Plural personal pronouns ("Us" rather than "Me") are used of God (Gen. 1:26; 3:22; 11:7; Isa. 6:8).
- 3) The three Persons of the Trinity appear together in the same passage as distinct from one another (Isa. 48:16; 59:20-21; 63:7-10).
- 4) Distinctions within the nature of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit are evident in:
  - a) Immanuel (Messiah) as being "God with us" (Isa. 7:14).
  - b) The Son called "the mighty God" (Isa. 9:6).
  - c) The Father delegating sovereign authority to the Son (Ps. 2:7).
  - d) The Father sending the Holy Spirit (Ps. 104:30).
  - e) One LORD as distinguished from the LORD (Gen. 19:24; Hos. 1:7).
  - f) The Spirit of the Lord (Holy Spirit) distinct from the Father and Son (Isa. 48:16).
  - g) The Redeemer (who must be divine) as distinguished from the LORD (Isa. 59:20).
  - h) The Father sending the Angel of Jehovah, or preincarnate Christ, who is called God yet distinguished from Him (Gen. 16:7-13; 18:1-21; 19:1-28; 32:30; Mal. 3:1).

b) New Testament Evidence:

- 1) Jesus Christ is called the God incarnate (John 1:14) and the Son of **God** (Matt. 16:16) but He was conceived by the **Holy Spirit** (Matt. 1:18, 20); however, He is never called "the Son of the Holy Spirit." Therefore, the Spirit must be God since God conceived Mary to produce the Son of God!
- 2) The three Persons of the Trinity are distinguished at the baptism of Christ where the Father spoke from heaven and the Holy Spirit descended as a dove (Matt. 3:16-17).
- 3) The Father and the Comforter (Holy Spirit) are distinguished from Christ Himself (John 14:16-17).
- 4) The Great Commission command to baptize "in the name (singular) of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit" breaks the rules of grammar by using a singular noun ("name") with three (i.e., a plural number of) genitives (Matt. 28:19). Again, in this trinitarian prescription for baptism the three Persons are distinguished.
- 5) Many other passages distinguish between the Persons in the Godhead by listing all three in the same passage (John 3:21-24; 4:2-31; 15:26; Rom. 8:9; 1 Cor. 12:3-6; 2 Cor. 1:21; 13:14; Eph. 1:17; 2:13-22; 3:14-19; 2 Thess. 2:13-14; Jude 20-21; Rev. 1:4-5).

### Misunderstandings of the Trinity

1. Tritheism: three persons who are three gods
2. Modalism: one person who manifests himself in three different ways
3. Unitarianism: one person who is the only God
4. Nonsense: one person who is at the same time three persons

# Denials of the Doctrine

Search Ministries, Dallas, Texas

The doctrine of the Trinity is clearly taught in the Scriptures and it was emphatically affirmed in church history from the earliest period to present. Yet the major cults of America deny the truth of the trinity.

## I. The Mormons reject the Trinity.

- A. Their view of the Father: God the Father is the resurrected Adam. He was once a man but he became a finite god who is now populating the earth with his many celestial wives.
- B. Their view of the Son: Christ is an ordinary man who became a god. He was not produced by a direct act of the Holy Spirit but by actual sexual relations between God the Father (Adam-god) and Mary.
- C. Their world view: Polytheistic. They believe that many gods inhabit the universe and that man may become a god.

## II. The Jehovah's Witnesses reject the Trinity.

- A. Their view of the Father: Jehovah is the <sup>most</sup> high god.
- B. Their view of the Son: Jesus is "god-like" but not Jehovah. Prior to his earthly life he was Michael the Archangel. At his incarnation he became a man. At the resurrection Jesus went back to his former state as an invisible spirit body.
- C. Their view of the Spirit: "So the holy spirit is the invisible active force of Almighty God which moves his servants to do his will." (Let God be True, pg. 108). Thus, the deity and the personality of the Holy Spirit are both denied.
- D. Their view of the Trinity: "The trinity doctrine was not conceived by Jesus or the early Christians (ibid. 1952, pg.93). "The plain truth is that this is another of Satan's attempts to keep the God-fearing person from learning the truth of Jehovah and His Son Christ Jesus" (ibid 93).
- E. Their world view: Jehovah's Witnesses are monotheistic: There is one God who is strictly one person.

## III. The Unity School of Christianity rejects the Trinity.

- A. Their view of the Father: God is an impersonal force or a principle. "God exercises none of his attributes except through the inner consciousnesses of the universe and man" (Jesus Christ Heals, Unity Sch. of Christianity, 1944, pp. 31-32).
- B. Their view of the Son: Jesus of Nazareth was a man. The Christ principle is god or the impersonal force of the universe which resides in all mankind. Jesus of Nazareth allowed the Christ principle to so totally control him that he was elevated to Jesus Christ.
- C. Their view of the trinity: "The Father is a principle, the Son is that Principle revealed in creative plan, the Holy Spirit is the executive power of both the Father and the Son carrying out that plan" (Metaphysical Bible Dict., pg. 629).
- D. Their world view: Pantheistic. God is an impersonal force. Everything that exists is God and God is all that exists.

## IV. The Christian Scientists reject the Trinity.

- A. Their view of the Father: Mary Baker Eddy denied that the God of Christian Science was pantheistic (meaning that god was to be identified with the whole material world). But when she describes God she depicts him as "the divine whole, an all pervading intelligence and love, a divine infinite principle" (Misc. Writings, p. 16). He is not an infinite personal God. He is a divine principle.
- B. Their view of the Son: Christ is a divine idea, or principle. Jesus is the human man who lived in history. Jesus the man more than any other man manifested the Christ principle and thus became Jesus Christ.
- C. Their world view: Christian Science is pantheistic. God is the world and the world is God.

In conversations with members of Cults the Trinity is the place to begin. Probe with two kinds of questions. Who was Jesus Christ? And what is Christ's relationship to the Father and the Spirit? Initially answers from cultists will sound orthodox. But as you ask questions and define terms you will quickly find a radical difference in their Christ and the person who is revealed in the Gospels.

# Different Views Of God

**Monarchianism**  
*(Mono = One Arche = Ruler)*  
**One Person One God**

A second- and third-century heresy that denies the doctrine of the Trinity maintaining that the only true God has always existed as one Person not three Persons. The teaching exists today in two forms:

**Modalistic**

This view holds that God exists as one Person Who is revealed in history in different modes using different names. The Father Son and Holy Spirit are different names for the same *Person*. Therefore, the Father was born at Bethlehem and crucified at Calvary, but at the time He was called Jesus.

Currently Taught  
by The United  
Pentecostal  
Church

*True Jesus Church also*

**Dynamic**

This heresy teaches that Jesus is not God but a special man who became (or was adopted as) the Son of God (usually thought to have occurred at His Baptism).

*but JW's say he was born as the Son of God*

Currently Taught by  
The Watchtower

**Trinitarianism**  
*(Trinus = triple)*  
**Three Persons One God**

The Biblical view of God. The Father Son and Holy Spirit are three separate Persons who have always existed as **ONE TRUE GOD**. The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are not three Gods nor are they three names for the same Person.

Although the word Trinity is not found in the Bible, the idea or teaching is found throughout scripture.

Currently Taught by  
The Bible and Christians

**Tritheism**  
*(Tri = Three, Theos = God)*  
**Three Persons  
Three Gods**

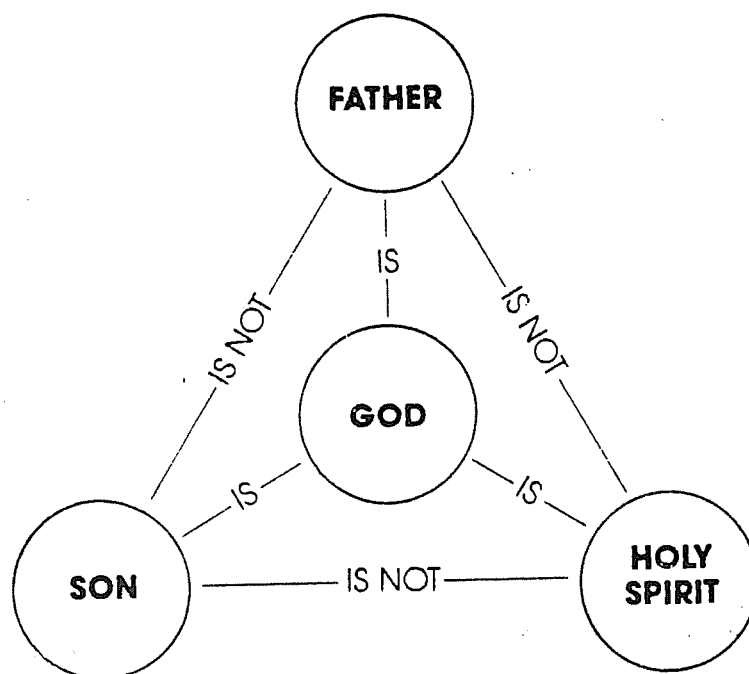
The belief that the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are three separate Gods. This is actually a form of Polytheism (the belief in more than one true God.)

Currently Taught  
by Mormonism

## Illustrations of the Trinity

No illustration of the Trinity can be adequate, but the following depict some of its aspects:

1. The triple point of water: Water in a vacuum tube at zero degrees centigrade will contain liquid, ice and vapor yet each part will still be H<sub>2</sub>O, the same substance.
2. An Egg: An egg is composed of three parts: the white, yolk and shell. However, it is one egg.  
Problem: Illustrates "parts" of God which is unscriptural.
3. The Sun: The Sun is unapproachable (the Father) but is the source of beneficial light (the Son) which in turn gives power to make plants grow (the Spirit).  
Problem: Impersonal illustration whereas God is a personal being.
4. A Man: A man can simultaneously be a father, son and husband although he is but one man.  
Problem: Approaches modalism since it indicates three different functions for one man.
5. A Diagram: The following diagram is the best illustration of the Trinity which I have seen:



Charles Ryrie, *Basic Theology*, 55

## Conclusion

“A popular statement about the Trinity goes like this, ‘Try to understand the Trinity and you will lose your mind, but fail to understand the Trinity and you will lose your soul.’ This betrays a misunderstanding of the doctrine. The Trinity is not a logical contradiction. For God to be three persons yet one essence is logically possible. We do know the what of the Trinity: God is three persons but one essence. But the how of the Trinity—the exhaustive knowledge of how the persons of the Trinity relate to one another—that is a mystery. It is what we can know coupled with what we cannot know that compels us to worship such a great God.”<sup>43</sup>

## Trinity Study Endnotes

Note: Underlined verses are translated correctly in the Jehovah Witness *New World Translation*. Those with double underline are particularly clear even in this distorted version of the Bible.

- 1 "The Trinity." An unpublished study outline by Search Ministries, Dallas, TX.
- 2 Deut. 4:39b; Isa. 43:10; 44:8; 45:22; Mark 12:29; Gal. 3:20; Eph. 4:5-6; Jas. 2:19; 1 Cor. 8:4-6.
- 3 For a full explanation of the "Liar, Lunatic, Lord" apologetic see Josh McDowell's *Evidence that Demands a Verdict* (San Bernardino, CA: Here's Life Publishers, 1979), 103-107.
- 4 1 Cor. 1:3; Eph. 6:23; Phil. 1:12; 2:10; Col. 3:17.
- 5 Matt. 1:23; 4:6-7; Mark 2:1-12; John 1:1, 14; 5:18; 10:30; 12:44-45; 14:9-11; 15:23; 17:11, 21; 20:28; Rom. 9:5; Phil. 2:8-11; Col. 1:15-19; 2:9; Tit 2:13; Heb. 1:1-4; 2 Pet. 1:1; 1 John 5:20; Rev. 1:8 with 1:17-18.
- 6 Matt. 1:18 with 16:16; 2 Cor. 3:17.
- 7 Exod. 20:3-5.
- 8 Matt. 2:2, 8, 11; 28:17; Heb. 1:6.
- 9 No explicit NT text (that I know of) encourages us to worship the Spirit or pray to Him.
- 10 2 Cor. 6:16.
- 11 Rom. 8:10.
- 12 John 14:17; 1 Cor. 6:19.
- 13 John 7:28; 8:26.
- 14 John 1:14; 8:32 with 8:36.
- 15 John 15:26; 16:13.
- 16 1 Thess. 1:10; Col. 2:12.
- 17 John 2:19-21.
- 18 Acts 17:31.
- 19 Matt. 10:29-30.
- 20 Col. 2:3; Heb. 4:13; Rev. 2:23.
- 21 Isa. 11:2.
- 22 Gen. 18:14; Job 42:4; Jer. 32:17; Zech. 8:6; Mark 10:27; Lk 1:37; 18:27.
- 23 Col. 1:17; Heb. 1:3.
- 24 Perhaps also 1 Cor. 12:13.
- 25 Job 22:12-14; Eph. 4:6.
- 26 Matt. 28:20; Col. 1:27.
- 27 John 14:17.
- 28 Matt. 6:9-13.
- 29 Phil. 2:6-8.
- 30 The Holy Spirit is not a "vapor" or a "divine influence." Only a person is referred to by the personal pronoun "He" (John 16:8) and only a person can be quoted (Acts 13:2).
- 31 Mark 2:7; Ps. 103:3a, 12; Isa. 1:18; 44:22; 53:5; Jer. 31:34.
- 32 Mark 2:1-11; Acts 10:43; 13:38.
- 33 John 15:26.
- 34 Isa. 43:25.
- 35 The Father's words (Jer. 31:34) are attributed to the Son (Heb. 8:12) and Spirit (Heb. 10:17). The author could not exercise this freedom unless all three are one.
- 36 James 1:17.
- 37 Heb. 1:12.
- 38 Ps. 41:13; Rev. 1:8.
- 39 Col. 1:15; Rev. 22:13.
- 40 The seven "I am" statements in John are: 6:35; 8:12; 8:58; 10:11; 11:25; 14:6; 15:1.
- 41 1 Pet. 1:15-16; Rev. 4:8; 15:4
- 42 Parallel in Luke 4:34; cf. Luke 1:35; John 6:69; Acts 2:27; 13:35; Rev. 3:7.
- 43 "The Trinity." An unpublished study outline by Search Ministries, Dallas, TX.



# Reincarnation

*Responding to an Age-Old Belief*

## I. Some Terms

- A. *Reincarnation* believes that after death people return to earth again in another human body (cf. Latin *carne*, “flesh”). *Transmigration* is similar, saying one could become an animal (bird, cow, flea, cockroach) or inanimate object (rock, piece of chalk, etc.) in the next life. Reincarnationists say people may go through hundreds or even millions of reincarnations.
- B. *Karma* (good and bad thoughts, words, and deeds in this life) decides the status of the new body—economically, intellectually, physically, etc. If one earns more good karma, he or she has a higher form in the next life, but bad karma results in lower forms of existence.
- C. *Pantheism* (Greek *pan*, “all” + *theism*, “God”) is the worldview of reincarnation in which God is an impersonal force; the universe is God and God is the universe. Therefore every human and all created beings are an extension of or an emanation from God. Similar to this is *panentheism* that teaches that God is not all things but God is *in* all things.
- D. Buddhists and Hindus have long believed in reincarnation, but a recent Gallup Poll noted that one in four Americans also believe in it. One current author, Gary Zukav, has popularized reincarnation in his book *The Seat of the Soul* (Fireside, 1990; 256 pp.) and through regular appearances on the Oprah Winfrey show. The adherents are growing.

## II. Five Arguments of Reincarnation Critiqued<sup>1</sup>

- A. *Hypnotic regression* is when someone vividly and accurately describes people, places, and events he or she could not have previously known. But must these be from a former life? Many “hypnotized” people have outright lied or simply not remembered the real details. “Although hypnosis increases recall, it also increases errors... During hypnosis, you are creating memories.”<sup>2</sup> Patients under hypnosis are also mostly children or are easily influenced by leading questions, which is why law courts do not accept testimony under hypnosis. Also, why is “past life recall” mostly prevalent in south and western Asia where “stories from a former life” are viewed with admiration? If reincarnation is really true, one should observe “past life recall” in all cultures, not just where it is believed.
- B. *Déjà vu* is a feeling that one has done a present action before (e.g., been at a certain place). Reincarnation advocates say this place or event occurred in a previous life, but researchers say the brain is simply fusing a similar past experience in this life with the current one.
- C. *Xenoglossy* is a sudden ability to speak a language one has never learned. Reincarnation attributes this to one’s previous language in a former life, but cryptoamnesia is more likely (when one recalls previously forgotten data such as languages heard as a child).
- D. *Birthmarks* also supposedly support reincarnation since some are similar to those on deceased individuals. Perhaps if these were identical then the reincarnationists might have a case, but similarity certainly does not prove that the same soul inhabited both bodies.

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<sup>1</sup> This section and the following biblical section mostly summarizes Patrick Zuckerman, “The Mystery of Reincarnation,” Richardson, TX: Probe Ministries, n.d. (<http://www.probe.org/docs/reincarn.html> or email him at [pzuckeran@probe.org](mailto:pzuckeran@probe.org)). He is a research associate with Probe, former pastor, and ThM graduate of Dallas Seminary.

<sup>2</sup> Elizabeth Stark, “Hypnosis on Trial,” *Psychology Today* (February 1984), 35.

- E. *The Bible* is also used to support reincarnation. While Christians agree with reincarnation in that the immaterial part of man (soul, spirit) never dies, the Bible does not allow for reincarnation (see below).

### III. Responses to Reincarnation

#### A. A Biblical Response<sup>3</sup>

1. Where explanations above fail, Scripture notes the possibility of demonic possession. The NT has several examples of persons whose bodies and minds were controlled by demons. These demons, while not all-knowing, have observed humans for thousands of years and can interject knowledge into the minds of those possessed. Edgar Cayce (father of the New Age movement) and others espousing reincarnation confess that the “emptying” of their minds allowed demons to control them.<sup>4</sup>
2. The Bible teaches clearly that we live once, die once, and then enter our eternal state. Hebrews 9:26b-27 states, "But now [Christ] has appeared once for all at the end of the ages to do away with sin by the sacrifice of himself. Just as man is destined to die once and after that to face judgment, so Christ was sacrificed once..." Jesus and all people die but once, thus excluding reincarnation teaching within the Bible.
3. Reincarnation advocates often appeal to John 9:1-3. Here the disciples questioned Christ whether a man was born blind due to his own sin or sin of his parents. Yet Jewish belief at that time saw birth defects as attributed to sin by the baby in the womb (cf. Jacob and Esau in Gen. 25:22) or to parental sin (cf. Exod. 20:5). Even still, Jesus refuted the idea of the man's blindness due to previous sins, so Christ certainly did not believe in karma.
4. The Bible even gives examples of people after their death who did not go through the evolutionary process taught by reincarnation. For example, Samuel was brought back from the dead (1 Sam. 28). This would not have been possible had he already returned to earth in another body. Also, Lazarus and especially the evil and rich man (Luke 16) did not return to earth in further incarnations.
5. The Bible teaches resurrection into one body—not reincarnation into many bodies. As the crops harvested first were called “firstfruits” (Exod. 23:16), so Christ's own resurrection is deemed the “firstfruits” of believers who have died (1 Cor. 15:20, 23). After his resurrection, Jesus received an eternal body that resembled his mortal one. In like manner, Christians will also be raised into new, glorious bodies—not return to earth in different mortal bodies. Similarly, after judgment unbelievers will rise to inhabit indestructible bodies, yet for punishment (Rev. 20:14-15; cf. Luke 16:19-31).

<sup>3</sup> For biblical critiques of reincarnation see Mark Albrecht, *Reincarnation: A Christian Critique of a New Age Doctrine* (Chicago: IVP, 1982, 1987), 35-50, 105-26; Norman L. Geisler and J. Yutaka Amano, *The Reincarnation Sensation* (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale, 1986), 105-7, 113-54; Walter Martin, *The Riddle of Reincarnation* (Santa Ana, CA: Vision House, 1977); Craig S. Hawkins, *Witchcraft: Exploring the World of Wicca* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1996), 121-27; and Craig S. Hawkins, *Goddess Worship, Witchcraft and Neo-Paganism* (Grand Rapids, Zondervan, 1998), 65-68; cited by Hawkins, n. 1 at <http://www.apologeticsinfo.org/papers/critiquereincarnation.html>. See also Robert M. Bowman, "Reincarnation—Did the Church Suppress It?" in the *Christian Research Journal*, Vol. 10, no. 1 (Summer 1987): 8-12; Paul Edwards, "The Case Against Reincarnation: Part 1," *Free Inquiry* 6 (Fall 1986): 24-34; "The Case Against Reincarnation: Part 2," *Free Inquiry* 7 (Winter 1986/87): 38-43.

<sup>4</sup> Thomas Sugue, *The Story of Edgar Cayce: There is a River* (Virginia Beach: Association for Research and Enlightenment, 1973), 219, as cited by Geisler and Amano in *The Reincarnation Sensation*, 79.

B. A Philosophical Response (for those who do not hold the Bible as authoritative)<sup>5</sup>

1. Reincarnation encourages murder. In the *Bhagavad-Gita* ("the song of God" in Sanskrit, which is Hinduism's most popular sacred book), the god Krishna counsels the warrior Arjuna not to worry or mourn over killing anyone in battle. Why not? Murder is not sin but is virtuous since it helps the murdered deal with their karma. Krishna says that Arjuna can't really kill anyway since, "Death is certain for the born. Rebirth is certain for the dead. You should not grieve for what is unavoidable.... Die, and you win heaven. Conquer, and you enjoy the earth. Stand up now, Son of Kunti, and resolve to fight. Realize that pleasure and pain, gain and loss, victory and defeat, are all one and the same: then go into battle. Do this and you cannot commit any sin."<sup>6</sup> Many reincarnation proponents agree with this concept of murder not being a sin.<sup>7</sup>
2. Reincarnation claims that everything that happens is due to choice. This choice in one's previous or present life may be conscious or unconscious, but each individual still chooses it. Shirley MacLaine expressed this pitiful view after her daughter's acting teacher burned to death beyond recognition. MacLaine asked, "Why did she choose to die that way?"<sup>8</sup> One occult leader claims, "Many other deaths do not seem to be choices: accidents, illnesses, murder, the deaths of young people... But in the occult view these deaths were not arbitrary nor beyond the control of the people involved. The death-choices were subconscious choices, but choices just the same for any of a myriad of reasons."<sup>9</sup> But do even reincarnationists choose their own deaths?
3. Reincarnationists need to have every (or close to it) type of experience possible. This may be to pay off negative karma, actualize their potential, or learn from different experiences in their "evolution as a deity." The witch Raymond Buckland states, "Why should one be born crippled, another fit and strong?... because we must all eventually experience all things."<sup>10</sup> Sadly, life as a murderer, prostitute, rapist, and terrorist is thus necessary in their system. Also, undergoing everything is impossible since time marches on and no one can experience all there is in a given age.
4. Reincarnation is fatalistic, saying that whatever happens in life is the best or morally correct course of events. No matter what happens to one, it ought to occur because, as one witch says, it "was the best possible thing that could happen to him."<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> This philosophical section summarizes Craig S. Hawkins, "A Philosophical Critique of Reincarnation and Related Worldview Correlatives," Santa Ana, CA: Apologetics Information Ministry, 1999; rev. 7/26/00 (<http://www.apologeticsinfo.org/papers/critiquereincarnation.html>).

<sup>6</sup> *Bhagavad-Gita: The Song of God*, translated by Prabhavananda and Christopher Isherwood, with an introduction by Aldous Huxley (New York: Mentor Books, 1944, 1951), 38-39.

<sup>7</sup> Rajneesh clarifies the *Bhagavad-Gita* (including the section cited above): "Even if you kill someone consciously, while fully conscious it is meditative. That is what Krishna was saying to Arjuna... Kill, murder, fully conscious, knowing fully that no one is murdered and no one is killed.... Just become the instrument of Divine hands and know well that no one is killed, no one can be killed" (Rajneesh, *The Book of the Secrets: Discourses on Vidyana Bhairava Tantra* [New York: Harper Colophon, 1977], 1:399; as quoted in John Ankerberg and John Weldon, *Cult Watch*, 290). The founder of Transcendental Meditation wrote in his commentary on the *Bhagavad-Gita* that Arjuna should attain "a state of consciousness which will justify any action of his and will allow him even to kill in love in support of the purpose of evolution" (Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, *On the Bhagavad Gita: A New Translation and Commentary* [Baltimore, MD: Penguin, 1974], 76; as quoted in Ankerberg and Weldon, *Cult Watch*, 290-91).

<sup>8</sup> Shirley MacLaine, *It's All in the Playing* (New York: Bantam Books, 1987), cited by Ron Rhodes, *New Age Movement* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1995), 17.

<sup>9</sup> Marion Weinstein, *Positive Magic: Occult Self-Help*, rev. ed. (Custer, WA: Phoenix Pub., 1981), 98.

<sup>10</sup> Raymond Buckland, *Buckland's Complete Book of Witchcraft* (St. Paul: Llewellyn Pub., 1988), 17.

<sup>11</sup> Sybil Leek, *Reincarnation: The Second Chance* (New York: Bantam Books, 1975), 50.

5. Reincarnation leads one never to care for others. “If a women gets raped (or any other tragedy occurs to someone) in this life, does that means she raped someone in a previous (or will in a future) life, or committed (or will commit) some other equally despicable act to bring about her own rape? Therefore, she is only getting what she has sown (deserves?), thus, reaping her own karma? Hence, why should we feel sorry for her or attempt to intervene? (Furthermore, how can we punish the rapist if he is only fulfilling the law of karma, and actually helping the women?) These are detestable views... if these ideas were true, one could rightly ask if anything is unjust, wrong, or evil. But, this flies in the face of our intuition, our innate sense of sympathy, right and wrong, good and evil, and fairness.”<sup>12</sup>
6. Reincarnationists cannot, or at least do not, live consistent to their views. If devout reincarnationists could live consistently by their philosophy, then the following scenario could genuinely happen: “Imagine that Shirley MacLaine's house is broken into and that many of her valuable possessions are destroyed or stolen, and she and her household are badly beaten-up and abused. Suppose further that just after her assailants are done and getting ready to leave, Shirley MacLaine musters what little strength she has and says, ‘Thank you, thank you so much. I really mean it. Oh, and don't worry about me calling the police and trying to see you punished, you have done me a great favor. Now, actually, I owe you a great favor; you have helped me work-off a great [amount] of negative karma, and of course, after all I did choose to have this happen, and besides, I needed to experience this, sooner or later, so thank you. Have a nice day!’ [...Why won't she respond like this? We all know that this crime] is wrong, and the perpetrators ought to be held responsible for their actions!”<sup>13</sup>
7. Reincarnation makes us unable to morally distinguish between good and evil. If all is the way it ought to be, morality is unnecessary and irrelevant. If things that look “bad” or “evil” are actually good, how can one know whether one is accruing negative or positive karma by “helping” others or oneself? To make such a judgment would be arbitrary without objective standards of right and wrong. Ironically, Satan himself promised us ability to tell right from wrong (Gen. 3:5b). What a lie.
8. Reincarnation teaches that the divinity is responsible for all the pain, suffering, and evil that has, does, or ever will exist. This is the ultimate conclusion to the pantheistic belief of reincarnation that “all is God.” If all is God, then both good and evil are aspects of this One who ultimately becomes responsible for evil. Reincarnation in witchcraft thus sustains Satan's first lie—that sin makes us “be like God” (Gen. 3:5a).
9. Reincarnation believes that evil is eternal. In fact, “we can have no assurance that the deity(ies) or divinity can or wants to defeat evil. Nor can we be sure that this is even an appropriate question, since in the [pantheistic or panentheistic] worlds evil is always part of the deity's or One's very nature.”<sup>14</sup>

#### IV. Conclusion

Reincarnation provides no real hope for conquering evil in ourselves or our world. Reincarnation is also a philosophy that even reincarnationists do not believe. They intuitively know that right and wrong exist, so they do not live consistent with the teaching that everything is legitimate. Instead of helping defeat the world's evil, reincarnation provides justification for more of it.

<sup>12</sup> Hawkins, “A Philosophical Critique of Reincarnation and Related Worldview Correlatives,” after note 32.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., after note 35.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., after note 39.

## Colossian Heresy in the True Jesus Church

### 1. Founder and History

Apparently this group began this century in Taiwan, but I'm not too sure about this since none of the sixteen pamphlets of True Jesus Church literature which I obtained provides any historical background to the group! To me this appears to be a conscious omission, since they believe that they alone have salvation. The logical result of such a belief is that no one else since the New Testament church has been saved until they came along as the "True Jesus Church, established by Jesus through the Holy Spirit during the end-time" as "the restored true church of the apostolic times." However, they do correctly state, "Our church IS NOT another denomination" (*Words of Life* pamphlet 16:4).

### 2. Teachings

- a. Anti-Trinitarian: The above may sound as if the TJC believes in the Trinity, but this is not so. Another pamphlet clears this up by declaring that "Jesus is the Heavenly Father...Jesus is 'Johovah' [sic] God in the Old Testament, and so is He [sic] the Heavenly Father, the Father of the spirits. He said, 'I and the Father are one' (Jn. 10:30)" (*Words of Life* pamphlets 12:22; 14:16). Therefore they believe in the ancient heresy known as Modalistic Monarchianism—that there exists only one God *and one person* who assumes different modes using different names.
- b. Salvation: There exists an elaborate and complicated formula of several things one must do in order to be saved. In fact, they seem to have covered all of the "additions" taught by other groups but missed the most important—faith in Christ!

*Identification with the True Jesus Church*

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*Water Baptism in the TJC with Head Bowed*

+

*Footwashing by a Minister of the TJC*

+

*Holy Communion (Transubstantiation)*

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*Reception of the Holy Spirit*

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*Speaking in Tongues (as the Sign of Receiving the Spirit)*

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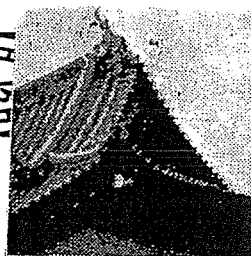
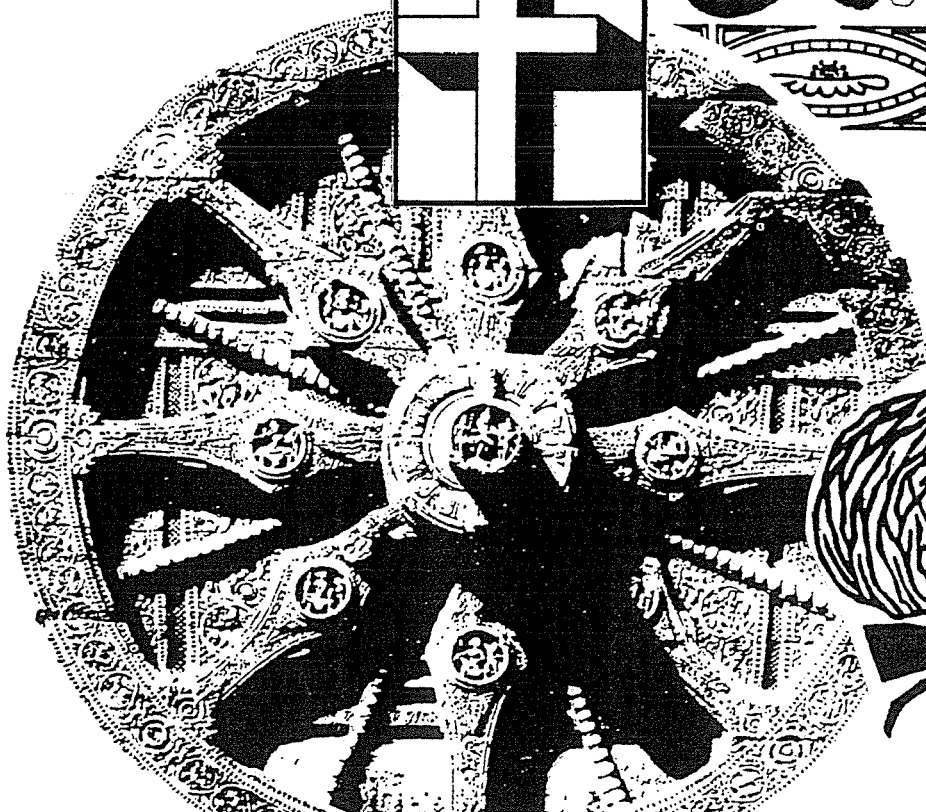
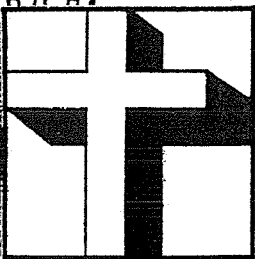
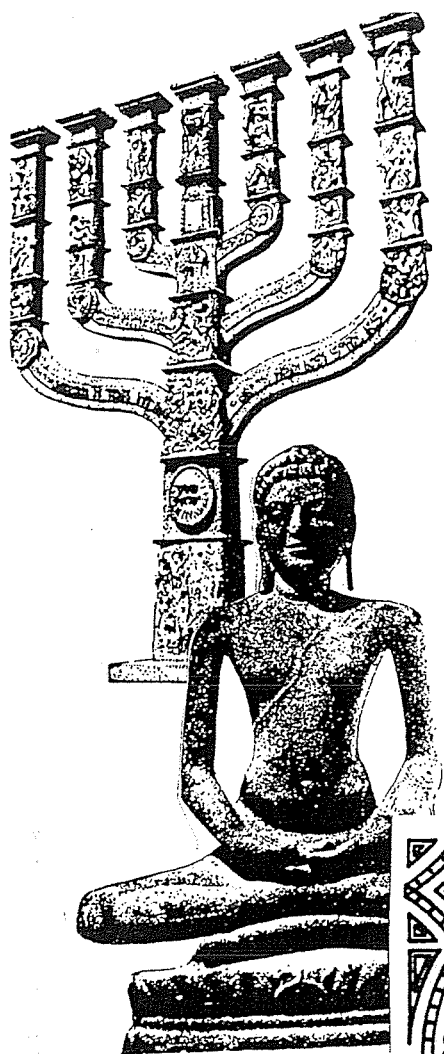
**Salvation!**

We should praise God that becoming a Christian is not really as complicated as the True Jesus Church has made it. They do so because they have no concept of the grace of God, shown in the atoning death of Christ. This foundation finds little or no mention in their literature.

*A Christian Response to*  
**World Religions**

*Including a Survey of Various Views*

*Rick Griffith, ThM, PhD*  
*Director of ThM Programmes*  
*Singapore Bible College*



# ADDRESSING MAN'S RELIGIOUS NATURE

"New Nation Educational Broadsheet: 2" *New Nation* newspaper (April 12, 1971)

## Introduction

**UNLIKE other animals, Man cooks, laughs and makes tools. Even more remarkable is the fact that he worships.**

Throughout history, in every land, Man has sought to come to terms with something that he believes to be greater than himself. In every human settlement is to be found some building, place or object used for no purpose other than the performance of acts of worship.

Europe, the Americas, and Australia have churches and chapels; the Moslem world boasts its mosques; the East its mysterious temples. In primitive lands, while the great religions have their converts, the gods of many other religions are also worshipped.

In uninhabited places of the world, there are the remains of older shrines and temples — swallowed up in the jungle as at Angkor Wat in Cambodia; crumbling in the desert as in the ancient Persian city of Persepolis; or isolated in mid-ocean like the great mute statues on Easter Island in the Southern Pacific.

What could all these structures be about? What has impelled man through the ages to erect them? The universality of the human religious response suggests that the answer to these

questions must be something fundamental to the human condition.

Most people conclude that men are animals who are not content to respond merely to the demands of the body. Eating, drinking, and making merry cannot totally satisfy them. Their very self-consciousness divides each of their worlds into "I" and "the other"; and "the other" — the mysterious "that which is not me" — seems to demand some sort of response, and this response is worship.

The enormous power of Religion in shaping and moulding society is one of the most arresting facts about it. It is hard to visualise the Arab world without Islam; the East without Brahma, Buddha, Lao-Tse or Confucius; how the history of Europe would have been written if the Gospels had never been written.

Religion obliges us to adopt a particular attitude towards it, ourselves, and our environment. This attitude may be noble, grotesque, obscene or merely superstitious. It may concentrate on explanations or on ecstasy. But throughout human history it is always there, for man has always been imbued with an awesome sense of the fundamental mystery of Life.

# Rules for religious liberty

Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; this right includes freedom to change his religion or belief, and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship and observance.

Article 18. Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

## SEVEN RULES FOR RELIGIOUS LIBERTY

(Drawn up by the World Council of Churches)

1. While maintaining clearly a Christian basis for religious liberty the civil liberty which Christians claim for themselves should be guaranteed everywhere to all men, whatever their religion or conviction.

2. Religious liberty includes freedom

for the individual to change his religion or belief without his social, economic or political status being affected. This right contains within it the right to continue in his belief or unbelief without incurring from the outside either constraint or hindrance.

3. Religious liberty in addition includes the freedom to express one's religion or conviction: worship, teaching, the putting into practice and observation of rites are the fundamental forms of religious expression and any law on religious liberty should directly guarantee these.

4. The right to express one's religion or belief should be guaranteed to everyone, singly or in common, in public or in private.

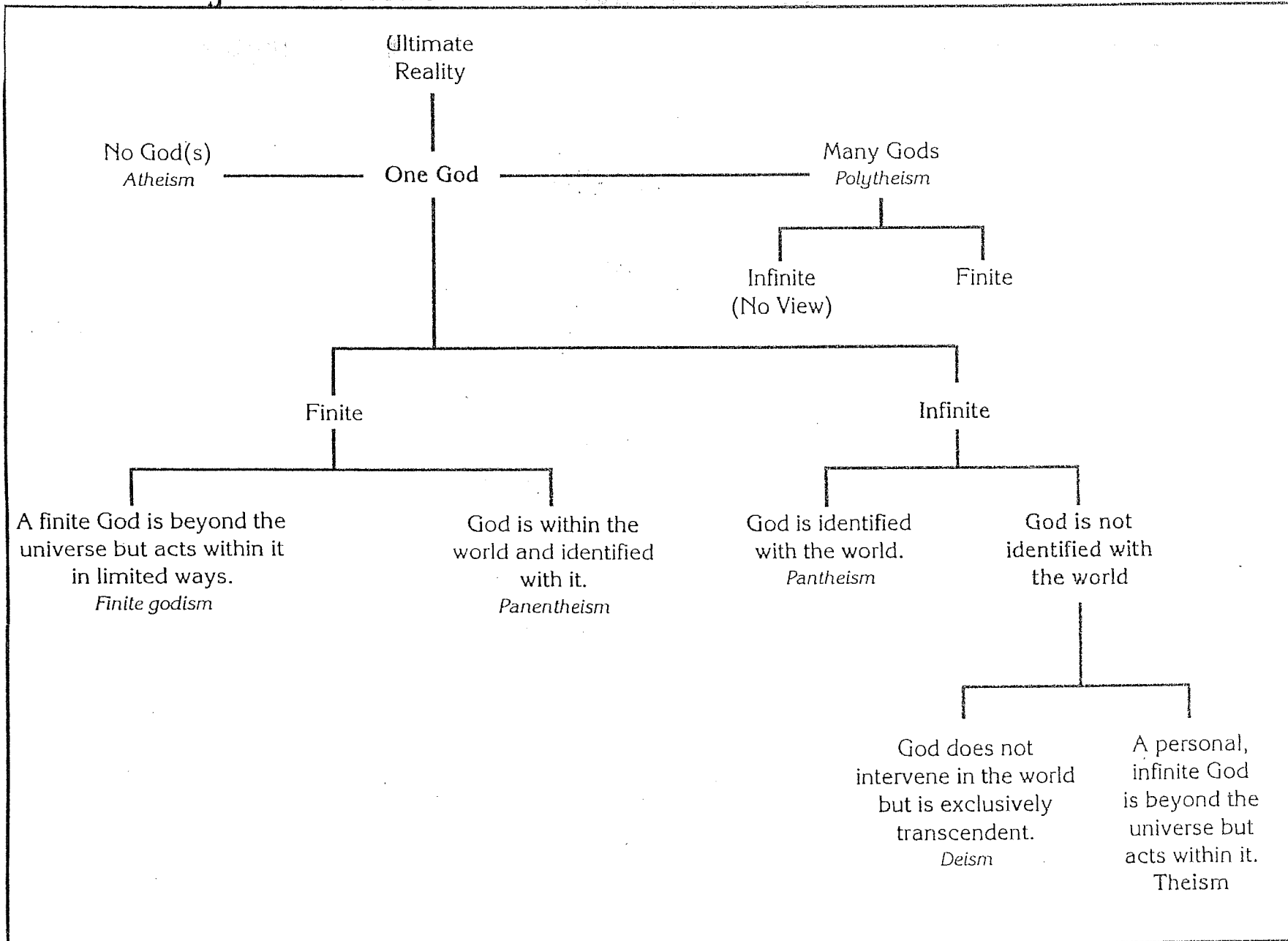
5. Religious liberty includes the freedom to maintain individual or collective links with religious communi-

ties or associations whose character transcends national frontiers: it also includes the freedom to express opinions or convictions and to communicate news and ideas by whatever means without consideration of frontiers.

6. The norm for religious liberty should be international: it should not be interpreted in a restrictive fashion in order that it should conform to existing national constitutions and laws, but should be implemented in such a way that national laws and constitutions should be made to conform to the international norm.

7. The exercise of religious liberty, in the same way as other civil rights, should be submitted to limitations defined by law only in the interests of public order: religious rights should be valid for all, without distinction of religion or conviction.

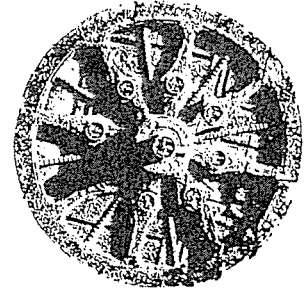
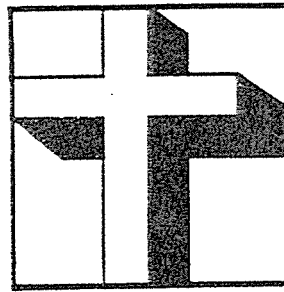
# Seven Major Worldviews



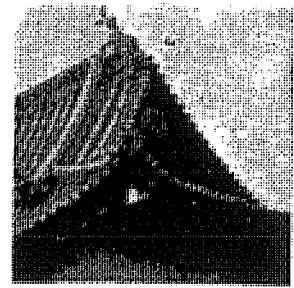
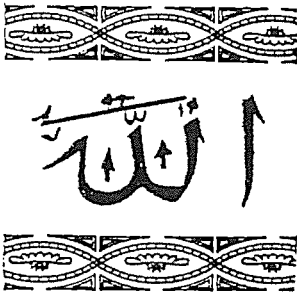
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# Great Living Faiths of the World



Religion	Buddhism	Christianity	Hinduism
Distribution	Throughout the Far East, China, Japan, Ceylon.	Founded in Palestine. Now world-wide.	Majority of Hindus found in India.
Date of foundation	6th Century B.C.	4 B.C.	Between 650 and 250 B.C.
Founder	Prince Gautama: the "Buddha" ("Enlightened One")	Jesus Christ: "Son of God."	Fusion of local and invading Aryan cults.
Structure	In Theravada (orthodox) lands there is a close clergy/laity relationship. Central monastic organisation.	Basis: Bible, Creeds, Episcopal transmission of Apostolic authority (this last not universally accepted).	Depends for continuance on thousands of independent Brahmins and ascetics: no overall organisation.
Scripture	The Book of Discipline (Vinaya), the Discourses (Sutta Pittaka), and the Theological Discourses (Abhidhamma) form the Tripitaka or "three baskets" (three lines of teaching). The writings were probably collected and set down from oral tradition by monks in the first century B.C.	The New Testament provides basis for all Christian thought. At first the canon was very loose; finally in A.D. 393 the present collection of books was accepted at a Church Council. Old Testament also accepted by Christians.	The Vedas (ancient hymns, liturgies, blessings, curses dating back as far as 1000 to 800 B.C.); The Upanishads (over 250 mystical interpretations of the Vedas); The Ramayana, Mahabharata, and Bhagavad-gita.
Ritual	The practice of the Eight-fold Path.	In most churches, God's grace is given in the Sacraments, variously defined. Most universal: Baptism and Communion.	Home is centre of religious activities. Congregational worship as such scarcely exists.
After Life	Temporary or permanent entry to the monastic priesthood.	In the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, God overcame the power of death, granting the possibility of loving union with him after life on earth.	Belief in transmigration of souls to a final goal, differently described by the different sects.
Ideals	The souls of all living things are part of a transmigratory cycle of existence. Final goal is Nirvana, a state of extinction of desire and greed and all suffering. The Doctrine of Anatta: to give up the very thought of self in order to free the mind of all suffering.	Christianity interprets all human life through God's revelation in Jesus. "Love God with thy whole heart . . . and thy neighbour as thyself."	Main doctrines: transmigration of souls; all living things have the same essence; strict system of social classes (castes).
Concept of God	Basically, the Buddhist has no god. He worships Truth and reverences the Buddha not as a god but as a principle of enlightenment.	God is creator of all—present and active in his creation. One in essence; three in his persons: Father, Son, Holy Spirit. God is Love.	Fundamental monotheism (Brahman, the supreme power); the hundreds of gods worshipped are subsidiary aspects of the one God.
Divisions	Four historical schools: Theravada of the Hinayana School, Mahayana School, Hinayana School, Lanka Vamsa.	Heresies and schisms occurred early. Major divisions today are between Roman Catholics, Eastern (Orthodox) Churches, and Protestants. Ecumenism is the modern movement aimed at Church Unity.	Differences exist due to its divided origin and the influences of Islam and Christianity and have grown in the last 200 years.



Islam.	Jainism	Judaism	Shinto
Arab countries, Pakistan.	A purely Indian religion.	Centred in Israel; now world-wide.	Japan: loosely organised cult.
Seventh century A.D.	Pre-600 B.C.	Twentieth century B.C.	Unknown.
Mohammed, born in Mecca.	First historical leader: Mahavira.	Traditional founder: Abraham.	No founder.
Islam excludes intermediaries between man and God, but Imams may lead mosque prayers and Mullahs teach.	Nucleus of the sect: a strict monastic order with intense discipline.	Synagogue is place of worship. No ordained priests.	Priesthood is now hereditary. Each shrine has parishioners (ujilo) and worshippers (sukeisha).
The Koran, the verses of which are called suras.	Vast Jain literature, only a fraction published. Books often concealed.	Any Jew may learn the Torah and become a Rabbi (teacher). The 1st five books of the Old Testament, variously called: the Pentateuch, the Books of Moses or the Torah — law of doctrine, religion, morals.	No official canon — creed rests on two eighth-century texts: Kojiki and Nihon Shoki.
Pilgrimage to Mecca; recital of creed, divine worship, fasting in month of Ramadan; alms giving.	No sharp distinction between laymen and monks. Great acts of penitence: paryushana.	Five main observances: The Passover; Pentecost; Tabernacles; Rosh Hashanah; Yom Kippur.	Rites connected mainly with ceremonial purification from any form of pollution.
Blessed men go to Paradise and see their Lord. Angels exist; some are the watchmen of hell and others the guardians of men.	Transmigration of indestructible souls. Every "karma" is purged off till soul is light enough to ascend to top of Universe.	Long-standing belief in the immortality of the soul.	Early Japanese had only vague notion about life to come. Influenced by Buddhism, ancestor veneration grew important.
There is but one God and Mohammed is his prophet. Faith requires belief in God, angels, inspired books, prophets (among whom is Jesus), Day of Judgment.	Many vows made, most important being never to kill anything live, even vermin. Matter exists only as mutable. Being is indefinite.	Faith in God's omniscience, reward and punishment; coming of Messiah; Israel chosen by covenant as people of the One God.	Stress on purity and perfection. Three purifying rituals: Misogi, Nakatomi, and Harai. Morally bad and criminal acts not clearly distinguished.
There is no God but one God, the first and the last. His name is Allah.	Jains believe their religion is millions of years old. 23 gods are worshipped, although they do not care for or influence the world.	One everlasting God, maker of Heaven and Earth, rules the world. Great stress on unity of God, incorporeal and eternal.	"The way of the Gods" meant the way of Kami: native indigenous spirits, anything awe-inspiring or with superior powers.
A.D. 657: Battle of Siffin — first known breach in unity of Islam. Today, two major sectarian divisions: Sunnites and Shiites.	Many schisms. Two distinct lines emerged in 3rd Century B.C. — Svetambaras and Digambaras.	Sects detached from main body of Judaism do not thrive. Present-day practising Jews may be either Orthodox (strict) or Progressive.	State Shinto arose in early 1800s and was abolished in 1945. Shrine Shinto is now main survivor — wide variety of sects.

## Singapore's Religious Harmony

### ① Time for S'pore to wake up to vulnerabilities

**I**T SHOULD not come as a shock for Singaporeans that we are also a terrorist target. No one is spared as the Osama bin Ladens and Al-Qaedas of this world seek mindless terror in the name of their brand of religion.

It is time for all of us to wake up to our vulnerabilities, not only economically but also to religious fanaticism.

Those who empathise with Osama and Al-Qaeda, and their form of religion, should be stripped of their citizenship, so that others so inclined will know that Singapore citizenship is a privilege, not a birthright.

It must be the religion of Satan which wants to shed innocent blood and cause untold harm to nations.

Certainly Prophet Muhammad did not preach mindless violence and the killing of innocent people. He was a prophet of peace who promoted education and the emancipation of women and children.

We should ban all movements which deviate from the quintessential teachings of Buddha, Jesus, Krishna, Muhammad, Zorasthra and other established prophets of peace.

We can do without newfangled religions or deviations from established ones, whose aim is anything but religious tolerance and peace!

All Singaporeans ought to be grateful to the ministries of Home Affairs and Defence, which keep a 24-hour vigil throughout the year so that the rest of us can carry on with our lives in peace.

Thanks, too, to the Internal Security Department for its superb alertness in apprehending the would-be destroyers and potential murderers. The main lesson here is this: Let vigilance be our second nature.

ST 8 Jan 02

ANANDA PERERA

### ② Draconian bans will only breed hatred

**I**REFER to the letter, "Time for S'pore to wake up to vulnerabilities" (ST, Jan 8), by Mr Ananda Perera. It is true that no one is spared as the Osamas and the Al-Qaedas of this world seek mindless terror in the name of their religion.

However, I am surprised that one can suggest stripping Singaporeans of their citizenship for empathising with Osama and the Al-Qaeda.

While violence in any form is patently against all forms of religion and no religion advocates violence, freedom of belief rules the day.

Empathy does no harm, actions do. Empathising with Osama may be an unusual point of view, but does no harm unless it is accompanied by action.

Bans on forms of religions deviating from the established few, as suggested by Mr Perera, also raise many questions. Who is to judge what is established and what is not? And what defines a deviation?

Religious tolerance can be accomplished only through mutual respect and understanding. Draconian bans can only breed ignorance, and this breeds hatred. I believe Osama and Al-Qaeda's hatred of America is due to such ignorance and lack of understanding.

It is better to allow things to exist as they are now, under the watchful eye of the Internal Security Department and related departments, so that Singaporeans have the opportunity to see and learn better judgment in the process.

ST 10 Jan 02

DANIEL ANG  
Cambridge, US

THE STRAITS TIMES : Tuesday, January 15, 2002

### ③ Be vigilant against deviant religions

**I**REFER to the letter, "Draconian bans will only breed hatred" (ST, Jan 12), by Mr Daniel Ang.

I am sure subsequent revelations about the activities of Al-Qaeda-trained empathisers in Singapore will make most thinking, sensible and loyal Singaporeans agree that we can do without such elements in our society.

Therefore, stripping such "Singaporeans" of their citizenship for being traitors is justified for the sake of peace and cohesion in our society.

Such people should live in the countries where their preferred leaders hide and espouse their violent and deviant causes.

History shows that such traitors were once publicly beheaded.

The Taleban used their sports stadium to execute hundreds of men and women publicly for disagreeing with their deviationist teachings.

Some were killed for not shrouding their faces, others for continuing to read and educate themselves, and yet some others for not keeping a prescribed length of beard.

The Americans learnt a bitter lesson on Sept 11 about the impact of such deviationist teachings.

In consequence, the rest of the civilised world is still reeling from this dastardly act.

If Singapore were to

wait for a learning process as advocated by Mr Ang, racial disharmony will have destroyed the fabric of our multi-racial and multi-religious society even before this lesson is learnt.

He also asks: "Who is to judge what is established and what is not?"

All registered and established religious authorities, the Government and the majority of Singaporeans should be the judge.

As Senior Parliamentary Secretary for Home Affairs Mohamad Maidin Packer said: "We should make sure that everyone is properly qualified to teach religion by getting appropriate certification."

He added that while the Islamic Religious Council of Singapore, or Muis, did check new teachers to ensure their teachings were not deviant, it could look further into this concern.

The wake-up call for suitable religious leaders must apply beyond Islam to include religious teachers of other faiths as well.

We have to be vigilant to ensure that newfangled religions or deviations from established ones will not injure the fabric of our society.

ANANDA PERERA

## Worldview Witnessing Strategies

### *Monotheism*

Judaism: Fulfilled prophecy (Isa. 53)

Islam: Character of Christ (gospels)

Sikhism: Character of Christ (gospels)

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### *Atheism*

Proofs for God's existence (Rom. 1)

Truth "piece of the pie" results in agnosticism

Faith is required in every belief system (including atheism)

Personal opinion does not determine truth

---

### *Polytheism*

Illogical that matter created intelligence (Gen. 1:1)

Works cannot take care of sin problem (Eph. 2:8-9)

---

### *Pantheism*

Demonstrate God's power over the universe (Acts 17:24-25)

Show God as distinct from the universe (Rom. 1:20, 23, 24)

The universe had a beginning so it cannot be God (Gen. 1:1)

Man is like God (Gen. 1:26-27) but God has no equal (Isa. 46:19)

Geisler, *False Gods of Our Time*, 80-87

Religion: **Buddhism**

Dates of Origin:

Two Types of Buddhism:

Thervada: 600 B.C. (conservative)

Mahayana: 300 B.C. (liberal)

Buddhism is hardly a religion in the generally-accepted sense of the word as connoting some contact between man and divinity. It is rather a moral philosophy and a Way.



Founders:

Offspring of Hinduism and of India

Thervada: Siddhartha Gautama

Mahayana: unknown, evolved from Thervada

Sacred Writings:

Thervada: *Hinayana*

Mahayana: 5,000+ miscellaneous volumes

Beliefs About:

God:

Thervada: God in the objective, personal sense does not fit into the system; no ultimate reality.

Mahayana: varied, mostly atheistic

Sin:

Thervada: No forgiveness, redemption, heaven, hell, judgment, prayer, praise.

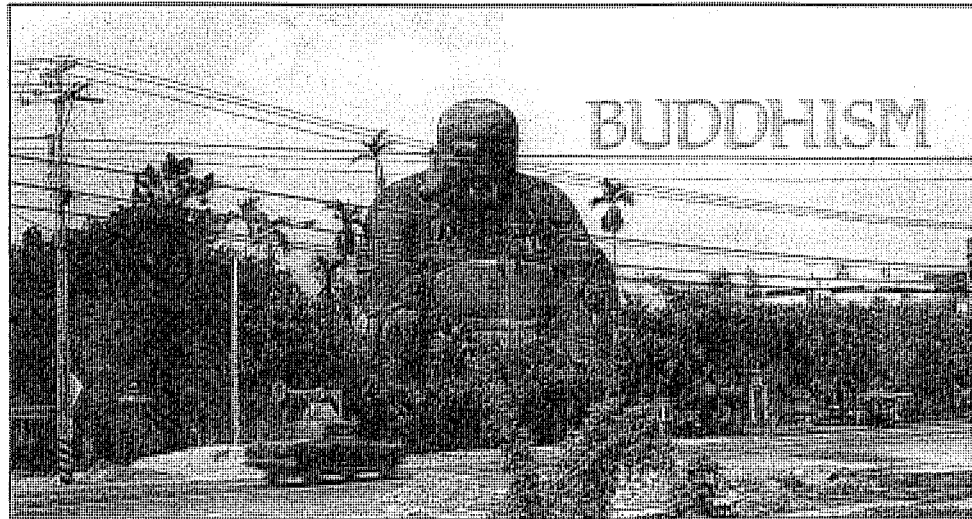
Mahayana: varied, but Zen lacks any deep, theological sense of sin, guilt, or separation from Ultimate Reality.

Salvation:

Thervada: *The Eightfold Path* (right views, aspirations, speech, \*conduct, mode of livelihood, effort, awareness, and concentration); i.e., a self-salvation through asceticism

\* Right conduct includes abstention from killing man or animal; even breaking an egg, a potential life, is condemned.

Mahayana: universal; however, the fiducial (Paradise or "Pure Land") school teaches salvation by faith through the simple recitation of the sacred formula which expresses faith in Amida Buddha.



Doug Thompson

### Origin

Buddhism was founded by Prince Siddhartha Gautama, born about 563 B.C. to a Hindu chief in what is now southern Nepal. Troubled by what he saw of poverty, sickness and death, and dissatisfied with much of what Hinduism taught, at age 29 he began a search for truth. On his 35th birthday he sat beneath a sacred tree, declaring that he would not rise until he attained understanding. After 49 days he arose as the Buddha, "The Enlightened One," and spent the remaining 45 years of his life imparting his message.

### Scriptures

Buddha's teachings were passed on orally. The first sacred books appeared in the first century B.C. The best known is *The Way of the Law*, parts of which are attributed to the Buddha himself.

### Beliefs

**God:** The transcendent reality of which the universe and man are only manifestations.

**Reincarnation:** When the body dies, the soul comes back to earth in another body or form.

**Nirvana:** A state of bliss, the spiritual goal of freedom from the endless cycle of reincarnations.

**The Four Noble Truths teach that:** Suffering is universal, the cause is selfish craving, the cure is to eliminate craving, and the way is the Eightfold Path.

**The Noble Eightfold Path is:** Right

knowledge, intention, speech, conduct, livelihood, effort, mindfulness, and concentration.

**The Five Precepts are to abstain from:** Taking life, taking what is not given, illegal sexual pleasures, lying, and intoxicants.

### Practices

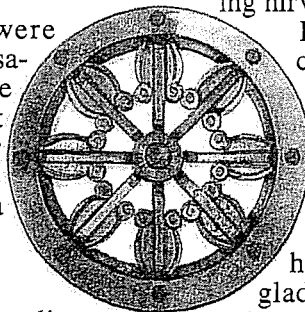
Buddhist monks officiate at funerals, perform ceremonies in monastery temples, and provide religious education for the young. Buddhism also provides for nuns.

Difficult pilgrimages to shrines or temples are considered an aid in gaining nirvana.

Domed or tower-like shrines, called *stupas*, house Buddhist relics, including teeth and hair from Buddha's body.

### Scope

Worldwide: 180 million adherents. SIM fields (Bangladesh, India): 9.26 million (approximately one percent of the population).



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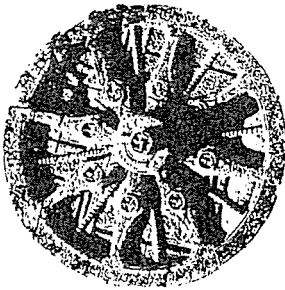
SIM-NOW is the official publication of SIM International, an interdenominational evangelical Protestant mission founded in 1893. SIM is a charter member of Interdenominational Foreign Mission Association and a member of Evangelical Council of Financial Accountability.

Religion: **Hinduism**

Date of Origin: Hindus call Hinduism *saratana dharma* ("eternal religion")  
approx. 2500 B.C.?

Founder: no one founder (Krishna?)

Sacred Writings:



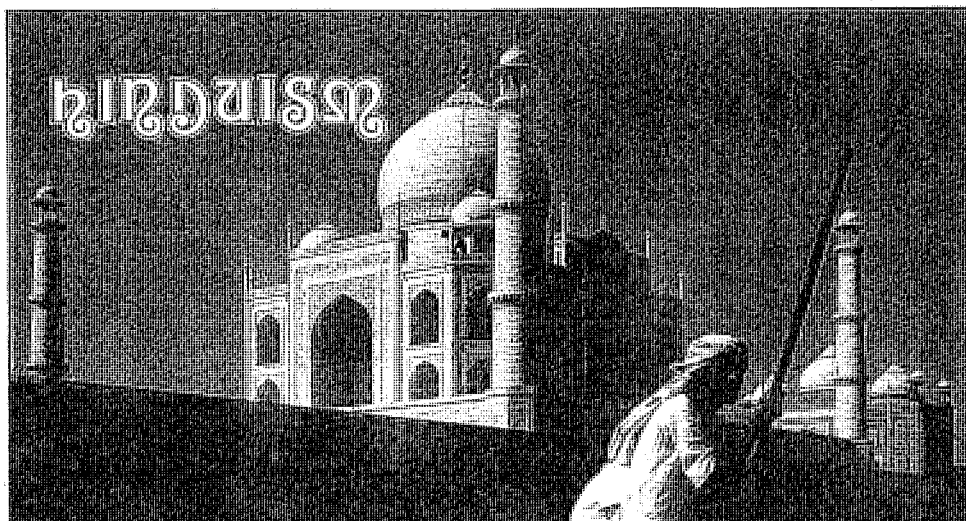
1. *Sruti*, or "what is heard," refers to the eternal truths of religion which the *rishis* or seers saw.
2. *Smriti*, or "what is remembered"  
- Vedas, Codes of law, Ramayana and Mahabharata (*Bagvagita, Upanishods*), Puranas, Agamas, Darshanas)

Beliefs About: Essentially eclectic and syncretistic

God: *Brahma*, Eternal Being or Reality  
- *Vaiseshika* school believes in a personal God.  
- *Vedanta* school sees *Brahma* as the one, abstract, all-pervading Reality.

Sin: Determined by the structures of human society (relative and metaphysical, not moral personal guilt)  
*Karma* is "action" or "doing" and is a moral interpretation of the natural law of causation which states that any action is the effect of a cause and is in its turn the cause of an effect (*samsara*, rebirth or reincarnation).

Salvation: Release from the wheel of *karma* (from life that never ends!)  
*Bhakti* (divine grace) is devotion for its one sake rather than for the glory of God (a method to merit the grace of God).  
Through *Yoga* salvation comes to mean to become like God in his timeless perfection by the emancipated soul realizing its own immortality.



### Origin

Hinduism has no known founder. Its origins are traced to northern India, about 1500 B.C. The name comes from the Sanskrit word *indus*, meaning ocean or river.

It is generally regarded as one of man's oldest living religions.

### Scriptures

Hinduism's sacred books are written in Sanskrit, India's most important religious language. The chief categories are:

- The four Vedas (books of knowledge)
- The Brahmanas (rituals and sacrifices)
- The Upanishads (oral treatises from 800-600 B.C., scripted in 1300 A.D.)
- The Bhagavad-Gita (a section of the 100,000-verse epic poem Mahabharata)
- The Laws of Manu (behavioral codes)
- The Puranas (18 collections of legends and instructions)

### Beliefs

**God:** The impersonal supreme being, the primal source and ultimate goal of all beings is Brahma (sometimes Brahman), who composes a trinity with Vishnu the preserver and Shiva the destroyer. Brahma can be conceived of in any way men like — hence a pantheon of innumerable gods and idols.

God is silent and beyond personality.

**Reincarnation:** When the body dies, the soul comes back to earth in another body or form.

**Karma:** The principle that what one does today shapes one's tomorrow. Being born to poverty and suffering is attributed to the sins of past incarnations.

**Salvation:** A process of spiritual evolution which all men ultimately achieve after innumerable cycles of time.

**Death:** The eventual gateway to freedom from the reincarnation cycle.

### Practices

**Caste:** A hierarchical system of social groupings based on occupation, and fixed at birth. Although caste is forbidden by India's constitution, it is important to Hindus. The four highest castes are: Brahman, for priests and scholars; Kshatriya, for rulers and soldiers; Vaishya, for merchants, artisans, and farmers; and Sudra, for laborers and servants. Christians are considered outside the caste system.

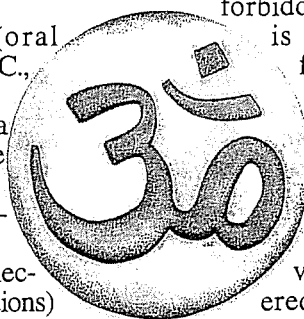
**Reverence for life:** Because God is in everything, all life must be revered. Cows have special status.

**Cremation:** Because of belief in reincarnation, bodies are burned, except for those of holy men, who are believed to be reunited directly with Brahma.

White shrouds are for men, widows, and single girls; red is for wives.

### Scope

Worldwide: 700 million. SIM fields: India, 670 million (82% of population); Bangladesh, 17.5 million (16%); Pakistan, 1.7 million (1.6%).





Religion:

**Islam**

Date of Origin:

610 A.D.



Founder:

Muhammad (571?-632 A.D.)



- four wives (including son's ex-wife)
- pre-existent
- impeccable, ascetic (solitude, fasting)
- last and greatest of the prophets

Sacred Writing:

Qu'ran (Koran)

104 divine books of the 124,000+ prophets

Beliefs About:

God:

"There is no God but God [Allah], and Muhammad is the Prophet of God."

Jesus was the Messiah, virgin born, God's word, a spirit from God, miracle worker, greatest of the prophets, not God, didn't die on a cross.

Sin:

Most heinous of the sins are polytheism, apostasy, scepticism, and impiety.

Salvation:

Strict adherence to the "Five Pillars:"

1. Recital of the Creed
2. Prayer (five times daily)
3. Fasting
4. Almsgiving
5. Pilgrimage to Mecca

\* "He who dies on the way to Mecca is enrolled in the list of martyrs."

\* "He who dies in a Jilad (Holy War) is a martyr and assured of paradise."

\* "When a man marries he perfects half his religion [no more than four wives]"

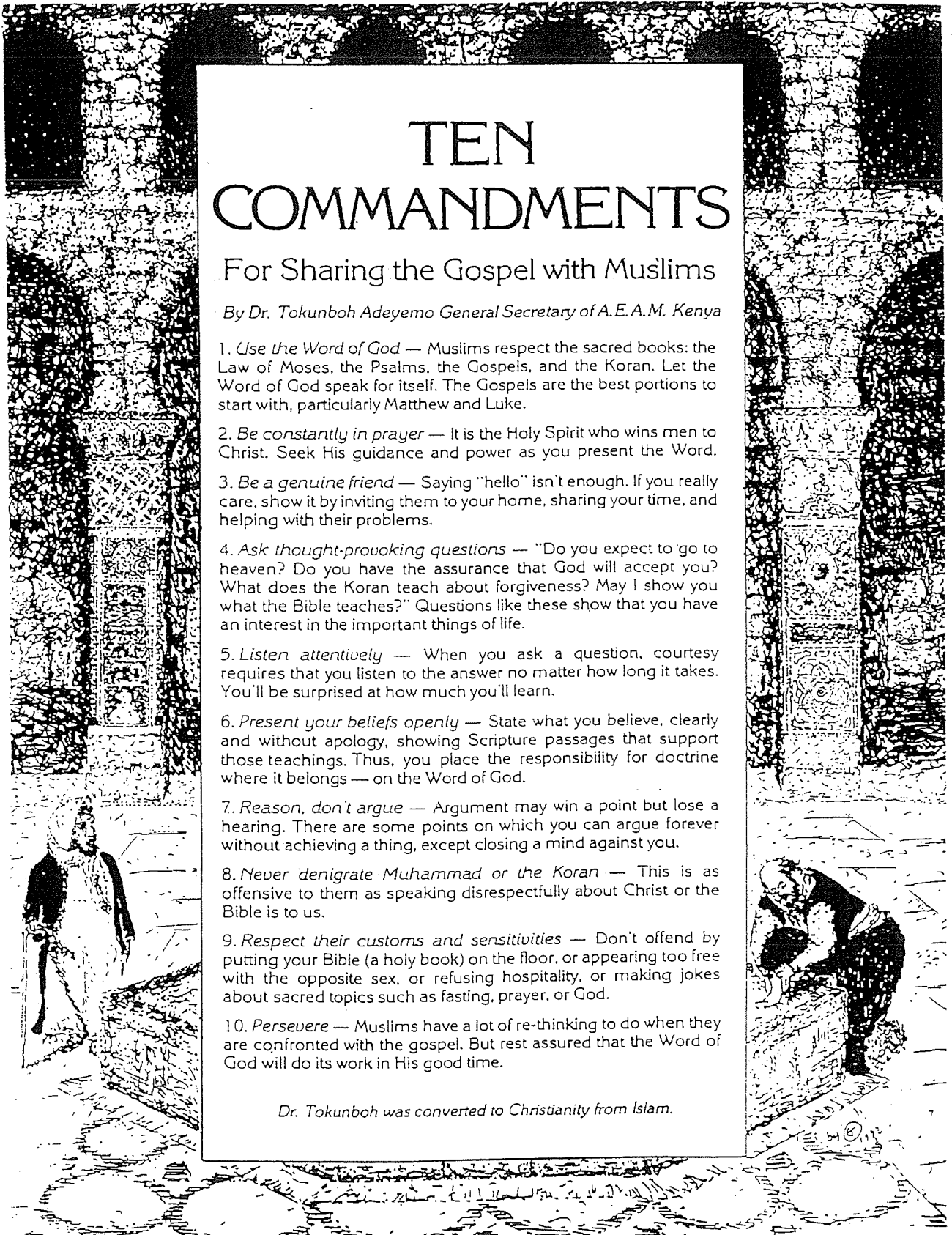
# TEN COMMANDMENTS

## For Sharing the Gospel with Muslims

*By Dr. Tokunboh Adeyemo General Secretary of A.E.A.M. Kenya*

1. *Use the Word of God* — Muslims respect the sacred books: the Law of Moses, the Psalms, the Gospels, and the Koran. Let the Word of God speak for itself. The Gospels are the best portions to start with, particularly Matthew and Luke.
2. *Be constantly in prayer* — It is the Holy Spirit who wins men to Christ. Seek His guidance and power as you present the Word.
3. *Be a genuine friend* — Saying "hello" isn't enough. If you really care, show it by inviting them to your home, sharing your time, and helping with their problems.
4. *Ask thought-provoking questions* — "Do you expect to go to heaven? Do you have the assurance that God will accept you? What does the Koran teach about forgiveness? May I show you what the Bible teaches?" Questions like these show that you have an interest in the important things of life.
5. *Listen attentively* — When you ask a question, courtesy requires that you listen to the answer no matter how long it takes. You'll be surprised at how much you'll learn.
6. *Present your beliefs openly* — State what you believe, clearly and without apology, showing Scripture passages that support those teachings. Thus, you place the responsibility for doctrine where it belongs — on the Word of God.
7. *Reason, don't argue* — Argument may win a point but lose a hearing. There are some points on which you can argue forever without achieving a thing, except closing a mind against you.
8. *Never denigrate Muhammad or the Koran* — This is as offensive to them as speaking disrespectfully about Christ or the Bible is to us.
9. *Respect their customs and sensitivities* — Don't offend by putting your Bible (a holy book) on the floor, or appearing too free with the opposite sex, or refusing hospitality, or making jokes about sacred topics such as fasting, prayer, or God.
10. *Persevere* — Muslims have a lot of re-thinking to do when they are confronted with the gospel. But rest assured that the Word of God will do its work in His good time.

*Dr. Tokunboh was converted to Christianity from Islam.*



## Judaism

### SOME POINTERS...

#### On witnessing to your Jewish friends



1. Be a real friend. There are many spiritual scalp hunters who want to win a Jewish soul for Christ, but are completely unaware of the person who is that soul. Have a well-rounded relationship with your Jewish friend before you attempt to witness on a personal basis.

It is the continuing person-to-person witness through which most people have been won to their Messiah.


2. Don't be afraid of discussion on life issues. They can give you insight on how your friend perceives and understands things. Listen when he talks about the things which concern him, and discuss what his Jewishness means to him.

In no way let him come to the misunderstanding that you only care for him "in order to convert him."

3. In some way give testimony to the gospel. A good place to begin is to tell specifically how God has answered prayer in your life. Avoid testimonies that talk about the peace and joy that you have in the Lord . . . remember, those who follow Eastern religions or any number of the "new" cults give such testimonies, as well as those who are made happy by the Jewish religion.
4. Answer questions or objections from Scripture. But remember, you don't have to answer every question when it is asked. You can say, "I don't know the answer to that, but I'll find out;" or "Let me think about it a little more and I'll give you an answer the next time I see you."
5. See if your friend will study the Bible with you. Don't concentrate only on the messianic prophecies; there is valuable truth in all Scripture. A good beginning point is Genesis 12 through Exodus 20--the story of the major covenants. However, if your Jewish friend is willing to study the Scriptures on a person-to-person basis, you may want to consult with your pastor. He will be able to recommend an appropriate study plan.
6. Offer to pray for your friend's needs. While our prophetic or teaching ministry is not always acceptable, most people appreciate prayer; and God seems to be particularly pleased to honor prayers as evidence of his existence.
7. Encourage your friend to communicate with Jewish Christians. Such a meeting might be painful, but it does bring persons to the place where they realize that Jesus is for Jewish people too!
8. Emphasize that Christ is the sin-bearer for Jew and Gentile alike, and that a person doesn't have to relinquish his Jewishness to accept Jesus. Remember that your Jewish friend has been taught that he will be committing spiritual treason even to consider the claims of Christ. It's up to you to show him that isn't true.
9. Ask for a decision. As a general rule, it is not good to press for a decision, but you will know the timing on the matter. Don't forget to ask the person for a decision.

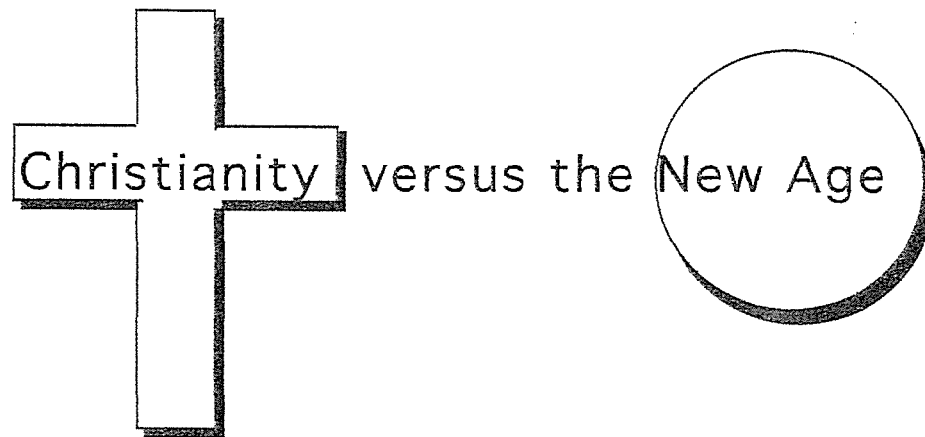
SOME MESSIANIC PASSAGES

<u>Old Testament Prophecy</u>		<u>New Testament Fulfillment</u>
1. Gen. 3:15, Isa. 7:14	Messiah to be seed of the woman, to be born of a virgin	Matt. 1:18-25 Gal. 4:4 Luke 1:26-38
2. Gen. 49:10	Messiah to be born of the tribe of Judah	Heb. 7:14 Rev. 5:5
3. Isa. 11:1-2, 10	Messiah to be from the house of Jesse	Acts 13:22-23
4. Isa. 9:6-7 Psalm 132:11	Messiah to be of David's lineage	Luke 1:32-33 Acts 13:22-23
5. Micah 5:2	Messiah to be born in Bethlehem	Matt. 2:1-6 Luke 2:4-7
6. Daniel 9:24-26	Time of Messiah's coming	Gal. 4:4; Eph. 1:10
7. Deut. 18:15, 18-19	Messiah, a prophet	Acts 3:20-26
8. Psalm 118:22	Messiah, the stone that was rejected	John 1:11-12 John 12:37-43 Acts 4:1-12
9. Psalm 22	Messiah's crucifixion	Matt. 27:39-43, 46 Mark 15:20, 24-26 Luke 23:11-35 John 19:15-18, 23-24
10. Psalm 110:1-4	Messiah's priestly ministry	Mark 16:19 Luke 24:50-51 Acts 2:33-36 Heb. 10:12-13
11. Isaiah 52:13 through Isaiah 53:12	The Gospel of Messiah in Isaiah	
Isa. 52:13	Matt. 21:9-11	Mark 11:7-10
Isa. 52:14	John 19:1-2	Matt. 26:67-68; 27:27-30
Isa. 53:1	John 12:37-38	
Isa. 53:2	Luke 2:40	
Isa. 53:3-4	John 1:11; 7:47-48	
Isa. 53:5-6	John 1:29; 11:49-52	I Cor. 15:3 II Cor. 5:21 I Peter 2:24-25
Isa. 53:7	Matt. 26:59-63; 27:12-14	Mark 15:3-5
Isa. 53:8	Matt. 27:1-2	Luke 23:8-9
Isa. 53:9	Matt. 27:57-60	Mark 15:42-47
Isa. 53:10	Heb. 2:10	Luke 23:50-52
Isa. 53:11	Romans 3:22-24	Eph. 2:8-9
Isa. 53:12	Luke 23:32-33	Heb. 9:26,28 I Peter 3:18
12. Jer. 31:31	Messiah's New Covenant	Heb. 8:6-13; 9:12-22 Heb. 10:4-24 Matt. 26:17; 27-29 Luke 22:15-20 Romans 11:26-27

Religion:	<b>Jainism</b>
Date of Origin:	599-527 B. C. (Mahavira's lifetime)
Founder:	Prince Mahavira, who pledged: "I shall neglect my body and abandon the care of it; I shall with equanimity bear, undergo, and suffer all calamities arising from divine powers, men, or animals." He begged 42 of his 72 years, wandering naked (accompanied for some years by another naked man, Goshala Makkhali). He spoke to nor greeted anyone in fear of forming relationships. He died by the insane rite of <i>sallekhanā</i> (voluntary starvation).
	
Sacred Writing:	<i>Kaupa Sutra</i> (Mahavira's Sermons)
Beliefs About:	Teaching summarized in the <i>Three Jewels</i> : Right Faith, Right Knowledge, Right Conduct: don't kill anything (even insects), steal, covet, lie, live unchastely or get drunk
God:	No Supreme Ruler exists (atheistic), although many finite beings who might be called "gods" exist on various levels of the celestial regions. They cannot help man, however, since they too need redemption. Prayer to them is useless.
Sin:	Passions, self-indulgence. People are responsible for their own karma.
Salvation:	Reincarnation and karma are conquered through ascetism as the only method of release. Nirvana comes through the control of the body. Asceticism is achieved through the <i>Five Jain Vows</i> : non-violence (not killing <i>any</i> living thing), truthfulness, non-stealing, celibacy, and non-covetousness. Women must be reborn as men to be saved.

- Religion:** **Sikhism**
- Date of Origin:** 15th Century, A.D. (initially a reform of decadent Hinduism)
- Founder:** Nanak (1469-1538 A.D.), born a Hindu but God appeared to him and said, "I am with thee... Abide uncontaminated by the world. Practice the repetition of My name, charity, ablutions, worship, and meditation. I have given thee this cup of nectar, a pledge of My regard."
- Sacred Writing:** the *Granth* (a devotional hymnbook by Guru Arjan) is their one authority
- Beliefs About:** A combo of Hinduism and Islam, yet unique; non-caste, syncretistic, meat-eaters, militant.
- God:** Monotheistic: "There is but one God whose name is True, the Creator, devoid of fear and enmity, immortal, self-existent, great and bountiful." *True Name* is eternally one, sovereign, omnipotent, transcendent and immanent, creator and destroyer, merciful and loving.
- Sin:** Lack of love for God (replaced by asceticism, bathing, pilgrimages, etc.)
- Salvation:** "The all-sufficient means of bringing an end to reincarnation is the simple, complete love of God that absorbs the soul into the Absolute." Salvation is not going to Paradise...but absorbtion--and individuality-extinguishing absorption --in God, the True Name.

- Religion: **Shinto**
- Date of Origin: A.D./B.C. (2,000 years old)
- Founder: No founder; Shinto is a term which merely distinguishes the Japanese traditions from the Way of Buddha or the Teaching of Confucious. Consequently, the word does not simply refer to a religious faith or a religious way of life, but to Japanese attitudes, ideas, and ways of doing things.
- Sacred Writings: No written canon, and therefore there is no organized, clearly defined body of doctrine or unified, systemized code of behavior (eclectic).  
*Kojiki, Nihon Shoki, Kogoshui, Manyoshu, Engishiki* (not canons Shintos bound by).
- Beliefs About:
- God: The *Kami* are spiritual beings of today, mythological entities of ancient times, natural phenomena (including both animate and inanimate things), physical objects of worship or ancestral spirits (lack of definiteness in the term).  
Japanese Emperors are descendants of the sun-goddess.
- Sin: "Goodness" and "badness" not determined by measurement against any clearly defined standard or moral code; no absolutes; while man is basically good his behavior should be in keeping with the mores of the community;
- Salvation: Worship centers around the Shinto shrine and consists of four elements: purification, offering, prayer, and sacred meal.



<u>Issue</u>	<u>Christianity</u>	<u>New Age</u>
<b>Theism</b>	Monotheism	Pantheism
<b>God</b>	Personal	Impersonal (& personal?)
<b>Divinity</b>	External: "He's God"	Internal: "I'm God"
<b>Our Origin</b>	Creation	Evolution
<b>Our Problem</b>	Alienation from God	Undiscovered divinity
<b>Our Solution</b>	Faith in God	Feel the Force
<b>Techniques</b>	Unimportant	Vital: imaging, hypnosis
<b>Faith</b>	Historical	Mystical
<b>Truth</b>	Objective	Subjective
<b>Standards</b>	Absolute	Relative
<b>Matter</b>	Real & temporal	Illusion & eternal
<b>Forgiveness</b>	Only in Christ	Not needed
<b>Appeal</b>	Rational: fill mind	Experiential: empty mind
<b>Religion</b>	One way	Many ways
<b>Orientation</b>	Exclusive	Inclusive (syncretism)
<b>Occultism</b>	Prohibited	Practiced
<b>Salvation</b>	Atonement	Enlightenment
<b>Basis</b>	Divine salvation	Human effort
<b>Jesus Christ</b>	God made man	Man knowing divinity
<b>Hope</b>	Resurrection	Reincarnation
<b>Afterlife</b>	Fellowship with God	Merge with God



## A Glossary of Terms Related to Non-Christian Religions

**Ahura Mazda:** The ethical, supreme god whose followers included Cyrus the Great, Darius I, Xerxes I, and the Magi (Zoroastrianism).

**Allah:** the god of Islam who is supreme, self-existent, omnipotent, omnipresent, the creator, the judge of all mankind, one who reveals himself, yet is not immanent or personal (Islam).

**animism:** the existence of souls or spirits in all living and inanimate things (pre-literate societies).

**Bushido Code:** the code of the *samurai*, the military class of the feudal period of Japan, which included eight attitudes: loyalty, gratitude, courage, justice, truthfulness, politeness, reserve, and honor (Shinto).

**Brahma:** both the material world (pantheism) and the subjective world --reason, feeling, will, and self-awareness in mystical union (Hinduism).

**Brahman:** volumes of literature which describe sacrifices (Hinduism).

**brahmin:** the head priest of the ritual sacrifice (Hinduism).

**dynamism:** the universe being made up of forces coming into interaction with one another; non-personal forces which affect one another with no ultimate reality (pre-literate societies).

**Eightfold Path:** the process to achieve Nirvana by right views, aspirations, speech, behavior, occupation, efforts, mindfulness, and absorption (Buddhism).

**fetishism:** any resort to the presumed power in inanimate things (pre-literate societies).

**filial piety (Hsiao):** loyalty to one's family as one's first and highest consideration (Confucianism).

**High god:** the one Supreme Being who created everything and rules above the gods (pre-literate societies).

**harakiri:** Japanese warrior-knight suicide for failure or misjudgment by the ceremonial method of disembowelment, carried out coolly and deliberately according to rule and without any expression of emotion (Shinto).

**impermanence:** all that exists passes through the cycle of birth, growth, decay, and death; life is one and indivisible; nothing eternal or immortal exists about man or any part of him; separate individual existence is an illusion, for self has neither beginning or ending (Buddhism).

**Ise:** Japanese sun-goddess and highest of the gods (Shinto).

**kami:** spiritual beings existing today; mythological entities of ancient times; natural phenomena such as islands, sun, and mountains, or powers and processes, such as birth or growth; their generation may be spontaneous, without explanation suddenly appearing from natural objects or born as the result of physical union between parent *kami* (Shinto).

**A Glossary of Terms Related to Non-Christian Religions (2 of 2)**

**karma:** action-reaction, denoting the law of cause and effect; reaping what one sows (Buddhism).

**magic:** an endeavor through the utterance of set words, or the performance of set acts, or both, to control or bend the powers of the world to man's will (pre-literate societies).

**Mahayana:** liberal, syncretistic form of Buddhism which views Buddha like a god (Buddhism).

**mana:** occult force or supernatural power distinct from persons or spirits (pre-literate societies).

**Middle Way:** the balanced teaching between asceticism (Jainism) and fatalism/depression (Hinduism) which Buddhists call their religion (Buddhism).

**Nichiren:** nationalistic Buddhism which claims salvation from the lotus sutra (eternity of Buddha), propagated by Nichiren who claimed to be the resurrected Buddha (Buddhism).

**Nirvana:** an ethical state, a condition which eliminates any future rebirth, the extinction of all craving, the final release from suffering; a state of mind in which *karma* comes to an end (Buddhism).

**popular magic:** magic not confined to magicians or priests, being diffused through the group (pre-literate societies).

**shaman:** a religious personage found in many pre-literate societies of Asia, Oceania, and the Americas (pre-literate societies).

**Sidhartha Guatama:** founder of Buddhism, deified after his death (Buddhism).

**taboo:** Prohibition or hands off warnings applied to many things, persons and actions because they are sacred, dangerous or socially forbidden (pre-literate societies).

**Theravada:** conservative, individualistic Buddhism which views Buddha not as a deity but a great leader (Buddhism).

**totemism:** the existence of a more or less relationship between certain human groups and corresponding classes or species of animals, plants, or inanimate objects in nature (pre-literate societies).

**upanishads:** holy writings of the Hindus (Hinduism).

**vedas:** holy writings of the Hindus (Hinduism).

**Zoroastrianism:** originally an Iranian religion following the teachings of Zoroaster (660 B.C.) who expounded ethical monotheism of the supreme god Ahura Mazda, but most present day adherents reside in Bombay.

# A Biblical Attitude Toward Non-Christian Religions

## Introduction

Mr. Howard Burkle, a United Church of Christ professor of religious studies, postulates these often-asked questions: “Can Christianity accept itself as simply one of the world’s many religions? Can it regard other religions as valid alternative pathways to salvation? Can it do this without giving up its conviction that Christianity is unique and decisive for the salvation of humankind?”

Burkle’s answer to these questions is a definitive “yes.” However, the Bible believing Christian must reply with an equally resounding “no.” Christianity is like no other religion in its basic tenants: the crucifixion and resurrection of One who was both God and man. It can therefore accept no other way as a legitimate means to reach God.

The Bible supports this conclusion. Christ said of Himself, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me” (John 14:6). John also records, “Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life; whoever does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God remains on him” (John 3:36). Similarly, Luke wrote, “And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved” (Acts 4:12).

Since Christianity is unique and incompatible with other religions, how should Christians respond to those of other faiths? What should be the proper, biblical attitude toward those who adhere to and teach heretical doctrines?

## Basic Content to Share with Other Faiths

Believers often deal with non-Christian religions in one of two extremes. The first extreme (noted above) is syncretism, while the second is isolationism. Syncretism is an “all roads lead to God” perspective that places the way of salvation offered by Christ no better or worse than the means of salvation offered by any other religion. Isolationism, on the other hand, denies any interaction with those of other faiths since it is based on a “once you’ve got what you are looking for, why look elsewhere?” kind of attitude. Both extremes should be avoided. The better approach is one of engagement, or dialogue.

Romans 1 is perhaps the best chapter to show God’s view of other religions. Verse 18 reveals that the religions of the world have come about not because of man’s *ignorance*, but because of his stubborn refusal to believe what God has already revealed about himself: “For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness *suppress* the truth” (italics mine). This truth that is rejected specifically relates to an innate knowledge of God’s existence as the powerful creator of the world (v. 20). This truth is common to all persons, each of whom can see the order and beauty of the universe. This is also why an atheistic civilization has yet to be discovered.

Therefore, when seeking to reach someone from another religion (or an atheist), the most important concept to teach is the correct view of God Himself. Who is He? This can be especially illustrated in the creation account, for here we see an all-powerful, totally righteous God who creates only good things—and the best of the “good things” is man himself. God has made us in His own image and as a result desires fellowship with us. This focus on creation can help us lay the theological foundation on which to build a proper understanding of salvation in Christ.

### **Basic Behavior to Show to Other Faiths**

A proper, biblical attitude towards non-Christian religions concerns far more than simply content. This is why we call it an “attitude.” In all our seriousness about Christ being the only way to God, we must be careful to communicate this narrow teaching with love and a non-judgmental spirit. The non-Christian must see a great deal of graciousness in us. We have no option but to declare truth lovingly, while reserving for God His right to judge.

Christians have a very defined and exclusive message. Communication of this narrow message calls for the utmost tact. We must be committed to proclaiming the truth, but even truth can wear an ugly garment. This is where the over-used cliché, “Love the sinner but not the sin” has merit. While doing this we must be “quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to become angry” (James 1:19b). We must keep our focus on the right issue—not belittle the person who follows a false system, but expose the error of the system itself.

Paul’s careful approach to the Greek philosophers of his day showed this proper approach to pagan religion (read Acts 17). He explained to these men of Athens in terms they could understand—and yet he did it in a way that they were not offended. The issues were made clear, though not as clear as they could have been (which would have turned his listeners off). These people worshipped a God whom they knew nothing about, and Paul became a spokesman for that God. He did not harangue them. He gave evidence for his claim, and while some sneered, others believed. Interestingly, Luke’s account of Paul’s speech never uses any names for Jesus Christ. The message was more important than a name.

### **Conclusion**

In summary, a biblical attitude towards non-Christian religions begins with the truth. The fact is that Christianity cannot compromise its uniqueness to become compatible with other religions. God never asked us to be compatible—only to be separate and distinct. This uniqueness is not something for which the Christian should apologize, though. He should communicate the message of Christ first in terms of the character of God, and always in a spirit of love and humility.

## Racial harmony must remain a priority

**T**HE recent arrest of a group of Muslims involved in terrorist activities here has hurt the feelings of many Muslim Singaporeans, myself included.

My immediate reaction to this was: How will this make non-Muslim Singaporeans feel about us?

Personally, I felt ashamed.

I would like to urge my fellow Muslim Singaporean friends to come out openly in condemning all acts of terrorism, including those carried out by Muslims, regardless of where in the world they take place.

Let us all — Singaporeans of all races and faiths — stand together and fight to keep what we have inherited from our fathers; that is, racial harmony and religious tolerance.

This is so that the same privilege can be enjoyed by our children.

It is an asset that no money can buy.

**KHAN ABDUL MAJID**



Inter-racial and inter-religious harmony between the various communities is vital, as underscored by recent developments in the country.

# Let recent episode push us to know Muslims better

**I**REFER to the report, "Carry on as usual: PM Goh" (ST, Jan 13).

Like many Singaporeans, I was shocked at the news of the arrests of 15 people over terrorism-related activities here.

That such a development has taken place underscores the importance of maintaining inter-racial harmony between the various communities

in Singapore.

Prime Minister Goh Chok Tong is right in calling on all Singaporeans not to overreact and let this episode harm our multi-racial and multi-religious harmony.

The important question is what we can do.

It is imperative that we see this recent development in the right perspective and not draw rash conclusions based on the behaviour and actions of a few

misguided individuals, who happened to be Muslims, and blow it out of proportion.

It is also imperative that we do not overreact by making spurious comments or casting doubts on the Muslim community here.

Indeed, we must take this opportunity to understand our fellow Muslim citizens better and seek to forge a warmer and stronger relationship that will bind

**IF THERE IS ANY USEFUL LESSON THAT CAN BE LEARNT FROM THE RECENT EPISODE, IT IS THAT SINGAPOREANS SHOULD CHERISH THE IDEAL OF ONE UNITED PEOPLE, REGARDLESS OF RACE, LANGUAGE OR RELIGION.**

us together as one people.

If there is any useful lesson that can be learnt from the recent episode, it is that Singaporeans should cherish the ideal of one united people, regardless of race, language or religion.

These are testing times for Singapore and I hope that good sense and goodwill among fellow citizens will prevail.

**SEBASTIAN TAN**

## Six Questions to Ask an Atheist

By Margaret Manning

<http://www.rzim.org/usa/usfv/tabid/436/articleid/10284/cbmoduleid/1561/default.aspx>

Many times, as Christian theists, we find ourselves on the defensive against the critiques and questions of atheists. Sometimes, in the midst of arguments and proofs, we miss the importance of conversation. These questions, then, are meant to be a part of a conversation. They are not, in and of themselves, arguments or "proofs" for God. They are commonly asked existential or experiential questions that both atheists and theists alike can ponder.

1. ***If there is no God, "the big questions" remain unanswered***, so how do we answer the following questions: Why is there something rather than nothing? This question was asked by Aristotle and Leibniz alike—albeit with differing answers. But it is an historic concern. Why is there conscious, intelligent life on this planet, and is there any meaning to this life? If there is meaning, what kind of meaning and how is it found? Does human history lead anywhere, or is it all in vain since death is merely the end? How do you come to understand good and evil, right and wrong without a transcendent signifier? If these concepts are merely social constructions, or human opinions, whose opinion does one trust in determining what is good or bad, right or wrong? If you are content within atheism, what circumstances would serve to make you open to other answers?
2. ***If we reject the existence of God, we are left with a crisis of meaning***, so why don't we see more atheists like Jean Paul Sartre, or Friedrich Nietzsche, or Michel Foucault? These three philosophers, who also embraced atheism, recognized that in the absence of God, there was no transcendent meaning beyond one's own self-interests, pleasures, or tastes. The crisis of atheistic meaninglessness is depicted in Sartre's book *Nausea*. Without God, there is a crisis of meaning, and these three thinkers, among others, show us a world of just stuff, thrown out into space and time, going nowhere, meaning nothing.
3. ***When people have embraced atheism, [were not] the historical results... horrific***, as in the regimes of Stalin, Mao and Pol Pot who saw religion as the problem and worked to eradicate it? In other words, what set of actions are consistent with particular belief commitments? It could be argued, that these behaviors – of the regimes in question – are more consistent with the implications of atheism. [However], I'm thankful that many of the atheists I know do not live the implications of these beliefs out for themselves like others did! It could be argued that the socio-political ideologies could very well be the outworking of a particular set of beliefs – beliefs that posited the ideal state as an atheistic one.
4. ***If there is no God, the problems of evil and suffering are in no way solved***, so where is the hope of redemption, or meaning for those who suffer? Suffering is just as tragic, if not more so, without God because there is no hope of ultimate justice, or of the suffering being rendered meaningful or transcendent, redemptive or redeemable. It might be true that there is no God to blame now, but neither is there a God to reach out to for strength, transcendent meaning, or comfort. Why would we seek the alleviation of suffering without objective morality grounded in a God of justice?
5. ***If there is no God, we lose the very standard by which we critique religions and religious people***, so whose opinion matters most? Whose voice will be heard? Whose tastes or preferences will be honored? In the long run, human tastes and opinions have no more weight than we give them, and who are we to give them meaning anyway? Who is to say that lying, or cheating or adultery or child molestation are wrong—really wrong? Where do those standards come from? Sure, our societies might make these things "illegal" and impose penalties or consequences for things that are not socially acceptable, but human cultures have at various times legally or socially

disapproved of everything from believing in God to believing the world revolves around the sun; from slavery, to interracial marriage, from polygamy to monogamy. Human taste, opinion law and culture are hardly dependable arbiters of Truth.

6. ***If there is no God, we don't make sense***, so how do we explain human longings and desire for the transcendent? How do we even explain human questions for meaning and purpose, or inner thoughts like, why do I feel unfulfilled or empty? Why do we hunger for the spiritual, and how do we explain these longings if nothing can exist beyond the material world?

For further reading, see Ravi Zacharias's book *The Real Face of Atheism*, and C.S. Lewis's book *Mere Christianity*. The RZIM website has many excellent resources on atheism at [www.rzim.org](http://www.rzim.org), as does the Centre for Public Christianity at [www.publicchristianity.org](http://www.publicchristianity.org).

**How Do You Respond to Trials?**

You say...	Strategy	Temperament	Epistle
"I'm right!"	Push through	Choleric	Ephesians
"Why me?"	Depression	Melancholy	Philippians
"I'll just get through"	Compromise	Sanguine	Colossians
"It'll pass"	Ignore it	Phlegmatic	Philemon



## Prison Epistle Christology

	Christ as...	Focus	Explanation
Ephesians	Head	Unity of Christ	Christ breaks down barriers between believers
Philippians	Example	Attitude of Christ	Christ models how to handle difficulty
Colossians	God	Deity of Christ	Christ is superior to human philosophies
Philemon	Reconciler	Forgiveness of Christ	Christ reconciles believers to God and one another

**Applying the Prison Epistles**

<b>Epistle</b>	<b>1st Century Problem</b>	<b>21st Century Problem</b>	<b>Solution (Theme)</b>
<b>Ephesians</b>	<b>Jew-Gentile Conflicts (“Weism”)</b>	<b>Chinese Only Baptist Only Adults Only</b>	<b>Realize Christian Unity (4:3)</b>
<b>Philippians</b>	<b>Persecution Prison Death</b>	<b>Ministry Inconvenience -time, sleep -recreation -pride (kids)</b>	<b>Imitate Christ’s Attitude (2:5)</b>
<b>Colossians</b>	<b>Denying Christ’s Deity</b>	<b>New Age Cults</b>	<b>Proclaim His Deity (2:9)</b>
<b>Philemon</b>	<b>Forgive Master and Slave (“Meism”)</b>	<b>Forgive Boss/ Employee/ Others</b>	<b>Reconcile the Relationship (vv. 17-18)</b>

# 1 Thessalonians

Preparation for the Rapture					
Innocence of Greed			Principles for Growth		
Chapters 1–3			Chapters 4–5		
Personal			Practical		
Silence Slanders			Strengthen Stand		
Historical			Hortatory		
Reflections			Exhortations		
Looking Back			Looking Forward		
Commendation 1:1-10	Conduct 2:1-16	Concern 2:17–3:13	Love 4:1-12	Eschatology 4:13–5:11	Church Life 5:12-28
"You're great!"	"I'm innocent"	"I care for you"	"Please God"	"Be comforted but watchful"	"Live holy"
<b>Corinth</b>					
Early Summer AD 51 (on second missionary journey)					

**Key Word:** Rapture

**Key Verse:** "May the Lord make your love increase and overflow for each other and for everyone else, just as ours does for you. May he strengthen your hearts so that you will be blameless and holy in the presence of our God and Father when our Lord Jesus comes with all his holy ones" (1 Thessalonians 3:12-13).

**Summary Statement:** Paul prepares the Thessalonians for the rapture by defending his motives for starting the church (to silence accusations of greed) and instructing the believers (to strengthen the church's doctrinal and relational foundation so it can continue to grow).

**Application:** Are you ready for the Lord's return if He comes today?

# 1 Thessalonians

## Introduction

**I. Title** The Greek title (Πρὸς Θεσσαλονικεῖς ἡ *First to the Thessalonians*) distinguishes this letter from Paul's second letter to the church just a few months later.

### II. Authorship

A. **External Evidence:** Pauline authorship has been upheld since the Marcion Canon (AD 140) and Muratonian Canon (AD 170). The early Church Fathers also believed Paul wrote 1 Thessalonians.

1. **Attacks:** Nevertheless, radical 19th century critics denied apostolic authorship, claiming: (a) a lack of Pauline ideas and Old Testament citations, (b) a reference to the fall of Jerusalem (AD 70) which places the epistle after Paul's death (AD 68), and (c) a large amount of non-Pauline vocabulary in the letter.

2. **Response:** Since the church was mostly Gentile (1:9-10; Acts 17:4) Paul would not cite the OT frequently. Also, the supposed reference to the fall of Jerusalem (2:16b) is very ambiguous. Finally, as this was one of his earliest letters and not primarily a doctrinal treatise, it does not reflect the same theological vocabulary as later letters.

B. **Internal Evidence:** The letter itself strongly supports Pauline authorship:

1. The epistle claims to have been written by Paul (1:1).

2. The church organization is primitive, reflecting an early date (Guthrie, 567).

3. No later writer would have attributed to Paul the unfulfilled expectation of living to see the Rapture (4:15, 17; cf. Kümmel, 185).

C. **Conclusion:** The attacks upon Pauline authorship have been soundly defeated so that nearly all scholars, despite their critical assumptions, believe that Paul penned this epistle.

### III. Circumstances

A. **Date:** The evidence from the letter suggests that Paul wrote it only a few months after leaving the city on his second missionary journey in early summer 51 (Hoehner, 381-84).

B. **Origin/Recipients:** Paul wrote from Corinth to Thessalonian believers to his north in Achaia (see "Occasion" below for support). This was a very young church—only about six months old.

C. **Occasion:** After Jews in Thessalonica incited crowds against Paul, he left Silas and Timothy with the church and instructed them to meet him in Athens (Acts 17:11-16). They did, but Paul then sent Timothy back to the Thessalonians (1 Thess. 3:1-2) and Silas back to Macedonia (probably Philippi). Both men rejoined Paul in Corinth (Acts 18:5) and are mentioned with Paul in his salutation (1:1). Timothy brought the good news that the Thessalonians, despite persecution, had remained true to the Lord (3:6f.). Paul mentions time and again how happy this made him (1:2-10; 2:19-20; 3:6, 8-10), especially since he thought that Satan might have undone his work in them (3:5). Therefore, he wrote to encourage the church still more, urging them to press on in growth in light of the Lord's return (Timothy probably informed him of some questions from the church).

### IV. Characteristics

A. The tone of the epistle shows very fond feelings for the Thessalonian believers (1:2-3, 7-8; 2:17-20).

- B. First Thessalonians contains the fullest explanation of the Rapture in Scripture (4:13–5:11). Paul believed in the imminency of Christ's return (“we” in 4:17) and thus revealed himself to be a proponent of a pretribulational Rapture (see the study after 1 Thessalonian notes).
- C. How long Paul stayed at Thessalonica is debated because Luke recorded that Paul reasoned in the synagogue only three weeks (Acts 17:2). However, Hoehner says Paul stayed from November 50-January 51, then the letter came in early summer AD 51. Many arguments suggest this longer stay:
1. The Philippians sent Paul at least two gifts when he was at Thessalonica (Phil. 4:16).
  2. He stayed there long enough to use his trade of tent-making (2:9; cf. 2 Thess. 3:7-9).
  3. Paul's general practice was to preach in the synagogue until he got kicked out (Acts 13:46; 18:6; 19:8-9). Evidently this took only three weeks at Thessalonica, after which he taught Gentiles.
  4. Since most Thessalonian believers were Gentiles formerly involved in idolatry (1:9; 2:14-16), a Gentile ministry would have required a fair amount of time after his three week Jewish ministry.
- D. The purpose of the letter has been seen in different ways (Ryrie, *1 & 2 Thess.*, 13-14):
1. Paul encouraged the people to continue to grow in Christ as they had been doing, based upon Timothy's good report (1:1-10; 3:6-13).
  2. Paul defended himself against some in Thessalonica who had accused him of insincerity and greed (2:2-6) as well as for failing to return to the city (2:17–3:5).
  3. Paul exhorted them to remain steadfast in the face of persecution (3:1-13; 5:16-18).
  4. Paul answered doctrinal questions relating to believers who had died prior to the Lord's return (4:13–5:11).
  5. Paul instructed them in healthy church life, such as sexual purity (4:1-8), respect for leadership (5:12-13), laziness (5:14), and relationships (5:15f.).

## Argument

While each purpose above finds support at some point in the letter, only the common theme of the Lord's return (Rapture) appears *throughout* it. Each of the five chapters closes with an exhortation regarding the Lord's soon coming (1:10; 2:19-20; 3:13; 4:13-18; 5:23-24).

Paul writes two major sections in this first letter to the Thessalonians, each showing how believers should live in light of the Rapture. He first uses himself as an example of proper conduct until the Lord returns (chs. 1–3). In this section he seeks to convince them of his sincere motives in establishing the church to defend himself against the false attacks of Jews and Gentiles in the city who had accused him of being a religious huckster concerned only with money (2:3, 5, 7, 9).

Paul then gives principles for growth until the Lord's return (chs. 4–5). These doctrinal and relational matters facing the Thessalonians that Timothy had reported include instruction on living to please God (4:1-12), eschatological issues (4:13–5:11), and church life (5:12-22).

## Synthesis

### Preparation for the Rapture

1–3

1:1

### Innocence of Greed

Salutation

### Rapture Noted:

1:2-10	Commendation	1:10
2:1-16	Conduct	
2:1-12	Gospel delivered without greed	
2:13-16	Gospel received in suffering	
2:17-3:13	Concern	
2:17-3:5	Longing to see them	2:19-20
3:6-13	Timothy's encouraging report	3:13
<b>4-5</b>	<b>Principles for Growth</b>	
4:1-12	How to love God/others	
4:13-5:11	Eschatological teaching	
4:13-18	Rapture comfort	4:13-18
5:1-11	Day of the Lord (Tribulation/Millennium) warning	
5:12-24	Healthy church life	5:23-24
5:25-28	Conclusion	

## Outline

### Summary Statement for the Book

Paul prepares the Thessalonians for the Rapture by defending his motives for starting the church (to silence accusations of greed) and instructing the believers (to strengthen the church's doctrinal and relational foundation so it can continue to grow).

- I. (Chs. 1-3) Paul defends his motives for establishing the church by citing his proper conduct and genuine concern for them in light of the Rapture in order to silence slander from his opponents in Thessalonica who accuse him of greed.
  - A. (1:1) Paul's salutation includes Silas and Timothy (his fellow-workers in Thessalonica) but does not note his apostleship to appeal to the believers from his concern rather than his apostolic authority.
  - B. (1:2-10) Paul's *commendation* of the Thessalonians for imitating his, Silas and Timothy's lifestyles verifies God's blessing on their ministry by both the church itself and those reached through its ministry as models of how to live in view of Christ's return.
  - C. (2:1-16) Paul's *conduct* among the people was never motivated by money since he had a secular job and cared for them like a parent does for his children, so others' accusations of greed are false.
  - D. (2:17-3:13) Paul's *concern* is shown in his longing to see them and his sending Timothy so they would know of his care until the Rapture even though he had not been able to see them again.
- II. (Chs. 4-5) Paul instructs the Thessalonian believers in order to strengthen the church's doctrinal and relational foundation for continued growth until the Rapture.
  - A. (4:1-12) Paul instructs the believers towards love in three ways: love God through sexual purity, love Christians by continually growing in mutual love, and love unbelievers by earning their own living so as not to be a stumbling block to the watching world.
  - B. (4:13-5:11) Paul's eschatological teaching comforts them by assuring the resurrection of dead believers at the Rapture and warns them to be prepared for the Rapture since the subsequent day of the Lord (tribulation and millennium) will come unexpectedly.
  - C. (5:12-24) Paul urges a healthy church life where each person fulfills responsibilities to leaders, hurting people, oneself, and in Spirit-led public worship to strengthen the church's relational foundation for continued growth in sanctification until the Rapture.
  - D. (5:25-28) Three requests and a benediction show Paul's genuine concern for the church.

## Themes in 1 Thessalonians

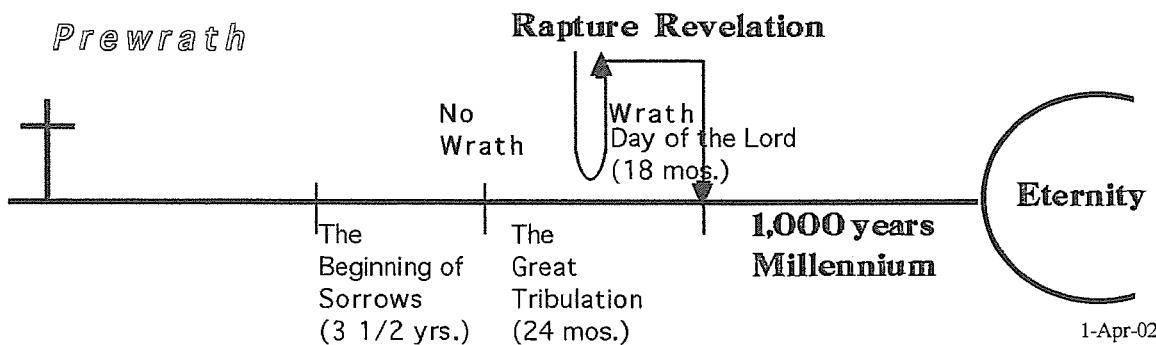
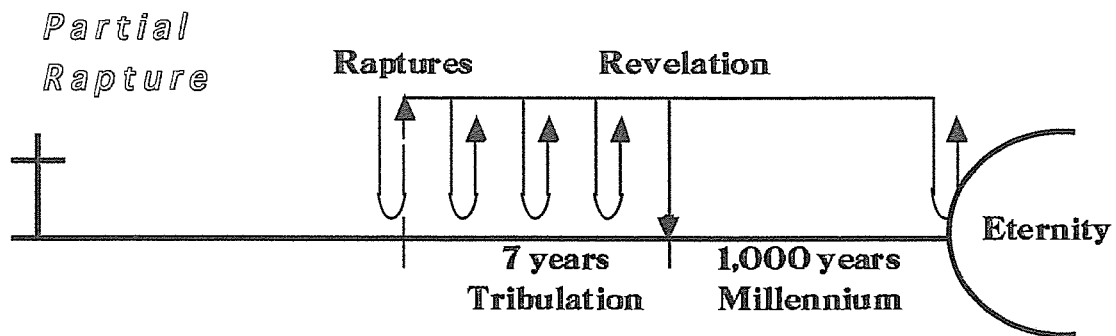
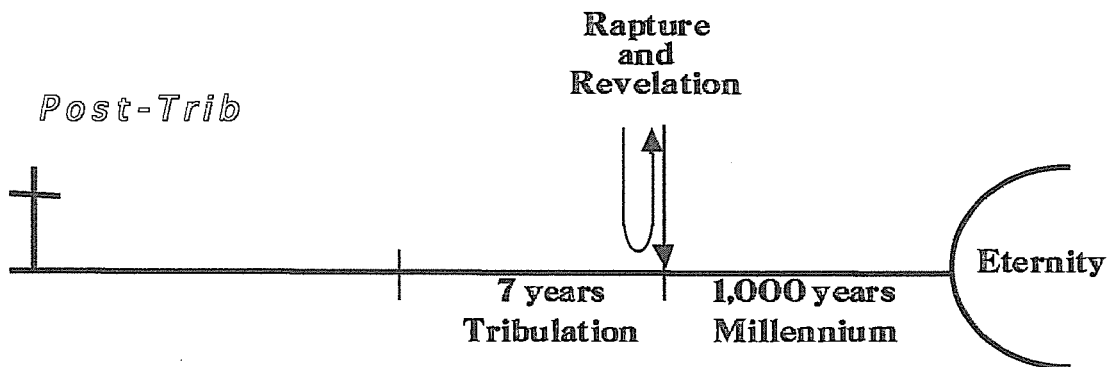
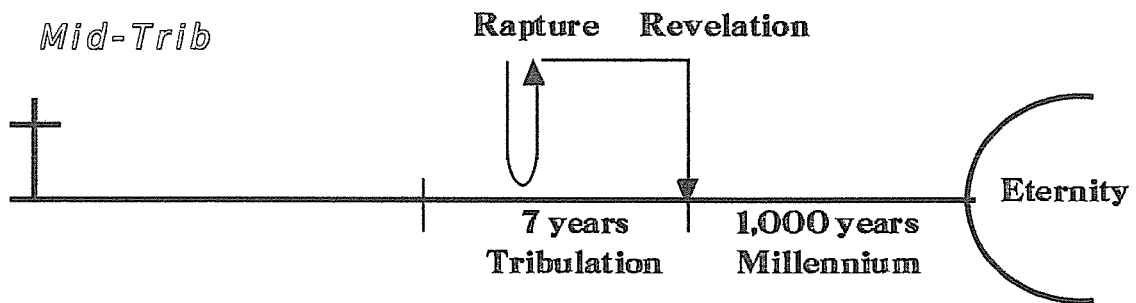
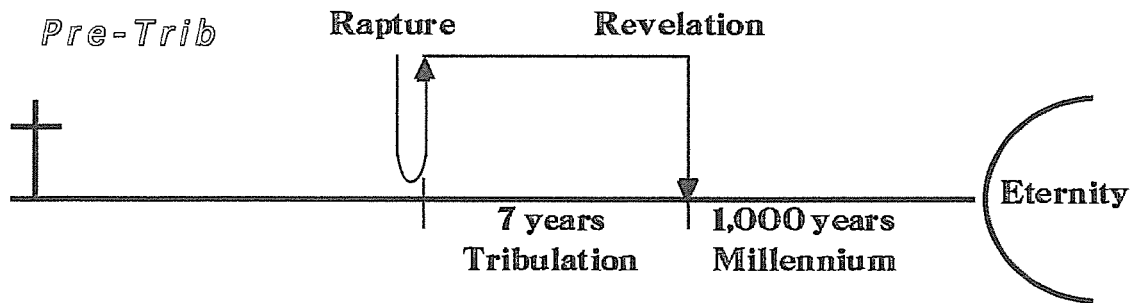
## Themes in 1 Thessalonians

## New Testament Background

## Group Presentation of 1 Thessalonians

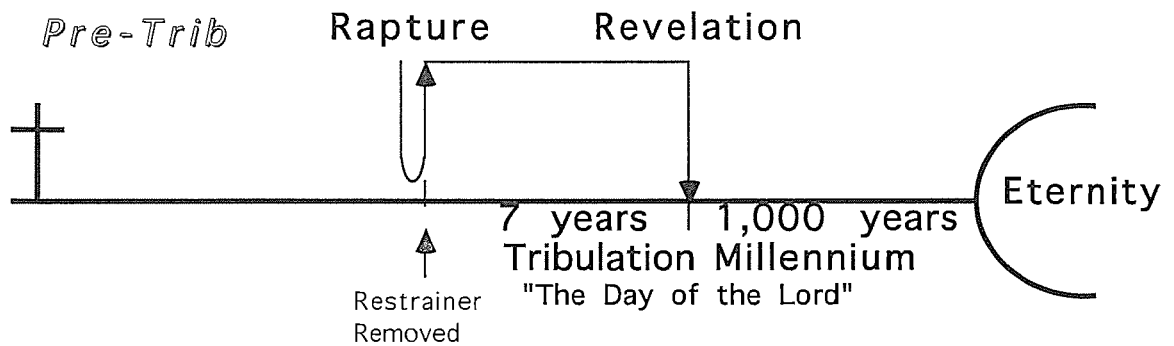
Issues	Background	Paul's response	Application
Paul defense over his ministry	Some Christians doubted Paul's sincerity. He worked for self-gain and had not had any personal interest in them	Our sincere conduct and genuine love Our gospel based on the Word Our teaching with power of the Holy Spirit	1. Continue to show Christ love to those who have accused you. 2. Responsibilities towards your disciples Always ready to be imitator of Christ. Always strengthen their faith and be encouraged by their good work Always thankful to God for His good work in them always keep praying for them
Persecution	Christians were persecuted by the Romans and Jews for their faith in God	Cost of following Christ Our example, imitate Christ The Judean church Hope of glory Christian suffering now is incomparable to that in Tribulation	1. Trials produces character. 2. But we should not go looking for them as if trial is holiness itself, like the cult of martyrs.
Sexual Immorality	Christians continued to have affairs with the prostitutes. Prostitution and Brothels are common practice and sight in Thessalonica.	Vessel of Honour A sin against each other and against God God's punishment for the rebellious God Desires sanctification	1. Sexual immorality is not only an abomination before God, it also causes harm to people around you. 2. Do not quickly associate such practice with demon possession. 3. Encourage one to turn from sin and not be judgmental. 4. God's truth is the final judge for all wrongs done.
Death and resurrection	Christians believed that Christ is coming again and they would not taste death. Unable to accept death of loved ones for Christ is not back yet.	Jesus' resurrection is the first fruit God will not abandon the dead The dead will rise first	1. It is alright to cry at someone's death for we grief for our own loss and not for the departed.
Second Coming of Christ	Took on passive attitude by idling around and not work: Depending on others like parasites	Jesus will come like a thief Live watchfully Work diligently and not idle	1. Christians should live watchfully as expecting Him to come in their lifetime. 2. Be faithful in your work and diligently fulfil your responsibilities
Godly living	Christians need to be encouraged to lead a life pleasing to God after all the above problems are settled.	Looking forward to a hope Encouraged them to pray for Paul and the other churches Thanking and praising God always	1. It is important to uphold one another in prayer 2. Show Christ love in practical ways.

# Views on the Time of the Rapture





## Arguments for a Pretribulational Rapture



Pretribulationists teach that the Rapture of the Church will precede the Tribulation. Why?

1. Christ told the Philadelphia believers, “I will keep you from the hour of testing (καὶ γὰρ σε τηρήσω ἐκ τῆς ὥρας τοῦ πειρασμοῦ), that hour which is about to come upon the whole world, to test those who dwell upon the earth” (Rev. 3:10). The definite article before “hour” indicates that the Tribulation period is in view (cf. Rev. 4–19).
2. The nature and purpose of the Tribulation is to test “those who dwell upon the earth” (Rev. 3:10b), a phrase used over a dozen times in the Book of Revelation. Each time this “phrase occurs... the *enemies* of the church are always in mind” (Mounce, *The Book of Revelation*, 120, emphasis mine). Since the Church is not to be tested, why would the Church be present during this time of testing?
3. The Holy Spirit’s work of restraining evil will be absent in the Tribulation. His restraining ministry is mentioned elsewhere in Scripture (Gen. 6:3; John 16:8-11). It is hard to conceive of a period when the Spirit’s restraining influence will be curtailed with the Church still present.
4. There is no mention of the Church in Revelation 4–19, the portion of this book relating to the Tribulation. Rather, the church (the “tabernacle of God”) is in heaven (Rev. 13:6; cf. Eph. 2:21-22) as Bride (19:1, 7-8) ready to return to the earth at Christ’s Second Coming.
5. The Church will never come under God's wrath (John 5:24; Rom. 5:9; 8:1; 1 Thess. 1:10; 5:9). Although the church has been promised persecution and tribulation (John 16:33; Acts 5:41; Phil. 1:29), this is different from the wrath that describes the Tribulation (Rev. 6:15-17; 11:18; 14:10, 19). Wrath and persecution are not the same!
6. Since the Rapture is imminent it must be pretribulational. Christians are not to wait for signs of His return but for His coming itself. The New Testament teaches that the next event on God's eschatological calendar is an imminent Rapture:
  - a. “For you yourselves know full well that the day of the Lord will come just like a thief in the night... so then let us not sleep as others do, but let us be alert and sober... and build up one another, just as you also are doing” (1 Thess. 5:2-11). This means the day of the Lord (that begins after the Rapture and continues through the Millennium) was imminent so that it would take people by surprise. Paul told the Thessalonians to fight “sleep” (spiritual lethargy) to prepare for Christ's unexpected arrival.
  - b. When Jesus told the disciples, “I will come back and take you to be with me...” (John 14:3) He actually used the present tense (“I am coming”) with a sense of the immediate future without any intervening signs (Herman A. Hoyt, *The End Times* [Chicago: Moody, 1969], 96-97).
  - c. Other New Testament passages expound upon the fact that Christ will come to receive His saints to Himself before the Tribulation (James 5:8-9; Tit. 2:13; Heb. 9:28; 1 Pet. 1:6-7; 1 John 2:28; 3:2-3; Rev. 22:10,12).

## 7. The Second Coming of Christ will be in two distinct stages:

	<b>The Rapture</b>	<b>The Revelation</b>
1	<u>Pretribulational</u> (Rev. 3:10)	<u>Posttribulational</u> (Rev. 19:11-21)
2	Christ will <u>come in the air</u> (1 Thess. 4:16)	Christ will <u>come to the earth</u> , His feet touching the Mt. of Olives (Zech 14:4)
3	A coming <u>for</u> the saints (John 14:1-2; 1 Thess. 4:15-17)	A coming <u>with</u> the saints (Matt. 25:31; 1 Thess. 3:13; Rev. 19:14)
4	<u>Saints</u> (dead and alive) will be <u>caught up</u> (“raptured”) from the earth to meet the Lord in the air and taken to heaven (1 Thess. 4:16-17)	<u>Saints</u> already on earth will <u>remain on the earth</u> (no Rapture) to be ushered into the Millennium (Acts 15:16; Rev. 5:10; cf. Matt. 6:10; chap. 24)
5	Produces <u>comfort and hope</u> (1 Thess. 4:18)	Produces <u>fear and judgment</u> (Matt. 24:27-31; Luke 21:20-28; Rev. 6:15-17)
6	<u>Mystery</u> truth revealed only in the New Testament age (1 Cor. 15:51)	<u>Central</u> in OT prophecy but clarified in the NT (Jer. 30:7; Zech 14:1-3; Matt. 24:30; Col. 3:4)
7	Bodies of church saints <u>glorified</u> (1 Cor. 15:51-58; Phil. 3:20-21) and brought to heaven for seven years (1 Thess. 4:17)	Bodies of tribulation saints left in <u>mortal</u> state to continue to live on the earth in the millennium (Matt. 25:31-34)
8	<u>Imminent</u> , no signs needed (1 Thess. 4:16)	<u>Not imminent</u> but preceded by spectacular signs in the heavens and on the earth (Matt. 24:29-31; Luke 21:25-28; Acts 2:19-21; Rev. 1:7; chs. 6-19)
9	Primary purpose is <u>deliverance</u> of the saints from this world (1 Thess. 1:10)	Primary purpose is <u>judgment</u> of unbelieving (Matt. 25:31-46)
10	<u>Invisible</u> and private as only believers see Christ and since God sends a powerful delusion through the Antichrist (2 Thess. 2:11)	<u>Visible</u> and public since “every eye shall see Him” (Rev. 1:7)
11	Fulfills a promise to the <u>Church</u> where Jew-Gentile distinctions do not exist (1 Thess. 4:15; cf. John 14:1-3; Eph. 2:11-16)	Fulfills promises to <u>Israel</u> of covenants made in the Old Testament (Gen. 12:1-3; Ps. 89; Isa. 11:11-14; cf. Rom. 11:26-27)
12	Evil begins to <u>increase</u> (2 Thess. 2:1-12)	Evil is <u>suppressed</u> (2 Thess. 1:7; Ps. 37:9-10)
13	<u>Church</u> removed (1 Thess. 4:13-18)	<u>Satan</u> removed (Rev. 20:1-3)
14	Christ shown as <u>Head</u> of the Church and all things (Eph. 1:10, 22; 4:15; Col. 1:18; 2:10)	Christ vindicated as <u>Messiah</u> to Israel (Zech. 14:3-4; cf. Acts 1:6 with v. 11)
15	Judgment seat of Christ for <u>believers</u> (2 Cor. 5:10; 1 Cor. 3:13)	Judgment of <u>Israel and Gentiles</u> (Ezek. 20:34-38; Matt. 25; Zech. 14:4; cf. p. 160)
16	The <u>Lord</u> is at hand (Phil. 4:5)	The <u>kingdom</u> is at hand (Matt. 24:14)
17	Nature subsequently <u>ruined</u> (Rev. 6-16)	Nature subsequently <u>restored</u> (Rom. 8:19-22; Isa. 11:6-9; 35:9; 65:25)

## Practical Implications of the Rapture

*How should your belief in Christ's future return change the way you live now?*

### 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18

Knowing that at the Rapture we'll see Christians who have died prevents us from hopeless grieving.

Once we are with the Lord we'll *never* be separated from Him—that's encouraging (vv. 17-18)!

### 1 Corinthians 15:35-49

We'll receive a new body at the Rapture so we shouldn't be absorbed with "body worship" now.

### 1 Corinthians 15:50-58

Christ's return will show that he defeated Satan—this gives us victory over sin now (vv. 54-57).

Our future hope stabilizes us now (v. 58).

Christ's sure return motivates us to diligent service since it's not done in vain (v. 58).

### 2 Peter 3:1-9

The more scoffing about His return we hear, the more encouraging this should be for us (vv. 1-4).

The longer it takes for Christ's return, the more His patience is demonstrated towards us (vv. 8-9)

### 2 Peter 3:10-18

The destruction of all we can see should motivate us to invest in the things we can't see (vv. 10-13).

The judgment of the earth should motivate holy living (vv. 11, 14).

Knowing the Day of the Lord is coming will give us the wisdom that protects from false teaching (vv. 15-17).

## Questions on the Thessalonians

1. Review how the Thessalonian church was planted in Acts 17. How long did this take? What doctrines did Paul teach them? Do you generally teach these doctrines to new believers?
2. What do you think is the heart of 1 Thessalonians (what is the key passage that summarizes its theme)? Why is it this passage and not another?
3. Which passage in 2 Thessalonians summarizes the book? How do you know?
4. How did a poor doctrinal foundation cause problems in Christian behaviour in these epistles? How have you seen this in churches today?

## 2 Thessalonians

<b>Tribulation Corrections</b>							
Persevere in Persecution		Day Still Future			Discipline the Idle		
Chapter 1		Chapter 2			Chapter 3		
Emotional		Theological			Practical		
Encouragement in Persecution		Explanation of the Day			Exhortation in Body Life		
Discouraged Believers		Disturbed Believers			Disobedient Believers		
Correction of Perspective		Correction of Doctrine			Correction of Behaviour		
Salutation 1:1-2	Reward vs. Judgment 1:3-12	Pretrib. Teaching 2:1-2	Antichrist Prerequisite 2:3-12	Stand Firm 2:13-17	Prayer Requests 3:1-5	Discipline Idle 3:6-15	Blessing Given 3:16-18
Corinth							
Late Summer AD 51							

**Key Word:** Tribulation

**Key Verse:** Do not “become easily unsettled or alarmed by some prophecy, report or letter supposed to have come from us, saying that the day of the Lord has already come. Don’t let anyone deceive you in any way, for that day will not come until the rebellion occurs and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the man doomed to destruction” (2 Thessalonians 2:2-3).

**Summary Statement:** Paul corrects the persecuted Thessalonians' misconception that the *day of the Lord* (Tribulation) had already begun to exhort perseverance among the disheartened and industry among the idle to help them stand firm in correct doctrine despite *false teachers*.

**Application:** Do you study eschatology, believing that it affects your behaviour as a Christian?

# 2 Thessalonians

## Introduction

I. **Title** The Greek title (Πρὸς Θεσσαλονικεῖς β΄ *Second to the Thessalonians*) distinguishes this letter from Paul's first letter to the church just a few months before.

### II. Authorship

A. External Evidence: Support for Pauline authorship has been upheld “very probably” since Polycarp (*ca.* AD 135; cf. Best, 37-38) and possibly earlier with Ignatius (*ca.* AD 110). One can add to this the Marcion Canon (*ca.* AD 140) and Muratonian Canon, plus the testimony of the early Church Fathers and ancient versions.

B. Internal Evidence: The letter itself strongly supports Pauline authorship:

1. The epistle claims to have been written by Paul (1:1; 3:17).
2. The premature ending (3:1-5) suits Paul more than a conscious imitator (Kümmel, 189).
3. The similarities to 1 Thessalonians, cited by some critics as evidence against Pauline authorship, actually support it (Best, 50-56).
4. Supposed discrepancies between the eschatologies of 2 Thessalonians 2:1-12 and 1 Thessalonians 4:13–5:11 have also been levied by critics, but these differences are accountable to the two different phases of the parousia (Hiebert, 57).

C. Conclusion: The attacks upon Pauline authorship have been soundly defeated so that nearly all scholars, despite their critical assumptions, believe that Paul penned this epistle.

### III. Circumstances

A. Date: Hoehner suggests that Paul wrote 2 Thessalonians in the summer AD 51 (just a few months after his first letter). The following supports this claim:

1. Paul, Silas, and Timothy (1:1) are not known to have been together again after their stay in Corinth (Hiebert, 59).
2. The same general conditions exist in the church as discussed in 1 Thessalonians (e.g., idleness; cf. 1 Thess. 4:11-12; 2 Thess. 3:6-15).
3. These men apparently stayed in Corinth another year. This doesn't necessarily argue for a date only a few months after 1 Thessalonians, but certainly the second letter precedes Paul's visit to them five years later (May 56). It is fairly certain that 2 Thessalonians did not follow the first letter by more than 12 months (Constable, *BKC*, 2:713).

B. Origin/Recipients: Paul wrote from Corinth to the Thessalonian believers north of him in the province of Macedonia (see “Date” above for support). Although this was his second letter to them, the congregation was still young—probably less than year old.

C. Occasion: The historical and chronological scenario for Paul's ministry at Thessalonica during his second missionary journey probably looks like this:

- |  |                        |
|--|------------------------|
| 1. Paul plants the Thessalonian church                   | November 50-January 51 |
| 2. Paul's ministry in Berea, Athens, and Corinth         | February-March 51      |
| 3. Silas and Timothy report to Paul in Corinth           | April/May 51           |
| 4. Paul writes 1 Thessalonians and sends it from Corinth | Early Summer 51        |

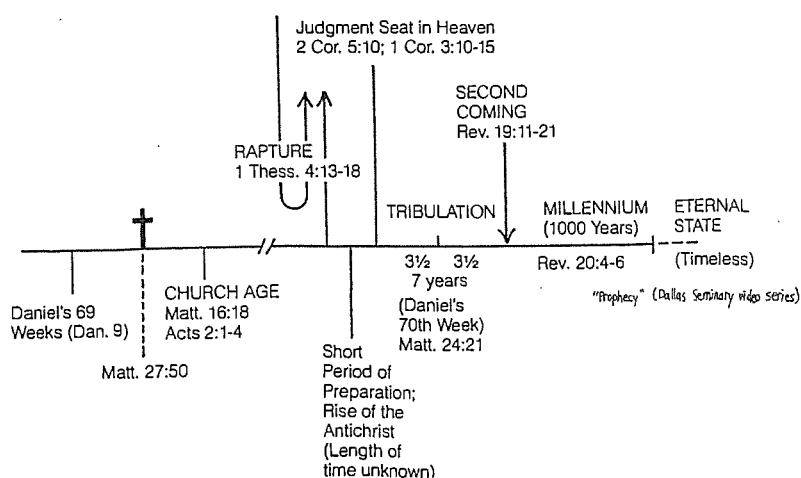
- |  |                       |
|--|-----------------------|
| 5. The carrier of 1 Thessalonian letter reports back to Paul | Mid Summer 51         |
| 6. Paul writes 2 Thessalonians from Corinth                  | Late Summer 51        |
| 7. Paul departs Corinth                                      | first of September 52 |

Within only a few months after writing 1 Thessalonians, Paul got news (probably from the letter carrier) of problems unresolved by his first letter. The persecution of the believers had increased (1:3-10), false teachers had taught that the day of the Lord had already come (2:1-12), and some of the Thessalonian Christians had become idle as they simply “waited for the Rapture” (3:6-15). Therefore, Paul decided to write the church again to help the believers handle these difficulties.

#### IV. Characteristics

A. Although 2 Thessalonians is Paul's shortest letter to a New Testament church, it contains significant information regarding the second coming of Christ and the day of the Lord.

1. The return of Christ, occupying the major theme of chapters 1-2, is the most mentioned doctrine in the New Testament, referred to 318 times (*TTTB*, 423). This averages out to every 25 verses in the New Testament, or 1.2 times per chapter! (The NT has 7959 verses and 260 chapters.) In 2 Thessalonians, 18 of 47 verses (38%) stress eschatology.
2. The day of the Lord is also taught many places in Scripture (cf. Isa. 13:6, 9; Joel 1-2; Zeph. 1:14-16; 1 Thess. 5:1-11; Rev. 6-20) and refers to a time of judgment upon God's enemies and blessing upon His children which is unsurpassed. Chronologically, it begins after the Rapture (perhaps half way through the seven-year tribulation) and continues to the end of the millennium (Constable, *BKC*, 2:717).
3. A problem exists concerning the day of the Lord: if the Rapture can happen at any time (i.e., without preceding signs), and the day of the Lord begins after that, how then can this latter “day” be preceded by three signs (2:3-12)?
  - a. These verses are clear that three signs (the apostasy, the revelation of the Antichrist, and the removal of the restrainer) all precede the day of the Lord. At first this may look like support for the posttribulation position (i.e., that the church will be removed from the earth *after* the tribulation).
  - b. However, the tribulation does *not* begin with the Rapture. It begins when the Antichrist signs a covenant with Israel (Dan. 9:27). What 2 Thessalonians 2:3-7 notes is only that the three signs will take place prior to the beginning of the tribulation, which could happen days, weeks, or months after the Rapture.
  - c. Therefore, while no signs precede the Rapture, at least three signs precede the day of the Lord during the time period between the Rapture and day of the Lord.



- B. Whereas Paul wrote 1 Thessalonians to *comfort*, he wrote 2 Thessalonians to *correct*.
- C. Paul deviates from his usual epistolary pattern through his two thanksgivings (1:3f.; 2:13f.) and two prayers (1:11-12; 2:16-17). Some believe that this indicates a merging of two separate letters, but there is no evidence that Paul ever felt constrained by a particular literary pattern and no manuscript evidence exists to doubt the unity of the epistle.

## Argument

As mentioned above, Paul wrote 2 Thessalonians to help the believers handle three difficulties facing the church: increased persecution (1:3-10), false teaching that the day of the Lord had already come (2:1-12), and idleness among some of the Thessalonian Christians who were “waiting for the Rapture” (3:6-15). Paul's design in writing was to *encourage* perseverance based upon their future reward at the day of the Lord (ch. 1) and to *correct* their false notion of the day of the Lord (ch. 2) which had resulted in idleness (ch. 3). The overriding theme is the day of the Lord and its implications on behavior.

## Synthesis

### Day of the Lord corrections

<b>1</b>	<b>Emotionally: Persevere in persecution</b>
1:1-2	Salutation
1:3-12	Church's reward vs. persecutors' judgment at day of the Lord
<b>2</b>	<b>Theologically: Day still future</b>
2:1-2	Teaching hasn't changed
2:3-7	Antichrist events preceding Day
2:3a	Apostasy
2:3b-4	Worship as God
2:5-7	Restraint removed
2:8-12	Antichrist activity and end
2:13-17	Stand firm
<b>3</b>	<b>Practically: Discipline the idle</b>
3:1-5	Pray for spread of the gospel
3:6-15	Discipline lazy unemployed members
3:16-18	Blessing/benediction

## Outline

### Summary Statement for the Book

Paul corrects the persecuted Thessalonians' misconception that the *day of the Lord* (Tribulation) had already begun to exhort perseverance among the disheartened and industry among the idle to help them stand firm in correct doctrine despite *false teachers*.

### I. (Ch. 1) Paul encourages the Thessalonian believers to continue to persevere in light of their persecutors' judgment at the day of the Lord so as to demonstrate his deep concern for the disheartened among them.

- A. (1:1-2) Paul's salutation includes Silas and Timothy (his fellow-workers in Thessalonica) but excludes reference to his apostleship in order to appeal to the believers from his deep concern rather than his apostolic authority.



- B. (1:3-12) Paul commends the past progress of the Thessalonians by contrasting their reward with their persecutors' punishment at Christ's return in order to encourage them to persevere as worthy of their calling in answer to Paul's prayers.

**II. (Ch. 2) Paul corrects the Thessalonians' misconception from false teachers that the day of the Lord had already occurred by teaching that the Antichrist must be revealed first.**

- A. (2:1-2) Paul cautions against some false teachers' so-called prophecy, report, or forged letter stating that he changed his views on the time of the day of the Lord in order to discredit someone's report to the church that they had missed the Rapture.
- B. (2:3-12) Paul notes necessary events about the revelation of Antichrist which must precede the day of the Lord so that the Thessalonians could see that they had not missed this event.
1. (2:3a) The professing church will depart from the earth before the day of the Lord takes place, leaving only an apostate church behind.
  2. (2:3b-4) The Antichrist will reveal himself as such to the discerning before the day of the Lord begins (by signing a covenant with Israel; cf. Dan. 9:27).
  3. (2:5-7) The restraining ministry of the Holy Spirit in the Church will be removed from the earth, allowing the Antichrist to rule unbridled when the day of the Lord takes place.
  4. (2:8-12) During the day of the Lord, the Antichrist's rule will be substantiated in counterfeit miracles and a powerful delusion sent by God but will be destroyed at Christ's return at the end of the tribulation.
- C. (2:13-17) Paul thanks God that the Thessalonians positionally are spared from the day of the Lord by sharing in Christ's glory and prays that their practice would demonstrate this by standing firm to encourage them to do good works.

**III.(Ch. 3) Paul warns the church to discipline idle believers who live off other's work as they wait for the Rapture to shame them into responsible behavior shown in Paul and his companions.**

- A. (3:1-5) Paul requests prayer for his speedy progress of the gospel and prays that the Thessalonians would be faithful also, thus establishing a model of responsible behavior in light of the coming day of the Lord before his rebuke in 3:6-15.
- B. (3:6-15) Paul warns the church to discipline idle believers who live off other's work as they wait for the Rapture to shame these lazy ones into responsible behavior of work and witness in light of the coming day of the Lord.
- B. (3:16-18) Paul signs the concluding blessing and benediction in his own hand as evidence of the genuineness of the epistle (cf. 2:2b) so that the church would act upon its authority.

In our day when most talk of self-esteem, it is refreshing to find the Godhead noted more than once each verse on the average in these books...

<b>Focus on God in the Thessalonian Epistles</b>					
Total Verses	"God"	"Jesus"	"Lord"	"Christ"	Total
1 Thess. (89)	36	16	24	10	86
2 Thess. (47)	18	13	22	10	63
Total (136)	54	29	46	20	149

Numbers of Greek occurrences from Elwell & Yarbrough, *Encountering the New Testament*, 332

## The Day of the LORD

### I. Usage

- A. The “day of the LORD” concept appears in every prophetic writing in the Old Testament, although not always by that same term.
- B. The judgment aspect receives detailed treatment in Zephaniah, Joel, Revelation 6—19. Some believe that the “Lord’s day” of Revelation 1:10 also refers to this period (cf. 2 Thess. 2:2-3).

### II. Definition

- A. The day of the LORD is “the time of Yahweh’s final intervention in history when He will judge the wicked, deliver the righteous, and establish His kingdom” (Hobart Freeman, *An Introduction to the OT Prophets*, 146).

#### 1. Judgment

- a. Primarily it refers to a destruction of Israel’s enemies (Zeph. 2—3; Amos 1:3—2:3; Joel 3; Zech. 12—14; Isa. 13:6, 9; 14:28-32; 17:1ff.; 20:1-6; 31:1-5; Jer. 46:10; Ezek. 30:3ff.).
- b. However, it also includes punishment of the rebellious and disobedient in the nation of Israel (Amos 5:18-20).
- c. The Great Tribulation of Revelation 6—19 finds so many parallels with descriptions by the OT prophets that the two judgments must certainly be the same period.
- d. Ultimately the day of the LORD will end in a destruction of the world (2 Pet. 3:10).

#### 2. Deliverance

- a. Israel’s salvation from Gentile oppressors will occur through God who preserves and delivers a remnant of Israel (Joel 2:32; Zech. 14; Zeph. 3:8-20; Isa. 2, 11; 65-66; Amos 9:11-15; Ezek. 20:33-44, etc.).
- b. This salvation is to enable Israel to enter into the kingdom in which God will fulfill all His promises to Abraham (cf. class notes, 336-37).
- c. The deliverance includes many blessings (Deut. 30:3-9) which also apply to Gentiles (Zeph. 3:9).
- d. Final salvation after judgment will be in the new heaven and earth (2 Pet. 3:11-13).

#### 3. Diagram

<i>Judgment</i>	+	<i>Salvation</i>	=	<i>Day of the LORD</i>
Great Tribulation	+	Christ’s Return/ Millennium	=	Day of the LORD

- B. The day of the LORD also had a nearer aspect to the prophets, depicting an imminent, impending disaster—generally through the Assyrians or Babylonians. Sometimes even both the near and far aspects appear together in a dual sense. God did not clearly reveal whether a near or far perspective was to be understood so as to encourage repentance.
- C. For further study see Greg A. King, “The Day of the LORD in Zephaniah,” *Bibliotheca Sacra* 152 (January-March 1995): 16-32.

## The Antichrist

### I. The Post-Rapture Crisis for Leadership

- A. The need for a world leader after the Rapture cannot be overstated.
1. Someone will need to explain the disappearance of millions of Christians.
  2. Communications, transportation, economic, and all other systems will be disrupted.
  3. The middle-east problem especially will need to be resolved.
- B. Difficult times have always set the stage for a strong man to take control. The world scene after the Rapture will be a perfect environment for the Antichrist to gain power.

### II. Names for the Future Fuhrer

- A. The names are many, describing his multifaceted character and the great emphasis placed upon this man in the Bible.
- B. List of the names in scriptural order:

Bloody and Deceitful Man	Ps. 5:6
Wicked One	Ps. 10:2-4
Man of the Earth	Ps. 10:18
Mighty Man	Ps. 140:1
Assyrian	Isa. 10:5-12
King of Babylon	Isa. 14:2
Sun of the Morning	Isa. 14:12
Spoiler	Isa. 16:4-5; Jer. 6:26
Nail	Isa. 22:25
Branch of the Terrible Ones	Isa. 25:5
Profane Wicked Prince of Israel	Ezek. 21:25-27
Little Horn	Dan. 7:8
King of Fierce Countenance	Dan. 8:23
Prince that shall Come	Dan. 9:26
One who causes Desolation	Dan. 9:27
Vile Person	Dan. 11:21
Willful King	Dan. 11:36
Idol Shepherd	Zech. 11:16-17
Abomination of Desolation	Matt. 24:15
One Coming in His Own Name	John 5:43
Man of Sin	2 Thess. 2:3
Man Doomed to Destruction	2 Thess. 2:3
Lawless One	2 Thess. 2:8
Antichrist	1 John 2:18, 22
Angel of the Bottomless Pit	Rev. 9:11
Beast from the Abyss/Sea	Rev. 11:7; 13:1
[Scarlet] Beast	Rev. 17:3, 8, 12

### III. Summary of the Activity of the Future Fuhrer

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| A. Makes 7 year treaty with Jews          | Dan. 9:27a; 2 Thess. 2:3 (treaty reveals him?) |
| B. Peaceful beginning                     | Rev. 6:1-2                                     |
| C. Heads 10 nation confederacy            | Dan. 7:20                                      |
| D. Dominated by world church              | Rev. 17:3-11                                   |
| E. Dominates world church                 | Rev. 17:12-16                                  |
| F. Breaks covenant with Israel            | Dan. 9:27 (midpoint of the Tribulation)        |
| G. Counterfeits death/resurrection        | Rev. 13:3a                                     |
| H. Worshiped worldwide                    | Rev. 13:3b-8, 11-15                            |
| I. Sets up image for worship              | 2 Thess. 2:3-4                                 |
| J. False prophet promotes mark            | Rev. 13:16-18                                  |
| K. Two witnesses slain                    | Rev. 11:7                                      |
| L. Persecutes Jews & Victorious in Israel | Dan. 11:40-43                                  |
| M. Defeated by Christ                     | Rev. 19:11-19                                  |
| N. Doom in Lake of Fire                   | Rev. 19:20                                     |

# Daniel's 70th Week

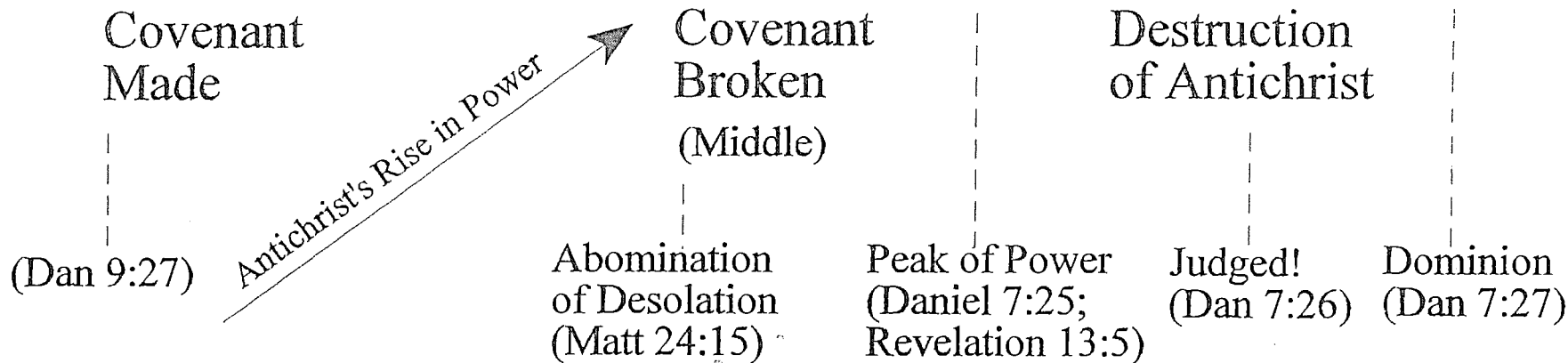
Daniel 9:27

Second Coming

(Matt 24:29-31)

Church Age

Messiah's Kingdom



Daniel's 70th Week  
Dr. J. Paul Tanner, SBC, 1998

# 1 Timothy

<b>Church Order</b> (is maintained by giving priority to...)				
Combat False Teachers	Church Life	Personal Life/Doctrine	Various Church Groups	Warning Against Materialism
Chapter 1	Chapters 2–3	Chapter 4	5:1–6:10	6:11-21
Doctrine	Worship	Example	Respect	Priorities
Warning	People	Warning	People	Warning
Salutation Fight heresies God's grace Charge	Prayer Gender Roles Leader Qualities Purpose of Epistle	Future heresy Watch life Watch doctrine	Respect everyone Widows Elders Slaves False teachers	Spiritual goals Wealthy must give Closing charge
<b>Practical Exhortations Throughout</b> (in contrast to the normal theology then application Pauline epistle structure)				
<b>From Macedonia to Ephesus</b>				
<b>Autumn AD 62</b>				

**Key Word:** Order

**Key Verse:** "... I am writing you these instructions so that...you will know how people ought to conduct themselves in God's household, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and foundation of truth" (1 Tim. 3:14-15).

**Summary Statement:** Paul exhorts Timothy to courageously guard his personal *life, doctrine, and local church order* in order to preserve the ministry of the Ephesian church against ascetic and speculative *false teachers*.

**Application:** Do you take an active role in guarding your local church against heresy—or do you expect others to do it?

# 1 Timothy

## Introduction

- I. Titles:** The Books of 1 Timothy (Πρὸς Τιμόθεον ἁ *First to Timothy*), 2 Timothy (Πρὸς Τιμόθεον β' *Second to Timothy*), and Titus (Πρὸς Τίτον *To Titus*) designate three of Paul's letters which, since the 18th century, have been often called "Pastoral Epistles." At least three facts make these unique:
- The Pastorals are the only Pauline epistles addressed to individuals (except for Philemon, which some also consider a Pastoral Epistle). Timothy and Titus were younger men serving as apostolic delegates to different geographical areas, and, although the men are not specifically designated pastors in these writings, they fulfilled a pastoral-like role (hence the title "Pastoral Epistles").
  - The Pastoral Epistles are Paul's last three writings preserved in the New Testament. Thus they provide many insights into the kind of concerns that burdened Paul near the end of his ministry.
  - The Pastoral Epistles provide the most information in Scripture on local church life, order, and leadership. All pastors/church leaders should be experts in these books—and those of us who follow them should heed Paul's pastoral advice here too!

## II. Authorship

- External Evidence:** Attestation for Pauline authorship is as good as that of any other Pauline epistle except Romans and 1 Corinthians (Guthrie, 585).
  - Early support from the Church Fathers is strong. Numerous passages in 1 Clement (*ca.* AD 95) and the Ignatian letters (*ca.* AD 110) indicate direct dependence upon copies of the Pastorals in hand (Kelly, 3). Polycarp quoted them (*Letter to the Philippians*; *ca.* AD 135 at latest) and by the mid-second century Irenaeus, Tertullian, Clement of Alexandria, and the Muratorian Canon unquestionably cite the Pastorals as Pauline (Kelly, 4).
  - Despite the overwhelming evidence for Pauline authorship, most modern liberal scholars believe a "Paulinist," or second to third generation follower of Paul, wrote the Pastorals in the second century. The reasons for supposing such a forgery are:
    - Pastorals are not in Marcion's canon and 1 and 2 Timothy were rejected by Tatian.
    - The earliest Greek manuscript available, *p*<sup>46</sup>, does not include the Pastorals.
- Internal Evidence:** The letters claim Pauline authorship (1 Tim. 1:1; 2 Tim. 1:1; Tit. 1:1) and contain the typical Pauline characteristics: sense of divine call, use of many personal names, and doctrinal emphases (grace, redemption through Christ, purpose of the Law, the Scriptures, the need for practical godliness, etc.).

Liberal scholarship denies Pauline authorship based upon internal factors such as an inability to reconcile the contents historically with the Book of Acts, a large number of words not found elsewhere in Paul's writings, a similarity to the vocabulary used in the second century, an ecclesiology "too advanced" for Paul's time, and "anti-Pauline" theology (Hellenistic terms "foreign to Paul"; 1 Tim. 6:15-16; 2 Tim. 1:10; Tit. 2:10f.).

Each of these so-called "evidences" depends on presupposition than objective data, and biblical facts should never be ignored to harmonize with presupposition. Some critics proposed a fragments hypothesis where scraps of Pauline writings were pieced together in the second century to make the Pastorals, but this creates more problems than it solves and is rejected even by modern critics.

### III. Circumstances

- A. Date: The chronology of the latter years of Paul's life is obscure (Guthrie, 623), yet one harmonization of the internal and external data yields this scenario (Hoehner, 381-84):

**First Roman Imprisonment (Acts 28:30-31)** **February 60—March 62**  
 Paul writes **Ephesians, Colossians, Philemon, and Philippians** Autumn 60—early Spring 62  
 James, the Lord's brother, martyred Spring 62

**Freedom from Imprisonment** **Spring 62—Autumn 67**  
 Paul in Ephesus and Colosse (Timothy left at Ephesus) Spring—Summer 62  
 Peter travels to Rome 62  
 Paul in Macedonia late summer 62-winter 62/63  
**1 Timothy** written from Macedonia to Timothy in Ephesus Autumn 62  
 Paul in Asia Minor Spring 63-Spring 64  
 Paul in Spain (anticipated in Rom. 15:24) Spring 64-Spring 66  
 Christians persecuted by Nero, Peter martyred Summer 64  
 Paul in Crete (Titus left there; Tit. 1:5) early Summer 66  
 Paul in Asia Minor Summer-Autumn 66  
**Titus** written from Asia Minor to Titus in Crete Summer 66  
 Paul in Nicopolis (Tit. 3:12) Winter 66/67  
 Paul in Troas (2 Tim. 4:13), Macedonia and Greece Spring—Autumn 67

**Second Roman Imprisonment** **Autumn 67—Spring 68**  
 Paul arrested and brought to Rome Autumn 67  
**2 Timothy** written from Rome to Timothy in Ephesus Autumn 67  
 Paul beheaded Spring 68

**Destruction of Jerusalem** **September 2, 70**

- B. Origin/Recipients: The above dates reveal that after Paul's release from prison he wrote 1 Timothy from Macedonia (1 Tim. 1:3a) to his long-time traveling companion, Timothy (1 Tim. 1:2), who he had left in Ephesus (1 Tim. 1:3b). The letter to Titus followed (Tit. 1:4) which was sent to him in Crete (Tit. 1:5) from an unknown origin (Ephesus, Macedonia, and Corinth have been postulated). Paul penned 2 Timothy from Rome during his second Roman imprisonment shortly after his first defense before the Imperial Court (2 Tim. 1:8-17; 2:9; 4:16-17). Since he did not expect to live much longer (2 Tim. 4:6-8) he requested Timothy to hurry to him before winter (2 Tim. 4:9, 21).
- C. Occasion: Paul wrote 1 Timothy only a month or two after leaving him in Ephesus. It might seem strange that he would need to write him so quickly, but perhaps Paul had to leave Ephesus in a hurry without providing him adequate instructions for church organization and oversight. Equally possible is that an emissary from Timothy asked for Paul's help. However, neither of these hypothesis can be supported from the text so the reason for the letter must be determined from its contents, which concern church order.

### IV. Characteristics

- A. Paul's first letter to Timothy contains more information on the qualifications for church leadership than any New Testament writing (1 Tim. 3:1-12). The necessary character traits for both elders and deacons are specified (in contrast to the letter to Titus, which concerns only elders; cf. Tit. 1:5-9).
- B. Timothy's position in the Ephesian church is not specifically mentioned. He evidently was not an elder since Paul spoke of the elders as individuals different from Timothy. In like manner, Titus was to appoint elders (Tit. 1:5) but not be one himself. Some have referred to Timothy as the pastor, but the letter suggests that his function at the church was to represent Paul (1 Tim. 1:3; 3:14; 4:6, 13).

## Argument

Paul specifically declares his purpose for writing the young Timothy, "... I am writing you these instructions so that...you will know how people ought to conduct themselves in God's household, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and foundation of truth" (1 Tim. 3:14-15). Thus, Paul's aim is to instruct Timothy so he can instruct others (cf. 2 Tim. 2:2). When Paul penned the letter, the Ephesian church, like nearly all which he founded, was being attacked by false teaching. Paul begins the epistle with a charge to Timothy to defend the faith using Paul's own life change as an encouragement to persevere (ch. 1). Proper conduct in public worship is discussed next so that the leadership and people might be above reproach before accusers (chs. 2—3), followed by an exhortation directed towards Timothy's life and doctrine (ch. 4). The letter concludes with instruction how to handle various groups in the church (5:1—6:10) and a warning of the perils of materialism to prevent the replacement of spiritual with material priorities (6:11-21). Throughout the letter Paul seeks church order not simply for order's sake alone, but as a deterrent to false teaching and practice which destroys local church ministry.

## Synthesis

### Church order (is maintained by giving priority to...)

<b>1</b>	<b>Combat false teachers</b>
1:1-2	Salutation
1:3-11	Warn against heresies
1:12-17	God's grace to Paul
1:18-20	Charge
<b>2—3</b>	<b>Church life</b>
2:1-7	Prayer
2:8-15	Gender roles
3:1-13	Leadership qualifications
3:14-16	Purpose for epistle
<b>4</b>	<b>Personal life/doctrine</b>
4:1-5	Warning of future heresy
4:6-16	Watch life/doctrine
<b>5:1—6:10</b>	<b>Various church groups</b>
5:1-2	Treat all people with respect
5:3-16	Widows
5:17-25	Elders
6:1-2	Slaves
6:3-10	False teachers
<b>6:11-21</b>	<b>Warning against materialism</b>
6:11-16	Priority of spiritual goals
6:17-19	Wealthy should share
6:20-21	Closing charge

## Outline

### Summary Statement for the Book

**Paul exhorts Timothy to courageously guard his personal *life, doctrine, and local church order* in order to preserve the ministry of the Ephesian church against ascetic and speculative *false teachers*.**

- I. (Ch. 1) Paul charges Timothy to defend the faith against false teachers of the Law and reminds him of God's grace in his own life to encourage Timothy to courageously fulfill his ministry.**



- A. (1:1-2) Paul greets Timothy with a reminder of his apostolic calling to add authority to the instructions following in the letter which would be difficult to carry out in the midst of false teaching to encourage Timothy to act courageously.
- B. (1:3-11) Paul reminds Timothy of his task to prohibit false teachers of the Law from leading the people away from love into speculation in order to encourage Timothy to correct Ephesian teachers majoring on minor matters in their Bible teaching.
- C. (1:12-17) Paul's own testimony of God's grace poured upon him despite his former persecution of the church is given to encourage Timothy that if God could use Paul, the "chief of sinners," then surely God could use Timothy.
- D. (1:18-20) Paul's first charge to Timothy exhorts him to be committed to spiritual truth in the battle against apostasy to motivate him to courageously defend the faith in the face of certain resistance.

**II. (Chs. 2—3) Paul instructs Timothy in proper conduct in public worship to insure the priority of prayer and godly leadership for victory against those who could find fault in the church.**

- A. (2:1-7) The apostle's first positive instruction is to emphasize the importance of prayer so that the church would recognize its dependence upon God for victory in the battle over people's souls.
- B. (2:8-15) Paul contrasts the men's role of teaching and authority in the church with the women's responsibilities of deeds of service and maintenance of their homes in order to balance the ministry from extremes of passive men and dominant women.
- C. (3:1-13) The qualifications for elders and deacons are provided to guide Timothy to assure that the church is led by the most godly leaders available to assure victory against those who would seek to find fault in the church.
- D. (3:14-16) Paul states his purpose in providing the leadership qualifications and writing the epistle to instill in Timothy the importance of proper conduct in the church.

**III. (Ch. 4) Paul exhorts Timothy to watch his personal life and doctrine closely to help him overcome the influences of ascetic apostates threatening the life of the Ephesian church.**

- A. (4:1-5) Paul warns that some believers will reject Christianity for a demonic, ascetic teaching which denies the legitimacy of marriage and certain foods to shock Timothy into realizing the Satanic source of such teaching.
- B. (4:6-16) Timothy is exhorted to watch his personal life and doctrine closely so that even as a young man he will diligently use his gift of teaching to protect himself and his congregation from false teachers.

**IV. (5:1—6:10) Paul provides instruction on how to respectfully treat various groups in the church to assure that financial and other needs are met.**

- A. (5:1-2) Paul instructs Timothy to treat all people with respect as the general principle of interpersonal relationships to follow in applying Paul's specific instructions regarding the various groups in the subsequent verses.
- B. (5:3-16) Older, godly widows without family should be cared for by the church but younger widows should remarry so as not to be a financial or social burden to the believers.
- C. (5:17-25) Elders should be well supported financially, not easily accused, and not hastily appointed so as to carefully guard the church by having only godly men serve in the highest office.

- D. (6:1-2) Slaves of Christian masters should work even harder than they would if they were owned by unbelievers because they benefit believers.
  - E. (6:3-10) False teachers who emphasize financial gain and useless theologies should be spurned to prevent church members from focusing upon materialism and speculation.
- V. (6:11-21) Paul cautions how materialism destroys godly virtues to enable Timothy to watch his own life so that physical goals do not replace spiritual and thus result in his own apostasy.**
- A. (6:11-16) Paul charges Timothy to flee materialism and speculation and pursue godly virtues to exhort him in spiritual rather than physical goals for the glory of God.
  - B. (6:17-19) The materially rich should be rich in deeds by sharing their wealth to the needy in the congregation so they can obtain rewards in heaven and fulfillment on earth resulting from giving.
  - C. (6:20-21) The closing charge is a final warning that some professors of Christianity have left the basics for speculation to caution Timothy to watch his own life lest apostasy take him in as well.

## Authority in the Church

### I. The Problem of Balance

- A. The ultimate authority over the universal church is Jesus Christ, the head of the body (Eph. 1:10; 4:15; 5:23).
- B. While Christ is also the ultimate authority over each local church, He has prescribed a practical means for each church to determine His will in human authority structures:
1. Congregational Authority: The local church as a unit has authority.
    - a) The congregation has the authority to select its own leaders:
      - (1) The people (not the leaders alone) chose men to feed widows (Acts 6:3-5).
      - (2) The Antioch church as a whole (not the leaders alone) sent Paul and Barnabas to settle a doctrinal dispute (Acts 15:2-3).
    - b) The church as a whole sent out missionaries (Acts 11:22; 2 Cor. 8:19).
    - c) The people themselves have the responsibility for church discipline:
      - (1) The process of discipline can begin with anyone in the body (Matt. 18:15). It also ends with corporate discipline where the sin is told to the church (v. 17).
      - (2) Paul admonished the Corinthian church as a whole to discipline an unruly member (1 Cor. 5:5; 2 Cor. 2:6-7).
    - d) The priesthood of believers gives all Christians equal access to God (1 Pet. 2:9).
  2. Leadership Authority: However, while apostles were the highest authority in the first century, elders had the highest authority after the apostolic age.
    - a) Paul put elders in charge in churches (Acts 14:23).<sup>1</sup>
    - b) Every church had a *plurality* of elders in their congregation rather than a single leader (Tit. 1:5).
    - c) “Elder” and “overseer” are interchangeable terms (Acts 20:17, 28; Tit. 1:5, 7; 1 Pet. 5:1, 2), indicating their authoritative role to lead with maturity.
    - d) “Ruling” was one role of elders (1 Tim. 5:17).
- C. The Issue: How can a church balance these two potentially contradictory authority structures of congregation and leaders? How can it have both at the same time?

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<sup>1</sup> The congregation, however, chose these elders. In Acts 14:23 the word *appointed* (Gr. *cheirotonesantes* χειροτονήσαντες) means to “choose; elect by raising hands” (cf. 2 Cor. 8:19; Tit. 1:9; BAGD 881; cited by Paul Enns, *The Moody Handbook of Theology* [Chicago: Moody, 1994], 358).

## II. Believers are Commanded to Obey Their Church Leaders

- A. The church must obey its leaders: “Obey your leaders and submit to their authority. They keep watch over you as men who must give an account. Obey them so that their work will be a joy, not a burden, for that would be of no advantage to you” (Heb. 13:17).
- B. “Remember your leaders, who spoke the word of God to you. Consider the outcome of their way of life and imitate their faith” (Heb. 13:7). To “imitate” them clearly means not to fight against them!
- C. Obviously, the time when believers are most tempted to disobey their elected church deacons, elders, or pastors is when they disagree with them. Yet the NT does not excuse the congregation from obedience simply based on personal tastes or opinions. Even in these cases they should obey. This means that members should *never* vote against the decisions of their elected leaders. To do so fights against God-ordained authority.

## III. What Should Church Members Do if the Leadership Itself is Divided?

- A. Every church leadership team has times of disagreement. This is inevitable due to the limited understanding of fallible men, both in the congregation and in the leadership team.
- B. When leaders themselves are divided, the people should submit in the following ways:
  - 1. Pray for unity on the elder council.
  - 2. Patiently wait for the leaders to render their verdict rather than usurp their authority by taking matters into one’s own hands.
  - 3. Decide in advance to support the leadership decisions, even if these decisions are not unanimous and even if the membership disagrees.
  - 4. The first maxim of George Mueller is helpful here when seeking God’s will in a difficult situation: “I SEEK AT THE BEGINNING to get my heart into such a state that it has no will of its own in regard to a given matter. Nine-tenths of the trouble with people is just here. Nine-tenths of the difficulties are overcome when our hearts are ready to do the Lord's will, whatever it may be. When one is truly in this state, it is usually but a little way to the knowledge of what His will is.”<sup>2</sup>

## IV. What Should Church Members Do When They Disagree with Their Leaders?

- A. If a leader is clearly in sin, members should follow the four-step procedure for restoring sinning Christians noted in Matthew 18:15-20.<sup>3</sup>
  - 1. Go to this leader in private.
  - 2. Bring one or two others along for a second meeting if there is no repentance.

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<sup>2</sup> George Mueller, *George Mueller: Man of Faith*, reprint of “How I Ascertain the Will of God,” from *An Hour with George Mueller: The Man of Faith to Whom God Gave Millions*, ed. A. Sims (Warren Myers, P.O. Box 125: Singapore, ca. 1981), 43.

<sup>3</sup> A detailed look at Matthew 18:15-20 is in my separate study on “The Process of Church Discipline” (NT Survey class notes, 240a-c).

3. If there still is no repentance, bring the matter before the entire church body.
  4. If publicly exposing the sin does not restore him, the leader should be removed from office and treated like a non-Christian (i.e., encouraged towards repentance).
- B. However, many church disagreements between a congregation and the leaders are differences of opinion in matters that are not sinful or addressed in Scripture. What should the church do over debatable matters?
1. God expects respectful appeal to authority here as well. The Matthew 18:15 principle of keeping matters as small as possible is wise in these situations too.
  2. The church should *never* appeal to unbelievers to solve church matters (1 Cor. 6:1-8). Such cases of the justified going before the unjustified for justice (!) shows that the church is defeated already (v. 7a). It is better for believers to be wronged (justice not meted out) than for the truth of the gospel to be tarnished—or the truth of the situation be exposed before ungodly civil authorities. This prohibits a church from ever seeking a judgment from the Registry of Societies, the courts, or any other unbeliever. A neutral, godly arbitrator is best in these situations.
- C. When a believer disagrees with the church leadership, he has but *three options*:
1. *Submit* to these leaders without appeal, even though in disagreement.
  2. *Appeal* to them respectfully, but still abide by their decisions.
  3. *Leave* the church so as not to be under their authority by transferring his membership to another church that is led by leaders he respects.
- D. The option that is *not allowed* in Scripture is to fight against God-ordained leaders, whether in the civil (Rom. 13:1-7; 1 Pet. 2:13), family (Eph. 5:22-6:3), employment (Eph. 6:5-8), or church realm (Heb. 13:7, 17; 2 Cor. 10:8).

## V. When Should Church Members *Not* Obey Their Leaders?

- A. John encouraged Gaius not to allow one of his church leaders named Diotrephes to lead a fight against missionary teachers (3 John 9-10). This situation was so serious that the minority group led by Diotrephes actually removed ministry staff! This congregation was held captive by aggressive and ungodly leaders that they should have opposed but did not.
- B. Believers should disobey their church leaders only when these leaders mandate them to do something unscriptural, such as murder (e.g., abortion), lying, etc. One clear NT example of disobeying spiritual authority is when Peter and John disobeyed the command of the high priest and Council who would not permit them to share Christ. They replied, “Judge for yourselves whether it is right in God's sight to obey you rather than God” (Acts 4:19), then they continued to publicly witness for Christ.
- C. If the issue at hand is one that does *not* oppose the Bible (e.g., a command from deacons or elders to attend or not attend a meeting), then those under authority are obliged to obey. Otherwise, one's submission to authority soon becomes a “pick and choose” situation whether to obey or rebel against God-ordained leaders.

## VI. What Does “Congregational Authority” Mean?

- A. Sometimes congregational polity is misinterpreted to mean that the congregation is the final authority in church matters. This view sees the church governed by the congregation. This is not accurate and will lead to micromanagement.<sup>4</sup>
- B. What, then, is proper congregational authority? (One Baptist theologian suggests it is best to talk of “congregational authority” rather than “congregational government,”<sup>5</sup> which seems appropriate since even congregational church also have leaders.) These are three basic elements that our church seeks to maintain:<sup>6</sup>
1. Autonomy: Congregational polity means that a bishop or pope or denomination board or any other outside body does not determine local church polity. This is often called the autonomy (independence) of the local congregation. Each congregation calls its own pastor, determines its rules, and determines its own budget rather than having a pastor assigned to them (as in the Anglican structure).
  2. Priesthood of the Believer: “Every member of the local congregation has a voice in its affairs. It is the individual members of the congregation who possess and exercise authority. Authority is not the prerogative of a lone individual or select group.”<sup>7</sup> The primary manner in which the church members express their “priestly” function is in the selection of their leaders.
  3. Leadership: Even congregational governments must have leaders (be they pastors, elders, or deacons). These congregations elect leaders to determine governance, doctrine, staffing, and ministries. Submission to leaders is required even in political democracies “of the people, by the people, and for the people” (Abraham Lincoln). The alternative is chaos. “Early church government [was] a combination of the congregational and the presbyterial [elder] forms.”<sup>8</sup> Elders will account to God whether they listened to the concerns of the people. As servant leaders, they must act in the congregation’s best interests rather than lord it over them (1 Pet. 5:2-3). However, the people must also submit to their leaders. Submission to leadership is not contradictory to congregational authority since the people themselves ultimately choose their leaders.

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<sup>4</sup> This takes congregational authority to its logical extreme and is critiqued by Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994), 935-36.

<sup>5</sup> Earl D. Radmacher, “The Question of Elders” (Portland, OR: Western Baptist Press, 1977), 13; cited by Gordon R. Lewis and Bruce A. Demarest, *Integrative Theology*, 3 vols. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994), 3:256.

<sup>6</sup> Baptist theologian Millard J. Erickson, *Christian Theology*, one vol. ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1983-85), 1078 notes that autonomy and democracy are key. I have added leadership not because this is unique to Baptist polity, but because all Baptist churches also have leaders in addition to congregational authority.

<sup>7</sup> Erickson, 1078.

<sup>8</sup> Henry C. Thiessen, *Lecturers in Systematic Theology*, rev. Vernon D. Doerksen (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1979), 322; cf. Enns, 359.

## VII. Conclusion

- A. A helpful summary of the above is provided in the following five points, to which I have added a sixth point:<sup>9</sup>
1. “A biblical view would seem to include elements of elder rule and congregational rule. The apostles had authority over local churches but they never established a system of [rule where the leaders were not accountable to their congregation].
  2. “The model for church government must come from Scripture not from examples of civil government (i.e. the church is not to be a democracy just because America is). The goal of church decision-making is not to determine the will of the majority but to determine the will of God.
  3. “God has designed His spiritual ‘organism’ – the church – to be led by spiritually qualified leaders (see qualifications). They do indeed direct the church’s ministry toward God-given goals. Spiritual leaders are initiators.
  4. “The congregation as a whole was gathered to decide on some very significant issues... so it seems that a local congregation today would also be involved in weighty matters [such as the selection of pastors, elders, and deacons, exercise of church discipline, etc.].
  5. “Each church has to decide how much decision-making is done at the leadership level and what is done at the congregational level. Some issues are of such a nature that it would be unwise to involve the whole congregation. Some issues are of such a nature that it would be unwise not to involve the whole congregation. But godly qualified leadership is key. When spiritual leaders have courage to lead and sensitivity to the needs of the congregation, God is free to produce harmony and effective spiritual ministry.”
  6. Although congregations have a voice and vote, they are not the supreme authority in church matters, except in the sense that the people themselves choose their leaders; it is their leaders that will bear the greatest responsibility before God.
- B. God’s will for all believers, even those in congregational churches, is simple: “Obey your leaders and submit to their authority. They keep watch over you as men who must give an account. Obey them so that their work will be a joy, not a burden, for that would be of no advantage to you” (Heb. 13:17).
- C. Here is the main point of this study: God will hold all Christians accountable to live under the authority of their leaders, even when they disagree with the decisions of these leaders. The only exception is when these leaders clearly violate the Bible’s teachings. In such cases, even following them is a sin as the Word of God must remain our highest authority.

*Approved by the elders of Crossroads International Church on 12 January 2009*

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<sup>9</sup> Adapted from Sid Litke, “Survey of Bible Doctrine: The Church” ([http://www.bible.org/page.asp?page\\_id=424](http://www.bible.org/page.asp?page_id=424)), section IV, B, 1, d.

## The Role of Women in the Church

Paul wrote to Timothy, who gave pastoral oversight in Ephesus (1 Timothy 2:11-12, NIV):

“A woman should learn in quietness and full submission.  
<sup>12</sup>I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man; she must be silent.”

Many issues strike the modern reader about this text. In what *context* do these restrictions appear? What is *meant* by “exercise authority” and is it negative or neutral? Are these limits *culturally* defined, applying only to first century Ephesus or to today too? If they *apply* today, then how—which ministries convey authority and are limited to men? These four issues are addressed below.

### I. Context: Do these limits apply to both private and public arenas?

- A. The six chapters of 1 Timothy alternate from teaching for Timothy (1), the church (2–3), Timothy (4), the church (5:1–6:10), and finally back to Timothy (6:11–21). The basic exhortation is that he makes sure order exists in both in his personal life and the church.
- B. Our text on women concerns order within *public worship* for these reasons:
  1. “I urge, then, first of all,” (2:1) indicates a change in subject from the more private “Timothy, my son” exhortations (1:18) of the previous context.
  2. The command, “I want men everywhere to lift up holy hands in prayer” (2:8) does not mean women cannot pray in private. The context is the gathered church assembly.
  3. The prescription for modest dress (2:9–10) would make little sense privately.
  4. The exhortation for women to “learn in quietness and full submission” (2:11) obviously refers to the public assembly since parents—both mothers and fathers—are elsewhere commanded to teach children at home (e.g., Deut. 4:9–10; 11:14).

### II. Meaning: Is “exercise authority” the best translation?

- A. The text of 1 Timothy 2:12 not only prohibits women from teaching men in the worship service, but it also does not allow them to “have authority” (NIV, NLT, RSV) over men in this context. However, some argue that this prohibition not to “exercise authority” (NASB) has a negative connotation. In this sense, doesn’t Paul mean that women leaders should not “usurp authority” (KJV) in a domineering manner over men?
- B. This Greek verb (αὐθεντέω *authenteo*) can have either the negative meaning of “to domineer” or the positive idea of “to have authority over” (UBS dictionary).<sup>1</sup> It is used only here in the Bible, making the sense difficult to determine as no NT cross-references can be consulted. However, the word is used many times in Greek literature from the first century BC to the fifteenth century AD. Henry Scott Baldwin wrote the most detailed study of *authenteo*. He concluded after studying 82 uses outside the NT that it has an unambiguously negative meaning (“tyrannize”) only *once*.<sup>2</sup> Some claim that Paul could have used a more common word for “authority” if he simply meant

<sup>1</sup> The negative sense is also indicated as possible in Thayer’s Lexicon, though Thayer applies a neutral meaning to 1 Tim. 2:12: “αὐθεντέω αὐθέντῳ; (a biblical and ecclesiastical word; from αὐθέντης contracted from αὐτοέντης, and this from αὐτός and ἔντεα arms [others, ἔντης, cf. Hesychius συνέντης συνεργός; cf. Lobeck, Technol., p. 121]; hence, a. according to earlier usage, *one who with his own hand kills either others or himself*. b. in later Greek writings *one who does a thing himself, the author* [τῆς πράξεως, Polybius 23, 14, 2, etc.]; *one who acts on his own authority, autocratic*, equivalent to ἀποκράτωρ an absolute master; cf. Lobeck ad Phryn., p. 120 [also as above; cf. Winer’s Grammar, sec. 2, 1 c.]); *to govern one, exercise dominion over one*: τινός, 1 Tim. 2:12.\*” Note that the negative sense applied only before and after NT times while the first century sense was neutral: *to govern or exercise dominion over*.

<sup>2</sup> H. Scott Baldwin, “A Difficult Word,” in *Women in the Church: A Fresh Analysis of 1 Timothy 2:9–15*, eds. Andreas J. Kostenberger, Thomas R. Schreiner, and H. Scott Baldwin [Grand Rapids: Baker, 1995], 75.



authority in a neutral or positive sense.<sup>3</sup> However, each word for “authority” has a range of meanings.<sup>4</sup> For *authenteo*, “the root meaning involves the concept of authority,”<sup>5</sup> without referring to how that authority is used.<sup>6</sup> Therefore, the idea of it being negative is unfounded.

- C. But 1 Timothy 2:12 has two infinitives, not just one: “I do not permit a woman *to teach* or *to have authority* over a man.” Some say that “these two infinitives joined by the word ‘neither’ (οὐδέ) communicate a single coherent idea”<sup>7</sup> so that only *one limit* is imposed—*authoritative teaching* in a worship service. It is true that teaching and authority are linked closely so that the sense of one of them also applies to the other. Either “both items proscribed are viewed negatively or positively. Thus, the verse either means ‘I do not permit a woman to teach falsely or domineer over a man’ or ‘I do not permit a woman to teach or exercise authority over a man.’ The latter option is demanded, for there is no evidence here that the infinitive διδάσκειν [“to teach”] should be rendered ‘to teach falsely.’”<sup>8</sup> In other words, since “teaching” is positive, “authority” must also carry a positive sense. However, teaching and authority are distinct concepts so the idea of only *one* prohibition here (“*authoritative teaching*”) cannot stand up exegetically.

### III. Culture: Does the prohibition from teaching and leading men apply today?

- A. Interestingly, these limits were never challenged in the church during the first nineteen centuries. However, since the rise of feminism (and evangelical feminism in particular), some modern interpreters say that Paul’s commands are culturally conditioned—applicable only in the first century. This assumes that women of his day could *not* teach men publicly—either in the Jewish synagogue or in the Gentile city of Ephesus.
- B. So how did women function in public worship in the first century? The assumption above is correct. Paul was consistent with the generally restrictive limits of his time. In fact, in the synagogues not only did women *not* teach, but they also worshipped in a different section.
- C. But what about Ephesus where Timothy ministered? Other evangelical feminists advocate that Paul was going *against* a prevailing liberalism in women’s roles. They seek to portray a “feminist Ephesus” so that this text “is not directed against women participating in leadership but rather against a *monopoly* on religious power by women.”<sup>9</sup> However, even in Roman-Greco political groups and in the Artemis cult in Ephesus; it was still the *men* who occupied the highest

<sup>3</sup> Andrew C. Perriman, “What Eve Did, What Women Shouldn’t Do: The Meaning of ΑΥΘΕΝΤΕΩ in 1 Timothy 2:12,” *Tyndale Bulletin* 44 (1993): 135; Richard and Catherine Kroeger, *I Suffer Not a Woman; Rethinking 1 Timothy 2:11-15 in Light of Ancient Evidence* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1992), 84; Alva Mickelsen, “An Egalitarian View: There is Neither Male Nor Female in Christ,” in *Women in Ministry: Four Views*, ed. B. Clouse and R. G. Clouse (Downers Grove: IVP, 1989), 202; David M. Scholer, “1 Timothy 2:9-15 and the Place of Women in the Church’s Ministry,” *Women, Authority, and the Bible* (Downers Grove: IVP, 1986), 205; Philip H. Towner, *The Goal of Our Instruction* (JSNTSup 34; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1989), 216; Ben Wiebe, “Two Texts on Women (1 Tim 2:11-15; Gal 3:26-29): A Test of Interpretation,” *Horizons in Biblical Thinking* 16 (1994): 59-60; all cited by Thomas Schreiner, “A Dialogue with Scholarship,” in *Women in the Church*, 132, n. 120.

<sup>4</sup> Schreiner, 132.

<sup>5</sup> Baldwin, 79.

<sup>6</sup> Despite the above evidence, some still favor the negative sense of “domineer”: Gordon D. Fee, *1 & 2 Timothy, Titus*, NIBC (Peabody, Mass.: Hendricksen, 1988), 73; Timothy J. Harris, “Why Did Paul Mention Eve’s Deception? A Critique of P. W. Barnett’s Interpretation of 1 Timothy 2” *Evangelical Quarterly* 62 (1990): 342; Craig S. Keener, *Paul, Women, and Wives: Marriage and Women’s Ministry in the Letters of Paul* (Peabody, Mass.: Hendricksen, 1992), 109; Carroll D. Osburn, “ΑΥΘΕΝΤΕΩ (1 Timothy 2:12),” *Restoration Quarterly* 25 (1982): 1-12; Philip B. Payne, “Libertarian Women in Ephesus: A Response to Douglas J. Moo’s Article, ‘1 Timothy 2:11-15: Meaning and Significance,’” *Trinity Journal* 2 n.s. (1981): 175; Towner, *Goal of Our Instruction*, 215-16; Ben Witherington, *Women and the Genesis of Christianity* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1990), 121-22; Clarence Boomsma, *Male and Female, One in Christ: New Testament Teaching on Women in Office* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1993), 71-72; Steve Motyer, “Expounding 1 Timothy 2:8-15,” *Vox Evangelica* 24 (1994): 95-96; all cited by Schreiner, 133.

<sup>7</sup> Philip B. Payne, “Οὐδέ in 1 Timothy 2:12,” paper presented at the 1988 meeting of the Evangelical Theological Society, 104-8; Boomsma, 72-73; Motyer, 96; all cited by Schreiner, 133. Kostenberger, 82-84 critiques Payne.

<sup>8</sup> Schreiner, 133.

<sup>9</sup> Kroegers, 93, emphasis mine (cited by S. M. Baugh, “A Foreign World: Ephesus in the First Century,” in *Women in the Church*, 15).

positions—both in politics<sup>10</sup> and in religion. In fact, the priests who served the majority of pagan deities in Ephesus were men!<sup>11</sup>

- D. However, though Paul's teaching of predominant leadership for men (not women) was consistent with both pagan and Jewish practice, he did not support his stance by appealing to culture. In verses 13-15 he appealed to the trans-cultural creation order. Since Adam was created first (2:13), male headship applies to all cultures and all times. Male leadership is also based on Eve's sin of being deceived so that sin entered the human race (2:14). For this reason, God's plan is for women to lead their children rather than lead in the church services (2:15).<sup>12</sup> While many say that a woman training her children at home does not fully utilize her gifts, this is certainly not the view of Scripture. God has a very high view of the impact of parents in their children's lives.

#### IV. Application: Which church ministries *convey authority* and thus are limited to men?

- A. Churches today often decide women's roles based on pragmatism rather than God's Word. Some say that since some women are gifted as teachers, they can teach men in the church service. This pragmatism does not address the limits of 1 Timothy 2:12. Such decision-making based on experience rather than the Bible assumes women must exercise their gifts in a mixed (both sexes) worship service. However, many other avenues of ministry outside the worship service exist: women's and children's ministries, parachurch groups, etc. Countries like China rely extensively on the teaching of "Bible women." God will require an accounting of the church in each culture as to the degree to which the Bible affected culture (or vice versa). Some churches reason that they lack godly men, but we must decide what our authority will be.
- B. Our church holds the Bible as final authority, even where it makes unpopular demands. Article 4.6 of our Constitution states, "The Bible is the inspired Word of God written without error, our only sure source of knowledge about God and His plans, and our absolute guide for doctrinal teaching and godly living (2 Timothy 3:16-17; 2 Peter 1:20-21)." Since Scripture disallows women from teaching or having authority over men in the church assembly, the leaders have concluded that we will follow God's limits. Thus women do not teach by preaching to men in our church services.
- C. How else does Paul limit women from exercising authority in a worship service? Surely singing a solo or on the worship team does not have authority, but being the worship leader may convey such authority. In the OT, both men (1 Chron. 9:33) and women (Neh. 7:67) served as temple singers and instrumentalists, but men always led the worship (e.g., 1 Chron. 16:4-6). However, in NT churches (unlike in the synagogue/temple), men and women sat together. We assume that NT saints followed the OT pattern of male worship leading based on the creation order and the injunction for men alone to pray publicly (1 Tim. 2:8).

<sup>10</sup> "There were a number of primary magistrates and civic groups at Ephesus. No women are known to have filled these magistracies at Ephesus in the first century" (Baugh, 18).

<sup>11</sup> If a supposed feminine supremacy in religions in Ephesus was true, "We would expect to find either priestesses or other women controlling the resources of the [cult of Artemis] and appointments to its offices. Instead, Ephesian religious affairs were governed by the Roman and municipal authorities who were decidedly male" (Baugh, 24).

<sup>12</sup> This verse states, "But women will be saved through childbearing—if they continue in faith, love, and holiness with propriety" (2:15). Either "saved" has a [less-used] meaning of "preserved" or, if it refers to spiritual salvation, the verse is an appropriate response to false teachers at Ephesus who denigrated marriage (1 Tim. 4:3) and childbearing. Adhering to this God-given role of childbearing still will not save, so Paul adds character qualities that show real faith.

## V. Do You Agree or Disagree?

To explore your own ideas on this vital subject, please mark as A, U, or D beside each statement below to show whether you Agree, are Unsure, or Disagree with the teaching.

- A. A woman should not serve as a pastor-teacher with authority over an entire church.
- B. A woman should not serve as an elder (or other role on the highest ruling council) of a church.
- C. A woman should not be the main worship leader in the church worship service.
- D. A woman should not be an adult Christian Education director with authority over male teachers.
- E. A woman should not be a children's Sunday school director with authority over male teachers.
- F. A woman should not teach a mixed adult Sunday school class at the church building.
- G. A woman should not teach a mixed adult cell group at a private home.
- H. A woman should not teach a mixed biblical studies course at a seminary or Bible college.
- I. A woman should not teach a mixed non-biblical course at a seminary or Bible college.

## VI. Conclusion

Believers who take 1 Timothy 2:12 seriously find the above agree-disagree statements difficult. Where does one draw the line? As advocates of grace, our church believes that women should be given as much latitude as biblically possible. Scripture does not prohibit women from teaching men in private contexts such as Priscilla and Aquila did with Apollos (Acts 18:26). This would allow them to teach any course in the seminary, as well as teaching and serving in most leadership positions within the church. In fact, Scripture grants women authority to direct men in *most* local church positions, except (a) being an elder (repeated “he” and “husband” of 1 Tim. 3:1-7), (b) serving as a deacon (1 Tim. 3:8-12), (c) leading as senior pastor (an elder position), and (d) the public assembly context of 1 Timothy 2 requires women to listen rather than to teach *in that worship service only*, and to follow rather than to exercise authority over men *in that worship service only*. Surely many women are as gifted by the Spirit as are men (both now and in Paul's day), but this is not the issue. The point is that both NT examples and commands impose the above as universal limitations in their roles. That these limits are not applied in many (especially missionary) settings does not absolve our church from obedience. Therefore, we agree with statements A & B above, we're unsure with C, and disagree with D-I.

The four questions addressed in this paper thus have the following answers:

1. Context: Do these limits apply to both private and public arenas? *They relate to public worship only.*
2. Meaning: Is “exercise authority” the best translation? *Yes, it has a neutral or positive sense.*
3. Culture: Does the prohibition from teaching and leading men apply today? *Yes, it is trans-cultural.*
4. Application: Which church ministries convey authority and thus should be restricted to men? *Limits in 1 Timothy 2:8, 12 prohibit women from teaching or authoritative leadership (e.g., leading in prayer) in a church worship service. Other texts limit them from being an elder (esp. pastor-teacher) or deacon.*

The cliché says, “The hand that rocks the cradle rules the world.” Was it true years ago before the rise of feminism? Is it true today? How can women have the greatest impact for Christ? Paul believed in marriage and in the great influence that mothers have over their children (1 Cor. 7:14). He also wanted people to do the most for the cause of Christ—men and women alike. For this reason, he continued the age-old practice in the first century of keeping women in the most influential place possible in society: the home (2 Tim. 1:5; 3:14-15). However, women are also gifted of God to serve Christ in thousands of ways outside the family, with the exception of the few public context positions noted in the NT.

*Approved by the elders of Crossroads International Church on 5 December 2006*

## Paul's Dealing with Problems

The New Testament does not systematically present theology. Rather, most NT writings are actually letters that address a particular problem (and at least ten letters below respond to heretics). The chart below shows Paul's unique solution for each situation. The *key word* for that epistle is *italicized* (cf. page 24).

<b>Letter</b>	<b>Recipient's Problem</b>	<b>Paul's Solution</b>
<i>Galatians</i> ( <i>Soteriology</i> )	<i>Heretics</i> taught new believers that they must obey the Mosaic Law to be saved	<i>Justification</i> is by faith alone and not by keeping the Law
<i>1 Thessalonians</i> ( <i>Eschatology</i> )	<i>Heretics</i> questioned Paul's church planting motives and the state of believers at Christ's Return if they had already died	They should prepare for the <i>Rapture</i> by seeing Paul's pure motives and being comforted over believers who died
<i>2 Thessalonians</i> ( <i>Eschatology</i> )	<i>Heretics</i> taught the believers were in the Tribulation due to intense persecution so some quit their jobs and became lazy	The Day of the Lord ( <i>Tribulation</i> ) won't start until after the Church is removed and they must persevere without idleness
<i>1 Corinthians</i> ( <i>Ecclesiology</i> )	Disorder in the church came from divisions, moral deviations, and false doctrines taught by <i>heretics</i>	Proper behavior where positional <i>sanctification</i> becomes practical results only from a true theology of the gospel
<i>2 Corinthians</i> ( <i>Ecclesiology</i> )	<i>Heretics</i> undermined Paul's authority to advise the church	Paul defends his <i>apostleship</i> in his new covenant ministry to affirm the church's doctrinal foundation and giving
<i>Romans</i> ( <i>Soteriology</i> )	Jew-Gentile struggles disrupted body life in confusion over the role of the Law and insensitivity to one another in gray areas	Living out God's <i>righteousness</i> achieved by justification through faith will bring unity before Paul arrives
<i>Ephesians</i> ( <i>Christology</i> )	Jew-Gentile disunity within the church hindered their testimony before unbelievers	God's mystery of Jew-Gentile <i>unity</i> in the Church under Christ as Head must show itself in love for each other
<i>Colossians</i> ( <i>Christology</i> )	<i>Heretics</i> led believers into combining legalism, asceticism, and angel worship	Christ is God ( <i>deity</i> ), so the church must worship Him alone in holy living
<i>Philemon</i> ( <i>Christology</i> )	A Christian slave owner (Philemon) was tempted to mistreat his now-believing former slave, Onesimus, who had returned	This master must grant <i>forgiveness</i> to his former slave to model the reconciliation of believers to God through Christ
<i>Philippians</i> ( <i>Christology</i> )	Concern over Paul's fate in prison was complicated by legalistic and libertine <i>heretics</i> and disunited women	Imitating Christ's <i>attitude</i> will give joy, humility, balance between "law extremes" and peace with God and man
<i>1 Timothy</i> ( <i>Ecclesiology</i> )	Ascetic and speculative <i>heretics</i> threatened Timothy's leadership of the Ephesian church	Church <i>order</i> will follow if Timothy guards his personal life and doctrine and shares leadership with other godly men
<i>Titus</i> ( <i>Ecclesiology</i> )	<i>Heretics</i> on Crete hindered the health of the newly planted churches	Teach believers sound <i>conduct</i> through qualified elders to silence accusations
<i>2 Timothy</i> ( <i>Ecclesiology</i> )	<i>Heretics</i> and persecution of believers caused many believers to deny Christ	Persevere in sound <i>doctrine</i> by preaching and practicing God's Word despite hardship

Do you also know the issues *your* people face? Do you ignore them or *resolve* them within your church?

## Selecting Leadership for the Local Church

### I. How Do Most Churches Select Their Leaders?

(i.e., What criteria is often used to find out who will be the church deacons, elders, etc.?)<sup>1</sup>

- A. Popularity (attractiveness, charisma, and likableness)
- B. Past (tradition, "He's always had that office" mentality)
- C. Politics (shrewdness, clout, manipulation)
- D. Pocketbook (wealth, large church contributions, even bribery)
- E. Profession (occupational standing—why do so few middle and lower class elders exist?)

### II. How *Should* Churches Select Leaders? What Process of Selection and What Qualifications Must Potential Church Leaders Meet?

#### A. Scriptural Examples:

1. APOSTLES: The Replacement of Judas (Acts 1:12-26)
  - a. Process of Selection: Congregational selection of candidates, prayer, drawing of lots, apostolic appointment. However, since we have no apostles anymore I believe that this process is not a pattern for us!
  - b. Qualifications: To be in "the twelve," one had to be a participant in Christ's ministry and eyewitness of His resurrection (Acts 1:21-22). For other apostles only the latter was required (cf. 1 Cor. 9:1). This is why no one today qualifies as an apostle.
2. DEACONS: The Church at Jerusalem (Acts 6:1-6)
  - a. Process of Selection: Congregational selection, apostolic appointment (Gr: "ordain")
  - b. Qualifications: Good reputation, full of the Spirit and of wisdom (v. 3; but see especially 1 Tim. 3:8-13 which is explained later in this study)
3. ELDERS: Titus' Responsibility (Titus 1:5-9)
  - a. Process of Selection: undefined, but Paul told Titus as his apostolic representative to appoint (Gr: "ordain") men once they had been selected. Elders were likely selected by church vote just as were the leaders in the Jerusalem church (cf. Acts 6:1-6). With no apostolic delegates today to ordain elders, ordination must be by the church leadership.
  - b. Qualifications: Titus 1:6-9; 1 Tim. 3:2-7 (explained on the following pages)

#### B. Scriptural Principles:

- 1) Qualifications *apply only to men* (women are excluded).
- 2) Qualifications are not optional but *essential* (all qualities must be true of one being considered; failure in one area should be reason for withholding appointment).
- 3) Qualifications primarily refer to one's *present lifestyle* and character, not his past (unless Scripture designates past actions as applicable to the present).
- 4) Qualifications refer to the *office of elder* (i.e., bishop, overseer, pastor) or *deacon* but not other church leadership positions (e.g., Sunday School teacher, care group leader).
- 5) Qualifications *must be maintained* to stay an elder. Those who at first met the qualifications but later neglected to maintain the standards must resign or be removed from the board.
- 6) Qualifications emphasize a man's *character far more than his abilities* (which may disqualify some of the most successful and shrewd businessmen within the church).
- 7) Qualifications emphasize a man's ability to manage his *home* more than his work.

<sup>1</sup>Chuck Swindoll, *Excellence in Ministry* (Fullerton, CA; Insight for Living, 1985), 39.

## An Examination of the Elder Qualifications (Titus 1:6-9; 1 Timothy 3:1-7)

### I. Outline of the Qualifications

A. General Reputation	(Titus 1:6a;	1 Tim. 3:2a)
B. Family Life	(Titus 1:6b;	1 Tim. 3:2b, 4-5)
C. Negative Characteristics	(Titus 1:7;	1 Tim. 3:3a, 6)
D. Positive Characteristics	(Titus 1:8;	1 Tim. 3:2b, 3b, 7)
E. Teaching Requirement	(Titus 1:9;	1 Tim. 3:2)

Note: A man's *desire* to be an elder must precede any official evaluation (1 Tim. 3:1a). If a man does not want to become an elder, it matters little whether he qualifies, so even if "desire" is not considered a qualification, it certainly is relevant. Also, "BAGD" in the qualities below abbreviates the Greek lexicon by Bauer, Arndt, Gingrich, and Danker. This work is considered the standard dictionary for defining Greek words.

### II. Examination of the Qualities Individually (NIV translations are underlined)

#### A. General Reputation (Titus 1:6a; 1 Tim. 3:2a)

1. Above Reproach is a general qualification of general reputation that can be seen as an "umbrella principle" under which all the other traits fall.
  - a. (ἀνέγκλητος Tit. 1:6, 10 [deacons]) means "blameless" (cf. KJV) or "irreproachable" (BAGD 64b) in the sense that no one can point a finger at his character or behavior with an accurate accusation—not perfect, but having a good reputation. This means not "merely unaccusable, but unaccused; not free from any just charge... but free from any charge at all...if any present [at the elder's ordination] had such a charge to bring, the ordination should not go forward until such a charge had been sifted" (Trench, 381). This requirement to be blameless excludes one guilty of sin in his past which the church would need to discipline (e.g., divorce, immorality, criminal offenses) or which affects his present reputation.
  - b. (ἀνεπίληπτου 1 Tim. 3:2) is translated "above reproach," being a synonym and also meaning "irreproachable" (BAGD) with the same sense as ἀνέγκλητο"
2. Respectable (κόσμιον 1 Tim. 3:2b) also has the idea "honorable" (BAGD) and is used of women who wear modest apparel (1 Tim. 2:9). The word refers to one who is living an orderly or well-arranged life, and Christ used the verb form (κοσμέω) to designate a "well-ordered house" (Matt. 12:44), "well-trimmed lamps" (Matt. 25:7) and "decorated" tombstones (Matt. 23:29). A respectable man shows maturity that avoids personal excesses that may offend others, particularly weaker brothers and sisters. The church whose leaders do not earn respect will have a difficult experience.
3. [Having] a Good Reputation with Those Outside the Church (μαρτυρίαν καλήν ἔχειν ἀπὸ τῶν ἕξωθεν 1 Tim. 3:7) also is mandatory for one being considered for office. An elder should be respected both inside and outside the church. The phrase literally reads, "to have a good witness from those outside." This requirement disqualifies anyone known by unbelievers as a crooked businessman, a lazy worker, a tyrant, a hardheaded and insensitive man, etc. A "good reputation" can be very broad.

Note: The following qualities relate to a man's *genuine* character, but the qualities above ("above reproach," "respectable" and "good reputation") denote his *perceived* character. A godly man who is not *known* as a godly man cannot qualify as elder.

**B. Family Life (Titus 1:6b; 1 Tim. 3:2b, 4-5)**

4. The Husband of One Wife (μιᾶς γυναικὸς ἄνδρα in 1 Tim. 3:2; μιᾶς γυναικὸς ἀνὴρ in Tit. 1:6) emphasizes a man's control in sexual restraint and a faithful relationship to his wife if he is married. (If he is not faithful in this second most important relationship in life should he be trusted in the affairs of the church?) This qualification excludes any husband unfaithful to his wife or one guilty of homosexuality, incest, and other sins of the flesh. (See the detailed evaluation on pages 228-230).
5. Having Responsible Children is generally translated like the NIV's "whose children believe" (τέκνα ἔχων πιστά Tit. 1:6) but may also be translated "having faithful children." This alternate translation is preferable since: (1) parents are not ultimately responsible for the salvation of their children, and (2) because the parallel meaning is supported in 1 Timothy 3:4 where an elder is required to "manage his household well, keeping his children under control with all dignity" (cf. 1 Tim. 3:12 for deacons). The word for "manage" is also used of elders who "rule" (1 Tim. 5:17). The meaning of "having faithful children" is explained in the following clause (below).
6. (Whose Children Are) Not Accused of Dissipation or Rebellion (μὴ ἐν κατηγορίᾳ ἀσωτίας ἀνυπότακτα Tit. 1:6) refers to the elder's children not being able to be slandered for riotous living or insubordination ("being wild or disobedient," NIV), but rather being disciplined and restrained (able to accept authority). The man whose children are rebellious or excessive (drugs, sex, drunkenness, etc.) would best get his family under control before taking on responsibility as a church leader (cf. 1 Tim. 3:5).

**C. Negative Characteristics (Titus 1:7; 1 Tim. 3:3a, 6)**

7. Not Self-Willed (μὴ αὐθάδη Tit. 1:7) means that the man under consideration must not be "stubborn or arrogant" (BAGD), or not self-indulgent to the point of showing arrogance to others. He must be a protector of God's concerns (holiness, purity, faithfulness, etc.) rather than of selfish pursuits (desire for control in the church, overbearingness, etc.). Humility is indispensable.
8. Not Quick-Tempered (μὴ ὀργίλον Tit. 1:7) means not "inclined to anger" (BAGD), not given to outbursts of wrath, not contentious or belligerent. Gentle (ἐπιεικῆ 1 Tim. 3:3) or "yielding" and "kind" (BAGD) describes this characteristic positively.
9. Not Addicted to Wine (μὴ πάροινον Tit. 1:7; 1 Tim. 3:3) properly describes one who is "not drunken" (BAGD). The literal translation is "not (one who lingers) beside (his) wine." Temperate (νηφάλιον 1 Tim. 3:2) refers to the same idea, "literally temperate in the use of alcoholic beverages, sober, clear-headed, self-controlled" (BAGD). An alcoholic or heavy drinker should never be considered for the office of elder. Ideally an elder should be a non-drinker and at the most one who drinks with great moderation.
10. Not pugnacious (μὴ πλήκτην 1 Tim. 3:3) refers to a "pugnacious man, bully" (BAGD). This is a man who is "not violent" (NIV) and not given to blows, not eager to use his fists, and not argumentative. Certainly any man with a reputation for physical and emotional retaliation at others would not meet this elder qualification.
11. Uncontentious (ἄμαχον 1 Tim. 3:3b) properly understood refers to the quality of being "peaceable" (BAGD). Not only should the elder avoid fighting ("not pugnacious" above), he must also actively pursue unity and harmony within the body of Christ. One who has a tendency to "witch hunt" makes the work of the elders terribly difficult in the many potentially explosive situations that eventually face every church. If this characteristic is expected of all believers (Tit. 3:2), how much more for the leaders!
12. Not Pursuing Dishonest Gain (μὴ αἰσχροκερδῆ Tit. 1:7) refers to one "not fond for dishonest gain, greedy for money" (BAGD 25a). He makes an honest living and is upright in all his

business dealings since he is “not given to filthy lucre” (KJV). Free from the love of money (ἀφιλάργυρον 1 Tim. 3:3b) describes the characteristic positively. A man who gambles, hoards his money, or is pursuing the elder office for financial advantage is clearly disqualified, as would be one who refuses to at least tithe.

13. Not a New Convert (μὴ νεόφυτον 1 Tim. 3:6) means not “newly planted” and gives our English word “neophyte” (BAGD). The age in Christ a Christian qualifies for eldership is not designated, but Paul appointed elders from men less than a year old in Christ during his first missionary journey (Acts 14:23). However, they were not novices as they were steeped in Judaism. The principle is to appoint mature men in Christ, especially mature in humility to fight pride from being appointed to office.

#### D. Positive Characteristics (Tit. 1:8; 1 Tim. 3:2b, 3b, 7)

14. Hospitable (φιλόξενον Tit. 1:8; 1 Tim. 3:2), or “loving strangers” (Hendriksen), also should characterize one considered for the office of elder. The word for “hospitable” here is a compound word (φίλος, “brotherly love” plus ξένος, “stranger, alien”) which means showing love towards those one doesn’t know. Does the man love and care for believers and strangers, or treat people with contempt, especially if they are of a different social status or race? One who still struggles with racial, religious, or social prejudices is disqualified on this requirement. “For the whole law is fulfilled in one word, in the statement, ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself’” (Gal. 5:14).
15. Loving What is Good (φιλάγαθον Tit. 1:8) has the same root (φίλος, “brotherly love”) as above, meaning “loving goodness, virtuous, ready to do what is beneficial to others” (Hendriksen; cf. Phil. 4:8). The KJV, “a lover of good men,” is an inaccurate and unfortunate translation in its exclusiveness (especially since believers are commanded to love all men; cf. Rom. 13:8-10). “Loving what is good” in its simplest sense means loving God and what God loves. This characteristic definitely disqualifies from office one who approves of abortion, premarital and extramarital sex, and other harmful practices clearly forbidden by Scripture.
16. Sensible (σώφρονα Tit. 1:8) suggests being “of sound mind, reasonable, sensible, serious, keeping one’s head” (BAGD). Prudent (σώφρονα 1 Tim. 3:2) expresses the same concept with a different English translation of the same Greek word. This connotes that an elder needs to be wise and balanced in his judgment, marked by a proper self-image (humility without self-condemnation) as Romans 12:3 exhorts. This quality excludes men known as lacking proper judgment or proud “know-it-alls.”
17. Just (δίκαιον Tit. 1:8) is defined as “upright, righteous” (BAGD). Being just suggests a man who demonstrates impartiality in his decision-making. He is fair, able to make mature judgments and characterised by practical righteousness affirmed in his lifestyle.
18. Devout (ὄσιον Tit. 1:8) especially emphasizes a man’s relationship with God as “devout, pious, pleasing to God, holy” (BAGD). One demonstrating this quality continually progresses in holiness to be more like Christ. He has made it a priority to “put on the new man” (Eph. 4:24). He is one of whom people declare, “He sure is a godly man!”
19. Self-Controlled (ἐγκρατῆ Tit. 1:8) also refers to being “disciplined” (BAGD). A man with excesses in habits, tardiness, anger, etc. reveals him to be undisciplined in his lifestyle and therefore not qualified for the office of elder. The point here is to require someone to exercise control over his own life before he is given control over the church.

#### E. Teaching Requirement (Tit. 1:9; 1 Tim. 3:2)

20. Able to Teach (διδασκτικόν 1 Tim. 3:2) and Holding Fast the Faithful Word... to Exhort (Encourage)... and to Refute... (Tit. 1:9) both specify that elders should have some aptitude for teaching, although not necessarily possessing the *gift* of teaching (Rom. 12:7; 1 Cor. 12:28; Eph. 4:11). They need not be scholars, but they should have a good grasp of the Word of God for two purposes (Tit. 1:9b): (1) to exhort (encourage) others in sound doctrine, and (2) to refute those who contradict [sound doctrine]. This teaching qualification is no light order, especially since the



responsibility covers a church-wide scale. It is imperative that an elder be well grounded in the “faithful word which is according to the teaching” (Tit. 1:9), and yet to be able to communicate the Word in a non-offensive manner. This characteristic excludes those with no aptitude for teaching on a group or one-on-one basis and those who possess only a superficial knowledge of the Bible, especially in its basic doctrines.

### **III. Summary of the Qualifications**

The 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1 elder qualifications mostly describe a man's character, not his abilities (exceptions being “able to teach” and “managing his household well”). It can be concluded from this observation that God is more concerned with *who* a man is than *what* he can do, especially as this is revealed in his family relationships and general reputation as a man of God.

### **IV. Practical Implications**

The qualifications for elder are presented as a unit. No ratio or percentage of them that need to be true of a man appears in either 1 Timothy 3 or Titus 1. Paul stressed each characteristic as vital. Therefore, *all* of the traits are necessary to accept a man as an elder. (If *all* the qualities were not mandatory, who would be so presumptuous to decide *which* ones are optional?)

This requirement of all the qualifications does not infer that the man must have *arrived* as a man of God, but that he is progressing toward greater spiritual maturity with these qualities as a foundation. The church should be instructed in the meanings of the requirements in a series of messages, then as a congregational body should decide upon each possible elder candidate who is put forward by a committee which recommends elders.

The question rises concerning how long to wait until such men are identified in a congregation. Scripture gives no time indication here. The temptation in some churches is to appoint men too quickly to this office; this leads to selecting elders who don't really scripturally qualify.

However, this also doesn't mean that the body of believers should sit around and wait for qualified men to appear like magic. The pastor needs to build his life into several men with the prayer that many of them would eventually qualify to assist him as elders.

These men certainly can and should assist the pastor before assuming the title of elder. They need not be elders to be useful to the church. Being disciplined by the pastor allows them time for growth into men of God who then can serve as elders with the pastor as models of a church with high, biblical standards of church leadership.

Alexander Strauch summarizes the importance of elder qualifications:<sup>2</sup>

It is highly noteworthy that the New Testament provides more instruction concerning the qualifications for eldership than on any other aspect of eldership. Such qualifications are not required of all teachers or evangelists. One person may be gifted as an evangelist and be used of God in that capacity, yet be unqualified to be an elder. An individual may be an evangelist immediately after conversion, but Scripture says that a new convert cannot be an elder (1 Timothy 3:6).

When we speak of the elders' qualifications, most people think that these qualifications are different than those of the clergy. The New Testament, however, has no separate standards for professional clergy and lay elders. The reason is simple. There aren't three separate offices—pastor, elders, and deacons—in the New Testament-style local church. There are only two offices—elders and deacons. From the New Testament perspective, any man in the congregation who desires to shepherd the Lord's people and meets God's requirements for the office can be a pastor elder.

<sup>2</sup> Alexander Strauch, *Biblical Eldership: Restoring the Eldership to Its Rightful Place in the Church*, rev. (Littleton, CO: Lewis & Roth, 1997), 21. This is a pamphlet size summary of his earlier full-length book available for US\$14.99 at <http://www.discerningreader.com/bibelalstrau.html>.

## A Closer Look at “Husband of One Wife” for Elders (1 Tim. 3:2; Tit. 1:6) and Deacons (1 Tim. 3:12)

### I. Various Translations

- A. Ambiguous/Literal: “the husband of one wife” (NASB, NAU, NJB, ESV, KJV, NKJV, RSV, Beck, Amplified)
- B. Emphasizing Number of Wives: “the husband of but one wife” (NIV, NIB), “must have only one wife” (LB, Williams, TEV [The Everyday Bible]), “with only one wife” (Phillips), “married only once” (NAB, NRS)
- C. Emphasizing Faithfulness in Marriage: “faithful to his one wife” (NEB), “faithful to his wife” (NLT), “committed to his wife” (The Message), “a one-wife kind of a man [that is, married only once]” (Wuest, brackets his)

### II. Greek Nuances

- A. Literally, μιᾶς γυναικὸς ἄνδρα [ἀνὴρ] means “a one woman (wife) man (husband)” or “a man (husband) of one woman (wife).”
  1. “Woman” and “wife” are both possible translations of the same Greek word (γυναικὸς).
  2. “Man” and “husband” are both possible translations of the same Greek word (ἄνδρα [ἀνὴρ]).
- B. The emphasis is upon the word “one” in the original.

### III. Various Interpretations & Critiques

- A. Prohibition of Those Not Married to the Church (i.e., must be celibate)
  1. Strengths
    - a. The church is referred to as “the Bride of Christ” in Scripture.
    - b. Paul considered celibacy honorable (1 Cor. 7:37-38).
  2. Weaknesses
    - a. While the church is frequently called the “bride of Christ” in the NT, it is never referred to as the “wife of Christ.” The New Jerusalem is called the “wife of the Lamb” (Rev. 21:9).
    - b. Although celibacy is honorable, if it was necessary for church leadership then the requirements regarding the elder’s children and family management would have no meaning (1 Tim. 3:4-5; Tit. 1:6). Therefore, this view does not fit the context.
    - c. If Paul required the single lifestyle for church leadership, he would be excluding even some of the married apostles such as Peter.
    - d. “Marriage” to the church is a concept foreign to Scripture.
    - e. This view is even abandoned by most Roman Catholic commentators today.
- B. Prohibition of Single Men (i.e., must be married)
  1. Strengths
    - a. Married men have a broader range of experience due to family responsibilities and can probably relate to more church and relational problems than can single men.
    - b. “Husband” and “wife” seem to be better translations than “man” and “woman” since the following phrase concerns the candidate’s children.
  2. Weaknesses
    - a. Paul considered the single life preferable over the married life (1 Cor. 7:37-38).
    - b. The same logic for marriage as a requisite would have to be used for the qualification “having children...” This would disqualify married men without children.
    - c. If Paul forbade the single lifestyle for church leadership, he would be contradicting his own warning against false teachers who prohibited marriage (1 Tim. 4:3).
    - d. If Paul forbade the single lifestyle for church leadership, he would be contradicting his own lifestyle as a single man (1 Cor. 7:8).
    - e. The qualification reads, “husband of *one* wife,” not “husband of *a* wife.”

## C. Prohibition of Polygamy or Concubines

## 1. Strengths

- a. One with two or more wives/mistresses can't be called a "husband of one wife"!
- b. Even men of God practiced polygamy in the OT times. God may be attaching a stricter rule here for leaders than that allowed in the OT.
- c. Men with concubines were a frequent NT practice.

## 2. Weaknesses

- a. Since polygamy and promiscuity are forbidden of *all* Christians, the requirement must mean more than this.
- b. There is no evidence that polygamy was practiced in the first century church. It was illegal by Roman, Greek, and Jewish law.

D. Prohibition of Remarried Widowers (Kelly, *The Pastoral Epistles*, 75-76)

## 1. Strengths

- a. Those who remarry following the death of a spouse may do so out of lack of self-control (1 Tim. 5:11-12).
- b. Remarried widowers have had two wives, not one.
- c. Most first and second century commentators taught this view as they saw remarriages as indicating lack of sexual self-restraint.
- d. Paul considered unmarried widows happier than remarried widows (1 Cor. 7:40).

## 2. Weaknesses

- a. A second marriage following a spouse's death does not necessarily imply lack of sexual self-restraint.
- b. Remarried widowers still only have one wife at the time of consideration regarding elder requirements.
- c. The practices of the church in the first few centuries are still subject to God's Word as their authority, and an ascetic bias prevailed during this time.
- d. Paul allowed remarriage after the death of a spouse (1 Cor. 7:39).

## E. Prohibition of Divorced Men Who Remarry

## 1. Strengths

- a. Christ claimed that one who marries another while his first spouse is still living is an adulterer (Matt. 5:32; 19:9; Mark 10:11; Luke 16:18). Similarly, Paul called a woman an adulteress if she is married to another man while her husband is living (Rom. 7:3).
- b. Paul commanded divorced believers to remain unmarried (1 Cor. 7:10-11).
- c. Divorce is a failure in one's most important arena (the home), and, though forgiven of the believer, is not the type of leadership example that the congregation should follow.
- d. Since the man who has never been married in the first place is called an adulterer for marrying a divorced woman (Luke 16:18), surely one who actually commits adultery himself cannot be deemed "above reproach" (1 Tim. 3:2; Tit. 1:6).

## 2. Weaknesses

- a. The emphasis in elder qualifications is upon one's *present* character, not his past. A man could have been a complete failure in a previous marriage but a success in the present one.
- b. The past divorce could have been largely or even entirely the wife's fault.
- c. The reference to married men being "adulterers" in the Greek describes an act, not an ongoing condition or state. The sin is forgiven and forgotten in God's book, so the church shouldn't hold against someone what God Himself does not hold against him—especially in the case of one whose divorce occurred as an unbeliever.
- d. At the time of being considered for office the candidate would have but one wife (i.e., he has only had "one wife at a time").

## F. Husband Who is Faithful to His Wife

### 1. Strengths

- a. It sees “a one-woman kind of man” as indicative of his character at present.
- b. It interprets an ambiguous phrase generally, not attaching any more meaning to it than the mere words allow. Being a “one-woman man” denotes a man who is not sexually promiscuous, who has his thought life under control, who is not flirtatious, etc.

### 2. Weaknesses

- a. The phrase says nothing at all about moral faithfulness. The above interpretation is too general for a specific phrase mentioning the number of wives a man has had. If Paul had a general sense in mind, why did he not write, “morally pure” or “sexually upright” to clearly indicate moral integrity?
- b. None of the Church Fathers of the first two centuries interpreted the qualification this generally—and they were reading this in Greek as their first language.
- c. It is not unfair to disqualify a man for something he did in his past. Although every believer’s sin is forgiven, the consequences are often long lasting.

## III. Conclusion

The ambiguous Greek for “husband of one wife” makes it a very difficult qualification to understand. The primary question seems to be, “How stringent a standard did Paul mean by this phrase?”

In summary, six views of the “husband of one wife” clause exclude from the eldership one who is:

1. Married to the church (elders must be single)
2. Single (elders must be married)
3. Polygamous or entertaining concubines (immoral)
4. A remarried widower
5. A remarried divorcee
6. Not morally upright with and devoted to the wife he presently has

The last two views have the most to commend them. Chuck Swindoll holds to the last view: “Taken in its most basic sense, it means that an overseer, if married, must be married to only one woman (which excludes bigamy, polygamy, and homosexuality) and must be devoted to his wife (which excludes promiscuity and an unhealthy marriage).”<sup>1</sup>

Yet even if the final view is correct, other issues regarding divorced men must be considered:

1. There is reason to question whether one who is divorced can be considered as “above reproach” (1 Tim. 3:2; Tit. 1:6). Failure in marriage is failure in the most important relationship in life.
2. Can a divorced man be an example for the flock as “one who manages his own household well” (1 Tim. 3:4-5; cf. Tit. 1:6)? Paul also noted the importance of ability: “If a man does not know how to manage his own household, how will he take care of the church of God?” (1 Tim. 5:5).
3. Depending upon views on divorce in society at large, some may doubt whether a divorced man could be described as “having a good reputation with those outside the church” (1 Tim. 3:7). Even if this failure has now been remedied, the effects from such a failure (e.g., broken home with children) generally last throughout one’s lifetime and become public knowledge.
4. The sticky question is whether one who marries a divorcee is disqualified on either or both of these texts: “... the man who marries a divorced woman commits adultery” (Luke 16:18), and whether one who marries a divorcee may be deemed “above reproach” (1 Tim. 3:2).

Therefore, although “husband of one wife” may emphasize only that a man must be a faithful husband if married, other qualifications may exclude from church leadership those divorced.

<sup>1</sup>Charles R. Swindoll, *Excellence in Ministry* (Fullerton, CA; Insight for Living, 1985), 41.

# An Examination of the Deacon Qualifications

1 Timothy 3:8-13

## I. Outline of the Qualifications

A. **Men: Specific Behavior (vv. 8-10)**

B. **Women: Specific Behavior (v. 11)**

C. **Men: Family Life (vv. 12-13)**

The elder qualification study (class notes, 224) noted that a man's *desire* to be an elder must precede any official evaluation (1 Tim. 3:1a) since if he does not *want* to become an elder, it matters little whether he qualifies. Although not expressly stated in the following passage on deacon qualifications, obviously the same truth applies here as well. Thus, implicitly a man's desire to be a deacon would have to precede or accompany any evaluation of his life.

As to the origin of the deacon office in the Church, this is not given in Scripture nor recorded for us in the extra-biblical writings. While the appointment of "the Seven" in Acts 6 in AD 34-35 may perhaps serve as model, nowhere are these seven men ever called deacons. In fact, over twenty years after their appointment (AD 57), Philip is still called one of "the Seven" (Acts 21:8), not "one of the Jerusalem deacons." However, in AD 62 Paul addressed his letter to Philippi's "elders and deacons" (Phil. 1:1) so the office was certainly known by this time.

As to the nature (i.e., responsibilities) of the office, this is also never laid out as with the elders (cf. Acts 20:28, 35; 1 Pet. 5:1-4). However, the term "deacon" means literally one who serves in a menial capacity such as waiting on tables, so these persons fulfilled a role that was subservient to the elders. Elders were responsible for teaching and hospitality, roles that were never required of deacons.

## II. Examination of the Qualities Individually

### A. **Men: Specific Behavior (vv. 8-10)**

1. Worthy of Respect (σεμνούς v. 8) means "worthy of respect or honor, noble, dignified, serious" (BAGD 747a 1a). This quality was required of older men in general (Tit. 2:2). A respectable man shows maturity that avoids personal excesses that may offend others, especially weaker saints. The church whose leaders do not earn respect will have a difficult experience.
2. Sincere is the positive way of saying "not double-tongued" (μὴ διλόγους v. 8; BAGD 198d; cf. NASB) and carries the idea of being one who is consistent in what he says. This means not being a "double-talker" who says "one thing to one man and a different thing to the next" (Kelly, *Pastoral Epistles*, 81). Deacons, being responsible for many servant tasks, must be men who can keep a tight rein on the tongue backed by integrity of heart.
3. Not Indulging in Much Wine (μὴ οἴνω πολλῷ προσέχοντας v. 8; cf. elder qualification #9 "not addicted to wine" or "not (one who lingers) beside (his) wine" [μὴ πάροινον] in Tit. 1:7; 1 Tim. 3:3) means one who is not "occupying oneself with, devoted or applying oneself to" wine (BAGD 714d 1c; cf. 1 Tim. 4:13). Temperate (νηφάλιον 1 Tim. 3:2) has the same idea, "literally temperate in the use of alcoholic beverages, sober, clear-headed, self-controlled" (BAGD 538d). An alcoholic or heavy drinker must never be considered for the office of deacon. Ideally a deacon should be an abstainer and at the most one who drinks with great moderation.
4. Not Pursuing Dishonest Gain (μὴ αἰσχροκερδεῖς v. 8, is an alternate form of elder qualification #12 μὴ αἰσχροκερδῆ Tit. 1:7) means "not fond for dishonest gain, greedy for money" (BAGD 25a). He makes an honest living and is upright in all his business dealings since he is "not given to filthy lucre" (KJV). Free from the Love of Money (ἀφιλάργυρον 1 Tim. 3:3b) used for elders describes this characteristic positively. A man who gambles, hoards his money, or pursues the deacon office for financial gain is clearly disqualified. Also, his giving record reveals whether he loves God or loves money. Deacons are often entrusted with large sums of money in the congregation (offerings, alms, etc.) and must show restraint here before appointment.
5. Keep[ing] Hold of the Deep Truths of the Faith with a Clear Conscience (ἔχοντας τὸ μυστήριον τῆς πίστεως ἐν καθαρᾷ συνειδήσει v. 9) refers to adhering to "the mystery of the faith," or doctrine received by special revelation (cf. Eph. 3:2-6). Today "mystery" denotes something concealed but in NT times it meant something revealed. A deacon must be firmly grounded in the basic, revealed, scriptural teachings and living in harmony with these doctrines. He need not be "able to teach" as is required of an elder, but he must hold firm personal convictions. This disqualifies from being a deacon men who lack assurance of salvation or have doubts about inerrancy, Christ's virgin birth, His substitutionary death, Christ's resurrection, etc.

6. Tested to See if There is Nothing Against Them (δοκιμαζέσθωσαν πρῶτον v. 10; elder qualification #1 in 1 Tim. 3:2a; Tit. 1:6) means to be “proved...blameless” (KJV) or “irreproachable” (BAGD 64b) in the sense that no one can point a finger at his character or behavior with an accurate accusation—not perfect, but has a good reputation. “Tested” means, “to put to the test, examine” (BAGD 202c 1), but *how* to conduct this test is not specified. “Some have thought that a probationary period or a formal examination is envisaged, and either or both are possible” (Kelly, 83). Also, a candidate should have first proven himself responsible in *other* ministries in the church before being considered to be a deacon (cf. Matt. 25:21). This requirement to be blameless excludes one guilty of sin in his past that the church would need to discipline (e.g., divorce, immorality, criminal offenses) or which affects his present reputation.

### B. Women: Specific Behavior (v. 11)

Verse 11 gives traits simply of women whose identity has long perplexed the Church, partly because the word here (γυναῖκός) can be legitimately translated as “women” or “wives.” At least six views on this phrase prevail. Are these: (1) women in general, (2) wives of both elders and deacons, (3) deaconesses with equal authority to male deacons,<sup>1</sup> (4) a group functioning like deacons but ranking under them,<sup>2</sup> (5) deacon wives,<sup>3</sup> or (6) deacon wives who are *called* deaconesses?<sup>4</sup>

The first view (women in general) contradicts the context that addresses qualifications for an office. The second (wives of both elders and deacons) is unlikely as verse 11 falls in the section on deacons (vv. 8-13). The third has weaknesses explained below while the fourth and fifth are most likely. The sixth view differs little from the fifth except for the name of these wives.

Some translations and scholars render the unclear word ambiguously as simply “women” (NASB, RSV, Amplified, TEB).

However, most English translations and scholars argue that they are deacon wives (view #5). I hold this view (or possibly view #4) for the following reasons:

- Verse 11 about women divides the male deacon qualifications in two sections (vv. 8-10 and 12-13), so it makes good sense that the women related very closely to the male deacons. Since their wives would the closest relationship possible, their wives are the most likely referent.
- Deaconesses served the church around AD 115 (Pliny to Trajan *Eps.* 10.96-97; cf. others in Kelly, 84), but whether this happened in the first century is debatable (Earle, *EBC*, 11:368).
- Paul prohibited women from exercising authority over men (1 Tim. 2:12), so at best he was advocating a group of women serving with equal authority as the male deacons (view #3 above).

A few translations and several scholars argue these points that they are woman deacons (view #3):

- It seems unusual for Paul to prescribe qualifications for wives of deacons but not for wives of elders (who occupied a more influential position); therefore, they probably are not deacon wives.

Response: While elders may be sworn to secrecy in private affairs of the church so that they would not even inform their wives, deacons often participate in serving ministries in conjunction with their wives; thus wives of deacons would need to have a tighter control of their tongue than wives of elders. Also, the mention of a quality for deacons but not for elders does not *exclude* it for elders as well (e.g., elders are not required to be “tested” as this is assumed).

- Nothing about the office of deacon would exclude women (*viz.*, they do not teach or exercise authority over men; cf. 1 Tim. 2:12).

Response: This argument from silence argues neither for nor against being deaconesses.

<sup>1</sup> 和合本。新國際版; NIV footnote, Williams; James B. Hurley, *Man and Woman in Biblical Perspective*, 229-33; Kelly, 83; Newport J. D. White, in *Expositor's Greek Testament*, 4:115-16; J. H. Bernard, *The Pastoral Epistles*, 58-59; Walter Lock, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Pastoral Epistles*, ICC, 40-41.

<sup>2</sup>“They are a group by themselves, not just the wives of the deacons nor *all* the women who belong to the church.... On the other hand, the fact that no special and separate paragraph is used in describing their necessary qualifications, but that these are simply wedged in between the stipulated requirements for deacons, with equal clarity indicates that these women are not to be regarded as constituting a third order in the church, the office of ‘deaconess,’ on par with and endowed with authority equal to that of deacons” (William Hendricksen, *Pastoral Epistles*, NTC, 346; cf. Donald Guthrie, *Pastoral Epistles*, 85).

<sup>3</sup>NIV, KJV, NKJV, GNB, Beck, LB, Phillips; Wiersbe, 51-52; Earle, *EBC*, 11:368; Litfin, *BKC*, 2:238 says the view has a “slim advantage.”

<sup>4</sup>Wiersbe, 52, cites this as a second possibility.

- If deacon wives were meant Paul could have been clearer by writing either “*having wives*” (cf. “*having children...*” in v. 4) or “*their wives*” or at least “*the women*.”

Response: This is also an argument from silence carrying little weight. Adding either word would have cleared up the problem but evidently Paul felt he was already clear. Since it is in the context of deacons he felt a qualifying word was unnecessary.

- Phoebe is a biblical example of a women who was a deaconess (Rom. 16:1). The masculine form of the word is used there (*διάκονος diakonos*) since no feminine form existed at the time. The masculine form was used of women as well.

Response: The word can simply mean “servant” rather than designate an office. The NT never clearly uses *diakonos* of women in the *office* of deacon, but it does refer to *men* having this role. Therefore, the clear texts should inform unclear ones such as Romans 16:1, not vice versa. In other words, we can be sure that men were deacons but we can’t be sure whether women held this position in the first century.

- The word “likewise” in verse 8 set apart deacons as a different office from the preceding elder qualifications (vv. 1-7). In the same way, “likewise” reappears in verse 11 to indicate another class of persons. Thus, “Paul chose to introduce the women in a manner which set them parallel to the elders and deacons, implying a new, similar class of persons. He said, ‘Women, likewise...’” (Hurley, *Man and Women in Biblical Perspective*, 230).

Response: If Paul meant to set the women apart as a *separate office* it would seem strange to do so in the middle of his deacon qualifications. The more natural sequence would be to finish the deacon qualifications first, *then* explain women deacon requirements.

Conclusion: One cannot be dogmatic about this difficult passage, but the two best views seem to indicate either deacon wives or women deaconesses not related to the deacons. While the deacon wives view may have the most to commend it, since women did not exercise authority over men in the church (1 Tim. 2:11-12), nothing would eliminate them from serving equally with men in servant roles in NT times. (However, in some modern churches the title “deaconess” refers to a woman in a helping role with no authority over men, but the NT never uses this term coined in the second century.) The best we can argue is that women served in capacities under the leadership of the elders, perhaps at the same level as male deacons but never over them.

However, let’s not “miss the forest through the trees.” The point of the verse is that proper conduct of *women*, not just men, is vital to the proper functioning of the church. Women are typically more relational than men, which has both advantages and disadvantages. One advantage is that they are more available to meet counseling needs in the church, but the disadvantage is that being trusted with such information requires respectable behavior and restraint of the tongue to prevent gossip.

Actually whether women can have the title of “deaconess” is irrelevant. They can serve in the church in hundreds of ways without holding an office. Also, the guidelines in verse 11, while not directed at all women generally, are still a good model for any woman to pursue.

One final observation may be noteworthy: the four women qualifications closely parallel the first four requirements of deacons (cf. adapted from Hurley, 231):

<b>Deacons (v. 8)</b>	<b>Women (v. 11)</b>	
worthy of respect (#1) ( <i>semnous</i> )	worthy of respect ( <i>semnas</i> —the feminine form of <i>semnous</i> )	deacon quality #7
not double-tongued (#2) ( <i>me dilogous</i> )	not slanderers ( <i>me diabolous</i> )	deacon quality #8
not given to much wine (#3) ( <i>me oino pollo prosechontas</i> )	sober/temperate ( <i>nephalious</i> )	deacon quality #9
not pursuing dishonest gain (#4) ( <i>me aischrokerdeis</i> )	trustworthy in all things ( <i>pistas en pasin</i> )	deacon quality #10

“The qualifications are point for point parallel. The final item in each list has to do with trustworthiness. In the case of the deacon it looks to his business life. In the case of the women, it looks to their handling of daily affairs and relationships, perhaps because few women were involved in business affairs” (Hurley, 231). The significance of these parallel features is left up to the reader.

**C. Men: Family Life (vv. 12-13)**

11. The Husband of One Wife (μίας γυναικὸς ἄνδρες is equivalent to elder qualification #4; 1 Tim. 3:2; Tit. 1:6) emphasizes a man's control in sexual restraint and a faithful relationship to his wife. If he is not faithful in this second most important relationship in life, he should not be trusted in the affairs of the church. This qualification excludes any husband unfaithful to his wife or one guilty of pornography, homosexuality, incest, and other sins of the flesh. (See the detailed evaluation of this requirement prior to this study on deacon qualifications).
12. Must Manage His Children and His Household Well (τέκνων καλῶς προϊστάμενοι καὶ τῶν ἰδίων οἴκων) is parallel to elder qualifications #5-6 where an elder is required to “manage his household well, keeping his children under control with all dignity” (1 Tim. 3:4; cf. Tit. 1:6). No charge should exist against a deacon’s children for riotous living or insubordination, but rather they should be disciplined and restrained (able to accept authority). A deacon candidate whose children are rebellious or excessive (drugs, sex, drunkenness, etc.) should get his family under control before taking on responsibility as a church leader (cf. 1 Tim. 3:5).

Two results of serving well as a deacon are provided in verse 13:

- (1) A good reputation before people and God (perhaps “promotion” to pastor or elder is in view)
- (2) Increased confidence in dealing with other people (Tom Constable, Dallas Seminary class notes, 24).

**III. For Further Study**

- A. Dresselhaus, Richard L. *The Deacon and His Ministry*. Springfield, MO: Gospel Pub., 1977.
- B. Green, Michael. *Called to Serve*. Philadelphia: Westminster, 1964.
- C. Hiebert, D. Edmond. “Behind the Word ‘Deacon’: A New Testament Study.” *Bibliotheca Sacra* 140 (April-June 1983): 151-62.
- D. Strauch, Alexander. *The New Testament Deacon*. Littleton, CO: Lewis & Roth, 1992. 192 pp. pb. US\$10.



#### IV. Summary

To review, let's compare and contrast the 20 traits required of elders with the 12 necessary for deacons. Similar characteristics appear in parallel columns in the following chart. Trait numbers in parentheses correspond with the numbers in the preceding trait studies. For the third column, the elder trait translation and trait number appears first, followed by the deacon translation and trait number. Also, similar but not exactly parallel qualifications match horizontally across the chart (e.g., respected = blameless, children believe = children obey, teach = holds doctrines, and deacon wife traits 7-10 parallel deacon traits 1-4).

Unique to Elders	Unique to Deacons	Required of Both Offices
Respected by non-Christians (3)	<u>Deacon Wife Qualities:</u>	Blameless (1)/tested as above reproach (6)
Not a new believer (13)	Wife respectable (7)	Respectable (2/1)
Not quick-tempered (8)	Wife not a slanderer (8)	Not quarrelsome (11)/ not deceptive (2)
Self-controlled (19)	Wife temperate (9)	Temperate (9)/not addicted to wine (3)
Not a lover of money (12b)	Wife trustworthy (10)	Not pursuing dishonest gain (12a/4)
Children believe or faithful (5)		Children obey (6)/managed well (12)
Able to teach (20a)		Holds basic doctrines (20b/5)
Not self-willed (7)		Husband of one wife (4/11)
Gentle/not violent (10)		
Hospitable (14)		
Loves what is good (15)		
Sensible/prudent (16)		
Just/fair (17)		
Devout/holy (18)		

#### Observations

1. More requirements are placed upon elders (20) than deacons (12) since elders hold the higher office.
2. Deacon traits in the third column fall into two basic categories: four parallel both wives and elders, plus four parallel elders alone.
3. Whereas no traits of elder wives are spelled out, four traits are given for deacon wives. This does not mean that an elder's wife is unimportant; it probably indicates that whereas elder wives are not privy to information shared in elder meetings, deacons serve with their wives, so these women must hold similar traits as the men themselves. In fact, requirements of their wives are the only requisites expected of deacons that are not expressly required of elders.
4. Nearly all traits address character rather than ability. Exceptions include both teaching ability and household management.

# Qualifications for Elders/Overseers and Deacons

Self-controlled	<b>ELDER</b>	ITi 3:2; Tit 1:8	Husband of one wife	<b>ELDER</b> <b>DEACON</b>	ITi 3:2; Tit 1:6 ITi 3:12
Hospitable	<b>ELDER</b>	ITi 3:2; Tit 1:8	Temperate	<b>ELDER</b> <b>DEACON</b>	ITi 3:2; Tit 1:7 ITi 3:8
Able to teach	<b>ELDER</b>	ITi 3:2; 5:17; Tit 1:9	Respectable	<b>ELDER</b> <b>DEACON</b>	ITi 3:2 ITi 3:8
Not violent but gentle	<b>ELDER</b>	ITi 3:3; Tit 1:7	Not given to drunkenness	<b>ELDER</b> <b>DEACON</b>	ITi 3:3; Tit 1:7 ITi 3:8
Not quarrelsome	<b>ELDER</b>	ITi 3:3	Manages his own family well	<b>ELDER</b> <b>DEACON</b>	ITi 3:4 ITi 3:12
Not a lover of money	<b>ELDER</b>	ITi 3:3	Sees that his children obey him	<b>ELDER</b> <b>DEACON</b>	ITi 3:4-5; Tit 1:6 ITi 3:12
Not a recent convert	<b>ELDER</b>	ITi 3:6	Does not pursue dishonest gain	<b>ELDER</b> <b>DEACON</b>	Tit 1:7 ITi 3:8
Has a good reputation with outsiders	<b>ELDER</b>	ITi 3:7	Keeps hold of the deep truths	<b>ELDER</b> <b>DEACON</b>	Tit 1:9 ITi 3:9
Not overbearing	<b>ELDER</b>	Tit 1:7	Sincere	<b>DEACON</b>	ITi 3:8
Not quick-tempered	<b>ELDER</b>	Tit 1:7	Tested	<b>DEACON</b>	ITi 3:10
Loves what is good	<b>ELDER</b>	Tit 1:8			
Upright, holy	<b>ELDER</b>	Tit 1:8			
Disciplined	<b>ELDER</b>	Tit 1:8			
Above reproach (blameless)	<b>ELDER</b> <b>DEACON</b>	ITi 3:2; Tit 1:6 ITi 3:9			

Dr. Rick Griffith

New Testament Survey: 1 Timothy

**Qualifications for Elders and Deacons**  
*Bible Visual Resource Book, 257*

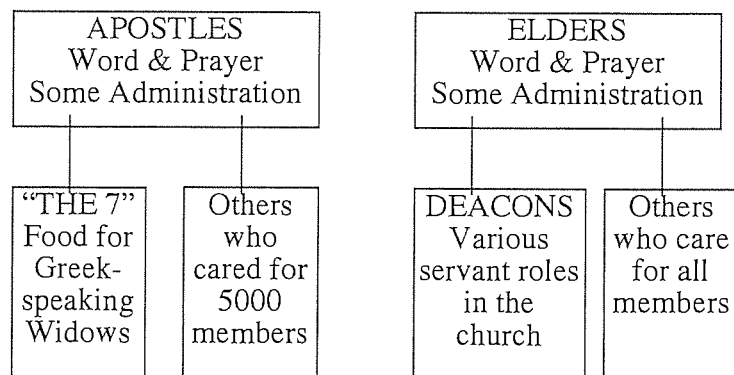
## Roles of Elders

### I. Pastoral Leadership (mostly a shepherd imagery)

*Elders primarily serve in a pastoral capacity, which includes the following...*

#### A. Elders teach the church (a shepherd feeds the flock in green pastures).

1. “Shepherd the flock” includes teaching the Word (Acts 20:28; 1 Pet. 5:2).
2. “Able to teach” is a basic elder requirement in this highest office of the church (1 Thess. 5:12; 1 Tim. 3:2; Titus 1:9b).
3. His foundation must be Scripture (Titus 1:9a).
4. Paul modeled the teaching content as the full plan and purpose of God (Acts 20:20, 27).
5. The church should pay elders who work hard at preaching and teaching (1 Tim. 5:17-18; cf. pastor-teachers in Eph. 4:11). For practical purposes, such elders could be called “pastor-teachers” (Eph. 4:11), but nothing in the term “pastor-teacher” denotes a paid position *per se*.
6. The Acts 6:1-7 principle is that the highest ruling body in the church must devote themselves to teaching and prayer—and delegate what is necessary to maintain these priorities.
  - a) In Acts 6, apostles filled this highest role. However, the Jerusalem church also had elders (Acts 11:30; 15:4).
  - b) As the apostles died out and as leaders were selected for other churches, elders filled this role (Acts 14:23).



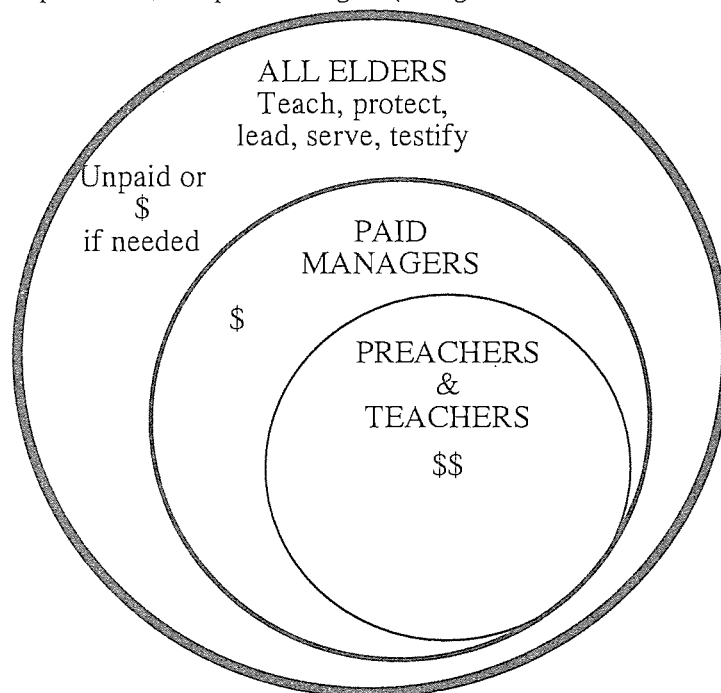
7. The mention of “overseers” (elders) before deacons (“overseers and deacons”) shows their prominence (Phil 1:1). There is evidence for deacons only here at Philippi and also at Ephesus (1 Tim. 3:8-13).

#### B. Elders protect believers from heresy (a shepherd uses his rod against enemies).

1. Judge doctrinal error (Acts 15:6)
2. Guard the flock from false teachers (Acts 20:17, 28-31a)
3. Know the Word well to refute heretics (Titus 1:5, 6a, 9).

#### C. Elders lead believers (a shepherd guides his flock, a “household manager” takes care of the master’s servants, property, and finances).

1. Leading was to be primarily by example (1 Pet. 5:3).
2. “Shepherd the flock” includes leading the church (Acts 20:28; 1 Pet. 5:2).
3. In biblical language, shepherding a nation or group means to lead or govern (2 Sam. 5:2; Ps. 78:71-72).
4. Elders exercise oversight of the body (Acts 20:28; Phil. 1:1; 1 Thess. 5:12; 1 Tim. 3:1-2; Tit. 1:7; 1 Pet. 5:2).
5. All elders should be honoured, meaning that the church makes sure their material needs are met. Those elders who rule [lead, direct, manage] well should be paid the most, especially preachers and teachers (1 Tim. 5:17a).
  - a) This verse distinguishes paid from unpaid elders, assuming that those with a vocation outside the church do not need a church salary. Elders who devote more time to the church should be paid more to relieve them of needing another means to make a living.
  - b) Taking into account (1)(e) above, three types of elders are noted in verses 17-18: unpaid, paid teachers/preachers, and paid managers (though all elders must be “able to teach”).



D. Elders serve/care for the church in practical ways:

1. The elders’ caring for the flock is parallel to managing one’s household (1 Tim. 3:5).
2. Pray for the sick (Jas. 5:14). Anointing with oil was a shepherd’s role to their sheep.
3. Help the weak in the flock (Acts 20:35)—counseling and comforting those who are bereaved.
4. Work hard for the saints (1 Thess. 5:12; 1 Tim. 5:17).
5. Provide official welcome to visitors (Acts 15:4).

E. Elders testify to the church and world in an official capacity:

1. Act as representatives of the church to appoint (ordain) qualified leaders (1 Tim. 4:14; 5:22).
2. Accept and distribute money (Acts 11:30).
3. Send representatives of the church to serve in official capacities (Acts 15:22).

## II. Shared Leadership

- A. All NT texts refer to a plurality of leadership. The “overseer” (elder) in the singular (1 Tim. 3:1) speaks only of a man who is representative of the larger group of shepherds. This pastoral team is never called a “board” as “board” is an administrative term derived from the business world.
- B. Peter appealed to “fellow elders” (1 Pet. 5:1).
- C. Paul modeled team ministry in all his travels (with Barnabas, Luke, Silas, etc.) and elder appointments (e.g., Acts 14:21).

## III. Male Leadership

- A. All OT and NT occurrences of elders are men. Similarly, while Christ had both male and female disciples, all twelve original apostles were males (Matt. 10:1-4).
- B. Male spiritual leadership for NT elders is in line with the OT pattern of having male priests. However, women sometimes served in administrative roles as queens and judges (Judg. 4–5). Further, women sometimes were prophetesses in both the OT (Exod. 15:20-21) and NT (Luke 2:36-38; 1 Cor. 11).
- C. Male leadership is particularly underscored by the requirement that an elder be the “husband of one wife” (1 Tim. 3:2; Tit. 1:6).

## IV. Qualified Leadership

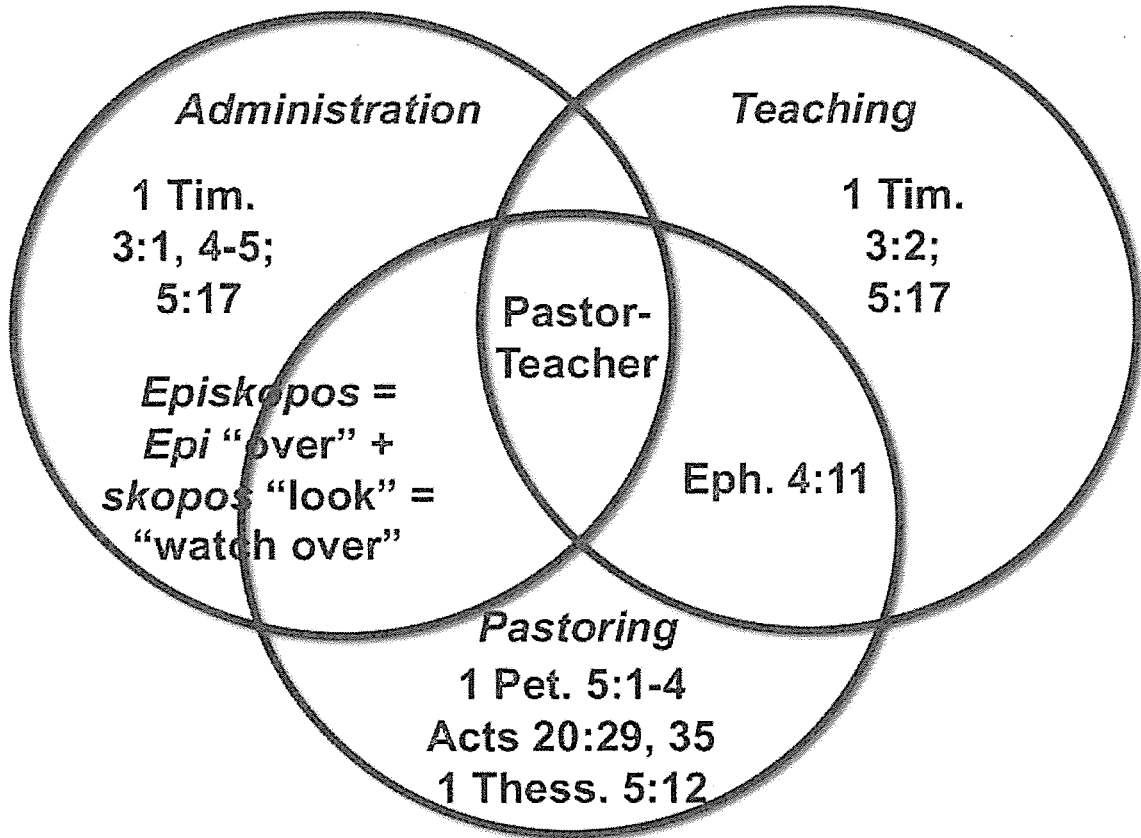
- A. Elders are to be evaluated by 20-22 criteria, depending on how one divides similar characteristics in parallel texts in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:6-9.
- B. Please refer to the NT Survey studies under Selecting Leadership (p. 223), Elder Qualifications (pp. 224-230), and Deacon Qualifications (pp. 231-234). Summaries of the qualifications of both offices are on pages 235-236.

## V. Difficult Leadership: Why is being an elder so difficult?

- A. Few Christian men can genuinely qualify for the 20 or more elder requirements noted in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:6-9.
- B. One can be sure that Satan and his demons will concentrate untiring efforts to make sure leaders will not function in their biblical role.
- C. The time demands to meet people’s pastoral needs are extensive! Few men can manage their own family well while meeting the needs of the flock—especially if they also work outside the church.

## Three Major Tasks of Elders

The multitude of tasks that elders handle can be boiled down into three general areas: **teaching** (point A on page 236a), **pastoring** (protect and lead on points B and C on page 236a), and **administration** (serve/care as well as testify on pages 236b-236c). These three roles overlap for the pastor-teacher (Eph. 4:11) as he fulfills them in a greater capacity due to his having more time available to meet needs and also due to the opportunities that come with his position.



## Elder Interview Questions

*55 questions to ask potential elders*

### I. Personal Summary

<b>Name &amp; Age</b>	
<b>Occupation</b>	
<b>Wife &amp; Yrs Married</b>	
<b>Children &amp; Ages</b>	
<b>Year Saved</b>	
<b>Year Baptized</b>	
<b>Ministries with Us</b>	
<b>Past Ministry Roles</b>	

### II. Motivations

- A. Why have you chosen to become committed to our church?
  
- B. What do you think you can bring to the leadership team as an elder?
  
- C. How long can we count on your involvement in this position?

### III. Passions

- A. Joys in Life
  1. What are your spiritual gift(s)?
  
  2. What things bring you the most joy?
  
- B. Life Goal(s) & Calling
  1. Why did God put you on earth?
  
  2. How are you progressing in accomplishing God's calling for you?
  
  3. How do you show a commitment to world mission?
  
  4. What is your educational background?

**C. Personal Devotional Life**

1. Describe your prayer life.
2. Describe your Bible study and reading program.
3. How many times have you read through the entire Bible?
4. How and when do you pray with your wife and children?

**IV. Background****A. Family of Origin**

1. What memories of your parents remain with you?
2. How are you improving your marriage beyond your parent's marriage?
3. Describe your relationships with your siblings while growing up and right now.

**B. Salvation Testimony**

1. How did you trust Christ?
2. In what ways has Jesus changed your life?

**C. Ministry Experience**

1. How have you served in similar roles to the elder role you are seeking now?
2. Who has had the greatest influence in your spiritual growth? How?
3. How have you helped nurture those outside your family in spiritual growth?



## D. Family Life

## 1. Marriage

- a) Have you ever married prior to your present marriage?
- b) What stages have you experienced in your marriage?
- c) How do you lead your wife spiritually?
- d) How does your wife feel about you becoming an elder?
- e) Is there anyone right now with whom your wife has a broken relationship? How?

## 2. Children

- a) How do you nurture your children spiritually?
- b) What present issues are you addressing in your children?

## E. Relationships

1. Relate a time when you had to repair a broken relationship.
2. Is there anyone right now with whom you have a broken relationship? How?

## F. Personal Life

1. Which of the 20 elder qualifications is your *strongest* area (Tit. 1; 1 Tim. 3; p. 235)?
2. Which of the 20 elder qualifications is your *weakest* area (Tit. 1; 1 Tim. 3; p. 235)?
3. What character traits are you presently working on?

## V. Theology

### A. Doctrinal Statement

1. Have you read through our entire doctrinal statement?
2. What part of it do you have even the slightest contrary opinion?

### B. Other Theological Matters

1. What NT church structures do you think apply today?
2. Where does the ultimate human authority in the local church lie?
3. Controversial Spiritual Gifts
  - a) Define prophecy and its place in the church today.
  - b) Define tongues and its place in the church today.
4. Role of Women in the Church
  - a) What ministries do you think Scripture prohibits for women? Why?
  - b) Does the Bible reserve the roles of elders and worship leaders for men?
5. Church Discipline
  - a) What should be the church's goal in disciplining errant members?
  - b) Describe when you have seen church discipline and your role in the process.
6. Baptism
  - a) Are sprinkling and pouring biblical modes of baptism? Why or why not?
  - b) Should immersion be required for church membership?
  - c) Should believer's baptism be required for church membership?

## Combating Materialism

One problem that Christian workers face is thinking that materialism cannot have grasp on them. This is why Paul warned Timothy against becoming a lover of money (1 Tim. 6:3-10). Yet how can pastors, missionaries, and all believers fight the grip of materialism in practical terms? Here are some suggestions, most of which I keep myself:

1. Give your speaking honorariums over to the church or to another Christian organization—or don't get paid for your speaking in the first place.
2. Require approval from someone (e.g., your spouse) for purchases over a certain amount (we use \$100 as a guideline, except for groceries!).
3. Don't make a purchase over a certain amount without both praying about it and sleeping overnight on it. (My wife's and my guide is \$100 here too, which has saved us from buying many a vacuum cleaner and encyclopedia set! Again, groceries are exempt here.)
4. Commit to living on a certain income for a time period and give the excess money earned back to the Lord's work.
5. Don't let sales people into your home unless both husband and wife agree. This means that a salesman will never enter your home when only one spouse is there.
6. Put budgeted money into respective envelopes and stop spending when they empty.
7. Don't compare your salary with others. Don't ask what others make or tell them your own salary. This will keep you from the twin sins of pride (if you make more) and jealousy (if you make less). Sometimes ignorance is better than knowledge.
8. Don't purchase anything on credit (except a house) that you cannot pay off within one month. This will prevent purchase of depreciating items such as cars, furniture, computers, etc.
9. Never gamble—at the horse races, card games, or stock market. Instead, put your savings in lower-risk investments. They may have lower rates of return but at least you can't lose all your money. Avoiding the stock markets (except mutual funds when someone else is managing your money) will also keep you from the temptation to always watch the rates to discern whether to buy or sell rather than invest yourself in ministry.

## 2 Timothy

<b>Sound Doctrine Against Opposition</b>				
Persevere in Present Hardship		Persevere in Future Hardship		
Chapters 1–2		Chapters 3–4		
Examples of Faithfulness 1	Characteristics of Faithfulness 2	Problem: Apostasy 3:1-9	Solution: Preach the Word 3:10–4:5	Paul's Hope 4:6-22
Eunice Lois Paul Onesiphorus	Discipling Single-minded Obedient Hardworking Biblical Holy Gentle	Godlessness Hypocrisy	Preaching Persevering Rebuking Encouraging Evangelism	Martyrdom Betrayals Greetings Benediction
Rome to Ephesus				
Autumn AD 67 (second Roman imprisonment)				

**Key Word:** Doctrine

**Key Verse:** “All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work... Preach the Word” (2 Timothy 3:16-17; 4:2).

**Summary Statement:** Paul exhorts Timothy to faithfully practice and *preach the Word* despite hardship in order to encourage him to persevere against *false teaching* and apostasy.

**Application:** Is anything more powerful against heresy than God's Word—methods, logic, ignoring false teaching, etc.? While teaching proper doctrine is not the only thing needed, it is the most important thing.

# 2 Timothy

## Introduction

I. **Title:** The Book of 2 Timothy (Πρὸς Τιμόθεον β' *Second to Timothy*) is one of the three books commonly called "Pastoral Epistles, which are unique in that they are addressed to individuals (not churches) and constitute Paul's last writings (cf. 1 Timothy notes).

### II. Authorship

- A. **External Evidence:** Attestation for Pauline authorship is as good as that for any other Pauline epistle except Romans and 1 Corinthians (cf. 1 Timothy notes).
- B. **Internal Evidence:** The letter claims Pauline authorship (2 Tim. 1:1) and contains the typical Pauline characteristics (cf. 1 Timothy notes).

### III. Circumstances

- A. **Date:** The chronology of the latter years of Paul's life is obscure (Guthrie, 623), yet a harmonization of internal and external data yields the following scenario (Hoehner, 381-84):

<b>First Roman Imprisonment (Acts 28:30-31)</b>	<b>February 60–March 62</b>
Paul writes <b>Ephesians, Colossians, Philemon, and Philippians</b>	Autumn 60–early Spring 62
James, the Lord's brother, martyred	Spring 62
<b>Freedom from Imprisonment</b>	<b>Spring 62–Autumn 67</b>
Paul in Ephesus and Colosse (Timothy left at Ephesus)	Spring–Summer 62
Peter travels to Rome	62
Paul in Macedonia	late summer 62–winter 62/63
<b>1 Timothy</b> written from Macedonia to Timothy in Ephesus	Autumn 62
Paul in Asia Minor	Spring 63–Spring 64
Paul in Spain (anticipated in Rom. 15:24)	Spring 64–Spring 66
Christians persecuted by Nero, Peter martyred	Summer 64
Paul in Crete (Titus left there; Tit. 1:5)	early Summer 66
Paul in Asia Minor	Summer–Autumn 66
<b>Titus</b> written from Asia Minor to Titus in Crete	Summer 66
Paul in Nicopolis (Tit. 3:12)	Winter 66/67
Paul in Troas (2 Tim. 4:13), Macedonia and Greece	Spring–Autumn 67
<b>Second Roman Imprisonment</b>	<b>Autumn 67–Spring 68</b>
Paul arrested and brought to Rome	Autumn 67
<b>2 Timothy</b> written from Rome to Timothy in Ephesus	Autumn 67
Paul beheaded	Spring 68
<b>Destruction of Jerusalem</b>	<b>September 2, 70</b>

- B. **Origin/Recipients:** Paul penned 2 Timothy to his long-time traveling companion, Timothy (2 Tim. 1:2), five years after his first letter. If Timothy was still in Ephesus (1 Tim. 1:3b), 2 Timothy also had the same destination (2 Tim. 1:16-18; 4:19). Paul wrote from Rome (1:17; 2:9; Roman names in 4:21) in his second Roman imprisonment after his first defense before the Imperial Court (4:16-17).
- C. **Occasion:** When Paul wrote 2 Timothy he was an experienced inmate. Ten years earlier (May 29–June 9, 57) he was imprisoned in Jerusalem for a few weeks, then in Caesarea for over two years 8–10 years earlier, and in Rome for over two years 5–7 years earlier. Having spent nearly five of the past ten years behind bars, he knew about prisons and political procedures. He knew that this second Roman imprisonment could only result in execution (2 Tim. 4:6-8). Since Paul did not expect to live much longer in the Roman jail, he requested Timothy to hurry to him before winter (2 Tim. 4:9, 21).

Three years before Paul composed 2 Timothy, Rome had burned (AD 64). Since Nero blamed the Christians, it had become very dangerous to be a Christian, and even moreso to be a leader or associated with one. As a result, many of Paul's co-workers sought a much lower profile, and some

even fell away (everyone in Asia, 1:15; Demas, 4:10; Alexander, 4:14). No one even defended Paul before the Emperor when he was on trial for his life (4:16). No doubt the timid Timothy was tempted to minister less aggressively as well (1:7-8). Therefore, Paul wrote this epistle to remind him of the need to faithfully continue to preach the Word in the face of hardship (4:2) and false teachers (3:6-9; 4:3-4).

#### IV. Characteristics

- A. This letter to Paul's younger protégé is unique in that it is his last extant writing.
- B. This letter provides the clearest NT exposition of the *need* for exposition (4:2). It shows the need to guard the gospel (1:14), emphasizes the centrality of the Scriptures (2:15), notes how we must persevere in the gospel (3:14) and suffer for it (1:8; 2:3), and provides the most important explanation of the inspiration of Scripture (3:16-17).

## Argument

Paul's second letter to Timothy concerns itself more with the man Timothy than with his congregation, as was the case for the first letter. With so many falling away just before Paul's death, he carefully chooses his words in perhaps his last statements to Timothy in order to assure that Timothy himself would remain true to the faith until death. The apostle accomplishes this end through exhorting him to persevere in present hardships with godly character (chs. 1–2) because the future will even be more difficult (chs. 3–4). He will especially have to fight apostasy with faithful preaching of the Word of God (3:10–4:5).

## Synthesis

### Sound doctrine against opposition

<b>1–2</b>	<b>Persevere in present hardship</b>
1:1-2	Salutation
1:3-18	Examples of faithfulness
1:3-7	Eunice and Lois
1:8-14	Paul
1:15-18	Onesiphorus
<b>2</b>	<b>Characteristics of a faithful minister</b>
2:1-2	Discipling
2:3-4	Single-minded
2:5	Obedient
2:6-13	Hardworking
2:14-19	Biblical
2:20-22	Holy
2:23-26	Gentle
<b>3–4</b>	<b>Persevere in future hardship</b>
3:1-9	Future apostasy
3:10–4:5	Preach the Word
4:6-18	Paul's hope in the face of death
4:19-22	Conclusion

## Outline

### Summary Statement for the Book

Paul exhorts Timothy to faithfully practice and *preach the Word* despite hardship in order to encourage him to persevere against *false teaching* and apostasy.

**I. (Chs. 1–2) Paul encourages Timothy to persevere in present hardships and illustrates the characteristics he should exemplify to combat false teaching and apostasy.**

- A. (1:1-2) Paul greets Timothy by identifying himself as “an apostle...according to the promise of life that is in Christ Jesus” to encourage Timothy with his own persevering attitude in the face of death.
- B. (1:3-18) Timothy is encouraged to continued faithfulness like that of his mother, grandmother, Paul, and Onesiphorus in the midst of many others who have fallen away.
  - 1. (1:3-7) Paul thanks God for Timothy's past faithfulness learned from his mother and grandmother and confirmed at his ordination to encourage him to continue ministering this way.
  - 2. (1:8-14) Timothy is encouraged to courageously suffer the present distress of Neronian persecutions like Paul because of the power of the gospel.
  - 3. (1:15-18) Paul contrasts the desertion of nearly all the Asian believers with the faithfulness of Onesiphorus from Ephesus to encourage Timothy to also courageously minister the gospel.
- C. (Ch. 2) Paul points out the characteristics of a faithful minister in order to admonish Timothy to persevere in present testings.
  - 1. (2:1-2) A discipling teacher's commitment to pass on the teaching he has received pictures the faithful minister in his wise discipleship ministry by investing his time in potential multipliers.
  - 2. (2:3-4) A good soldier's single-minded desire to please his commander pictures the faithful minister in his unswerving commitment to please the Lord.
  - 3. (2:5) A successful athlete's faithfulness to the rules pictures the faithful minister in his steadfast obedience to God's Word.
  - 4. (2:6-13) A hardworking farmer's reaping his material rewards pictures the faithful minister in his joy of seeing spiritual fruit just as Christ was raised to see His fruit.
  - 5. (2:14-19) A diligent workman who is unashamed pictures the faithful minister in his use of the Scriptures against false teachers.
  - 6. (2:20-22) A noble container which is preferred over an ignoble container pictures the faithful minister in his discipline to stay away from false teachers.
  - 7. (2:23-26) A gentle servant pictures the faithful minister in his refusal to quarrel with false teachers and commitment to instruct them properly instead.

**II. (Chs. 3–4) Paul exhorts Timothy to persevere in future tribulation and furnishes his own positive attitude towards death to encourage Timothy to faithfully preach the Word despite increased apostasy in teaching and practice.**

- A. (3:1-9) Paul warns of a future time when people will appear godly but exemplify the traits of the enemy to enable Timothy to face it intelligently.
- B. (3:10–4:5) The apostle exhorts his younger apostolic delegate to oppose the future false teaching by faithfully preaching the inspired Word of God and fulfilling the other duties of his ministry: enduring hardship, rebuking, encouraging, and evangelism.
- C. (4:6-18) Paul expresses hope in God despite his approaching death and betrayals by his friends as a model to Timothy of trust in God despite future testings.

## The Process of Church Discipline

*How to Exercise Church Authority to Restore Sinning Christians (Matt. 18:15-20)*

### Introduction

1. Every church eventually encounters problems with believers living in sin. In these cases a loving body will restore them to God's holiness.
2. Key Issue: But *how* do we restore sinning Christians properly?
3. In Matthew 18:15-20 Jesus provides God's plan for loving church discipline:

If your brother sins against you, go and show him his fault, just between the two of you. If he listens to you, you have won your brother over. <sup>16</sup>But if he will not listen, take one or two others along, so that 'every matter may be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses.' <sup>17</sup>If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; and if he refuses to listen even to the church, treat him as you would a pagan or a tax collector. <sup>18</sup>I tell you the truth, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven. <sup>19</sup>Again, I tell you that if two of you on earth agree about anything you ask for, it will be done for you by my Father in heaven. <sup>20</sup>For where two or three come together in my name, there am I with them.

4. This text has two main teachings outlined below. First...

#### I. God's way to restore members in sin is to keep the matter as private as possible (15-17).

A. The desired end is restoration, not punishment or excommunication.

1. We must be clear that the goal of discipline is behavior change since many churches "excommunicate" to punish rather than restore (e.g., Catholic).
2. Restoration is God's goal for a wandering saint in the context (vv. 10-14).
3. Restoration is the explicit teaching of this text in verse 15b.
4. Restoration is the desired goal of church discipline in other passages (Gal. 6:1, etc.).

B. God's restoring process involves four steps that progressively tell more and more people about the sin (15-17).

1. First only the offended person should deal with it individually (15).
  - a) Note that the text deals specifically with a believer living *in sin*. This does not refer simply to differences of opinion on debatable matters. (For a list of sins worthy of discipline, see the end of this study.)
  - b) The human tendency is to tell *others* about the problem rather than the one involved, but God's command here is to keep the issue as private as possible.
  - c) While letter writing was very popular in the time of Christ, our Lord specifically says to deal with these sensitive matters face-to-face. Today this means



confrontation should never be handled via letter, phone calls or emails. It also prohibits the cowardice of anonymous communication.

(What if the offender does not repent?)

2. The offended person should then take only one or two others along (16).
  - a) These 1-2 persons should be individuals whom the offender respects as they will best help restore him/her. They should not go *instead of* the offended believer, but *along with* this person.
  - b) The OT law prohibited conviction of crimes based on only one person's testimony (Deut. 19:15). The NT teaching is the same, protecting the offender from an easily offended or lying accuser.

(What if the offender *still* does not repent?)

3. The sin should be exposed to the entire church (17a).
  - a) The church leadership certainly must be involved at this point before the matter is brought to the congregation. They also must not see the issue as a difference of opinion between two parties; the biblical basis for the offender living in sin must be clearly shown with specific passages.
  - b) Bringing the matter to the entire church is vital, since without it the sinning person will be able to find fellowship in other smaller groups within the larger church who do not know of his/her sin. Such gossip situations inevitably bring disunity, which lead to factions that can split the body.

(What, then, should the entire church do once discipline has been determined?)

4. The church should treat this person as an unbeliever (17b).
  - a) Sometimes this step has been interpreted to mean "excommunication" whereby the errant person is never contacted again.
  - b) However, Jesus said to "treat him as you would a pagan or a tax collector." Since Jesus treated pagans (Gentiles) and publicans with love and kindness, how does this indicate discipline? The idea here is not to be ugly or ungodly, but to follow guidelines such as:
    - (1) Don't refer to the disciplined person as a Christian.
    - (2) Seek to evangelise this person.
    - (3) Do not allow the person to participate in the Lord's Supper.
    - (4) Remove the person from membership.
    - (5) Remove this person from any responsibility in the church.

- (6) Prohibit the sinner from attending church.<sup>1</sup>
- (7) The Corinthians had to “deliver over to Satan” a believer living in sexual sin (1 Cor. 5: 5). In like manner, proper church discipline places the erring believer out from under God’s protection into Satan’s domain.
- (8) Church members should not to eat with the disciplined person (1 Cor. 5:11).

(But why can we do all this? What right do we have to discipline our members? Because...)

## II. Our church acts as an extension of the authority of God Himself (18-20).

- A. We act in the place of the Father when we seek to restore someone (18-19).
  1. Too often today’s churches act as if they have no authority under God (yet we should still exercise discipline upon sinning members who leave to attend another church).
  2. However, God has already determined what we announce as guilt or innocence (18).
    - a) “Whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven” (NIV) is a periphrastic future perfect tense. It is better rendered “shall already have been permanently bound,”<sup>2</sup> meaning, “Truly I say to you, whatever you bind on earth *shall have been bound* in heaven; and whatever you loose on earth *shall have been loosed* in heaven” (NASB Updated).
    - b) Thus, what Jesus is saying is that, when a local body follows biblical procedure in love toward restoration, the decision of the church leadership in the matter has already been preceded by heavenly dictate!
  3. We should trust that our leaders’ prayerful judgments are God’s will (19; cf. Ps. 82:1).
- B. We act in the presence and authority of Christ when we seek to restore someone (20).
  1. The “two or three” refers to the witnesses whose testimony enacted discipline (v. 16).
  2. The point of Christ being “in their midst” is that local church discipline acts with the presence and authority of Christ Himself.

### Conclusion

1. Main Idea: We must restore sinning members properly since we act on God’s behalf.
2. As a member of this church you submit to its authority under God. This means that we will lovingly seek to restore you should you fall.
3. Is there sin in you worthy of discipline? Clean this up now and avoid pain for us all!
4. Do you know anyone who needs a private confrontation?

<sup>1</sup> Some say they, like unbelievers, should be welcomed in services without taking the Lord’s Supper; however, in most discipline cases this is not even an issue as few disciplined believers seek to return to the assembly until repentant.

<sup>2</sup> Nigel Turner, *Grammatical Insights into the New Testament* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1965), 80.

## Purposes of Church Discipline

Why should every local church follow the procedure of Matthew 18:15-20, as difficult as this is to carry out? The NT gives at least twelve reasons each local church should lovingly seek to restore errant believers. These can all be described as three benefits each to four groupings within the local church that exercises church discipline:<sup>3</sup>

### I. Benefits to the Offender

- A. It restores and reconciles the offender to God and to the fellowship.

Gal. 6:1 Brothers, if someone is caught in a sin, you who are spiritual should restore him gently. But watch yourself, or you also may be tempted.

- B. It stimulates spiritual inventory in the offender that leads to restoration to the fellowship.

2 Thess. 3:13-15 <sup>13</sup>And as for you, brothers, never tire of doing what is right. <sup>14</sup>If anyone does not obey our instruction in this letter, take special note of him. Do not associate with him, in order that he may feel ashamed. <sup>15</sup>Yet do not regard him as an enemy, but warn him as a brother.

- C. It destroys fleshly lusts and returns the offender to the rule of Christ over his life.

1 Cor. 5:1-5 It is actually reported that there is sexual immorality among you, and of a kind that does not occur even among pagans: A man has his father's wife. <sup>2</sup>And you are proud! Shouldn't you rather have been filled with grief and have put out of your fellowship the man who did this? <sup>3</sup>Even though I am not physically present, I am with you in spirit. And I have already passed judgment on the one who did this, just as if I were present. <sup>4</sup>When you are assembled in the name of our Lord Jesus and I am with you in spirit, and the power of our Lord Jesus is present, <sup>5</sup>hand this man over to Satan, so that the sinful nature may be destroyed and his spirit saved on the day of the Lord.

### II. Benefits to the Whole Church

- A. It purifies the worship and message of the church.

1 Cor. 5:6 Your boasting is not good. Don't you know that a little yeast works through the whole batch of dough?

- B. It denies the enemy any advantage or access into the church.

2 Cor. 2:10-11 If you forgive anyone, I also forgive him. And what I have forgiven— if there was anything to forgive— I have forgiven in the sight of Christ for your sake, <sup>11</sup>in order that Satan might not outwit us. For we are not unaware of his schemes.

- C. It prevents God's discipline within the local church.

Rev. 2:4-5 Yet I hold this against you: You have forsaken your first love. <sup>5</sup>Remember the height from which you have fallen! Repent and do the things you did at first. If you do not repent, I will come to you and remove your lampstand from its place.

<sup>3</sup> Adapted from Ted G. Kitchens, ThD Dissertation (Dallas Theological Seminary, 1989), 239.

### III. Benefits to Each Individual Believer in the Church

- A. It strengthens one's faith to maintain a clear conscience.

1 Timothy 1:18-20 Timothy, my son, I give you this instruction in keeping with the prophecies once made about you, so that by following them you may fight the good fight, <sup>19</sup>holding on to faith and a good conscience. Some have rejected these and so have shipwrecked their faith. <sup>20</sup>Among them are Hymenaeus and Alexander, whom I have handed over to Satan to be taught not to blaspheme.

- B. It promotes self-examination in the offended believer's life.

2 Corinthians 7:11 See what this godly sorrow has produced in you: what earnestness, what eagerness to clear yourselves, what indignation, what alarm, what longing, what concern, what readiness to see justice done. At every point you have proved yourselves to be innocent in this matter.

- C. It confirms individual responsibility for other believers.

Hebrews 3:13 But encourage one another daily, as long as it is called Today, so that none of you may be hardened by sin's deceitfulness.

### IV. Benefits to the Church Authorities

- A. It protects the Scriptures from perversion and error.

Titus 1:10-13 For there are many rebellious people, mere talkers and deceivers, especially those of the circumcision group. <sup>11</sup>They must be silenced, because they are ruining whole households by teaching things they ought not to teach-- and that for the sake of dishonest gain. <sup>12</sup>Even one of their own prophets has said, "Cretans are always liars, evil brutes, lazy gluttons." <sup>13</sup>This testimony is true. Therefore, rebuke them sharply, so that they will be sound in the faith

- B. It affirms obedience to the authority of God and his leadership.

2 Corinthians 2:9 The reason I wrote you was to see if you would stand the test and be obedient in everything.

- C. It allows the congregation to show that they support their church leaders.

2 Corinthians 7:12 So even though I wrote to you, it was not on account of the one who did the wrong or of the injured party, but rather that before God you could see for yourselves how devoted to us you are.

These twelve purposes for exercising church discipline show that courageous love for erring saints benefits the body in many ways. Should the church fail to discipline, one can also go through these twelve reasons for discipline and prove that the opposite truth would be true as well.

For example, consider the last purpose above: for the congregation to show support of its leaders. If the leaders do not exercise discipline when it is needed, the congregation has no opportunity to show trust in these leaders in a difficult situation. Rather, the people will distrust their leaders to handle matters in a biblical way. The unwillingness of leaders to exercise needed discipline has caused many congregations to lose respect for these leaders. May this *not* be *your* experience!

## Sins that Warrant Church Discipline

All unrepentant sin is subject to corrective discipline. The scriptural emphasis is placed on those sins that especially violate the purity of the Christian community. The sins that warrant church discipline in the community are:<sup>4</sup>

### I. Private and personal offenses that violate Christian love

- A. “If your brother sins against you...” (Matt. 18:15; cf. 5:23-24) means that even matters involving only two persons can still warrant church-wide discipline.
- B. Believers must reject “hatred ... jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition” (Gal. 5:20).

### II. Divisions and factions that destroy Christian unity

- A. Romans 16:17 I urge you, brothers, to watch out for those who cause divisions and put obstacles in your way that are contrary to the teaching you have learned. Keep away from them.
- B. Titus 3:10-11 Warn a divisive person once, and then warn him a second time. After that, have nothing to do with him. <sup>11</sup>You may be sure that such a man is warped and sinful; he is self-condemned.
- C. 1 Corinthians 5:11 ... you must not associate with anyone who calls himself a brother but is... a slanderer... With such a man do not even eat.
- D. 3 John 1:9-10 I wrote to the church, but Diotrephes, who loves to be first, will have nothing to do with us. <sup>10</sup>So if I come, I will call attention to what he is doing, gossiping maliciously about us.
- E. Believers must reject “... discord, jealousy... dissensions, factions” (Gal. 5:20).

### III. Moral and ethical deviations that break Christian law

- A. 1 Corinthians 5:11 ... you must not associate with anyone calls himself a brother but is sexually immoral or greedy ... or... a drunkard or a swindler. With such a man do not even eat.
- B. 1 Corinthians 6:1 If any of you has a dispute with another, dare he take it before the ungodly for judgment instead of before the saints? (The justified going to the unjustified for justice is certainly worthy of discipline!)
- C. 2 Thessalonians 3:6 In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, we command you, brothers, to keep away from every brother who is idle and does not live according to the teaching you received from us.

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<sup>4</sup> Adapted from Ted G. Kitchens, ThD Dissertation (Dallas Theological Seminary, 1989), 240; cf. idem, “Perimeters of Corrective Church Discipline.” *Bibliotheca Sacra* 148 (April-June 1991): 201-13.

- D. Galatians 5:19 The acts of the sinful nature are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery.
- E. Ephesians 5:11 Have nothing to do with the fruitless deeds of darkness, but rather expose them.
- F. Jude 4 For certain people have crept in unnoticed who long ago were designated for this condemnation, ungodly people, who pervert the grace of our God into sensuality and deny our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ.

#### IV. Teaching false doctrines that reject essential Christian truth

- A. Titus 1:9-11 Every church leader “must hold firmly to the trustworthy message as it has been taught, so that he can encourage others by sound doctrine and refute those who oppose it. <sup>10</sup>For there are many rebellious people, mere talkers and deceivers... <sup>11</sup>They must be silenced.”
- B. 1 Corinthians 5:11 ... you must not associate with anyone calls himself a brother but is... an idolater or.... With such a man do not even eat.
- C. 1 Timothy 1:20 Among them are Hymenaeus and Alexander, whom I have handed over to Satan to be taught not to blaspheme.
- D. 2 Timothy 2:18b ...They say that the resurrection has already taken place, and they destroy the faith of some.

#### V. Do You Agree or Disagree?

To explore your own ideas on this vital subject, please mark as A, U, or D beside each statement below to show whether you Agree, are Unsure, or Disagree with the teaching.

1. A U D Telling others the truth and administering justice are more important than unity (the answer is in 1 Cor. 6:6-7).
2. A U D A church can deteriorate to the point where discipline should not be enacted.
3. A U D A church leader who fears disciplining overt sin should be replaced.

#### VI. Conclusion

Very few church leaders today show the commitment and courage to enact church discipline. This reflects either ignorance of God’s instructions or an unwillingness to follow them. In both cases the leaders sin against both the Lord and the body of Christ. Cancer untreated in one part of the body eventually kills the entire body.

# Titus

Sound Conduct Against Opposition											
Appoint Elders		Set Things in Order									
Prevent False Doctrine		Practice True Doctrine									
Elders vs. False Teachers		Conduct for Various Groups					Grace Leads to Godliness				
Chapter 1		2:1-10					2:11-3:15				
Organize		Teach					Grace				
Truth leads to godliness 1:1-4	Elders 1:5-16	Older Men 2:1-2	Older Women 2:3	Younger Women 2:4-5	Younger Men 2:6-8	Slaves 2:9-10	Educates 2:11-15	Empowers 3:1-2	Motivates 3:3-8	Protects 3:9-11	Concl. 3:12-15
Asia Minor to Crete											
Summer AD 66											

**Key Word:** Conduct

**Key Verse:** “This is a trustworthy saying. And I want you to stress these things, so that those who have trusted in God may be careful to devote themselves to doing what is good. These things are excellent and profitable for everyone” (Titus 3:8).

**Summary Statement:** Paul exhorts Titus to *organize the Cretan churches* by appointing qualified elders and teaching respectable behavior as the natural result of salvation by grace in order to *defeat opposers by word and deed (conduct)*.

**Application:**

The grace of God must result in our proper conduct.

Do you do good deeds:

- because you fear punishment by God (external motivation, the law) or
- because you love Him in response to His grace?

# Titus

## Introduction

I. **Title:** The Letter to Titus (Ἐπιστολὴ πρὸς Τίτον *To Titus*) is one of the three books commonly called Pastoral Epistles, which are unique in that they are addressed to individuals (not churches) and constitute Paul's last writings (cf. 1 Timothy notes).

### II. Authorship

- A. **External Evidence:** Attestation for Pauline authorship is as good as that of any other Pauline epistle except Romans and 1 Corinthians (cf. 1 Timothy notes).
- B. **Internal Evidence:** The letter claims Pauline authorship (Tit. 1:1) and contains the typical Pauline characteristics (cf. 1 Timothy notes).

### III. Circumstances

- A. **Date:** The chronology of the latter years of Paul's life is obscure (Guthrie, 623), yet one harmonization of the internal and external data yields this scenario (Hoehner, 381-84):

<b>First Roman Imprisonment</b> (Acts 28:30-31; cf. p. 142)	<b>February 60–March 62</b>
Paul writes <b>Ephesians, Colossians, Philemon, &amp; Philippians</b>	Fall 60–early Spring 62
James, the Lord's brother, martyred	Spring 62

<b>Freedom from Imprisonment</b>	<b>Spring 62–Fall 67</b>
Paul in Ephesus and Colosse (Timothy left at Ephesus)	Spring–Summer 62
Peter travels to Rome	62
Paul in Macedonia	late summer 62-winter 62/63
<b>1 Timothy</b> written from Macedonia to Timothy in Ephesus	Fall 62
Paul in Asia Minor	Spring 63-Spring 64
Paul in Spain (anticipated in Rom. 15:24)	Spring 64-Spring 66
Christians persecuted by Nero, Peter martyred	Summer 64
Paul in Crete (Titus left there; Tit. 1:5)	early Summer 66
Paul in Asia Minor	Summer- Fall 66
<b>Titus</b> written from Asia Minor to Titus in Crete	Summer 66
Paul in Nicopolis (Tit. 3:12)	Winter 66/67
Paul in Troas (2 Tim. 4:13), Macedonia and Greece	Spring– Fall 67

<b>Second Roman Imprisonment</b>	<b>Fall 67–Spring 68</b>
Paul arrested and brought to Rome	Fall 67
<b>2 Timothy</b> written from Rome to Timothy in Ephesus	Fall 67
Paul beheaded	Spring 68

<b>Destruction of Jerusalem</b>	<b>September 2, 70</b>
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- B. **Origin/Recipients:** Paul's letter to Titus (Tit. 1:4) was sent from an unknown location in Asia Minor to Titus in Crete (Tit. 1:5). Ephesus, Macedonia, and Corinth have been postulated, but the location of composition does not change the interpretation of the contents.

- C. **Occasion:** Between Paul's first and second Roman imprisonments he and Titus traveled together to Crete. With the evangelistic work well under way and many new Christians, Paul left Titus to organize the new believers into local churches, and then he moved on to other ministries. Shortly afterwards Paul penned the epistle to Titus to provide him with practical wisdom regarding church administration and the conduct of believers.



**IV. Characteristics**

- A. Paul's letter to Titus shares many of the same concerns as his first letter to Timothy (leadership qualifications, advice on false teaching, need for sound doctrine and behavior).
- B. While similarities exist, there exist several differences between these last two letters we have penned by Paul:

Titus	2 Timothy
Written in freedom at Asia Minor (AD 66)	Written in captivity at Rome (AD 67)
Briefer (3 chapters, 46 verses)	Longer (4 chapters, 83 verses)
More official, less personal (6 names used)	Warm, informal (20 names used)
Teaches how the church is to be organized	Teaches how the church is to be lead
Emphasis on sound conduct	Emphasis on sound doctrine

- C. Despite its greater emphasis on behavior as opposed to doctrine, Titus contains three excellent summaries of Christian theology (1:1-4; 2:11-14; 3:4-7), the last two being among the most significant New Testament passages on the grace of God (*TTTB*, 440).

## Argument

Paul's aim in his letter to Titus is to give him practical advice that will help this apostolic delegate organize the new believers in Crete. His letter offers counsel in three general areas: how to appoint the right elders who can counter false teaching through word and deed (ch. 1), how to teach the people respectable conduct to protect the churches from being maligned by opposers (2:1-10), and finally, how to exhort the saints to live in contrast to the false teachers since the grace of God which they received leads to godly behavior (2:11-3:15). The apostle's emphasis is upon Christian behavior more than Christian doctrine; nevertheless, the fact that Titus had to *teach* the people proper action shows that doctrine and behavior are inseparable.

## Synthesis

### Sound conduct against opposition

- |          |   |
|----------|---|
| <b>1</b> | <b>Elders against false teachers</b>    |
| 1:1-4    | Truth leads to godliness                |
| 1:5-16   | Elders                                  |
| 1:5-9    | Character/Scriptural knowledge          |
| 1:10-16  | Needed to refute materialistic teachers |

- |               |                                   |
|---------------|-----------------------------------|
| <b>2:1-10</b> | <b>Conduct for various groups</b> |
| 2:1-2         | Older men                         |
| 2:3           | Older women                       |
| 2:4-5         | Younger women                     |
| 2:6-8         | Younger men                       |
| 2:9-10        | Slaves                            |

- |                  |                                 |
|------------------|---------------------------------|
| <b>2:11-3:15</b> | <b>Grace leads to godliness</b> |
| 2:11-15          | Educates                        |
| 3:1-2            | Empowers                        |
| 3:3-8            | Motivates                       |
| 3:9-11           | Protects                        |
| 3:12-15          | Conclusion                      |



## Outline

### Summary Statement for the Book

Paul exhorts Titus to *organize the Cretan churches by appointing qualified elders and teaching respectable behavior as the natural result of salvation by grace in order to defeat opposers by word and deed (conduct).*

#### **I. (Ch. 1) Paul exhorts Titus to appoint elders of character and of the Scriptures to protect the newly formed Cretan churches by refuting legalistic false teachers.**

- A. (1:1-4) Paul's greeting to Titus declares how truth leads to godliness in order to preview the contents that emphasize godly behavior in a pagan world.
- B. (1:5-16) Paul provides a checklist of elder qualifications so that Titus might select only godly men who will be able to refute legalistic false teachers in both word and deed.
  - 1. (1:5-9) Titus' task on Crete is to organize the churches by appointing men of character and the Scriptures.
  - 2. (1:10-16) Godly men of sound doctrine are needed to refute legalistic, Jewish false teachers eager for wealth.

#### **II. (2:1-10) Paul exhorts Titus to teach various groups conduct conforming to sound doctrine so that Cretan enemies cannot malign the church or God's Word.**

- A. (2:1-2) Older men should be taught to act respectably in line with their age.
- B. (2:3) Older women should be taught respectable behavior also so they can teach the younger women by example.
- C. (2:4-5) Younger women should be taught by the older women (not by Titus) the priority of an upright home life.
- D. (2:6-8) Younger men should be taught self-control in speech and actions.
- E. (2:9-10) Slaves should be taught submission to their masters in respect, lack of slander, and honesty.

#### **III. (2:11-3:15) Paul affirms that God's grace leads to godly behavior to remind Titus that his instructions in the letter are required of all Christians since all are saved by grace.**

- A. (2:11-15) God's grace educates believers how to choose godliness over ungodliness.
- B. (3:1-2) God's grace empowers gracious behavior before all people.
- C. (3:3-8) God's grace motivates Christians to good works as a natural response to being accepted by God because of His mercy.
- D. (3:9-11) God's grace protects believers from behavior that divides fellow Christians on minor issues so that church discipline must be exercised upon argumentative saints.
- E. (3:12-15) Paul's conclusion sends greetings, exhorts hospitality to his fellow-workers, and instructs the people in meaningful employment to act in line with gracious behavior.

## Church Government Summary

	<b>Episcopal</b>	<b>Presbyterian</b>	<b>Congregational</b>	<b>Elder/Congregational</b>
<i>Definition</i>	Bishop rule over several churches	Local church elders submit to higher bodies	Individual local church members have ultimate say	Individual local church members say balanced with elected elders
<i>Structure</i>	Bishop Archdeacon Vicar Priest Warden PCC Leaders Congregation	General Assem. Synod Presbytery Session Local church	Congregation Deacons Pastors	Elders/Pastors Deacons Congregation
<i>Uniquenesses</i>	Various levels of clergy  Most hierarchical structure	One level of clergy  Teaching and ruling elders distinguished (1 Tim. 5:17)	One level of clergy  Democratic  Local church autonomy  Single pastor per church common	One level of clergy  Democratic  Local church autonomy
<i>Denominations and Groups</i>	Anglican/Episc. Lutheran. Methodist Orthodox Catholic	Presbyterian Reformed	Congregational Baptist Bible Presb. Evangelical Free Pentecostal	Bible churches Independent
<i>Biblical Support Cited</i>	OT precedent of single leader  Matt. 16:18; 18:18; 28:18-20 (apostolic succession)  Acts 6:3, 6 (bishop ordaining)  Acts 15:13 (James)  Tit. 1:5 (Titus' authority)	OT precedent of rule by elders  Acts 11:30 (elders handled finances)  Acts 14:23 (group of elders per church)  Acts 15 (assembly higher than local church)  Acts 20:17f. (elders as ultimate church authority)	Matt. 18:17; Acts 1; 6:3-5; 11:22; 15:25; 1 Cor. 5:12; 2 Cor. 2:6-7; 2 Thess. 3:14; 1 John 2:20; 4:1 (group decisions)  Elder, bishop, pastor & overseer synonymous (e.g., 1 Tim. 3:1 vs. Tit. 1:5)  1 Pet. 2:9 (priesthood of believers)  NT focus on local church (many verses)	Presbyterian column (except Acts 15 is not seen as denoting an assembly higher than the local church)  +  Congregational verses

	<b>Episcopal</b>	<b>Presbyterian</b>	<b>Congregational</b>	<b>Elder/Congregational</b>
<b>Biblical Refutation</b>	<p>No clear evidence of structure above the local church (James presided rather than ruled)</p> <p>Power to ordain not clearly given to a single bishop</p> <p>Apostolic succession unproved</p> <p>Bishop/presbyter distinction unwarranted</p>	<p>No clear evidence of structure above the local church (Jerusalem church in Acts 15 has no authority over Antioch as decision made by whole church in v. 22)</p> <p>Priesthood of believers not sustained with elders who lord it over the flock</p>	<p>Single pastor (=elder) concept unbiblical as elders always functioned as a group</p>	
<b>Practical Advantages</b>	<p>Efficiency</p> <p>Unity (less church splits?)</p>	<p>Group decision making</p>	<p>Group decision making</p> <p>Congregation has significant input</p>	<p>Balance of power between elders &amp; congregation</p>
<b>Practical Disadvantages</b>	<p>Too much authority in one person (bishop)</p> <p>Little place for congregational input</p>	<p>Too much authority in one group (elders)</p> <p>Little place for congregational input</p>	<p>Inefficiency</p> <p>Major decisions often made by the uninformed</p> <p>Disunity (church splits)</p> <p>Pastor too often seen as employee rather than a leader</p>	<p>Danger of an overpowering elder board</p> <p>Difficulty determining which issues are elder issues and which are congregational</p>

## Christian Baptism



To really “hear out” an issue—especially one with such emotion as baptism—it is wise to present arguments from both sides. We think believer’s baptism has stronger support, but we present both views here.

	Infant	Believer’s
<b>Adherents</b> Who does it?	Catholic, Lutheran, Presbyterian, Reformed, Anglican, Methodist, some Evangelical Free Church	Baptist, Bible, Brethren, Mennonite, Pentecostal, some Evangelical Free Church, most independent churches
<b>Purpose</b> Why do they do it?	<p>Three Views:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><u>Catholic</u>: Means of saving grace <i>apart</i> from the faith of the baptized (baptismal regeneration)</li> <li><u>Lutheran</u>: Means of saving grace <i>assuming</i> faith by those baptized (baptismal regeneration)</li> <li><u>Others</u>: <i>Not</i> a means of saving grace but Reformed churches see it as a seal and sign of the covenant while the Methodists see it as a form of membership in the church family</li> </ol>	<p>Unified View:</p> <p>Baptism is a symbol of salvation: an outward sign of the inward reality of justification received in Christ with no external efficacy (A. Oepke, “bapto, baptizo...” <i>TDNTabr.</i>, 93).</p>
Supports for Above Stated Purpose:	<p>Baptismal regeneration is taught in many verses (Mark 16:16; John 3:5; Acts 2:38; Tit. 3:5; 1 Pet. 3:21).</p> <p>(Baptismal regeneration is refuted by Ronald K. Y. Fung, <i>The Epistle to the Galatians</i>, NICNT, 173-74)</p>	<p>Baptism and salvation are indeed linked, but not directly so that baptism <i>causes</i> salvation. This would contradict the clear NT teaching of salvation by faith alone (John 3:16; Rom. 10:9-10; Eph. 2:8-9). In NT times, baptism often occurred on the day of one’s conversion. This close association between salvation and baptism was viewed as a single event, yet baptism was not always commanded with conversion (Acts 3:19; 16:31).</p>
	<p>Baptism is the sign of the covenant (Col. 2:12).</p> <p>It thus signifies the recipient’s initiation into the community of God.</p>	<p>The sign of the new covenant is not baptism but the Lord’s Supper (1 Cor. 11:25).</p> <p>Colossians 2:11-12 associates baptism not with physical circumcision but with “spiritual” circumcision, or salvation.</p> <p>Also, Scripture never connects water baptism with an OT covenant such as the Abrahamic Covenant. The argument at the left is an argument from silence, as Colossians mentions no covenant relating to baptism.</p>
	<p>Baptism is the seal of the covenant (Acts 15:1; 21:21; Gal. 2:3-5).</p>	<p>The verses at the left prove only that circumcision is not required in the present age; they say nothing about baptism.</p> <p>The seal of the new covenant is not baptism but the Spirit (Eph. 1:13-14).</p>

	<b>Infant</b>	<b>Believer's</b>
Purpose (continued)	The central idea associated with baptism is purification from sin (Col. 2:11-12).	Baptism signifies forgiveness of sin but also identification with Christ in His death and resurrection (Rom. 6:1-7).
	Assigning to baptism only a symbolic purpose shows a low view of baptism in light of the many NT references.	This outward sign of an inward reality is supported in that all NT baptisms were performed on believers. To the contrary, to perform it only on Christians is to show a <i>high</i> view of baptism—especially since it is so often associated with salvation. The statement at the left assumes that a symbol cannot be important, but this is exactly what we have in the Lord's Supper.
	The thief on the cross lacked a chance to be baptized so he is not a good example of requisites for salvation. Christ may have made an exception in his case.	Concerning Catholic and Lutheran views requiring baptism for salvation, Christ promised the repentant thief on the cross salvation without baptism (Luke 23:40-43).
<b>Subjects</b> Who can be baptized? Support for Above Stated Subjects	Infants who have no personal faith in Christ can be baptized.	Believers alone should be baptized, which excludes infants and the unsaved.
	Baptism is parallel to circumcision, and circumcision was done to infants. Therefore, baptism should be performed on infants as well.	The logic at the left is faulty in its first premise—that baptism and circumcision are parallel (see above under Col. 2:12). Also, only boys can be circumcised.
	Infant baptism more powerfully illustrates the grace of God. Children were included in the old covenant. Since the new covenant supersedes the old, the new covenant should surely include children. Even animals are included in God's covenant of redemption (Gen. 9:10), let alone children, who are definitely more precious to Him. Sally Kee, p. 3	How is God's grace towards a baby who has never consciously sinned <i>greater</i> than His grace towards one who has repeatedly rebelled against Him? Grace towards adults is the greater marvel. Children under the old covenant were not saved by circumcision but by faith (Gen. 15:5). Likewise, under the new covenant we are accepted by faith—not by baptism (Rom. 4:1-25). Besides, how is denying baptism for infants a sign of the priority of animals over humans? Since animals are not baptized, the comparison cannot be made.
	Entire households were baptized in the NT, which almost certainly included infants (Acts 10:47-48; 16:15; 18:8; 1 Cor. 1:16).	Each of the household texts declare that the households <i>believed</i> before baptism; that infants were baptized is an assumption that is counter to the stated fact that people believed before baptism.
	Infant baptism has been practiced throughout the history of the church from earliest times.	The earliest non-scriptural baptism instructions (early second century) requires fasting of 1-2 days prior to baptism, thus implying only adult baptism ( <i>Didache</i> 7:4 in J. B. Lightfoot, <i>Apostolic Fathers</i> , 153)

	Infant	Believer's
Subjects (continued)	Christ blessed little children—probably even infants (Mark 10:13-16); this indicates His approval to baptize them.	Blessing children and baptizing them are wholly different. The argument at the left is valid only if the NT shows Christ baptizing children, which it does not.
	Infant baptism is not prohibited in the NT and therefore is allowed.	Silence does not necessarily argue for approval (e.g., we cannot argue for baptism of the dead simply because the NT does not prohibit it). NT support for believer's baptism automatically prohibits infant baptism since infants cannot believe.
		The order in the Great Commission is first to make disciples, <i>then</i> to baptize them (Matt. 28:19-20). Thus only believers are to be baptized, which excludes infants.
		Baptism points <i>back</i> to the believer's becoming united with Christ in His death (Rom. 6:1-11); this cannot be said of infants who have yet to believe.
		All subjects of baptism in the NT are clearly believers; one must have very good reason to deviate from this norm (Acts 2:38, 41; 8:12, 36-38; 9:18; 10:47; 16:14-15, 33; 18:8; 19:5). These texts show that repentance preceded baptism in a sequence of "hearing...believing...being baptized."
<b>Mode</b>	Scripture does not specify any particular mode of baptism, thus allowing both sprinkling and pouring. It is not <i>method</i> that counts, but the <i>sincerity</i> of the one baptized.	The only scriptural mode is immersion, so how can we say mode is unimportant? While it is true that mode is less important than heart attitude, this does not then imply that mode is irrelevant.
Support for the Above Stated Mode	Baptism by pouring has been practiced throughout the history of the church from earliest times.	Pouring is first stated in the early second century—and only as an exception when immersion in running water or cold water should/could not be used ( <i>Didache</i> 7:1-3 in J. B. Lightfoot, <i>Apostolic Fathers</i> , 153).
	Baptism by <i>pouring</i> is mentioned often in the NT (1 Cor. 6:11; Eph. 5:26; Heb. 9:10; 10:22; Tit. 3:5).	None of these verses refer to baptism and none refer to pouring. They refer in each case to <i>spiritual</i> cleansing from sin by faith in Christ ("washing") or to <i>Jewish</i> ceremonial washings that were performed numerous times on the same persons (cf. Heb. 9:10). Hebrews 10:22 refers not to baptism but to "having our <i>hearts sprinkled</i> to cleanse us from a guilty conscience and having our bodies washed with pure water."



	Infant	Believer's
Mode (continued)	Pouring best represents the outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon believers (Matt. 3:11; Acts 1:5; 2:3).	While <i>implied</i> similarities exist between baptism by pouring and the outpouring of the Spirit, the <i>explicit</i> symbolism in the NT is that baptism represents the believer's dying to his old life and rising to a new one (Rom. 6:1ff.). Thus immersion is the explicit mode in the NT and pouring can be argued only by implication.
	Baptism by <i>sprinkling</i> is mentioned often in the Bible (Exod. 24:6-8; Num. 8:7; Ezek. 36:24-26; Heb. 9:13-14; 10:22).	None of these texts note baptism. They refer to purifying priests with sprinkled water (Num. 8:7), sprinkling vessels with blood (Exod. 24:6-8; Heb. 9:13-14), or the Spirit's saving work (Ezek. 36:24-26; Heb. 10:22).
	Practically speaking, Peter could not have immersed 3000 in a single day on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:41). This baptism must have been by sprinkling or by pouring.	One wonders if he could have sprinkled or poured upon that many either, but the text does not say Peter did the baptizing. If one could immerse 100 people per hour (a distinct possibility), the 120 disciples there (Acts 1:15) could have immersed 12,000 in a single hour! Even if only the 12 baptized it would take less than three hours to baptize the 3000 (12 x 100 = 1200/hour).
	The Philippian jailer would not have left his post for immersion, but could have momentarily for pouring or sprinkling (Acts 16:33b).	The text says he took time to listen to Paul's preaching (v. 32) and to wash Paul and Silas' wounds (v. 33a), which may have taken just as long. He obviously left his post to invite Paul and Silas to his home for a midnight meal (v. 34). Baptism takes less time than eating a full meal. The argument at the left also assumes that he guarded the jail alone and could not have delegated his responsibilities to others.
	Lexical meanings are not sufficient to establish theology.	The lexical meaning of the only word used for NT baptism (βαπτίζω) means "dip, immerse... wash, plunge, sink, drench, overwhelm...soak" (BAGD 131c). Besides baptism, other literal uses include "to dip" (Luke 16:24; cf. LXX Judg. 2:14; Josh. 3:15; Lev. 4:6; 11:32) and "to dye" (Rev. 19:13). Also, baptism is likened to the Flood (1 Pet. 3:21). From the lexical data even Luther and Calvin both believed immersion to be the biblical mode.
	Since sprinkling was practiced in the OT, John the Baptist probably sprinkled as well—especially since he was a Levite (Luke 1:5).	John the Baptist performed his baptisms in the Jordan River. Would sprinkling have required people to walk into the water with John? Besides, the type of baptism immediately preceding John's historically was Jewish proselyte immersion (see next box below).



	<b>Infant</b>	<b>Believer's</b>
Mode (continued)	Baptisms preceding Christianity do not absolutely establish that Christian baptism followed the same pattern.	βαπτίζω (to dip) is used not only of NT baptism, but also of Jewish ritual washings (Mark 7:4; Luke 11:38), which were by immersion. Both pagan religious washings and Jewish proselyte baptism preceded Christian baptism, the later being by self-immersion (A. Oepke, "bapto, baptizo..." <i>TDNTabr.</i> , 92-93).
	Sprinkling and pouring also have OT and NT parallels (see above).	Immersion best signifies: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• identification with Christ's death and resurrection by going under the water and out again (Rom. 6:3-5; Col. 2:12)</li> <li>• subjection to Christ's authority (Matt. 28:18-19; Acts 19:3-5; 22:16)</li> <li>• obedience and a good conscience before God (1 Pet. 3:21).</li> </ul>
	Baptism preceded the writing of Romans, so the immersion portrayed in Romans 6 could have been new. (No evidence prior to Romans indicates that baptism signified Christ's death and resurrection.)	Only six NT books were written before Romans, so Romans was among the first NT books to be written (AD 56-57). It is quite problematic to argue an early and later form of Christian baptism given that there exists "one baptism" (Eph. 4:5).
	The passages at the right argue only that baptism took place in water, but this still could have been by pouring or sprinkling while standing in the water.	All NT examples of baptism best allow for immersion: "plenty of water" (John 3:23), "coming up out of the water" (Mark 1:10), "went down into the water" (Acts 8:38). This last case concerns the Ethiopian eunuch who could have easily been baptized by pouring or sprinkling anywhere along the journey by using water in the caravan.



Please Note: Various persons holding to the infant baptism position above have proofread this column so that this study will accurately present this perspective. However, as with any view, there exists a spectrum of views on this topic.

## Questions About Baptism

1. Should baptism be required of those who take the Lord's Supper?

Response: Since 1 Corinthians 11:28 warns each believer to *evaluate himself* prior to taking the Lord's Supper, our church does not act as judge for each participant. However, we do encourage people in our congregation to obey Christ in all ways, including baptism. If a person is informed about baptism but resists being baptized, one could ask if he can take the Lord's Supper in a "worthy manner" (1 Cor. 11:27-32). Baptism was required of those partaking the Lord's Supper as early as the second century (*Didache* 10:5 in J. B. Lightfoot, *The Apostolic Fathers*, 154), yet we see this as an individual decision.

2. Should those sprinkled *as infants* later be baptized following confession of salvation?

Response: The difference between infant sprinkling and adult baptism relates to more than simply the *time* of baptism. The whole *purpose* of baptism differs significantly in these two ceremonies. Infant sprinkling signifies the parents' desire for their infant to be accepted into the community of God (Presbyterian view) and even serves as a means of saving grace in the Catholic and Lutheran views. However, as Scripture relates to baptism a symbolic purpose of looking back at one's salvation, it would seem that one who has been saved would welcome the opportunity to testify to his or her salvation through baptism after salvation.

3. Should those sprinkled *as believing adults* be immersed once they see immersion's NT support?

Response: Many churches will not admit persons for membership who have not been immersed after placing their faith in Christ, even if they have been sprinkled following salvation. This is not as serious of an issue as question "2" above, but there is a similar situation in Scripture that can help.

Here is where Acts 19:1-7 can help. In this passage Paul visited Ephesus and found twelve men to whom he ministered. A key question here is, "Were these men believers in Christ?" Some claim, "The fact that these men did not have the Spirit dwelling within was proof that they had never truly been born again,"<sup>1</sup> but the following shows that, as much as possible, they had placed their faith in Christ:

- a. They were already deemed "*disciples*" when Paul met them (19:1). It is clear they were disciples of John, but Luke uses this word "*disciples*" 31 other times in Acts—and every time he refers to believers in Christ (16:1 18:23, 27; 19:9, 30; 20:1-7, 30 are the closest references).<sup>2</sup>
- b. Paul asked them "*when they believed*"—not "*if they believed*" (19:2), so he assumed that they had already placed their faith in Christ according to the teaching of Apollos (Acts 18:25). "The impression of verse 2 and its mention of their believing, however, is that their instruction is incomplete, not that Jesus is not a part of it at all."<sup>3</sup>
- c. They had already *repented* of their sins in anticipation of the Messiah's ministry.
- d. They had already received the *baptism* of repentance (Matt. 3:2, 6, 8, 11; Mark 1:4-5; Luke 3:8).

So they were believers when Paul met them. However, for whatever reason, they were unlike the majority of John's disciples who eventually met and followed Christ. Since they had a baptism (immersion) of repentance under John that was incomplete in picturing their faith in Christ, Paul

<sup>1</sup>Warren W. Wiersbe, *The Bible Exposition Commentary* (Wheaton, Ill.: Victor Books, 1996, c1989), Ac 19:1; cf. Lawrence O. Richards, *The Bible Readers Companion*, electronic ed. (Wheaton: Victor Books, 1991; Published in electronic form by Logos Research Systems, 1996), 726; Ben Witherington, *The Acts of the Apostles: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 570 (cited by Bock's commentary below) says that neither they nor Apollos were believers, given their lack of the Spirit, which Luke requires for true believers (e.g., Acts 11:17). However, given this narrow definition in the transitional book of Acts, one wonders how even the twelve apostles could be called believers prior to receiving the Spirit in Acts 2.

<sup>2</sup>Others say that "*disciples*" usually refers to Christians, but since these people had not received the Holy Spirit, it is more likely that they are to be regarded as disciples of John the Baptist, on 'the Way' but not very far along" (D. A. Carson, *New Bible Commentary: 21st Century Edition*, 4th ed. [Leicester, England; Downers Grove, Ill., USA: Inter-Varsity Press, 1994], Ac 19:1). Polhill notes that in Luke's gospel, "*disciples*" can refer to John's followers (Luke 5:33; 7:18-19; cf. J. B. Polhill, *Acts*, New American Commentary [Nashville: Broadman, 1992], 399). However, followers of John the Baptist essentially placed their faith in the coming Messiah. Therefore, since Jesus was the focus of John's preaching, disciples of John believed in the Jesus that he proclaimed (19:4).

<sup>3</sup>Darrell L. Bock, *Acts*, Baker Exegetical Commentary on the NT (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2007), 599. Bock also notes on the same page, "Most commentators understand disciples as being disciples of Jesus here..."

rebaptized them in the Christian manner (immersion in the name of Christ). Paul felt it vital that their baptism accurately picture their faith in Christ. This is the only place in the NT that explicitly refers to anyone being rebaptized.<sup>4</sup> As far as we know, neither Apollos nor the twelve apostles were rebaptized, but arguing the case either way would be an ineffective argument from silence.<sup>5</sup>

The Acts 19 situation did not concern *sprinkling* followed later by immersion as in question “2” above. John *immersed* in the Jordan and the Jewish proselyte baptism that preceded him was also by immersion. Certainly if Paul felt it necessary to supplement one form of immersion (John’s baptism of repentance) with another form of immersion (Christian baptism), it would be appropriate to supplement post-conversion sprinkling with post-conversion immersion. As in question “2” above, this ceremony gives believers another opportunity and privilege to testify of their faith in Christ.

Someone may ask, “Methodists and Presbyterians and others holding to infant baptism accept new adult members who have been immersed without them being sprinkled. Why then, can’t those holding to believers’ immersion accept the sprinkling of the other denominations?” This is a fair question, but the two situations are not parallel. Many who practice infant baptism such as Calvin and Luther admit that immersion is the scriptural mode, so it is certainly easy for them to accept those with scriptural baptism. However, those practicing immersion of believers do not see any scriptural support for sprinkling either adults or infants. Why should immersionists have to accept an unscriptural form of “baptism” just because those who sprinkle accept immersion as the scriptural form?

#### 4. Should a church require immersion for those who seek to become members?

This question is even stickier than the preceding three questions as it asks not simply what *should* be done but what a church would *require* to be done. It is important since to require anything beyond what the Bible requires would be legalism; however, to require less than Scripture would be unscriptural.

Many people object to the requirement of immersion. These objections deserve a reasoned answer:

Objection 1: Why won’t you accept sprinkling as an alternate mode of baptism?

*Response:* The first recorded case of sprinkling was in AD 257 to someone on a sickbed. It started then as an exception to the rule and brought about fierce opposition from the whole church. Not until AD 757 did the church accept sprinkling in such sickbed cases of necessity. It wasn’t until AD 1311, when the Catholic council of Ravenna, declared that sprinkling was an acceptable substitute for immersion and from that time forward sprinkling replaced immersion in the Roman Catholic Church.<sup>6</sup>

Objection 2: Such a strict requirement of immersion-only invalidates baptisms by sprinkling or pouring.

*Response:* Pouring emerged in the second century, followed by sprinkling in the third century. The requirement of immersion only acknowledges that a single form of baptism was practiced in the first century. It in no way invalidates sprinkling or pouring as public testimonies of one’s faith in Christ. There are many ways to testify of Christ that are not noted in Scripture: public profession, walking the aisle, sharing via television, fax, email, blogging, etc. Requiring immersion only notes that immersion is a *biblical* form of public testimony via the baptism that Christ commanded.

Objection 3: Is the rebaptism by immersion in Acts 19 really parallel since immersion after adult sprinkling today is a second public testimony of faith in Christ? Acts 19 required baptism of those who did not have Christian baptism until trusting in Christ at their second baptism. However, believers today who have been sprinkled as adults have not become Christians between their sprinkling and immersion.

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<sup>4</sup> Stanley D. Toussaint, “Acts,” in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures*, eds. John F. Walvoord, Roy B. Zuck and Dallas Theological Seminary (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1983-c1985), 2:409.

<sup>5</sup> A.T. Robertson, *Word Pictures in the New Testament* (Oak Harbor: Logos Research Systems, 1997), Ac 19:5.

<sup>6</sup> See [www.bible.ca/cath-overview-false-teaching.htm](http://www.bible.ca/cath-overview-false-teaching.htm).

*Response:* As noted above, believers who have not been immersed are actually quite parallel to those in Acts 19. In both cases, true believers publicly responded to what they knew about the Messiah—through John’s immersion then and through sprinkling or pouring today. Those in Acts were immersed *twice*. Why would not believers today who have *never* been immersed be immersed even for the *first* time?

Objection 4: Why have membership at all—especially with such a high standard like immersion?

*Response:* The NT church had certain lists—obviously for those in leadership (Acts 6:5) and even widows for church support (1 Tim. 5:9). The church in Jerusalem had 5000 in attendance within the various house churches, which must have had official lists of members.

What was required for membership? The NT pattern required two basics: (1) belief in Christ, and (2) immersion. Many churches add numerous other requirements to these two basics: several class sessions on membership, an interview by the pastor, etc. While these are not necessarily wrong, often these are required but the biblical requirement of immersion is neglected. Immersion is not a high standard. It was practiced immediately on thousands of believers upon their simple testimony of Christ as the One who saved them from sin.

Objection 5: Aren’t differing modes of baptism parallel to differing types of food in Communion? If we must follow the NT unleavened bread and wine, why do we use bread and grape juice today?

*Response:* The variances here are not parallel at all. The difference between wine and grape juice is marginal compared to the symbolism of immersion versus sprinkling or pouring. The latter do not picture the symbolism of immersion where a believer dies to his old life only to rise to a new life (Rom. 6). Similarly, differences between unleavened and leavened bread are inconsequential compared to pouring and sprinkling which have no NT baptismal significance as opposed to immersion’s symbolism.

Objection 6: In today’s international setting with many divergent backgrounds within a congregation, shouldn’t a local church be more accommodating to these views rather than require immersion?

*Response:* Romans 14 warns us not to put a stumbling block before weaker believers. However, this should never be done at the expense of following NT practices. When we must choose between accommodating various backgrounds and violating Scripture, we must choose to obey the Word. All NT believers in the book of Acts were immersed before being added to their particular fellowship:

- Peter commanded those at Pentecost to repent and 3000 were immersed (2:38, 41)
- Samaritans trusted Christ and were immersed (8:12)
- The Ethiopian eunuch “believed...[and was] immersed” (8:36-38)
- Paul believed and was immersed that same night (9:18)
- Cornelius “believed... [and was] immersed” (10:47)
- The Philippian jailer “believed... [and was] immersed” (16:14-15, 33)
- Crispus “believed... [and was] immersed” (18:8)
- John’s disciples “believed [and were] immersed” (19:5)

Almost all NT churches were international—except possibly the Jewish church at Jerusalem. Even Jerusalem likely had Jews from many nations worshipping together, if some of those saved at Pentecost remained at Jerusalem. The point is not the background from which people have emerged. Believers today and then are saved from a variety of backgrounds—including pagan religious roots as well as Christian roots of varying stripes. The point is to follow the NT patterns as closely as possible.

Actually, having different requirements for membership leads to confusion as to the biblical mode. Why require immersion for those baptized by our church, but allow sprinkling or pouring for others from other churches? If we have a biblical mode, then we should not be afraid to follow it.

Since God has given us such a beautiful, clear picture of the new life we have in Christ that *all early church Christians practiced*, should we not do so today?

# Philemon

Forgive Others and Seek Forgiveness							
Greeting 1-3		Prayer & Commendation 4-7		Appeal for Onesimus 8-21			Conclusion 22-25
Preface		Praise		Petition			Postscript
People Concerned		Philemon's Character		Onesimus' Conversion			Paul's Co-Workers
Authors 1a-b	Recipients 1c-3	Thanks 4-5	Relationships 6-7	General Appeal 8-11	Reasons for Return 12-16	Specific Appeal 17-21	Preparations Greetings Blessing 22-25
Rome to Colosse							
Fall AD 61							

**Key Word:** Forgiveness

**Key Verse:** “So if you consider me a partner, welcome him [Onesimus] as you would welcome me. If he has done you any wrong or owes you anything, charge it to me” (Philemon 17-18).

**Summary Statement:** Paul requests the Christian slave owner, Philemon, for *forgiveness* for his runaway but repentant slave, Onesimus, whom Paul led to Christ and sent back to Philemon for restatement as Christian brother to teach *how to forgive and be forgiven*.

**Application:** With whom do best relate to now?

1. **Philemon:** Whom do you need to *forgive* a wrong done to you?
2. **Onesimus:** Whose forgiveness do you need to *request*?
3. **Paul:** How can you *help* two others reconcile?
4. **The Church:** How can you *affirm* the reconciliation of others?

# Philemon

## Introduction

**I. Title:** The title (Πρὸς Φιλῆμονα *To Philemon*) follows the standard practice of naming New Testament epistles after their recipients.

### II. Authorship

A. External Evidence: The authenticity of Philemon was held until objections were raised in the fourth century against its lack of doctrinal content. However, Jerome and Chrysostom vindicated the epistle and Pauline authorship has been universally held until the 19th century radical critics.

B. Internal Evidence: Paul refers to himself three times as author (vv. 1, 9, 19).

### III. Circumstances

A. Date: The letter was written during Paul's first imprisonment in Rome (AD Feb. 60-March 62), evident in the parallels between this epistle and the one to the entire Colossian church (cf. v. 23 with Col. 4:7-10). Hoehner's date for this epistle is the same as that for Colossians: fall AD 61.

B. Origin/Recipients: Philemon (v. 1b), a wealthy Christian slave owner in Colosse, is the primary addressee, but others in his church are included as well (v. 2).

C. Occasion: During Paul's first imprisonment in Rome (AD Feb. 60-March 62) he led to Christ the fugitive slave of Philemon named Onesimus (v. 10b). The content of the letter reveals that Onesimus had done some injustices to and stolen from Philemon (v. 18) before he ran away. This letter to Philemon (who also had become a Christian through Paul; v. 19b) was sent with Onesimus to Colosse to convince Philemon to forgive Onesimus as a brother (Col. 4:9).

### IV. Characteristics

A. This "New Testament postcard" is the shortest letter of Paul's epistles (only 25 verses).

B. The letter to Philemon probably provides the clearest example of the need to demonstrate forgiveness in the New Testament. Onesimus' commitment to return to his former master was in effect risking his life to ask forgiveness, yet he still did it. The Roman government gave absolute rights to slave owners and no rights to slaves as they were considered their masters' property. "The slave was absolutely at his master's disposal; for the smallest offence he might be scourged, mutilated, crucified, [or] thrown to the wild beasts" (J. B. Lightfoot, *Saint Paul's Epistles to the Colossians and to Philemon*, 321).

C. This writing illustrates the nature of imputation perhaps better than any other. Paul requests that all of Onesimus' sin be placed not upon Onesimus but upon himself (v. 18). In like manner Christ took the sin of humanity upon Himself (Rom. 5:12-21).

D. In this correspondence Paul provides several reasons why forgiveness is important:

1. Forgiveness solidifies friendships (vv. 8-11, 17, 20).

2. Restored relationships make people more helpful to us (v. 11).

3. Forgiveness involves one's heart (v. 12).

4. The sacrifice that forgiveness requires is painful but good for us (vv. 13, 18-19a).

5. Forgiveness shows humility since it must be voluntary not forced (vv. 14, 21).

6. Forgiveness reminds one that God is in control of painful events (vv. 15, 16).
  7. Forgiving others reminds us of how God forgave us (v. 19b).
- E. The letter finishes without the end of the story ever completed. The question looms, "Did Philemon forgive Onesimus?" Three factors would indicate that he did:
1. Philemon preserved this epistle and allowed it to be circulated and copied among the churches so that it was finally included within the canon. It is unlikely that he would *not* have forgiven Onesimus and then allowed this lack of forgiveness to be publicized!
  2. Paul expressed great confidence that Philemon would do more than even forgive Onesimus (v. 21). Perhaps what is meant by this is that the apostle had no doubt that Philemon would grant Onesimus his freedom so that he would no longer be a slave.
  3. Ignatius wrote a letter to the nearby church in Ephesus about AD 115 and addressed it to "Bishop Onesimus"! Could the former slave and the Ephesian bishop be one and the same? This took place approximately 55-57 years later, which would have made Onesimus in his 70s.

## Argument

Paul's short letter to Philemon demonstrates both the importance of forgiving offenders and also being forgiven (making right the offenses one causes) as necessary decisions for walking with God. This views the letter from the perspective of both Onesimus and Philemon. Paul greets Philemon (vv. 1-3) and praises him (vv. 4-7) as introduction to his main request, the pardon of Onesimus (vv. 8-21), followed by closing personal remarks (vv. 22-25). That the letter served not simply as a personal piece of correspondence to Philemon alone is evident in the address to others in the church and the use of the plural "you" in verse 25.

## Synthesis

### Forgive others and seek forgiveness

1-3	<b>Greeting</b>
4-7	<b>Prayer/commendation</b>
8-21	<b>Appeal for Onesimus</b>
8-11	General appeal
8-9	Paul's credentials
10-11	Onesimus' new status
12-16	Reasons for return
12-13	Proper
14	Philemon's authority
15-16	Sovereignty
17-21	Specific appeal
17	Forgiveness
18-19a	Imputation
19b	Debt to Paul
20	Complete acceptance
21	Grant freedom
22-25	<b>Conclusion</b>
22	Preparations
23-24	Greetings from co-workers
25	Blessing



## Outline

### Summary Statement for the Book

Paul requests the Christian slave owner, Philemon, for *forgiveness* for his runaway but repentant slave, Onesimus, whom Paul led to Christ and sent back to Philemon for restatement as Christian brother to teach *how to forgive and be forgiven*.

- I. (1-3) Paul introduces himself as author with Timothy, addresses Philemon, his wife, his son and his housechurch, and wishes them God's grace and peace to set the tone for his following appeal for Onesimus.
  - A. (1a-b) Paul introduces himself in humble and friendly terms to stir Philemon's sympathy and conscience, and adds Timothy's name as additional weight for his appeal.
    1. (1a) Paul identifies himself humbly as a prisoner from loyalty to Christ as a sign of friendly warmth (not apostolic authority) to incite Philemon's sympathy and touch his conscience by Philemon receiving a plea from one bondsman on behalf of another.
    2. (1b) Timothy's name is included with Paul's as added weight to his appeal by affirming that Timothy was in complete agreement with Paul regarding the letter.
  - B. (1c-2) Philemon, some family members, and the entire church are recipients of the letter to make it public, thus reminding Philemon of the widespread influence of his private decision regarding Onesimus.
    1. (1c) Philemon, a wealthy Christian slave owner, is addressed as the primary recipient of the letter.
    2. (2) Apphia, Archippus and the housechurch are added as secondary recipients to give the letter a public sense as additional incentive for Philemon to accept Onesimus.
      - a. (2a) Apphia, due to the placement of her name between two men rather than after, apparently is the wife of Philemon and is addressed because of the influence she would have upon her husband's decision regarding Onesimus.
      - b. (2b) Archippus is probably Philemon's son and the pastor of the church who would need to know the details regarding Philemon's response to Onesimus.
      - c. (2c) The entire housechurch which met in Philemon's home is also addressed to remind Philemon of the public implications of his decision regarding Onesimus.
  - C. (3) Paul greets his readers by wishing upon them God's unmerited favor which results in peace as a reminder to Philemon of the Source upon Whom he would need to draw to experience grace and peace with Onesimus.
- II. (4-7) Paul prays for and commends the love and faith of Philemon in genuine thanksgiving to encourage Philemon to demonstrate these same qualities towards Onesimus, his runaway but repentant slave.
  - A. (4) The nature of Paul's thanksgiving is continual, godward, and personal to let Philemon know of his high esteem of him.
  - B. (5) The reason Paul gives thanks is because of Philemon's faith toward Christ demonstrated in his love toward believers which Paul commends to subtly imply that Onesimus is now included among them.
  - C. (6) Paul prays for Philemon's faith active in his relationships resulting in knowledge of his divine blessings that this same faith might be demonstrated towards Onesimus.
  - D. (7) Paul's thanksgiving is based upon Philemon's love expressed in good deeds which refreshed believers.



**III.(8-21) Paul makes a general appeal to Philemon for mercy to be granted to Onesimus, cites reasons for sending him back to Philemon and makes a specific request that Onesimus be fully pardoned for his wrongdoing.**

- A. (8-11) Paul's general appeal for mercy on Onesimus based on Paul's credentials and on Onesimus' new status is to prepare Philemon to grant his specific request later.
1. (8-9) Paul's appeal is based on his own credentials as an old friend of Philemon who had undergone persecution for Christ to arouse Philemon's sympathy.
    - a. (8-9a) Paul appeals not from his apostolic authority but from brotherly love so that Philemon's decision would be voluntary and not forced.
    - b. (9b) Paul appeals as a man having grown old through a strenuous life to add weight to his entreaty which could not be easily cast aside.
    - c. (9c) Paul appeals as an imprisoned man for Christ's sake to arouse Philemon's sympathies which would make him more favorable to grant Paul's request.
  2. (10-11) Paul's appeal is also based upon Onesimus' new position and usefulness as a believer to stimulate Philemon to respond to him as he did to other Christians.
    - a. (10) Paul appeals on the basis of Onesimus' new position in Christ as a believer which would shake Philemon into the realization that whatever he does to Philemon should be appropriate in the family of God.
    - b. (11) Paul appeals on the basis of Onesimus' new usefulness to both Philemon and Paul since he is more valuable to both as a believer in order to make Philemon aware of Onesimus' incalculable worthiness.
- B. (12-16) Paul states several reasons for sending Onesimus back to Philemon so that Philemon might know his real heart motives and therefore grant forgiveness to Onesimus.
1. (12-13) Paul admits that his own desires for a continuing relationship with Onesimus could not overrule doing what was right.
  2. (14) Paul recognizes Philemon's ultimate authority over Onesimus as his slave so that Philemon could decide whether Onesimus could remain with him.
  3. (15-16) Paul suggests that the events which occurred may have been permitted by God to result in a greater good by Philemon and Onesimus becoming brothers in Christ.
- C. (17-21) Paul requests Philemon to encourage him by unconditionally forgiving Onesimus, offers to pay any outstanding debts, and expresses his confidence that Philemon will even free Onesimus as well.
1. (17) Paul requests that Philemon accept Onesimus back as a brother just as Philemon would accept Paul that the slave owner might understand Onesimus' equal standing with them in Christ.
  2. (18-19a) Paul offers to pay any of Onesimus' outstanding debts to Philemon to encourage Philemon to forgive Onesimus unconditionally.
  3. (19b) Paul reminds Philemon that he owes his own conversion to Paul to motivate Philemon to forgive Onesimus rather than require payment of his debts for stealing.
  4. (20) Paul asks Philemon to encourage him through the complete acceptance of Onesimus that this slave owner would realize that his forgiveness of Onesimus would not only encourage Onesimus but Paul as well.
  5. (21) Paul expresses confidence that Philemon will both forgive and free Onesimus.

**IV.(22-25) Paul requests preparations for his anticipated visit, sends greetings from co-workers and blesses the church to reinforce the public nature of Philemon's decision and to remind of God's power for fulfilling his appeal.**

- A. (22) Paul requests preparations to be made for his expected visit and acknowledges the church's prayers for his release to comfort them by prospects of an upcoming visit and to spur them to quickly respond to Paul's plea for Onesimus.
- B. (23-24) Five men who voluntarily shared Paul's prison confinement send their greetings to Philemon which reinforces the public nature of Philemon's decision regarding Onesimus.
  - 1. (23) Epaphras, the founder of the Colossian church (Col. 1:7) who voluntarily shared Paul's confinement, sends Philemon greetings.
  - 2. (24) Four other fellow workers of Paul's also send their greetings which emphasizes the public influence that Philemon's decision will carry.
- C. (25) Paul pronounces a blessing of Christ's grace upon the Colossian church as an indication of the Source of power to fulfill his appeal in the letter.



Saul escaped from Damascus with the help of his new Christian friends. Once he was safely outside the city, he set out immediately for Jerusalem.

## Bible Study

# Dear Onesimus, I'll Write the Letter— but You Deliver It

by Gary Stanley

The letter to Philemon is all that remains of Paul's efforts to help one of his converts get his life straightened out. Onesimus was a slave<sup>1</sup> who ran away from Philemon,<sup>2</sup> his master, and made his way to Rome. He became a Christian after meeting Paul.<sup>3</sup> On the eve of Paul's trial before Caesar, and with the press of the churches on him,<sup>4</sup> Paul still found time to compose a brief note on behalf of a slave. That Paul should write such a note isn't the least bit odd. But that a note written to an obscure individual who lived in a town Paul never visited<sup>5</sup> should find a place among the rest of the New Testament — that's another matter.

Perhaps the theme of Paul's note is the reason for its popularity; it touches a universal need — forgiveness. In the 25 verses of Philemon, Paul relates six basic elements of forgiveness<sup>6</sup> to Onesimus, Philemon and himself. But how the note to Philemon was written in the first place . . . well, the following scraps of correspondence (real or otherwise) may unlock some doors.

Dear Onesimus,

A pastor friend of mine named Epaphras arrived yesterday from Colossae. As I was telling Epaphras about you and how useful<sup>8</sup> you have been to me since our first meeting, he expressed surprise. It seems that Philemon, a believer from Colossae, once had a slave by the same name.<sup>9</sup> Onesimus is a common enough name (especially among slaves), but from what Epaphras tells me, you two could be twins! Small world, isn't it, Onesimus?

Your brother,

*Paul*

Dear Paul,

It was just a matter of time before I was found out. Well, I'm kinda relieved. Epaphras has been to my master's house lots — that's where their church meets.<sup>10</sup> I wasn't bothered at all by my actions until I met you and then

God, personal-like.

But now I'm sorry I ran away<sup>11</sup> (not to mention the stealing).<sup>12</sup> I've tried to forget it all and work on doing better now. It hasn't helped much. I thought Christians were supposed to feel forgiven.

Your servant,

*Onesimus*

Dear Onesimus,

Up until now I've not been as concerned with your past as I was with your future. But it now looks as though your future is dependent on how you respond to your past. What do you think you should do?

A fellow bond slave of God,

*Paul*

## Dear Onesimus, I'll Write the Letter—but You Deliver It (2 of 2)

Dear Paul,

You think I should go back, don't you? Paul, there are more than 60 million slaves around today, and they all know one thing — the life of any slave ain't worth nothin' if he crosses his master, and gets caught.<sup>13</sup>

If I go back, I'll be beaten, branded and maybe even killed! You were born a citizen,<sup>14</sup> so how could you possibly understand? I want forgiveness, but I ain't sure I want it more than life.

Your brother,  
Onesimus

Can't we just write him a letter explaining everything? If I go back, I figure I may get only one shot at this if things don't go the way they're suppose to.

Sincerely,

Onesimus

Dear Onesimus,

You're right, a letter is a good idea. I'll gladly write him a note explaining the situation and interceding on your behalf. But forgiveness simply won't work in the abstract. Its sweet savor is found only when it's done face to face.<sup>20</sup> I know.<sup>21</sup> I want you to stay, but you need to go back. I'll write the letter—but you deliver it.<sup>22</sup>

Love,

Paul

Onesimus did deliver Paul's note, and Philemon did forgive him. Tradition<sup>23</sup> holds that Philemon sent Onesimus back to Rome to serve Paul. More than 50 years later, a man named Onesimus was the bishop of the church at Ephesus, probably the first place an effort was made to collect the books of our New Testament. If Bishop Onesimus was the former slave, how appropriate that he would want a little note on a grand theme to be included.

Many sides of forgiveness are found in Paul's note to Philemon (see footnote 6). Can you find the six steps Paul took in the case of Onesimus? What are the parallels between Paul's handling of this specific case with Christ's efforts on your behalf?

The footnotes are given to whet your appetite for further study and application (they're also the justification for my speculation).

Dear Onesimus,  
You've greatly underestimated your master, Philemon. You saw him only through the eyes of a slave; he has a Master, too. If the gospel can cause a runaway slave to return to his master, don't you think the same gospel can cause the master to forgive the slave?<sup>15</sup> Your service to me is commendable,<sup>16</sup> and I believe your faith to be sincere, but it won't bring about the forgiveness you're looking for.<sup>17</sup>

Paul

P.S. You're also wrong about my not knowing the taste of slavery. I've willingly been a slave a lot longer than you've been alive.<sup>18</sup>

Dear Paul,

You sure are right. I need to ask Philemon to forgive me. But it's such a long way back, and you said yourself you wanted me to stay 'cause I was a big help to you.<sup>19</sup>

1. Philemon 16; 2. Philemon 15; 3. Philemon 10; 4. Paul's letters to the churches of Ephesus, Philippi and Colossae were all written from prison about the same time that Philemon was written (A.D. 62). The loving concern and instruction he wished to impart personally had to be put in letters instead; 5. Colossians 1:4,8; 6. Merrill C. Tenney's *Survey of the New Testament*, p. 317, lists all six elements of forgiveness: the offense, compassion, intercession, substitution, restoration to favor, and elevation to a new relationship; 7. Epaphras was likely the pastor in Colossae (Colossians 4:12,13), and he went to Rome to help Paul during his time of need (Philemon 23). Epaphras also prompted Paul to write to the church of Colossae concerning the heresies there (Colossians 1:7,8); 8. Paul is making a pun on Onesimus' name, which means useful (Philemon 11); 9. Philemon 10,11; 10. Philemon 2; 11. Philemon 15; 12. Philemon 18; 13. See William Barclay's *Letters to Timothy, Titus and Philemon*, pp. 310ff; 14. Acts 22:27,28; 15. Philemon 8,9,21; 16. Philemon 11; 17. Matthew 5:23,24; 18. Romans 6:17, 18; 19. Philemon 13; 20. Philemon 14; 21. Acts 9:1ff is the story of Paul's forgiveness found on the road to Damascus; 22. Philemon 12; Colossians 4:7-9; 23. The church father Ignatius wrote a letter to the church in Ephesus around A.D. 115 making mention of their bishop, Onesimus.

Gary Stanley, a graduate of Baylor University and Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, is on the faculty of the International School of Theology.

# HOW WE BECOME LIKE THOSE WE RESENT

• A bitter young father recalled his unhappy childhood days and renewed his vow, "I'll never be like my dad!"

His dad drank, was unfaithful to his wife, and had grossly neglected his son.

Now the son was married and had his own family. He never drank, he was very faithful to his wife, and he spent long hours with his family. Yet, those who were closest to him said, "You're just like your father!" Why was this true?

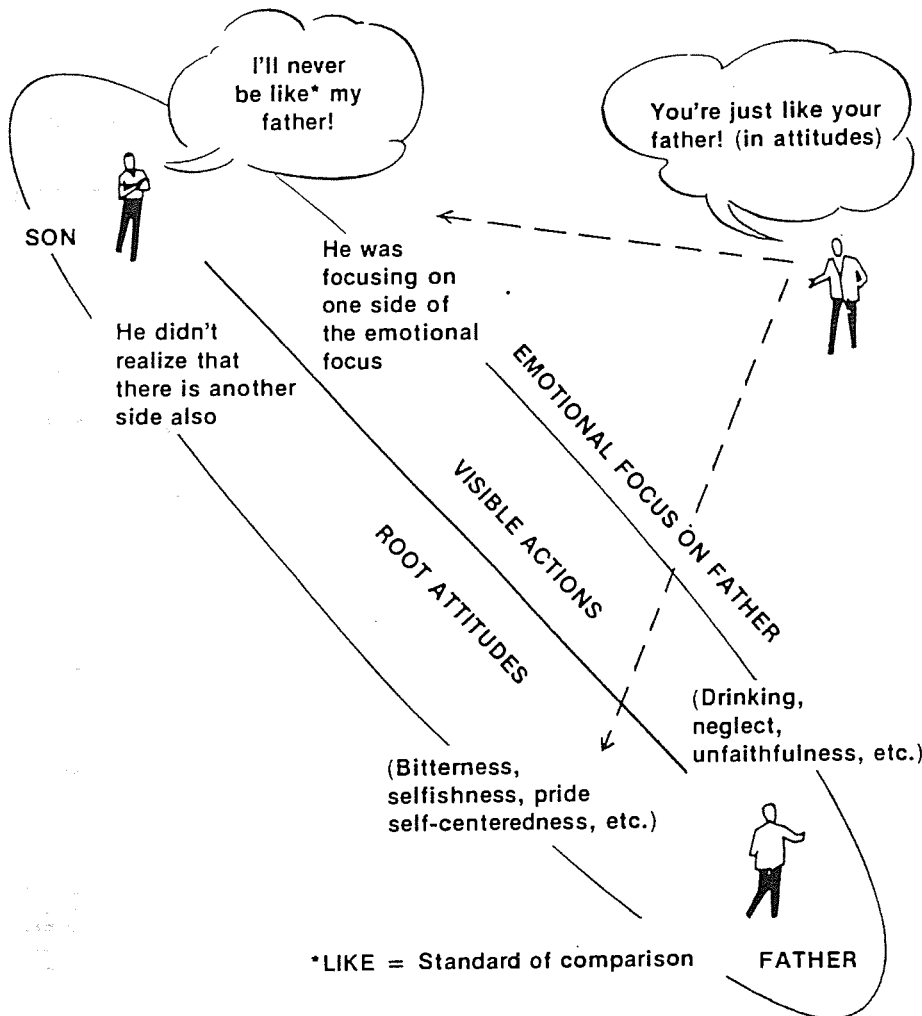
• When that son stated, "I'll never be like my father!" he established a standard of comparison with his father.

The "emotional focus" on the visible actions of his dad made it impossible for him to stop thinking about his father. These thoughts became the dominating concerns on his mind.

The more he thought about the actions of his dad, the deeper his bitterness became.

This bitterness was easily detected by all those who were close to him. Also evident were pride, selfishness, stubbornness and a host of other destructive root attitudes.

These were the same attitudes which the father had. Those who were closest to both of them were thus able to say to the son, "You're just like your father."



Source: Bill Gothard, *Institute in Basic Youth Conflicts Basic Seminar Textbook*, 1979, 1981 revised 1986 (July)



# ***BASIC STEPS TO GAIN A FORGIVING SPIRIT***

• It is one thing to agree to forgive someone after he offends you. It is quite a different thing to have a spirit of forgiveness toward every offender whom God allows to come into your life. In order to gain this, we must understand the following factors.

## **1. REALIZE THAT GOD IS WORKING THROUGH THE ACTIONS OF YOUR OFFENDER**

As long as we think that the one who hurts us is acting independently, we can hardly help growing bitter. But as soon as we realize that God "raised him up" for a specific purpose in our lives, we will be able to gain a forgiving spirit. He may think evil against us, but God means it for good. (Genesis 50:20) "Surely the wrath of man shall praise Thee: the remainder of wrath shalt Thou restrain." (Psalm 76:10)

## **2. THANK GOD FOR THE BENEFIT HE PLANS THROUGH EACH OFFENSE**

God's command to give thanks in all things is especially essential at this point. (1 Thessalonians 5:18) We don't have to be thankful in order to thank God. Thanking God is an act of the will. Being thankful is an act of the emotions.

When our lives are dedicated to God, He puts a protective wall around us so that nothing can touch us except that which God permits. He permits it for a purpose, and this purpose is for our ultimate joy and reward. It is for this reason we can thank God for each offense.

## **3. DISCERN WHAT CHARACTER QUALITIES GOD WANTS TO DEVELOP IN ME THROUGH THE OFFENSE**

When we wrongly react to an offender, we are revealing various lacks of character which need to be developed such as, love, meekness, patience, faith, gentleness, self-control, etc. Even if we respond correctly to an offender, other qualities will have to be strengthened such as joy, peace, godliness, etc.

## **4. EXPECT TO SUFFER FOR DOING RIGHT AS A NORMAL PART OF CHRISTIAN LIVING**

Many of us have the mistaken idea that if we are Christians we won't have to suffer, yet the Scripture clearly states, "For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on Him, but also to suffer for His sake." (Philippians 1:29) "Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution." (1 Timothy 3:12) "If we suffer we shall also reign with Him." (1 Timothy 2:12)

— Bill Gothard, 18YC



## How Do I Ask Forgiveness?

1. Never say, "I'm sorry (full stop)."  
Say, "Will you forgive me for \_\_\_\_\_ (specifically identify your offense)."  
*Philemon 10, 18*
2. Request forgiveness in person—not by phone or letter or fax or e-mail or through mediators. . .  
*Onesimus traveled 1400 kilometers to speak to Philemon in person*
3. Demonstrate humility without concern for saving face.  
*Philemon 1, 8-9, 14 (cf. Gal. 6:1b, 3-4)*
4. Remember that your response is not a private issue, but public, involving many people.  
*Philemon 1-2, 25 (plural)*
5. Make the request for forgiveness as public as the offense.
  - a. Public sins require public apology (1 Tim. 5:20)
  - b. Private sins require private apology (Matt. 18:15)

## *Restoring Relationships*

### General Principle: Romans 12:18

**When Offender: GO!**

Matthew 5:23-24  
James 5:16

**When Offended: GO!**

Matthew 18:15  
Galatians 6:1

## The Value of the Philemon Postcard

*Jon Courson's Application Commentary: New Testament* (© 2003), pp. 1429-1433 (1 of 4)

### Paul the Peacemaker

Whether it was in a crowded Roman marketplace, or through an armed Roman guard, we can't be sure. But this much we do know: The "aged apostle" and the runaway slave met, resulting in the letter before us. Why was this personal postcard of Paul's included in the canon of Scripture? I suggest the following possible reasons ...

### Biographical Value

For a man to go to bat for a slave was unheard of in Paul's day. Greek historian, Pliny, recounts an incident concerning a slave who accidentally tipped a dish he was carrying, causing a bit of food to spill on his master's table. His punishment? He was immediately thrown into the courtyard pond stocked with bloodsucking lampreys and was devoured. According to Pliny, this was not unusual treatment because slaves were thought of as less than human. Yet here is Paul saying, "I care deeply about Onesimus."

Most people think of Paul as harsh and austere. His letter written on behalf of a runaway slave clearly says otherwise.

In the little book before us, we also see in Paul a man who not only had a compassionate heart, but one who didn't pull rank. To Philemon he says, "I'm going to talk to you as a brother. I'm praying for you. I have confidence in you. I'm going to give a suggestion to you that you would be wise to consider, but I'm not going to force this upon you."

His letter to Philemon allows us to see in Paul a heart, an attitude, a tactfulness, a grace that helps round out our understanding of our wonderful brother, Paul.

### Ethical Value

Onesimus is saved. He's born again. But what does Paul do? He tells him he must go back and pay his debt. Why is this important? Because many people say, "There's no need for restitution, no need for meeting my obligation because I wasn't a Christian when I ran up my credit cards to forty thousand dollars." Or, "I signed that contract before I was born again; therefore, it doesn't matter now" This little book is important because it says a new life does not release one from old debts. Yes, we have a new life in Christ, and He looks at us as being without spot or wrinkle positionally, but we have an obligation to the people around us practically to pay old debts and make things right.

Mom and Dad, please teach your kids that once confession is made, there is immediate and total forgiveness from God, but they still have an obligation to make things right in man's sight. The world looks at Christians, wanting to find a reason not to believe.



## The Value of the Philemon Postcard

*Jon Courson's Application Commentary: New Testament* (© 2003), pp. 1429-1433 (2 of 4)

Let's not give them one. Onesimus shows us that we have an ethical obligation to pay debts—be they financial, relational, or societal.

### Theological Value

Under the inspiration of the Spirit, Paul told Philemon that perhaps it was part of God's plan for Onesimus to rip him off and run away in order that Onesimus would come to a saving knowledge of Jesus. But notice Paul says, "Perhaps."

Growing up, I would hear testimonies of guys who came to the Lord after years of doing drugs or being involved in gangs. And I erroneously concluded that the only way to be really used by God was to first go through perversity. God may perhaps work that way, but it's not the only way. I am so thankful I was raised in a Christian home. Oh, it might not make for a very exciting testimony, but it shows that God is not limited to any single methodology.

### Political Value

Paul doesn't use this situation to kick off an antislavery campaign. He doesn't say, "We'll start the Onesimus Coalition. Get our newsletter, and for only thirty-five dollars a month, you, too, can lead a movement to abolish slavery." No, Paul masterfully and insightfully says, "Philemon, I trust God's work in your life, and I know you'll do even more than I'm suggesting to you," the implication being that Philemon would set Onesimus free of his own accord.

Paul was not trying to legislate morality, but rather he was trusting in the work of the Holy Spirit to transform a man's heart internally. The problem with the Christian political movement is that so often it tries to clean the fish before it catches it; it attempts to change people before saving them.

Paul makes a suggestion here, saying, "Do more than what I say." Centuries go by. The gospel does its work through Wilberforce in England, through Lincoln in America. Hearts are changed. People come to understand that the institution of holding another man down is not right, and the work Paul begins is finally complete. Cultures and communities only truly change when people are born again, when they're changed from within.

### Doctrinal Value

As important as the biographical, ethical, theological, and political implications of Paul's Epistle to Philemon are, I believe the doctrinal value inherent in this seemingly insignificant little postcard is the reason we hold in our hands Paul's letter as part of the canon of Scripture. Herein we see the glorious "Doctrine of Imputation," as Paul says to Philemon, "If Onesimus wronged you, if he owes you anything, charge it to my account."

*Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin. Romans 4:8*

## The Value of the Philemon Postcard

*Jon Courson's Application Commentary: New Testament* (© 2003), pp. 1429-1433 (3 of 4)

To whose account is our sin imputed, or charged?  
To the account of the One who was pinned to a Cross in our place.

*Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ... Romans 5:1*

The incredible fact of justification means God not only forgives our sin but also chooses to forget we're sinners.

*For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God... Romans 3:23—25*

Imputation is based upon justification, which can only come about through propitiation. Propitiation means that the righteous wrath God should hurl on me, the righteous anger He should feel toward you, was absorbed by His Son.

*I remember reading the story of a man who, on his way to the kitchen late at night, noticed the top of the terrarium in which he kept his eight-foot boa constrictor was ajar. As he glanced around the room for the snake, he was suddenly gripped by a horrifying thought. He ran to the nursery, where he found the snake in his son's empty crib. Racing to his garage, he grabbed an ax and began chopping the snake, hoping to pull his baby to safety. But it was too late. No one arrested this dad for killing the boa constrictor. No one called the animal rights people. No, everyone identified with the righteous anger in his heart concerning the fate of his son.*

So, too, it is a loving Father who feels a holy indignation, a righteous anger when He sees every one of His children being eaten up by the snake of sin. He is right in taking up the ax and saying, "I can't stand what sin has done. It's swallowed up, ripped off, and ruined people's lives."

Yet as willing participants, we become not only the victims of sin, but propagators of it. So to destroy sin, God would have to destroy mankind. Instead, He comes up with an unbelievable third alternative. He took the ax of His indignation and didn't thrust it in the snake, but buried it in Himself. He who knew no sin became sin (2 Corinthians 5:21). God's understandable, justifiable, righteous anger was released, His justice meted out when He slaughtered Himself to become the propitiation for my sin.

What does this mean? It means that reconciliation is based upon imputation by means of justification through the work of propitiation. Simply said, reconciliation between God and us meant Jesus had to die. Reconciliation always means someone has to die.

Husband, if you're distanced from your wife; Wife, if you're estranged from your husband; Kids, if you feel as though there's a problem between you and your parents, the only way there will be reconciliation is if someone dies. Will you choose to die, Husband? Will you choose to end the war between you and your wife by laying down your point of view, your way of thinking, your anger, bitterness, or hostility? Will you choose to die, Wife, by laying down your hurts and your fears, your

## The Value of the Philemon Postcard

*Jon Courson's Application Commentary: New Testament* (© 2003), pp. 1429-1433 (4 of 4)

cares and concerns in order to make peace with your husband?

Will you choose to die, Kids, to your own demands and needs and, instead, honor your parents?

At work, on the ball field, in the classroom, at home, the only way there can be reconciliation is if someone dies. The question is, will it be you?

“But he has to pay for what he said about me,” or “She has to pay for what she did to me,” or “They have to pay for how they hurt me.”

“It’s already been paid,” Jesus says. “As I bled on the Cross of Calvary, I absorbed that sin specifically.”

Therefore, all that remains is for us to say, “Thank You, Lord. I’m free.”

As I consider this, I wonder who you are.

Some are Onesimus. If you’re Onesimus, open your heart anew to the Lord, and do what’s right. If you’re not paying child support, pay it. If you’re cheating your workplace, make restitution. I admire Onesimus because instead of refusing to go back, he returned and made things right. If you’re Onesimus tonight, I have good news for you: God can do something wonderful with your life if you’ll choose to do what’s right.

Some are Philemon. If you’re Philemon, you need to say, “I have no right to hold this debt, this unforgiveness, this bitterness toward that person. And even though I might not agree with him or have been hurt badly by her, I am going to see Christ dying for that sin and embrace that person once again.”

Others are like Paul, looking for ways to make peace. If you’re making peace between people at war with one another, good for you! In humility, you are not pulling rank, not preaching, but simply willing to not only point out the problem but also ready to get your own hands dirty to help pay the price.

Who am I?

I suppose I’m all three. Sometimes, though not often enough, I’m Paul. Other times, needing to make things right, I’m Onesimus. Often, I’m Philemon, needing to forgive. Yet this powerful postcard of Paul ministers to me on all three levels. And I pray it will do the same for you.

May you, like Onesimus, celebrate the freedom of your salvation. May you, like Philemon, embrace others, knowing their sin has been imputed to our Lord’s account. And may you, like Paul, be a peacemaker.

In Jesus’ Name.

## Philemon and the Domestic Maid

“Postcard to Philemon,” NT Survey Class Presentation, SBC, 2005 (1 of 2)

### The PLIGHT

Singapore has always been regarded as Antioch of South East Asia. Recent survey shows that Christians hold the majority of the top and middle management positions in the government and corporate business. In view of this, Christians employ a majority of the domestic maids. The survey also shows that most maids come from Indonesia and the Philippines, with a minority from Thailand, Sri Lanka and Myanmar.

They come here because:

- Singapore is a safe and secure place to work. A good balance of government employment policies protecting both the interests of the employers and the foreign workers.
- Poverty and high unemployment rate in their country.
- The remuneration here is better than they can get back home.

How do they come?

- Many of them pay huge sums of money to an employment agent to find a job here. They often end up selling personal items or borrowing (from legal as well as illegal agents) to meet this fee. At the end, there are no guarantees that the agent will be able to secure a job for them. Often times, many have nothing to return to.

What are the problems they will encounter working in Singapore?

- Difficulties adjusting to city living, differences in cultures and languages. Inability to communicate creates much frustration for the employer and employee.
- The emotional aspects, the domestic maids have to battle being away from family and friends. Homesickness and loneliness can be a major problem. Their social need not met.
- Inability to meet the demands of the job, since many of the domestic maids are not trained housekeepers, are not familiar with modern electrical conveniences or just cannot fulfill their responsibilities to the expectations of their Singaporean employers.
- In their country of origin, some of this domestic maid were professionals; teacher in high school, nurse, accountant and etc. Coming to Singapore to work as a maid does affect their morale and self-image.
- Oppression and exploitation are also other problems the domestic maids may face. Unreasonable and demanding employers who force their maid to work long hours without sufficient rest or subject them to physical and verbal abuse. They are not properly nourished.

## Philemon and the Domestic Maid

“Postcard to Philemon,” NT Survey Class Presentation, SBC, 2005 (2 of 2)

### Our PART

The church's primary concern is each person's salvation. The existence of the church is to preach the Gospel, teach moral truths, practice communal life, which is shaped by love, baptized those who believed and teach the congregation everything Jesus had commanded so that believers can strive toward sanctification in Christ with the help of the Holy Spirit.

The challenge:

As a body of believers, do we exemplify Christ's love?

Is there a place in this body for maids?

Is it a master-and-slave situation?

Do we care about the salvation of the maids?

If they do receive Christ, is there a place for them in Church as a sister?

As Christians, Paul's reminds us not to conform to the standards of the world and the prophet Micah urges us to do justice and love kindness. Even if this practice is a norm it does not give us permission to follow the norm and ignore what the Bible commanded us to do.

As Christian employers we should be mindful of the following:

- Let's be realistic with our expectation of them. Let not forget that our children are watching how we conduct ourselves as a Christian employer and how we treat others should reflect Christ to our children.
- Let's practice what Leviticus 19:33-34 said "When an alien lives with you in your land, do not mistreat him. The alien living with you must be treated as one of your native born. Love him as yourself, for you were aliens in Egypt. I am the Lord your God". Let us follow the example of the employer reported in the Sunday newspaper how this employer had showed love and care to his Indonesian maid that has a rare heart disease.
- Let's not be "kiasu" or "kiasi" and gave them a break. In Exodus 20: 10 and 23:12: "Six days do your work, but on the seventh day do not work, so that your ox and your donkey may rest and the maidservant and the slave born in your household, and the alien as well, may be refreshed". This "Sabbath" obedience communicates the need for proper proportion between work and rest and also promotes social justice and compassion.
- Thank God for the privilege to be able to employ a domestic maid. Take this employment as an opportunity given by God to share with them the Gospel. In Luke 12:48: "For everyone to whom much is given, from him much will be required" and also in 1 John 4:20: "those who do not love a brother or sister whom they have seen cannot love God whom they have not seen". Let us profess our faith and be a living testimony for our Lord Jesus Christ.

# Hebrews

<b>Christ's Superiority over Judaism as High Priest</b>													
Superiority in His Person to...			Superiority in His Priestly Work to...					Endurance Through Faith					
1:1–4:13			4:14–10:18					10:19–13:25					
Prophets 1:1-3	Angels 1:4–2:18	Moses 3:1–4:13	Aaron 4:14– 6:20	Melch. 7	Old Cov. 8	Taber- nacle 9:1-10	Sacri- fices 9:11– 10:18	Will- ful Sin 10:19- 39	Models 11:1– 12:3	Endure as Sons 12:4-13	Ethics 12:14- 17	Ignoring God 12:18-29	Exhor. 13
Christ's Majesty			Christ's Ministry					Christian's Manifestation					
Theology							Practice						
<b>Unknown Author, Recipients, Origin, and Destination!</b>													
AD 67-68													

**Key Word:** Superiority

**Key Verse:** “Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us. Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him, endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God” (Hebrews 12:1-2).

**Summary Statement:** An unknown author shows Hebrew believers the *superiority of Christ as High Priest* and the superiority of Christianity over Judaism to exhort them to endure persecution rather than *return to their former life* under Judaism.

**Application:** Despite the perceived advantages, never, ever let difficulties convince you to return to the religion you embraced before you were saved!

# Hebrews

## Introduction

**I. Title** The Greek title (Ἰπὸς Ἑβραίων *To the Hebrews*) does not follow the standard practice of naming General Epistles after their authors. In this case the name comes from the Jewish recipients.

### II. Authorship

A. External Evidence: The author of the Book of Hebrews is not stated in the book, although 13:18-24 tell us that the book was not anonymous to its original readers. Several different authors have been suggested throughout the history of the Church. Even early church tradition was divided over the issue of authorship. A historical overview looks like this:

1. In Alexandria (Egypt) and in the Eastern Church the author was considered to be **Paul**.
2. North African early church fathers (e.g., Tertullian of Carthage) said **Barnabas** wrote it.
3. In Italy and Western Europe authorship was **initially debated**. Pauline authorship was rejected originally by Hippolytus (ca. 160-235), Caius (cited by Eusebius), and Irenaeus (ca. 140-203). Hebrews was not in the Muratorian Canon (AD 170), but Jerome (AD 340-420) and Augustine (AD 354-430) eventually convinced the Western Church to accept the Eastern Church view of authorship by **Paul**. This officially became Catholic dogma at the Council of Trent (AD 1546).
4. Reformation Protestants such as Calvin rejected the Catholic adherence to Pauline authorship. Luther and Erasmus attributed the epistle to **Apollon**.
5. Modern scholarship remains equally baffled by the authorship question! Additional suggestions include **Luke, Clement, Silas, Priscilla, and Philip the Evangelist**. Therefore, external evidence is inconclusive.

B. Internal Evidence: Although in some respects the letter seems non-Pauline, the best evidence may indicate Pauline authorship.

1. Several lines of internal evidence support Pauline authorship:
  - a. Timothy is mentioned in 13:23, likely as a traveling companion.
  - b. The author seems to be in prison (13:19) and the letter has the characteristically Pauline form of the closing benediction (13:20-21), including a greeting from Italian believers (13:24). This may indicate that Paul could have written it during one of his imprisonments in Rome (AD 60-62, 67-68).
  - c. Pauline themes of faith (ch. 11), the New Covenant (ch. 8), Israel's example (ch. 4), gifts and power (2:4) and the person of Christ (chs. 1-10) are evident.
  - d. Paul may have purposely omitted his name due to the hatred Jews had for him (they thought he maligned the temple and "apostatized" from Judaism to Christianity).
2. However, several lines of internal evidence may oppose Pauline authorship:
  - a. The Greek style is more polished and classical than in Paul's epistles. The Old Testament quotations are from the Septuagint (Greek) rather than the Hebrew text, which would be expected of one trained formally as a Jew like Paul. (However, Paul does use both translations in his writings.)
  - b. No customary Pauline salutation appears at the beginning.

- c. It seems that 2:3-4 indicates a second-generation author who received the gospel from the disciples of Jesus. Paul did not describe himself in this way (Gal. 1-2).
  - d. While Paul's writings emphasize the death and resurrection of Christ, Hebrews emphasizes the priesthood of Christ and His present work.
3. Any objective inquisitor of the epistle's author must confess with the third century church father Origen who said, "Who it was that really wrote the Epistle, God only knows."
  4. Being anonymous does not affect its canonicity since the early church held to its authority.

### III. Circumstances

- A. Date: The date is not expressly stated in the book so must be determined by internal and external evidence. However, the following facts can be summarized:
  1. Clement of Rome quoted the letter in AD 95-96 which rules out a second century date.
  2. The lack of reference to the destruction of the Jerusalem temple points to a date before AD 70, especially since the sacrificial system was still in operation (cf. 8:4-5, 13: 9:6-9; 10:1-3, 11) and was "obsolete and aging" and would "soon disappear" (8:13).
  3. The readers had "not yet resisted to the point of shedding blood..." (12:4), so this may suggest a date prior to the Neronian persecutions (AD 64-68). However, this assumes the recipients would be persecuted by the Romans (e.g., Nero), which may not have been the case had they still held to monastic inclinations. Also, no reputable scholars date the book prior to AD 64.
  4. Assuming Pauline authorship, the best dating estimate may be during his second Roman imprisonment (AD 67-68), placing it during the Jewish revolt in Palestine.
- B. Recipients: That the readers were Jews is evident from the many allusions to and quotes from the Old Testament which would have needed explanation if a Gentile audience was in view. This finds support in that "To the Hebrews" is the oldest and most reliable title.

These Jews, however, were second-generation (2:1-4) believers (3:1; 4:14-16; 10:19-22, 32-34; 12:7; 13:1, 20-22) who should have matured beyond their present immature state in Christ (5:11-14). They were immature, but they were true believers, not simply professing Christians. They were in danger of lapsing back into Judaism, perhaps due to persecution for Christ (although the precise nature of their temptation is not explicitly stated). A problem with dabbling in Old Testament rites is hinted at in 7:11, 26-28; 8:4-5; 9:1-10:18.

Several lines of evidence indicate that the letter is not a general address; instead, it appears that these Jewish Christians composed a specific community:

1. They have a definite history to which the author is acquainted, including their conversion (2:3), ministry to other Christians (6:10), sufferings for the gospel (10:32-34), and present state of spiritual maturity (5:11ff.).
  2. The author had already visited them once and desired to revisit them (13:19, 23). The readers apparently had a concern for Timothy as well (13:18).
  3. The readers may have been the leadership section of a larger community since it is unlikely that the writer would expect the entire church to be teachers (5:12).
- C. Origin: The letter apparently was sent from Italy (13:24) to its recipients in another locale. However, Italy itself may also have been the destination since the Italians here may have been with the author sending their greetings to their countrymen in Italy.



- D. Destination: The Jewish Christians who first read the letter lived in a specific geographical location which probably was away from Jerusalem (i.e., in a mission field) since they were not among those who personally saw the Lord (2:3). Many destinations have been suggested: the Lycus Valley in Asia Minor, Rome, Cyprus, Cyrene, and the Qumran Community near the Dead Sea (see “Occasion” below). If Barnabas authored it, evidence may point to Cyrene (his home area) as the destination. He evidently ministered in Rome at the time of writing and a relationship may have existed between Italian Christians and believers at Cyrene through Barnabas' contact with Simeon called Niger (a black) and Lucius of Cyrene (cf. Acts 13:1). No one really knows the origin or destination, but Jewish Christians in the Diaspora mixed with Gentile believers, as in Ephesus, Corinth, and Rome; however, the recipients of this letter were all Jews, so a location in Israel is most likely.
- E. Occasion: The admonishment not to stop meeting together (10:25) may show that the readers had sectarian tendencies, possibly separating themselves from their original, larger group. Perhaps they were believers saved from the Jewish Qumran Community who identified with a church, experienced persecution from unbelieving Jews, and then separated with the thought of a possible return to the Community and Judaism. The Dead Sea Scrolls note that the Qumran Community believed that Michael and his angels would be the rulers of the coming age. If the recipients were saved out of this background, persecution may have tempted them to again emphasize angels—so the writer began by showing how Jesus surpassed angels (1:4–2:18). No one knows the exact historical situation, but the writer had clear prophetic knowledge that the temple and sacrificial system would soon be destroyed (8:13), which happened in AD 70. He warned these believers that returning to Judaism would inflict the fires of Rome upon all involved in the Jewish revolt—believer or unbeliever alike. Thus the “raging fire that will consume the enemies of God” (10:27; cf. 6:8) refers not to eternal hellfire but to the fires that burned Qumran, Jerusalem and all other cities resistant to the Romans (p. 266c). See the excellent support of this view by Randall C. Gleason, “The Old Testament Background of the Warning in Hebrews 6:4-8,” *Bib Sac* 155 (Jan-Mar 1998): 62-91; idem., “The Old Testament Background of Rest in Hebrews 3:7-4:11,” *Bib Sac* 157 (July-Sep 2000): 281-303.

Whoever these Jewish Christians were, the writer saw them in a very serious situation. Five severe warnings (2:1-4; 3:7–4:13; 5:11–6:8; 10:19-39; 12:18-29) admonish them not to reject Christianity for Judaism. The recipients had suffered persecution (10:30-32), though perhaps not to the point of actual martyrdom (12:4). They desperately needed endurance (10:36), for they had become dull of hearing (5:11) and were in danger of drifting away from their moorings in Christ (2:1; 3:12).

#### IV. Characteristics

- A. Hebrews perplexes scholars as to its authorship more than any book in Scripture. The recipients, place of writing, and destination are equally baffling!
- B. The five warning passages in Hebrews have caused much debate. The main issue is whether they address professing Christians (non-Christians) in danger of eternal damnation, Christians in danger of loss of salvation, or Christians in danger of loss of reward or temporal judgment in the fires of Jerusalem. See page 266c that contrasts these views in more detail.
- C. Hebrews has the greatest information in Scripture on several doctrines: the “rest” for the believer (pp. 266g-k), the Melchizedek Priesthood (p. 266m), the High Priesthood of Christ (p. 266u), the New Covenant (p. 266o, 266v), and the typology of the offerings and feasts in Leviticus.
- D. Hebrews lacks a salutation at the beginning, reading “more like a sermon essay than a letter... [In fact,] only 13:18-25 sounds like a real epistle” (*TTTB*, 457).
- E. The Greek style is considered by many to be the most elegant in the New Testament. At least 157 words are used in this epistle that are found nowhere else in Scripture.
- F. It has over 86 OT quotes and many allusions as well so that it has more than 100 references from 21 OT books (p. 266aa)! It also contains the longest quote in the NT (Heb. 8:8-12 quotes Jer. 31:31-34).
- G. Chapter 11 is the Church's most loved chapter in Scripture on faith (pp. 266x-z).

- H. Hebrews has been called the fifth Gospel. Whereas the four Gospels relate what Christ did while on earth then, Hebrews supplements them by explaining his role in heaven now.
- I. Romans shows the *need* for Christianity but Hebrews shows the *superiority* of Christianity.
- J. Six key words repeated in the book affirm the superiority of Christ since He is the perfect and eternal high priest in heaven and thus better than Judaism (Harold L. Willmington, *Willmington's Guide to the Bible* [Wheaton: Tyndale, 1991], 516):
1. "Priest, high priest"      Used 32 times
  2. "Heaven"                      Used 17 times
  3. "Eternal, forever"      Used 15 times
  4. "Perfect"                      Used 14 times
  5. "Better"                      Used 13 times
  6. "Partakers"                Used 9 times

## Argument

Hebrews is a logical and yet passionate and stern declaration to rescue a group of persecuted Jewish Christians from abandoning Christianity to return to Judaism. The writer affirms the superiority of Christ in a rational style, beginning first with His person and then His work. He explains Jesus' preeminence over the prophets, angels, Moses, Aaron, the Old Covenant, the tabernacle and sacrifices to convince the readers that abandoning Christ Himself for only types of Him makes no sense and receives sure judgment. Five warning texts emphasize how forsaking the substance for the shadow is clearly a tragic mistake. The letter then progresses with an exhortation to endure in faith, citing the examples of many who have successfully gone before the suffering recipients of the epistle. The final chapter exhorts the church to love in both the social and religious realms, concluding with a request for prayer, a benediction, and personal greetings.

The author wrote to prevent his hearers from deserting the faith by lapsing back to Judaism. He did this by showing the superiority of Christianity (and Christ specifically) to the old system of Judaism in many ways:

1. Christ is the final revelation of God and is God Himself (1:1-8).
2. Christ is superior to: (a) angels (chs. 1-2), (b) Moses (chs. 3-4), and (3) Aaron, the old covenant, the sanctuary, and the sacrifices (chs. 4-10).
3. The word "better" occurs 13 times (1:4; 6:9; 7:7, 19, 22; 8:6a, 6b; 9:23; 10:34; 11:16, 35, 40; 12:24; p. 266f) along with emphases in christology and soteriology. Each time "better" contrasts Christ with the old order.
4. Five admonitions to the Hebrews warn them against despising the new order so that they can return to the old (2:1-4; 3:7-4:13; 5:11-6:8; 10:19-39; 12:18-29).

## Synthesis

### Christ's superiority over Judaism as high priest

1:1-4:13	Superior in His person to...	
1:1-3	Prophets (theme)	
1:4-2:18	Angels	
1:4-14	Due to deity	
2:1-4	#1-Drifting away	#= five warning passages
2:5-18	Due to humanity	
3:1-4:13	Moses	
3:1-6	Glory/position	
3:7-4:13	#2-Unbelief	

**4:14–10:18**

4:14–6:20  
 4:14-16  
 5:1-10  
 5:11–6:20  
 5:11–6:8  
 6:9-20  
 7  
 8  
 9:1-10  
 9:11–10:18

**Superior in His priestly work to...**

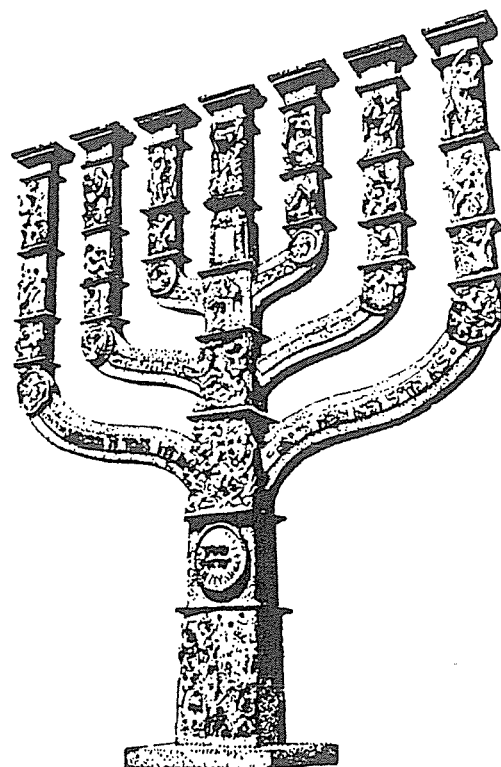
Aaronic priesthood  
 Due to deity  
 Due to Melchizedek order  
 Maturity  
 #3–Immaturity warned  
 Maturity exhorted  
 Melchizedek  
 Old covenant  
 Tabernacle  
 Sacrifices

**10:19–13:25**

10:19-39  
 11:1–12:3  
 12:4-13  
 12:14-17  
 12:18-29  
 13:1-25

**Call to endurance through faith**

#4–Willful sin  
 Models of faithful endurance  
 Endurance as sons  
 Ethics of endurance  
 #5–Ignoring God's voice  
 Exhortations to love/conclusion



## Outline

### Summary Statement for the Book

An unknown author shows Hebrew believers the *superiority of Christ as High Priest* and the superiority of Christianity over Judaism to exhort them to endure persecution rather than *return to their former life under Judaism*.

- I. (1:1–4:13) The readers should not return to Judaism because Christ is superior to Judaism's prophets, angels, and Moses in *His person*.
- A. (1:1-3) Since Christ is *superior to the OT prophets*, the readers should follow Christ.
1. (1:1) OT prophets ministered to Jews repeatedly and only as partial revelations of God.
  2. (1:2-3) Christ is the *final revelation* of God as His person exceeds that of the prophets.
    - a. (1:2a) Jesus is *God's Son* speaking (which was never said of a prophet).
    - b. (1:2b) Jesus is *heir* of the universe (but no prophet was ever appointed to rule the world).
    - c. (1:2c) Jesus is the *Creator* of the universe (but all prophets are created beings).
    - d. (1:3a) Jesus is *God* since he exactly represents the Father (said of no prophet).
    - e. (1:3b) Jesus is Sustainer of the universe by his word (but prophets don't sustain the world).
    - f. (1:3c) Jesus is *Atonement* for mankind's sins (while prophets need his atonement).
    - g. (1:3d) Jesus completed his ministry in a manner pleasing to the Father.
- B. (1:4–2:18) Since Christ is *superior to the angels* in both his deity and humanity, the readers should not respect created angels (as mediators between God and man in the giving of the Law) more than Christ, the Creator Himself.
1. (1:4-14) Christ is superior to angels in *His deity* as the OT says many things about him not said of angels, so the readers should not return to their Jewish sect emphasizing angel ministry.
    - a. (1:4-5) Christ has a *better name* than angels since he is called God's son.

- b. (1:6-12) Angels eternally *worship* Christ as God and the Father calls him "God" (1:8).
  - c. (1:13-14) Christ has *completed his work* whereas the angels continue working.
2. (2:1-4) First Warning: Christ is unsurpassed in the angelic realm, so these Christian readers would be punished if they discarded their faith and drifted back into Judaism. (No penalties are listed here, but they can't include hell as the writer was among those who could "drift away.")
  3. (2:5-18) Christ is superior to angels in *His humanity* since Scripture says man, not angels, has authority to rule over the world, which gives Christ authority to rule and be a merciful high priest, so the readers should trust Christ rather than angels.
    - a. (2:5) God never promised angels authority to rule the world in the future.
    - b. (2:6-8) Psalm 8:4-6 promises man this privilege of ruling the world fully in the future.
    - c. (2:9-13) Many Scriptures prophesied that Jesus would become a man with authority to rule due to His atoning death.
    - d. (2:14-18) Other wonderful results of Christ's humanity make Him more desirable to worship than any angel.
      - 1) (2:14-16) As a man, Christ has been able to defeat Satan's grip on other men.
      - 2) (2:17) As a man, Christ atoned for man's sin as a compassionate high priest.
      - 3) (2:18) As a man who was victorious in His suffering, Christ can help people now who suffer temptation.
- C. (3:1-4:13) Since Christ is *superior to Moses* in His glory and position, as unbelief in Moses' time forfeited entering the Promised Land, so any readers who return to Judaism will forfeit their inheritance in the messianic kingdom.<sup>9</sup>
1. (3:1-6) Christ is superior to Moses in His glory and position so the readers should follow Christianity over Judaism.
    - a. (3:1-4) Christ is greater than Moses in *His glory* because, while both were faithful, two offices of apostle (cf. Moses) and high priest (cf. Aaron) are combined in one Person (Christ) who built the redeemed community while Moses only served them.
    - b. (3:5-6) Christ is greater than Moses in *His position* because He was not *in* "God's house" (the redeemed of all ages) as a servant, but *over* the house as a son.

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<sup>9</sup>Of the various interpretations of the "Sabbath-rest for the people of God" (Heb 4:9), the millennial kingdom view may have the most to commend it. This view sees the rest as future which is consistent with verse 11 and accounts for the different (hapax legomena) Greek word translated "Sabbath-rest." As a Sabbath-rest in the Old Testament was a literal 24-hour day, so may the kingdom rest be limited in time (1000 years). This rest is not yet fully realized also (v. 1). The concept of rest in the kingdom age also accurately parallels the Old Testament reference to an inheritance which the Jews in the wilderness sought to attain (v. 11a) but some missed out due to their disobedience (vv. 6, 11b) stemming from lack of genuine faith (v. 2). Likewise, only genuine believers will enter the millennium, but those who simply profess to be believers will not. This Sabbath-rest is viewed in the passage as "another day" (v. 8)—a day yet future from Joshua's time that was distinct from the 24-hour Sabbath day of Judaism. Finally, in that the Old Testament rest concerned the possession of an actual land (Canaan), the millennial interpretation likewise speaks of inheriting an actual dominion here on earth. For more details see the comparison of views on the Sabbath rest on pages 266g-k.

2. (3:7–4:13) Second Warning: As Israel was not able to enter Canaan rest (the Promised Land) because of unbelief, so believers in the church should continue in obedience to enter their rest in the same Promised Land in the Millennial Kingdom
  - a. (3:7-19) The second warning passage quotes and applies Psalm 95:7-11 by saying that disobedience to Moses brought Israel the judgment of not obtaining their inheritance in Canaan, so would disobedience to the One above Moses.
    - 1) (3:7-11) Psalm 95:7-11 shows that Israel's unbelief in the wilderness kept them from entering Canaan to show that this same unbelief was possible in the time of the psalmist.
    - 2) (3:12-15) Psalm 95:7-11 is applied to show the readers that although they could have the same type of unbelief in their day as well, daily mutual encouragement could help them prevent such a hardening of heart.
    - 3) (3:16-19) Israel's unbelief in God's promise to bring them into the Promised Land is deemed as rebellion, sin, and disobedience which disqualified them from entering Canaan to show the readers the seriousness of their own situation.
  - b. (4:1-13) Israel's former unbelief should warn these Hebrew Christian readers against rejecting Christ for a mere shadow (Judaism) as failure to keep obeying will result in loss of their reward of rest in Canaan in the kingdom (cf. 1 Cor. 3:11-15; pp. 266i-k).

**II. (4:14–10:18) The readers should not return to Judaism because Christ is superior to Judaism's priestly system in *His high priestly work*.**

- A. (4:14–6:20) Since Christ is *superior to Judaism's high priest* in His position and qualifications, the readers should follow Him.
  1. (4:14-16) Christ's superiority to the earthly high priest (Judaism's highest office) in His heavenly position and victory over temptation in every way should cause the readers to draw near to Him rather than drift away.
    - a. (4:14) Jesus did not pass from one *room* into another (as did the high priest to enter the Holy of Holies annually on the Day of Atonement), but He passed through the *heavens* and therefore is unequalled as high priest.
    - b. (4:15-16) However, even in His greatness, Christ is able to "sympathize with our weaknesses" and provide free access to His throne of grace.
  2. (5:1-10) Christ's superiority to the earthly high priest (Judaism's highest office) in His qualifications makes Him worthy to be followed more than Judaism.
    - a. (5:1-4) There were basically two qualifications of the Jewish high priest.
      - 1) (5:1-3) He needed to be a man participating in human weakness.
      - 2) (5:4) He needed to be chosen by God.
    - b. (5:5-10) Jesus fulfilled both of these high priestly qualifications even more than did the earthly high priest.
      - 1) (5:5-6) Christ was chosen by God (as was the Aaronic high priest) but He was chosen to be in the higher Melchizedek priesthood since He was God's Son.
      - 2) (5:7-10) Christ became a man but showed human submission more than any man in His prayers and ability to learn obedience, qualifying Him into the Melchizedek priesthood.

3. (5:11–6:20) A severe warning against lapsing back into Judaism and an encouragement to spiritual maturity is given to prevent the readers from apostasy and temporal judgment.
  - a. (5:11–6:8) Third Warning: The danger of continued spiritual immaturity shown in a return to Judaism would lead to an irreversible apostasy and judgment in the fires of Jerusalem.
    - 1) (5:11-14) The lethargy to pursue Christ had resulted in dullness of hearing so that these Christians who were old enough to be teachers still needed to be taught the basics about Christ rather than advanced doctrine in righteousness.
    - 2) (6:1-3) This dangerous situation caused them to be susceptible to wrongly emphasize the lifeless Old Testament rituals<sup>11</sup> rather than mature doctrines.
    - 3) (6:4-8) Apostasy by dropping Christianity for the Law would be an irreversible decision in which a recommitment to Christ was impossible and physical death inevitable.<sup>12</sup>
  - b. (6:9-20) An encouragement to spiritual maturity shows confidence that the readers will not apostasize and be judged but they will show faithfulness to the end of their lives.
- B. (Ch. 7) Since Christ is *superior to Abraham and Judaism's Levitical priesthood* by being of the Melchizedek Priesthood, the readers should follow Him.
  1. (7:1-10) The great angel Melchizedek<sup>13</sup> and the respected Levitical priesthood received tithes from Israel's founder, Abraham, which shows their high stature within Judaism.
    - a. (7:1-3) Melchizedek, personified as the king of Salem, possessed such superior qualities that even Abraham, the great patriarch of Israel, paid him tithes.
    - b. (7:4-10) Levi also paid Melchizedek tithes through Abraham.

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<sup>11</sup>These rituals of the old order needed to be abandoned for the new and living way. Of particular importance are the "instructions about washings." This is not a reference to New Testament baptism since the plural form is never used of baptism and the word here (βαπτισμός, "ceremonial washings") is wholly different from the normal word for baptism (βάπτισμα, "baptism"). If the letter was addressed to converts from the Qumran Community, this reference would have particular significance in light of the many ablutions which were characteristic of this community.

<sup>12</sup>Hebrews 6:4-8 is interpreted in several ways: (1) a Christian who loses his salvation, (2) a hypothetical, impossible situation which a Christian could never find himself, (3) a profession which really was not genuine and thus results in eternal damnation, and (4) a Christian who is disqualified for Christian service and will never again return to Christian commitment. The first view must be rejected due to the clear scriptural testimony to eternal security as totally God's responsibility (cf. John 3:16; 10:28-29; Eph. 1:14; 1 John 5:11-13). The second view finds no support in the text in that a conditional element does not appear in the Greek (although many translations add "if...") and the writer speaks as if he did know some examples. The third view cannot be supported since true believers (not professing believers who are actually non-Christians) are always in view in parallel passages which use the phrases "enlightened" (cf. 2 Cor. 4:3-6), "tasted the heavenly gift" ("tasted" refers to full participation; cf. John 4:10; Rom. 6:23; James 1:17-18), and "who have shared in the Holy Spirit" (cf. 1:9; 3:1, 14). The fourth view has the best evidence. The "falling away" refers to Christians who have defected from the faith in apostasy. These will be judged with fire (6:8; 10:27)—not eternal hellfire but the temporal fire of the Jewish revolt against the Romans (see occasion on page 257). The result of such disobedience is that "it is impossible to renew them to repentance" (v. 6a). Note that the text says "repentance," not "it is impossible to renew them to *salvation*." The issue here is a real one where Christians have drifted away from Christ not to eternal damnation, but to never being renewed to commitment to Christ and being judged by physical death.

<sup>13</sup>Melchizedek was "without father or mother, without genealogy, having neither beginning of days nor end of life, but made like the Son of God, he abides a priest perpetually" (7:3). The nature of these attributes suggests that he could be either an angel or a theophany (the preincarnate Christ). Supporting the angelic interpretation is that this status would not elevate him to Christ's level of stature (cf. chs. 1–2) and he would not be comparing an OT and NT Christ. Both interpretations fit the context, but evidence of Melchizedek being regarded an angelic being in the Qumran Community may support the angelic view if this epistle was originally sent to believers tempted to return to the community.

2. (7:11-28) However, Christ is preeminent over the Levitical priesthood since he is from the tribe of Judah (not Levi) and from the order of Melchizedek, so a return to the old Levitical order is foolish and unnecessary.
  - a. (7:11-19) Jesus' fulfilling the promise (Ps. 110:4) of a new, future Priest from an order other than Aaron's—the Melchizedek priesthood not decided by heredity—shows how Christ could be of Judah's line and how the Law had ended.
  - b. (7:20-22) God recognized Jesus as high priest by oath whereas other priests do not obtain office with an oath.
  - c. (7:23-25) Jesus' priesthood is permanent since He is eternal whereas other priests eventually die in office.
  - d. (7:26-28) Jesus' character is perfect whereas other priests need to offer sacrifices for their own sins since they are not perfect.
- C. (8:1-13) Since Christ is *superior to the old covenant* in that He established the new covenant, the readers should follow Him.
  1. (8:1-6) Since Jesus in His priesthood supersedes the old priesthood, His covenant established likewise supersedes the old covenant.
  2. (8:7-13) The fact that Jeremiah 31:31-34 taught the coming of a new and better covenant demonstrates that the coming of the new covenant makes the old obsolete.
- D. (9:1–10:18) Since Christ is *superior to the tabernacle* by His sacrifice, the readers should follow Him.
  1. (9:1-10) Despite the glory of the tabernacle and sacrificial system, this was only a temporary system.
    - a. (9:1-5) The earthly sanctuary (tabernacle) met God's approval in its arrangement of the articles of furniture and reminders of His blessing.
    - b. (9:6-10) The sacrifices of the priests and annual ministry of the high priest (who offered up blood for the people's and his own sins) were only external regulations that could not cleanse the worshippers' consciences.
  2. (9:11–10:18) Christ is a far better sacrifice than could ever be offered in the tabernacle, so the Hebrews should not trade the new and permanent source of redemption for the old and transitory.
    - a. (9:11) Christ passed from earth to heaven after His atonement for man—not simply from the Holy Place to the Holy of Holies in the tabernacle.
    - b. (9:12-14) Christ shed His own human blood—not just the blood of animals.
    - c. (9:15) Christ's sacrifice resulted in Him becoming the mediator of a new covenant.
    - d. (9:16-22) Christ died because forgiveness never comes except by the shedding of blood—in relation to the tabernacle as well as to the new covenant.
    - e. (9:23–10:18) Christ entered heaven itself following His sacrifice to show that His sacrifice was the one perfect, permanent, and final sacrifice.

**III. (10:19-13:25) Since Christ is superior to Judaism, the Hebrew readers are exhorted to endure persecution by faith rather than to shrink back.**

- A. (10:19-39) The danger of willful sin in which believers lose their lives highlights the need to persevere in faith despite the obstacles.
1. (10:19-25) Exhortation: The unsurpassed high priesthood of Christ should encourage perseverance in fellowship with God and man.
    - a. (10:19-22) Christ's superiority exhorts believers to draw near to Him.
    - b. (10:23) Christ's faithfulness exhorts believers to hold fast to true doctrine.
    - c. (10:24-25) Christ's superiority moves believers to show one another love and good deeds.
  2. (10:26-31) Fourth Warning: Divine judgment through death by Roman fires<sup>13</sup> would result if these believers continued in the willful sin of disbelief after accepting the truth of the gospel.
  3. (10:32-39) The preceding warning is buffered by an encouraging reminder that the readers had already suffered persecution successfully in the past to exhort this same endurance in their present difficulties.
- B. (11:1–12:3) Examples of others who endured in faith should encourage the persecuted Hebrews to likewise see that perseverance was a requisite to their own reward.
1. (Ch. 11) Old Testament saints persevered in anticipating the fulfillment of God's promises but did not receive what was promised even at their deaths, just as the Hebrew believers had yet to receive all that God had promised them as members of His family.
  2. (12:1-3) Jesus Christ is given as the ultimate example of endurance at the cross and reward in His exaltation to help the readers look away from sin and everything else that may hinder their faith and look to Jesus in order not to tire of being faithful.
- C. (12:4-13) The results of enduring hardship from God as disciplined sons is righteousness and confidence.
1. (12:4-11) All sons of God must endure discipline in order to become righteous just as human sons are trained by their earthly fathers.
  2. (12:12-13) As a result of responding correctly to God's discipline, the Hebrews could be strong and confident.
- D. (12:14-17) Endurance must be done in the context of right relationships with others since even perseverance can be done with bad attitudes and improper motives.
1. (12:14) God requires peace with others if we are to be truly holy.
  2. (12:15) God requires sanctification in relationships to prevent the spread of bitterness.
  3. (12:16-17) God requires purity in lifestyle to prevent sexual sin and greed like Esau.

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<sup>13</sup> This context (as in 6:4-8) refers to believers since the author includes *himself* among those who could possibly sin to this extent (10:26) and since he had just encouraged these people as *believers* to hold to their confession and to mutually build one another up in the faith (10:23-25). In light of the scriptural evidence for eternal security (cf. John 3:16; 10:28-29; Eph. 1:14; 1 John 5:11-13), the fire judgment referred to here (10:27) must not mean hell, but a judgment for believers—most likely temporal fire that soon engulfed Jerusalem's unbelieving Jews (see "Occasion," p. 257).



- E. (12:18-29) **Fifth Warning: Ignoring the voice of God feared at Sinai at the establishment of the Mosaic covenant by apostatizing will result in even greater divine retribution now since this same God established the new covenant with its even greater blessings.**
1. (12:18-24) The awesome God feared and avoided at Mt. Sinai at the giving of the law (old covenant) has now brought believers in the new covenant as citizens of heaven.<sup>19</sup>
    - a. (12:18-21) Believers do not come to the unapproachable God who was greatly feared in the fire and smoke of the terrible and awesome Mt. Sinai when Moses gave Israel the old covenant (cf. Exod. 19:10-25; Deut. 4:11-12; 5:22-26).
    - b. (12:22-24) Believers have come to the living God who has accepted them into the new covenant as citizens of heaven (Mt. Zion) with God, angels, OT saints, and Jesus (cf. Rev. 14:1; Ps. 2:6; 48:1-2, 8).
  2. (12:25-29) Believers should never reject God when He speaks from heaven now since this will invite even more severe judgment than Israel experienced in Moses' time.
    - a. (12:25) If rejecting God's voice from earth brought judgment on Israel in the desert, then rejecting His voice from heaven now will bring at least as much judgment.
    - b. (12:26-27) God's judgment at Mt. Sinai repeatedly shook only the area near the mountain, but in the future [after the millennium] He will judge the entire earth and skies by removing them.
    - c. (12:28-29) God deserves to be thanked and worshipped because of His graciousness in providing heaven permanently and because of His holiness shown in judgment.
- F. (Ch. 13) An epilogue of various admonitions on how the Hebrew believers could "offer to God an acceptable service with reverence and awe" (12:28) gives practical exhortations which did not appropriately fit earlier in the letter but nevertheless needed to be said.
1. (13:1-17) Exhortations to love in various realms of life summarize some practical applications of Christ's supremacy.
    - a. (13:1-6) The readers are exhorted to love in the social realm so that the supremacy of Christ is shown in relationships with people.
      - 1) (13:1-3) Hospitality must be shown to all the saints, to strangers, and to prisoners.
      - 2) (13:4) Purity in marriage must be priority to avoid God's judgment.
      - 3) (13:5-6) Contentment with one's possessions is the logical result of recognizing God's commitment to his children.
    - b. (13:7-17) The readers are exhorted to love in the religious realm so that the supremacy of Christ is shown in relationship to God.
      - 1) (13:7-8) They should honor church leaders because they teach and live out God's word, which is as changeless as is Christ Himself.
      - 2) (13:9-17) Doctrinal purity will result from separation from Judaism and obedience to their leaders.

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<sup>19</sup> Scholars debate whether by "Mt. Zion" (v. 22) the author means the literal Mt. Zion (Jerusalem, or the hill on its southeast portion also called the Ophal) or if he refers to Mt. Zion as symbolically representing heaven. Favoring the literal view is the earlier discussion of entering Canaan rest in the literal land of Israel (Heb. 4) and the fact that he does call Mt. Zion a city here. However, it probably is better to argue for a figurative interpretation since the believers' entrance to "Mt. Zion" is already accomplished ("you have come") and the city is designated as the "heavenly Jerusalem" (v. 22).

2. (13:18-25) The epistle concludes in a personal manner to temper the strong exhortations within the body of the letter.
  - a. (13:18-19) The author requests prayer in general, and particularly that he might be able to join the Hebrews soon so he could exhort them face-to-face.
  - b. (13:20-21) A doxology that God would enable the readers to fully obey reminds them that only through God's power can they please Him.
  - c. (13:22-25) Concluding remarks, especially greetings from those with him in Italy, end the letter on an affectionate note.

## Anglican Heresy

The Province

Sunday, September 28, 1997

# Christ 'not only way'

## Vancouver's Anglican bishop defends book

OTTAWA — It's time for Christians to drop the idea that Christ is the one sure way to salvation, says Vancouver's Anglican bishop.

In a controversial new book, *Mansions of the Spirit*, Bishop Michael Ingham questions what has been a central tenet of the Christian faith for most of the past 2,000 years: That God can be known only through Christ.

That conviction is increasingly untenable in a world where we regularly encounter members of other faiths "whose depth of intimacy with God is evident and radiant," he writes.

The fundamentalist belief that billions of non-Christians will be consigned to an "eternity of everlasting fire defies all moral sense and contradicts everything we know about God," writes Ingham.

Ingham said in an interview that most Christians who have heard him speak on the topic are relieved that a church leader is finally saying what most people seem to believe.

He said fundamentalism is "a great threat to peace and security, and is based on a misreading of Scripture."

"What I'm advocating is a pluralist theology that accepts God's grace in the great religions of the world, and calls us to see people of other faiths and traditions as brothers and sisters."

He said Hinduism, Buddhism, Islam, Christianity or Judaism are paths to God that have withstood the test of centuries.

Ingham said there is little in his book that is new to Christian scholars, but it will undoubtedly surprise many of the people in the pews.

"All I have tried to do is crystallize a lot of academic work into readable form."

Ingham said he sees Canada "as one of God's great experiments. It's as if God is seeing if the nations of the world can live together in a highly multi-ethnic, multireligious country."

"We've seen what religious hostility can do to people. We have an opportunity to establish another way of doing things in Canada."

— Southam Newspapers

## Eternal Security in Hebrews

### MEMO

To: All my *wonderful* students in the class, "The Book of Hebrews"

From: Dr. J. Paul Tanner

Date: Dec 4, 1998

Congratulations on completing the class in which we studied The Book of Hebrews. I hope that you enjoyed the study and that you will be inspired to invest many future hours in the further study of this wonderful book. It is certainly one of my favorites, and I get more out of it every time I study it and teach it again. I hope that each of you will have the opportunity to teach it yourself.

Most of you did quite well in the class, by the way! However, I do have a deep concern that I want to share with each of you. As a result of grading the exegetical papers on Heb 10, it is very apparent that a high number of you in the class have taken the position that a true believer can lose his salvation.

I admit that the Hebrews 10 passage is quite challenging and that the Book of Hebrews as a whole raises lots of interpretative questions that boggle the greatest of minds. Personally, however, I am rather surprised that so many of you have come to the position that you have. I hope that I have not miscommunicated anything during our study together. In case there has been any confusion, let me state quite frankly that I do not think the Book of Hebrews is suggesting that true believers can lose their salvation. Based on my many years of study in the Bible, I am of the opinion that the Bible teaches the doctrine of eternal security for the believer.

From my studies of the Book of Hebrews, I think that the author is indeed writing to true regenerate Christians who were in danger of abandoning their confession of faith in Christ. If they were to do that, there would be a most severe consequence. Yet, I do not think he is trying to say that the consequence would be eternal punishment in hell. If that is your understanding, may I kindly and gently suggest that you rethink that position. Let me give you several reasons why I do not think you should take such a position.

- (1) The author of Hebrews never states *in clear terms* that the punishment will be loss of salvation or punishment in hell. There is no verse in Hebrews that straightforwardly states this. Therefore, we need to be careful not to say more than Hebrews is actually saying!

A very fundamental hermeneutical principle is that *clear statements* in Scripture take precedence over *less clear statements* when it comes to theological deductions. Looking at the broader scope of Scripture, there are several verses in the NT that more clearly address the issue of eternal destiny (e.g., Jn 10:27-29 and Rom 8:38-39). It is possible (and I would say probable) that the severe warnings in Hebrews have to do with a punishment or fate that will involve serious implications for the believer who has denied his Lord, but yet short of losing salvation.

- (2) To say that man can "undo" the wonderful working of God in salvation undermines the sovereignty of God. It is not we who have chosen Christ, but Christ who has chosen us. We are part of God's eternal plan, and He will not be defeated in His purposes. Romans 8:29-30 declares, "For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the first-born among many brethren; and whom He predestined, these He also called; and whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified." Notice that the ones who receive the eventual "glorification" are the same ones whom He foreknew and predestined. How could we speak of God predestining someone if salvation was a matter that had to await the believer's faithfulness?

## Eternal Security in Hebrews (2 of 2)

- (3) To say that we could possibly lose our salvation is to fail to see that each believer is a gift that has been given to Christ. Furthermore, to suggest that some might be lost is to call into question the ability of Christ to safely guard them and guide them to their eternal destiny. In Jn 6:37, Christ said, "All [not *most*] that the Father gives Me shall come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will certainly not cast out." You and I cannot be lost, if it is God's will that none be lost. Christ went on to say in Jn 6:39, "And this is the will of Him who sent Me; that of all that He has given Me I lose nothing, but raise it up on the last day." You and I might not be faithful (God forbid!), but He will always remain faithful and will not fail in His obligation as the faithful Shepherd to bring every sheep home.
- (4) To say that any believer can forfeit his salvation is to say that the will of man is greater than the love of God. "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" (Jn 3:16). It is God's love for us that made Calvary possible, and that made "eternal life" possible for everyone who believes. Furthermore, how could God promise "eternal life" to us if it might not really turn out to be *eternal* after all? John 3:16 is not a conditional statement! It is an absolute promise of God. We *certainly* will never perish, we who have believed! (cf. Jn 10:27-29).

I hope that you will take these thoughts to heart. The Book of Hebrews ought to motivate us to a life of faithfulness, but not because we might lose our salvation as a result of being unfaithful. We ought to see that faithful believers will be greatly rewarded and will share in King Messiah's glorious reign when He exercises dominion over the Messianic kingdom of God. He is the heir of all things, and we do not want to forfeit our inheritance that He is willing to share with us. So, let us be faithful until the end that we might reign with Him. But let us not cast doubt on the beautiful doctrine of eternal security. This is the birthright of every believer, and properly taught, this will help us hold on through many a storm when we might be tempted to doubt that God has made us anew in Christ. The more I go along in my Christian life, the more I realize how unworthy I am unto a Holy God. What love! What grace! That He would love one such as I.

Thank you for taking a moment to listen to the pleadings of your dear Bible teacher. My earnest desire is to guide you rightly in all the will of God. Cling to what is good!

Humbly,



## Views on the Warning Passages

Hebrews warns those who “fall away” five times (2:1-4; 3:7-4:13; 5:11-6:8; 10:19-39; 12:18-29). Each warning cautions readers not to reject Christianity for Judaism. These passages are perhaps the most controversial in the NT. But *what* penalty do these verses actually warn against—and to *whom* are they addressed? The basic issues can be contrasted in the following chart:

<i>Issues</i>	<b>False Believer</b>	<b>Former Believer</b>	<b>Carnal Believer</b>
<i>What group of Jews is being addressed?</i>	<b>Unbelievers:</b> Professing “Christians” in the assembly who are not really believers after all	<b>Believers:</b> Christians who sin because they do not see the superiority of Christ	<b>Believers:</b> Christians who sin because they do not see the superiority of Christ
<i>What is the nature of their punishment?</i>	Never had salvation	Loss of salvation	Loss of reward
<i>What is the result?</i>	Hell	Hell	Divine discipline (even by death)
<i>Which theological perspective holds to this view?</i>	Reformed (Presbyterian, B-P, etc.) Some Arminians too	Arminian (Methodist, AOG, Nazarene, etc.)	Partakers (Baptist, Bible church, etc.)
<i>Strengths</i>	It takes the seriousness of the warnings as signifying hell	It takes the seriousness of the warnings as signifying hell	Loss of rewards as a judgment for true believers is more biblically consistent than loss of salvation
<i>Weaknesses</i>	Hebrews consistently speaks of the readers as genuine Christians (3:1; 4:14; 10:23, 39)	“Temporal security” goes against the NT doctrine of justification by grace (John 3:16; Rom. 8:28-39)	Texts refer to judging <i>persons</i> , not <i>deeds</i> (“fire that will consume the enemies of God,” 10:27; cf. 6:8) though these may denote the AD 70 Jerusalem fire
<i>Adherents</i>	Hughes, <i>Hebrews</i> , 420; McKnight (below), 34; Toussaint, <i>GTJ</i> (1982): 67, 78-79	Attridge, <i>Hebrews</i> , 293-96; Lane, <i>Hebrews 9-13</i> , 295-96	Dillow, <i>Reign of Servant Kings</i> , 458-65; Pentecost, in <i>Integrity of Heart...</i> , 140; Oberholtzer, <i>BibSac</i> (1988): 412-25; Gleason, <i>BibSac</i> (2000)

For two other views not noted above see Scot McKnight, “The Warning Passages of Hebrews: A Formal Analysis and Theological Conclusions,” *Trinity Journal* 13 (Spring 1992): 23-25. He says that scholars also hold to the hypothetical view (that does not see apostasy as possible) and the community view (that applies the text only to groups rather than individuals). However, neither of these views has received much of a following and thus is not treated above.

## Views on Eternal Security and Perseverance

Can a Christian lose his salvation? This question is often answered from either a Calvinistic or Arminian view. However, a third, meditating view draws from both of these views. Joseph C. Dillow has championed this Partakers view, or Inheritance view in *The Reign of the Servant Kings* (Miami Springs, FL: Schoettle Pub. Co. [P.O. Box 594], 1992). This monumental work of 649 pages is quite scholarly and yet very readable, comforting and convincing to me. Note the distinctions between these three views:

<i>Issues</i>	<b>Reformed</b>	<b>Arminian</b>	<b>Partakers</b>
<i>How does each system define election and perseverance?</i>	God sovereignly <i>elects</i> to salvation and helps believers persevere in faith until death	God elects those whose <i>free will</i> accepts Christ and preserves them unless they lose faith	God <i>elects</i> to salvation; some do not persevere, but the faithful will partake of rewards
<i>What specific elements of salvation make up this system of belief?</i>	Total depravity Unconditional election Limited atonement Irresistible grace Perseverance	Natural inability Conditional election Unlimited atonement Resistible grace* Conditional perseverance	Total depravity Unconditional election Unlimited atonement Irresistible grace Conditional perseverance
<i>How does this view see carnal Christians (e.g., 1 Cor. 3:1-5)?</i>	They aren't Christians or are at a low level of spiritual commitment in a particular area	They spurn Christ to the point of almost losing their salvation	These believers lack blessings now and later (but are still saved)
<i>Do all believers persevere until death?</i>	Yes 1 Cor. 15:2; Phil. 1:6	No Rom. 8:13; Gal. 5:21; 6:8	No 1 Cor. 3:15; Rev. 3:26
<i>Can a true Christian lose his salvation?</i>	No, it is eternally secure	Yes, it is not eternally secure	No, it is eternally secure
<i>Is 100% assurance of salvation possible?</i>	Yes, if one knows Christ as Saviour	No, since no one knows if he will persevere	Yes, if one knows Christ as Saviour
<i>How does this system counsel believers in habitual sin?</i>	"You better re-examine whether you genuinely trusted Christ"	"You either lost your salvation or never were really saved"	"You must turn from your sin to be fully rewarded (Heb. 3:14)"
<i>How do those struggling with sin gain spiritual motivation?</i>	From fear that they may not actually be saved after all	From fear that they may not have sufficiently maintained their salvation	From fear that they will miss key rewards (their inheritance can be lost but not their salvation)
<i>What actually results in the listeners from this teaching?</i>	They may become carnal Christians by doubting their salvation	They believe God must always be appeased (low view of grace)	They will more likely appreciate God's faithfulness to them
<i>Who holds this view?</i>	John Calvin (d. 1564), Reformed churches, Presbyterians, Charles Hodge, Arthur Pink	Jacob Arminius (d. 1609), John Wesley, Methodists, Wesleyans, Nazarenes, Holiness churches, Pentecostals/Charismatics	Baptists, Bible churches, Joseph Dillow, Zane Hodges, Earl Radmacher, Charles Ryrie

\* Formerly known as "prevenient" grace—it means God's grace comes to all to enable them to believe, but it is not always successful and can be resisted.

## Exhortations in Hebrews

- Heb 4:1 “...let us be careful that none of you be found to have fallen short...”
- Heb 4:11 “...let us, therefore, make every effort to enter that rest...”
- Heb 4:14 “...let us hold firmly to the faith we profess...”
- Heb 4:16 “...let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence...”
- Heb 6:1 “...let us leave the elementary teachings about Christ and go on to maturity...”
- Heb 10:22 “...let us draw near to God...”
- Heb 10:23 “...let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess...”
- Heb 10:24 “...let us consider how we may spur one another...”
- Heb 10:25 “...let us not give up meeting together...”
- Heb 10:25 “...let us encourage one another...”
- Heb 12:1 “...let us throw off everything that hinders...”
- Heb 12:1 “...let us run perseverance the race marked out for us...”
- Heb 12:2 “...let us fix our eyes on Jesus...”
- Heb 12:3 “...consider him who endured such opposition from sinful men...”
- Heb 12:7 “...endure hardship as discipline...”
- Heb 12:14 “...make every effort to live in peace with all men and to be holy...”
- Heb 12:15 “...see that no misses the grace of God and no bitter root grows up...”
- Heb 12:28 “...let us be thankful...”
- Heb 13:1 “...keep on loving each other...”
- Heb 13:15 “...let us continually offer to God a sacrifice of praise...”

Adapted from source: Mears, Henrietta C. *A Look at the New Testament*, Glendale: Gospel Light Publications, 1966.  
Adapted from source: Dunnett, Walter. *An Outline of New Testament Survey*, Chicago: Moody Press, 1960.

## The 13 'Bettors'

- Heb 1:4 "...become so much **better** than the angels..."
- Heb 6:9 "...we are confident of **better** things in your case..."
- Heb 7:19 "...and a **better** hope is introduced..."
- Heb 7:22 "...Jesus has become the guarantee of a **better** covenant..."
- Heb 8:6 "...Mediator of a **better** covenant..."
- Heb 8:6 "...it is founded on **better** promises..."
- Heb 9:23 "...with **better** sacrifices than these..."
- Heb 10:34 "...you yourselves had **better** and lasting possessions..."
- Heb 11:4 "...Abel offered God a **better** sacrifice than Cain did..."
- Heb 11:35 "...so that they might gain a **better** resurrection..."
- Heb 11:40 "...God had planned something **better** for us..."
- Heb 12:24 "...speaks a **better** word than the blood of Abel..."

### SIX DANGERS IN HEBREWS

**D**

RIFTING (2:1-4)  
 DOUBTING (3:7-4:2)  
 DISOBEDIENCE (4:11-13)  
 DEGENERATION (5:11-13)  
 DESPISING (10:19-29)  
 DENYING (12:25-29)

Source: Hall, Terry. *Bible Panorama*, Wheaton: SP Publications, 1983.



## Views on the 'Sabbath-Rest' of Hebrews 4

Summarizing Richard James Griffith, "The Eschatological Significance of the Sabbath," ThD diss., Dallas Theological Seminary, 1990, pp. 279-311

"There remains, then, a Sabbath-rest for the people of God" (Heb. 4:9). What does this mean? At least seven different views can be cited, each with their strengths and weaknesses.

View	Strengths	Weaknesses
<p><i>Present Sabbath Rest and Future Heavenly Rest</i></p> <p>(held by Seventh-day Adventist scholar Bacchiochi)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Rest is present since those 'who have believed <i>are entering</i>' (4:3).</li> <li>"Remains" literally means "to leave behind" the sabbath (4:1).</li> <li>"Strive to enter that rest" shows the Sabbath is permanent (4:11).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>But this view says the sabbath is also future (inconsistent).</li> <li>"Remain" also appears in 4:6 and makes no sense there as "to leave behind." In fact, 4:1 does not even mention the Sabbath.</li> <li>How could "enter" be an appropriate verb to use for "observe" (4:3, 11)?</li> <li>If the readers were sabbath-keepers, why command what they were already doing?</li> <li>Joshua didn't fail to lead Israel into the weekly Sabbath.</li> <li>The book emphasises the new covenant—not a Mosaic sabbath.</li> <li>Changes meaning from the land rest of Hebrews 3.</li> </ul>
<p><i>Present Sunday and Grace Rests and Future Heavenly Rest</i></p> <p>(Jewett, Beckwith &amp; Stott, J. Owen)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Christ rose on a Sunday.</li> <li>Believers worshipped on Sunday (Acts 20:7; Rev. 1:10).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sunday was a day of worship (but not rest) in the early church. A required weekly day of rest for Christians is never commanded in Scripture. Sunday was not a rest day until the fourth century.</li> <li>One cannot properly argue that, because heavenly rest has not yet been consummated, we must therefore preserve the physical symbol of rest.</li> </ul>
<p><i>Present Spiritual Rest</i></p> <p>(Chafer, Kent, Thieme, Ellen Whit, most Adventists)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The present tense of "enter" (4:3) shows that entering is through believing.</li> <li>Enter "today" (3:7, 13, 15; 4:7).</li> <li>Believers are delivered from works-oriented salvation (4:10).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>God's rest is physical more than spiritual as Canaan is a physical place. Just because Israel did not enter the rest in Joshua's day does not mean that the <i>nature</i> of the rest has changed.</li> <li>Rest is preceded by resurrection (Rev. 20:4f.).</li> <li>The Sabbath rest is "another day" (4:8) or time period (not a state of being).</li> <li>The Sabbath rest is like God's rest from his work (4:10), which is <i>good</i> work (and thus is not like "works-oriented salvation," which is <i>bad</i>).</li> <li>Exhortations to diligence (4:1, 11) refer to an eschatological rather than soteriological rest since believers need no effort to be saved.</li> </ul>
<p><i>Present Spiritual and Future Heavenly Rest</i></p> <p>(Clarke, Barrett, Wiersbe)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Since the rest is God's, it must be both present and future</li> <li>People enter it now (a present aspect) but also must strive to enter it (future)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The parallel with the Israelite generation makes a dual focus improbable. The generation under Joshua could not in some sense have their rest spiritually without having it physically.</li> <li>The parallel between the Sabbath rest available and God's "physical" rest (4:10) suggests only the latter (physical) rest.</li> <li>To read a spiritual/salvation rest into the passage goes beyond its stated evidence.</li> </ul>

View	Strengths	Weaknesses
<p><i>Future Heavenly Rest</i></p> <p>(Attridge, Barnes, Bruce, Delitzsch, Gaebelien, Lincoln, Moffatt, Morris, von Rad, Vos, Westcott, and others—this is the most popular view)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The promise of entering His rest still stands (4:1).</li> <li>• The believer's rest occurs after death (Rev. 14:13).</li> <li>• Sabbath typified "the world to come" by rabbis.</li> <li>• Rest can't be land since believers expect 'better things' (6:9).</li> <li>• Rest in Hebrews 3 is redefined in 4:4-5 as a type (cf. 1 Cor. 10:1-13).</li> <li>• Rest equals the heavenly sanctuary (6:19-20; 8:2; 9:11, 23-24; 10:19), heavenly Jerusalem (11:10, 16; 12:22; 13:14), and heavenly promised land (11:14ff.).</li> <li>• The rest is called "God's rest" so it must be that which He has enjoyed in heaven since creation (Gen. 2:2-3).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The first argument is valid, for indeed the text does indicate the eschatological rest to be future. Yet this does not automatically mean heaven.</li> <li>• In the second argument, those who rest after death (Rev. 14:13) "reign with Christ a thousand years" (Rev. 20:4) on earth in the kingdom (Rev. 5:10).</li> <li>• The rabbinic "age to come" referred not to heaven, but to a political-geographical experience in the kingdom with the Abrahamic Covenant fulfilled.</li> <li>• Why can't the believer's rest be in a physical place such as the renewed earth? Heaven is also a physical place. The teaching that "better" cannot be physical is without scriptural support.</li> <li>• Why attach a different meaning to rest than in chapter 3? The same word ("rest") is used. Paul's typology (1 Cor. 10:1-13) is specifically defined but Hebrews 3-4 indicates no antitype of Canaan rest.</li> <li>• In response to the claim that Hebrews associates "rest" with heavenly antitypes, these depictions are found farther along in the book in Hebrews 6-13. As such they are not actually contextually related to the rest theme in 4:1-13. In contrast, the immediate context (3:7-19) clearly relates the rest with the earthly land of Canaan, which God calls His rest in accord with the meaning in Psalm 95. Thus the immediate context is a better indicator of meaning than passages later in the book.</li> <li>• How do we know God's rest has been in heaven? He resides on earth as well. God's rest in Scripture is not related to heaven but to earth. It was after he finished creating the <i>earth</i> (not heaven) that He "rested." Therefore, the land is "God's rest" since it was offered according to His promise (Gen. 12:1-3; 15:18) though it will not be claimed apart from Israel's repentance (Deut. 30:1-5).</li> </ul>
<p><i>Millennial Rest with Present Day Application</i></p> <p>(Lombard, Riesenfeld, Jehovah's Witnesses)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hebrews contrasts the present age &amp; the age to come.</li> <li>• Hebrews contrasts the transient earthly life with the eternal heavenly life.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• "Age to come" is a millennial term, so this first point has merit.</li> <li>• Claiming a present spiritual rest and eschatological physical rest is inconsistent; it applies two different meanings to "rest" in the same context.</li> <li>• This view also must accept a dual meaning to the concept of resting from one's work (4:10): the present aspect viewing this work negatively and the future aspect seeing it positively.</li> </ul>
<p><i>Future Millennial Rest</i></p> <p>(G. Archer, Buchanan, Griffith, Zane Hodges [BKC], Kaiser, Lang, Oberholtzer, Seiss, Toussaint)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I believe this view has the strongest support, so see the more extensive explanation below.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The text seems to indicate that the rest is a present rest (not future), but this is explained below.</li> <li>• This view may also have other weaknesses, but these can be explained (see next three pages).</li> </ul>

## Support for the Future Millennial Rest

1. **The context** of the previous chapters talks much of the Millennial kingdom.
  - a. Believers are designated “companions” (μέτοχοι) with Christ in His anointing by God as messianic King (1:9 quoting Ps. 45:6-7).
  - b. Christ's victory over His enemies before the Millennium (1:13) is linked with the promise that believers will share in that victory (σωτηρ(α); 1:14).
  - c. The same eschatological salvation (σωτηρ(α)) is referred to three verses later (2:3), which Christ will share with man in “the world to come,” or Millennium (2:5).
  - d. That Christians are companions with Christ in His future dominion is repeated in chapter 3 (3:1, 14; cf. 6:4; 12:8). However, the saints' promise of reigning with Him is contingent upon their continued faithfulness to their confession (3:6b)
2. **The land promise** is mentioned repeatedly in the passage itself (3:7—4:13).
  - a. The text quotes Psalm 95 five times (3:7-11, 15; 4:3, 5, 7) to emphasize the millennial rest in Canaan. Surely the “rest” of Psalm 95 is not eternal rest in heaven or the spiritual rest of salvation, but rather the repose Israel sought in having her own land. As Psalm 95 is an enthronement psalm that depicts the time of the Messiah's rule, it is appropriate that the author use this particular psalm to refer to the millennial rest.
  - b. The “rest” in this passage must be something that Joshua *could have* offered his people had they believed. Certainly he *could not* have offered them salvation (spiritual peace) or eternal life (heaven). However, what he did offer was access to the land so that wherever the people would tread, that land would be theirs (Josh. 1:3).
  - c. The millennial view best explains the “work” in 4:10: “for anyone who enters God's rest also rests from his own work, just as God did from his.” Most commentators see the work here as a figurative “abstention from servile work” or sinful deeds at all times. However, ceasing work in a literal sense makes better sense since the text compares man's rest with God's rest from His literal work of creation; certainly God does not rest from sinful deeds.
3. **Other Scripture** often depicts Israel as literally resting in the millennial age.
  - a. God says of Zion, “This is My resting place forever and ever; here I will sit enthroned, for I have desired it” (Ps. 132:14).
  - b. As God rests there, so will Israel, for He will give the nation rest from pain and turmoil and harsh service in which it has been enslaved (Isa. 14:3).
  - c. He also promises, “My people will live in peaceful dwelling places, in secure homes, in undisturbed places of rest” (Isa. 32:18; cf. Ezek. 34:15).
  - d. The kingdom age is spoken of as a time in which God “will rest in His love” (Zeph. 3:17).
4. **Extra-biblical references** taught about the Sabbath rest in the kingdom age.
  - a. Jews first taught the millennial sabbath:
    1. When Adam died at age 930, “he lacked 70 years from 1000 years, for 1000 years are like one day in the testimony of heaven” (Jubilees 4.30-31, 2nd cent. BC).
    2. Israel “will dwell in confidence in the land. And then it will not have any Satan or any evil (one). And the land will be purified from that time and forever” (Jub. 50.5; cf. suppression of Satan's power in Revelation 20:4).
    3. In Life of Adam and Eve 51.2 (1st cent. AD), the archangel Michael says to Seth regarding Eve's death, “Man of God, do not prolong mourning your dead more than six days, because the seventh day is a sign of the resurrection, the rest of the coming age.”
    4. In this age Israel will be free from laborious work (2 Enoch 65:9 late 1st cent. AD).
  - b. Christians followed this common Jewish idea of a literal 1000 years of sabbath:
    1. The six days of creation each represent one thousand years of history (based upon Psalm 90:4), which are followed by “the Sabbath” millennium which commences “when His Son shall come” (Epistle of Barnabas 15.4-9).
    2. Augustine wrote before he became amillennial, “Therefore, the eighth day signifies the new life at the end of the world; the seventh day, the future rest of the saints on this earth” (Augustine, *Sermons on the Liturgical Seasons*, 259.2).
    3. “A kingdom is promised to us upon the earth, although before heaven, only in another state of existence; inasmuch as it will be after the resurrection for a thousand years in the divinely-built city of Jerusalem” (Tertullian, *The Five Books Against Marcion*, 3.25).
    4. “And 6000 years must needs be accomplished, in order that the Sabbath may come, the rest, the holy day ‘on which God rested from all His works’” (Hippolytus, *Fragments on Daniel*, 2.4).

5. **Hebrews 4:8** refers to the Sabbath rest as a time period: "For if Joshua had given them rest, God would not have spoken later about another day." Obviously "day" refers to another time period, not another state of being. This does not definitively argue for the millennial view since the heavenly rest view relates to a future time period; however, it is consistent with the kingdom view and inconsistent with the "present spiritual rest" orientation.
6. **An Objection** against the millennial view concerns verse 3a, which seems to warn against missing a *present* rest ("Now we who have believed enter that rest—εἰσερχόμεθα γὰρ εἰς [τὴν] κατάπαυσιν οἱ πιστεύσαντες). This immediate aspect is reflected in all of the major English translations (NIV, NASB, NEB, REB, KJV, NKJV, RSV, GNB, NBV, Amplified, Moffatt, Phillips, Williams).

**Response:** However, despite this support, there is reason to question a present nuance here. Because of these factors it is better to advocate a futuristic (proleptic) use of the present here.<sup>19</sup> The use of a futuristic present is supported by these factors:

- a. The preceding proves an overwhelming amount of eschatological emphases in the passage, in the Book of Hebrews as a whole, in parallel Scriptures, and in the extra-biblical literature.
- b. A futuristic present could demonstrate an even more affirmative tone regarding the assurance of rest. Turner notes that futuristic presents "are confident assertions intended to arrest attention with a vivid and realistic tone or else with imminent fulfillment in mind, and they are mainly restricted to the vernacular."<sup>20</sup>
- c. The use of the futuristic present is not only well established,<sup>21</sup> but, interestingly enough, the verb *ἔρχομαι* employs the futuristic present perhaps more than any other verb.
  - 1) The Messiah is called the *ὁ ἔρχόμενος*, the "Coming One" (Matt. 11:3), which means not one who has already arrived or who is in process of arriving (presently) but one who is expected in the future.
  - 2) The same nuance is used of *Ἠλίας ἔρχεται*, "Elijah is coming" (Matt. 17:11), which is present in form but future in meaning.
  - 3) The nobleman who distributed ten minas in Luke 19:13 commanded his servants, "Put this money to work . . . until I come (*ἐν ᾧ ἔρχομαι*) back," employing a future sense.
  - 4) Christ referred to His future return with the present form *πάλιν ἔρχομαι*, "I come again" (John 14:3), which obviously has the futuristic sense of "I *will* come again."
  - 5) Paul used the futuristic present *διέρχομαι*, "I go/am going" (1 Cor. 16:5), to designate an upcoming visit.
  - 6) Even in other languages verbs of going often employ a futuristic present.

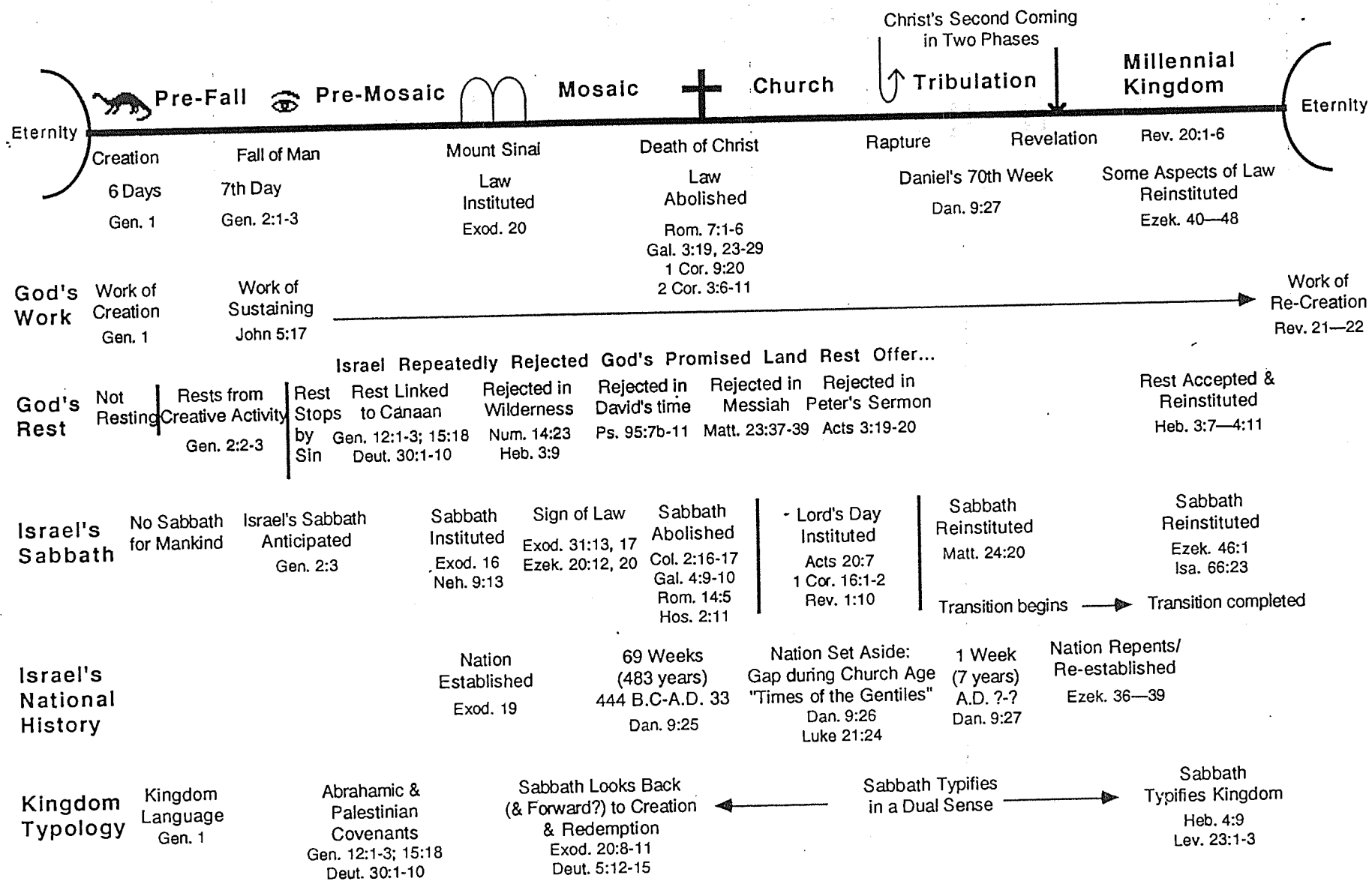
<sup>19</sup>Jean Héring, *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, 29-30; Lünemann, 481; Oberholtzer, "The Kingdom Rest in Hebrews 3:1—4:13," 192; Stuart, 323; Toussaint, "The Eschatology of the Warning Passages in the Book of Hebrews," 71.

<sup>20</sup>Nigel Turner, *Syntax*, in J. H. Moulton, ed., *A Grammar of New Testament Greek*, 3:63; A. T. Robertson, *A Grammar of the Greek New Testament in Light of Historical Research* (Nashville: Broadman, 1934), 869.

<sup>21</sup>Raphael Kühner, and Bernhard Gerth, *Ausführliche Grammatik der griechischen Sprache*, 2:1:137-38, § 5.

# The Eschatological Significance of the Sabbath

A visual summary of a ThD dissertation by Richard James Griffith, Dallas Theological Seminary, 1990



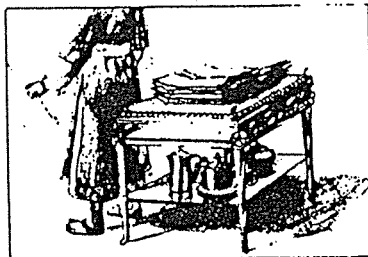
A Summary of the ThD dissertation by Richard James Griffith, Dallas Theological Seminary, 1990

## The Eschatological Significance of the Sabbath

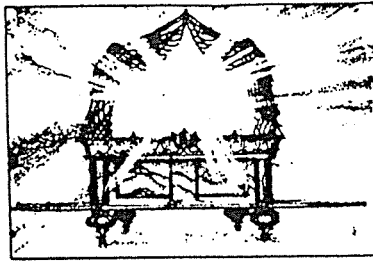
Dr. Rick Griffith

New Testament Survey: Hebrews

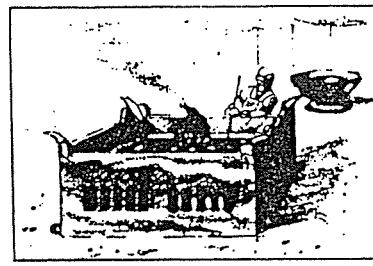
## THE HIGH PRIEST'S GARMENTS



THE TABLE OF SHOWBREAD (Ex. 25:23-30)



THE ARK OF THE COVENANT (Ex. 25:10-22)



THE BRONZE ALTAR (Ex. 27:1-8)

*And they shall make holy garments for Aaron . . . that he may minister unto me in the priest's office (Exodus 28:4b).*

### THE HOLY CROWN

And thou shalt make a plate of pure gold, and engrave upon it . . . HOLINESS TO THE LORD. And thou shalt put it on a blue lace, that it may be upon the . . . forefront of the miter . . . And it shall be upon Aaron's forehead (Exodus 28:36-38).

### THE URIM AND THUMMIM

And thou shalt put in the breastplate of judgment the Urim and the Thummim; and they shall be upon Aaron's heart, when he goeth in before the LORD: and Aaron shall bear the judgment of the children of Israel upon his heart before the LORD continually (Exodus 28:30). Authorities disagree as to what the Urim and Thummin were.

### THE BREASTPLATE

And thou shalt make the breastplate of judgment with skillful work; after the work of the ephod . . . Foursquare it shall be, and doubled; a span shall be the length . . . and a span . . . the breadth thereof. And thou shalt set it in settings of stones, even four rows of stones: the first row shall be a sardius, a topaz, and a carbuncle . . . the second row shall be an emerald, a sapphire, and a diamond . . . the third row a jacinth, an agate, and an amethyst . . . the fourth row a beryl, and an onyx, and a jasper: they shall be set in gold in their enclosings. And the stones shall be with the names of the children of Israel . . . according to the twelve tribes.

And thou shalt make upon the breastplate chains at the ends of braided work of pure gold . . . and they shall bind the breastplate by the rings thereof unto the rings of the ephod with a lace of blue, that it may be above the beautifully woven girdle of the ephod, and that the breastplate be not loosed from the ephod. And Aaron shall bear the names of the children of Israel in the breastplate of judgment upon his heart, when he goeth in unto the holy place, for a memorial before the Lord continually (Exodus 28:15-29).

### THE EPHOD

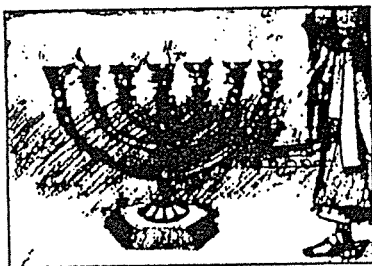
And they shall take gold, blue, purple, and scarlet, and fine linen. And they shall make the ephod of gold; of blue, and of purple, of scarlet, and fine-twined linen, with skillful work. It shall have the two shoulder-pieces thereof joined at the two edges thereof; . . . And the beautifully woven girdle of the ephod, which is upon it, shall be of the same . . . even of gold, blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine-twined linen. And thou shalt take two onyx stones, and engrave on them the names of the children of Israel: Six of their names on one stone, and the other six names . . . on the other stone, according to their birth . . . thou shalt make them to be set in settings of gold. And thou shalt put the two stones upon the shoulders of the ephod . . . and Aaron shall bear their names before the LORD . . . for a memorial. And thou shalt make settings of gold; And two chains of pure gold at the ends; of braided work shalt thou make them, and fasten the braided chains to the settings (Exodus 28:6-14).

### THE UNDERGARMENTS

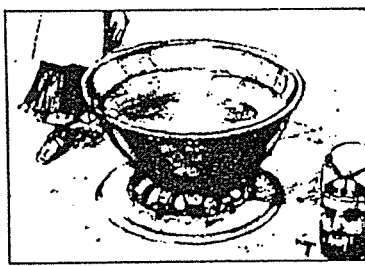
An embroidered linen coat and linen breeches (Exodus 28:39 and 42).

### THE ROBE OF THE EPHOD

And thou shalt make the robe of the ephod all of blue . . . there shall be a hole in the top of it, in the midst thereof: it shall have a binding of woven work round about the hole . . . and beneath upon the hem of it thou shalt make pomegranates of blue, and purple, and scarlet, round about the hem thereof; and bells of gold between them . . . A golden bell and a pomegranate, a golden bell and a pomegranate, upon the hem of the robe round about. And it shall be upon Aaron . . . and his sound shall be heard when he goeth in unto the holy place . . . and when he cometh out, that he die not (Exodus 28:31-35).



THE GOLDEN LAMPSTAND (Ex. 25:31-40)



THE LAVER OF BRONZE (Ex. 38:8)



THE ALTAR OF INCENSE (Ex. 30:1-10)

## Melchizedek and OT Quotes in Hebrews

### WHO IS MELCHIZEDEK?

(Gen 14:18-20; Psa 110)

- A. Shem, one of Noah's 3 sons
- B. Godly priest-king over the city of Salem (thought to be reference to Jerusalem, thus first mention of the Holy City in the Bible)
- C. Christ Himself – theory based on Heb 7:3 – type of Christ, not only in office, but also in his origin
- D. Heavenly creature – angelic being who reigned for a time at Salem! Without beginning of days means pre-temporal origin. Even if he is an angel, he is not superior to Christ. Evidence at Qumran states that he was regarded an angelic personage

Source: Walvoord, John F. & Zuck, Roy B. eds. *The Bible Knowledge Commentary*, Wheaton: SP Publications, 1983.

### HEBREW'S QUOTATION OF OLD TESTAMENT PASSAGES

<b>Genesis</b>	31:8 – Heb 13:5	45:6-7 – Heb 1:8-9	<b>Isaiah</b>
2:2 – Heb 4:4	32:35 – Heb 10:30a	95:7-8 – Heb 3:15, 4:7	8:17LXX, Heb 2:13a
21:12 – Heb 11:18	32:36 – Heb 10:30b	95:7-11 – Heb 3:7-11	8:18 – Heb 2:13b
22:17 – Heb 6:14	32:43LXX – Heb 1:6	95:11 – Heb 4:3, 5	<b>Jeremiah</b>
<b>Exodus</b>	<b>2 Samuel</b>	102:25-27 – Heb 1:10-12	31:31-34 – Heb 8:8-12
19:13 – Heb 12:20	7:14 – Heb 1:5b	104:4 – Heb 1:7	31:33 – Heb 10:16
24:8 – Heb 9:20	<b>Psalms</b>	110:1 – Heb 1:13	31:34 – Heb 10:17
25:40 – Heb 8:5	2:7 – Heb 1:5a, 5:5	110:4 – Heb 5:6, 7:17, 21	<b>Habbakuk</b>
<b>Deuteronomy</b>	8:4-6 – Heb 2:6-8	118:6 – Heb 13:6	2:3-4 – Heb 10:37-38
9:17 – Heb 12:21	22:22 – Heb 2:12	<b>Proverbs</b>	<b>Haggai</b>
31:6 – Heb 13:5	40:6-8 – Heb 10:5-7	3:11-12 – Heb 12:5-6	2:6 – Heb 12:26

Source: House, H. Wayne. *Chronological and Background Charts of the New Testament*, Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1984.

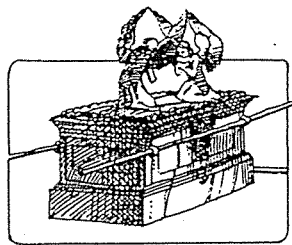
# Chart and Furnishings in Hebrews

## HEBREWS

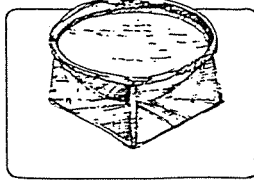
NT Made Simple by Sabin Huang

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	10	11	13
<b>Jesus is the Son</b>		<b>He is the Apostle</b>		<b>He is the High Priest</b>		<b>He is like Melchizedek</b>		<b>Having Faith is</b>	
<b>S</b>		<b>U P</b>		<b>E R</b>		<b>I O</b>		<b>R</b>	
<b>to Angels in name</b>		<b>to Moses in honour</b>		<b>to Aaron in calling</b>		<b>to Levi in blessing</b>		<b>to losing heart</b>	

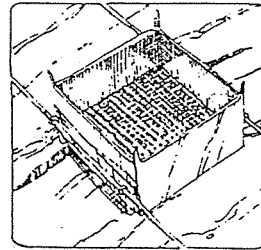
### The Furniture of the Tabernacle (Heb. 9:1-10)



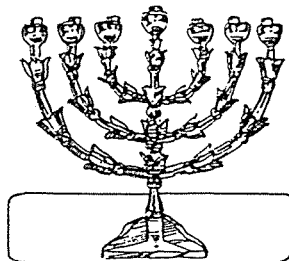
**Ark of the Covenant**  
(Ex. 25:10-22)  
The ark was most sacred of all the furniture in the tabernacle. Here the Hebrews kept a copy of the Ten Commandments, which summarized the whole covenant.



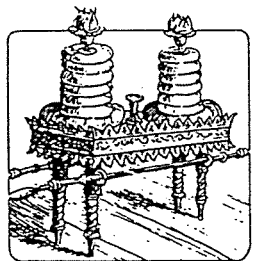
**Bronze Laver**  
(Ex. 30:17-21)  
It was to the laver of bronze that the priests would come for cleansing. They must be pure to enter the presence of God.



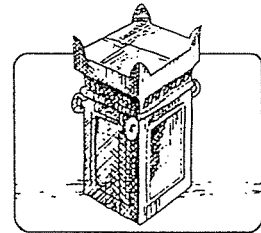
**Altar of Burnt Offering**  
(Ex. 27:1-8)  
Animal sacrifices were offered on this altar, located in the court in front of the tabernacle. The blood of the sacrifice was sprinkled on the four horns of the altar.



**Golden Lampstand**  
(Ex. 25:31-40)  
The gold lampstand stood in the holy place, opposite the table of showbread. It held seven lamps, flat bowls in which a wick lay with one end in the oil of the bowl and the lighted end hanging out.



**Table of Showbread**  
(Ex. 25:23-30)  
The table of showbread was a stand on which the offerings were placed. Always in God's presence on the table were the 12 loaves of bread representing the 12 tribes.



**Altar of Incense**  
(Ex. 30:1-10)  
The altar of incense inside the tabernacle was much smaller than the altar of burnt offering outside. The incense burned on the altar was a perfume of a sweet-smelling aroma.

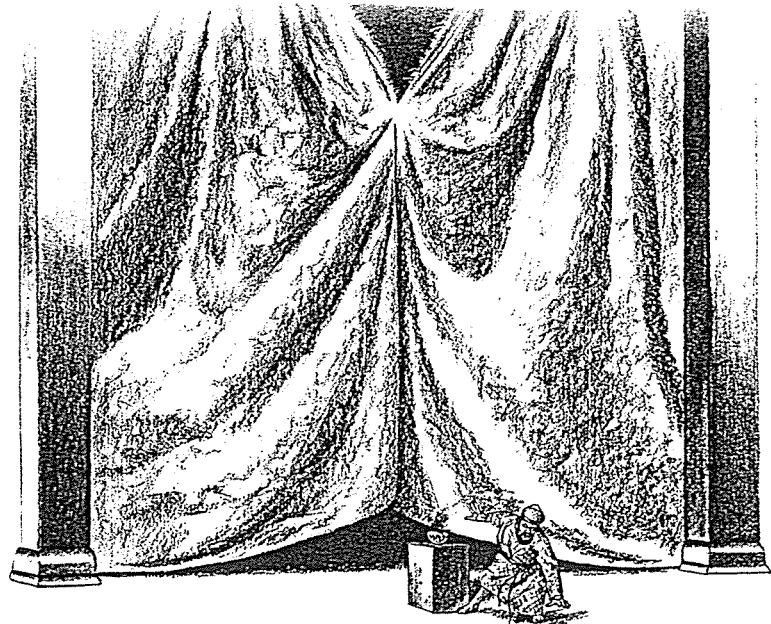
Hayford's Bible Handbook  
Gen. Ed. Jack W. Wayford



## Christ vs. the Old Order

CHRIST	OLD ORDER
A great high priest (4:14)	A high priest (5:1)
After the order of Melchizedek (5:10)	After order of Aaron (7:11)
An indestructible life (7:16)	Subject to death (7:23)
Guarantee of a better covenant (7:22)	Former regulation weak and useless (7:18)
Permanent priesthood (7:24)	Temporary priesthood (7:23)
Able to save completely (7:25)	Death prevented continuation (7:23)
Blameless and perfected (7:26, 28)	Sinful and weak (7:27, 28)
At right hand of the Majesty in heaven (8:1)	Served in earthly place (8:5)
A minister of the true tabernacle (8:2; 9:24)	A minister in a man-made sanctuary (8:2; 9:24)
Mediator of a superior covenant (8:6)	Mediator of an obsolete and ageing covenant (8:13)
Obtained eternal redemption (9:12)	Obtained only temporary respite (5:1)
Cleanse our consciences (9:14)	Cleansed outwardly (9:13)
Do away with sin once for all (9:26)	Yearly sacrifices for sin (9:25)
Made holy once for all (10:10)	Sacrifices does not sanctify (10:11)

Adapted from source: Dunnett, Walter. *An Outline of New Testament Survey*, Chicago: Moody Press, 1960.



## Truth in Action Through Hebrews

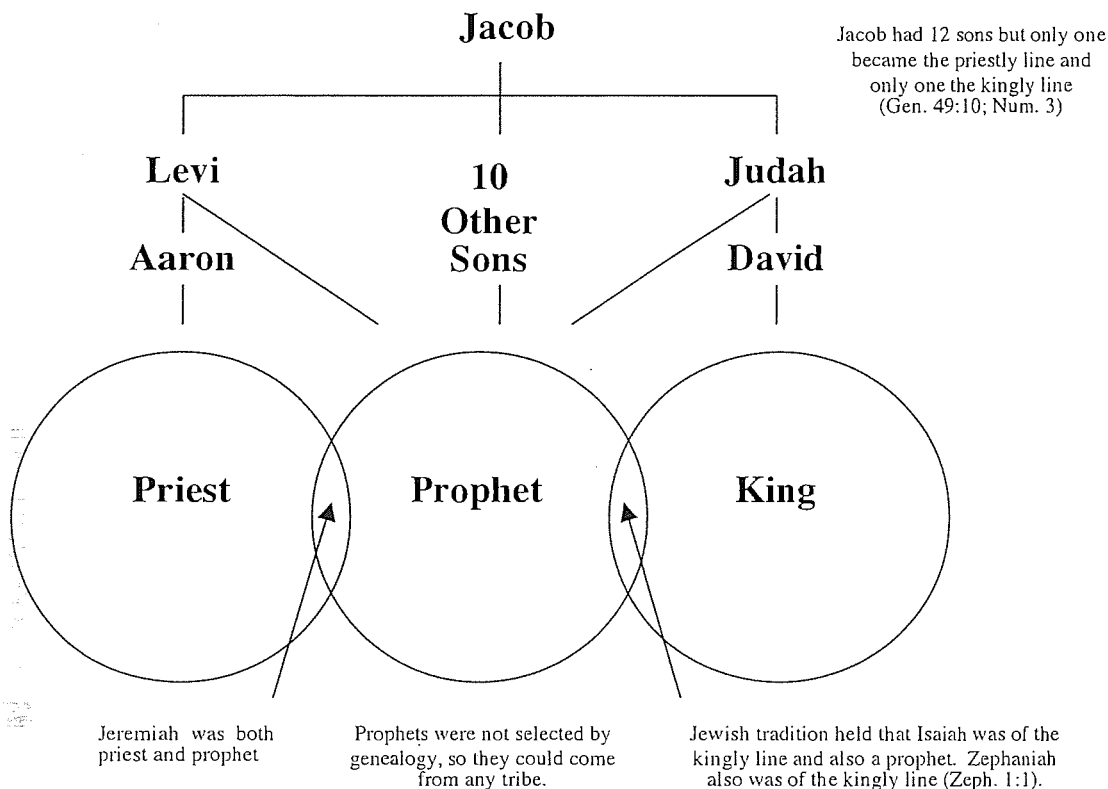
Truth Hebrews Teaches	Action Hebrews Invites
<p><b>1 Key Lessons in Faith</b>                      Faith accepts the Bible's record of who Jesus is and what He has accomplished on our behalf. It also draws near to God and clings to Him tenaciously. The believer accepts the benefits of Jesus' sacrifice and enters God's presence with confidence. Faith believes the Bible implicitly, knowing it is God's living self-expression and so submits to its judgment. Finally, faith is willing to suffer with Christ, knowing it will receive a good reward.</p>	<p><b>2:14-18</b> <i>Recognize</i> that Jesus has destroyed the fear of death for you by overcoming the Devil.  <b>3:6</b> <i>Consciously hold onto</i> the courage and hope that is implied by your confession of faith.  <b>4:12, 13</b> <i>Allow</i> the Word of God to judge the intents and thoughts of your heart.  <b>4:14</b> <i>Be tenacious</i> in holding onto God's promises. <i>Aggressively pursue</i> God, <i>study</i> His Word, and <i>build up</i> your faith.  <b>4:16</b> <i>Draw near</i> to God with confidence when in need. <i>Believe</i> He understands your suffering.  <b>10:23</b> <i>Hold on to hope!</i> <i>Develop</i> a sense of high destiny.  <b>13:11-13</b> <i>Recognize</i> that following Jesus brings reproach. <i>Do not fear</i> human mockery, rejection, and scorn.</p>
<p><b>2 Steps to Dynamic Devotion</b>                      Devotion is concentration on a particular pursuit, purpose, or cause. He who is devoted to Jesus recognizes his fleshly tendency to become lackadaisical and studies to avoid it. The Scriptures shape his thinking, and he devotes time to prayer, to waiting upon the Lord, and to praise and thanksgiving.</p>	<p><b>2:1-4</b> <i>Give your full attention</i> to God's Word and your relationship with Jesus.  <b>3:1</b> <i>Let</i> Jesus and His Word be the foundation and sustainer of your thinking.  <b>9:11-15</b> <i>Celebrate daily</i> that you have gained access to God through the shed blood of Jesus Christ.  <b>10:22</b> <i>Continually draw near</i> to God with a blameless heart and faith.  <b>10:25</b> <i>Gather often</i> with God's people to encourage and urge them on in righteousness.  <b>11:6</b> <i>Seek God diligently.</i> <i>Believe</i> that He will reward you for it.  <b>13:15</b> <i>Practice</i> persistent and patient praise.</p>
<p><b>3 Steps to Faithful Obedience</b>                      Faith believes what God says and acts in line with His Word. Faith allows the believer to enter the rest into which God has called all His people. It acknowledges the completed work of salvation, while faithfully obeying every instruction from God.</p>	<p><b>4:1-10</b> <i>Enter</i> the rest promised by God. <i>Mix</i> your faith with God's Word. <i>Do not allow</i> rebellion to harden your heart.  <b>4:8-11</b> <i>Devote your whole heart</i> to obeying God and His Word. <i>Trust</i> Him to do the things He says He will do.  <b>5:8-10</b> <i>Study</i> Jesus' life as your model for suffering and obedience.  <b>12:25</b> <i>Never reject</i> a message because it makes you uncomfortable. <i>Accept</i> correction from God's Word.  <b>13:17, 18</b> <i>Obey</i> church leadership. <i>Recognize</i> and <i>cooperate</i> with leadership to make their job easier. <i>Pray</i> for them continuously and faithfully.</p>
<p><b>4 How to Develop Dynamic Discipleship</b> The disciple is an apprentice to Jesus, learning to live as He did. God disciplines His children, correcting and training them to live in His kingdom.</p>	<p><b>5:12-14</b> <i>Recognize</i> that it is only through a sustained daily effort to apply God's Word to your life that you will become mature.  <b>6:11, 12</b> <i>Turn</i> from laziness and <i>patiently endure</i>, sustaining diligence in your pursuit of Christlikeness.</p>
<p><b>5 How to Develop Dynamic Discipleship (continued)</b>                      Correction, if received with the right attitude of heart, produces the fruit of righteousness. The Father's object is to bring His children to maturity.</p>	<p><b>12:1-3</b> <i>Discard</i> any attitude or practice that hinders your walk with Christ. <i>Model</i> your life after Jesus. <i>Give careful thought and study</i> to the life of Jesus for encouragement in your struggle with sin.  <b>12:4-10</b> <i>Embrace</i> God's discipline. <i>Know</i> that it is evidence that He is training you as His child.  <b>12:11</b> <i>Accept</i> God's correction as necessary for spiritual growth.  <b>13:7</b> <i>Honor, consider,</i> and <i>imitate</i> those God has put over you to lead you.</p>

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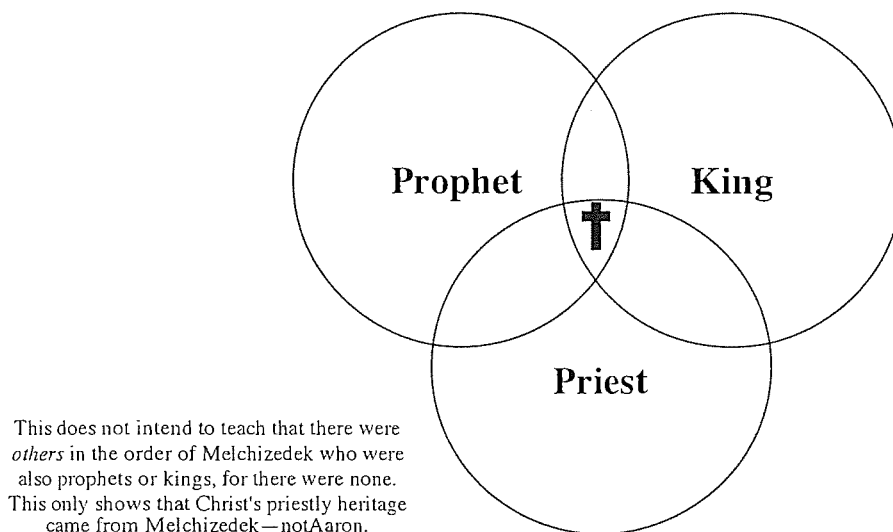
## Christ as Prophet, Priest, and King

*How Can He Be a Priest from the Line of Judah?*

The Jewish readers addressed in Hebrews did not see how Jesus could be their high priest. After all, Christ descended from the line of Judah (the kingly line; 7:14) through David whereas all priests came from the line of Levi through Aaron (7:11). No one could be both an Aaronic priest and a Davidic descendant qualified to be Israel's king. This can be diagrammed like this:



However, the actual picture for Jesus is that his priesthood is not of Aaron but of Melchizedek, the ancient OT figure to whom Abraham paid tithes (Gen. 14:18-20) and had no family line. This is how Jesus can be prophet, priest, and king simultaneously (Heb. 7:11; cf. Ps. 110:4).



## Contrasting the Priesthoods

Hebrews 5:1-10 and Hebrews 7 provide much information on the priestly ministries of Aaron's descendants, of Melchizedek,, and of Christ. Make as many observations as you can in these three columns below, then draw lines between your lines to show comparisons and contrasts.

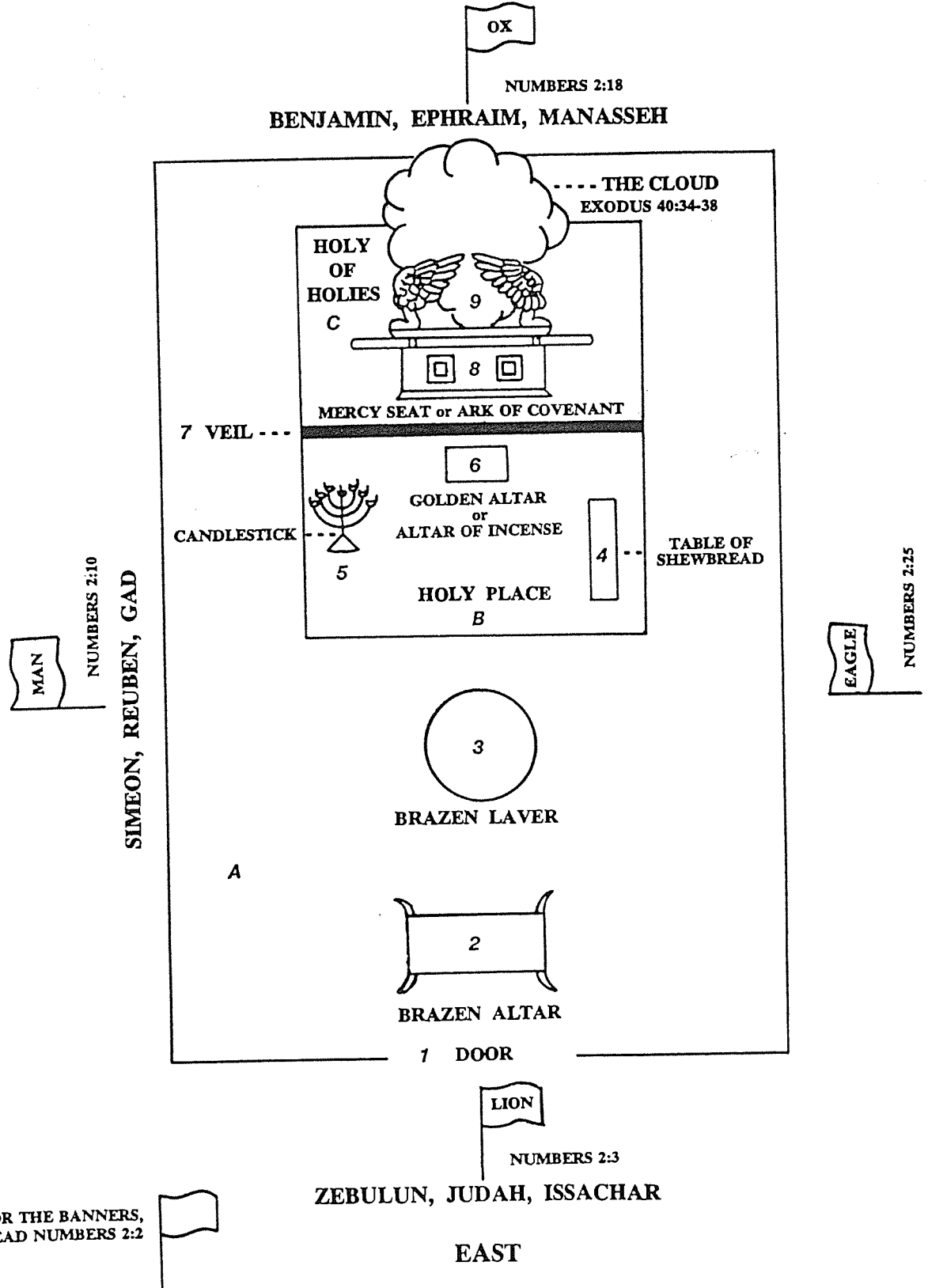
Aaronic Priesthood	Melchizedek	Jesus as High Priest

# The Tabernacle

PRECEPT UPON PRECEPT  
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Hebrews II  
L-9, C-9  
Page 2

## THE TABERNACLE AND THE TRIBES OF ISRAEL



## Backsliding Temptations

Why not start off our study in Hebrews by being really honest with one another? We often share how Christ has changed our lives—that is wonderful. But each of us also is still tempted by certain aspects of our "BC" (Before Christian) days. These things tempt so many Singaporean Christians that one third of them return to their former religion. So what was *your* religion or philosophy before you became a Christian (Buddhist, atheist, agnostic, nominal Christian, genuine Christian family, etc.)? What about your BC days still tempts you to return today (had more time, legalism, freedom, etc.)?

**My Background**

**The Hebrews' Background**

**My Temptations**

**The Hebrews' Temptations**

## Implications of Christ's High Priesthood

Hebrews goes to great lengths to prove Christ's high priesthood—that He identifies with us by making atonement for our sin and by praying for us. This doctrine relates better to Jewish readers than to us. Also, it is not emphasized much in the rest of the NT. So why would this truth be so important to us?

- ◆ When we understand that Christ is our high priest then we can confidently experience what it means to be truly forgiven. Jews better understood how Jesus brought his blood of atonement "behind the curtain into the holy of holies" (6:19–20), but we Gentiles also need forgiveness.
- ◆ His high priesthood means He's worthy of worship which motivates us to persevere in our faith (4:14; 6:19) so we will not lose our rewards by falling away (6:7–11).
- ◆ Christ has a heart for us. As the earthly high priest was tempted to sin, so Christ sympathizes with us—even though He didn't ever sin (4:15). He understands us!
- ◆ The high priesthood of Jesus gives us boldness to approach Christ in prayer (4:16a). Don't think He's too high and lofty to listen to you!
- ◆ Here we find mercy and grace in times of need (4:16b).
  - ◆ *Mercy* means He *doesn't give* us what we *deserve* (hell, punishment).
  - ◆ *Grace* means He *gives* us what we *don't deserve* (heaven, forgiveness).
- ◆ Knowing Christ's high priesthood (that He has provided atonement and is superior to the Law) is basic to learning the "solid food" of the Bible (5:11–12). Such "food" consists of learning about righteousness that mature believers alone care about to distinguish between good and evil (5:13–14). I suspect this would include aspects of holiness that immature believers consider as getting "very picky": making every word spoken a holy one, being saturated with God's Word, submitting every area of life to Christ's Lordship, etc.
- ◆ Christ's high priesthood clarifies that believers are not under the Mosaic law since the Aaronic priesthood has been superceded (7:12, 18–19). Therefore, many rules do not apply to us—food laws, Sabbath, feasts, etc.
- ◆ His priesthood also assures our salvation due to His intercession for us (7:25).
- ◆ As high priest Christ fully meets our needs since He doesn't have the limitations of the OT high priests who repeatedly had to offer sacrifices for their own sins as well as for the people (7:26–28).

## Old vs. New Covenant

**Hebrews 8:8–12 is the longest OT quote in the NT. It's from Jeremiah 31:31–34, the text that has the most explicit OT teaching on the new covenant. Solomon's temple was about to be destroyed in 586 BC and life under the old (Mosaic or Sinai) covenant was going to be radically altered. So God used Jeremiah to comfort Israel by revealing an even better covenant to come.**

**In like manner, the Hebrews passage also reminds us of this new covenant just before the temple would be destroyed a second time in AD 70 (8:13). Unless we understand the old covenant, though, we won't appreciate the new. So let's draw some contrasts between the two covenants from Hebrews 8...**

Old Covenant	New Covenant
High priest stood in the tabernacle (10:11) (atonement work was incomplete)	Christ sat down in heaven (8:1a; 9:24; 10:12) (atonement work was complete)
Priests never ruled	Christ is next to God's throne (8:1b)
Priest served in temporary tabernacle (8:13)	Christ serves in true tabernacle (8:2a)
Tabernacle set up by man (8:2c)	Tabernacle set up by God (8:2b)
Type: Sanctuary a copy and shadow (8:5a)	Antitype: Heaven is the reality (8:5b)
Moses mediated old but good pattern (8:5c)	Christ as mediator of better promises (8:6)
Imperfect (8:7a)	Perfect (8:7b)
Obsolete, aging, and soon to disappear (AD 70) after the book of Hebrews was written (8:13b)	New and thus replacing the old covenant (8:13a)
Holy Place and Most Holy Place (9:1-8)	Earth and Heaven (9:11)
High priest passes between rooms (9:7)	Christ passed from earth to heaven (9:11)
Could not cleanse the conscience (9:9; 10:2)	Cleanses the conscience (9:14; 10:22)
High priest entered Holy of Holies with animal blood for atonement (9:12a)	Christ entered heaven with His own blood for atonement (9:12b)
Blood of animals covered sin temporarily (9:13; 10:1-4)	Blood of Christ forgave sins eternally (10:14)
Required only animal sacrifices for purification (9:22)	Required a much greater Sacrifice for purification (9:23)
Repeated sacrifices (10:1-2)	Once-for-all sacrifice (9:26, 28)



## Parallels Between Hebrews 6:4-12 and 10:26-36

William L. Lane, *Hebrews 9-13*, vol. 47, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, 1991), 2:296-97

WARNING	6:4-8	10:26-31
(1) Description of the apostate	“fallen away” (6:6) “crucifying the Son of God” (6:6) “exposing him to open shame” (6:6)	“deliberately persist in sin” (10:26) “trample upon the Son of God” (10:29) “treat the blood of the covenant as defiled” (10:29) “insult the Spirit of grace” (10:29)
(2) Prior experience	“once for all brought into the light” (6:4) “have experienced the gift from heaven” (6:4) “have received a share in the Holy Spirit” (6:4) “have experienced the goodness of God’s word and the coming age” (6:5)	“have received the full knowledge of the truth” (10:26) “consecrated by means of the blood of the covenant” (10:29)
(3) Impossibility of renewal	“It is impossible . . . to restore them to repentance” (6:4/6)	“no longer any sacrifice for sins” (10:26)
(4) Expectation	“loss” (6:6) “curse” (6:8) “burning” (6:8)	“terrifying expectation of judgment” (10:27) “raging fire” (10:27) “severer punishment” (10:29) “dread” (10:31)
COMFORT	6:9-12	10:32-35 (36)
(1) Basis	Appeal to “better things which accompany your salvation” (6:9)	Appeal to “remember those earlier days after you had received the light” (10:32)
(2) Past experience as Christians	“work and love demonstrated” (6:10) “you served . . . fellow Christians” (6:10)	“endured a hard contest with sufferings” (10:32) “showed solidarity with those who were harshly treated” (10:33) “shared the sufferings of those in prison” (10:34) “cheerfully accepted the seizure of your property” (10:34)
(3) Present responsibility	“demonstrate the same earnest concern” (6:11) “not become sluggish” (6:12) “become imitators of those with steadfast endurance” (6:12)	“Do not throw away your boldness” (10:35) [“endurance” (10:36)]
(4) Incentive	“the realization of your hope” (6:11) “inherit the promise” (6:12)	“great reward” (10:35) [“receive the promise” (10:36)]

# The Hall of Faith

## Examples of Endurance from Hebrews 11

Why are there Halls of Fame for sports heroes? Examples have a way of spurring us on to greater heights in ways that theory can never do. The author of the book of Hebrews knew this well. This is why he listed specific people who faithfully endured amidst difficulty to encourage his readers that they were not alone in their struggle. These people are enrolled in God's Hall of Faith!

<b>Hero</b>	<b>Challenge</b>	<b>Demonstration</b>	<b>Endurance &amp; Faith Lessons</b>
<b><i>Us Believers in Creation</i></b> (3)	Explain how the world came into being when we were not there	Trust that God created the universe by speaking (3a)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Faith can see the unseen</li> <li>• God did not provide any eyewitnesses of creation that we might trust in His word</li> </ul>
<b><i>Abel</i></b> (4)	Please God in righteous offerings (Gen. 4:2-5)	Offered a better sacrifice than did Cain (4a)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Offer what God requires</li> <li>• Worship in humility</li> </ul>
<b><i>Enoch</i></b> (5)	People of his age did not seek to please God	Pleased God in his lifestyle of holiness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Please God (cf. Eph. 5:17)</li> <li>• Faith goes against the flow</li> </ul>
<b><i>Noah</i></b> (7)	Had to heed God's warning of a worldwide flood with no sign of rain	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Built the ark despite ridicule</li> <li>• Believed it would rain</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Endure patiently (120 years to build the ark!)</li> <li>• Do God's "silly" will despite opposition</li> </ul>
<b><i>Abraham</i></b> (8-12, 13-19)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No land</li> <li>• No son, then must sacrifice him (Gen. 22)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Moved to an unknown land</li> <li>• Wife conceived</li> <li>• Gave his best</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Don't live in the past</li> <li>• Trust God's renewal ability</li> <li>• Be generous like Abraham</li> </ul>
<b><i>Isaac</i></b> (20)	Trust God to bless both Jacob & Esau (Gen. 27:27-29)	Went against tradition by blessing both boys	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Trust God's Word over tradition</li> </ul>
<b><i>Jacob</i></b> (21)	Could have asked, "Should I reveal the future of each son?"	Blessed every son and worshiped God outside of Canaan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Faith does the unpleasant things</li> <li>• Faith looks to the future with hope</li> </ul>
<b><i>Joseph</i></b> (22)	Could have felt that Israel would remain in Egypt forever	Commanded, "Bury me in Canaan" (Gen. 50:25)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Faith acts now based on God's promises yet unfulfilled</li> </ul>
<b><i>Moses' Parents</i></b> (23)	Obey Pharaoh (Exod. 1:22) or save their son's life (Exod. 2:1-4)?	Trusted that God would protect a baby floating in the Nile	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Trust in God's protection often is risky, humanly speaking</li> </ul>
<b><i>Moses</i></b> (24-28)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Grasp of power &amp; materialism</li> <li>• Leave Egypt?</li> <li>• Will blood on the door save?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chose slavery</li> <li>• Led the Exodus</li> <li>• Kept Passover</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reject worldly pleasures for difficulties that have God's blessing</li> </ul>

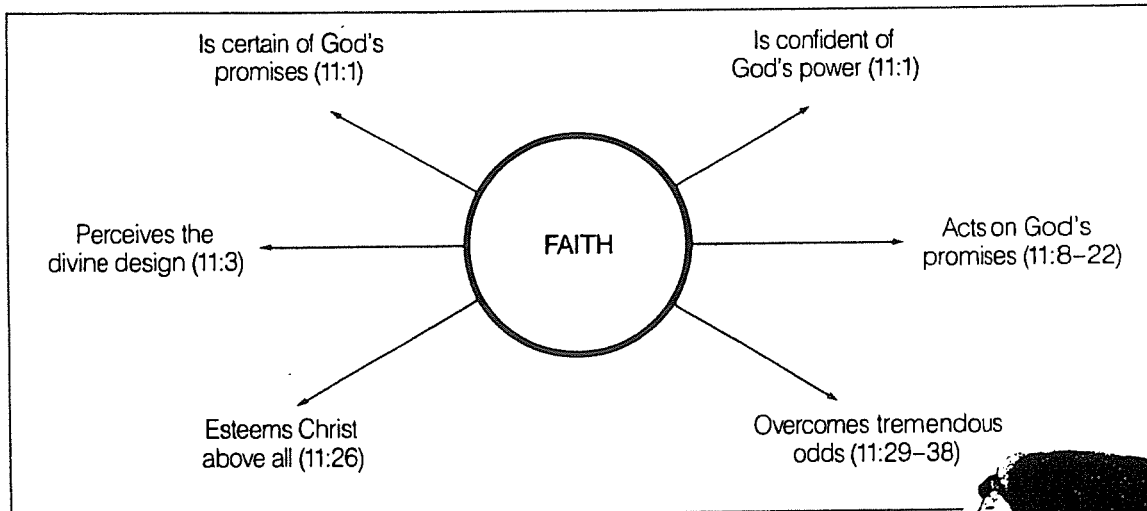
<b>Hero</b>	<b>Challenge</b>	<b>Demonstration</b>	<b>Endurance &amp; Faith Lessons</b>
Israel at the Red Sea (29)	Trapped by Pharaoh & water (Exod. 14:9)	Crossed between walls of water (Exod. 14:21-22)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Look up when trapped</li> <li>• Get God's bearings</li> <li>• March in His will</li> </ul>
Israel at Jericho (30)	Non-military plan on Canaan's first city (Josh. 6:1-5)	Circled & shouted (Josh. 6:6-16)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Obey God's non-conventional strategies</li> </ul>
Rahab (31)	Hide spies or not (Josh. 2:1-3)?	Hid them and helped them escape (Josh. 2:4-16)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Show individual faith when the group won't believe</li> </ul>
Gideon (32)	From a wimpy clan & had his doubts (Judg. 6:11-22)	Attacked when vastly outnumbered (Judg. 7:19-21)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• God equips</li> <li>• Move with the movers</li> <li>• Grow in faith</li> </ul>
Barak (32)	Fight foot soldiers against chariots (Judg. 4:13)	Overcame doubts to attack a stronger army (Judg. 4:14f.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Growth in faith eventually helps us stand alone</li> </ul>
Samson (32)	Militarily superior Philistines (Judg. 13-16)	Beat them despite lust and vengeful attitude	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Be dedicated for God's service</li> <li>• Overcome your biggest weakness</li> </ul>
Jephthah (32)	Illegitimate child who was thrown out (Judg. 10:11)	Returned to his people as a judge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conquer rejection by faith</li> <li>• God is bigger than our biggest failure</li> </ul>
David (32)	Goliath vs. David's wimpy size (1 Sam. 17)	Defeated him without a sword	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The bigger they are, the harder they fall</li> </ul>
Prophets (32)	Want godly wife Don't get involved Protect your wife	Hosea: loyal to harlot Amos: confronted sin Ezekiel: wife died	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Obedience supercedes comfort</li> <li>• Stand alone</li> <li>• Bear ministry sacrifices</li> </ul>
Women with resurrected relatives (35)	Elijah had to help widow & dead son (1 Kings 17:8-20)	Raised the boy to life (1 Kings 17:21-24)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Regular people can do great things by faith (cf. James 5:17)</li> </ul>
Persecuted (36)	Keep believing amidst trials (2 Tim. 3:12)	Rejoicing in suffering (James 1:2)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Faith is always optimistic</li> </ul>
Martyrs (37a)	Life itself is the dearest possession to most people	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stephen martyred (Acts 7)</li> <li>• Rome's martyrs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• True faith is faithful to death</li> </ul>
Mistreated (37b-38)	Jeremiah: temptation to preach only positive things to avoid persecution	Kept preaching truth despite being deemed "negative" preaching (Jer. 32:3, 28, 36)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Faithful obedience is often persecuted (Jer. 32:2)</li> <li>• Don't abandon convictions or truth when life gets difficult</li> </ul>

# Christ's Superiority

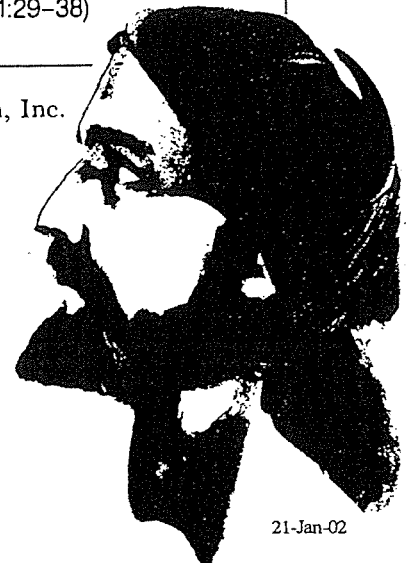
Jesus Is Greater Than the Prophets 1:1-3 Seven character affirmations:	Jesus Is Greater Than the Angels 1:4-14 Seven Scripture quotations:
Heir of all things (v. 2) Creator (v. 2) Manifestation of God's Being (v. 3) Perfect representation of God (v. 3) Sustainer of all things (v. 3) Savior (v. 3) Exalted Lord (v. 3)	Psalm 2:7 (v. 5) 2 Samuel 7:14 (v. 3) Deuteronomy 32:43 or Psalm 97:7 (v. 6) Psalm 104:4 (v. 7) Psalm 45:6, 7 (vv. 8, 9) Psalm 102:25-27 (vv. 10-12) Psalm 110:1 (v. 13)

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## How Faith Works



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## OT Quotes in Hebrews

*Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology*

Theme	OT Source	Hebrews
1. The divine nature and appointment of the Son	Ps 2:7	1:5; 5:5
2. The human nature and identification of the Son	Ps 8:4-6	2:6-8
3. Warning against spiritual regression ("Today... enter his rest")	Ps 95-7-11	3-7-11
4. The eternal nature and office of the Son	Ps 110:4	5:6; 7:17,21
5. A new covenant providing the sanction for Jesus' priesthood and sacrifice	Jer 31:31-34	8:7-12 10:15-17
6. A willing self-offering marking the ultimate superiority of Jesus' redemptive achievement	Ps 40:6-8	10:5-7
7. Exhortation to persevere by remaining faithful	Hab 2:3-4	10:37-38
8. Exhortation to persevere under spiritual discipline	Prov 3:11-12	12:5-6
9. The final shaking of all things	Hag 2:6	12:26
10. Exhortation to be content	Deut 31:6 Ps 118:6-7	13:5-6

# Enduring God's Discipline

Hebrews 12:1-13

Background: The author has already provided many examples of faithful endurance (Heb. 11).

## How can we endure in faith (12:1-3)?

- ◆ *Remember the many faithful believers before us who cheer us on (1a).*
- ◆ *Rid yourself of obstacles to faith (1b-c).*
  - Even good things that aren't sin must be eliminated (1b).
  - Sin must be put away as well (1c).
- ◆ *Run toward Jesus as He is the best example of faithful endurance (2-3).*

But when we get off track (as the Hebrews did) God disciplines us.

Examples of God's discipline...

## What results from enduring God's discipline in faith (12:4-13)?

- ◆ *Realization that we are God's sons results from enduring God's discipline (4-9).*
- ◆ *Righteousness results from enduring God's discipline (10-11).*
- ◆ *Reassurance and spiritual strength results from enduring God's discipline (12-13).*

## Wrap-Up

- ◆ *Is the Lord disciplining you? How?*
- ◆ *How are you responding?*
- ◆ *How should you respond?*

## The Better Covenant Warns Us Not to Turn Back

*The Warning of Hebrews 12:18-29*

The author of Hebrews has one final warning to Hebrew Christians tempted to turn back to Judaism. By contrasting the first covenant with the second, he hopes they will see how inviting this new covenant is in comparison. These two covenants are figuratively depicted as two mountains:

	<b>Mt. Sinai</b>	<b>Mt. Zion</b>
<b>Reality</b>	“You have not come to...” (18a)	“You have come to...” (22a) as if heaven was a present reality
<b>Nature</b>	Mountain of fire and darkness (18b)	City of perfection (22b; cf. 11:10, 16; 13:14)
<b>Mood</b>	Gloom (18)	Joy (22)
<b>Privileges</b>	Feared even touching Sinai (20)	Names recorded in heaven in privileged status (= “firstborn,” 23)
<b>Location</b>	Earth (25-26; cf. Exod. 19:10-25)	Heaven (22, 25)
<b>Covenant</b>	Old/Mosaic (21)	New (24)
<b>Atoning Blood</b>	None was yet shed (20)	Perfect atonement (24)
<b>Participants</b>	Jews who could not escape living under the law (25)	God (21, 23b) Angels (22) Church (23a) OT saints (23c) Jesus (24)
<b>Listening</b>	Asked not to hear God (19b)	Should listen to God speaking (25)
<b>Stability</b>	Easily shaken (26-27a)	Cannot be shaken (27b-28)
<b>Application</b>	Never turn back to your past religion (25)	Press on to your future reward with thanks and worship (28b-29)

## Contrasting the Abrahamic & Mosaic Covenants

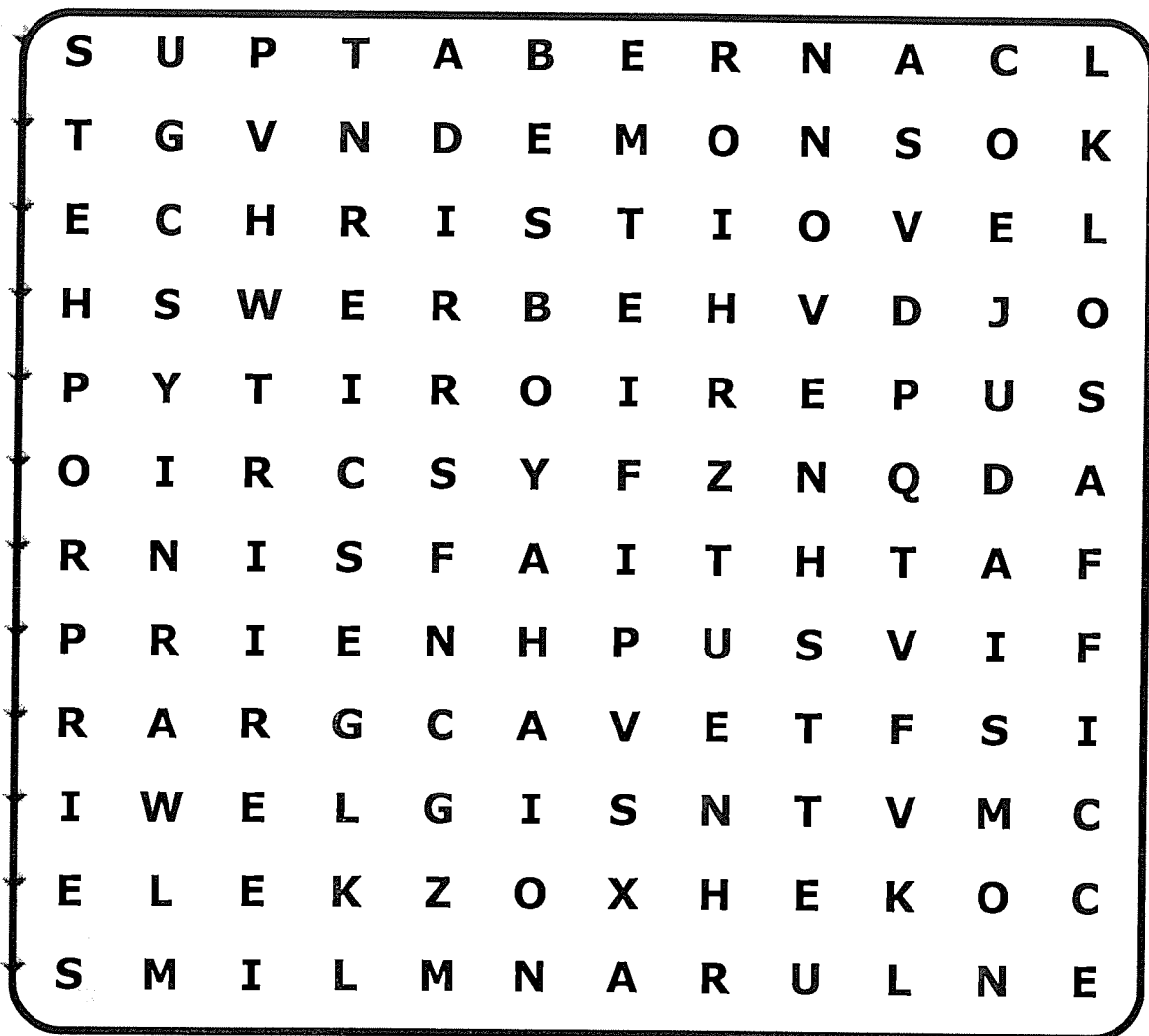
Distinguishing these covenants provides a foundation for interpreting the OT and NT, especially the prophets as they look back on covenants with both Abraham (e.g., Ezek. 36–37; OTS, 508) and Moses (e.g., Lam. 1:3; OTS, 496). Knowing the conditional and temporal nature of the Law prevents misapplying obsolete commands to the Church today (e.g., Sabbath, charging interest to believers, tithing). Also, God's faithfulness to sinners is clear due to Abraham.

	<b>Abrahamic Covenant</b>	<b>Mosaic Covenant</b>
<i>Recipient (Date &amp; Place)</i>	Abraham as mediator for all nations 2060 BC, Ur of the Chaldees	Moses as mediator for Israel 1445 BC, Mount Sinai
<i>Scripture</i>	Genesis 12:1-3 (but formalized into a covenant in Genesis 15)	Exodus 20—31 is the heart of the covenant
<i>Between God &amp;</i>	A person (for a future nation)	A nation
<i>Scope</i>	Universal ("all peoples will be blessed through you")	Only Israel received the Law (Deut. 4:8; Ps. 147:20)
<i>Character &amp; Significance</i>	Grace (promises) —primary (what God will do)	Works (laws) —secondary (how God will do it)
<i>Promises</i>	Land, seed, and blessing (without indication of time of fulfillment)	Blessing for obedience and cursing for disobedience (Lev. 26; Deut. 28)
<i>Conditions</i>	Unconditional: "I will..."	Conditional: "If you will...then I will..."
<i>Participation</i>	Abraham asleep (Gen. 15:17)	Israel agreed to obey (Exod. 19:8)
<i>Analogy</i>	Father to son (royal grant)	Suzerain (superior king) to vassal (servant nation)
<i>Purpose</i>	Clarified Israel's blessings in general terms to motivate the nation towards righteousness by faith in God's provision of a wonderful future (Gen. 12:1; 15:1, 6)	Clarified how Israel could be blessed in the Abrahamic Covenant as soon and full as possible; didn't restate or expand the Abrahamic Covenant but revealed sin (Rom. 5:20; Gal. 3:19, 24)
<i>Form</i>	Oral (no written stipulations)	Written on tablets of stone & Pentateuch
<i>Emphasis</i>	Blessing over discipline/judgment (five "blessings" in Gen. 12:1-3)	Judgment/discipline over blessing (contrast Deut. 28:1-14 & vv. 15-68)
<i>Christology</i>	Ultimate seed (Gen. 12:3)	Typified in tabernacle (Heb. 8–10)
<i>Sign</i>	Circumcision (Gen. 17:11)	Sabbath (Exod. 31:13, 17)
<i>End</i>	Never been terminated (deemed an eternal covenant in Gen. 17:8)	Ended at Christ's death (Rom. 7:6; 10:4; 2 Cor. 3:7-11; Gal. 5:1; Heb. 7:11-12)

While most of the above is original, some is based on Thomas L. Constable, "A Theology of Joshua, Judges, and Ruth," in *A Theology of the Old Testament*, ed. Roy B. Zuck (Chicago: Moody, 1991), 100-101.



# BRAIN TWISTER



1. Keyword for Hebrews
2. Hebrews author shows the superiority of \_\_\_\_\_ as high priest
3. Hebrews author shows the superiority of Christianity over \_\_\_\_\_
4. Hebrews has been called the \_\_\_\_\_ gospel
5. Hebrews was written to prevent readers from desertion of the \_\_\_\_\_
6. King of Salem & Priest of the Most High
7. Christ is superior in his person to p\_\_\_\_\_, a\_\_\_\_\_ & M\_\_\_\_\_
8. The 'BETTER' book

## Why Attend Church?

### Introduction

“Oh, I had to work last Sunday,” he responded when asked why he didn’t attend church. Sure, he was a Christian—but he also had to work for a living. Yet skipping worship this one time soon became two Sundays missed in a row and eventually a new habit was born—the pattern of trying to go it alone in the Christian life. Going it “alone” led to loneliness, so he rarely spoke the name of Christ or even referred to himself as a Christian. A new “me and them” language developed. He was sliding down on the slippery slope.

The problem is not new. Some Jewish Christians in Israel only about 30 years after Christ also had begun to withdraw from public worship with believers. Maybe they had to work that day too. Maybe it was too inconvenient to get up early to attend services before heading off to work. Maybe they were “just too tired” to fellowship in services after work on Sunday evenings. They probably still did attend services—but only those of other Jews who had not trusted in Christ as Messiah. We don’t know. We just know that they had begun to withdraw from being with true believers.

A concerned Christian leader had to do something about this. He had to write them a letter. We call his letter the “Book of Hebrews.” After ten chapters of impassioned pleas he wrote:

*“Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing—and all the more as you see the Day approaching” (Heb. 10:25).*

### So Why Attend Church?

- A. Christ is the Better Way: Huge crowds followed Christ in his ministry, but after he made some disturbing statements “many of his disciples turned back and no longer followed him” (John 6:66). When he asked the Twelve whether they also would leave, Peter spoke for them all:

*“Lord, to whom should we go? You alone have the words of eternal life. We believe and know that you are the Holy One of God” (John 6:68).*

So what about *you*? Do *you* have a better way? Do you have *another* way for people to attain eternal life? If so, follow it! If not, return to Christ. In his letter, the author of Hebrews used the word “better” thirteen times to show his readers that by not attending worship anymore, they were following an inferior way—not the better way of Christ. Since he alone has eternal life, the “second best way” is eternal death!

- B. You should identify with people holding God’s values. It’s no surprise that we all become like those we hang around.

*“Do not be deceived: “Bad company corrupts good morals” (15:33).*

- C. You need exposure to God’s Word. Sure, you can study the Bible on your own. However, the sense of accountability is heightened when you study with others as the early church did:

*“All the believers devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching” (Acts 2:42).*

- D. You will renew your relationship with Christ. You are not the only person who loves Christ. When you are around others who fellowship with him, you learn to deepen in that love.
- E. You show humility. Attending church is an admission that you cannot “go it alone.” Pride is the first and deadliest sin.
- F. You broaden your perspective. Believers who forsake commitment to a body of believers end up critical and negative.
- G. You need not defend yourself any more. Once you get back into a fellowship then you won’t have to make them all hypocrites to keep from feeling guilty.
- H. You get your eyes off yourself. The person who neglects ministry to other believers is basically self-focused. Change your perspective into one that looks out for others:

“<sup>3</sup> Don’t be selfish; don’t try to impress others. Be humble, thinking of others as better than yourselves. <sup>4</sup> Don’t look out only for your own interests, but take an interest in others, too” (Phil 2:3-4).

- I. You obey God. Face it. You know that God tells you, “Do not forsake assembling with others” (Heb. 10:24). So that disobeying God and start obeying Him—today!

### Summary of Contrasts Between Believers Attending Church and Those Who Neglect Church

<i>Issues</i>	<i>Attenders</i>	<i>Slackers</i>
<i>Quality</i>	Follow the better way (Jn 6:68)	Follow an inferior substitute
<i>Identification</i>	With people holding God’s values	With people holding worldly priorities
<i>Exposure to Word</i>	Maintained	Lacking
<i>Relation to Christ</i>	Renew their first love	Forsake their first love
<i>Relation to Others</i>	Humility by needing them	Pride by “going it alone”
<i>Typical spirit</i>	Open minded to new patterns	Critical of others
<i>Defense for actions</i>	“I need to be accountable”	“People at church are hypocrites”
<i>Chances to serve</i>	“I attend to help others”	“I don’t want to help other believers”
<i>Obedience</i>	Obey Hebrews 10:24-25	Disobey Hebrews 10:24-25

### Do You Agree or Disagree?

To explore your own ideas on this vital subject, please mark as A, U, or D beside each statement below to show whether you Agree, are Unsure, or Disagree with the teaching.

- A. It’s a sin to lose the habit of regular fellowship with other believers.
- B. If it’s hard to find the right church for you, God wants you to give up.
- C. Sometimes God doesn’t allow us to find fellowship because He wants us to begin a new one.

### Conclusion

It’s amazing how many Christians rationalize not going to church. Don’t join their critical ranks!

# James

Faith is Revealed through Works						
Rejoices in Difficulty	Obeys the Word	Avoids Favoritism	Produces Works	Speaks Wisely	Produces Humility	Triumphs
1:1-18	1:19-27	2:1-13	2:14-26	3	4:1—5:6	5:7-20
Salutation Trials Temptations	Listening Anger Obedience Speech Compassion Purity	Discrimination Materialism Egalitarianism	Meeting Needs Validation	Influence Untamable Use Wisdom	Conflict Judging Presumption	Patience Prayer Confrontation
Jerusalem						
AD 44-47						

**Key Word:** Works

**Key Verse:** “Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says” (James 1:22).

**Summary Statement:** James exhorts early Jewish believers throughout the Roman Empire that Christian *faith is shown through works* that they might replace their *hypocrisy* with good deeds in maturity and holiness.

**Application:**

What specific works noted in the letter of James do you consistently do that reveals your calling as a Christian?

Others should see *works* resulting from our belief in Christ (James 2:14-26; cf. 1 John 2:3-6, 9-11, 18-19, 24-25; 3:24; 4:20; etc.).

# James

## Introduction

I. **Title** The Greek title, “Of James” (Ἰακώβου *Jacobou*), is a shortened form of the early title, “Epistle of James” (Ἰακώβου Ἐπιστολή *Jacobou Epistole*). *Jacobos* (Ἰακώβος; BAGD 367b, d) is the Greek form of the Hebrew name Jacob (יַעֲקֹב).

## II. Authorship

A. **External Evidence:** The identity of the author in James 1:1 has been proposed as any of four different men named “James” in the New Testament.

1. Early church tradition ascribes the letter to James the Just (who was not an apostle) even though two other men called “James” were apostles. Origen, Eusebius, Cyril of Jerusalem, Athanasius, Augustine, and many other early writers upheld authorship by James the Just (Blue, *BKC*, 2:816).
2. Many object to the traditional view by claiming that the author is pseudonymous (Kümmel, 291) or one of the other men named “James” in the New Testament (i.e., James the son of Alphaeus, James the son of Zebedee, or James the father of Judas “not Iscariot”). Jerome voiced uncertainty over the book and regarded it as published by another in the name of James, and he did cite from it as from Scripture (Guthrie, 737). Moffatt, Calvin, Luther and Erasmus attributed it to another “James” due to internal “evidence” (Davids, 2, 6).

B. **Internal Evidence:** The traditional view of 1:1 is that the author is James the Just, the half-brother of Jesus who believed in Christ at His resurrection (1 Cor. 15:7) and soon led the Jerusalem church (Acts 12:17; 21:18; Gal. 1:19). Information derived from the book itself supports this conclusion:

1. The simple introduction shows that the author thought it not necessary to identify himself by other than “James,” thus indicating that he was a man who was well known to his readers (1:1).
2. James the Just is referred to simply as “James” in Acts 12:17; 15:13; 21:18 and elsewhere (cf. 1 Cor. 15:7; Gal. 2:12).
3. The writer addressed a significant portion of the church (i.e., the twelve tribes) in very weighty tones, indicating his authoritative position in the church (Davids, 6).
4. The letter corresponds to the language used by James the Just from Luke's record (James 2:7 with Acts 15:17; cf. Guthrie, 742).
5. A strong Semitic flavor is evident in its five Old Testament quotes (1:11; 2:8, 11, 23; 4:6), numerous indirect allusions (1:10; 2:21, 23, 25; 3:9; 4:6; 5:2, 11, 17, 18), and traces of Hebrew idioms behind the Greek forms of language (Guthrie, 741).

Some claim that a pseudonymous man authored the epistle because of the superior Greek style, the lack of claim to be Christ's brother, the absence of references to the crucifixion or resurrection, and a supposed literary dependence upon 1 Corinthians, Galatians, Romans, and 1 Peter (Guthrie, 747-753). However, the “pseudonymous theory” must be deemed unacceptable on several grounds:

1. Ascribing the author to a forger denies the explicit statement that one named “James” wrote the epistle and thus cannot be reconciled with the divine inspiration of the book. One who accepts the doctrine of inerrancy must accept that the author was indeed one called “James.”

2. If someone wrote in James' name at the end of the first century as critical scholarship claims (e.g., Kümmel, 291), this would be years after his death. Certainly the church would wonder where the epistle had been for so many years.
  3. All three other men named "James" lacked the authority this epistle demands (Hiebert, 3:38-44):
    - a. James the son of Alphaeus (James the younger) appears only in the lists of the twelve (Matt. 10:3; 27:56; Mark 3:18; 15:40) and thus was not a key figure in the Church.
    - b. James the father of Judas "not Iscariot" (Luke 6:16) also is unknown except for the fact that he was the father of one of the twelve.
    - c. James the son of Zebedee was beheaded under Herod Agrippa I in AD 44 (Acts 12:2), thus not attaining the special leadership position this epistle requires.
  4. The accusation that the epistle lacks reference to the crucifixion or resurrection ignores the fact that the emphasis of the epistle is ethical, not doctrinal.
  5. Since James knew of Paul's and Peter's oral teaching, the supposed literary dependence upon their writings is speculative. No valid reason exists to disprove that James could have penned his epistle before they wrote theirs.
- C. Conclusion: Both the external and the internal evidence show James the Just as author.

### III. Circumstances

- A. Date: Traditional options for dating James fall into two early periods: AD 40-49 or AD 50-62 (Davids, 2; Guthrie, 761-764; Hiebert, 52-53).
1. External evidence:
    - a. James the Just presided as leader of the Jerusalem church from AD 40 until his martyrdom in AD 62 (Davids, 2; Guthrie, 761).
    - b. James seems to be quoted by *1 Clement* and *The Shepherd of Hermas*, and possibly was used by Paul and Peter (1 Peter 1:1 with James 1:1, etc.; Guthrie, 751-753, 763).
  2. Internal evidence:
    - a. Absence of reference to the fall of Jerusalem (AD 70) and the Jewish-Gentile controversy (AD 49) support a date before AD 49.
    - b. The epistle shows primitive church organization (3:1; 5:14, 15), a Jewish tone (1:11; 2:8, 11, 23; 4:6), poverty within the church (1:27—2:13), no references to Gentiles in the church (2:2) and persecution of Jewish Christians (1:2ff.). This supports a date before AD 49.
    - c. James' use of the word "justify" (2:21, 24, 25) had not yet acquired the technical sense of the Pauline usage (Rom. 3:20, 24, 28; Gal. 2:16, 17).
  3. Conclusion: Harnack, Julicher, and the Tübingen School date the epistle in the late second century due to its "apparent synthesis of Jewish Christian and Pauline concepts" (Davids, 3). Dibelius supports a date between AD 80-130 due to a supposed usage of the letter by the author of Jude (Dibelius, 45). However, both the external and internal evidence support a date earlier than AD 62. (See the helpful chart of the dating held by 63 scholars in Davids, 4.) The epistle probably dates before AD 46, or at least before AD 49 (Hiebert, 53). This would make it the earliest epistle in the New Testament. This study follows Hoehner's date of 44-47.

B. Origin/Recipients: The Book of James specifies its readers as “the twelve tribes who are dispersed abroad” (1:1). The book's origin is not specifically stated, but the traditional view is that James the Just wrote a general epistle from Jerusalem to the Jewish Christians scattered throughout the Roman Empire. Good support exists for this view:

1. External evidence: James died in Jerusalem in AD 62 (*Jos. Ant.* 20.9.1; cf. Whiston, 4:140).
2. Internal evidence (Guthrie, 758-761; Davids, 13ff.):
  - a. The “twelve tribes in the dispersion” was a technical (not a metaphorical) term which described Jews who lived outside of Palestine (Guthrie, 759).
  - b. The book has an obviously Jewish flavor (1:11, 18; 2: 8, 11, 21, 23; 3:6; 4:6). The recipients' meeting place was a synagogue (2:2).
  - c. The recipients were believers since they are deemed “brethren” (1:2, 16, 19; 2:1, 5, 14; 3:1, 10, 12; 4:11; 5:7, 9, 10, 12, 19) holding to “the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ” (2:1).

However, an alternative to the traditional view says the letter addresses “Christians as the true Israel, which lives on earth as sojourners, and has its home in heaven” (Kümmel, 287).

1. External evidence regarding this view of origin or destination is not cited by Kümmel except for so-called “parallel passages” (cf. Gal. 6:16; Phil. 3:3; 1 Peter 1:1, 17; 2:11; Rev. 7:4; 14:1).
2. Internal evidence (all from Kümmel, 287):
  - a. The reference to “the twelve tribes in the dispersion” is ambiguous and viewing the recipients only as Jewish Christians imposes too narrow a meaning.
  - b. The epistle is lacking any characteristic of a missionary writing.
  - c. The letter nowhere indicates that a Christian is speaking to Jews.
  - d. The impersonal attitude and lack of epistolary conclusion give evidence that it was not an actual letter, but rather “of an essay in epistolary form, which is directed to a wide circle of readers, not to be sharply defined.”
3. Conclusion: The traditional view also agrees that the letter is addressed to a wide readership, but the technical sense of James 1:1 reveals this readership to be Jews. Internal evidence conclusively argues for Jewish recipients and Kümmel's view has no external support (the “parallel passages” are taken out of context and thus do not distinguish Israel and the Church). These reasons indicate that the epistle was indeed written from Jerusalem to Christian Jews outside of Palestine (Guthrie, 761).

Therefore, both the internal and external evidence indicate that James wrote from Jerusalem to Jewish Christians living outside of Palestine. It may be that Peter wrote to Jewish Christians in the West (1 Peter 1:1) whereas James addressed Jewish Christians in the Eastern Empire, in Babylon and Mesopotamia (Jones, 319; Blue, *BKC*, 2:816). Others believe these Jewish congregations were in Syria (Hiebert, 50; cf. Acts 11:19).

C. Occasion: This epistle does not explicitly state its purpose, but the internal evidence reveals much about the recipients to help us discern the occasion. The readers apparently met regularly in the synagogue (2:2) where the rich among them (1:10) exploited (2:1-13) the poor within the congregation (1:9; 5:1-6). This led to complaining (4:11-12; 5:9-10) and quarreling against one another (4:1-3). The recipients also evidenced a worldly (4:4-10) and materialistic outlook (4:13-17) that lacked compassion (2:15-16), so James wrote to show that faith shown through good deeds justifies its validity before men (2:14-26).

These deplorable conditions in the church prompted James to write a general epistle as a plea for vital Christianity. The purpose is not a doctrinal but an ethical (practical) treatise to force the believers to examine whether their attitudes and actions demonstrate the reality of their faith in Christ. Its key concepts may be summarized in the exhortation to “be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves” (1:22) as well as the declaration that “faith without works is useless” (2:20b).

#### IV. Characteristics

A. The Letter of James is very unique viewed from a literary standpoint:

1. Structure: The book is difficult to outline in that it consists of several pithy sayings. For this reason it has been called “The Proverbs of the New Testament.” A typical critical view says, “Even though there may be many good sayings in it, it is unorganized and Jewish, and therefore not an apostolic writing” (Kümmel, 285).

2. Emphases

a. *Ethical Emphasis*. Luther called James “a right strawy epistle in comparison with [Paul’s Epistles], for it has no evangelical manner about it.” He was unimpressed with the epistle’s lack of emphasis on doctrinal teaching and said it conflicted with the Pauline epistles by supporting the Papist view of justification by works (Hiebert, 3:34-35; Kümmel, 285). While the epistle contains little formal theology, Luther’s criticism is unjustified in that it does contain several doctrinal statements (1:12-13, 17-18; 2:1, 10-13, 19; 3:9; 4:5; 5:7-9; *TTTB*, 466). Its ethical emphasis and pastoral admonition is evident in that James uses imperative verbs more frequently than any other NT book (Carson, *Intro. to the NT*, 415). In its short 108 verses there are more than 50 direct commands!

b. *Jewish Emphasis*. A strong Semitic flavor is evident in its five Old Testament quotes (1:11; 2:8, 11, 23; 4:6), numerous indirect allusions (e.g., 1:10; 2:21, 23, 25; 3:9; 4:6; 5:2, 11, 17, 18), and traces of Hebrew idioms behind the Greek forms of language (Guthrie, 741).

c. *Emphasis on the Sermon on the Mount*. The book contains many similarities with the teaching of Jesus (Guthrie, 743-744), and the Sermon on the Mount (Matt. 5—7) in particular (Blue, *BKC*, 2:818). See these notes, 274a.

d. *Emphasis on Nature*. This short epistle illustrates its truths with no less than 30 references to nature (Blue, *BKC*, 2:817).

e. *Excellent Greek*. DeWette felt that James the Lord’s brother could not pen such superior Greek and thus doubted the letter’s authenticity (Kümmel, 285). However, this neglects the fact that James had been leading the Jerusalem church for 10-20 years and had not been a carpenter for some time. It also assumes the false belief that carpenters were uneducated.

3. Unity: James has been accused of lacking “continuity of thought” (Dibelius, 1), but this is unwarranted. Each of the five chapters call for maturity and holiness of life in trials, service, speech, submission, and sharing, respectively.

B. The interpretation of the “faith without works” section (2:14-26) has been much debated, many (e.g., Luther) supposing that it conflicts with the Pauline teaching of justification by faith (cf. Rom. 3:28). Some even advocate that Paul wrote a polemic against James or vice-versa (Kümmel, 286), but these differences are best understood by two distinct meanings of “justification.” The Pauline concept of justification refers to one’s relationship with God whereas James’ earlier meaning of justification refers to one’s relationship with man. The contrasts can be charted in this manner:



### Romans vs. James on Justification

	<u>Romans</u>	<u>James</u>
Author:	Paul	James
Date:	AD 56	AD 44-48
Justification is a	technical term	non-technical term
Justification is before	God (vertical)	Man (horizontal)
The faith is	at beginning of salvation	after salvation
The emphasis is upon	faith	works

See the helpful article by Robert V. Rakestraw, "James 2:14-26: Does James Contradict the Pauline Soteriology?" *Criswell Theological Review* 1 (Fall 1986): 31-50; cf. review by Mark L. Bailey in *Bib Sac* 144 (April-June 1987): 220-221.

- C. The early church debated the canonicity of James (especially the Western Church) until it was universally recognized following the third Council of Carthage in AD 397 (Hiebert, 3:33).
1. Early external evidence is inconsistent concerning the authority of the Epistle. Origen, the first to mention the book, clearly recognized James as Scripture and the work is quoted or alluded to by Clement (*ca.* 30-100), Hermas (*ca.* 110-140), and Irenaeus (*ca.* 140-203). However, the writing is omitted in the following canons: Muratorian, Marcion, Syriac and African. Eusebius lists it in his disputed books (Antilegomena) but cites the work as genuine and claims that it had "been publicly used with the rest in most of the churches" (Guthrie, 737).
  2. Several reasons existed for this hesitancy to accept James as authentic (Hiebert, 3:32):
    - a) The Epistle remained unknown to many early churches, having been written from Jerusalem to Jews of the East Dispersion without as wide an appeal as Paul's epistles (Guthrie, 739).
    - b) The authorship was debated as to whether the author was an apostle or not.
    - c) It seemed to contradict Paul's teaching.
  3. Conclusion: Although historically the epistle was in question, this arose primarily from uncertainty of its author, not of its authenticity (Hiebert, 3:36). Both internal and external evidence uphold the fourth century decision to regard James as a genuine apostolic epistle worthy of its place in the New Testament canon.

### Argument

Because of its many subjects, the Epistle of James is very difficult to outline. Yet there can be no question about its theme: living faith is revealed through active works.

These works include a joyful attitude during trials and temptations (1:1-18), obedience to God's Word (1:19-27), impartiality without judging social status (2:1-13), good deeds in general (2:14-26), wise control of one's tongue (ch. 3), humility rather than worldliness (4:1-5:6), and finally, patient and prayerful suffering (5:7-20). Topics in the letter change abruptly, but are introduced with the phrase "my brothers" (1:2, 19; 2:1, 14; 3:1; 4:11; 5:7, 19), the words "now listen" (4:13; 5:1), or with a question (4:1; 5:13). James' main concern is that his readers put away their hypocritical, double-minded (1:8; 3:10) dispositions in order to grow in maturity and holiness. In effect he says, "If you *say* you believe in Christ, then *act* like it!"

## Synthesis

### Faith revealed through works

<b>1:1-18</b>	<b>Rejoices in difficulty</b>
1:1	Salutation
1:2-12	Trials
1:13-18	Temptations
<b>1:19-27</b>	<b>Obeys the Word</b>
1:19-25	Listening, anger, obedience
1:26-27	Speech, compassion, purity
<b>2:1-13</b>	<b>Avoids favoritism</b>
2:1-4	Doesn't discriminate
2:5-7	Recognizes transience of wealth
2:8-13	Recognizes all equal
<b>2:14-26</b>	<b>Produces works</b>
2:14-17	Meets needs
2:18-26	Validates itself before men
<b>3</b>	<b>Speaks wisely</b>
3:1-6	Recognizes influence of tongue
3:7-8	Recognizes tongue as untamable
3:9-12	Uses tongue for good, not evil
3:13-18	Produces wisdom for proper speech
<b>4:1—5:6</b>	<b>Produces humility</b>
4:1-12	Not conflict/judging
4:13—5:6	Not presumption of the future
<b>5:7-20</b>	<b>Triumphs</b>
5:7-12	in patient suffering
5:13-18	in believing prayer
5:19-20	in loving confrontation

## Outline

### Summary Statement for the Book

James exhorts early Jewish believers throughout the Roman Empire that Christian *faith is shown through works* that they might replace their *hypocrisy* with good deeds in maturity and holiness.

- I. (1:1-18) James affirms that faith responds to trials and temptations with joy to encourage his readers to humbly and patiently endure persecution rather than blame God.
  - A. (1:1) James, although the half-brother of Christ, refers to himself simply as God's servant in his greeting to Jewish believers throughout the Roman Empire as an indication of the humility produced by faith that he addresses in the epistle.

**A KEY ISSUE:**

What does genuine faith look like during trials?

When the going gets tough, how can you tell if you have *real* faith?

**How can I persevere with joy during trials?** (*Here's another outline similar to that below...*)

- I. Remember God's *purpose* for trials is to develop Christ's character in you (1:2-4).
- II. Remember to *pray* for wisdom in faith (1:5-8).
- III. Remember your *position* before God (1:9-11).
- IV. Remember God's *promise* of reward (1:12).
- V. Remember to *praise* God for His gifts since temptations come from us—not Him (1:13-18).

B. (1:2-12) Faith tested in trials produces perseverance when it is received joyfully and humbly.

1. (1:2-4) Faith accepts trials with joy because it believes that God allows testing to develop perseverance and maturity (Christ-likeness).
2. (1:5-8) Faith accepts trials with prayer for wisdom from God because He delights in giving wisdom to believers who ask Him in faith.
3. (1:9-11) Faith accepts trials with humility because God's approval is superior to wealth during difficulty.
4. (1:12) Faith accepts trials with hope of reward because God blesses perseverance and love for Him.
5. (1:13-18) Faith accepts trials without blaming God because God gives only good gifts.
  - a) (1:13-15) Faith tested in temptations stems from one's own evil desires.
  - b) (1:16-18) Since only good comes from God, don't blame Him for trials.

**Main Idea of 1:2-18...**

**We can accept trials with joy only by placing our trust in God—not in circumstances.**

- Which do you really want more: smooth sailing or being like Jesus?
- Which do you really want more: physical comforts or spiritual growth?
- Which do you really want more: wealth or godliness?
- What specific character trait of Christ is God trying to build in you now though a trial?

**II. (1:19-27) James affirms that faith responds to God's Word in practical ways.**

There is a danger in listening to many sermons!

Subject: So what practical ways can you let God's Word take root in you?

**A. (1:19-21) Prepare yourself to accept what the Bible says.**

1. (1:19a) Be known as a great listener.
2. (1:19b) Be more eager to listen than to speak.
3. (1:19c-20) Get rid of anger.
4. (1:21) Get rid of anything else that prevents God's Word from taking root in you.

**B. (1:22-25) Don't just listen to the Word—obey it!**

1. (1:22a) Don't just listen to the Bible because listening alone is deceptive.
2. (1:22b) We must obey Scripture rather than just listen to it.
3. (1:23-25) The Bible is a mirror that shows us what we need to change.
  - a) (1:23-24) What not to do—Don't ignore the sin that Scripture reveals in you.
    - (1) (1:23a) When we don't respond to God's Word we quickly forget our sin.
    - (2) (1:23b-24) Men tend to glance into a mirror and then forget to make any improvements.
  - b) (1:25) What to do—Gaze intently at Scripture and get blessed for acting on it.

**C. (1:26-27) Obey the Word in speech, compassion, and purity.**

1. (1:26) If you don't control your speech then you're self-deceived and useless for God.
2. (1:27a) To please God you must care for widows, orphans, and other weak persons.
3. (1:27b) To please God you must keep yourself from getting stained by worldly values.

**DO YOU AGREE?**

1. Our church should have only Singaporeans on certain committees.
2. Men in church leadership should at least be middle class.
3. Our pastor should be an American (or any other specific nationality).
4. It's OK to reserve better seats at church for certain people.
5. American pastors should earn more than Asians with equal experience and roles.

III. (2:1-13) James affirms that faith avoids favoritism to rebuke his Jewish readers who paid special attention to the rich in their assemblies.

A. (2:1) Christians should never favor the rich.

B. (2:2-13) James gives five reasons we should not give preference to those with money:

1. (2:2-4) Favoring the rich *indicates impure motives*.
2. (5-6a) Favoring the rich *insults the poor* whom God honors.
3. (6b-7) Favoring the rich *indulges oppressors* more than the oppressed.
4. (8-11) Favoring the rich *ignores God's command* to love *others* as we love ourselves.
5. (12-13) Favoring the rich *incurs God's judgment*.

**ACTION PLAN:**

1. What area of prejudice do you see in your own life through this study?
2. How can you resolve any problems that your prejudice may have caused?
3. How can you avoid this kind of favoritism in the future?

**IV. (2:14-26) James affirms that faith should produce good deeds to exhort his readers to action that is consistent with their verbal testimony.**

***TO GET YOU THINKING...***

1. Do all true Christians die in fellowship with the Lord? In other words, do you think everyone perseveres in his or her faith or do some fall away? What is the key issue here?
2. Does James contradict Paul on justification by faith?
3. Martin Luther Thought Little of James

A. (2:14-17) Faith should result in works like giving food and clothing to needy believers.

1. (2:14) Faith that has no good deeds cannot preserve the life of anyone (cf. 1:21).
2. (2:15-16) Practical Argument: Words of blessing without real compassion provide no needs.
3. (2:17) Likewise, faith without actions is sterile (“dead”) in helping anyone.

B. (2:18-26) Faith shown through good deeds justifies its validity before men.

1. (2:18-19) Rational Argument: Genuine faith is seen in actions whereas intellectual faith in one God is no better than that of demons.
2. (2:20-25) Biblical Argument: Two OT examples prove that faith is seen in works.
  - a) (2:20-24) Abraham showed his faith by offering Isaac on the altar.
    - (1) (2:20-23) Abraham’s near sacrifice of Isaac proved is faith genuine.
    - (2) (2:24) Christians show their faith as valid before men by their works since faith alone cannot otherwise be seen.
  - b) (2:25-26) Rahab showed her faith by protecting Israel’s spies, since faith apart from works is not evidenced to others.

**DO YOU AGREE?**

On your own circle "A" if you Agree, "U" if you are Unsure, or "D" if you Disagree with each statement:

- A U D 1. All speech is good or bad but never simply neutral
- A U D 2. There can be such a thing as a "white lie" (a lie told for good to result from it)
- A U D 3. A person's tongue will always reveal whether that person is a Christian
- A U D 4. A mature believer will eventually learn to control his or her tongue

Now that you've finished discuss your answers with someone near you, OK?

**V. (Ch. 3) James affirms that faith controls one's speech to motivate his audience to wise use of the tongue for good rather than evil purposes.**

- A. (3:1-6) Faith recognizes that the tongue is small but tremendously influential.
1. (3:1) No one should be eager to be a teacher because teachers will be judged more strictly due to their greater influence over others.
  2. (3:2) Speech is so influential that if someone had perfect speech (which no one does) then he would also have perfect control over his whole body.
  3. (3:3-4) Both horse and ship are controlled for good by very small objects—bit and rudder.
  4. (3:5-6) Both body and forest fire are controlled for bad by small objects—tongue and spark.
- B. (3:7-8) Faith recognizes that everything can be tamed but the tongue.
1. (3:7) All living creatures can be tamed by man.
  2. (3:8) However, no one can tame his speech since it is evil and poisonous to others.
- C. (3:9-12) Faith uses the tongue for good rather than evil purposes.
1. (3:9-10) Every tongue both praises God and curses men even though it should be consistent.
  2. (3:11-12) As neither springs nor trees can produce water or fruit inconsistent with their source, so the tongue only reveals what is within one's heart.
- D. (3:13-18) Faith produces wisdom that is necessary for proper speech.
1. (3:13) God's wisdom is shown in a humility that benefits others.
  2. (3:14-16) Worldly wisdom is shown in pride and envy that hurts others.
  3. (3:17-18) God's wisdom is pure and peace-loving so that it benefits relationships.

## Why Do We Fight?

### **DO YOU AGREE?**

On your own circle "A" if you Agree, "U" if you are Unsure, or "D" if you Disagree with each statement:

- A   U   D   1. The root cause of all sin is pride
  
- A   U   D   2. If two persons are truly humble, they will not argue
  
- A   U   D   3. Judging is an opinion that lacks basic facts while discerning has most facts
  
- A   U   D   4. One cannot discern properly without humility

Now that you've finished discuss your answers with someone near you, OK?

*What's the difference between discerning (which is good) and judging (which is bad)? How can we make sure we discern but not judge others?<sup>1</sup>*

<b>Discernment</b>	<b>Judgment</b>
Commanded by God (1 Cor. 11:31)	Prohibited by God (Matt. 7:1; Rom. 4:13; Jas. 4:11-12)
Asks questions to consider all key factors (Prov. 25:2)	Accepts hearsay at face value (Prov. 14:15)
Looks for a comparable problem in one's own experience (Matt. 7:5)	Makes no personal application or self-evaluation (Matt. 7:3)

<sup>1</sup> The chart above is adapted significantly from Bill Gothard, *Basic Seminar Textbook* (n.p.; Institute in Basic Youth Conflicts, 1986), 176.



**VI. (4:1—5:6) James affirms that faith produces humility to warn his readers of their worldliness shown in following evil desires, judging others, and presumption about the future.**

- A. (4:1-12) Faith produces humility rather than the worldliness evident in church conflict and judgment of others.
1. (4:1-10) We shouldn't follow our evil desires in pride but humbly submit to God.
    - a) (4:1-3) Evil desires between believers lead to many bad consequences:
      - (1) (4:1) *Quarrels* between believers are due to their evil desires.
      - (2) (4:2a) *Envy* (desire for what someone else has) stems from our evil passions.
      - (3) (4:2b) *Murderous thoughts or actions* come from our evil desires.
      - (4) (4:2c) *Coveting* what another possesses is from evil inner desires.
      - (5) (4:2d) *Failure to pray* leads to not receiving what we need.
      - (6) (4:3) *Materialistic prayers* do not receive answers from God.
    - b) (4:4-6) God gives strength to obey him [grace] when we turn our pride into humility.
      - (1) (4:4) *Worldliness* makes us God's enemies.
      - (2) (4:5) The Old Testament clearly indicates our tendency towards envy.
      - (3) (4:6) God fights against the proud but strengthens the humble.
    - c) (4:7-10) Submission to God leads to him honoring us.
      - (1) (4:7) Submission to God and resistance to Satan cause the devil to stop tempting us.
      - (2) (4:8-9) Drawing near to God with a pure and repentant heart shows a truly submissive heart.
      - (3) (4:10) The result of true humility is being honored by God.
  2. (4:11-12) We shouldn't judge other believers as this questions God's judging ability.
    - a) (4:11a) We should never slander other believers.
    - b) (4:11b-12) We shouldn't judge others because slander is based on pride.
      - (1) (4:11b) Slander puts itself above the law's command to "love your neighbor as you love yourself" (Lev. 19:18) and thus fails to keep this very law.
      - (2) (4:12) God alone is the Giver, Interpreter, and Enforcer of the law of love, so we have no right to take his place by judging others.

- B. (4:13—5:6) Faith depends upon God instead of presuming upon the future, which the rich do in their self-indulgent luxury.
1. (4:13-17) Believers must never make their plans in presumptuous pride but should humbly submit these plans to God's will.

NIV James 4:13 Now listen, you who say, "Today or tomorrow we will go to this or that city, spend a year there, carry on business and make money." <sup>14</sup>Why, you do not even know what will happen tomorrow. What is your life? You are a mist that appears for a little while and then vanishes. <sup>15</sup>Instead, you ought to say, "If it is the Lord's will, we will live and do this or that." <sup>16</sup>As it is, you boast and brag. All such boasting is evil. <sup>17</sup>Anyone, then, who knows the good he ought to do and doesn't do it, sins.

- a) Please make the following observations on the text above:
- (1) Circle all the connecting or contrasting words.
  - (2) Underline each verb.
  - (3) Highlight in some other way (color) the references to time.
- b) What is the difference between the declaration of verse 13 and wise planning? Is James saying we should not make plans? Why or why not?
- c) Wouldn't the uncertainty of life (v. 14) argue for having a plan as opposed to not planning at all? Explain your reasoning.
- d) What are some signs of submitting our plans to God's will (v. 15)? Can you give an example in your own experience?
- e) How does the sin of verse 17 fit the context?
- f) What plans are you currently making in your life?
- g) How should this advice from James change the way you plan?

2. (5:1-6) The rich should humbly realize that their enjoyment of wealth will be replaced with judgment for using their power to oppress others.

NLT James 5:1 Look here, you rich people, weep and groan with anguish because of all the terrible troubles ahead of you. <sup>2</sup>Your wealth is rotting away, and your fine clothes are moth-eaten rags. <sup>3</sup>Your gold and silver have become worthless. The very wealth you were counting on will eat away your flesh in hell. This treasure you have accumulated will stand as evidence against you on the day of judgment. <sup>4</sup>For listen! Hear the cries of the field workers whom you have cheated of their pay. The wages you held back cry out against you. The cries of the reapers have reached the ears of the Lord Almighty. <sup>5</sup>You have spent your years on earth in luxury, satisfying your every whim. Now your hearts are nice and fat, ready for the slaughter. <sup>6</sup>You have condemned and killed good people who had no power to defend themselves against you.

- Is James saying all wealthy people fit this description?

#### **FOUR TYPES OF PEOPLE:**

- Spiritually poor and materially poor
- Spiritually rich and materially rich
- Spiritually rich and materially poor
- Spiritually poor and materially rich

James addresses this final group in this section.

#### **QUESTIONS:**

- Which wealthy people are noted here—believers, unbelievers, or both?
- List results of loving money and characteristics of the godless wealthy:

Troubles of Riches

Sins of the Rich

- Would you classify yourself as a wealthy person? Why or why not?

**OUTLINE**

- a) (5:1) The wealthy should repent to avoid the results of their sin.
- b) (5:2-3) The future troubles of the rich should motivate them to repent.
  - (1) (5:2a) Their wealth will be lost.
  - (2) (5:2b) Their nice clothes will be replaced with rags.
  - (3) (5:3a) Their investments will be worthless.
  - (4) (5:3b) Their retirement savings will be not help them while in pain in hell.
- c) (5:3b-6) The sins of the rich will be cause for judgment by God.
  - (1) (5:3c-4) Their cheating their employees will be cause for God's judgment.
  - (2) (5:5) Their money spent only for their luxuries will harden their hearts for judgment.
  - (3) (5:6) Their oppression of good but powerless people will be used against them.

**TO BRING HOME:**

Are you among the rich or the poor of the world? How do you know this?

What luxuries or conveniences could you share with others? Think of things you tend to waste or not put to greater use.

What should you do with the hard-hitting words of James?

**VII. (5:7-20) James affirms that faith triumphs in patient suffering, believing prayer, and loving confrontation to encourage his readers to be steadfast until the Lord returns.**

## HOW PATIENT ARE YOU?

Check how often the following apply to you:

0	1	2	3	4	5
Never (or only once)	Very Rarely (hardly ever)	Seldom (infrequently)	Sometimes (occasionally)	Usually (often)	Always (or almost always)

- I get frustrated when using a slow computer.  
 When God doesn't answer my prayers I give up praying that request.  
 At the grocery store I still use the express lane when I have more than six items.  
 I stand as close as I can to be first in doors on lifts, MRT trains, busses, etc.  
 I expect an answer to my e-mails within 24 hours.  
 When calling someone, I hang up the phone after three rings.  
 I get angry when someone on the road cuts me off (when driving, in a taxi, or walking).  
 I get annoyed when forced to take self-evaluation tests (like this one).  
  
 Total

### Add up your score...

- 0 You are either Jesus or a liar  
 1-5 You are probably still lying  
 6-10 You have exceptional patience, but Jesus still wins  
 11-15 You must have grown up in the city  
 16-25 Your hard work has paid off and you are worthy of the title, "*kiasu*" (Hokkien for "fears falling behind")  
 26+ Seek help! (Ivan may be willing to counsel you)

A. (5:7-12) Faith triumphs through patient suffering until Christ's return.

1. (5:7-9) The farmer is a good example of patience until Christ's coming.

a) (5:7-8) We should show patience in difficulty until Christ returns just as a farmer patiently waits for the rains to help yield his harvest.

b) (5:9) One sign of impatience is complaining about other Christians, which Christ could judge at any minute!

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- \_\_\_\_\_ Total

**Add up your score...**

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## SIN & SICKNESS, PAIN & PRAYER

What do you think about prayer for sickness and healing? In front of each of these statements, put "A" if you agree, "U" if you're unsure, and "D" if you disagree.

1. If someone is sick, it means this person is not trusting God for healing.
2. A prayer offered in faith will make the sick person well; the Lord will raise him up.
3. "Divine healing is an integral part of the gospel. Deliverance from sickness is provided for in the atonement, and is the privilege of all believers (Isaiah 53:4,5; Matthew 8:16,17; James 5:14-16)" (The Assemblies of God Constitution in its Statement of Fundamental Truths, section 12).

B. (5:13-18) Faith triumphs through believing prayer for sickness.

1. (5:13a) A troubled believer should commit his trials to prayer.
2. (5:13b) A joyful believer should praise God in song.
3. (5:14-15) A sick believer whose elders pray for and anoint with oil will be healed.
  - a) What kind of sickness (*asthenei ασθενέω*) is referred addressed here (5:14a)?
    - "Weak faith or weak conscience" (cf. Acts. 20:35; Rom. 6:19; 14:1; 1 Cor. 8:9-12; Ron Blue, "James," in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary*, eds. Walvoord & Zuck, 834)
    - While this word can refer to weakness of any form, others say the context indicates illness (Peter Davids, *Commentary on James*, NIGTC, 192).
  - b) Is this anointing medicinal (rubbing) or spiritual (5:14b)?
  - c) Does the "prayer of faith" believe God *can* heal or that God *will* heal (5:15a)?

- d) Will this procedure always result in healing (5:15b)? Why or why not?
- e) How can the prayer of others result in forgiveness (5:15c)?
4. (5:16a) Mutual confession of sin and prayer among believers can heal sickness.
- How have you seen this type of public confession in a local church setting?
  - What resulted from the confession that shows why this is so important?
5. (5:16b-18) Elijah's prayers to stop and then start raining were great examples of how God answers believing prayer.

### ***Prayer and You***

I used to think this section of James was about sickness. Now I see that it's more about prayer.

1. Projecting yourself twenty years into the future, when you look back on this time of your life, which area do you think you will wish you had committed more to prayer?
2. Would *your* "prayer of faith" relate more to trusting God for healing physically, spiritually, or emotionally? How so? What would God have you do about this?



**A BIG PROBLEM: THE INDIVIDUALISM OF OUR DAY**

1. What examples of self-centeredness do you see in society today?
2. How do you think concern for self rather than others shows itself in the church?

**James 5:19-20**

**<sup>19</sup>My brothers, if one of you should wander from the truth and someone should bring him back, <sup>20</sup>remember this: Whoever turns a sinner from the error of his way will save him from death and cover over a multitude of sins.**

- C. (5:19-20) Faith triumphs through loving confrontation of erring believers.
  1. (5:19) Christians must restore believers who fall into heresy in doctrine or practice.
    - a) How do these last two verses in the book relate to verses 13-18?
    - b) Could this wanderer be a professing Christian whose faith is not genuine (a possibility suggested by *The NIV Study Bible*)? Why or why not?
  2. (5:20) Restoring errant saints saves them from premature physical death and additional sins.
    - a) Have you ever helped turn a Christian from sin or had someone do this to you? Share your story.
    - b) When have you seen a believer dealt with by God so severely that God took him to heaven early (see 1 Cor. 11:30; 1 John 5:16)?

**Making this Passage Real:**

**Whom do I need to help restore?**

**How will I do it?**

# Bible Study

## Oh, Brother!

by Gary Stanley

How would you like to be the little brother of someone who seemed practically perfect? You follow him through school; he probably made all A's. Whenever you get into an argument with him, you're always wrong. No matter what you do, no matter how hard you try, you always fall short of your brother's mark. Oh, you may be able to run faster or drive a nail straighter, but in the main qualities of life (character, credibility and confidence), you will never better your elder brother. You see, he never swears when he bangs his thumb with a hammer!

To make matters worse, he becomes a popular speaker and begins to imply that he is God incarnate. How embarrassing! Imagine trying to explain your brother to your friends. Finally, your family is disgraced when he is executed like a common criminal.

James had the dubious honor of being the little brother of Jesus.<sup>1</sup> Of course, James also had the privilege of living in the same household as Jesus. They went to the same school, ate at the same table, and Mary watched over them both. Who more than James could view the Christ under such close scrutiny?

Such is the background of the author to the "twelve tribes who are dispersed abroad,"<sup>2</sup> the writer of the Epistle of James. It has been called everything from a "right strawy epistle"<sup>3</sup> to the Proverbs of the New Testament.

The following interview with James is an undated (and unconfirmed) document found recently in a file drawer.

**Garimus:** I've always wondered, James, did you ever think that there was something special about Jesus when you both were growing up?

**James:** Every boy thinks his big brother is special, but not in the way you mean. He was always different I suppose, but remember, I grew up with Him and life with Jesus was normal for me. But while familiarity can enhance many things, worship isn't usually one of them.

**Garimus:** Well, what did your family think when Jesus began to receive so much publicity?

**James:** I'm not sure any of us gave it much thought at first. Jesus reacted pretty strongly to John the Baptist's preaching,<sup>4</sup> but many others were also moved by John's words. There were some wild rumors about some wine at a wedding feast in Cana.<sup>5</sup> But, the Sabbath Jesus stood and read from the scroll in the synagogue of Nazareth—that was something else. He claimed that the portion of Scripture He had just read about the Messiah was fulfilled in their hearing. It started a riot! Our friends and neighbors were so incensed that they tried to throw Jesus off a cliff for blasphemy.<sup>6</sup> After that they were glad He moved to Capernaum.<sup>7</sup> We tried to tone Him down a couple of times, but He wouldn't listen.<sup>8</sup>

**Garimus:** Did you try to keep track of Him?

**James:** I didn't have to. Everyone was constantly telling us what Jesus had said or done.<sup>9</sup> I couldn't escape news of Him.

**Garimus:** I can see why not. Did you ever go and see Him for yourself?

**James:** Once. Jesus was speaking to a large crowd from the crest of a hill.<sup>10</sup> Everyone was so quiet that you could hear every word a long way off. I sat under a tree at the edge of the crowd and listened. I can still hear His exact words to this day. Oh, did He make me uncomfortable! My pride wouldn't let me accept what He said, but my heart wouldn't let me forget.<sup>11</sup> It got so I avoided all possible contact with Him.

**Garimus:** When did you change your mind?

**James:** I never did.<sup>12</sup> Jesus changed my mind after he changed my heart. The trial and crucifixion were a nightmare.<sup>13</sup> Mother insisted on being there.<sup>14</sup> My brothers<sup>15</sup> and I all refused to take her, but she went anyway. Then, as if His death weren't enough, rumors began that Jesus had risen from the dead.<sup>16</sup> And that's when it happened . . .

**Garimus:** What happened?

**James:** Jesus appeared to me. My big brother presented me with conclusive proof of his claims—Himself.<sup>17</sup>

**Garimus:** In light of your acceptance of Jesus as Lord, it seems odd that you make no mention of being His brother in your letter. Why didn't you make more out of the fact?

**James:** I certainly didn't glory in being His brother during His earthly life. It hardly seems appropriate to claim such a title now. A "bond-servant of God"<sup>18</sup> is what I am, and that is more honor than I can possibly bear.

**Garimus:** Still, you became the head of the church at Jerusalem.<sup>19</sup>

**James:** True, but my position wasn't based on nepotism. All of us enter into His service the same way, by faith alone.

**Garimus:** That brings up an interesting question. You are perhaps best known for your quote "faith without works is dead."<sup>20</sup> How do you square that with your comment about "faith alone"?

**James:** I was wondering when we'd get around to that question. It's amusing that my little letter, almost totally devoid of theology, has become such a watershed for theological speculation. Thank God we are saved by proper faith and not our theology!

Do you think it odd that Paul's affirmation of faith<sup>21</sup> and my insistence of works could be fast friends? Don't forget it was Paul who came to me for advice, not once but three times.<sup>22</sup> Paul, Barnabas and I, with several others, resolved much of this issue at the Council of Jerusalem.<sup>23</sup>

**Garimus:** And what was the consensus of that council?

**James:** That Jewish works and ritual aren't essential for salvation. I think that one of my more favorable critics summed up proper faith quite nicely when he said, "Faith alone saves, but saving faith is never alone."<sup>24</sup>

**Garimus:** I think I understand. Were the council's findings what prompted you to write your epistle?

**James:** No. I actually wrote that letter several years before the meeting. A great persecution had broken out against the church in Jerusalem. Stephen was stoned, Saul was imprisoning everyone, and the rest had been scattered abroad.<sup>25</sup> Some practical help was called for. No one had to be convinced of the theological implications of tribulation. They wanted to know how to deal with it and a host of other problems they now had to face without the support of their home church.

**Garimus:** Is there an underlying theme to your advice for all of these various problems?

**James:** There certainly is! The best advice in the world is worth nothing if it isn't acted on.<sup>26</sup> I could recite Jesus' Sermon on the Mount from memory, but it wasn't until I began to act on what He said (years later) that it made any real difference.<sup>27</sup>

**Garimus:** And what's the most obvious difference your active faith has produced?

**James:** Well, they don't call me Old Camel Knees<sup>28</sup> for nothing.

**Garimus:** Old Camel Knees!

**James:** It refers to a lifetime of kneeling in prayer. Pastoring a church will drive anyone to his knees in prayer. Prayer is perhaps the only thing that truly combines faith and works. I'm not sure it can be done in any other way. I've never seen a successful petitioner who wasn't ready to take an active part in the answer to each of his prayers.<sup>29</sup>

**Garimus:** One last question. Tradition claims that you were martyred in Jerusalem by stoning at the hands of Ananus, the high priest.<sup>30</sup> Would you care to comment on this bit of tradition?

**James:** No, I don't see any reason to change that tradition at this time.

### For personal study and reflection:

There's an old saying, "You can fool all of the people some of the time, and some of the people all of the time, but you can't fool Mom (or your brother)." That James was able to accept his half-brother as the Son of God is a powerful testimony.

James' view of the Christian life is equally unique and demanding. Like James, most of us know far more than we are willing to act on. What nickname (such as James' nickname, Old Camel Knees) would you like to represent your life of faith? What specific suggestions does James give that can make your nickname recognizable to those around you. Which ones can you begin to implement today?

1. Mark 6:3. Actually James was the half-brother of Jesus (James' father was Joseph), and there were three other brothers and at least two sisters; 2. James 1:1; 3. Martin Luther's *General Preface to the New Testament of 1522*; 4. Matthew 3:13-4:11, Luke 4:1-15; 5. John 2:1-11; 6. Luke 4:16-30; 7. Matthew 4:14; 8. John 7:3-6, Matthew 12:46-50; 9. Luke 4:37; 10. Matthew 5:1ff; 11. There are more than 20 apparent allusions to the Sermon on the Mount in James; 12. John 7:5; 13. John 18:12ff, Luke 22:54ff, Mark 14:53ff, Matthew 26:57; 14. John 19:26; 15. Their names are Judas, Joses and Simon (Mark 6:3); 16. Matthew 28:1ff, Mark 16:1ff, Luke 24:1ff, John 20:1ff, 1 Corinthians 15:4-6; 17. 1 Corinthians 15:7; 18. James 1:1; 19. James' leadership is clear from passages like Acts 12:17; 15:13-19; 21:18; 20. James 2:17,26; 21. Romans 3:28; 5:1; Ephesians 2:8; 22. Galatians 1:19, Acts 15:2, 21:18; 23. Acts 15:1-19; Galatians 2:9; 24. John Calvin; 25. Acts 8:1-3; 26. James 1:22; 27. Acts 1:14 indicates that Jesus' entire family believed in Him after His resurrection and was there on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:1); 28. Eusebius' *Ecclesiastical History*, 2:23; 29. James 2:15,16; 30. Josephus' *Antiquities*, 20:9.1.

Gary Stanley, a graduate of Baylor University and Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, is on the faculty of the International School of Theology.

## Applying the Commands in James

Andy Lew, Malcolm Goh, Raymond Ang, Yoo Ji Eun  
(Group Presentation in NT Survey, 7 Feb 2003), p. 9

### APPLICATION

James gives us some imperatives that exhort us to Christian maturity and holiness of life.

Verse Ref.	Imperatives	Personal Application
1:16	Do not be deceived	When tempted, I must not deceive myself and say that God is tempting me.
1:21	Get rid of moral filth	I must not let the moral filth of anger make me say careless words but let God's word be firmly planted in me.
1:22	Do not merely listen	I must do what the Word says and not merely listen only.
2:1,5	Do not show favoritism	I must treat everyone with equity regardless of wealth, race or authority in my work and ministry.
2:12	Speak and act as those going to be judged	I must speak and act with mercy knowing that God will judge.
2:18	Show me your faith	I must show my faith demonstrated in good deeds. To render assistance to the poor and needy.
3:10	Praise and cursing from the same mouth; this should not be	I must be conscious of the words I speak and thereby control my tongue
4:7	Submit yourselves to God	I must submit to God whenever the world tempts me and the devil will flee
4:8	Draw near to God	I must draw near to God in my daily devotion that He might draw close to me
4:10	Humble yourselves	When I am in any position of authority, I must not be arrogant but humble myself before God.
4:11	Do not slander	I must not slander and speak against anyone but endeavor to preserve the unity of saints.
4:15	Do not boast	Any plans that I make must be committed to God in prayer.
5:7	Be patient	I must be patient when suffering and look forward to the blessed hope of Christ return
5:9	Do not grumble	If I am unhappy over something, I will not grumble and spread discord amongst others.
5:12	Do not swear	I must make sound decisions and responsible choices without the need to swear
5:16	Confess your sins	Whenever I fall into sin, I must admit my sins and seek prayers that I may be restored.

### References to Nature in the Book of James

1:6	"wave of the sea"
1:6	"tossed by the wind"
1:10	"wild flower"
1:11	"sun . . . with scorching heat"
1:11	"the plant . . . blossom falls"
1:17	"the heavenly lights"
1:17	"shifting shadows"
1:18	"firstfruits"
3:3	"bits into the mouths of horses"
3:4	"ships . . . driven by strong winds"
3:5	"a great forest is set on fire by a small spark"
3:6	"a fire"
3:7	"animals, birds, reptiles, and creatures of the sea"
3:8	"deadly poison"
3:11	"fresh water and salt water"
3:12	"can a fig tree bear olives, or a grapevine bear figs?"
3:18	"sow in peace [and] raise a harvest of righteousness"
4:14	"you are a mist"
5:2	"moths have eaten your clothes"
5:3	"gold and silver are corroded"
5:4	"workmen who mowed your fields"
5:4	"the cries of the harvesters"
5:5	"fattened yourselves in the day of slaughter"
5:7	"the farmer waits for the . . . crop"
5:7	"how patient he is for the fall and spring rains"
5:14	"anoint him with oil"
5:17	"prayed . . . that it would not rain"
5:17	"it did not rain on the land"
5:18	"the heavens gave rain"
5:18	"the earth produced its crops"

### James' References to Jesus' Sermon on the Mount

James	Sermon on the Mount
1:2	Matthew 5:10-12
1:4	5:48
1:5; 5:15	7:7-12
1:9	5:3
1:20	5:22
2:13	5:7; 6:14-15
2:14-16	7:21-23
3:17-18	5:9
4:4	6:24
4:10	5:3-5
4:11	7:1-2
5:2	6:19
5:10	5:12
5:12	5:33-37

## Views on Lordship Salvation

Must Christ be Lord to be Savior? Does salvation require a person to submit to Christ as master along with being the substitute for sin? Those who teach "Lordship salvation" answer "yes" but carefully note that they do not teach salvation by works or even faith plus works. Others disagree.<sup>1</sup>

	Lordship	Moderate	Free Grace
<i>Key Advocate</i>	John MacArthur	Charles Ryrie	Zane Hodges
<i>Accept Christ as...</i>	Savior and Lord	Savior then Lord	Savior alone
<i>Nature of saving faith: What kind of response is required to the truth of the gospel?</i>	<b>Intellectual</b> (understanding of truth), <b>emotional</b> (conviction & affirmation of truth), and <b>volitional</b> (determination of the will to obey truth) <sup>2</sup>	<b>Intellectual and volitional</b> ("an act of the will to trust in the truth which one has come to know" about Christ's forgiveness and vicarious death) <sup>3</sup>	<b>Intellectual</b> in the sense of "believing the facts" that Jesus is the Christ who guarantees resurrection and eternal life (John 11:25-27; cf. 20:30-31) <sup>4</sup>
<i>Simplicity of faith</i>	Authentic and insufficient faith are distinguished (e.g., counterfeit, temporary) <sup>5</sup>	Faith is simple without various "types" as in the Lordship view	Faith is so simple it appropriates eternal life (1 John 5: 9-13) <sup>6</sup>
<i>Repentance</i>	Turning to God from sin ("change of heart and purpose") to be saved <sup>7</sup>	A "change of mind" about Christ <sup>8</sup>	It "may precede salvation [but...] it need not do so" <sup>9</sup> ; faith alone saves.
<i>How saving faith and discipleship relate</i>	The two should not be distinguished <sup>10</sup>	Discipleship <i>must</i> begin after salvation	Discipleship <i>may</i> begin after salvation <sup>11</sup> but lacking it affects rewards
<i>Post-salvation works</i>	Inevitable <sup>12</sup>	Inevitable	Desirable
<i>Meaning of "Lord"</i>	Sovereign master <sup>13</sup>	God (deity) <sup>14</sup>	God (deity)
<i>Those claiming to be Christians but no longer believe</i>	They never were Christians in the first place <sup>15</sup>	The genuineness of their faith should not be questioned <sup>16</sup>	The genuineness of their faith should not be questioned <sup>17</sup>
<i>Counsel to a genuine believer with doubts</i>	Trust in Christ as Savior and Lord	You have eternal life already (1 John 5:13)	You have eternal life already (1 John 5:13)
<i>Assurance</i>	Conditional <sup>18</sup>	Divinely promised <sup>19</sup>	Unconditional <sup>20</sup>
<i>Perseverance</i> <sup>21</sup>	True of all believers <sup>22</sup>	True of all believers	Not true of all believers <sup>23</sup>
<i>Carnal Christians</i>	Not a type of believer <sup>24</sup>	A type of believer <sup>25</sup>	Possible for a lifetime
<i>Key objection to the other two views</i>	"You can accept Christ as Savior now but Lord later" produces only <i>professing</i> "Christians" with false assurance <sup>26</sup>	Lordship salvation raises the standard too high for trusting Christ so that few (if any) can be saved	Salvation is absolutely free and as a gift it has no other condition than faith, so lordship theology distorts the simple gospel
<i>Problems</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Blurs distinctions between faith and obedience<sup>27</sup></li> <li>• Leaves no option of weak/immature faith<sup>28</sup></li> <li>• Lordship has degrees<sup>29</sup></li> <li>• Carnal Christians exist</li> <li>• Assurance is doubted</li> <li>• Experience refutes<sup>30</sup></li> <li>• Denies sin unto death<sup>31</sup></li> </ul>	True repentance is: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• a decision to change behavior<sup>32</sup></li> <li>• part of the gospel<sup>33</sup></li> <li>• often linked with faith<sup>34</sup></li> <li>• noted alone for salvation<sup>35</sup></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It overlooks the danger of false professions</li> <li>• It is hard to imagine that salvation could be that free</li> <li>• It has the same problems with repentance as the Moderate view</li> </ul>

## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> This study summarizes Randall C. Gleason, "The Lordship Salvation Debate," in *Principles of Leadership: What We Can Learn from the Life and Ministry of Bill Bright*, eds. Ted Martin and Michael Cozzens (Orlando: New Life, 2001): 377-97. The sources for the chart are John F. MacArthur, *The Gospel According to Jesus* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1988); Charles C. Ryrie, *So Great a Salvation: What it Means to Believe in Jesus Christ* (Wheaton: Victor, 1989); Zane C. Hodges, *Absolutely Free! A Biblical Reply to Lordship Salvation* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1989). The sources in the following footnotes are all cited in Gleason's article.

<sup>2</sup> Kenneth L. Gentry, Jr., *Lord of the Saved: Getting to the Heart of the Lordship Debate* (Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian & Reformed, 1992), 20.

<sup>3</sup> Ryrie, 121.

<sup>4</sup> Hodges, 37-39. He also notes, "It is an unproductive waste of time to employ the popular categories—intellect, emotion, or will—as a way of analyzing the mechanics of faith... But is [faith] mere intellectual assent? Of course not! . . . What faith is, in biblical language, is receiving the testimony of God. It is the *inward conviction* that what God says to us in the gospel is true. That—and that alone—is saving faith" (Hodges, 31 *italics his*).

<sup>5</sup> Earl D. Radmacher, in MacArthur, *Faith Works: The Gospel According to the Apostles* (Dallas: Word, 1993), 38-39.

<sup>6</sup> Hodges, 40.

<sup>7</sup> MacArthur, *Faith Works*, 88; *idem.*, *The Gospel According to Jesus*, 164; cf. Gentry, *Lord of the Saved*, 46-47.

<sup>8</sup> Ryrie, 99; cf. Thomas L. Constable, "The Gospel Message," *Walvoord: A Tribute*, ed. Donald Campbell (Chicago: Moody, 1982), 207-8; Livingston Blauvelt, Jr., "Does the Bible Teach Lordship Salvation?" *Bibliotheca Sacra* 143 (Jan.-Mar. 1986), 41-42; Robert P. Lightner, *Sin, the Savior, and Salvation* (Nashville: Nelson, 1991), 212.

<sup>9</sup> Hodges, 146 (*italics his*). On this page he notes that while repentance is not a condition for *salvation*, it is a condition for *fellowship* with God. He also notes that, while John's gospel explicitly claims to do evangelism (20:30-31), it never once mentions repentance (Hodges, 147-48!).

<sup>10</sup> The Lordship view claims that saving faith should not be contrasted with discipleship, including "repentance, surrender, and the supernatural eagerness to obey" (MacArthur, 30-31). Since believers in Acts were called disciples and the church's commission is to make disciples (Matt. 28:19-20), he sees little if any distinction between the two.

<sup>11</sup> Non-Lordship advocates often note that faith is a gift but discipleship is costly (e.g., Hodges, 67-76).

<sup>12</sup> "Faith encompasses obedience" and "obedience is... an integral part of saving faith" (MacArthur, *The Gospel According to Jesus*, 173, 174).

<sup>13</sup> MacArthur, *The Gospel According to Jesus* 206-10; Gentry, *Lord of the Saved*, 59-65.

<sup>14</sup> Texts relating to salvation often employ the meaning of deity when the word "Lord" is used (e.g., Rom. 10:9; 1 Cor. 12:3; Ryrie, 70, 73; *ibid.*, *Balancing the Christian Life* [Chicago: Moody, 1969], 173-76). While this certainly includes the concept of sovereign ruler, the difficulty with the Lordship view is that people accept his personal lordship to varying degrees, so how much submission is enough for salvation?

<sup>15</sup> MacArthur, *The Gospel According to Jesus*, 17.

<sup>16</sup> Ryrie, 141.

<sup>17</sup> Hodges, 107-11.

<sup>18</sup> All three positions above teach "once saved, always saved" (i.e., eternal security). While noting that assurance is available based upon scriptural promises, MacArthur also claims that it is conditioned upon the pursuit of holiness and the fruit of the Spirit (*Faith Works*, 202-12).

<sup>19</sup> Some see assurance as primarily based on the promises of God's Word but secondarily based on the evidence of a transformed life (Ryrie, 143-44; cf. Lightner, 244-47).

<sup>20</sup> Hodges, 93-99; *idem.*, *The Gospel Under Siege* (Dallas: Redencion Viva, 1981), 10. This is not to say that believers should not grow in their assurance by seeing their own spiritual growth (Heb. 6:11; 2 Pet. 1:5-11). However, assurance and security must be distinguished. Eternal security is the absolute certainty of a person's salvation from God's perspective. Assurance is the believer's awareness of his eternal security.

<sup>21</sup> Perseverance means that "those who have true faith can lose that faith neither totally nor finally," as defined by Anthony A. Hoekema, *Saved by Grace* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1989): 234. Agreeing with this definition is John F. MacArthur, "Perseverance of the Saints," *Master's Journal* 4 (Spring 1993): 8.

<sup>22</sup> MacArthur teaches perseverance by saying that true saving faith endures since "believe" in the present tense shows continuous action and the abiding quality of faith as a gift given by God (*The Gospel According to Jesus*, 172-73).

<sup>23</sup> Perseverance is rejected but eternal security is accepted.

<sup>24</sup> "The concept of the 'carnal Christian' as a separate category of believers is not only misleading but harmful" (Hoekema, *Saved by Grace*, 21). This "theory" is "one of the most perverse teachings of our generation" (Ernest C. Reisinger, *Lord and Christ: The Implications of Lordship for Faith and Life* [Phillipsburg, PA: Presbyterian & Reformed, 1992], 79).

<sup>25</sup> This believer is not the same as a non-Christian since he is included in the "we all... are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory" (2 Cor. 3:18). Nevertheless, Paul says the carnal Christian does exist (1 Cor. 2:14-3:3), but since he is a "new creature" (2 Cor. 5:7) he will bear *some* fruit (Ryrie, 32-32).

<sup>26</sup> MacArthur, *The Gospel According to Jesus*, 17.

<sup>27</sup> Gleason, 380.

<sup>28</sup> MacArthur raises the standard for "saving faith" too high: "It clings to no cherished sins, no treasured possessions, no secret indulgences. It is an unconditional surrender, a willingness to do anything the Lord demands... It is a total abandonment of self-will, like the grain of wheat that falls to the ground and dies so that it can bear much fruit (cf. John 12:24). It is an exchange of all that we are for all that Christ is. And it denotes obedience, full surrender to the lordship of Christ. Nothing less can qualify as saving faith" (MacArthur, *The Gospel According to Jesus* 140). He summarizes, "Faith obeys. Unbelief rebels... There is no middle ground" (*ibid.*, 178). One wonders if *anyone* has the faith MacArthur describes. Besides, Scripture has many examples of Christians who have immature faith. The believer's faith must grow and mature (James 1:2-4). Moses was a man of great faith but he was disciplined for his rebellion (Num. 14:9; Deut. 9:23-24). Christ even called the disciples men "of little faith" (Matt. 8:26). Since believers often rebel, God disciplines (Heb. 12:4-13) and uses trials (1 Pet. 1:6-7) to mature their faith.

<sup>29</sup> As Christ is not the Lord of anyone in the complete sense, it is almost arbitrary to say whether someone has sufficiently accepted Him as Lord.

<sup>30</sup> Both Scripture and the experiences of believers show many persons who were genuinely saved and yet failed to follow Christ throughout life. These will suffer loss of reward at the judgment seat of Christ and "be saved... as through fire" (1 Cor. 3:15). A classic example is Lot, who compromised his faith in God (Gen. 19) but still was deemed righteous in God's sight in 2 Peter 2:7-8 (see Ryrie, *Balancing the Christian Life*, 173).

<sup>31</sup> The sin unto death (1 John 5:16, KJV) is a sin in the life of a believer so severe that God disciplines him by taking him to heaven by loss of physical life. Such was the case with the Exodus generation (Deut. 2:14), a sexually immoral man who would potentially die so that his "spirit may be saved" (1 Cor. 5:5), and believers abusing the Lord's Table (1 Cor. 11:30). MacArthur does not address this issue but insists that the sign of a true disciple is "when he does sin he *inevitably returns* to the Lord to receive forgiveness and cleansing" (*The Gospel According to Jesus*, 104, *emphasis mine*). If MacArthur is correct, then why does God take the lives of some believers hopelessly caught in sin?

<sup>32</sup> Acts 26:20; 2 Cor. 12:21; Rev. 2:21-22.

<sup>33</sup> Christ commanded his disciples to preach repentance (Luke 24:47). Peter and Paul preached repentance throughout their ministries (Acts 2:38; 3:19; 5:31; 8:22; 11:18; 17:30; 20:21; 26:20).

<sup>34</sup> Mark 1:15; Acts 11:17-18; 19:4; 20:21; Heb. 6:1.

<sup>35</sup> As only faith is sometimes noted as necessary for salvation (John 3:16; 6:28-29; Acts 13:39; 16:31; Rom. 10:9), so repentance alone is required in other verses (Acts 2:38-47; 3:19; 11:17-18). This shows that the two are opposite sides of the same coin. Such a view is supported in the Dallas Theological Seminary doctrinal statement.

## Perseverance

Will all who are saved continue to persevere in their faith? In other words, could someone genuinely profess faith in Christ but die in a spiritually pathetic state? People have dealt with this issue for ages, but especially in our day when many claim the name of Christ but show little fruit. Note some NT verses used to advocate perseverance as opposed to a "free grace" position.

Perseverance	Free Grace
<p>John 8:31-32 To the Jews who had believed him, Jesus said, "If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. <sup>32</sup>Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free."</p>	<p>In this text Christ exhorts believers to be true disciples. He does not say that if they disobey that they will not longer be Christians (or never were). Rather, they will not truly be free.</p>
<p>Rom. 11:22 Consider therefore the kindness and sternness of God: sternness to those who fell, but kindness to you, provided that you continue in his kindness. Otherwise, you also will be cut off.</p>	<p>"'Kindness and sternness' (v. 22) are aspects of the divine nature, the latter experienced by Israel in her present condition, the former being the portion of Gentile believers. But the positions can be reversed, and if this occurs, it will not be due to any fickleness in God, but to the nature of the human response. Once Israel's unbelief is put away, God is prepared to graft her branches in again (v. 23)" (<i>NIV Bible Commentary</i>).</p>
<p>1 Cor. 15:2 By this gospel you are saved, if you hold firmly to the word I preached to you. Otherwise, you have believed in vain.</p>	
<p>2 Cor. 13:5 Examine yourselves to see whether you are in the faith; test yourselves. Do you not realize that Christ Jesus is in you—unless, of course, you fail the test?</p>	
<p>Phil. 1:6 being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.</p> <p>This verse places the responsibility on the believer's security upon God rather than any human being.</p>	<p>This verse can be handled in at least two ways:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. It teaches eternal security, not perseverance.</li> <li>2. The "good work" refers to God's work of bringing people into his family through the Philippians. God assured that their participation in the gospel would continue to bear fruit until Christ's return.</li> </ol> <p>What it does <i>not</i> say is that each individual church member would remain faithful until Christ returns. Obviously, each one of them died prior to the return of Christ.</p>
<p>Titus 1:16 [False teachers] claim to know God, but by their actions they deny him.</p>	<p>These persons have never been believers since they reject the truth (1:14).</p>
<p>Heb. 3:6 But Christ is faithful as a son over God's house. And we are his house, if we hold on to our courage and the hope of which we boast.</p>	



## Perseverance

Heb. 3:14 We have come to share in Christ if we hold firmly till the end the confidence we had at first.

Hebrews 10:35-39 <sup>35</sup>So do not throw away your confidence; it will be richly rewarded. <sup>36</sup>You need to persevere so that when you have done the will of God, you will receive what he has promised. <sup>37</sup>For in just a very little while, "He who is coming will come and will not delay. <sup>38</sup>But my righteous one will live by faith. And if he shrinks back, I will not be pleased with him." <sup>39</sup>But we are not of those who shrink back and are destroyed, but of those who believe and are saved.

James 2:20-26 You foolish man, do you want evidence that faith without deeds is useless? <sup>21</sup>Was not our ancestor Abraham considered righteous for what he did when he offered his son Isaac on the altar? <sup>22</sup>You see that his faith and his actions were working together, and his faith was made complete by what he did. <sup>23</sup>And the scripture was fulfilled that says, "Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness," and he was called God's friend. <sup>24</sup>You see that a person is justified by what he does and not by faith alone. <sup>25</sup>In the same way, was not even Rahab the prostitute considered righteous for what she did when she gave lodging to the spies and sent them off in a different direction? <sup>26</sup>As the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without deeds is dead.

2 Pet. 1:10-11 Therefore, my brothers, be all the more eager to make your calling and election sure. <sup>11</sup>For if you do these things, you will never fall, and you will receive a rich welcome into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

## Free Grace

There exists a distinction between "knowing Christ" (salvation) and "sharing in Christ" (being rewarded in Him).

The fact that the author notes their need to persevere indicates the possibility that they may not do so. In fact, the entire letter appeals for the readers not to shrink back to Judaism, which he viewed as a distinct possibility. That such backsliders would not please God does not indicate that they were never believers in the first place. It indicates that such persons would be "destroyed" (killed) in the Jerusalem fires of AD 70 that consumed the unbelieving Jews with whom the readers were tempted to follow.

"Apostasy here is not a theoretical, but a real, possibility. This is the apostasy of God's 'righteous one,' the regenerate son of God who has received the imputed righteousness of Christ" (Dillow, 337).

The context notes, "For if you possess these qualities in increasing measure, they will keep you from being ineffective and unproductive in your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. But if anyone does not have them, he is nearsighted and blind, and has forgotten that he has been cleansed from his past sins" (1:8-9). The "falling" refers not to loss of salvation but to a stumbling in one's growth as a Christian.

## Perseverance

1 John 2:19 They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us; but they went out that they might be made manifest, that none of them were of us.

The Reformed view typically says that these men had never believed in the first place.

## Free Grace

The key issue here is, "Who are 'they'?" Are these believers who had not persevered? The context contrasts the "they" in verse 19 with the "you" in verse 20, meaning antichrists ("they") had arisen from the apostolic circle itself. Other passages in the epistle show the same we/you contrasts (1:1-3; 4:4-6). John is speaking of heretics whose defection showed that they were never saved in the first place (Hodges, *The Gospel Under Siege*, 58-59).

## Apostasy of Hymenaeus and Alexander

1 Timothy 1:18-20 <sup>18</sup>Timothy, my son, I give you this instruction in keeping with the prophecies once made about you, so that by following them you may fight the good fight, <sup>19</sup>holding on to faith and a good conscience. Some have rejected these and so have shipwrecked their faith. <sup>20</sup>Among them are Hymenaeus and Alexander, whom I have handed over to Satan to be taught not to blaspheme.

These men: (1) had believed ("faith"), (2) had given evidence of their faith in a good conscience, and (3) needed to be taught not to blaspheme, "taught" being a word used of divine discipline of the regenerate (1 Cor. 11:32; Tit. 2:12-13; Heb. 12:5-6; Dillow, 334).

## Apostasy in Galatians

Galatians 6:12 <sup>12</sup>Those who want to make a good impression outwardly are trying to compel you to be circumcised. The only reason they do this is to avoid being persecuted for the cross. . .

"Submission to circumcision indicated cessation of faith in Christ (Gal. 2:17-21). In fact, it meant you counted Christ's death as vain, had severed yourself from Christ (5:2), had fallen from grace (5:43), and were liable to judgment (5:10). To be severed from Christ and to fall from grace logically required a former standing in grace and connection with Christ from which to fall and be severed! It is possible for those who are regenerate to deny the faith and forfeit their share in the coming kingdom. There is no need to assume that they lose salvation, as the Arminian maintains" (Dillow, 337).

## Perseverance

## Free Grace

## Apostasy in Hebrews

Hebrews 10:38-39 <sup>38</sup>But my righteous one will live by faith. And if he shrinks back, I will not be pleased with him." <sup>39</sup>But we are not of those who shrink back and are destroyed, but of those who believe and are saved.

2 Peter 1:5-11 <sup>5</sup>For this very reason, make every effort to supplement your faith with virtue, and virtue with knowledge, <sup>6</sup>and knowledge with self-control, and self-control with steadfastness, and steadfastness with godliness, <sup>7</sup>and godliness with brotherly affection, and brotherly affection with love. <sup>8</sup>For if these qualities are yours and are increasing, they keep you from being ineffective or unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. <sup>9</sup>For whoever lacks these qualities is so nearsighted that he is blind, having forgotten that he was cleansed from his former sins. <sup>10</sup>Therefore, brothers, be all the more diligent to make your calling and election sure, for if you practice these qualities you will never fall. <sup>11</sup>For in this way there will be richly provided for you an entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Verses 8-9 note that some who are forgiven are ineffective, unfruitful, nearsighted, and blind. These should be diligent to return to Christ so they won't fall away and so they will be richly rewarded upon entrance into eternal life (vv. 10-11).

## Apostasy in the Last Days

<sup>NIV</sup> 1 Timothy 4:1 The Spirit clearly says that in later times some will abandon the faith and follow deceiving spirits and things taught by demons.

The verb for "fall away" (*apostesontai* ἀποστήσονται from ἀφίσταμαι) is used only here in the NT in the intransitive sense as "leave, go away; desert, commit apostasy; keep away; trans. incite to revolt" and appears in Acts 5.37 (Friberg NT). One cannot abandon a faith that he never had accepted.

**Perseverance****Free Grace****Denial of the Faith**

NIV 1 Timothy 5:8 If anyone does not provide for his relatives, and especially for his immediate family, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.

This text clearly teaches that some Christians can act worse than unbelievers. This is a lifestyle of apostasy, which is equally as serious as spoken blasphemy.

**Apostasy of Widows**

1 Timothy 5:14-15 <sup>14</sup> So I counsel younger widows to marry, to have children, to manage their homes and to give the enemy no opportunity for slander. <sup>15</sup> Some have in fact already turned away to follow Satan.

**Apostasy Due to Gnostic Deception**

1 Timothy 6:20-21 <sup>20</sup> Timothy, guard what has been entrusted to your care. Turn away from godless chatter and the opposing ideas of what is falsely called knowledge, <sup>21</sup> which some have professed and in so doing have wandered from the faith

Timothy himself is being warned here, which makes it clear that the possibility of apostasy relates to genuine believers.

**Apostasy of Demas and Others**

- Demas (2 Tim. 4:10)
- Phygelus & Hermogenes (2 Tim. 1:15)
- Many others (2 Tim. 4:16)

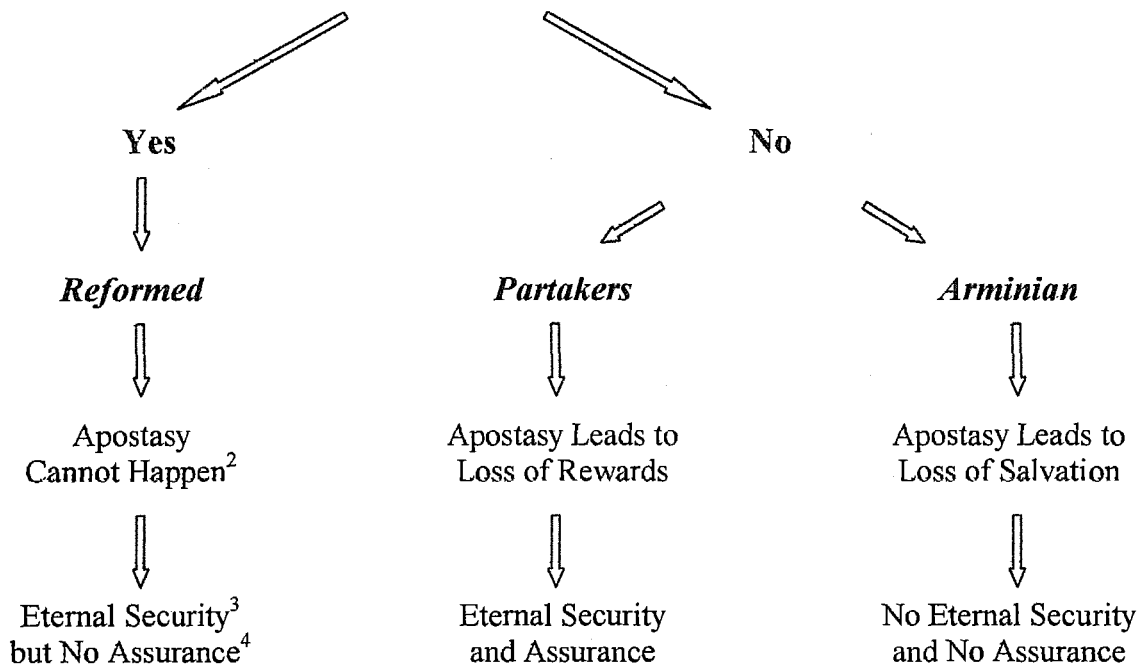
**Source Supporting Perseverance (i.e., Advocate Conditional Security)**

Davis, John Jefferson. "The Perseverance of The Saints: A History of the Doctrine," *JETS* (June 1991).

**Source Opposing Perseverance (i.e., Advocate Eternal Security)**

Dillow, Joseph C. *The Reign of the Servant Kings*. Miami Springs, FL 33266: Schoettle Pub. Co. [P.O. Box 594], 1992. 649 pp. hb.

## Will each genuine Christian persevere in faithfulness at death?



<sup>1</sup> The Reformed view allows for *temporary* lapses into a carnal (worldly) state, but these will always be rectified by death so that no true believer can die in rebellion with God.

<sup>2</sup> Apostasy refers to a true Christian denying the faith in word or deed. This cannot happen in the Reformed view because perseverance is upheld. Instead, what appears to be a denial of the faith is an evidence that the person was never a Christian in the first place (only a “professing Christian” but in reality an unbeliever).

<sup>3</sup> Eternal security means “once saved, always saved” so that salvation could never be lost, either through the fault of the believer or of God. Security is *God’s* work of preserving each person by His own grace and choice.

<sup>4</sup> Assurance of salvation means the believer can know with 100% confidence that he will go to heaven at death because the work of Christ on his behalf has forgiven any sin that could be committed. Since the Reformed view teaches that all believers will persevere and no one ever knows until death whether he will continue believing until death, this results in a continual state of lack of assurance of salvation (even though a true believer’s eternal security is guaranteed).

# 1 Peter

Endurance in Righteous Suffering by God's Grace (is achieved by...)												
Sanctification			Submission				Selflessness					
1:1-2:12			2:13-3:12				3:13-5:14					
Holiness			Humility				Honoring Others					
Salu- tation 1:1-2	Praise for Hope 1:3-12	Holy Life Exhorted 1:13- 2:12	Gov't 2:13- 17	Work Place 2:18- 25	Marri- age 3:1-7	Church & all of life 3:8-12	Christ's Triumph 3:13-4:6	Edify Others 4:7-19	Elders 5:1-4	Young Men 5:5a	Humility/ Watchfulness 5:5b-11	Purpose 5:12-14
Rome to Northern Asia												
Early AD 64												

**Key Word:** Suffering

**Key Verses:** "Dear friends, do not be surprised at the painful trial you are suffering, as though something strange were happening to you. But rejoice that you participate in the sufferings of Christ, so that you may be overjoyed when his glory is revealed.... I have written to you briefly, encouraging you and testifying that this is the true grace of God. Stand fast in it" (1 Peter 4:12-13; 5:12).

**Summary Statement:** Peter encourages north Asia Minor believers to *suffer properly for Christ* as holy, submissive, and selfless witnesses motivated by Christ's example and the hope of future glory to help them be people who *attract others* to hear their message.

**Application:** Your response to suffering for Christ will either draw unbelievers to Jesus or repel them. Do you suffer with integrity?

"When it is all over, you will not regret having suffered;  
rather you will regret having suffered so little -  
and suffered that little so badly."  
  
- Sebastian Valfre (1629-1710)

# 1 Peter

## Introduction

**I. Title** The Greek title (Πέτρου ἄ *First of Peter*) follows the standard practice of naming the General Epistles after their authors.

### II. Authorship

A. External Evidence: Early tradition affirms that the Apostle Peter wrote this epistle that bears his name. The Church Fathers supported Petrine authorship, including Irenaeus (*Against Heresies*; ca. AD 185), Tertullian (*De Orations*; ca. AD 200), and Eusebius (*Eccl. Hist.* 3.3; ca. AD 325).

B. Internal Evidence: The facts contained in the book itself are consistent with the long held belief that Peter authored the epistle:

1. The opening salutation identifies Peter as the author (1:1).
2. The authoritative tone of the work is confirmed in the author's identification with the elders and his claim to be a witness of the sufferings of Christ (5:1).
3. Many similarities exist between this letter and Peter's discourses in Acts (1 Pet. 1:10-12 and Acts 3:18; 1 Pet. 1:20 and Acts 2:23; 1 Pet. 2:4 and Acts 4:11; 1 Pet. 3:22 and Acts 2:33-34).

However, in their usual manner, modern critics contradict the overwhelming external and internal evidence on literary grounds. They claim that the author wrote in the second century using Peter's name to gain acceptance of the letter (Kümmel, 296-98). The following explains their arguments and rebuttals to each:

1. Objection: Peter cannot be the author because the epistle has excellent Greek and Peter was only a fisherman.

Response: The epistle was written 30 years after Peter gave up his fishing trade. He certainly had time to sharpen up on his Greek! Besides this, one cannot confidently assume that a businessman in the fishing industry was unskilled at writing. He probably needed some degree of literary skill to be successful in his work.

2. Objection: Peter would never have quoted the LXX like this epistle does.

Response: Given the wide Gentile readership (1:1b) it made better sense to use the standard Greek translation rather than the Hebrew.

3. Objection: The epistle contains many Pauline conceptions.

Response: This falsely assumes Peter and Paul had divergent theologies.

4. Objection: If Peter was writing where Paul had evangelized, why does he not mention Paul's previous work?

Response: This is an argument from silence and the same claim could be made for any other author other than Paul. However, and even more importantly, the five Roman provinces of Asia Minor addressed (1:1b) were areas unevangelized by Paul. The gospel may have reached this area through converts at Pentecost (Acts 2:9) or perhaps even Peter himself (1 Cor. 9:5).

Conclusion: The evidence shows that Peter wrote this letter bearing his name.

### III. Circumstances

- A. Date: Peter was martyred in the spring AD 64 (Hoehner, 381-84). In that 2 Peter followed 1 Peter chronologically (2 Pet. 3:1), some time must be included between the two works. In that 2 Peter was written shortly before Peter's death (2 Pet. 1:13-15), 1 Peter must be dated at the latest in early AD 64.
- B. Origin: The epistle claims to have been written from "Babylon" (5:13). Several factors indicate that this is a code word for Rome rather than the literal Babylon:
1. External Evidence:
    - a. There exists no tradition that Peter ever visited the Babylon on the Euphrates or the Babylon on the Nile (now known as Old Cairo).
    - b. There does exist a tradition from Papias (AD 80-155) and Clement of Alexandria (AD 155-225) that "Babylon" refers to Rome (Eusebius, *Eccl. Hist.* 2.15).
    - c. The tradition is very strong that Peter was martyred in Rome (Guthrie, 801-803).
    - d. Revelation hints that Rome is "Babylon the Great" (cf. Rev. 14:8; 17:5; 18:10).
  2. Internal Evidence: Since Mark was with Peter when he wrote (5:13) and Mark's residence was Rome (Col. 4:10; Philem. 24), Peter must have written from Rome.
- C. Recipients: Peter addresses "God's elect, strangers in the world, scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia and Bithynia" (1:1b). These five Roman provinces are mentioned in a circle, suggesting that the letter was to be copied and sent to the next province (cf. Rev. 1:11 for a similar scenario for the churches of Asia). Several references indicate that a predominantly Gentile readership originally received the letter (1:14, 18; 4:3), yet Jewish elements are also present (Jewish coloring of 1:1; 2:9), so the readership likely included some Jews as well. It is likely that Peter was addressing these northern Asia Minor groups which he himself had nurtured while Paul devoted his time to the southern Asia Minor peoples.
- D. Occasion: July 19, AD 64 was one of the most significant dates for the church in the first century. On this day much of Rome burned to the ground, perhaps at Nero's own hand, but the event provided fuel to the already suspect opinion of the many Christians in Rome. The infamous Neronian persecutions began at this time in which Christians were thrown to the lions and dogs, mutilated by gladiators, and lit on fire on posts in Nero's garden to provide light for his evening meals.

According to Hoehner's chronology (see "Date" above), Peter was crucified upside down a few months before the Neronian persecutions broke out. However, while civil persecution was not yet in full swing, believers experienced personal persecution (2:12; 3:16-17; 4:3-4, 12, 14) and the threat of imperial persecution loomed on the horizon. In this context Peter wisely penned this manual on suffering to encourage his brethren (5:12) in the provinces of northern Asia Minor to stand firm with submissive attitudes.

Little did Peter know how applicable his letter would soon become in the regions beyond his intended readership and especially in Rome itself. The words "suffer," "suffered," "suffering," and "sufferings" occur 16 times. Suffering and glory often appear together in the epistle (1:11; 4:13; 5:1, 10) as an encouragement for believers to look ahead in faith (1:5, 7, 9, 21; 5:9) to the completion of their salvation (1:5, 9, 10; 2:2) at the return of Christ (1:5, 7, 13; 4:13; 5:1, 4). It seems that all of the biblical books that provide eschatological teaching do so in light of suffering (e.g., Daniel, Ezekiel, 1 & 2 Thess., Revelation, etc.; cf. p. 28). Peter's epistles do the same through their emphasis upon the Second Coming of Christ in conjunction with the Christians' present suffering.



**IV. Characteristics**

- A. The epistle uses 62 *hapax legomena* (words that occur only once in the New Testament).
- B. One of the most problematic NT passages is 1 Peter 3:18-22, which states that after His resurrection, Christ “preached to the spirits in prison who disobeyed long ago... in the days of Noah...” See the study on pages 283a-f.
- C. Peter's advice on dealing with persecution counters the natural responses of man:

Common Responses to Persecution	Peter's Exhortation
“I'll get even”	“Do not repay evil with evil or insult with insult, but with blessing, because to this you were called to inherit a blessing” (3:9; cf. 2:1)
“I'm discouraged”	“Rejoice that you participate in the sufferings of Christ...do not be ashamed...” (4:13, 16)
“I'm afraid”	“Do not fear what they [persecutors] fear; do not be frightened” (3:14b)
“Forget Christianity. It's not worth it”	“...by His wounds you have been healed” (2:24)
“Why do they only persecute me?”	“...your brothers throughout the world are undergoing the same kind of sufferings” (5:9)
“Hey! I have my rights!”	“Humble yourselves... under God's mighty hand, that He may lift you up in due time” (5:6)

- D. First Peter may well be called the “Job of the New Testament” because of its theme of undeserved suffering and steadfast submission to the sovereignty of God (*TTTB*, 473).

**Argument**

While the letter has many themes, Peter explains the key purpose of his epistle near its end, “...I have written to you briefly, encouraging you and testifying that this is the true grace of God. Stand fast in it” (5:12). Thus, the letter has these dual themes (adapted from Kay Arthur, *Precepts*):

“This is the true grace of God.”  
 1 Peter 1:1-12  
 Election  
 Sovereignty of God  
 Positional sanctification  
 Initiated by Godhead (1:2)

“Stand firm in it.”  
 1 Peter 1:13-5:14  
 Endurance  
 Responsibility of man  
 Practical sanctification  
 Effected in godly living (1:13ff.)

Therefore, Peter’s purpose is to encourage his readers that God’s grace enables them to live appropriately despite the suffering they had already experienced and undoubtedly would still suffer. The type of behavior he exhorts is holiness resulting from salvation (1:1—2:12), submissiveness in all aspects of life (2:13—3:12), and selflessness in the midst of suffering with Christ's example as motivation (3:13—5:14). The promise reiterated again and again is that suffering precedes glory.

## Synthesis

### Endurance in suffering by God’s grace (is seen in...)

<b>1:1—2:12</b>	<b>Sanctification</b>
1:1-2	Salutation
1:3-12	Praise for hope
1:13—2:12	Holy life exhorted
<b>2:13—3:12</b>	<b>Submission</b>
2:13-17	Government
2:18-25	Work place
3:1-7	Marriage
3:8-12	Church/all of life
<b>3:13—5:14</b>	<b>Selflessness</b>
3:13—4:6	Christ's triumph
4:7-19	Edifying others in suffering
5:1-4	Elders
5:5a	Young men
5:5b-11	Humility/watchfulness
5:12-14	Purpose: stability in God's grace

## Outline

### Summary Statement for the Book

North Asia Minor believers should *suffer properly for Christ* through God’s grace as holy, submissive, and selfless witnesses motivated by Christ's example and the hope of future glory to help them *attract others* to hear their message.

- I. (1:1—2:12) *Sanctified living in light of the believers’ hope of future glory helps watching unbelievers praise God.*
  - A. (1:1-2) Peter greets north Asia Minor believers as strangers in the world and elected for progressive sanctification and obedience as a foretaste of his emphases in the letter.

<i>Characteristics of Strangers (1:1):</i>	
1.	<i>Resides in a foreign land</i>
2.	<i>Citizenship is in another place (cf. Phil. 3:20)</i>
3.	<i>Abode is temporary (not a P.R.)</i>
4.	<i>Values differ from the majority—sense of humor, dress, view of money, job, giving, etc.</i>
5.	<i>Persecution often results from being different—laughed at, ridiculed, etc.</i>

<i>Distinctive Roles of the Trinity (1:2)</i>		
	Role in Salvation	Translation
Father	Author	“chosen according to the <i>foreknowledge</i> of God”
Spirit	Augmenter	“through the <i>sanctifying</i> work of the Spirit”
Son	Attainer	“for <i>obedience</i> to Jesus Christ and <i>sprinkling</i> by his blood”

*Kay Arthur, Precept Ministries*

- B. (1:3-12) Peter praises God for the distinctive hope believers have by faith in Christ to encourage his readers that their present suffering will ultimately result in triumph in future glory.
1. (1:3a) Even believers undergoing unjust suffering have reason to praise God.
  2. (1:3b-5) As suffering Christians, we have several reasons to rejoice.
    - a) (1:3b) We have been born into God's family.
    - b) (1:3c) Our life in God is based on the hope of eternal life in eternal bodies because Jesus has such a body now.
    - c) (1:4-5) We have salvation that can never be lost.
      - (1) (1:4) Our salvation can never be eradicated or diminished since it is reserved for us in heaven itself.
      - (2) (1:5) Salvation can be assured until the return of Christ only by God's power.
  3. (1:6-9) Unjust suffering in persecuted believers accomplishes several good purposes. List them here:
  4. (1:10-12) Since OT prophets prophesied with only scant understanding about Christ's suffering for us, we should appreciate this salvation we now possess.

## ***How Holy are You?***

*How true are these statements of you?*

1. *My work (or school or neighborhood) friends know me as a believer in Jesus Christ.*
2. *How is it that during trials believers can be deceived into lowering their commitment to a holy life? Can you diagram this peril?*

C. (1:13—2:12) Peter exhorts the sanctification of the believers as the natural result of their salvation so that their holy lifestyle might cause unbelievers to give praise to God.

1. (1:13-2:3) We should replace the evil desires we had as unbelievers with moral purity now for four reasons:

a) (1:13-16) God our Example is holy.

- *What temptation or sin have you said “no” to lately because it falls short of God’s holiness?*

b) (1:17) God our Judge will hold us accountable for our deeds without any favoritism.

- *In what way do you feel like a “stranger” here on earth?*

c) (1:18-21) God our Redeemer rescued us from our empty life through Christ’s blood.

- *How was your former way of life as a non-Christian “empty” (v. 19)?*

d) (1:22-2:3) God our Communicator purifies us to obey him through his Word.

- *Which of the sins of 1 Peter 2:1 has been reduced through “the pure milk of the Word” in your life? How?*

*One way that I want to be more like Christ this year compared to last year is...*

2. (2:4-12) Our holiness has a corporate dimension that declares to unbelievers that we in the church are God's special people.
- 4 As you come to him, the living Stone— rejected by men but chosen by God and precious to him—
- 5 you also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.
- 6 For in Scripture it says: "See, I lay a stone in Zion, a chosen and precious cornerstone, and the one who trusts in him will never be put to shame." {Isa. 28:16}
- 7 Now to you who believe, this stone is precious. But to those who do not believe, "The stone the builders rejected has become the capstone," {or *cornerstone*; from Ps. 118:22}
- 8 and, "A stone that causes men to stumble and a rock that makes them fall." {Isa. 8:14} They stumble because they disobey the message— which is also what they were destined for.
- 9 But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.
- 10 Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.
- 11 Dear friends, I urge you, as aliens and strangers in the world, to abstain from sinful desires, which war against your soul.
- 12 Live such good lives among the pagans that, though they accuse you of doing wrong, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day he visits us.
- a) Underline or circle each reference above that relates to holiness.
- b) Spell out in a full sentence below what each reference to holiness teaches us (give the truth or principle relating to living a separated life).
- c) List from the passage the privileges you have of being in the people of God.

- d) (2:4-5) Believers receive incredible privileges in Christ: eternal life and a corporate blessing to serve and worship even higher than OT priests.
- (1) (2:4) We come to Christ who was rejected by unbelievers but chosen by God.
  - (2) (2:5) God grants us eternal life and makes us a spiritual temple and holy mediators (priests) whose spiritual sacrifices please Him.
- e) (2:6-10) The way unbelievers reject Christ contrasts with the way God blesses believers as His own people.
- (1) (2:6-7a) God chose Christ as Jerusalem's "new cornerstone" (source of support and strength) who is precious to God and to believers whose salvation is assured.
  - (2) (2:7b-8) However, unbelievers who reject the most important and most debated Person in history are destined for eternal condemnation.
  - (3) (2:9-10) Yet we are similar to OT Israel as an elect, kingly, priestly, holy, people who belong to God to praise Him for transferring us from the ignorance of sin into the knowledge of holiness and mercy.
- f) (2:11-12) Our response to God's blessings should be to live such holy lives that this will silence opposition at the judgment.
- (1) (2:11) Since our real home is in heaven, we should act like we are there by holding ourselves back from earthly, sinful practices.
  - (2) (2:12) Our purity will silence the criticism of unbelievers when God judges them.
    - (a) The only other NT reference to God's "visitation" is in the context of the AD 70 judgment of Jerusalem in Luke 19:44 RSV, and the exact phrase for judgment appears in Isa. 10:3.
    - (b) However, others see this "visitation" as when God saves unbelievers (e.g. Stills, 108, and Raymer, *BKC*, 846; Peter Davids, 97, says 1 Pet. 2:12 refers to judgment while Isa. 10:3 refers to salvation).

# ARE YOU SUBMISSIVE?

Please rate yourself on the following scale:

<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
Never (or only once)	Very Rarely (hardly ever)	Seldom (infrequently)	Sometimes (occasionally)	Usually (often)	Always (or almost always)

1. \_\_\_\_\_ I have a problem with *complaining* (especially about the government)
  2. \_\_\_\_\_ I feel the need to be the one in *control*
  3. \_\_\_\_\_ I struggle with admitting my *faults*
  4. \_\_\_\_\_ People call me *stubborn*
  5. \_\_\_\_\_ I rationalize: (a) *driving* over the speed limit (if you drive), or (b) disobeying *pedestrian* laws (e.g. jaywalking—if you do not drive). If you do both then pick where you are worst!
- \_\_\_\_\_ Total

Scale: 0 (Jesus, why are *you* taking this?), 1-5 (you must be my wife Susan ☺), 6-10 (could you please teach today's class?), 11-19 (you need this class session), 20-25 (please see me after class for counseling referrals)

## The Context in Peter's Day (AD 64)

1. Christians were being maligned for believing in another king, Jesus.
2. The Roman state assumed that their respect for Jesus meant they did not honor the government.
3. Peter wrote the believers to remind them that belief in Christ actually made them *better* citizens.

## II. (2:13–3:12) *Submissive* living in all areas of life pleases both God and man.

- A. (2:13-17) Believers must submit to the government so that their good conduct will silence those who oppose the truth.
  1. (2:13a) The command to submit to all human authorities prepares readers to show humility to all authorities noted in 2:13–3:12.
  2. (2:13b-15) Submit to governing authorities to show that believers are good for society.
    - a) (2:13b) The king is the ultimate human authority and therefore worthy of obedience.
    - b) (2:14) Governors deserve obedience because they create order in society by punishing lawbreakers and rewarding law-abiding citizens.
    - c) (2:15) Christians obeying laws silences accusations that believers are poor citizens.
      - What positive and negative examples have you seen of this principle?

3. (2:16-17) Submit to God and civil laws by respecting and honoring Him and others.
- a) (2:16) Believers can't break laws just because they are servants of God.

NAU 1 Peter 2:16 *Act as free men, and do not use your freedom as a covering for evil, but use it as bondslaves of God.*

NIV 1 Peter 2:16 *Live as free men, but do not use your freedom as a cover-up for evil; live as servants of God.*

NLT 1 Peter 2:16 *You are not slaves; you are free. But your freedom is not an excuse to do evil. You are free to live as God's slaves.*

- What positive and negative examples have you seen of this principle?
- b) (2:17) Christian submission applies in every area of life.
- (1) (2:17a) Treat everyone with dignity.
- What positive and negative examples have you seen of this principle?
- (2) (2:17b) Love fellow believers.
- (3) (2:17c) Revere God.
- (4) (2:17d) Respect the government [literally, *the king*].

### To Take Home:

1. How can you better submit to the laws of the land?
2. How specifically will you do this?



## *SUBMISSION IN THE WORKPLACE*

**Net Bible—2:18** Slaves, be subject to your masters with all reverence, not only to those who are good and gentle, but also to those who are perverse. **2:19** For this finds God's favor, if because of conscience toward God someone endures hardships in suffering unjustly. **2:20** For what credit is it if you sin and are mistreated and endure it? But if you do good and suffer and so endure, this finds favor with God. **2:21** For to this you were called, since Christ also suffered for you, leaving an example for you to follow in his steps. **2:22** He *committed no sin nor was deceit found in his mouth*. **2:23** When he was maligned, he did not answer back; when he suffered, he threatened no retaliation, but committed himself to God who judges justly. **2:24** He *himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we may cease from sinning and live for righteousness*. *By his wounds you were healed*. **2:25** For you were *going astray like sheep but now you have turned back to the shepherd and guardian of your souls*.

- B. (2:18-25) Believers must submit in the workplace with Christ's subjection as an example so that they might please God.
1. (2:18) The general principle of 2:18-25 is stated upfront—that slaves must submit to their masters, no matter how they are treated.
  2. (2:19-25) Reasons for submission to one's master are given to motivate Christian slaves to give their owners a godly response.
    - a) (2:19-20) God is pleased with submission to a harsh master.
    - b) (2:21-24) Submission in unjust circumstances mimics Christ's example when he committed himself to God at his mistreatment and death for us.
      - (1) (2:21) Christ suffered to set an example for us.
      - (2) (2:22a) Christ committed no sin in his suffering.
      - (3) (2:22b) Christ spoke no lies during his suffering.
      - (4) (2:23a) Christ did not answer back when he was maligned.
      - (5) (2:23b) Christ did not verbally retaliate when he suffered but committed himself to God as the Just Judge.
      - (6) (2:24) Christ bore our sins to enable us to live for righteousness rather than sin.
    - c) (2:25) Submission in the workplace shows unbelievers a repentant rather than wandering lifestyle.

This passage speaks directly to slaves but the same principles relate to those who are paid for their work. Thus it indirectly applies to each of us in our submission to authority within our employment. Often believers are treated unjustly for the simple fact that they are Christians. This may include: the boss requiring us to work on Sunday (while giving this day off to unbelievers), being passed up in promotions due to our faith, needing to accept a lower salary, or any number of injustices.

Jesus knows what it feels like to be treated as a slave. He endured worse in his suffering and crucifixion. When you are mistreated, do you respond like him as Peter commands or...

- Are you known as a complainer at work? About what specifically (Phil 2:14)?
- Do you fight for your "rights" in your place of employment?

- C. (3:1-7) Both wives and husbands must submit in marriage in order to be pleasing to God and to see answers to prayers, respectively.
1. (3:1-6) The reason a wife should submit to her husband is to please him and God.
    - a) (3:1-2) One *purpose* Christian wives should reverently submit to their husbands is so that their unbelieving husbands might trust Christ by being pleased with their purity.
    - b) (3:3-6) The true *nature* of beauty for women is an internal submission that pleases God rather than an external adornment.
      - (1) (3:3) Wives should not think that beauty comes from outward adornment.
      - (2) (3:4-6) Wives must realize that true beauty has come from an inner gentle and quiet spirit that has pleased God since OT times [i.e., interior decorating!].
  2. (3:7) The reason a husband should submit to his wife is because she is weaker physically but equal spiritually and able to affect his prayer life.
    - a) (3:7a) The way he should treat his wife is by submitting to her.
    - b) (3:7b-d) Three reasons are given to submit to her.
      - (1) (3:7b) Accommodate her because she is weaker physically.
      - (2) (3:7c) Honor her because she is equal spiritually.
      - (3) (3:7d) Treat her well so nothing will hinder his prayer life.
    - c) What does "in the same way" mean? The same as what?
      - (1) Some scholars note that Peter does not specifically say that husbands should submit here (e.g., Grudem, 142). Therefore, the sense is "also" or "continuing on the same area of discussion" (BAGD 568; 1 Pet. 5:5). Grudem notes, "Peter does not command submission to, but rather considerate use of, authority" (p. 142). Michaels (WBC, 167) agrees by saying that "likewise" "functions only to connect related sections of the household duty code, not to point out any real analogy. In this case the relationship is reciprocal: 'in turn,' or 'for your part' (cf. 5:5)." However, others say it does refer to a husband's submission (Peter Davids, 122).
      - (2) But there exist two problems with not seeing it referring to submission.
        - (a) The context is not simply one of consideration, but of submission!
        - (b) This phrase is used repeatedly to refer to *submission* (3:1 looks back on 2:18 with this phrase). A husband's submission may have been counter-cultural but this is consistent with Ephesians 5:21.
    - d) What is meant by "submission"? The Greek ὑποτάσσω means "to arrange, appoint, or order under" (used in 2:18; 3:1, 5). A similar word (ὑποτάγητε) is used in 2:13.
    - e) How should a husband submit to his wife? It notes two ways he can submit to her by: (1) being considerate with her and (2) treating her with respect.

- f) What does it mean to be considerate with your wife?
- (1) Literally this means "dwell together with knowledge." A husband should genuinely know his wife. Many a man lives with his wife but is totally insensitive to knowing how she feels, what her preferences are, etc. The NASB renders this "in an understanding way."
  - (2) Peter doesn't specify what kind of knowledge is noted, but it probably includes any kind of knowledge that benefits the husband-wife relationship (Grudem, 143):
    - (a) Knowledge of God's principles and purposes for marriage
    - (b) Knowledge of the wife's desires, goals, and frustrations
    - (c) Knowledge of her strengths and weaknesses in the physical, emotional and spiritual realms, etc.
  - (3) "Living with" includes the total marital relationship, often with sexual overtones (Davids, 122; cf. Michaels, WBC, 168).
    - (a) It appears only here in the NT, but the LXX OT it appears 8 times: Deut. 22:13; 24:1; 25:5 are more sexually toned than Isa. 62:5; Prov. 19:14; Sir. 25:8; 42:9; 2 Macc. 1:14.
    - (b) Paul used the expression similarly regarding the bedroom or other activities of marriage (1 Cor. 8:1-13; Phil. 1:19; Col. 1:9-10; 3:10 [cf. 2 Pet. 3:5-6]).
- g) Does the reference to the wife as a weaker vessel point back to the first verb ("live with") or the second ("respect")? Grammatically it could refer to either verb and thus provide a reason for living with her in an understanding way or respecting her because of her weakness (Michaels, 168).
- h) What does it mean for the wife to be a weaker vessel? spiritually? emotionally? mentally? morally? physically? all of these? The notion of women being weaker in many respects was common in the ancient world, but is that true here? What all can agree upon is that women in general are more physically weaker than men. However, the previous text (verses 2 and 4) note how women are capable of feats of moral and spiritual strength (Davids, 123). Probably three types of weakness are indicated (Grudem, 144):
- (1) It is easy for a husband to abuse his wife physically or sexually since he is stronger than her. The "vessel" ("partner" NIV) literally refers to a piece of pottery and figuratively of the human body in Scripture (1 Thess. 4:4; 2 Cor. 4:7; Michaels, 169).
  - (2) Women are weaker in terms of authority in their marriage (3:1, 5-6), so husbands must be sure they do not abuse this authority over them by using it for selfish ends.
  - (3) Women are typically more emotionally vulnerable than men too. Wives are often more deeply hurt by marital conflict than their husbands or by inconsiderate actions by their husbands.

- i) What does it mean to respect your wife? Literally it is to "apportion her honor." This word (τιμη) is rendered both as "respect" her (NIV) and "honor" her (NAU, NLT).
- (1) Peter said to honor the king in the same context of respecting him (2:17).
  - (2) Just as one would never slander or make fun of a king in his presence, so husbands should never put down their wife—publicly or privately, and in words or deeds.
  - (3) The NT gives honor to those who are weak, last or least in the eyes of the world. Paul applied this to indispensable but unseen spiritual gifts (1 Cor. 12:22-24). Elsewhere, the weak are honored (Matt. 18:1-4, 10-14; 19:30; 20:16; 23:11-12; 25:40; Mark 9:33-37; 10:42-45; Luke 14:7-11; cf. 1 Pet. 5:5-6; Michaels, 170).
- j) Is the wife "an heir of the gracious gift of life" in salvation (Davids, 123; Grudem, 145; Michaels, 170; Stibbs, 127)? Yes, as Paul notes in Galatians 3:28 that in matters of salvation there is no difference between men and women.
- k) Does "your (plural) prayers" refer to prayer by the husband (Grudem, Davids) or both husband and wife (Michaels, 171)?
- (1) While this phrase does end the section dealing with both spouses (3:1-6), the nearer context addresses husbands (7a) so it is their prayers that are hindered.
  - (2) Also, one would wonder why a husband's mistreatment of his wife would hurt *her* prayers since she is not at fault.
- l) How will an improper relationship with my wife hinder my prayers? Does this mean God won't answer my prayers? Or does this mean that I won't be able to pray?
- (1) Many NT passages note that our horizontal relationships can disturb our vertical relationship with God:
    - (a) Matt. 5:23 says not to offer God a gift unless we are right with our brother.
    - (b) Matt. 6:14 notes, "If you forgive men when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you."
    - (c) Paul notes in 1 Cor. 11:33-34, "So then, my brothers, when you come together to eat, wait for each other. If anyone is hungry, he should eat at home, so that when you meet together it may not result in judgment."
  - (2) Therefore, Peter is warning husbands that lack of respect for their wives can hinder their prayer life in many ways.

*So What?*

**Wives:** In what area do you have the most difficult time submitting to your husband?

**Husbands:** In what area do you have the most difficult time submitting to your wife?

D. (3:8-12) Believers must submit in the church and all of life to please God.

1. (3:8) Relational living within the church shows submission.
  - a) (3:8a) Harmonious living shows submission.
  - b) (3:8b) Sympathetic living shows submission.
  - c) (3:8c) Brotherly love shows submission.
  - d) (3:8d) Compassion shows submission.
  - e) (3:8e) Humility shows submission.
2. (3:9) Verbally blessing unfriendly outsiders allows God to reward believers.
  - a) (3:9a) Speaking a blessing rather than retaliation shows submission.
  - b) (3:9b) The reason Christians must speak kindly is because God wants us to *speak* a blessing so we can *inherit* a blessing.
3. (3:10-12) Psalms 34:12-16 also affirms that true enjoyment of life stems from rejecting evil and pursuing good—especially in one’s speech.
  - a) (3:10a) Psalms 34:12 also introduces how to live a blessed life.
  - b) (3:10b-12) Psalms 34:13-16 says that a blessed life stems from submission to God in many areas.
    - (1) (3:10b) Submissive speech is never malicious nor deceitful.
    - (2) (3:11) Submissive actions are always good and unifying by encouraging others to pursue peace.
    - (3) (3:12a) Righteousness receives God’s protection.
    - (4) (3:12b) Righteous prayers receive God’s answers.



**III. (3:13–5:14) *Selfless* living by God's grace for Christians of all types follows Christ's example of triumph after suffering and also receives God's reward.**

A. (3:13–4:6) Since Christ's suffering before His triumph parallels the believers' suffering for righteousness before their future glory, Christians should live for others in a selfless way.

1. (3:13-17) God rewards Christians who suffer for righteousness' sake.

*Read verses 13-17 to answer these two questions:*

a) What does a selfless lifestyle look like for the believer undergoing injustice?

b) What specific rewards do we receive when we respond to unjust treatment selflessly?

2. (3:18-22) God rewarded Christ after he suffered for righteousness' sake.

a) (3:18-20a) Christ *proclaimed his triumph* to imprisoned demons after his death (cf. 1 Peter appendix, pp. 283a-f).

b) (3:20b-21) As Noah's ark saved from physical death caused by water, so Christ's *resurrection* saves from spiritual death (seen in baptism that looks back on the death, burial and resurrection of Christ).

(1) (3:20a) Noah's ark saved eight people from the waters of judgment.

(2) (3:21) The flood waters of judgment symbolize baptism in that water baptism is closely linked to salvation due to Christ's resurrection by cleansing the conscience of believers towards God.

c) (3:22) God gave Jesus *authority* over the angelic realm at God's right hand after Christ's unjust suffering.

3. (4:1-6) Christians should live selflessly in contrast to godless people who heap abuse on the believers and are concerned only for themselves.

a) (4:1-2) Christians should imitate Jesus in his selfless attitude.

b) (4:3-6) Unbelievers live only for themselves and abuse believers, even though they will account for their sin and some were warned before they died.

Thought Questions:

- Would your friends and family say that you selflessly help others?
- *How* do you show a selfless spirit when relating to others?

### ***Today Let's Start with Applications on Righteous Suffering...***

*How are you suffering for Christ now? (How are you struggling because of doing what is right?)*

1. "Someone I know dislikes the reality that I am a Christian"—how is this?
2. "People see me as intolerant because I'm 'calling a spade a spade'"—in what sense?
3. "I must pick up slack from those not serving Christ"—how does this affect your time or energy?
4. "I'm not getting much support in my quest to do what's right"—how can others help?
5. In what other area are you having difficulty because you are a believer seeking what is right?

B. (4:7-19) God rewards believers who show selfless concern for others and praise God for their unjust suffering.

1. (4:7-11) Those suffering for righteousness sake must show selfless concern for others.

a) (4:7) We should be clear-headed and self-controlled so we can be prayerful and ready for imminent reward (cf. Matt. 3:2; Rom. 13:12; Jas. 5:8).

b) (4:8) Love is the most vital virtue as it passes "over wrongs done to a person rather than continue a dispute" (Peters, 158; note that 4:8 quotes Prov. 10:12; cf. 1 Cor. 13:7).

c) (4:9) Hospitality without grumbling shows selflessness.

- How specifically do you work at hospitality in our face-paced culture?

d) (4:10-11) Speaking and serving gifts must show God's grace to others and praise Him.

(1) (4:10) God gave each spiritual gift as a means of sharing His grace to others.

(2) (4:11) The goal of using gifts is to praise God—whether in speaking or serving (likely two categories of gifts).

(a) (4:11a) Those gifted in *speaking* should *say what God would say* to others.

(b) (4:11b) Those gifted in *serving* should *rely on God's strength* to help others.

(c) (4:11c) The goal of using gifts is to praise God.

#### **Spiritual Gift Categories**

##### **Speaking**

Teaching  
Evangelism  
Pastor-Teacher  
Encouraging

##### **Serving**

Administering  
Faith  
Giving  
Service  
Mercy

See gift lists in Rom. 12:6-8; Eph. 4:11;  
1 Cor. 12:8-10, 28-30



2. (4:12-18) Those suffering for righteousness will be blessed for their selfless care for others.
  - a) (4:12) Suffering for Christ is natural.
    - Why do we think that godly believers shouldn't experience painful trials?
  - b) (4:13-18) Believers should rejoice in suffering as this brings many blessings.
    - (1) (4:13) Rejoicing now will bring greater *rejoicing later*—after Christ returns.
    - (2) (4:14) Rejoicing brings greater blessing of God's *Holy Spirit* working through us.
    - (3) (4:15-16) Rejoicing about proper (not deserved) suffering reminds us that *we bear Christ's name*.
    - (4) (4:17-18) Rejoicing in difficulty reminds us that *all people will account* to God—and unbelievers even more so.
3. (4:19) Conclusion: Believers suffering for God must commit themselves to Him and keep blessing others.
  - **How specifically should you: (1) commit yourself to God and (2) bless others?**

## WHAT KIND OF LEADER ARE YOU?

Whether you like it or not, you are a leader. People look to you for leadership—as employer or boss or parent or teacher or ministry leader or other capacity. The real question is, “What *kind* of leader are you?” To find out, honestly rate yourself on the following scale:

0	1	2	3	4	5
Never (or only once)	Very Rarely (hardly ever)	Seldom (infrequently)	Sometimes (occasionally)	Usually (often)	Always (or almost always)

1. \_\_\_\_\_ People seem to like to have me as their leader
  2. \_\_\_\_\_ When I lead, people follow
  3. \_\_\_\_\_ I lead others because I want to do it
  4. \_\_\_\_\_ I serve the people who are under my care rather than expecting them to serve me
  5. \_\_\_\_\_ Others tell me that I am an example of integrity for them
- \_\_\_\_\_ Total

Scale: 1-5 (I trust at least you are a good *follower*), 6-10 (please *listen* really well to today's class session), 11-19 (please *teach* today's class), 20-25 (have you been nominated for church *elder*? You should be!)

The Apostle Peter knew something about leadership, having been led by Christ Himself for three years. As an apostle, he addressed fellow elders at the end of his letter, but what he says can apply in many ways to leaders in other capacities as well. Here's what he wrote...

<sup>1</sup> 1 Peter 5:1 To the elders among you, I appeal as a fellow elder, a witness of Christ's sufferings and one who also will share in the glory to be revealed:

<sup>2</sup> Be shepherds of God's flock that is under your care, serving as overseers-- not because you must, but because you are willing, as God wants you to be; not greedy for money, but eager to serve;

<sup>3</sup> not lording it over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock.

<sup>4</sup> And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that will never fade away (NIV).

C. (5:1-4) Elders should teach and gently protect their churches to selflessly share the suffering of its members until they are rewarded in glory.

1. (5:1) Peter appeals to church elders who served like he did to tell them that he will be rewarded at Christ's return for his participation in Christ's suffering.
  - a) (5:1a) Peter appealed as a fellow elder.
  - b) (5:1b) Peter appealed as a witness of Christ's sufferings.
  - c) (5:1c) Peter appealed as one who would be rewarded for his service.

2. (5:2-3) The way that elders should selflessly care for the church is as a shepherd cares for his sheep.

a) (5:2a) The main command for elders is to oversee the care of the church.

- What does it mean to “shepherd the flock”?

b) (5:2b-3) The motive for caring for the body must be pure.

What Not to Do— Elders should NOT...	What to Do— Elders should...
shepherd because someone else says they should do it (5:2b)	serve because they sincerely care for people, as God desires (5:2c)
have a financial motive for church ministry (5:2d)	want to serve others (5:2e)
appeal to their authority as the motive for others to obey (5:3a)	model integrity to the saints (5:3b)

- What does it mean not to “lord it over” the flock?

3. (5:4) The result of elders selflessly caring for their congregations is that they will be rewarded at Christ’s return.

## LEADERSHIP + YOU

We have talked about elders in 1 Peter 5. However, we have also studied God’s design for the leadership that we *all* should show.

So what has God told you through this study about your own nurture of those under your care?

# umility efore onor

## Thought Question: Why is genuine humility so rare?

NIV: <sup>5:5a</sup> Young men, in the same way be submissive to those who are older.

<sup>5b</sup> All of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, because, "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble" {Prov. 3:34}. <sup>6</sup> Humble yourselves, therefore, under God's mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time. <sup>7</sup> Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you. <sup>8</sup> Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. <sup>9</sup> Resist him, standing firm in the faith, because you know that your brothers throughout the world are undergoing the same kind of sufferings. <sup>10</sup> And the God of all grace, who called you to his eternal glory in Christ, after you have suffered a little while, will himself restore you and make you strong, firm and steadfast. <sup>11</sup> To him be the power for ever and ever. Amen.

<sup>12</sup> With the help of Silas {Gr. *Silvanus*}, whom I regard as a faithful brother, I have written to you briefly, encouraging you and testifying that this is the true grace of God. Stand fast in it. <sup>13</sup> She who is in Babylon, chosen together with you, sends you her greetings, and so does my son Mark. <sup>14</sup> Greet one another with a kiss of love. Peace to all of you who are in Christ.

- D. (5:5a) **Young men** must humbly submit to their church elders to selflessly help them in perilous times rather than show concern for self.
1. The term for "elders" here (*presbuteros* πρεσβύτερος) can refer either to the church leaders (Tit. 1:5; Jas. 5:14; 1 Pet. 5:1) or to older men in general (Acts 2:17; 1 Tim. 5:1). Which of these two meanings makes better sense here? Why?
  2. Of all the commands that could be given to younger men, why do you think Peter instructed the younger men to function under the authority of older leaders?
- E. (5:5b-11) **All believers** should undergo suffering with humility and watchfulness so that God can give them triumph.
1. (5:5b-7) Humility should be our goal so that God will fight for us rather than against us.
    - a) (5:5b) God grants grace to the humble (power to do His will)—so don't be among the proud that He fights.
    - b) (5:6) God grants restoration to the humble—so humble yourself under Him.
    - c) (5:7) God cares for the humble—so give Him your anxieties.
      - Since God gives us a choice to humble ourselves or to have Him humble us, which would you prefer? Why?

2. (5:8-9) Watchfulness against Satan's temptations is needed so we can suffer successfully with other believers.
  - a) (5:8) The reason we must show self-control is because Satan seeks to destroy unsuspecting Christians.
  - b) (5:9) One encouragement to resist Satan is knowing that many other believers also are experiencing victory over him.
3. (5:10-11) God's response to humble watchfulness is to restore these saints in character.
  - a) (5:10) God graciously elects believers who suffer to be restored to a stronger foundation in faith.
  - b) (5:11) We should humbly praise God for giving us His power to do His will.
- F. (5:12-14) Peter states his purpose in writing is for believers to find stability in God's grace, and then gives greetings and a benediction.
  1. (5:12) Peter's purpose for Silas to record this epistle was to encourage the readers to endure suffering based on their election through God's grace (cf. p. 278).
  2. (5:13) Peter sends greetings from a woman in Rome ("Babylon," cf. p. 277) and from Mark, the younger believer with him there in Rome (cf. Gospel of Mark).
  3. (5:14a) The recipients should also greet one another affectionately.
  4. (5:14b) The benediction notes that, despite their difficulties in suffering, believers can experience peace through Christ.

### Summing Up 1 Peter 5...

Humility and selflessness are two sides of the same coin—you can't have one without the other. Peter showed humility in his own life, and expected this of elders, young men, and the entire church.

- How are you doing in curbing pride in your own life?
- Would the person who knows you best agree that you are truly humble? What evidence would this person cite for genuine humility in your life?

### Summing Up 1 Peter as a Whole...

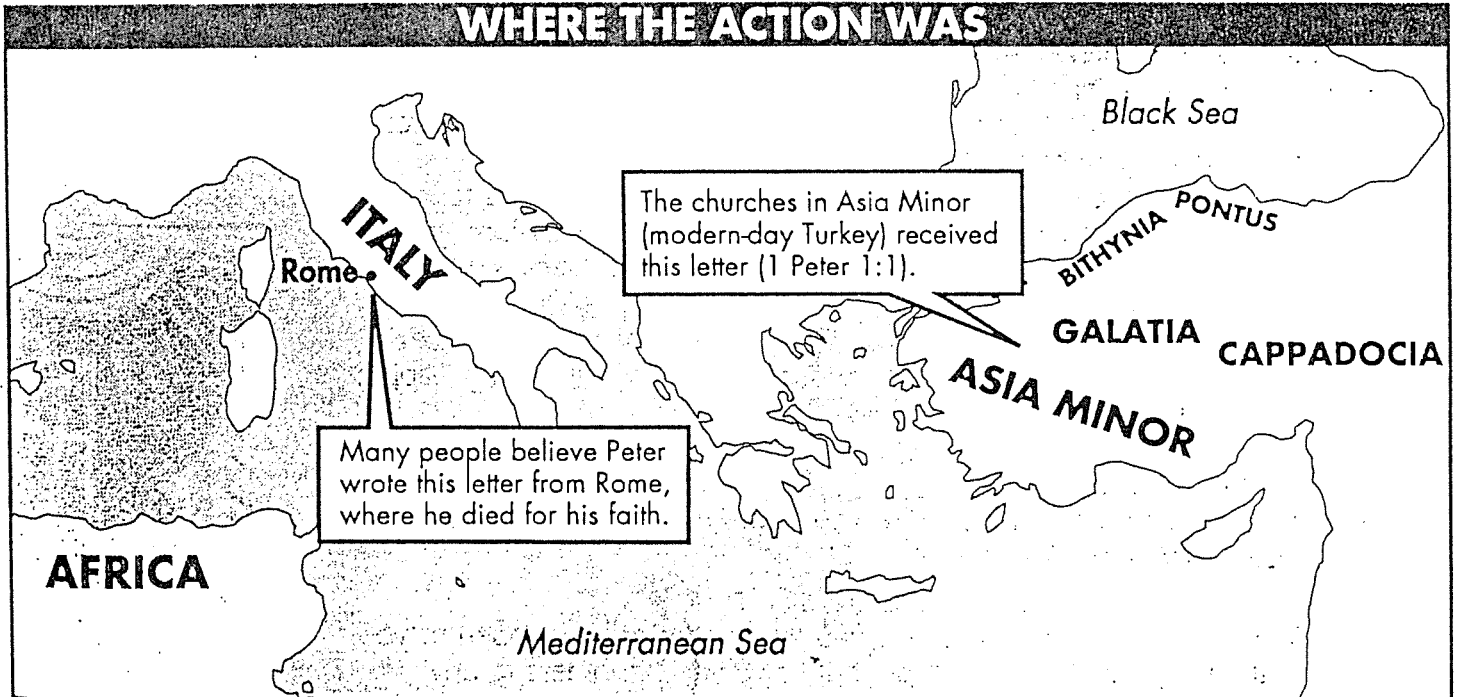
**Summary Statement:** Peter encourages north Asia Minor believers to *suffer properly for Christ* as holy, submissive, and selfless witnesses motivated by Christ's example and the hope of future glory to help them be people who *attract others* to hear their message.

**Application:** Your response to suffering for Christ will either draw unbelievers to Jesus or repel them. Do you suffer with integrity?

# Geography of 1 Peter

*The Student's Bible*

## WHERE THE ACTION WAS



# NT Keyword Crossword Puzzle

Created at <http://www.crosswordpuzzlegames.com/cgi-crosswordpuzzlegames/create>

It's time to review where we have come so far in the course. Take the next few minutes to review all the key words you remember up to this point. Put the ones you remember on the chart first, then if you need help go to page 24 for the answers. Have fun!

	1								2								3	
4									5				6					
					7													
			8						9									
																10		
	11																	12
														13				
14																		
				15														
16																		

### ACROSS

- 4. Matthew
- 5. 1 Timothy
- 11. Luke
- 14. 2 Corinthians
- 15. Galatians
- 16. 1 Corinthians

### DOWN

- 1. Mark
- 2. Acts
- 3. Philippians
- 6. 1 Thessalonians
- 7. Romans
- 8. John
- 9. Ephesians
- 10. 2 Thessalonians
- 12. 1 Peter
- 13. Colossians

# Submit to Government

*no matter what type...*

## Socialism

You have two cows...  
and you give one to your neighbor.

## Communism

You have two cows...  
the government takes both of them  
and gives you some milk.

## Fascism

You have two cows...  
the government takes both of them  
and sells you some milk.

## Nazism

You have two cows...  
the government takes both of them  
and shoots you.

## Bureaucracy

You have two cows...  
the government takes both of them,  
shoots one, milks the other,  
and pours the milk down the drain.

## Capitalism

You have two cows...  
you sell one and buy a bull.



# The Life of Peter

*The Word in Life Study Bible Nelson, 1996)*

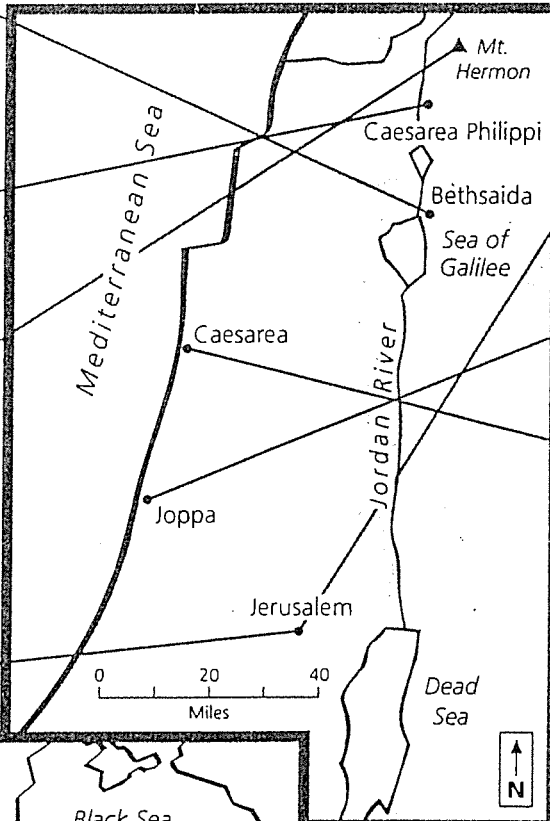
## THE LIFE OF PETER

1. Born at Bethsaida, Peter was called from his fishing nets on the Sea of Galilee to become Jesus' disciple (John 1:44; Luke 5:1-11).

2. In the region of Caesarea Philippi, Peter acknowledged Jesus as Messiah (Matt. 16:13-16).

3. Peter, James, and John witnessed the transfiguration of Jesus on a mountain, perhaps Mt. Hermon, in this region (Matt. 17:1-9).

4. Peter denied Jesus three times on the night before His crucifixion in Jerusalem (Matt. 26:69-75).



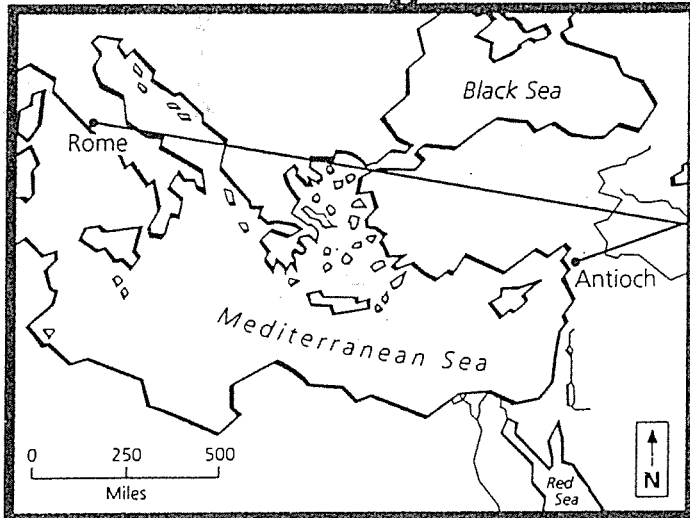
5. After His resurrection, Jesus appeared to Peter and the other disciples in the Upper Room in Jerusalem (Luke 24:33-43).

6. A bold witness in the early church at Jerusalem (Acts 2:14-41), Peter broadened his witness to include the Gentiles following a vision on the rooftop of Simon the tanner in Joppa (10:9-23).

7. Beginning at Caesarea, Peter traveled through Judea and Samaria, proclaiming Christ and witnessing to the Gentiles (Acts 10:24-11:18).

8. Peter made a bold appeal to the church leaders at Jerusalem to stop impeding Gentiles from coming into the faith (Acts 15:6-11). Yet on another occasion, at Antioch, Paul opposed Peter for distancing himself from Gentile Christians in order to save face with Jewish Christians (Gal. 2:11-14).

9. According to early church tradition, Peter was executed in Rome.



*Peter is listed first among those Jesus called to follow Him as disciples. To learn more about this important leader in the early church, see his personality profile at Mark 1:16, and "Peter, the First Disciple" at Mark 1:16-18.*

## Early Church Suffering

Pliny the Younger was governor of Pontus/Bithynia from AD 111-113. We have many of his letters with the emperor Trajan on political matters. These two are the most famous, in which Pliny encounters Christianity for the first time.

### Pliny, Letters 10.96-97

Pliny to the Emperor Trajan

It is my practice, my lord, to refer to you all matters concerning which I am in doubt. For who can better give guidance to my hesitation or inform my ignorance? I have never participated in trials of Christians. I therefore do not know what offenses it is the practice to punish or investigate, and to what extent. And I have been not a little hesitant as to whether there should be any distinction on account of age or no difference between the very young and the more mature; whether pardon is to be granted for repentance, or, if a man has once been a Christian, it does him no good to have ceased to be one; whether the name itself, even without offenses, or only the offenses associated with the name are to be punished.

Meanwhile, in the case of those who were denounced to me as Christians, I have observed the following procedure: I interrogated these as to whether they were Christians; those who confessed I interrogated a second and a third time, threatening them with punishment; those who persisted I ordered executed. For I had no doubt that, whatever the nature of their creed, stubbornness and inflexible obstinacy surely deserve to be punished. There were others possessed of the same folly; but because they were Roman citizens, I signed an order for them to be transferred to Rome.

Soon accusations spread, as usually happens, because of the proceedings going on, and several incidents occurred. An anonymous document was published containing the names of many persons. Those who denied that they were or had been Christians, when they invoked the gods in words dictated by me, offered prayer with incense and wine to your image, which I had ordered to be brought for this purpose together with statues of the gods, and moreover cursed Christ--none of which those who are really Christians, it is said, can be forced to do--these I thought should be discharged. Others named by the informer declared that they were Christians, but then denied it, asserting that they had been but had ceased to be, some three years before, others many years, some as much as twenty-five years. They all worshipped your image and the statues of the gods, and cursed Christ.

They asserted, however, that the sum and substance of their fault or error had been that they were accustomed to meet on a fixed day before dawn and sing responsively a hymn to Christ as to a god, and to bind themselves by oath, not to some crime, but not to commit fraud, theft, or adultery, not falsify their trust, nor to refuse to return a trust when called upon to do so. When this was over, it was their custom to depart and to assemble again to partake of food--but ordinary and innocent food. Even this, they affirmed, they had ceased to do after my edict by which, in accordance with your instructions, I had forbidden political associations. Accordingly, I judged it all the more necessary to find out what the truth was by torturing two female slaves who were called deaconesses. But I discovered nothing else but depraved, excessive superstition.

I therefore postponed the investigation and hastened to consult you. For the matter seemed to me to warrant consulting you, especially because of the number involved. For many persons of every age, every rank, and also of both sexes are and will be endangered. For the contagion of this superstition has spread not only to the cities but also to the villages and farms. But it seems possible to check and cure it. It is certainly quite clear that the temples, which had been almost deserted, have begun to be frequented, that the established religious rites, long neglected, are being resumed, and that from everywhere sacrificial animals are coming, for which until now very few purchasers could be found. Hence it is easy to imagine what a multitude of people can be reformed if an opportunity for repentance is afforded.

### Trajan to Pliny

You observed proper procedure, my dear Pliny, in sifting the cases of those who had been denounced to you as Christians. For it is not possible to lay down any general rule to serve as a kind of fixed standard. They are not to be sought out; if they are denounced and proved guilty, they are to be punished, with this reservation, that whoever denies that he is a Christian and really proves it—that is, by worshiping our gods—even though he was under suspicion in the past, shall obtain pardon through repentance. But anonymously posted accusations ought to have no place in any prosecution. For this is both a dangerous kind of precedent and out of keeping with the spirit of our age.

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## Unjust Suffering

Alan Andrews (Navigators) at Grace Baptist Church, June 1994

### Part I. Three Common Realities to All Believers

- A. New Birth (1:3)
- B. Certain Suffering (1:6, 4:12)
- C. Sure Inheritance (1:4)

### Part II. Resources for Enduring Unjust Suffering

- A. Living Hope (1:3)
- B. Living Word (1:23)
- C. Living Stones (2:5)

### Part III. Sources of Unjust Suffering

- A. Authorities instituted among men (2:13)
- B. Employers (2:18-20)
- C. Family (3:1-7)
- D. Church leaders (5:1-4)
- E. Unbelievers (4:3-4)

### Part IV. Responses to Suffering

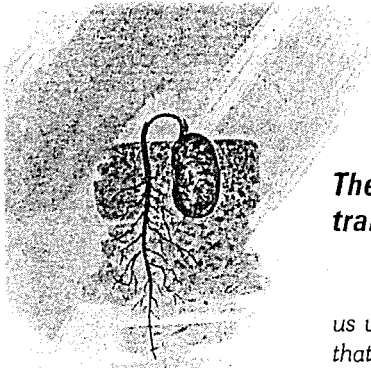
- A. Be self controlled in your mind (1:13; 4:7; 5:8)
- B. Desire the pure milk of the Word (2:2)
- C. Imitate the model of Jesus in his suffering (2:21-25; 4:1,2; 4:12-19)
- D. Know your God-given identity (2:4-10)
- E. As Kingdom citizens, live as strangers and pilgrims in this world (1:17; 2:11)
- F. Be submissive to authority (2:13-17; 2:18-20; 3:1-6; 5:5)
- G. Live in harmony, sympathy, and love with one another (3:8; 4:8-9)
- H. Bless those who are our enemies (3:9-12)
- I. Humble ourselves under God's mighty hand (5:6)
- J. Cast our anxieties on the Lord in prayer (3:7; 4:7; 5:7)
- K. Resist the devil and stand firm in the faith (5:9)
- L. Shepherd the flock of believers (5:1-4)

### Part V. Benefits Resulting from Endured Suffering

- A. Proven faith (1:7); praise, glory, and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed (1:7)
- B. Restoration, strength, firmness, steadfastness (5:10)
- C. Exaltation (5:6)

# Definitions of Suffering

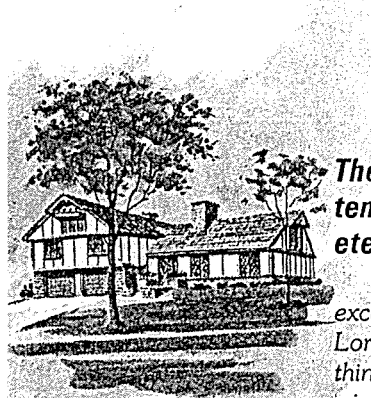
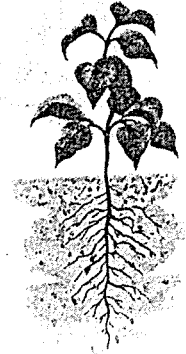
Bill Gothard, *Birthday Greetings* (Institute in Basic Youth Conflicts, 1987)



## Suffering

**The fertile soil into which God transplants every growing Christian**

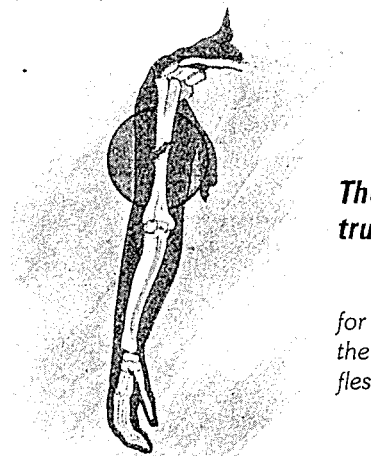
*"But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you" (I Peter 5:10).*



## Suffering

**The motivation to take your eyes off temporal things so that you can see eternal realities**

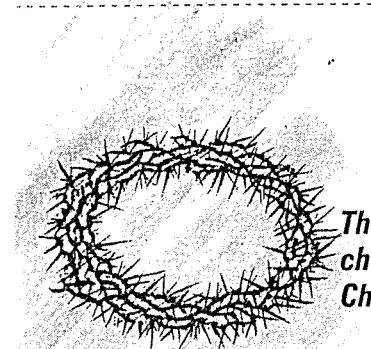
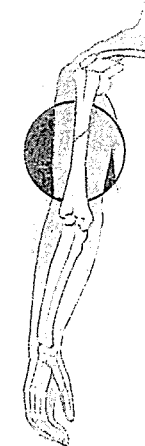
*"... I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ" (Philippians 3:8).*



## Suffering

**The pain that is required in order for true healing to take place**

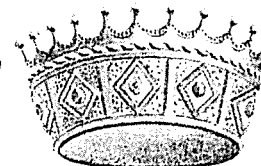
*"Forasmuch then as Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves likewise with the same mind: for he that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin" (I Peter 4:1).*



## Suffering

**The confirmation that you have been chosen for special leadership with Christ in His Kingdom**

*"If we suffer, we shall also reign with him . . ." (II Timothy 2:12).*



# Palm Trees and Suffering

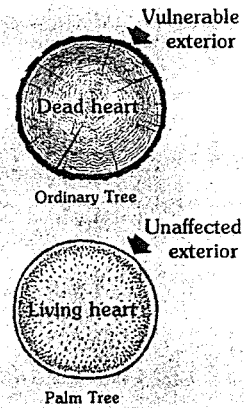
Bill Gothard, *Birthday Greetings* (Institute in Basic Youth Conflicts, 1986)



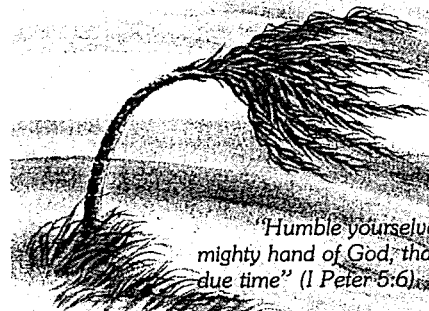
## PALM TREES CAN WITHSTAND ABUSE

- While the hearts of ordinary trees are dead, the heart of the palm tree is alive.
- Because the life of the palm tree is on the inside, outward abuse does not affect its life or quality of fruit.

"... though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day." (II Corinthians 4:16)



## PALM TREES CAN ENDURE STORMS



- Strong winds will break ordinary trees.
- The palm tree will bow to the ground and spring back when the winds have passed.

"Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time" (1 Peter 5:6)



Ordinary leaves collect wind.



Wind cannot "grab hold" of palm leaves.

## PALM TREES CAN SURVIVE DROUGHT

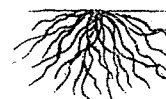


- Each palm root is the same size at its stem and its base; therefore, it cannot be pulled up easily.
- Because palm trees send their roots deep into the ground, they are able to tap resources of nourishment that are not available on the surface.

"... Take root downward, and bear fruit upward" (Isaiah 37:31).



Ordinary roots taper and branch.



Each palm root is thick and strong.

## THE OLDER A PALM TREE GROWS, THE SWEETER ITS FRUIT BECOMES



- Ordinary fruit trees diminish their yield as they grow older.
- Palm trees do not bear fruit until they mature, a process sometimes requiring up to fifty years.
- As palm trees age, their fruit grows sweeter.

"They shall still bring forth fruit in old age; they shall be fat [healthy] and flourishing" (Psalm 92:14).



Sleek trunk gives ordinary fruit.



Scarred trunk gives sweeter fruit.

## The “Spirits in Prison” of 1 Peter 3:18-20

One of the most problematic NT passages is 1 Peter 3:18-20, which states...

<sup>18</sup>For Christ died for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God. He was put to death in the body but made alive by the Spirit, <sup>19</sup>through whom also he went and preached to the spirits in prison <sup>20</sup>who disobeyed long ago when God waited patiently in the days of Noah while the ark was being built. In it only a few people, eight in all, were saved through water.

Several attempts seek to answer six questions about this event: when it occurred, who preached, what was preached, to whom the message was preached, where it was preached, and the reason for the preaching (adapted from Grudem, *1 Peter*, TNTC, 204; Davids, *1 Peter*, NICNT, 138-39):

	Time	Messenger	Content	Spirits/Place	Purpose
1	Noah's day	Christ in Noah	Repentance/ righteousness	Live humans on earth (but now spirits in hell)	Judgment
2	Between Christ's Death & Resurr.	Christ	Gospel	Dead unsaved humans in Hades who perished in Noah's flood	Judgment
3	Between Christ's Death & Resurr.	Christ	Gospel	Dead unsaved humans in Hades from OT times	Second chance to believe
4	Between Christ's Death & Resurr.	Christ	Defeat of Death	Dead unsaved humans in Hades from OT times	Judgment
5	Between Christ's Death & Resurr.	Christ	Release	Dead humans in Purgatory who repented just before dying in Noah's flood	Lead them to heaven
6	Between Christ's Death & Resurr.	Christ	Redemption	Dead saved humans in Hades	Lead them to heaven
7	Between Christ's Death & Resurr.	Christ	Defeat of Death	Imprisoned angels of Genesis 6 in Tartarus	Victory of Resurrection
8	Between Christ's Death & Resurr.	Christ	Defeat of Death	Imprisoned angels of Genesis 6 in Tartarus	Victory of Resurrection
9	After Christ's Resurrection	Christ	Invasion of Place of Demon Refuge	Demonic offspring of fallen angels of Genesis 6 in the earth	Victory of Resurrection
10	After Angels Fell in Genesis 6	Enoch	Word of Judgment	Spirits of fallen angels of Genesis 6	Judgment

It is my opinion that views 3 and 5 have the least support (both contextually and theologically) and that view #8 has the best evidence. However, each of the above views are surveyed with both their strengths and weaknesses in the following study...

**Analysis of Views:**

#1. Noah preached repentance to his generation who are now in Hades.

A. Advocates: Augustine, Aquinas, Leighton, 354-66; Zahn, 289; Guthrie, *NTI*, 842; Grudem, 156-57, 205.

B. Strengths

1. The relative pronoun in 1 Peter often changes from its immediate antecedent in a transition from one section to another, so the “whom” of verse 19 need not refer to Christ (1:6, 8, 10; 2:4, 22; 3:21; Grudem, 157).
2. Peter says Christ preached through prophets (1 Pet. 1:11; 2 Pet. 2:5; cf. 2 Cor. 13:3).
3. Noah and Peter’s readers shared in common many characteristics such as being a righteous, persecuted minority (Grudem, 160-61).

C. Weaknesses

1. A new section is not being addressed here, so the force of the above pronoun argument is not applicable here.
2. Although 1 Peter 2:5 says that Noah was a preacher, this is not taught in the present text before us. Rather, the subject of the verb in verse 18 (“Christ died...”) continues into verse 19 when it notes that “he went...”
3. Christ inspiring prophets is not the same as Christ himself preaching and there are no other parallels to Christ temporarily inhabiting OT characters (Marshall, 124)..
4. Actually, *Christ* is the model of righteous suffering here—not Noah. The reference to Noah shows only the time in which the spirits lived.
5. This view doesn’t relate the event to the death and resurrection of Christ which is noted in the context. This event occurred after Christ was *made alive*.

#2. Christ preached judgment to unsaved human spirits in Hades who died in Noah’s flood.

A. Advocates: C. E. B. Cranfield, “An Interpretation of 1 Peter iii.19 and iv.6” *ExpT* 69 (1957-58), 369-72; E. Stauffer, *New Testament Theology*, trans. J. Marsh (London, 1955), 133-34; also commentators Beare, Goppelt, Windisch, and Wand.

B. Strengths

1. The view addresses both Noah’s and Christ’s involvement in the event.
2. This view sees the recipients as remaining unsaved and since the message is one of judgment it avoids the problematic “second chance to believe” theory.

C. Weaknesses

1. In the NT “spirits” always refers to nonhuman spiritual beings (angels) unless specifically noted as human (verses cited under view #7).
2. This view does not explain why Noah’s generation is singled out in particular among the numerous wicked generations.

#3. Christ preached a second chance to accept the gospel to unsaved human spirits in Hades.

A. Advocates: Reicke, 90-91, 118, 120-22, 130-31; Cranfield, 84-86; Hart, 68-69 (to repentant disobedient angels); Bigg, 162-63; Beare, 170-73; Best, 140-47. This view is called “further probation” and is taught by Franz Delitzsch (19th century scholar) and modern “evangelicals” such as Dale Moody (1962), Donald Bloesch, and Clark Pinnock.

B. Strengths

1. The idea of providing a “second chance” would at first seem to be consistent with the compassionate nature of Christ.
2. Other texts are used to support the idea of a second chance to believe. Appeal is made to Isaiah 26:19; John 5:25-29; Ephesians 4:8, and 1 Peter 4:6.

C. Weaknesses

1. The text nowhere states that any second chance to believe is provided for the recipients of the message, so this is an argument from silence.
2. Hebrews 9:27 notes that judgment (not opportunity to believe) follows after the death of each person. It says “man is destined to die once, and after that to face judgment.”
3. Where persons end up immediately after death is a fixed condition with no “crossing over” possible (Luke 16:26; cf. 13:28). In parabolic form the irreversibility of one’s state is indicated as the door being shut (Matt. 25:10-12; Luke 13:22-30).
4. Why would a second chance to believe be offered to pre-cross persons but not to post-cross persons? Yet to argue for post-death opportunities to believe today is clearly unscriptural as the above indicates.
5. The distinction between this view and the Catholic concept of purgatory is difficult to determine except that punishment is downplayed. Therefore, many of the arguments against purgatory under view #5 below would apply here as well.

#4. Christ announced victory over unsaved human spirits in Hades whose condemnation was final.

A. Advocates: Lenski, 160-69 and many 17th-century supporters (cited by Reicke, 44-45, who calls this the “Orthodox Lutheran theory”).

B. Strengths

1. This view acknowledges Christ as the preacher.
2. The timing of this event would make sense.
3. It does not argue an unscriptural “second chance” theology.

C. Weaknesses

1. “Spirits” when unqualified never refers to humans in the NT (only to angels).
2. The concept of preaching to the dead is a foreign idea to the NT.

#5. Christ released human spirits from Purgatory because they repented at Noah’s Flood.

A. Advocates: Robert Bellarmine (AD 1586) first proposed this view that is now common among Roman Catholic commentators (e.g., H. Willmering, *A Catholic Commentary on Holy Scripture*, [London: Nelson, 1953], 1179).

B. Strengths

1. The concept of purgatory stems from a compassionate God.
2. This view does bring into account both the contexts regarding Christ and Noah.



## C. Weaknesses

1. The place where these spirits were held was a “prison” which seems an odd description of the place of the righteous.
  2. Why would people who repented before death be held in purgatory (if it existed) for the unsaved anyway?
  3. The scriptural basis for purgatory is lacking. The following shows that a temporary place of punishment for those eventually going to heaven does not exist:
    - a. Even Catholics admit that purgatory is *not taught in the Bible*. Support used to be sought in some verses (e.g., Isa. 4:4; Micah 7:8; 1 Cor. 3:13-15), but even these are rarely cited by Catholics anymore. Hayes says that “although there is no clear textual basis in Scripture for the later doctrine of purgatory, neither is there anything that is clearly contrary to that doctrine” (Hayes, in *Four Views on Hell*, ed. William Crockett, 107). In response, Scripture clearly says that punishment is “for ever and ever” (Rev. 20:10). Also, no text can be found that indicates a second chance to believe after death.
    - b. *Support for purgatory is mostly found in the Apocrypha*. Appeal for centuries has been to Judas Maccabeus in 2 Maccabees 12:41-46 (c. 200 BC), who discovered that some of his men killed in battle were wearing pagan amulets. Judas took up a collection from his surviving soldiers and sent it to Jerusalem as an “expiatory sacrifice,” with the result, “And thus he made atonement for the dead that they might be freed from their sin” (v. 46).
    - c. *Hebrews 9:27* says “man is destined to die once, and after that to face judgment.” Where we are immediately after death is a fixed condition with no “crossing over” possible (Luke 16:26; cf. 13:28). In parabolic form the irreversibility of one’s state is indicated as the door being shut (Matt. 25:10-12; Luke 13:22-30).
    - d. *The foundation for purgatory is salvation by works*, which is destroyed when salvation by faith is seen clearly (Rom. 3:28; Gal. 2:21; Eph. 2:8-9). Believers are *in Christ* and enter God’s presence on this basis, not on their works.
- #6. Christ preached redemption through the Holy Spirit to saved human spirits in a place where they awaited Christ.

A. Advocates: John Calvin, *Hebrews, 1-2 Peter, 292-95*

## B. Strengths

1. Christ is seen to have done the preaching.
2. This view sees the recipients as already beneficiaries of the gospel and thus avoids the problematic “second chance to believe” theory.

## C. Weaknesses

1. “Prison” is taken in a non-hostile sense.
2. These people disobeyed (v. 20) which is an unlikely description of believers.

- #7. Between his death and resurrection, Christ proclaimed triumph over imprisoned, fallen angels who married women before the flood.
- A. Advocates: Peter H. Davids, 140; Selwyn, 197-203, 314-62; Dalton, 135-201; Kelly, 151-58, Fitzmyer, *JBC*, 2:366-67; Stibbs/Walls, 142-43; Blum, 241-43; Leaney, 50-52; France, 264-81; Marshall, 128. This is probably the most widely held view today.
- B. Strengths
1. "Spirits" can refer to angels as much as to humans (1 Enoch uses it both ways) and in the NT "spirits" always refers to nonhuman spiritual beings (angels) unless specifically noted as human (Matt. 12:45; Mark 1:23, 26; 3:30; Luke 10:20; Acts 19:15-16; 16:16; 23:8-9; Eph. 2:2; Heb. 1:14; 12:9, 23; Rev. 16:13, 14).
  2. Angels ("sons of God") were involved in the disobedience of cohabiting with women while Noah built the ark (Gen. 6).
  3. This view of fallen angels being imprisoned was a commonly held interpretation during the first century (e.g., 1 Enoch 21:6, 10). In fact, a proclamation to these spirits in prison was a proclamation of judgment (1 Enoch 16:3).
  4. Peter gives a clear indication of imprisoned angels in Tartarus in 2 Peter 2:4.
  5. "In the NT the Greek term *kerysso* normally refers to the proclamation of the kingdom of God or the gospel (e.g., 1 Cor. 9:27), but it does on a few occasions retain its secular meaning of 'proclaim' or 'announce' (e.g., Luke 12:3; Rom. 2:21; Rev. 5:2). Furthermore, while Peter refers to the proclamation of the gospel clearly four times, he never uses this verb to do so. Although the NT never speaks of evangelizing anyone's spirits, it does speak of the victory of Christ over spirits (e.g., 2 Cor. 2:14; Col. 2:15; Rev. 12:7-11; cf. Eph. 6:11-12, which implies the same, and Isa. 61:1; Jon. 3:2, 4 in the LXX)" (Davids, 140-41).
- C. Weaknesses
1. Never are angels said to have disobeyed during the building of the ark (though they did disobey just prior to this).
  2. This view argues on the less likely (secular) meaning of the word for "preached" (which is not impossible but only unusual).
  3. This view assumes the possibility of sexual relations between angels and humans. (Yet an alternate view is that angels possessed human kings who committed the immorality; thus both the humans and the angels would be judged for the sin.)
- #8. Between his death and resurrection, Christ proclaimed triumph over imprisoned, fallen angels who possessed rulers and these rulers in turn married women before the flood.
- A. Advocates: I am the only advocate I know of this view though probably many others hold to it as well as me.
- B. Strengths
1. This view has the five strengths of view #7 above.
  2. It also avoids the problem of angels marrying humans, which seems impossible according to Christ in Matthew 22:30, "At the resurrection people will neither marry nor be given in marriage; they will be like the angels in heaven."
- C. Weaknesses (same as 1 and 2 above but without weakness #3)

1. Never are angels said to have disobeyed during the building of the ark (though they did disobey just prior to this).
  2. This view argues on the less likely (secular) meaning of the word for “preached” (which is not impossible but only unusual).
- #9. Christ proclaimed an invasion of the refuge of demonic offspring of fallen angels of Genesis 6.
- A. Advocates: J. R. Michaels, 205-11
  - B. Strengths
    1. Christ did invade and disarm the demonic sphere following his death (Col. 2:15).
    2. This view adheres to the normal meaning of “spirits” as denoting angels.
  - C. Weaknesses
    1. It is highly unlikely that demons have offspring (can reproduce themselves).
    2. One wonders why, even if demonic offspring existed, they would have to be punished for the sins of their “parent demons.”
- #10. Enoch preached judgment to the fallen angels of Genesis 6.
- A. Advocates: William Bower (AD 1772), E. J. Goodspeed, “Some Greek Notes,” *JBL* (1954), 91-92.
  - B. Strengths
    1. Enoch was indeed a preacher of righteousness.
    2. This perspective seeks to deal with the context which addresses Noah’s time (Noah and Enoch were contemporaries).
  - C. Weaknesses
    1. The passage never even mentions Enoch, so how can he be the subject?
    2. This view ignores the death and resurrection context concerning Christ.

## Civil Disobedience in Scripture

When God Does *Not* Want Us to Obey Authorities

Christians are obedient people—but sometimes *too* obedient! Read the texts below and fill in the missing areas so you can see when Christians should submit and when they should resist authority.

Passage	Authority's Command	Godly Response	Result
Jeremiah 35	God tested the Recabites by commanding to drink wine	They refused since their ancestor Recab had vowed for his descendants to be Nazarites who did not drink at all	
Daniel 1	King Nebuchadnezzar assigned defiled food to Daniel and his friends to eat (1:5)	Daniel respectfully appealed to be a vegetarian (1:8)	God rewarded them with better health (1:15), removal of the temptation (1:16), wisdom (1:17), and got the best jobs in the kingdom (1:18-21)
Daniel 3	King Nebuchadnezzar commanded three Jewish youths to worship an idol (3:1-7)	They did not mock those who did so, but they remained standing rather than bow to an object (3:8)	They were rescued from the furnace (3:19-27), causing the king to praise God (3:28-29) and promote them (3:30)
Daniel 6	King Darius prohibited Daniel to pray to any god but himself		
Acts 4:17-18; 5:40	The Jewish ruling council (Sanhedrin) commanded Peter and John not to share Christ		
1 Peter 2:13	The Emperor Nero killed those claiming to be Christians	Some refused and still worshipped underground	Many deserted the faith, while others died for Christ
Revelation 1:9	The Emperor Domitian outlawed Christianity	John continued to shepherd God's people	John was boiled in oil but miraculously survived and wrote the book of Revelation later.

*What lessons can you summarize from these biblical accounts of disobedience to authority?*

# 2 Peter

<b>Knowledge to Combat False Teaching</b>									
<b>God's Election</b>			<b>Future Apostasy</b>			<b>Lord's Return</b>			
<b>Chapter 1</b>			<b>Chapter 2</b>			<b>Chapter 3</b>			
Salutation 1:1-2	Provides Every Need 1:3-11	Foundation of Knowledge 1:12-21	False Teachers Coming 2:1-3a	End in Hell 2:3b-10a	Character Described 2:10b-22	Scoffers Before Rapture 3:1-4	Destroys Heaven & Earth 3:5-13	Motivates Holiness 3:14-16	Protection/Growth Exhorted 3:17-18
<b>Adequacy of Believers</b>			<b>Inadequacy of Unbelievers</b>			<b>Expectancy of Believers</b>			
<b>Holiness</b>			<b>Heresy</b>			<b>Hope</b>			
<b>Disciples of the Lord</b>			<b>Diabolical Leaders</b>			<b>Day of the Lord</b>			
<b>Rome to North Asia Minor</b>									
<b>AD 64</b>									

**Key Word:** Knowledge

**Key Verse:** “Therefore, dear friends, since you already *know* this, be on your guard so that you may not be carried away by the error of lawless men and fall from your secure position. But grow in the grace and *knowledge* of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and forever! Amen” (2 Peter 3:17-18).

**Summary Statement:** Peter reminds north Asian believers of their *knowledge* of the characteristics and future destruction of false teachers and of the grace of Jesus Christ in order to combat *false teaching* and stimulate *growth in godliness*.

**Application:** Never stop being a student of the Scripture. If you do, you will stop growing in grace and you will eventually tolerate and/or promote heresy. So what new things in His Word has God been teaching you lately?

# 2 Peter

## Introduction

**I. Title:** The Greek title (Πέτρον β' *Second of Peter*) follows the standard practice of naming the General Epistles after their authors.

### II. Authorship

A. **External Evidence:** The early tradition is divided whether Peter wrote this epistle, although most regarded it authentic. The views of the Church Fathers and early canons are summarized below by century (Hiebert, 3:134-37; cf. p. 36 of these notes).

#### Support 2 Peter as Authentic

#### Lack Mention of 2 Peter

1 <sup>st</sup>	Shows parallels with Jude (1:5 and Jude 3; 1:12 and Jude 5; etc.; cf. Hiebert 3:138) — This point could be argued either way, depending upon one's dating of Jude Possible allusions are in <i>1 Clement</i> (AD 95) and <i>Barnabas</i> (AD 70-130)	
2 <sup>nd</sup>	Vague Allusions: — Ignatius (AD 110) — Polycarp (ca. AD 110-150) — Justin Martyr (AD 150-155) — Irenaeus (ca. AD 185)  Probable Allusions (Quotes) — <i>Gospel of Truth</i> (Gnostic) — <i>Apocryphon of John</i> (Gnostic) — <i>Apocalypse of Peter</i> (Spurious)	Muratonian Canon (ca. AD 170) Old Latin Version (ca. AD 170) Old Syriac Version (ca. AD 200)
3 <sup>rd</sup>	Bodmer Papyrus (p <sup>72</sup> ) Firmilian, Bishop of Caesarea (AD 256) Methodius, Bishop of Lycis (quotes 3:8)	Origen (AD 185-253)-disputed Tertullian Cyprian Dionysius of Alexandria
4 <sup>th</sup>	Athanasius of Alexandria (AD 367) Basil the Great Epiphanes, Bishop of Cyprus Ambrose, Bishop of Milan Cyril of Jerusalem Hillary of Piotiers in Gaul Gregory of Nazianzus Augustine Council of Laodicea (AD 363) Third Council of Carthage (AD 397) Jerome's Vulgate (with doubt due to style)	Eusebius placed it among books widely accepted but disputed by some since: 1) Writers whose opinion he respected regarded it as noncanonical 2) Few earlier sources quoted it (However, he did not call it spurious)  Chrysostom Theodore of Mopsuestia (rejected it)
6 <sup>th</sup>	Syrian Church	

Note 2 Peter's acceptance by the fourth century councils despite the objections raised.

B. **Internal Evidence:** The liberal scholar Kümmel rejects Petrine authorship but candidly admits, "the letter clearly and unambiguously makes the claim that it was written by the apostle Peter" (Kümmel, 430). Then he cites the following evidence:

1. It says Peter was the author: "Simon Peter, servant and apostle of Jesus Christ" (1:1).
2. The author speaks as an eyewitness of the transfiguration of Jesus (1:16f.).
3. He makes reference to the saying of Jesus concerning the martyrdom of Peter (1:14).

4. Reference to the “beloved brother Paul” places the author on the same level of apostolic authority as Paul (3:15f.).
5. Second Peter clearly refers to 1 Peter: “This is already the second letter I am writing to you” (3:1).
6. “Since Peter regards his death as near (1:13ff), 2 Peter is written in the form of a testament of Peter.”

After presenting irrefutable internal evidence for Peter as author, Kümmel's very next statement denies the evidence by stating, “But this letter cannot have been written by Peter.” The following cites his six objections (Kümmel, 430-33) and rebuttals to each:

1. Objection: The literary dependence on Jude rules this out.  
Response: The unconfirmed assumptions are that Jude is postapostolic and that 2 Peter quotes Jude, but the opposite is true since Peter wrote first (AD 64 for 2 Peter and *ca.* AD 70-80 for Jude). Jude 17-18 quotes 2 Peter 3:3 as written by an apostle.
2. Objection: The language and style shows a Hellenistic flavor which not only rules out Peter, but his disciples as well.  
Response: Stylistic differences between 1 and 2 Peter can be explained in that Silas helped write 1 Peter (5:12) whereas Peter wrote 2 Peter by himself. Also, the letters deal with different subjects so the vocabulary should not be the same.
3. Objection: It argues against Gnostics who deny Christ's soon coming (1:12f; 3:3).  
Response: The unproven assumption is that the writing refers to second century Gnostics. There exists no reason that Peter couldn't have faced doubters in AD 64.
4. Objection: The author refers to Paul's collected letters as Scripture (3:16), whose interpretation is reserved for the ecclesiastical teaching office (1:20f.). This dates the letter “without doubt far beyond the time of Peter and into the epoch of 'early Catholicism'” (Kümmel, 432).  
Response: The “interpretation” of 1:20 refers not to that of a teaching office in the church. It says that prophecy did not come by any *prophet's* interpretation. Further, reference to Paul's letters as Scripture only provides proof that they were regarded as authoritative very early.
5. Objection: “The pseudonymity in 2 Peter is carried through consistently by means of heavy stress on the Petrine authorship” (Kümmel, 433).  
Response: In typical liberal fashion, Kümmel denies the evidence. If the letter did *not* emphasize Petrine authorship it would be spurious, and even if *does*, it is suspect! This “logic” exalts preconceived speculations over textual fact.
6. Objection: Second Peter is nowhere mentioned in the second century in spite of its heavy stress on Petrine authorship.  
Response: The lack of mention by early individuals, councils, and canons proves only that while most accepted it, some disputed it. The epistle was never rejected, so internal evidence must take priority over arguments from silence.

Conclusion: While some disputed the authenticity of 2 Peter, the evidence (especially internal) shows that Peter did in fact write this letter bearing his name. The book is markedly superior to the spurious books attributed to Peter—*Gospel of Peter*, *Preaching of Peter*, *Acts of Peter*, and *Apocalypse of Peter* (Guthrie, 845). The authenticity of the epistle is also confirmed in its language that is similar to Peter's speeches in Acts (Guthrie, 844).

### III. Circumstances

- A. Date: Peter was martyred in the spring AD 64 (Hoehner, 381-84). Second Peter was likely written in this same year as it was shortly before his death (2 Pet. 1:13-15).
- B. Origin: Both conservatives and critics agree that the evidence for the origin of 1 Peter in Rome undoubtedly applies to 2 Peter as well (1 Pet. 5:13; cf. 1 Peter notes).
- C. Recipients: In 1 Peter the apostle addresses “God’s elect, strangers in the world, scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia and Bithynia” (1 Pet. 1:1b). The readers were likely both Jews (the minority) and Gentiles (the majority) which Peter himself had nurtured (cf. 1 Peter notes). In 2 Peter he addresses the same group (2 Pet. 3:1).
- D. Occasion: Peter referred to his readers as “strangers in the world” (1:1b), reminding himself and them that this earth is not their home. Such a truth was especially needed since Nero was ruling Rome! In his letter Peter does not specifically refer to his imprisonment, unlike Paul, who calls himself as a “prisoner of Christ Jesus” in his Prison Epistles. However, it is clear that Peter expected the persecutions to take his life (1:14-15a), which in fact did take place, according to tradition. Within a few months after recording this letter, Rome burned (16 July 64) and Nero used the Christians as his scapegoat. Believers suffered the most horrible kinds of deaths in the ensuing four years. Peter wrote this epistle before his soon death as a reminder of truths his readers already knew (1:12, 15b; 3:17a) to stimulate them to wholesome thinking (3:1b)—both knowledge of error (3:17) as well as truth (3:18). Interestingly, he cared about orthodoxy in the midst of this suffering.

### IV. Characteristics

- A. Contrasts Between Peter’s Two Letters

	First Peter	Second Peter
<b>Nature of Problem</b>	Persecution (Hostility)	False Teaching (Heresy)
<b>Source of Problem</b>	External	Internal
<b>Theme</b>	Hope	Knowledge
<b>Key Word (all forms)</b>	“suffering” (16 times)	“knowledge” (16 times)
<b>Date</b>	early AD 64	early spring AD 64

- B. “Peter’s scenario from the creation of the present heavens and earth to the dissolution of the universe and creation of the new heavens and earth is one of the most astonishing passages in all of Scripture (3:5-13)” (*TTTB*, 480).
- C. This second letter of Peter has the most explicit teaching in Scripture on false teachers.

## Argument

Second Peter emphasizes knowledge, as is seen in the sixteen occurrences of the words for “knowledge” (ἐπίγνωσις 1:2, 3, 8; 2:20; ἐπιγινώσκω 2:21a, 21b; προγινώσκω 3:17; γνωρίζω 1:16; γνώσις 1:5, 6; 3:18; γινώσκω 1:20; 3:3; οἶδα 1:12, 14; 2:9). Peter seeks knowledge for his readers in three areas: a knowledge of God and His choice of them (ch. 1), a knowledge of the characteristics and destruction of future false teachers (ch. 2), and a knowledge of Christ’s return and the coming Day of the Lord (ch. 3). However, the apostle is not content with knowledge alone, stored in a reader’s head. This knowledge must work itself out in godly behavior (1:3-9; 3:11, 14, 18) and a cautiousness that protects them from being ensnared by heresies surrounding them (3:17). The last two verses of the epistle especially emphasize this dual purpose for knowledge: protection and maturity (3:17-18).



## Synthesis

### Knowledge to combat false teaching

- |          |  |
|----------|--|
| <b>1</b> | <b>God's election</b>                  |
| 1:1-2    | Salutation                             |
| 1:3-11   | Provides all that believers need       |
| 1:12-21  | Foundation of knowledge                |
| <br>     |  |
| <b>2</b> | <b>Future apostasy</b>                 |
| 2:1-3a   | False teachers coming                  |
| 2:3b-10a | End in hell                            |
| 2:10b-22 | Character described                    |
| <br>     |  |
| <b>3</b> | <b>Lord's return</b>                   |
| 3:1-4    | Scoffers precede rapture               |
| 3:5-13   | Day of the Lord destroys heavens/earth |
| 3:14-16  | Motivates holiness as Paul indicates   |
| 3:17-18  | Protection/growth encouraged           |

### What's Your View?

Please circle A (Agree), U (Unsure), or D (Disagree) before each of these statements:

- |    |   |   |   |  |
|----|---|---|---|--|
| 1. | A | U | D | God chooses those who will go to heaven                                |
| 2. | A | U | D | People on earth can know for sure whether they are going to heaven     |
| 3. | A | U | D | False teachers sometimes teach in evangelical churches                 |
| 4. | A | U | D | No one who has truly trusted Christ will stop trusting Him until death |
| 5. | A | U | D | Christians already have all they need for successful spiritual living  |

## Outline

### Summary Statement for the Book

Peter reminds north Asian believers of their *knowledge* of the characteristics and future destruction of false teachers and of the grace of Jesus Christ in order to combat *false teaching* and stimulate *growth in godliness*.

- I. (Ch. 1) Peter assures his readers that their knowledge of God and His choice of them has a firm foundation and provides them with all they need for godliness so they can fight successfully against the false teaching in their midst.
  - A. (1:1-2) Peter greets his north Asian readers with a blessing of God's knowledge received through faith in Christ as a foretaste of the letter's emphasis of knowing God in the face of false teaching.
    1. (1:1a) Peter introduces himself as a slave and messenger (apostle) of Jesus Christ so that the readers may know his authority in writing.

2. (1:1b) Peter wants his readers to know that their faith comes only through the righteousness of the Savior Jesus Christ, who is God [in Greek, the persons are one and the same].
  3. (1:2) Peter introduces his theme of **knowledge** in his blessing that notes that grace and peace come through knowing God the Father and Jesus our Lord [in Greek, the persons are distinct].
- B. (1:3-11) Knowledge of God's choice of us for salvation gives us everything we need for godliness.
1. (1:3-4) God's election of us gives us all we need to be like Christ.
    - a) (1:3) Every spiritual provision we need comes by knowing that God called us to salvation.
    - b) (1:4) God shows His glory and goodness in promises that lead us to Christ-likeness.
  2. (1:5-7) The purpose spiritual qualities should grow sequentially by believer's efforts is so that Christians can become pure and Christ-like ("participate in the divine nature," v. 4).
    - ↑
    - (1:7b) **Love**—*agape*, Christian concern and interest (cf. 1 Pet. 4:8)
    - ↑
    - (1:7a) **Brotherly Kindness**—love that seeks the best for family members (cf. 1 Pet. 1:22)
    - ↑
    - (1:6c) **Godliness**—good deeds like God (cf. 2 Pet. 1:3)
    - ↑
    - (1:6b) **Perseverance**—lit. "bearing under," patient endurance (cf. Jas. 1:3)
    - ↑
    - (1:6a) **Self-Control**—opposite to the world's lust and gluttony (cf. Acts 24:25; Gal. 5:23)
    - ↑
    - (1:5c) **Knowledge**—insight and understanding from Scripture (cf. 1 Pet. 3:7; 2 Pet. 3:18)
    - ↑
    - (1:5b) **Goodness**—morality, the opposite of evil (cf. 2 Pet. 1:3; Phil. 4:8)
    - ↑
    - (1:5a) **Faith**—our foundation and means to salvation (parentheses above = same word, different vv.)
  3. (1:8-9) Christians can affect their future by whether they grow in these qualities or not.
    - a) (1:8) One who continually grows in these traits will be effective based on his knowledge.
    - b) (1:9) A believer who doesn't show these spiritual qualities will be useless due to ignorance of his forgiven state.
  4. (1:10-11) Believers should live out their election in a continually growing spiritual life.
    - a) (1:10a) Express the virtues of verses 5-7 to show that your calling and election are sure.
    - b) (1:10b-11) Assurance of salvation has at least two wonderful benefits.
      - (1) (1:10b) Assurance leads to a stable spiritual life now that prevents apostasy.
      - (2) (1:11) Assurance leads to a more richly rewarded heavenly welcome later [at death or the Lord's return].

But how do *you* need to grow more like Christ the next 12 months? Luke 2:52 says Jesus grew four ways: in **wisdom** (*intellectual*), **stature** (*physical*), **favor with God** (*spiritual*), and **favor with man** (*social*). Surely if *Christ* had to grow in these four areas, you can set one goal in each area on the next page...

## Worksheet for Establishing Goals and Priorities by Rick Griffith

"You always have enough time to do all of God's will"

**Biblical Perspectives: Verses to claim**

- Ephesians 5:15-17 "Therefore, be careful how you walk, not as unwise men but as wise, making the most of your time, because the days are evil."
- Proverbs 3:6 "In all your ways acknowledge Him and He will direct your paths."
- James 4:17 (LB) "Knowing what is right to do and not doing it is sin."
- 2 Timothy 1:7 "For God has not given us a spirit of timidity, but of power and love and discipline."
- 2 Corinthians 12:9 "And He said to me, 'My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness.' Most gladly, therefore, I will rather boast about my weaknesses, that the power of Christ may dwell in me."
- Luke 2:52 "...Jesus kept increasing in **wisdom** and **stature**, and in **favor with God** and **man**."

**Specific Goals: Objectives to accomplish** \*\* Remember that you will be what you are now becoming!

<b>Wisdom</b> (Intellectual/Applied Knowledge)	<b>Stature</b> (Physical/Health)
Secular Reading (newspapers, magazines, books...)	Exercise (sports, calisthenics, jogging, on which days?)
Christian Reading (number of books, which books?)	Sleep/Rest (hours nightly, time to rise & retire, no naps?)
Development of Hobbies & Talents (music, gifts...)	Eating Habits/Nutrition (foods to avoid, when to/not to eat)
Planning (schedule priorities each day/week/month)	
<b>Favor with God</b> (Spiritual)	<b>Favor with Man</b> (Social/Relationships)
Quiet Time (time daily, where? when? notebook?)	Evangelism (times weekly, tracts to carry, with/to whom?)
Bible Study (times weekly, topics, Biblical books)	Discipleship (whom to follow-up/disciple, time needed)
Bible Reading (number of chapters/pages each day)	Family Commitments (time/letters to parents/children)
Bible Memory (number of verses/chapters/books)	Correspondence (whom to write/send tapes to regularly)
Prayer (use of prayer list, time, prayer for whom?)	Church Involvement (ministries, attendance, use of gifts)
Stewardship (% to give, missions, savings, budgeting)	Social Activities (dating/time with spouse, fun, T.V. limits)
Integrity/Dependability/Self-Discipline (tardiness)	Building Relationships (roommate, co-worker, neighbor)
	Emotional/Psychological (changing thought patterns)

## Attacks Against Scripture Today

*Which teachings do you hear today that seek to undermine the truthfulness of our faith?*

- 
- 
- 
- 
- 
- 

Even as early as AD 64 when many apostles were still living, false teachers questioned what the believers had been taught. Since Peter cared that his readers had an accurate knowledge of the truth they had heard, he responded in 2 Peter to these attacks.

- C. (1:12-21) Peter assures his readers that their knowledge of God has a firm foundation in apostolic witness and fulfillment of OT prophecy so they can confidently fight against false teaching.
1. (1:12-15) Since Peter already knows that Nero was about to execute him, he reminds them while still alive of the truth of God's election and provisions.
  2. (1:16-23) Two reliable sources (not teaching by false teachers) helped Peter remind his readers of these truths vital to their spiritual lives.
    - a) (1:16-18) He knows about Christ's power not due to cleaver second-hand tales from a false teacher but because he witnessed it at the Transfiguration.
    - b) (1:19-22) He knows about Christ's power because the OT prophets accurately predicted Christ in uninterpreted messages from God.
      - (1) (1:19) The apostles knew the OT prophets spoke truth like a light shining in darkness, so readers should heed their messages until the return of Christ.
      - (2) (1:20) No true OT prophet ever misinterpreted a prophecy.
      - (3) (1:21) The reason a true prophecy couldn't be messed up by the prophet was because it didn't originate in his own will but came from God and only used his mouth as a willing instrument of the Spirit's message.

## Summary of Prophetic Views

Grudem's View	Biblical View
Prophecy is declaring anything (true or false) that the Spirit brings to one's mind	Prophecy is declaring God's inspired and inerrant revelation to others
The above definition was invented in 1988 by Wayne Grudem	The above definition has been the teaching of the church for 20 centuries
OT prophets are parallel to NT apostles	OT prophets are parallel to NT prophets
God changed the definition of prophecy from the OT to the NT	God kept the meaning of prophecy consistent between the two testaments
God gives some prophecies with errors	God gives all prophecies without errors (2 Pet. 1:20-21)
Any believer can prophesy	Only those with the gift of prophecy can prophesy (1 Cor. 12:29)
There's two kinds of NT prophecy (fallible and infallible)	There's one kind of NT prophecy (infallible)
Fallible prophecy can be inspired	Fallible prophecy is false prophecy (Deut. 13:1-5; 18:14-20)
God sometimes lies	God always tells the truth since He cannot lie (Heb. 6:18)

Wayne A. Grudem, "Why Christians Can Still Prophesy: Scripture Encourages Us to Seek this Gift yet Today," *Christianity Today* (September 16, 1988): 29; cf. Grudem's book, *The Gift of Prophecy* (Eastbourne: Kingsway, 1988).

### Discussion Questions:

1. What should the church do today with a person who claims to be a true prophet of God but fails to fulfill any of these tests? For example, if one makes a prediction that proves false or the "prophet" falls into moral sin, should a local church stone him, rebuke him, remove him, or admit, "We all make mistakes"?
2. In light of this study, what do you think of this now popular definition of prophecy by Wayne Grudem: Prophecy is "telling something that God has spontaneously brought to mind"? Is it true prophecy even if it is erroneous? Why or why not?
3. Do you think Grudem's teaching that all believers can prophesy has biblical support (cf. 1 Cor. 12:29 vs. 14:1)? Support your answer.
4. What would you say to someone who claimed that his prophecy is inspired but not equal in authority to Scripture? (In other words, he argues for different levels of inspiration and/or inerrancy.) Support your answer.

### Time for Self-Evaluation:

Do you have secret doubts about whether the Bible has errors? What should you do about it?

**II. (Ch. 2) Peter warns of a future time of apostasy by describing these false teachers to assure his readers that their knowledge of God will be needed to recognize and defeat these apostates.**

- A. (2:1-3a) Peter warns of a coming apostasy in which heretics will exploit the church with false stories so that his readers might be prepared to defend themselves (this time had already come by the time of Jude about ten years later in AD 75).
1. (2:1a) Israel not only had true prophets in OT times (noted in 1:19-20) but false prophets also among them—a warning that false prophecy is not something new among God's people.
  2. (2:1b-3a) Peter briefly describes the false teachers so his readers can identify them soon.  
*What are the characteristics of these false teachers in verses 1b-3?*
- B. (2:3b-10a) The destiny of all apostates in hell shows that believers will be protected as much as apostates will be condemned.
1. (2:3b) Even though these teachers had yet to deceive, God had already condemned them.
  2. (2:4-8) God has a long history of judging the ungodly while protecting the righteous.
    - a) (2:4) Demons who sinned [probably by enticing rulers in Genesis 6 into immorality] have long been in Tartarus (hell) awaiting final judgment.
    - b) (2:5) Ungodly people died in the Flood while the godly Noah's family was spared.
    - c) (2:6-8) Sodom and Gomorrah were burned alive while righteous Lot was delivered.
  3. (2:9-10a) These three past examples of judgment and salvation show that in the future God will do the same.
    - a) (2:9) God will rescue the godly but judge the ungodly in the future and the present.
    - b) (2:10a) God especially judges heretics guilty of sexual sin and despising authority.

The preceding, scathing denunciation of these teachers even boldly declares that they will go to hell. But although Peter gave their general characteristics in verse 1-3, we still need a more *thorough description* of who these men are so we can recognize them and avoid their snares. The rest of the chapter does just that...

- C. (2:10b-22) An extended description of the heretics shows how to recognize them when they come.
1. (2:10b-12) The false teachers are rebellious.
    - a) (2:10b-11) They boldly slander demons while powerful angels do not even dare try this.
 

*\* Health and wealth teachers often curse “demons” of poverty, lust, gluttony, etc.!*
    - b) (2:12) They blaspheme like brute beasts without thinking, so they likewise will be ruined.
  
  2. (2:13-16) The false teachers are immoral.
    - a) (2:13a) The harm they have done others will befall them.
    - b) (2:13b) Their sexual sin is public.
 

*\* The popularity of many health and wealth “evangelists” has led to illicit sex.*
    - c) (2:13c) They eat with the saints but boast about their immorality.
    - d) (2:14a) They continually commit adultery.
 

*\* Jim Jones required all women in The People’s Temple to sleep with him at least once.*
    - e) (2:14b) They seduce those without firm footing in the faith.
 

*\* Dan Brown’s The Da Vinci Code seduces the naive to think that “Yah” was a “male deity” with a feminine consort (“Havah”), resulting in “Jehovah” and illicit temple sex!*
    - f) (2:14c) They greedily get their way to their own curse.
 

*\* A US\$1-2 million salary satiated Rev. Jim Bakker’s greed until his imprisonment.*
    - g) (2:15-16) They entice others into immorality like Balaam did to Israel (Num. 25:1-9) though a donkey rebuked him (Num. 22:28).
  
  3. (2:17-22) The false teachers are depraved unbelievers who ensnare others, even though they may have tasted the blessings of a righteous life.
    - a) (2:17) Hell is reserved for them just like a dry spring or waterless storm.
    - b) (2:18-19) They entice others into “free” sex while they are slaves to sex.
    - c) (2:20-22) They reject the knowledge of righteousness they once held so that their final state is even worse—like animals that once again soil themselves in filth.
 

*\* The end for Jim Jones was the death (suicide?) of nearly 1000 followers with him.*

For brief evaluations of hundreds of current teachers, see <http://faith.propadeutic.com/>

For Life Change: Which teachers in your experience must you warn yourself and your family about? How?

## ***Something to Think About...***

*What decision have you made differently due to knowing Christ could return at any moment?*

### **III. (Ch. 3) Peter exhorts godly living based upon the knowledge of Christ's return and the destruction of everything in the Day of the Lord.**

- A. (3:1-7) Apostates will live godlessly and scoff at the passing of time until Christ returns which should only stimulate us to live in light of the promise that Christ will indeed return.
1. (3:1-2) Both of Peters' letters remind his readers that both the OT prophets and NT apostles stimulated wholesome thinking.
  2. (3:3-7) Rather than the wholesome belief in creation and the Flood, end times scoffers will teach that no catastrophic event ever occurred—a belief designed to create doubt that God will climatically judge in the future as well.
    - a) (3:3) The appearance of scoffers shows that the Church Age actually comprises the “last days” before Christ returns (cf. 2:1; predicted by Jesus in Matt. 24:3-5, 11, 23-26).
    - b) (3:4-6) Scoffers doubt God on the assumption that nothing catastrophic ever happens.
      - (1) (3:4a) One of their key teachings is to make fun of Christians because Christ still hasn't come back.
      - (2) (3:4b) Another of their key teachings is uniformitarianism—the belief that the earth has continued in the same state since creation.
      - (3) (3:5-6) Uniformitarianism denies two catastrophic events: both Creation from water and the Great Flood from water.
    - c) (3:7) The same word of God that brought judgment by Flood also will judge the world and unbelievers by fire.
- B. (3:8-16) Knowing that the Day of the Lord [Tribulation + Millennium] will end with the heavens and earth being replaced with a new heavens and earth should motivate believers to godliness.
1. (3:8-10) Although God can patiently wait 1000 years (cf. Ps. 90:4) for more to trust in Christ, he will still destroy the “heavens” (atmosphere and stars), elements, and earth.
    - Do not confuse the patience of God with the omnipotence of God.



2. (3:11-16) Knowing the temporary nature of the present heavens and earth should motivate us to action in three ways.
  - a) (3:11-12) Knowing that this creation is temporary motivates *holy living* (separated from the world, used for God).
    - How does our knowing that the earth is temporary lead to holy living?
  - b) (3:13) Knowing that this creation is temporary helps us *long for our eternal home*.
  - c) (3:14) Knowing that this creation is temporary brings *peace with God*.
  - d) (3:15-16) Knowing that this creation is temporary helps us *understand God's patience* despite Paul being misinterpreted on this point.
    - (1) (3:15) Paul's letters show the same wisdom about God's patience as Peter that God waits to bring more into His family.
    - (2) (3:16) However, some unbelievers distorted Paul's difficult teachings as they also did to the other Scriptures [note that Peter considered Paul's letters Scripture along with the Old Testament!].
- C. (3:17-18) Knowing the ultimate destruction of false teachers and the grace of Jesus Christ will protect believers and stimulate growth in godliness.

*What does it mean that believing heresy could cause a Christian to "fall from his secure position"?*

1. Some say this means a Christian could lose his salvation. However, many passages in the NT affirm that the believer's position in Christ is permanent (e.g., John 3:16; 10:28-29; see also 1 John supplements on pages 296a-d in this NT Survey volume).
2. It is better to see this as referring to believers being led astray (1:10; Gal. 5:4).<sup>1</sup>

### Applying 2 Peter as a Whole

Do you feel that you are progressively growing "in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ" (3:18) like you should? What new habit can you start to better assure your growth continues?

<sup>1</sup> Dick Lucas and Christopher Green, *The Message of 2 Peter and Jude*, *The Bible Speaks Today* (Leicester, England: IVP, 1995), 156; Kenneth O. Gangel, "2 Peter," in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary* (Wheaton: Victor, 1983), 878.

## 52 Week Bible Reading Plan

<i>Week</i>	<b>Epistles</b> <i>(Sunday)</i>	<b>The Law</b> <i>(Monday)</i>	<b>History</b> <i>(Tuesday)</i>	<b>Psalms</b> <i>(Wednesday)</i>	<b>Poetry</b> <i>(Thursday)</i>	<b>Prophecy</b> <i>(Friday)</i>	<b>Gospels</b> <i>(Saturday)</i>
1	<input type="checkbox"/> Rom 1-2	<input type="checkbox"/> Gen 1-3	<input type="checkbox"/> Josh 1-5	<input type="checkbox"/> Ps 1-2	<input type="checkbox"/> Job 1-2	<input type="checkbox"/> Isa 1-6	<input type="checkbox"/> Matt 1-2
2	<input type="checkbox"/> Rom 3-4	<input type="checkbox"/> Gen 4-7	<input type="checkbox"/> Josh 6-10	<input type="checkbox"/> Ps 3-5	<input type="checkbox"/> Job 3-4	<input type="checkbox"/> Isa 7-11	<input type="checkbox"/> Matt 3-4
3	<input type="checkbox"/> Rom 5-6	<input type="checkbox"/> Gen 8-11	<input type="checkbox"/> Josh 11-15	<input type="checkbox"/> Ps 6-8	<input type="checkbox"/> Job 5-6	<input type="checkbox"/> Isa 12-17	<input type="checkbox"/> Matt 5-7
4	<input type="checkbox"/> Rom 7-8	<input type="checkbox"/> Gen 12-15	<input type="checkbox"/> Josh 16-20	<input type="checkbox"/> Ps 9-11	<input type="checkbox"/> Job 7-8	<input type="checkbox"/> Isa 18-22	<input type="checkbox"/> Matt 8-10
5	<input type="checkbox"/> Rom 9-10	<input type="checkbox"/> Gen 16-19	<input type="checkbox"/> Josh 21-24	<input type="checkbox"/> Ps 12-14	<input type="checkbox"/> Job 9-10	<input type="checkbox"/> Isa 23-28	<input type="checkbox"/> Matt 11-13
6	<input type="checkbox"/> Rom 11-12	<input type="checkbox"/> Gen 20-23	<input type="checkbox"/> Judg 1-6	<input type="checkbox"/> Ps 15-17	<input type="checkbox"/> Job 11-12	<input type="checkbox"/> Isa 29-33	<input type="checkbox"/> Matt 14-16
7	<input type="checkbox"/> Rom 13-14	<input type="checkbox"/> Gen 24-27	<input type="checkbox"/> Judg 7-11	<input type="checkbox"/> Ps 18-20	<input type="checkbox"/> Job 13-14	<input type="checkbox"/> Isa 34-39	<input type="checkbox"/> Matt 17-19
8	<input type="checkbox"/> Rom 15-16	<input type="checkbox"/> Gen 28-31	<input type="checkbox"/> Judg 12-16	<input type="checkbox"/> Ps 21-23	<input type="checkbox"/> Job 15-16	<input type="checkbox"/> Isa 40-44	<input type="checkbox"/> Matt 20-22
9	<input type="checkbox"/> 1Cor 1-2	<input type="checkbox"/> Gen 32-35	<input type="checkbox"/> Judg 17-21	<input type="checkbox"/> Ps 24-26	<input type="checkbox"/> Job 17-18	<input type="checkbox"/> Isa 45-50	<input type="checkbox"/> Matt 23-25
10	<input type="checkbox"/> 1Cor 3-4	<input type="checkbox"/> Gen 36-39	<input type="checkbox"/> Ruth	<input type="checkbox"/> Ps 27-29	<input type="checkbox"/> Job 19-20	<input type="checkbox"/> Isa 51-55	<input type="checkbox"/> Matt 26-28
11	<input type="checkbox"/> 1Cor 5-6	<input type="checkbox"/> Gen 40-43	<input type="checkbox"/> 1Sam 1-5	<input type="checkbox"/> Ps 30-32	<input type="checkbox"/> Job 21-22	<input type="checkbox"/> Isa 56-61	<input type="checkbox"/> Mark 1-2
12	<input type="checkbox"/> 1Cor 7-8	<input type="checkbox"/> Gen 44-47	<input type="checkbox"/> 1Sam 6-10	<input type="checkbox"/> Ps 33-35	<input type="checkbox"/> Job 23-24	<input type="checkbox"/> Isa 62-66	<input type="checkbox"/> Mark 3-4
13	<input type="checkbox"/> 1Cor 9-10	<input type="checkbox"/> Gen 48-50	<input type="checkbox"/> 1Sam 11-15	<input type="checkbox"/> Ps 36-38	<input type="checkbox"/> Job 25-26	<input type="checkbox"/> Jer 1-6	<input type="checkbox"/> Mark 5-6
14	<input type="checkbox"/> 1Cor 11-12	<input type="checkbox"/> Ex 1-4	<input type="checkbox"/> 1Sam 16-20	<input type="checkbox"/> Ps 39-41	<input type="checkbox"/> Job 27-28	<input type="checkbox"/> Jer 7-11	<input type="checkbox"/> Mark 7-8
15	<input type="checkbox"/> 1Cor 13-14	<input type="checkbox"/> Ex 5-8	<input type="checkbox"/> 1Sam 21-25	<input type="checkbox"/> Ps 42-44	<input type="checkbox"/> Job 29-30	<input type="checkbox"/> Jer 12-16	<input type="checkbox"/> Mark 9-10
16	<input type="checkbox"/> 1Cor 15-16	<input type="checkbox"/> Ex 9-12	<input type="checkbox"/> 1Sam 26-31	<input type="checkbox"/> Ps 45-47	<input type="checkbox"/> Job 31-32	<input type="checkbox"/> Jer 17-21	<input type="checkbox"/> Mark 11-12
17	<input type="checkbox"/> 2Cor 1-3	<input type="checkbox"/> Ex 13-16	<input type="checkbox"/> 2Sam 1-4	<input type="checkbox"/> Ps 48-50	<input type="checkbox"/> Job 33-34	<input type="checkbox"/> Jer 22-26	<input type="checkbox"/> Mark 13-14
18	<input type="checkbox"/> 2Cor 4-5	<input type="checkbox"/> Ex 17-20	<input type="checkbox"/> 2Sam 5-9	<input type="checkbox"/> Ps 51-53	<input type="checkbox"/> Job 35-36	<input type="checkbox"/> Jer 27-31	<input type="checkbox"/> Mark 15-16
19	<input type="checkbox"/> 2Cor 6-8	<input type="checkbox"/> Ex 21-24	<input type="checkbox"/> 2Sam 10-14	<input type="checkbox"/> Ps 54-56	<input type="checkbox"/> Job 37-38	<input type="checkbox"/> Jer 32-36	<input type="checkbox"/> Luke 1-2
20	<input type="checkbox"/> 2Cor 9-10	<input type="checkbox"/> Ex 25-28	<input type="checkbox"/> 2Sam 15-19	<input type="checkbox"/> Ps 57-59	<input type="checkbox"/> Job 39-40	<input type="checkbox"/> Jer 37-41	<input type="checkbox"/> Luke 3-4
21	<input type="checkbox"/> 2Cor 11-13	<input type="checkbox"/> Ex 29-32	<input type="checkbox"/> 2Sam 20-24	<input type="checkbox"/> Ps 60-62	<input type="checkbox"/> Job 41-42	<input type="checkbox"/> Jer 42-46	<input type="checkbox"/> Luke 5-6
22	<input type="checkbox"/> Gal 1-3	<input type="checkbox"/> Ex 33-36	<input type="checkbox"/> 1Ki 1-4	<input type="checkbox"/> Ps 63-65	<input type="checkbox"/> Prov 1	<input type="checkbox"/> Jer 47-52	<input type="checkbox"/> Luke 7-8
23	<input type="checkbox"/> Gal 4-6	<input type="checkbox"/> Ex 37-40	<input type="checkbox"/> 1Ki 5-9	<input type="checkbox"/> Ps 66-68	<input type="checkbox"/> Prov 2-3	<input type="checkbox"/> Lamentations	<input type="checkbox"/> Luke 9-10
24	<input type="checkbox"/> Eph 1-3	<input type="checkbox"/> Lev 1-3	<input type="checkbox"/> 1Ki 10-13	<input type="checkbox"/> Ps 69-71	<input type="checkbox"/> Prov 4	<input type="checkbox"/> Ezek 1-6	<input type="checkbox"/> Luke 11-12
25	<input type="checkbox"/> Eph 4-6	<input type="checkbox"/> Lev 4-6	<input type="checkbox"/> 1Ki 14-18	<input type="checkbox"/> Ps 72-74	<input type="checkbox"/> Prov 5-6	<input type="checkbox"/> Ezek 7-12	<input type="checkbox"/> Luke 13-14
26	<input type="checkbox"/> Phil 1-2	<input type="checkbox"/> Lev 7-9	<input type="checkbox"/> 1Ki 19-22	<input type="checkbox"/> Ps 75-77	<input type="checkbox"/> Prov 7	<input type="checkbox"/> Ezek 13-18	<input type="checkbox"/> Luke 15-16
27	<input type="checkbox"/> Phil 3-4	<input type="checkbox"/> Lev 10-12	<input type="checkbox"/> 2Ki 1-5	<input type="checkbox"/> Ps 78-80	<input type="checkbox"/> Prov 8-9	<input type="checkbox"/> Ezek 19-24	<input type="checkbox"/> Luke 17-18
28	<input type="checkbox"/> Col 1-2	<input type="checkbox"/> Lev 13-15	<input type="checkbox"/> 2Ki 6-10	<input type="checkbox"/> Ps 81-83	<input type="checkbox"/> Prov 10	<input type="checkbox"/> Ezek 25-30	<input type="checkbox"/> Luke 19-20
29	<input type="checkbox"/> Col 3-4	<input type="checkbox"/> Lev 16-18	<input type="checkbox"/> 2Ki 11-15	<input type="checkbox"/> Ps 84-86	<input type="checkbox"/> Prov 11-12	<input type="checkbox"/> Ezek 31-36	<input type="checkbox"/> Luke 21-22
30	<input type="checkbox"/> 1Thes 1-3	<input type="checkbox"/> Lev 19-21	<input type="checkbox"/> 2Ki 16-20	<input type="checkbox"/> Ps 87-89	<input type="checkbox"/> Prov 13	<input type="checkbox"/> Ezek 37-42	<input type="checkbox"/> Luke 23-24
31	<input type="checkbox"/> 1Thes 4-5	<input type="checkbox"/> Lev 22-24	<input type="checkbox"/> 2Ki 21-25	<input type="checkbox"/> Ps 90-92	<input type="checkbox"/> Prov 14-15	<input type="checkbox"/> Ezek 43-48	<input type="checkbox"/> John 1-2
32	<input type="checkbox"/> 2Thes	<input type="checkbox"/> Lev 25-27	<input type="checkbox"/> 1Chr 1-4	<input type="checkbox"/> Ps 93-95	<input type="checkbox"/> Prov 16	<input type="checkbox"/> Dan 1-6	<input type="checkbox"/> John 3-4
33	<input type="checkbox"/> 1Tim 1-3	<input type="checkbox"/> Num 1-4	<input type="checkbox"/> 1Chr 5-9	<input type="checkbox"/> Ps 96-98	<input type="checkbox"/> Prov 17-18	<input type="checkbox"/> Dan 7-12	<input type="checkbox"/> John 5-6
34	<input type="checkbox"/> 1Tim 4-6	<input type="checkbox"/> Num 5-8	<input type="checkbox"/> 1Chr 10-14	<input type="checkbox"/> Ps 99-101	<input type="checkbox"/> Prov 19	<input type="checkbox"/> Hosea 1-7	<input type="checkbox"/> John 7-9
35	<input type="checkbox"/> 2Tim 1-2	<input type="checkbox"/> Num 9-12	<input type="checkbox"/> 1Chr 15-19	<input type="checkbox"/> Ps 102-104	<input type="checkbox"/> Prov 20-21	<input type="checkbox"/> Hosea 8-14	<input type="checkbox"/> John 10-12
36	<input type="checkbox"/> 2Tim 3-4	<input type="checkbox"/> Num 13-16	<input type="checkbox"/> 1Chr 20-24	<input type="checkbox"/> Ps 105-107	<input type="checkbox"/> Prov 22	<input type="checkbox"/> Joel	<input type="checkbox"/> John 13-15
37	<input type="checkbox"/> Titus	<input type="checkbox"/> Num 17-20	<input type="checkbox"/> 1Chr 25-29	<input type="checkbox"/> Ps 108-110	<input type="checkbox"/> Prov 23-24	<input type="checkbox"/> Amos 1-4	<input type="checkbox"/> John 16-18
38	<input type="checkbox"/> Philemon	<input type="checkbox"/> Num 21-24	<input type="checkbox"/> 2Chr 1-5	<input type="checkbox"/> Ps 111-113	<input type="checkbox"/> Prov 25	<input type="checkbox"/> Amos 5-9	<input type="checkbox"/> John 19-21
39	<input type="checkbox"/> Heb 1-4	<input type="checkbox"/> Num 25-28	<input type="checkbox"/> 2Chr 6-10	<input type="checkbox"/> Ps 114-116	<input type="checkbox"/> Prov 26-27	<input type="checkbox"/> Obadiah	<input type="checkbox"/> Acts 1-2
40	<input type="checkbox"/> Heb 5-7	<input type="checkbox"/> Num 29-32	<input type="checkbox"/> 2Chr 11-15	<input type="checkbox"/> Ps 117-118	<input type="checkbox"/> Prov 28	<input type="checkbox"/> Jonah	<input type="checkbox"/> Acts 3-4
41	<input type="checkbox"/> Heb 8-10	<input type="checkbox"/> Num 33-36	<input type="checkbox"/> 2Chr 16-20	<input type="checkbox"/> Ps 119	<input type="checkbox"/> Prov 29-30	<input type="checkbox"/> Micah	<input type="checkbox"/> Acts 5-6
42	<input type="checkbox"/> Heb 11-13	<input type="checkbox"/> Deut 1-3	<input type="checkbox"/> 2Chr 21-24	<input type="checkbox"/> Ps 120-121	<input type="checkbox"/> Prov 31	<input type="checkbox"/> Nahum	<input type="checkbox"/> Acts 7-8
43	<input type="checkbox"/> James 1-3	<input type="checkbox"/> Deut 4-6	<input type="checkbox"/> 2Chr 25-28	<input type="checkbox"/> Ps 122-124	<input type="checkbox"/> Eccl 1-2	<input type="checkbox"/> Habakkuk	<input type="checkbox"/> Acts 9-10
44	<input type="checkbox"/> James 4-5	<input type="checkbox"/> Deut 7-9	<input type="checkbox"/> 2Chr 29-32	<input type="checkbox"/> Ps 125-127	<input type="checkbox"/> Eccl 3-4	<input type="checkbox"/> Zephaniah	<input type="checkbox"/> Acts 11-12
45	<input type="checkbox"/> 1Pet 1-3	<input type="checkbox"/> Deut 10-12	<input type="checkbox"/> 2Chr 33-36	<input type="checkbox"/> Ps 128-130	<input type="checkbox"/> Eccl 5-6	<input type="checkbox"/> Haggai	<input type="checkbox"/> Acts 13-14
46	<input type="checkbox"/> 1Pet 4-5	<input type="checkbox"/> Deut 13-15	<input type="checkbox"/> Ezra 1-5	<input type="checkbox"/> Ps 131-133	<input type="checkbox"/> Eccl 7-8	<input type="checkbox"/> Zechariah 1-7	<input type="checkbox"/> Acts 15-16
47	<input type="checkbox"/> 2Pet	<input type="checkbox"/> Deut 16-19	<input type="checkbox"/> Ezra 6-10	<input type="checkbox"/> Ps 134-136	<input type="checkbox"/> Eccl 9-10	<input type="checkbox"/> Zechariah 8-14	<input type="checkbox"/> Acts 17-18
48	<input type="checkbox"/> 1John 1-3	<input type="checkbox"/> Deut 20-22	<input type="checkbox"/> Neh 1-4	<input type="checkbox"/> Ps 137-139	<input type="checkbox"/> Eccl 11-12	<input type="checkbox"/> Malachi	<input type="checkbox"/> Acts 19-20
49	<input type="checkbox"/> 1John 4-5	<input type="checkbox"/> Deut 23-25	<input type="checkbox"/> Neh 5-9	<input type="checkbox"/> Ps 140-142	<input type="checkbox"/> Song 1-2	<input type="checkbox"/> Rev 1-6	<input type="checkbox"/> Acts 21-22
50	<input type="checkbox"/> 2John	<input type="checkbox"/> Deut 26-28	<input type="checkbox"/> Neh 10-13	<input type="checkbox"/> Ps 143-145	<input type="checkbox"/> Song 3-4	<input type="checkbox"/> Rev 7-11	<input type="checkbox"/> Acts 23-24
51	<input type="checkbox"/> 3John	<input type="checkbox"/> Deut 29-31	<input type="checkbox"/> Esther 1-5	<input type="checkbox"/> Ps 146-148	<input type="checkbox"/> Song 5-6	<input type="checkbox"/> Rev 12-17	<input type="checkbox"/> Acts 25-26
52	<input type="checkbox"/> Jude	<input type="checkbox"/> Deut 32-34	<input type="checkbox"/> Esther 6-10	<input type="checkbox"/> Ps 149-150	<input type="checkbox"/> Song 7-8	<input type="checkbox"/> Rev 18-22	<input type="checkbox"/> Acts 27-28

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Do you want to be more regular in your Bible reading? The above plan has such variety in weekly reading that it brings you through seven sections of Scripture each week.

# 1 John

Obedience in Love Combats Early Gnosticism		
Necessity of Obedience	Characteristics of Love	Benefits of Obedience
Chapters 1-2	3:1-5:3	5:4-21
Humanity of Christ Prerequisites to obedience Hindrances to obedience	Don't sin Don't hate believers Compassion Confidence before God Obey apostolic teaching Care for believers Obey God's commands	Victory over the world Assurance of salvation Guidance in prayer Freedom from sin Fidelity to God
Ephesus to Asia Minor Churches		
AD 85-95		

**Key Word:** Love

**Key Verse:** "I am writing these things to you about those who are trying to lead you astray... And now, dear children, continue in him, so that when he appears we may be confident and unashamed before him at his coming" (1 John 2:26, 28).

**Summary Statement:** John writes a general letter encouraging his readers to *obey God's commands by loving others* in order to protect them from *early Gnosticism* which denied either Christ's deity or humanity.

**Application:**

How can you show love to another believer so that heresy might be thwarted? Who do you know that needs to see Christian love demonstrated in order to turn from false teaching?



# 1 John

## Introduction

I. **Title:** The Greek title (Ἰωάννου ἁ *First of John*) follows the standard practice of naming the General Epistles after their authors and distinguishes this epistle from John's other two letters.

### II. Authorship

A. **External Evidence:** The letter of 1 John is the best attested of all the General Epistles.

1. Evidence for John's authorship is very early after its composition, starting with Polycarp—John's contemporary for 20 years (*Letter to the Philippians*; AD 110-135). Irenaeus quoted John as author of this epistle (*Against Heresies* 3.16.5; 3.16.8; ca. AD 185). Many other Church Fathers also accepted Johannine authorship: Clement of Alexandria (AD 155-215), Tertullian (AD 150-222), Origen (AD 185-253), Cyprian (AD 200-258) and all Latin and Greek Fathers. The Muratonian Canon and Old Syriac Version also attributed 1 John to John.

2. The major opposing views are: (a) a second "John" penned the epistle who was known either as "John the Elder" or possibly "John the Presbyter," and (b) a disciple of John wrote the book. In one statement, Papias seems to make a distinction between "John the Elder" and "John the Apostle" (Guthrie, 868-69, 886-87); however, elsewhere he uses the term "elder" to refer to the original apostles, so the "two men" should be interpreted as one and the same.

B. **Internal Evidence:** The contents of the epistle itself support the strong tradition for Johannine authorship. He is not mentioned by name, but he is an eyewitness (1:1-4) who carries great authority shown in the assertiveness by which he speaks (2:19; 4:6, 14). The style is also very similar to that of the Fourth Gospel.

### III. Circumstances

A. **Date:** Most conservative scholars date 1 John from AD 80-97 and liberals date it soon after (AD 90-110). The epistle does not mention any persecution, which lasted during Domitian's reign (AD 81-96). This may suggest a date just before AD 81 or after AD 96 (but is an argument from silence). At any rate, John was an old man in his eighties or older when he wrote. This course uses a date of AD 85-95 as it likely preceded Revelation (AD 95-96).

B. **Origin/Recipients:** The traditional view is that John wrote this epistle as a circular letter from his residence in Ephesus to the churches of Asia Minor (Hiebert, 3:199; Guthrie, 873-76). The admonition to keep oneself from idols (5:21) substantiates this tradition since idols were prominent in the pagan Graeco-Roman culture but rare in Israel.

C. **Occasion:** The epistle suggests that many antichrists had gone out into the world (2:18f.) and perhaps had even infiltrated the churches. Although Gnosticism did not develop into its worst form until the second century, an early (beginning) form of Gnosticism is evident in this letter. Gnosticism had two basic heretical elements: the exaltation of intellect (*gnosis*) and the belief that matter is inherently evil.

John combats two forms of Gnostic teaching in his letter that supposedly exalted the intellect:

1. Docetic Gnosticism denied the *humanity* of Christ (4:2-3), saying that He only *seemed* to be human (cf. *dokeo*, "to seem"), so John wrote that he actually touched Jesus (1:1).
2. Cerinthian Gnosticism denied the *deity* of Christ. Cerinthus, who lived near John in Asia Minor, taught that Jesus was only a man upon whom "the Christ" descended at His baptism but left before His crucifixion. John replied that Jesus Christ came both by water (His baptism) *and* by blood (His death), thus refuting Cerinthus (5:6).

The practical outworking of Gnostic belief that matter is evil also fell into two camps.

1. Some Gnostics reasoned that since matter is evil, one should avoid it at all costs, resulting in asceticism. (Asceticism is the attempt to remove oneself from all possible temptations to sin by withdrawing from society—some forms are called monasticism.) In his letter John attempts to defeat asceticism by encouraging fellowship among believers (1:7).
2. Other Gnostics took a more fatalistic attitude, thinking that since one cannot change the fact that matter is evil, any type of immoral aberration is acceptable. John especially responded to this latter philosophy (1:6, 8, 10; 3:4-10). His letter shows that obedience to God's commands, especially through loving others, is the best rebuttal to the practices of Gnosticism. He also sought to defeat immorality by exhorting obedience and righteousness (2:28-29).

<b>Docetic Gnosticism</b>	<b>Cerinthian Gnosticism</b>
From dokeo, "to seem" (Christ only seemed to be a man)	From Cerinthus, founder in Asia (Christ only seemed to be God)
Matter is Evil	Spirit is Good
Depreciated Materialism	Exalted Knowledge (gnosis)
Denied Christ's Humanity	Denied Christ's Deity
Touched Jesus (1:1)	Water & Blood (5:6)
Led to Asceticism	Led to Pride
Immorality exalted	Education exalted

#### IV. Characteristics

A. The literary characteristics are unique:

1. John makes several absolute statements, especially 1 John 3:6. Sometimes this verse is translated as, "No one who abides in Him *sins*" (NASB; held by commentators Kubo, Marshall, R. Brown, and Smalley). However, others interpret this with a habitual sense: "No one who lives in him *keeps on sinning*" (NIV; held by commentators Ross, Stott, Barker, Plummer, F. Stagg, and Zerwick). I think the absolute sense is more natural.
2. John's definition of abiding in Christ is clearly explained as obeying God's commands and loving one's brothers (2:28-4:16).
3. Teaching by contrast (antithetical parallelism) is abundant as John sees everything as black or white: light vs. darkness (1:5; 2:9-11), life vs. death (3:14; 4:12), love vs. hatred (4:20), new vs. old (2:7), Christ vs. antichrist (2:22), truth vs. falsehood (4:6), confidence vs. fear (4:17-18), love of the world vs. love of God (2:15), confession of sin vs. denial of sin (1:8-10), and sin leading to death vs. sin not leading to death (5:16).
4. The style is very simple and yet profound in meaning. Concepts are frequently repeated, but not monotonously (e.g., love, light, life, truth, and righteousness).
5. It surprisingly has not one Old Testament quotation and only one incident (Cain, 3:12).

B. A significant textual problem in 1 John 5:7 deserves attention. In the KJV this reads, "For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one." This provides the clearest statement of the Trinity in the Bible and thus has been forcefully defended by some KJV advocates.

However, this translation has a questionable origin (to the delight of Jehovah's Witnesses):

1. Alexandrian and Byzantine texts convincingly show this reading as an error. It is in only four Greek manuscripts—and the earliest is a 12th century manuscript (min. 88) with the added phrases scribbled in the margin! Thus, *thousands* of earlier manuscripts do not include it.

2. Despite its dubious origin, some questioned Erasmus in the 16th century why he did not include the verse in his *Textus Receptus* (his Latin translation from the Greek). He said that if anyone could show it to him in a *Greek* manuscript then he would include it. Someone promptly added it to a Greek manuscript (min. 61) and showed it to him. Although embarrassed, he then *had* to include it, even though he did not believe it was original. Unfortunately, Erasmus' *Textus Receptus* became the basis of the King James Version soon after, reproducing the error into the most popular English translation of the Bible. See D.A. Carson, *The King James Version Debate: A Plea for Realism* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1978), 34-35, 59-61.

## Argument

John's letter has at least five stated purposes: to promote fellowship (1:3), to produce joy (1:4), to protect holiness (2:1), to prevent heresy (2:26), and to provide assurance of salvation (5:13; *TTTB*, 483, adapted). This fivefold purpose makes the book difficult to summarize in a central theme or purpose and difficult to outline, especially since the subjects overlap. However, it seems that the general theme of obedience, especially demonstrated in loving others, encompasses all of the above purposes. The word "love" is used 35 times (NIV), so it is a huge emphasis.

Viewed in this manner, a simple outline of the epistle sees John exhorting obedience (chs. 1-2) seen particularly by loving others (3:1-5:3) which provides many benefits (5:4-21). These benefits are innumerable, but the most immediate benefit of obedience by love is the protection from early Gnosticism that it provides.

## Synthesis

### Obedience in love combats early Gnosticism

<b>1-2</b>	<b>Necessity of obedience</b>
1:1-5	Humanity of Christ (vs. Docetic Gnosticism)
1:6-2:14	Prerequisites to obedience
2:15-29	Hindrances to obedience
2:15-17	Worldliness
2:18-29	Deception
<b>3:1-5:3</b>	<b>Characteristics of love</b>
3:1-10	Don't habitually sin
3:11-15	Don't hate believers
3:16-20	Show compassion
3:21-24	Show confidence before God
4:1-6	Obey apostolic teaching
4:7-21	Care for believers
5:1-3	Obey God's commands
<b>5:4-21</b>	<b>Benefits of obedience</b>
5:4-5	Victory over the world
5:6-13	Assurance of salvation
5:14-17	Guidance in prayer
5:18-20	Freedom from habitual sin
5:21	Fidelity to God

## Outline

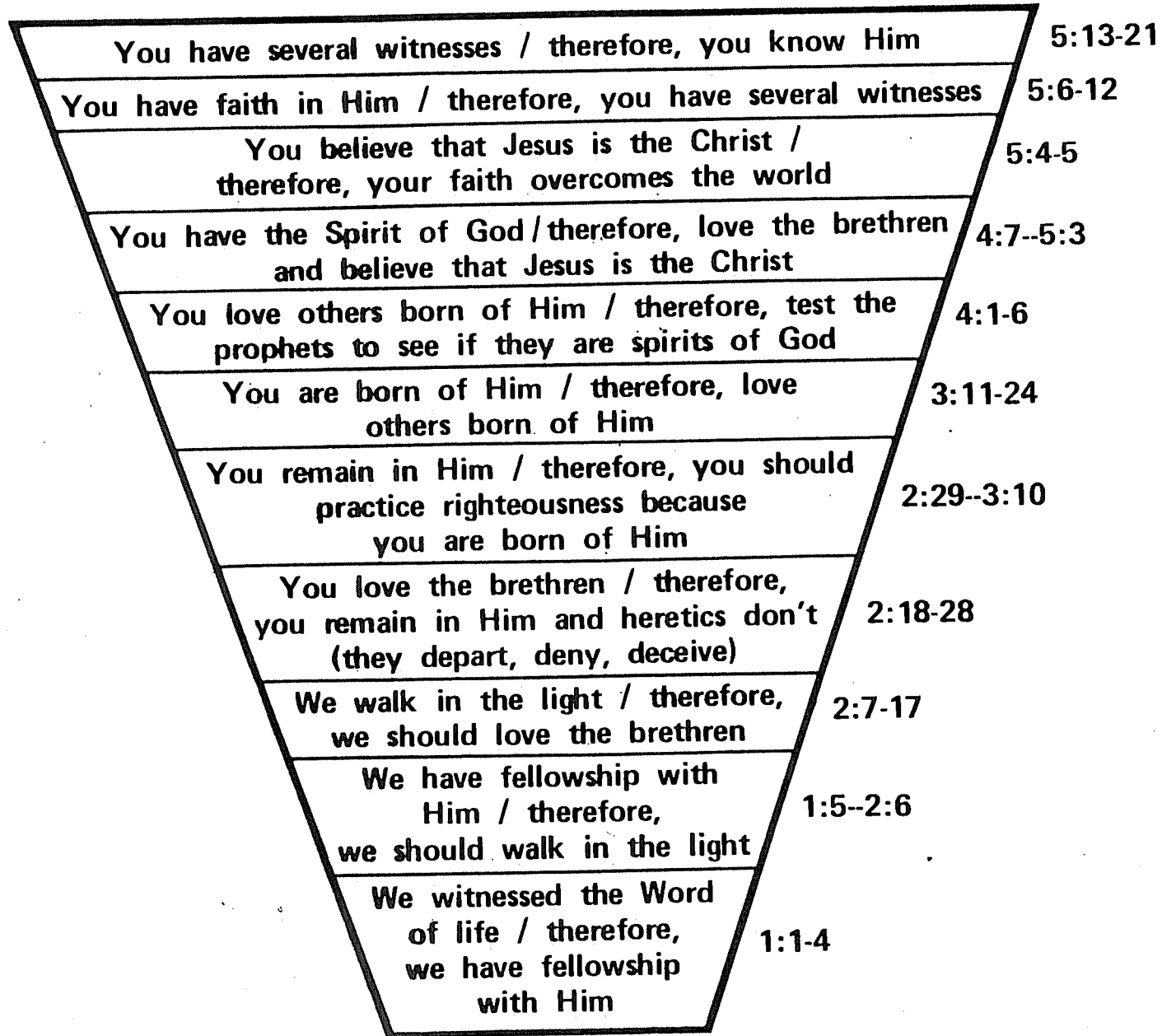
### Summary Statement for the Book

Believers must *obey God's commands by loving others* to be protected from *early Gnosticism* that denied either Christ's deity or humanity.

- I. (Chs. 1–2) Knowing the prerequisites to a life of obedience helps believers not be easily led astray into early Gnostic teaching and practice.**
- A. (1:1-5) John begins his epistle with a clear affirmation of the humanity of Christ and confidence that this rebuttal of Docetic Gnosticism will bring him joy by seeing fellowship among believers.
  - B. (1:6–2:14) John expresses the prerequisite to living in obedience is dependence upon Christ in order to protect the holiness of his readers.
  - C. (2:15-29) John explains the hindrances to a life of obedience in order to prevent the heresy of early Gnosticism from gaining a following from believers who are not protected by a life of obedience (“walk in the light” already noted in 1:7).
    - 1. (2:15-17) Worldliness among believers is cautioned so that they would not be easily led away into false teaching and practice.
    - 2. (2:18-29) Deception among believers is cautioned so that they would not be easily led away into the false teaching and practices of early Gnosticism.
- II. (3:1–5:3) Living in love defends against early Gnostic teaching and practice.**
- A. (3:1-10) An inability to sin when living in light of one's future conformity to the character of Christ characterizes one who genuinely loves.
  - B. (3:11-15) An inability to hate other believers characterizes one who genuinely loves.
  - C. (3:16-20) Compassionate acts characterize one who genuinely loves.
  - D. (3:21-24) Confidence before God because of righteous behavior characterizes one who genuinely loves.
  - E. (4:1-6) Obedience to the apostolic teaching rather than the error of Docetic Gnosticism characterizes one who genuinely loves.
  - F. (4:7-21) Caring for others as Christ did characterizes one who genuinely loves, since God Himself is love.
  - G. (5:1-3) Obedience to God's commands characterizes one who genuinely loves.
- III. (5:4-21) The consequences of a life of obedience motivate his readers to live obediently in the face of early Gnosticism.**
- A. (5:4-5) Victory over the world system results from a life of obedience.
  - B. (5:6-13) Assurance of salvation results from a life of obedience.
  - C. (5:14-17) Guidance in prayer results from a life of obedience.
  - D. (5:18-20) Freedom from habitual sin results from a life of obedience.
  - E. (5:21) Fidelity to God shown in avoiding idolatry results from a life of obedience.

**ASCENDING SPIRAL STRUCTURE IN 1 JOHN**  
 (Adapted from Lenski)

--Dr. Roy B. Zuck





## *The Da Vinci Code Heresy*

For free downloads of 224 English, 224 Mongolian or 145 Chinese PowerPoint slides that visually present these notes, go to the "Theology" link at <http://www.biblestudydownloads.com> or [http://biblestudydownloads.com/Mongolian/NT\\_Mongolian.html](http://biblestudydownloads.com/Mongolian/NT_Mongolian.html)

### I. THE INFLUENCE

A. Truth has always been attacked.

1. John was clear about the deity of Jesus Christ (John 1:1, 14).
2. Nevertheless, truth is always attacked, so Peter admonished us always to be ready to defend our faith with gentleness and respect (1 Peter 3:15).
3. Since the first century Christians have faced many challenges to their faith. Each century new heresies have forced us to articulate the truth about what we believe.

B. We are there again with Dan Brown's *The Da Vinci Code*. Its impact is incredible:

1. Released only in March 2003, the book sold 12 million copies by February 2005, so by then Brown had earned over US\$260 million in royalties. Sales passed 100,000 copies in Singapore alone.<sup>1</sup> This far surpasses Charles Sheldon's *In His Steps* (22 million copies sold) as the best selling fiction of all time.
2. Interest in *The Da Vinci Code* led to increased sales of his other three books, adding another US\$100 million to his pockets. By May 2006 it sold over 45 million copies worldwide, as it has been a bestseller in over 100 countries—second only to the Bible.
3. It has been translated into over 44 languages as well as spawning board games and at least 30 other books in its wake—both in support of its thesis as well as critiques.
4. *The Da Vinci Code* movie was released worldwide in May 2006 with a computer game that followed.

### II. THE PLOT

- A. The story involves characters that try to answer why Silas, a Catholic (Opus Dei order) monk, kills the curator (Jacques Saunière) of the Louvre museum in modern-day Paris.
- B. As the old curator dies, he forms his body into the position of da Vinci's Vitruvian Man.
- C. These characters then try to solve the murder (real names in *italics*):
  1. Robert Langdon (*Tom Hanks*), a Harvard so-called "expert" in studying symbols, is asked to help solve the murder.

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<sup>1</sup> Kristina Tom, "Da Vinci Decoded," *The Sunday Times* (Singapore, 13 Feb 2005), page L8.

2. Sophie Neveu (*Audrey Tautou*) is a French detective and granddaughter of the victim.
  3. Since Langdon is the prime suspect, they end up running away from French detective Bezu Fache (*Jean Reno*).
- D. As the police chase Landon and Neveu, they find clues to the murder in places such as Westminster Abbey. Clues also lie in paintings by Leonardo da Vinci, especially his Last Supper, which supposedly has a dagger with no one holding it (the paint of Peter's hand has chipped away!). They seek to decipher da Vinci's backward writing (where da Vinci concealed astronomy and math theories—but not religious ones). These clues “reveal” that Christianity, as we have known it for 2000 years, is a farce. How? Read on...

### III. THE SUMMARY (THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO BROWN)

- A. Jesus married Mary Magdalene.
- B. His daughter Sarah grew up in France.
- C. His deity was invented in AD 325.
- D. We have the wrong NT Gospels in our Bibles.
- E. The roots of Christianity lie in the “Divine Feminine.”
- F. Christians cover up this conspiracy. (However, even up to the last fictional scene they never actually *see* evidence of Mary's sarcophagus and the chests proving these claims.)

### IV. THE SOURCES

- A. Amazingly, Brown claims to be a Christian, though he does not clearly identify his definition of “Christian” ([http://www.danbrown.com/novels/davinci\\_code/faqs.html](http://www.danbrown.com/novels/davinci_code/faqs.html)).
- B. Does Brown really believe all this? He says, “I began as a skeptic. As I started researching *The Da Vinci Code*, I really thought I would disprove a lot of this theory about Mary Magdalene and Holy Blood and all of that. I became a believer.”<sup>2</sup>
- C. Brown makes the astonishing claim in his preface: “All descriptions of artwork, architecture, documents, and secret rituals in this novel are accurate.”
- D. Brown looks convincing to the uninformed, but depends mostly on flawed works.<sup>3</sup> Four books are cited in the book itself as sources—but none of these four is a real historian.
- E. In fact, the name of Leigh Teabing, Brown's main “historian” in the book, is derived from two author's names in *Holy Blood, Holy Grail*.
- F. Brown's errors in history, art, and biblical interpretation are surveyed in these notes:<sup>4</sup>

<sup>2</sup> ABC News Special, “Jesus, Mary, and Da Vinci,” aired 3 Nov 2003.

<sup>3</sup> In April 2006 Brown won the lawsuit accusing him of plagiarizing Michael Baigent and Richard Leigh, *Holy Blood, Holy Grail* (Doubleday, 1982). His book cites them as sources. His inaccurate details on da Vinci stem from Lynn Picknett and Clive Prince, *The Templar Revelation* (New York: Touchstone, 1997).

## V. THE HISTORICAL ERRORS

- A. Brown's assertion that the supposed "80 gospels" were narrowed down to our four in the NT because of their patriarchal view toward women is untrue. Actually, only 17 gospels were composed (e.g., The Gospel of Thomas, The Gospel of Mary, etc.) and all of these except our four canonical ones were from the mid-second to fourth centuries. The church also consistently acknowledged these four gospels (see chart at the end of these notes).
- B. The Development of the New Testament
1. Dates: NT writings were composed from the AD 40s (James) to AD 94-95 (Revelation). For details, please see my NT Survey notes, 41-43.
  2. Canonicity: How did the early church identify which letters were inspired?
    - a) *Apostolic Authority*: An apostle or someone under the guidance of an apostle composed each NT book (Luke under Paul, Mark under Peter).
    - b) *Early & Widespread Acceptance*: The Apostle Peter noted in about AD 64 that this literature was considered inspired very early (2 Pet. 3:15-16).
    - c) *Consistency of Doctrine*: Nothing in the NT writings contradicts the OT corpus.
  3. These books were not all recognized at the same time. Some took longer to establish such credibility due to particular problems (e.g., the authorship of Hebrews and 2 Peter, the supposed discrepancy between James and Paul's doctrine of justification by faith, etc.). The supplement at the end of these notes shows that by Irenaeus' time (AD 130-202) most were already accepted, and at the Council of Hippo (AD 393) all 27 were accepted.
  4. However, NT letters were considered inspired even as they were being written!
    - a) Paul wrote in AD 62 that churches should pay their leaders well (1 Tim. 5:18). He argued that the Scripture said not to muzzle the ox while it treads the grain (quoting Deut. 25:4) and that "the worker deserves his wages." This latter scriptural support quotes Luke 10:7 as inspired, even though Luke's gospel was written no more than five years earlier (likely written in AD 57-59 during Paul's imprisonment in Caesarea)!
    - b) Peter also said in AD 64 that false teachers were misinterpreting Paul's letters, just "as they do the other Scriptures" (2 Peter 3:15-16). The ink had hardly dried on Paul's epistles (written AD 49-62), and 2 Timothy had not even been written yet—but Pauline epistles were already deemed on par with the OT Scriptures!

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<sup>4</sup> Brown's historical errors begin with the book's misspelled title, for Leonardo da Vinci did not spell his name with a capital "d." Nor was "da Vinci" his "last name," as Brown claims. Rather, it was his city of origin. For other critiques, see Dallas Seminary professor Darrell L. Bock, *Breaking The Da Vinci Code* (Nelson, 2004) and a Catholic response by Carl Olson, *The Da Vinci Hoax* (Ignatius Press, 2004).

- C. Brown says Emperor Constantine invented the deity of Christ at the Nicaea Council (AD 325).<sup>5</sup> What can be said in response?
1. Would Christians who “believed that Jesus was only a man” really need to worship secretly in the catacombs? The Romans would have had no problem with them believing in the principles of a crucified man.
  2. Would Christians who “believed that Jesus was only a man” die as martyrs? Hardly! Ignatius, Bishop of Antioch, refused emperor worship and was fed to wild beasts in Rome. Perpetua (AD 203) and many others died for their belief in Christ’s deity.
  3. The Council only *affirmed* this teaching against the Arian heresy that claimed Christ was created—it did not *create* it. While he claims the Council vote was “close,” it actually was 297-3 in favor of upholding Christ’s deity that Christians had died for.
  4. Paul and early creeds affirmed Jesus as God almost immediately (Rom. 9:5; cf. Tit. 2:13; Heb. 1:8-9; 2 Pet. 1:1; 1 John 5:2) and the gospels agree (e.g., John 1:1, 18; 8:58; 10:30; 20:28).
  5. Many church fathers affirmed Christ’s deity before Nicaea:<sup>6</sup>
    - Ignatius: “God Himself was manifest in human form” (AD 105)
    - Clement: “It is fitting that you should think of Jesus Christ as of God” (AD 150)
    - Irenaeus: “He is God, for the name Emmanuel indicates this” (AD 180)
    - Tertullian: “... Christ our God” (AD 200)
    - Origen: “No one should be offended that the Savior is also God” (AD 225)
    - Lactantius: “We believe Him to be God” (AD 304)
- D. Sun worship was not the ancient religion of Rome, as Brown asserts. It actually centred on Jupiter and was patriarchal (not matriarchal contra Brown) as male gods dominated.
- E. Brown also depends on the second-century heretical (Gnostic) *The Gospel of Thomas*, a patriarchal work that he misinterprets as matriarchal even though its final verse (saying 114) reads, “For every woman who will make herself male will enter the kingdom.”
- F. The author advocates that the “holy grail” was the womb of Mary Magdalene, which held the blood of Christ or sacred bloodline as it held their child.
- G. The Knights Templar was established in the Middle Ages to guard pilgrims traveling to the Holy Land. However, Brown says that this was only a guise of their “real” aim—to retrieve the bones of Mary Magdalene and four chests of documents “proving” that Jesus and Mary were married. These were supposedly found underneath the Jerusalem temple ruins and brought to Europe (DVC, 158 hb. ed. or p. 219 pb. ed.). What is the truth in this regard?

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<sup>5</sup> Brown’s view of Jesus is taught through “historian” Leigh Teabing: “My dear,” Teabing declared, “until [AD 325], Jesus was viewed by His followers as a mortal prophet... a great and powerful man, but a man nonetheless. A mortal.” [Sophie:] “Not the Son of God?” “Right,” Teabing said. “Jesus’ establishment as ‘the Son of God’ was officially proposed and voted on by the Council of Nicaea” (p. 197).

<sup>6</sup> David Bercot, ed. *A Dictionary of Early Christian Beliefs* (Peabody, MA: Hendricksen, 1998), 93-100; cited in Garlow & Jones, 94.

1. There is no support for this fanciful theory, and he also gives no support for his view that the “v” shape of the chalice symbolized the womb of Mary Magdalene.
2. The legend of the Holy Grail first appeared in 1170 in *Perceval*, a romantic writing about a legendary King Arthur and his kingdom of Camelot. The Grail was never linked to Mary Magdalene until *Holy Blood, Holy Grail* (1982).
3. The Templars actually began in 1118 by Hugo des Payens to protect pilgrims traveling to the Holy Land.<sup>7</sup>
4. Brown admits that no one knows what the Knights actually found underneath Temple Mount (p. 218 pb. ed.), then his entire book continues around the theory that they discovered proof that Jesus and Mary Magdalene were married (pp. 219ff.)! Guesses as to what they actually found include the ark of the Covenant, Shroud of Turin, or architectural plans for Gothic cathedrals with the novel “flying buttresses” design.<sup>8</sup>
5. Brown supposes without support that the Templars became wealthy due to possessing documents about Jesus’ supposed marriage. Actually, their wealth came from grateful pilgrims.

H. Brown’s secret society information on the Priory of Sion is flawed as well.

1. His preface declares, “FACT: The Priory of Sion—a European secret society founded in 1099—is a real organization. In 1975 Paris's Bibliotheque Nationale discovered parchments known as *Les Dossiers Secrets*, identifying numerous members of the Priory of Sion, including Sir Isaac Newton, Botticelli, Victor Hugo, and Leonardo da Vinci....”
2. What is the historical truth?
  - a) Brown has his dates correct for the first Priory of Sion founded in 1100, but he fails to note that it was absorbed into the Jesuits in 1617. A modern “Priory of Sion” to assist people with low-cost housing was founded in 1954 by Pierre Plantard (1920-2000), an anti-Semitic Frenchman who went to jail for fraud. It dissolved in 1957.<sup>9</sup>
  - b) *Les Dossiers Secrets (The Secret Records)* were forged documents in the 1960s and 70s planted in libraries throughout France by Plantard to “prove” his right to be king of France! In 1993 he admitted under oath to a French judge that he had fabricated all these documents relating to his “Priory of Sion.”<sup>10</sup>

<sup>7</sup> Robert G. Clouse, “Templars,” in *The New International Dictionary of the Christian Church*, gen. ed., J. D. Douglas (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1974), 956 (cited by Josh McDowell, *The Da Vinci Code: A Quest for Answers*, IM print Edition [Singapore: Campus Crusade Asia Ltd., 2006], 57); Richard. Abanes, *The Truth Behind The Da Vinci Code: A Challenging Response to the Bestselling Novel* (Eugene, Oregon: Harvest House, 2004), 57.

<sup>8</sup> Abanes, 58, who also cites the buttress idea in BBCi, “The Knights Templar,” March 13, 2000, [www.bbc.co.uk/dna/h2g2/A272558](http://www.bbc.co.uk/dna/h2g2/A272558).

<sup>9</sup> See Laura Miller, “The Da Vinci Con,” *The New York Times Book Review* (Sunday, February 22, 2004), exposes the entire hoax.

<sup>10</sup> *The Da Vinci Code: Separating Fact from Fiction*,” Radio Bible Class, 10 (available for free download at [rbc.org](http://rbc.org)).

- c) No evidence exists to support Brown's view that Newton, Botticelli, and da Vinci were so-called Grand Masters of the Priory. Brown's assertions are based on Plantard's forged document called *Les Dossiers Secrets d'Henri Lobineau* (The Secret Records of Henri Lobineau).

## VI. THE ART ERRORS

- A. Leonardo's "enormous output of art" with "hundreds of lucrative Vatican commissions" is false. He actually had but one commission and few art works due to his varied interests.
- B. Brown's idea of the Mona Lisa being a self-portrait of Leonardo himself is ridiculous; this is the wife/mistress of a prosperous merchant. Such an idea would certainly anger Mona!
- C. In the Last Supper painting, is "John" on the right of Jesus actually Mary Magdalene? No, John here is depicted in the typical Florentine manner as "the beautiful young man," with the twelve disciples in four groups of three men each.
- D. Brown's supposed "disembodied dagger" in the Last Supper proves nothing. This painting is on a wall with perishable materials, so it has been touched up at least seven times.
- E. Jack Wasserman, retired art history professor at Temple University, says "Just about everything [Dan Brown] says about Leonardo da Vinci is wrong"<sup>11</sup>

## VII. THE BIBLICAL INTERPRETATION ERRORS

### A. The Reliability of the Bible

- 1. Leigh Teabing accuses, "The Bible is a product of man, my dear. Not of God. The Bible did not fall magically from the clouds. Man created it as a historical record of tumultuous times, and it has evolved through countless translations, additions, and revisions. History has never had a definitive version of the book" (p. 195).
- 2. What is the truth of the matter here? The Bible is the *best*-attested book of antiquity.<sup>12</sup>
  - a) The number of Greek copies is presently 5,686. Add to this over 14,000 non-Greek manuscripts of the New Testament.
  - b) The time interval between the original and existing copies is very short:
    - (1) Many ancient documents have over 1000 years between the original and our oldest copy.
    - (2) The NT has copies as early as 200 years away from the original autographs.
  - c) The accuracy of the copies is astonishing:
    - (1) Even with over 20,000 manuscripts, they are so close that we are virtually certain of 97-98% of the NT.

<sup>11</sup> In Patrick Reardon, "The Da Vinci Code Unscrambled," *Chicago Tribune*, February 5, 2004.

<sup>12</sup> Norman Geisler, *The Baker Encyclopedia of Christian Apologetics*, 532.

- (2) The Dead Sea Scrolls included two copies of Isaiah from 200 BC. A comparison with the AD 1000 Isaiah scroll shows astounding accuracy:<sup>13</sup>

TABLE 1. QUMRAN VS. THE MASORETES
Of the 166 Hebrew words in Isaiah 53, only seventeen letters in Dead Sea Scroll 1QIsb differ from the Masoretic Text.
10 letters = spelling differences
4 letters = stylistic changes
3 letters = added word for "light" (vs. 11)
17 letters = no affect on biblical teaching

B. Who was Mary Magdalene?

1. The Bible says Christ delivered her from demons and she became an ardent follower.
2. In fact, she was one of the three "Marys" that witnessed his death and resurrection.
3. However, Brown claims far more than this. He says Jesus married Mary Magdalene and together they had a daughter named Sarah, but Constantine and the early church made Mary out as a prostitute to hide the "truth" of their marriage.<sup>14</sup>
  - a) But when did this confusion occur? Pope Gregory in the sixth century in a sermon in AD 591 was the *first* to confuse her with the sinful woman who washed Jesus' feet (Luke 7:36-8:2).
  - b) In other words, Constantine had no tarnished image of her to restore within the church three centuries earlier!
4. Support for Mary Magdalene as Jesus' wife is sought in *The Gospel of Philip* 63:32-64:10. It reads, "And the companion of the [...] Mary Magdalene. [...] loved her more than [all] the disciples [and used to] kiss her [often] on her [...]. The rest of the disciples [...]. They said to him "Why do you love her more than all of us?" What Brown does *not* say is that...
  - a) This is a second-century heretical work.
  - b) If Jesus really were married then why would the disciples be jealous?
  - c) "Companion" need not indicate a wife. Jesus had several traveling companions, many of them women.
  - d) The word rendered "mouth" is obscured in the original and so translators supply it. It could just as easily been her head, hand, or cheek, as in Philip 58:34-59:4,

<sup>13</sup> Norman L. Geisler and William E. Nix, *Introduction to the NT* (Chicago: Moody, 1986), 382; cited by Garry K. Brantley, "The Dead Sea Scrolls and Biblical Integrity" at <http://www.apologeticspress.org/articles/266>.

<sup>14</sup> Brown, 254.

which reads, “For it is by a kiss that the perfect conceive and give birth. For this reason we all kiss one another. We receive conception from the grace which is in one another.”

- C. Brown’s claim that first century Jews always needed to marry is patently false. Members at Qumran valued celibacy, as did Judaism for one dedicated to the Lord. Also, no credible evidence exists that Jesus ever married (or even a hint in the NT).<sup>15</sup> Even if Christ had married, this would not have destroyed God’s plan anyway.
1. Marriage is an honorable institution created by God.
  2. But had Jesus married, the NT would have noted this significant point.
  3. The real problem would have been if Jesus, who had no sin nature, fathered a child—thus not passing on this sinful nature.
- D. Brown’s claim that Yahweh and Shekinah were male and female deities, respectively, is blasphemous—as is the contention that the sacred name “Jehovah” came from sex between the male “Yah” and pre-Hebrew female name for Eve, “Havah.”<sup>16</sup>
1. Actually, “Jehovah” resulted from a spelling error when the vowels of the name “Adonai” (Lord) were wrongly added to the sacred name of consonants only: YHWH. Thus “Yahweh” is correct.
  2. Further, “Shekinah” refers to God’s glory dwelling with his people as a cloud at daytime and a pillar of fire at night in Exodus 40:38. Nothing about these two terms relate to being male and female.

## VIII. THE SUMMARY

- A. *The Da Vinci Code* contains too many other errors even to list here. While many do not worry about these claims and dismiss them as fiction, Dan Brown boasts of his “extensive research” and the publisher claims the main aspects of the book are true! The *Chicago Tribune* even called the research “impeccable.” Such lies are leading millions of uniformed Christians into error—and unbelievers into everlasting peril. In contrast to liberal theology read mostly only by scholars, this attack on biblical authority has reached the masses.
- B. Brown has rewritten history based on false data. His main thesis should concern every believer: “Constantine and his male successors successfully converted the world from matriarchal paganism to patriarchal Christianity by waging a campaign of propaganda that demonized the sacred feminine, obliterating the goddess from modern religion forever.”<sup>17</sup>
- C. Simply put, Brown claims that Christianity was originally goddess worship, but this was changed two hundred years later by inventing the deity of Christ and selecting only gospels that favored men to be in the NT. He implies that, to be truly Christian, believers today should admit that Jesus needed Mary Magdalene as a feminine consort and we should be involved in modern goddess worship.

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<sup>15</sup> James L. Garlow and Peter Jones, *Cracking Da Vinci’s Code* (Colorado Springs: Victor, 2004), 117.

<sup>16</sup> Brown, 309.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid, 124.



## IX. OUR CONTEXT

(What about society today gives this ridiculous book such a following?)

### A. Women's "Liberation"

1. Some of Brown's most preposterous claims concern women.
  - a) One of his website FAQs notes, "THIS NOVEL IS VERY EMPOWERING TO WOMEN. CAN YOU COMMENT?"
  - b) Brown answers his own question: "Two thousand years ago, we lived in a world of Gods and Goddesses. Today, we live in a world solely of Gods. Women in most cultures have been stripped of their spiritual power. The novel touches on questions of how and why this shift occurred and on what lessons we might learn from it regarding our future."
  - c) Brown says the church has suppressed women but he is liberating them. He even claims (without support) the church killed over *five million* women in attempts to stamp out witches!
2. The truth is that at times the church has not given women their full status as created along with men in the image of God. However...
  - a) One need not resort to Brown's fiction of Mary Magdalene as the leader of the church at Jerusalem to give women a prominent place in the early church. Women served in many leadership roles: Priscilla taught Apollos (Acts 18:26), Phoebe was a leader in Greece (Rom. 16:1), etc.<sup>18</sup>
  - b) Brown's claim of five million executions grossly exaggerates the actual number of 40,000 deaths (which is 40,000 more than it should have been).
  - c) Yet even this must be put into context of the *true* liberation that women have received in Christian societies around the world. Wherever the gospel has gone, granting women's rights has followed. One example is India's terrible practice of *sati*, where countless thousands of widows were burned after their husband's deaths. Abolishing this horrendous practice became one of the life goals of the Christian missionary William Carey, who saw it accomplished in 1829. Christians have also been on the forefront of abolishing slavery of various forms (e.g., William Wilberforce), including the sex slavery of women.
  - d) Brown advocates *hieros gamos* (the so-called "holy sex" pagan religious ritual)—a sex orgy that denigrates and abuses women. In contrast, God offers women His fulfilling experience of sex within a committed, lifelong, marriage relationship.
  - e) *The Da Vinci Code* view of Mona Lisa as a man and the Last Supper's John as a woman *blurs* the sexes, *robbing* woman of her true femininity. Women never had a high status as sex slaves in ancient pagan temples. May women never return to the kind of "exalted status" that Brown endorses.

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<sup>18</sup> For a brief discussion on the NT view of women, see Beverly Roberts Gaventa, "Is Christianity Anti-Women?" at <http://www.thedavincichallenge.com/expert.cfm?e=140>. She teaches NT at Princeton.

## B. Entertainment Better Than Truth

1. James Frey, author of the 2005 bestseller *A Million Little Pieces*, confessed in January that he really wasn't a criminal, didn't go to jail, etc. even though these were key aspects of his "autobiography."
2. When confronted with these fabrications, this was his response: "The writer of a memoir is retailing a subjective story." His friend, Oprah Winfrey, commented that this insistence on truth was "much ado about nothing."
3. Literary theorist Stanley Fish also noted in this vein that the death of objectivity "relieves me of the obligation to be right"; it "demands only that I be interesting."<sup>19</sup>

## C. Subjectivity characterizes our age

1. Movies rarely espouse any form of absolute authority.
2. All literary sources are considered of equal authority.
  - a) Brown's key sources Gnostic, which he assumes to have equal authority to Scripture and had two main forms.

<b>Docetic Gnosticism</b>	<b>Cerinthian Gnosticism</b>
Matter is Evil	Spirit is Good
Depreciated Materialism	Exalted Knowledge ( <i>gnosis</i> )
Denied Christ's Humanity	Denied Christ's Deity
Touched Jesus (1:1)	Water & Blood (5:6)
Led to Asceticism	Led to Pride
Immorality exalted	Education exalted

- b) The *Gospel of Judas* recently discovered makes Judas the hero of the passion narrative—chosen by Christ as chief over the disciples in Jesus' own plot to betray him. The media neglects to note that this is a Gnostic gospel with no Christian teaching at all, which only illustrates that heresy existed in the second century church!
3. Commentators serve up opinion instead of news.
4. Talk shows (dozens of them!) place all opinions on equal footing.
5. Talk radio (46% of USA radio) provides a venue for uninformed publicity.
6. Reality TV (over 50% of USA TV programming) continually degenerates to retain viewers, having no moral compass.
7. Blogging gives an outlet to air any view publicly with no checks and balances.

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<sup>19</sup> Quoted in Michiko Kakutani, "Truth Fast Losing Its Value in Non-Fiction," *The Sunday Times* [Singapore], 22 January 2006, p. 33 reprint of *The New York Times*. Stanley Fish is the Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences at University of Illinois at Chicago and one of the most influential and controversial theorists and critics of literature, law, and philosophy of our time.

## X. OUR RESPONSE

### A. Know both the Word and the enemy arguments.

1. Know the Best Book first.
2. Know Brown's book. I suggest that you read it—but only a borrowed one—don't buy it! Alternatively, you can read his own summary of the book on his website.<sup>20</sup>
3. Read the critiques—especially the Radio Bible Class pdf summary.
4. The Singapore DVC Project ([www.davincicode.org.sg](http://www.davincicode.org.sg)) can help. Also, some of my seminars include: Thurs 27 April (8-10 PM) at Jurong Christian Church, Sat 13 May (730-10 PM) at Church of Our Redeemer Lutheran Church, Sun 21 May (2-5 PM) at Mt. Hermon BP Church, and Sun 28 May (1:15-4:00 PM) at Neighbourhood Church.

### B. Focus on the cross and resurrection (which Brown never notes!) as you teach the truth.

### C. Dialogue with people about *The Da Vinci Code* by using these questions:<sup>21</sup>

#### 1. Basic Questions

- a) Open: What do you think about *The Da Vinci Code*?
- b) Passion: Why do you think speculation on how Jesus lived stirs so much passion?
- c) Cost: Did you know that many Christians were persecuted for their beliefs for the first 300 years of the church? Do you think it is possible that the early Christians could have been willing to die for beliefs they knew were untrue?
- d) Cover-up: If Dan Brown is right, how could Christians have wiped away any traces of the “real” Jesus (“man only”) from both religious and secular literature?
- e) Resurrection: Dan Brown never notes Christ's resurrection in his book. Yet...
  - (1) It is a well-established fact of history that Jesus' tomb is empty.
  - (2) Can you think of any way of explaining the fact of the empty tomb and yet believe that Jesus was in fact just a man as Brown claimed in his book? (DVC, 233)
- f) Identity: Do you think it is possible that Jesus Christ could be something more than what the book portrayed him to be?

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<sup>20</sup> Brown offers free excerpts at [www.danbrown.com/novels/davinci\\_code/excerpt.html](http://www.danbrown.com/novels/davinci_code/excerpt.html).

<sup>21</sup> Questions in sections “C” and “D” are adapted and used with permission from Dr. Dave Geisler, Meekness & Truth Ministries, Singapore ([www.meeknessandtruth.org](http://www.meeknessandtruth.org)). This website has free downloads to critique the DVC in PPT and pdf formats. For those interested in pre-evangelism training contact Dr. Geisler at [dgeisler@meeknessandtruth](mailto:dgeisler@meeknessandtruth).

- g) Willingness: One of the key questions that Dan Brown does not address is that whether Jesus died willingly or not. If Jesus did not claim to be the Son of God, why do you think Jesus did not speak up before Pontius Pilate put him to death?
- h) Application (If you sense they are open ask): Can I share with you why I believe he did this and why it makes a difference?

## 2. Extra Questions

- a) Many people today believe that truth (especially religious truth) is relative to one's particular culture or situation. However can the truth about who Jesus is be specific to one's culture (or situation) and at the same time it be correct that "almost everything our fathers taught us about Christ is false" (DVC, 235)?
- b) How could "Christians" have wiped away any traces of the real Jesus from secular literature if they were not "the winners" even at the time these things were written?
- c) If Jesus was just a "mortal prophet," what was the focus of the Church for the first 300 years if nobody was worshipping Jesus as God?
- d) Does it make more sense to you that man sins because he has forgotten that he is in fact god, or is it more likely that man sins because he has fallen short of measuring up to the standards of a Holy God?
- e) Let's say for the sake of argument that everything we have been taught about Christianity is a lie and that the Gnostic gospels came before Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John and were the true Gospels.
  - (1) Do you know what kind of story this would tell us about Christianity? It would say that:
    - (a) Salvation equals liberation from the body.
    - (b) Jesus came to bring us the true gnosis (knowledge).
    - (c) Not every one can obtain this true knowledge.
    - (d) Jesus only appeared to be physical but was not really a human being.
  - (2) How then does this belief fit with Brown's assertion that "Jesus was just a man"? (In other words, Brown tries to use Gnostic writings but his view is not even consistent with Gnosticism.)
- f) How can Brown say that the Christian writers of the NT devalued the rights of women when the Gnostic gospels he uses to devalue the writing of the gospels actually devalue women even more (see The Gospel of Thomas 114)?
- g) The Christian writer C.S. Lewis has pointed out concerning the New Testament claim that Jesus was God that this proves that he either was a liar, a lunatic, or actually Lord (Savior). Others have also suggested that he was actually a legend.

Do you think it is possible that Jesus Christ could be something more than what the movie portrayed him to be? Why or why not?

- h) How does a painting painted 15 centuries after the time of Christ (The Lord's Supper by Leonardo Da Vinci, 1495–1497) have anything to do with verifying whether the New Testament documents are a reliable record of the things that Jesus said and did?
- i) Has anyone ever explained to you the difference between Christianity and all other religions in the world? (explain Do verse Done) If not would you be interested in hearing?

(1) Most religions teach us to Do:

- (a) Muslims believe that salvation depends upon man measuring up and not on God's grace. (Do)
- (b) Buddhism teaches that salvation comes about when one desires to stop desiring. (Do)
- (c) Hinduism teaches that if one does enough good he can pay off his karmic debt and escape the cycle of reincarnation. (Do)

(2) However, Jesus says accept the gift I offer. It has already been "Done" for you (you can do nothing to earn God's gift). Invite me to come into your life and change you from the inside out (John 1:12; Phil. 2:13).

(3) Something to think about...

"...I am trying here to prevent anyone saying the really foolish thing that people often say about Him, 'I'm ready to accept Jesus as a great moral teacher, but I don't accept His claim to be God.' That is the one thing we must not say. A man who was merely a man and said the sort of things Jesus said would not be a great moral teacher. He would either be a lunatic - on the level with the man who says he is a poached egg - or else he would be the Devil of Hell. You must make your choice. Either this man was, and is, the Son of God, or else a madman or something worse. You can shut Him up for a fool, you can spit at Him and kill Him as a demon; or you can fall at His feet and call Him Lord and God. But let us not come with any patronizing nonsense about His being a great human teacher. He has not left that open to us. He did not intend to."

C.S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity*, 56

## D. Did you know that...?

1. Did you know that the main dispute at the Council of Nicaea was not whether Jesus was God or man but whether as God he was created or not?
2. Were you aware of the fact that two-thirds of all the New Testament books were accepted as sacred Scripture by the middle of the second century?
3. Did you know that the Priory of Sion was not founded in Jerusalem in 1099 but in 1956 and was officially registered in France?
4. Did you know that in the 1960s a man named Pierre Plantard *planted* the cache of documents “discovered” in the Bibliotheque Nationale in Paris?<sup>22</sup> These documents supposedly “proved” that the French kings (including Plantard!) descended from Jesus and Mary Magdalene’s daughter Sarah.
5. Did you know that these deceptions were exposed in France in the 90’s and in a BBC Documentary in 1996?
6. Did you know that Plantard was determined to be an anti-Semite with a criminal record for fraud who formed a social group over 50 years ago?<sup>23</sup>
7. Brown claims that “Constantine converted the world from matriarchal paganism to patriarchal Christianity by waging a campaign of propaganda that demonized the sacred feminine, obliterating the goddess from modern religion forever” (DVC, 124). However are you aware that there *never* has been a matriarchal society?
8. Did you know that not only were the books of the Bible not “voted on” during the council of Nicaea in 325 but that none of the four gospels nor the Apostle Paul’s letters were ever questioned as authentic scripture?
9. Did you know that the Council of Nicaea did not debate over whether Jesus was divine or mortal but whether he was co-eternal with God the Father?
10. Did you know that the term “Shekinah” in Hebrew refers to the Glory of God in His indwelling in the temple not his female counterpart?
11. Did you know that the Jewish Tetragrammaton (YHWH) was the sacred name for God that was not derived from the word Jehovah?
12. Did you know that the word Jehovah was not formed from the physical union between “the masculine Jah and the pre-Hebraic name for Eve, Havah” (As DVC implies, p. 262 [paperback p. 309]) but came about by taking the consonants of YHWH and combining them with the vowels of the word Adonai (Lord) which resulted in the word “Jehovah”?

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<sup>22</sup> Documented in James Garlow and Peter Jones, *Cracking Da Vinci's Code* (Colorado Springs, CO: Cook Communications, 2004), 112.

<sup>23</sup> See Laura Miller, “The Da Vinci Con,” *The New York Times Book Review* (Sunday, February 22, 2004), 23.

13. Brown said that “The pre-Christian God Mithras – called the Son of God and the Light of the World – was born on December 25, died, was buried in a rock tomb, and then resurrected in three days.” Did you know that scholars of Mithraism know nothing of any of this?
14. Did you know that the documents that Brown cites to verify his claims about Christ teaches that salvation can only be attained through higher knowledge (“*gnosis*”) and that few every actually can achieve this?
15. Did you know that the documents that Brown cites to verify his claims that Jesus was just a man actually teach that Jesus was not a man since Gnosticism teaches that Jesus could not be involved with a corrupt material existence?
16. Did you know if Dan Brown is right about what he says about the sacred feminine the Jews have been wrong about their belief in worshiping one God?
17. Did you know that neither the Gospel of Phillip nor the Gospel of Mary teach that Mary Magdalene was married to Jesus?
18. Did you know that the Gospel of Phillip was not even written in Aramaic but Coptic (a late form of Egyptian) so the use of the word “companion” in the Gospel of Phillip does not imply that Jesus was married to Mary Magdalene? (The word “companion” means wife in Aramaic—not Coptic.)
19. Did you know that the Edict of Milan in 313 did not make Christianity the state religion but only declared that Christian worship was to be tolerated?

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# The Things of the World

## 1 John 2:15-16

<u>Description (NIV)</u>	<u>Meaning</u>	<u>Eve's Temptation</u>	<u>Christ's Temptation</u>
"Cravings of sinful man"	<p>Ungodly bodily desires</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sex outside of marriage</li> <li>• Gluttony, etc.</li> </ul>	"Good for food"	Stones to bread
"Lust of the eyes"	<p>Greed Coveting (10th commandment)</p>	"Pleasing to the eye"	Possess all kingdoms
"Boasting of what he has and does"	<p>Pride Boasting of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• occupation</li> <li>• position</li> <li>• worldly advantages, etc.</li> </ul>	"Desirable for gaining wisdom"	Acclaim by men ("throw yourself from the temple")

## Eternal Security

*Will Every True Christian Really Go to Heaven—For Sure?*

One of the most important questions a Christian can ask is whether his salvation is permanent. Can one who genuinely trusts Christ—and therefore inherits eternal life and a place in heaven—can that person lose this salvation? Please note that we are talking about a real believer here, not simply one who *thinks* he is a Christian. While Paul and other NT writers address this question, none address it as completely as John (though others are dealt with below as well).

Another introductory clarification concerns the difference between eternal security and assurance of salvation. Security refers to one's position before God forever, whereas assurance generally indicates whether the believer has *knowledge* of this security. Believers can be secure without knowing it (i.e., without having assurance). My wife as a little girl once saw the water in her bathtub flow down the drain. She reasoned that since the water occupied more space than she did, if the water can all pass through the drain, then she could too. In reality, she was secure from this tragedy ever occurring, but for some time she lacked assurance of salvation from the drain. Security and assurance are different matters.

Conversely, a person can *think* he or she is eternally secure (i.e., feel assurance of salvation) but actually be an unbeliever with no security at all. Although assurance is a wonderful study worthy of our time, this study concerns itself with eternal security.

There are many reasons that every Christian is eternally secure:

### I. Theological Support for Eternal Security

#### A. The Work of the Triune God

##### 1. The Work of God the Father

- a) The Father is the One who elects persons for salvation. One who says that God's choice is ever wrong or inadequate to save is on a shaky foundation.
- b) But if God chooses one for salvation, is this permanent? Christ answered this important question in John 6:37, "All that the Father gives me *will come to me...*" (emphasis mine).

##### 2. The Work of the Christ the Son

- a) Jesus protects the salvation of true believers. He declared, "My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one can snatch them out of my hand. My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all; no one can snatch them out of my Father's hand" (John 10:27-29).
- b) Christ claimed that salvation is permanent. Christ promised, "Whoever comes to me *I will never drive away*" (John 6:37, emphasis mine).

### 3. The Sealing Work of the Spirit

- a) The seal of salvation is God's Spirit—not our works or continued faith or anything else. This seal shows our ownership and guaranteed protection by God.

(1) Eph. 1:13-14 “And you also were included in Christ when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation. Having believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, who is a deposit *guaranteeing our inheritance* until the redemption of those who are God's possession—to the praise of his glory.” Paul's point is that if God gives us His Spirit, then He will surely give us our *full* inheritance in heaven!

(2) The only way this seal could be broken is through the fault of the Spirit!

- b) This assurance of salvation in the sealing is the reason we should never grieve the Spirit. Eph. 4:30 “And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.”

### B. The Nature of Salvation

1. Salvation is God's free gift and is not earned by good deeds (Eph. 2:8-9). So if it is received by grace *without* works then it cannot be undone by *lack* of works. Since security depends upon what *God* has done for you, this work of God would have to be *undone* for your security to be lost!
2. All believers are promised eternal life (1 John 5:11-12; Tit. 3:5-6). The term “*eternal* life” indicates that this life cannot be lost. If believers had the potential of possessing only “temporal life” spiritually, it would be a lie to say this life is eternal.

### C. The Believer's Standing before God

1. God sees each believer as eternally perfect before Him. Hebrews 10:14 says “by one sacrifice he has made perfect *forever* those who are being made holy.”
2. No Christian can experience God's condemnation by going to hell. “Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus” (Rom. 8:1).
3. A believer cannot be separated from God's love. Rom. 8:35-39 affirms this: “Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? As it is written: ‘For your sake we face death all day long; we are considered as sheep to be slaughtered.’ No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”
4. Someone may ask, “God may not reject me, but can I disqualify *myself*?” The “nor anything else in all creation” noted above includes our own lack of good works or our committing of a sin which would “undo” God's gift on our behalf. If we needed to add anything to the work of Christ on the cross, His work would be incomplete.

## II. Biblical Support for Eternal Security

Many explicit statements in the New Testament say that our salvation is simply through belief and results in eternal life (all verses from the English Standard Version of 2002):

John 3:15-16 Whoever believes in him may have eternal life. For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.

John 5:24 Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life. He does not come into judgment, but has passed from death to life.

John 6:40 For this is the will of my Father, that everyone who looks on the Son and believes in him should have eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day.

John 6:47 Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever believes has eternal life.

John 10:28 I give them eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand.

John 17:3 And this is eternal life, that they know you the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent.

Romans 6:23 For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

1 Timothy 1:16 But I received mercy for this reason, that in me, as the foremost, Jesus Christ might display his perfect patience as an example to those who were to believe in him for eternal life.

Titus 3:7 so that being justified by his grace we might become heirs according to the hope of eternal life.

1 John 2:25 And this is the promise that he made to us—eternal life.

1 John 5:11-13 <sup>11</sup>And this is the testimony, that God gave us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. <sup>12</sup>Whoever has the Son has life; whoever does not have the Son of God does not have life. <sup>13</sup>I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God that you may know that you have eternal life.

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  - “The Sealing of the Spirit” (155o)
  - “Eternal Security in Corinth” (161dd)
  - “The Scriptural View of Justification” (174c)
  - “Our Position in Christ” (180e)
  - “Eternal Security in Ephesians” (180h)
  - “Eternal Security in Hebrews” (266a)
  - “Views on the Warning Passages” (266c)
  - “Views on Eternal Security and Perseverance” (266d)
  - “Romans vs. James on Justification” (272)
  - “Views on Lordship Salvation” (274b-c)
  - “What is the Gospel?” (317a-b)
  - “Does Major Sin Prove a Person is Unsaved (Rev. 21:8)?” (350-51)

#### IV. Discussion Questions:

- A. Why do you think most people have difficulty accepting the doctrine of the eternal security of the believer?
- B. “If Christ came to seek and to save that which was lost, and yet we can somehow become unsaved—and therefore undo what Christ came to do—would it not be wise for God to take us on to heaven the moment we are saved in order to insure we make it? Isn’t it unnecessarily risky to force us to stay here?” (Stanley, 10) Do you agree?
- C. “If our salvation hinges on the consistency of our faith, by what standard are we to judge our consistency? Can we have any doubts at all? How long can we doubt? To what degree can we doubt? Is there a divine quota we dare not exceed?” (Stanley, 95) Agreed?
- D. Do you think believing in the “once saved, always saved” view causes Christians to neglect their salvation? Why or why not?

## 2 John

Limits to Love				
Aid True Teachers			Avoid False Teachers	
Verses 1-6			Verses 7-13	
Walk in Commandments			Watch for Counterfeits	
Positive			Negative	
Demonstrate Truth			Defend Truth	
Greeting in Truth and Love (1-3)	Children's Obedience Commended (4)	Exhortation to Love (5-6)	Prohibition to Help False Teachers (7-11)	Expected Visit & Greetings (12-13)
Ephesus				
AD 85-95				

**Key Word:** Limits

**Key Verses:** "Anyone who runs ahead and does not continue in the teaching of Christ does not have God; whoever continues in the teaching has both the Father and the Son. If anyone comes to you and does not bring this teaching, do not take him into your home or welcome him" (2 John 9-10).

**Summary Statement:** John exhorts *limitations to love* for a Christian woman and her children who show hospitality to missionaries but need warning not to extend the same to false teachers to warn against *aiding the spread of destructive heresies*.

**Application:** Don't contribute to or encourage in any way Buddhism, Islam, Hinduism, Mormonism, Jehovah's Witnesses or any other false religion.



# 2 John

## Introduction

**I. Title:** The Greek title (Ἰωάννου β' *Second of John*) follows the standard practice of naming the General Epistles after their authors and distinguishes this epistle from John's two others.

### II. Authorship

- A. **External Evidence:** The Church has long viewed this epistle as penned by the Apostle John, leader of the church of Ephesus in Asia Minor and author of the Gospel, 1 John, 3 John and Revelation.
- B. **Internal Evidence:** The designation "the elder" (v. 1) has always been considered another designation for John until the rise of liberal scholarship. Themes such as love (vv. 1, 3, 5, 6), joy (vv. 4, 12; cf. 1 John 1:4), truth (v. 4), and antichrist (v. 7) bear remarkable resemblance to emphases in 1 John and the Gospel of John.

### III. Circumstances

- A. **Date:** Most scholars believe that John recorded this epistle about AD 90, although nothing in it excludes an earlier date (see 1 John notes). Thus it was written in about AD 85-95.
- B. **Origin/Recipients:** John invested the final years of his ministry in Ephesus, which makes this capital of Asia the likely origin. The letter is addressed to the "chosen lady and her children" (v. 1), which has caused some debate as to who really is being addressed.

1. Some believe the title is a personified form for a local church, citing the following arguments:
  - a. No personal names are found in the epistle—either for the woman herself, her children or her nephews (in contrast to 3 John).
  - b. The literary form which addresses nations, cities, and churches as female personages is common in the Bible ("the daughter of Zion" for Israel; "the bride of Christ" for the church in Eph. 5:29f.; 2 Cor. 6:2f.; "she who is in Babylon" for a church in 1 Peter 5:13).
  - c. "The greeting in verse 13 is more natural if sent from one church to another than from a group of people to their aunt by means of a third party" (Guthrie, 892).
  - d. John often referred to the people in the church as "children" (1 John 2:12, etc.).
  - e. Nothing is known in the New Testament of a woman named *Eklekta* or *Kyria*—the Greek titles for "chosen" and "lady" which some see as the woman's name.
  - f. The lady was known not only by John, but by "all who know the truth" (v. 1), which is more probable if it refers to a community than to a woman.
  - g. The subject matter regarding false teachers matches that of a church more than that of an individual, "although this might have been equally necessary for a prominent private person in the habit of entertaining visitors freely" (Guthrie, 892).
  - h. The predominant use of the second person plural (vv. 8, 10, 12) suggests a composite community more than a family.
  - i. The "new commandment" (v. 5) "has more point if applied to a community rather than to the narrower limits of a family circle" (Guthrie, 892).
2. The Virgin Mary who resided in Galilee (Knauer's view cited by Barnes, 1501).

3. An anonymous woman and her children are addressed (v. 1), who probably opened their home for church services and housed traveling preachers. This more literal view depicting an actual woman in a local church is probably preferable for several reasons:
  - a. Her children are mentioned (vv. 1, 4) and “the reference to the lady's children is quite intelligible if these were by now grown up” (Guthrie, 891).
  - b. She may have been named *Eklecta* (“chosen”) or more likely *Kyria* (“lady,” a popular proper name for Christian women [although only in later times]; cf. Barnes, 1501) as the Syriac and Arabic versions translate it as a proper name
  - c. Possible grammatical constructions include “the Elect Lady,” “an Elect Lady,” “Eklecta the Lady,” “The elect Kyria,” and “Eklecta Kyria.”
  - d. This better distinguishes between the woman herself and her children (physically or spiritually). If the “lady” is the church, then who are the “children”?
  - e. If the “lady” refers to the leader of the church then it would be odd to refer to the leader of a church by a feminine title.
  - f. The New Testament pattern for addressing churches is to refer to them by name.
  - g. The woman's name may have been kept secret to protect her from persecution.
  - h. It's best to follow the literal sense unless it doesn't make sense (it does here).
  - i. The woman's nephews and nieces (v. 13) make good sense taken literally.
  - j. Adopting the literal meaning better accounts for the reluctance of some of the early Christians to use this epistle. “A private letter written to a lady would not seem of sufficient importance to receive canonical status” (Guthrie, 893).
- C. Occasion: Before the New Testament writings were completed and circulated among the early believers, the churches had to rely upon traveling preachers and teachers for truth. Since inns were unsafe and few in number, these teachers stayed with Christians. A question with which many struggled was, “How could someone know *which* teachers to allow into his/her home?” John answers this question in this epistle where he pointedly commands a hospitable woman to “put limits on her love” by refusing to house false teachers or to encourage them in any way.

#### IV. Characteristics

- A. This letter is the second shortest book in the Bible (3 John is slightly shorter; cf. p. 306).
- B. This is the only NT letter addressed to a woman.
- C. Verse 10 is the most controversial part of this letter. The issue is whether false teachers should be allowed to: (1) stay in believer's homes, (2) enter their homes, or (3) neither. The third view is the normal interpretation so that believers are not involved in promoting false teaching even in the slightest sense. See the study on pages 302-4 for different views on this subject.

### Argument

John's second epistle warns a woman zealous in hospitality against providing lodging to false teachers so she wouldn't help spread their destructive doctrines. His greeting balances truth and love to illustrate this point (vv. 1-3), followed by a commendation of the woman for her love (v. 4) balanced with the importance of truth (vv. 5-6). Next follows the main teaching of the letter, which warns her to demonstrate her love with discerning limits by refusing hospitality to false teachers (vv. 7-11). A conclusion follows (vv. 12-13).

## Synthesis

### Limits to love

<b>1-6</b>	<b>Aid True Teachers</b>
1-3	Greeting in truth and love
1a	Author
1b-2	Recipients
3	Blessing
4	Commendation for children's obedience
5-6	Exhortation to love
<b>7-13</b>	<b>Avoid False Teachers</b>
7-11	Prohibition to help false teachers
7	Heresy defined
8-9	Rewards lost for aiding heresy
10-11	Never aid heresy
12-13	Expected visit/greetings

## Outline

### Summary Statement for the Book

**John exhorts *limitations to love* for a Christian woman and her children who show hospitality to missionaries but need warning not to extend the same to false teachers to warn against *aiding the spread of destructive heresies*.**

- I. (1-6) John encourages a woman in both truth and love to prepare her for his later rebuke.**
- A. (1-3) John greets a woman and her children with an emphasis on truth and love to prepare them for his warning on overemphasizing love by helping false teachers.
1. (1a) The Apostle John, the leader of the Ephesian church, identifies himself in a short epistle in the latter years of his life that the recipients might know that the contents have the stamp of apostolic authority.
  2. (1b-2) The recipients, a woman and her children, are affectionately greeted in love and truth to emphasize John's basis for his love, and they are kept anonymous probably to protect them from more severe persecution should the letter fall into the wrong hands.
    - a. (1b) The recipients, a woman and her children, are kept anonymous probably to protect them from more severe persecution if the letter fell into the wrong hands.
    - b. (1c-2) The recipients are affectionately greeted in love and truth from John and other believers to emphasize that John's basis for his love was God's truth so that the woman might know that her response to his limits on love are to protect the truth.
      - 1) (1c) John expresses not only his love for the woman based upon truth but reminds her that all who know God love her too since true love is based upon truth.
      - 2) (2) John declares that his love is based upon the eternal, indwelling truth of God which all Christians share so that the woman might know that her response to his limits on love are to protect the truth.
  3. (3) John notes that God's blessings always come in both truth and love to stress this balance as preparation for his teaching to follow on how love must be limited by truth.
- B. (4) John commends the woman for the obedience of her children in order to buffet his later correction with this word of sincere appreciation.

1. (4a) John mentions the great joy he experienced from the woman's children living the truth, thus letting her know of his high esteem for her in order to buffet his later correction with this word of sincere appreciation.
  2. (4b) The woman's children please not only John but God the Father by their obedience, which would serve to encourage her that God was pleased with her life as well.
- C. (5-6) John exhorts the woman to practice the truth through a life of love shown in obedience so that she won't think by his later comments that he is discouraging love altogether.
1. (5) John notes that God has always expected those who fear Him to love one another so that his later statements won't be misunderstood as discouraging love altogether.
  2. (6) A life of love is the same as it always has been—obedience to God's commands.

## II. (7-13) John warns the woman not to help false teachers to help her see love's limits.

- A. (7-11) John warns the woman to protect the truth by not assisting false teachers in their work who deny that Christ is God become man to stress how love must discern with limits.
1. (7) John defines false teachers as those who deny that Christ is God become man and warns that they are numerous, deceptive and totally against Christ so that the woman may consider how she may be supporting such men.
  2. (8-9) John cautions the woman not to lose her rewards by aiding or believing false teachers' heresies to encourage her to please God by remaining steadfast in doctrine.
    - a. (8) John cautions that believers can lose the rewards which they have earned for the Judgment Seat of Christ to cause the woman to consider whether her aid to false teachers really receives God's blessing.
    - b. (9) John explains that rewards can be lost when believers go beyond orthodox teaching by adhering to heresy without God's approval in order to encourage her to please God by remaining steadfast in doctrine.
  3. (10-11) John warns that a Christian must never encourage the spread of heresy by inviting false teachers inside one's home or even greeting them to stress how the woman's love must have discerning limits based upon the truth of the gospel.
    - a. (10) John sternly declares that a Christian must never invite false teachers inside one's home or even greet those who propagate destructive heresies to stress how the woman's love must be discerning and have limits based upon the truth of the gospel.
    - b. (11) John warns that anyone who even *greet*s a proselytizing false teacher will encourage him in his heretical ways and thus help promote his evil work to cause the woman to see the seriousness of aiding Satan's workers.
- B. (12-13) John knows a personal visit will better clarify his teaching about false teachers than a letter so he hopes to see the woman and sends greetings from her sister's children to end this serious letter with an affectionate touch.
1. (12) John wants to clarify his teaching about discerning love by a personal visit which is better than a letter and would result in a joyful time rather than a list of stern regulations.
    - a. (12a) John has more teaching on the delicate subject of responding to false teachers but expresses that a letter was not the best means to communicate this so that the woman might know that he would further clarify the nature of discerning love later.
    - b. (12b) John expresses a desire for a personal, face-to-face visit which would better clarify his teaching and result in a joyful time rather than a list of stern regulations.
  2. (13) John sends greetings from her nephews and nieces to end in an affectionate way.

## The Meaning of 2 John 10

### A Study of How to Respond to False Teachers

#### Translations

1. " ... do not take him into your house or welcome him" (NIV).
2. " ... do not receive him into *your* house, and do not give him a greeting" (NASB).
3. " ... receive him not into *your* house, and do not bid him God speed" (KJV).
4. " ... do not receive him -- do not accept him, do not welcome him *or* do not admit him -- into [your] house or bid him Godspeed *or* give him any encouragement" (Amplified).
5. " ... don't have him inside your house; don't even greet him" (J. B. Phillips).
6. " ... don't even invite him into your home. Don't encourage him in any way" (Living Bible).
7. " ... don't take him into your home or greet him " (Beck).
8. " ...you must stop welcoming him to your house and stop bidding him good morning" (Williams).
9. " ... stop receiving him into your house. And stop giving him greeting" (Wuest)
10. " ... do not receive him into the house or give him any greeting" (Revised Standard Version)
11. " ... stop receiving him into [your] house and stop saying a greeting to him" (my translation)
12. "... μὴ λαμβάνετε αὐτὸν εἰς οἰκίαν καὶ χαίρειν αὐτῷ μὴ λέγετε" (Greek).

#### Interpretive Issues

1. Definition: The lexical (dictionary) meaning of χαίρειν (χαίρω) is twofold (BAGD 873-74):
  - a. "rejoice, be glad" (e.g., Romans 12:15a "Rejoice with those who rejoice...").
  - b. used as a formula of greeting--
    - 1) as a form of address, often on meeting people... "welcome, good day, hail (to you), I am glad to see you," sometimes (e.g., Hermas) "how do you do?" or even the colloquial "hello"... "good morning"; ... "greet someone, bid someone the time of day" 2 John 10f.
    - 2) elliptically at the beginning of a letter... "greetings" (James 1:1).
2. Parallel Passages: The word is used in the sense of "b." above in 2 John 10 but also in...
  - a. "Going at once to Jesus, Judas said, '**Greetings**, Rabbi!' and kissed Him (Matt. 26:49)
  - b. "... They put a staff in His right hand and knelt in front of Him and mocked Him. "**Hail**, King of the Jews!" they said (Matt. 27:29b).
  - c. "Suddenly Jesus met [the women after His resurrection]. '**Greetings**,' He said. They came to Him, clasped His feet and worshiped Him" (Matt. 28:9; cf. Mark 15:18; John 19:3).
  - d. "The angel went to her [Mary] and said, '**Greetings**, you who are highly favored! The Lord is with you" (Luke 1:28).
3. Tense Usage: The use of the present imperative tense here has either of two possibilities:
  - a. Iterative: repeat an action at successive intervals or whenever the occasion arises; i.e., "whenever a false teacher comes don't receive him into your house" (cf. J. A. Moulton, *Grammar of the New Testament Greek*, Vol. 1, Edinburgh: T & T. Clark, 1908, 125).
  - b. Prohibitive: a command to discontinue an action already going on; i.e., "stop receiving him into the house" (Eugene Van Ness Goetchius, *The Language of the New Testament*, New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1965, 263).

- c. Therefore, John wrote the woman given to hospitality to immediately stop demonstrating hospitality to false teachers (which could only occur the next time she had opportunity to encourage them in their propagation of their false gospel).

### Notes from Commentaries Allowing Entrance Into Homes

1. John Stott makes three key observations on 2 John 10. (*The Epistles of John*, 213-14). I agree with "a." and "c." but show my disagreement with "b." in brackets []:
  - a. "John is referring to teachers of false doctrine, not merely to believers in it... Christians may certainly welcome and entertain someone who holds false views, and will seek to bring him to a better mind. It is those who are engaged in the systematic dissemination of lies, dedicated missionaries of error, to whom we may give no encouragement."
  - b. "John's instruction may well relate not only to an 'official' visit of false teachers, but to the extending to them of an 'official' welcome, rather than to private hospitality [because]:
    - (1) "this letter was addressed, to a church, not to an individual [But verse 1 says it was written to a woman and her children!], and
    - (2) "the phrase *if there come any unto you* (plural, *humas*) describes the anticipated visit of a false teacher (or group of them, verse 7) to the church in question... They had left the church where John was . . . but had evidently not yet arrived where the recipients of the Second Epistle were" [but if this were true why didn't John specifically say, "There are some false teachers en route to you from our area . . ."? Also, the plural "you" obviously refers to the woman and her children in verse 1 since a church is nowhere mentioned in the letter].
    - (3) "John's order [is] not to *receive him . . . into your house*, which is literally 'into the house' (RSV). Which house? Of course he may mean that every Christian house was to be closed to the false prophets. But may it not be that John was referring to 'the house' . . . in which the church met for worship?" [Of course, the woman's house probably was also the same place believers met for worship—besides this, should false prophets be banned from church services but welcomed into private homes?]

NOTE: Stott contradicts this whole second argument (b) when he writes concerning (3) above, "How then can we make him welcome in our home or church or wish him well on his journey?" (p. 214).
  - c. "John is referring to teachers of false doctrine about the incarnation, and not to every false teacher." [Here Stott brings up a good point: those in view are first of all *teachers*, and second, they are *not* divergent in a *small* issue (e.g., a different perspective on baptism, church structure, divorce, etc.) but a *big* issue—whether Jesus is indeed God in the flesh].
2. F. F. Bruce writes, "The injunction not to receive any one who does not bring 'the teaching of Christ' means that no such person must be accepted as a Christian teacher or as one entitled to the fellowship of the church. It does not mean that (say) one of the Jehovah's Witnesses should not be invited into the house for a cup of tea in order to be shown the way of God more perfectly in the sitting-room than would be convenient at the doorstep" (*The Epistles of John*, 142)."

Therefore, the above authors believe that the verse prohibits false teachers from a teaching ministry in the church. In this view, it does not prohibit believers from showing hospitality to false teachers within their own homes.

### Notes from Commentaries Denying Entrance Into Homes

1. "For their hospitality and keep [traveling Christian preachers] depended upon the generosity of *the members* of the church. Such hospitality was not to be offered to preachers with a false message; it can be taken for granted that they were not to be allowed to minister in the church [emphasis mine]" (Marshall, *The Epistles of John*, 74).
2. "Do not receive such a teacher as one who can justly claim the privilege of Christian hospitality as a brother" (Westcott, *The Epistles of St. John*, 231).
3. "Neither the local church *nor the individual* believer are to have any fellowship whatsoever with those teaching erroneous views which deny the person and work of Christ [emphasis mine]" (Robert Weldon Wilson, "An Exposition of Second and Third John," Th.M. Thesis, Dallas Theological Seminary, 1955, 36).

### Summary of the Differing Views:

#### Can False Teachers . . .

<u>View</u>	<u>Stay in Believers Homes?</u>	<u>Enter Believers' Homes?</u>	<u>Adherents</u>
1	Yes	Yes	John R. Stott F. F. Bruce
2	No	Yes	Stanley Toussaint
3	No	?	I. Howard Marshall B. F. Westcott Robert Weldon Wilson
4	No	No	Rick Griffith

### Views Explained

1. False teachers can stay overnight with believers and can be invited to enter the private homes of believers because the command prohibits them only from church services (Stott, Bruce)
2. False teachers should never stay overnight with believers *but* can be invited to enter the private homes of believers for a chat (Toussaint, Dallas Seminary)
3. False teachers should never stay overnight with believers but the question of staying inside for a few minutes is not addressed (Marshall, Wilson, Westcott)
4. False teachers should never stay overnight with believers *and* should never be invited to enter the private homes of believers (Griffith). In my opinion, this is the natural sense to the expression, "Do not take him into your house or welcome him." Anyone who invites a heretical teacher into his house even for a few minutes has welcomed false teaching into the home.

See pp. 304a-b → **Endnotes** 

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1 *History of the Church* (vol. 2), 182; (vol 5), 336.

2 "Millions Now Living Will Never Die," *The Watchtower* (July 15, 1924), 89.

3 *Watchtower*, Dec. 1941.

4 Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy*, 480.

5 Op. cit., 486-490.

6 Op. cit., 483.

7 EGW, *Testimonies for the Church* (vol. 3), 530.

8 EGW, *Spirit of Prophecy* (vol. 4), 266.

9 EGW, *Early Writings*, 234.

10 Op. cit., 75.

11 Op. cit., 15-16.

12 Op. cit., 35, 276.

13 EGW, *Testimonies*, 131-132.

## Modern Heresies

## THE BEREAN CALL

P.O. Box 7019 Bend, Oregon 97708

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## God's Word: Our Guard and Guide

Dave Hunt

The fruitful man in Psalm 1 meditates upon God's Word "day and night," and not from a sense of duty but because it is his "delight." In his heart and on his mind continually, God's Word guards and guides him. How essential this is! Common sense and logic are helpful. However, without God's Word (which transcends human wisdom) to guard and guide us, we are susceptible to temptation and error, especially when the latter is presented convincingly "in the name of God" by those looked up to as Christian leaders.

God works through His Word: "[M]y word...shall not return unto me void..." (Isa 55:11); "Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee" (Ps 119:11). Satan works to snatch God's Word from the heart: "[T]hen cometh the wicked one, and catcheth away that which was sown in his heart" (Mt 13:19). If it suits him, Satan quotes the Bible (Mt 4:6) and attempts to pervert it in order to deceive. He also inspires false prophets with "new revelations" which subvert the Word. We have many such "prophets" in the church today.

God's Word repeatedly warns about false prophets. We need to heed those warnings. Jesus said, "Beware of false prophets" (Mt 7:15); "[M]any false prophets shall rise...and shall shew great signs and wonders; inasmuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect" (Mt 24:11, 24). Christ clearly warns of a last-days false signs-and-wonders movement promoted by false prophets. Paul likens the latter to Jannes and Jambres, who opposed Moses and Aaron (2 Tm 3:8) with signs and wonders done by the power of Satan.

Peter warned that just as there were false prophets in Old Testament times, "there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies..." (2 Pt 2:1). The Apostle John declared that already in his day "many false prophets are gone out into the world" (1 Jn 4:1). How much more must we beware of false prophets as the prophesied last-days apostasy reaches its climax in preparing the world and a false church for the Antichrist. Knowing, loving and obeying God's Word is the only sure way not to be led astray.

Any one of the Bible's six marks of false prophets is sufficient identification: 1) through signs and wonders they lead astray after false gods (Dt 13:1-4); 2) their prophecies don't come to pass (Dt 18:20-22); 3) they contradict God's Word (Is 8:20); 4) they bear bad fruit (Mt 7:18-20); 5) all men speak well of them (Lk 6:26); 6) they deny that Jesus, the one and only Christ, has come once and for all in the flesh (1 Jn 4:3).

How tragic that God's personal letter of love and guidance to His own is so neglected today by those who call themselves Christians! Many who profess to know God and to serve Him have little or no thirst for His Word. Instead, they seek signs and wonders, emotional experiences, new revelations, the latest "move," or the gifts rather than the Giver. As a result, they are susceptible to "every wind of doctrine" (Eph 4:14) and fall prey to false teachers who "through covetousness...with feigned words make merchandise" (2 Pt 2:3) of them, "supposing that gain is

And many false prophets shall arise, and shall deceive many.

Matthew 24:11

godliness" (1 Tm 6:5). The popular lie of "seed faith"—that a gift to a ministry opens the door to miracles and prosperity—deceives and promotes covetousness among millions ignorant of God's Word.

The fulfillment of biblical prophecies is the great proof of God's existence, that the Bible is His Word and that Jesus Christ is the promised Savior. The false prophecies of many of today's Christian leaders are a loud warning. Heed it! Most cults are founded upon false prophecies, which, if pointed out, offer an effective way to open blind eyes and rescue cultists.

Among the false prophets throughout history were a number of the popes. As one example, Pope Gregory XI's papal bull of 1372 (*In Coena Domini*) pronounced papal dominion over the entire Christian world, secular and religious, and excommunicated all who failed to obey the popes and to pay them taxes. *In Coena* was confirmed by subsequent popes, and in 1568 Pope Pius V swore that it was to remain an eternal law. Instead, in 1870, two months after the Vatican pronounced papal infallibility, Rome was liberated from papal dominion

by Italy's army and Pope Pius IX took refuge in the Vatican, all that remained of what had been a vast empire.

Mimicking the popes, Sun Myung Moon prophesied decades ago that he would take over the world. Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, founder of the Transcendental Meditation (TM) movement, declared that 1975 was the first year in "The Age of Enlightenment," 1977 was "The Year of the Ideal Society," and 1978 "The Year of Invincibility of Every Nation." No comment is necessary. Herbert W. Armstrong predicted that his Worldwide Church of God would be raptured to the ancient city of Petra in 1972 and that Christ would return to the earth in 1975 (a favorite date of many cults). In the 1970s Elijah Muhammad prophesied to his Black Muslim followers that God's return to North America was imminent.

Mormonism boasts of its prophecies—but they have all been false. In 1833, founding prophet Joseph Smith prophesied that the United States would suffer unparalleled multiple disasters ("pestilence, hail, famine and earthquake") which would sweep the wicked (non-Mormons) off the land, leaving Mormons safe in their Zion haven in Missouri. Instead, they fled to Utah. Among Smith's many other false prophecies was the declaration in 1835 that Christ would return within 56 years

and many living then would "not taste of death till Christ comes."<sup>1</sup> Smith's successor, Brigham Young, prophesied that the Civil War would not free the slaves.<sup>see p. 304</sup>

Charles T. Russell's false prophecies formed the basis for what became The Watchtower Bible and Tract Society and the Jehovah's Witnesses. Russell declared that the Second Coming had taken place invisibly in October 1874, and the Lord was truly present, and that in 1914 the faithful (the 144,000) would be translated to heaven and the wicked destroyed. Armageddon (which began in 1874) would culminate in 1914 with the complete overthrow of earth's rulers and the end of the world. C.T. Russell, still on earth, died in 1916.

In the early 1920s, JW's zealously distributed on the streets and from door to door a book titled Millions Now Living Will Never Die. It was prophesied, "The year 1925 is a date definitely and clearly marked in the Scriptures, even more clearly than that of 1914...we may confidently expect that 1925 will mark the return of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and the faithful prophets of



see p. 304

## "Modern Heresies" by Dave Hunt (2 of 2)

old...to the condition of human perfection."<sup>2</sup> The JW's even built a house in San Diego where the patriarchs were to live and tried to deed it to King David. (The house was quietly sold in 1954.)

In the early 1940s, JW's were declaring that Armageddon, *only months away*, would end World War II and the defeat of the Nazis would usher in God's rule on earth.<sup>3</sup> Their book, *Children*, suggested that plans to marry and have children be postponed until after Armageddon. It's been a long wait! Not giving up, they later prophesied that God's millennial kingdom would commence in 1975. Again JW's were told not to engage in any plans for this world, including marriage and having children. Many quit their jobs, sold their homes and dedicated themselves to going door to door.

Seventh-Day Adventism (SDA) originated with similar false prophecies about Christ's coming. (We offer an excellent book.) It began with William Miller's prediction that Christ would return in 1843 (revised to October 22, 1844). Miller admitted his error. However, SDA prophetess Ellen G. White (EGW), who had repeatedly endorsed Miller's prophecy, insisted that Christ had indeed come, but not to earth. Instead, He had entered "the holy of holies" in heaven "to make an atonement for all who are shown to be entitled to its benefits."<sup>4</sup> *Entitled?* Many quotes could be given to prove that EGW taught salvation by works. Here are a few:

"Our acts, our words, even our most secret motives, all have their weight in deciding our destiny...though...forgotten by us, they [our works] will bear their testimony to justify or condemn."<sup>5</sup>

When any have sins remaining upon the books of record, unrepented of and unforgiven, their names will be blotted out of the book of life...<sup>6</sup>

Each one of you needs to...[be] working with your might to redeem the failures of your past life. God has placed you in a world of suffering to prove you, to see if you will be found worthy of the gift of eternal life.<sup>7</sup>

This teaching of the "investigative judgment" is the foundational doctrine and major heresy of Seventh-day Adventism: that the atonement was not complete on the Cross but was begun in heaven in 1844 and depends upon our works. According to EGW, the blood of Christ, instead of making "an atonement for the soul" (Lv 17:11) and "cleans[ing] us from all sin" (1 Jn 1:7), *brought sin into heaven*: "[O]ur sins are, in fact, transferred to the heavenly sanctuary by the blood of Christ."<sup>8</sup> Thus Christ had to begin the work of cleansing the heavenly sanctuary (*of sins His blood had brought there!*)

through the "investigative judgment." EGW declared that "Ministers who would not accept this *saving message*" were hindering God's work and "*The blood of souls is upon them.*"<sup>9</sup> Millerites who adopted this delusion became Seventh-day Adventists.

EGW made numerous false prophecies: that "Old Jerusalem never would be built up,"<sup>10</sup> that she would be alive at the Rapture,<sup>11</sup> that Christ would return before slavery was abolished,<sup>12</sup> that Adventists living in 1856 would be alive at the Rapture,<sup>13</sup> and many more. Yet her writings are revered like Scripture. Number 17 of the "Fundamental Beliefs of Seventh-day Adventists" states,

*The Gift of Prophecy*: One of the gifts of the Holy Spirit is prophecy. This gift is an identifying mark of the remnant church and was manifested in the ministry

**But there were false prophets among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you... 2 Peter 2:1**

of Ellen G. White. As the Lord's messenger, her writings are a continuing and authoritative source of truth which provide for the church comfort, guidance, instruction, and correction.

False prophets continue among us and are often seen and heard on Christian television and radio. For example, toward the end of 1975, Kenneth Copeland prophesied, "As you move into the month of January [1976], you shall see more of the outpouring of God's glory than...in the history of this world...limbs that have been amputated put back on by the power of God...instantly...[bald] men's hair grow to a full head of hair...eyeballs replaced where there were no eyeballs....God will cause your automobile...[that gets] 10 miles to the gallon to get 70 miles...the same old car!" These are but a few of Copeland's false prophecies, to say nothing of his false doctrines.

The false prophecies and "words of knowledge" by those associated with John Wimber and his Vineyard churches would fill several volumes. The laughing revival from Toronto and its latest variation (spreading like wildfire) in the Brownsville Assembly of God in Pensacola, Florida, has spawned a new generation of false prophets. Failure of fulfillment is excused because today's prophets are "different" and errors are normal during the process of learning to become more proficient. Imagine Jeremiah saying, "I'm often wrong, but I'm

improving"!

Benny Hinn is the most popular televangelist/healer today, and many of his false prophecies are documented in The Confusing World of Benny Hinn. (See books offered.) On December 31, 1989, Benny said, "The Lord also tells me...about '94 or '95, no later than that, God will destroy the homosexual community of America...by fire....Canada will be visited with a mighty revival that will start on the west coast of British Columbia...in the next three years." It only takes one false prophecy to make a false prophet, and Hinn's are legion. He can't even get his testimony straight. In PTL Family Devotional he says, "I got saved in Israel in 1968," but in a 1983 message in St. Louis he said, "It was in Canada that I was born again right after '68." Yet in Good Morning, Holy Spirit, he says he was converted in 1972, during his senior year in high school. But he dropped out before his senior year. When was he saved?

For three years, night and day, Paul wept and warned the Ephesian elders of coming apostasy and that some of them would be among its leaders (Acts 20:29-31)! How feeble is our concern for the state of the church in comparison with Paul's! And what was the remedy he offered? Not spiritual warfare, not prayer and fasting, but obedience to God and His Word: "I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace" (v 32).

There is a growing movement of "prayer and fasting for revival." It sounds so good! But the leaders of this movement refuse to heed God's Word, and promote ecumenism and heresies! We need no revival of that! We need repentance for not heeding God's Word. We need reformation, not revival! There are times when prayer and fasting are wrong. After the defeat at Ai, God told Joshua that prayer was inappropriate because Israel had sinned (Jos 7:10-13). How tragic to have a revival led by false prophets promoting false doctrines!

Not all Seventh-day Adventists embrace EGW's heresies. Pray that SDA leaders will admit to EGW's false prophecies and repent of wrong doctrines. Pray that evangelical leaders will face up to the fact that their ranks are filled with false prophets. Pray for a great outcry against unbiblical doctrines. Pray that today's evangelical leaders will faithfully correct false prophets.

And may the rest of us be faithful in our small spheres of influence. May God help us to love His Word, to meditate upon it day and night, to obey it in our daily lives, and to stand firmly against the perversion of that Word by the false prophets and false teachers of our day. May His Word truly be our guard and guide!

# 3 John

Supporting Missionaries								
1-8			9-11			12-14		
Gaius			Diotrephes			Demetrius		
Commended			Condemned			Recommended		
Supported Missionaries			Opposed Missionaries			Is a Missionary		
Greetings & Prayer 1-2	Joy over Godliness 3-4	Support Confirmed 5-8	for Rejecting John 9	for Opposing Missionaries 10	for Doing Evil 11	Good Reputation 12	Visit Anticipated 13-14a	Affectionate Greetings 14b-d
Asia Minor								
c. AD 90								

**Key Word:** Missionaries

**Key Verse:** “We ought therefore to show hospitality to such men [missionaries] so that we may work together for the truth” (3 John 8).

**Summary Statement:** John encourages Gaius to continue *supporting missionaries* such as Demetrius despite opposition from Diotrephes (a godless leader who opposes supporting them) to help the church to see its *responsibility to finance God’s work*.

**Application:**

Are you advancing the gospel by supporting missionaries through hospitality and finances?

# 3 John

## Introduction

**I. Title:** The Greek title (Ἰωάννου γ' *Third of John*) follows the standard practice of naming the General Epistles after their authors and distinguishes this epistle from John's two others.

### II. Authorship

- A. External Evidence: The Apostle John penned this shortest biblical writing as the leader of the Ephesian church in Asia Minor and author of his Gospel, 1 John, 2 John and Revelation.
- B. Internal Evidence: The title “the elder” (v. 1) was always interpreted as John until the rise of liberal scholarship. Themes such as love (v. 6), joy (v. 4; cf. 1 John 1:4), and truth (vv. 1, 3-4, 12) bear remarkable resemblance to emphases in 1 John and the Gospel of John.

### III. Circumstances

- A. Date: Most conservative scholars believe John wrote concerning this issue about AD 90, although nothing in the epistle excludes an earlier date (see 1 John notes).
- B. Origin/Recipients: John addresses his dear friend Gaius, a man who regularly opened his home to traveling missionaries, probably in Asia Minor, where John lived.
- C. Occasion: Before NT writings were completed and circulated among believers, churches relied upon traveling missionaries (prophets and teachers) for truth. Inns were unsafe and few in number, so these missionaries stayed with Christians. A man named Gaius extended hospitality to such men (vv. 5-8), despite the opposition of another man in his church named Diotrephes (vv. 9-10). John wrote to encourage Gaius to continue his hospitality and support to missionaries. Whereas John in 2 John warns against supporting *false* teachers, 3 John speaks to the “flip-side” of the issue: believers should support *true* missionary teachers.

### IV. Characteristics

- A. **People** in the Postcard: This warm, personable letter revolves around three people:
- Gaius is a godly man who wholeheartedly supports the missionaries (vv. 1-8).
  - Diotrephes (“nourished by Zeus”) is a carnal believer opposing hospitality towards the missionaries practiced by Gaius and other believers (vv. 9-11). Although the common first century practice for Gentiles saved from idolatry was to change their names after embracing Christianity, Diotrephes’ pagan name was not changed after his conversion.
  - Demetrius is a missionary whom the church should support (v. 12).
- B. The latter two epistles of John can be contrasted in several ways:

	<u>2 John</u>	<u>3 John</u>
Recipient	a Woman	a Man
Names	Anonymous	Gaius, Diotrephes, Demetrius
Mood	Condemns	Commends
Condemns	Bad Doctrine	Bad Conduct
Missionaries	False	True
Hospitality/Support	Misplaced	Missing (Diotrephes), Maintained (Gaius)
Verses	13	14
Words (Greek text)	245	219

- C. This is the shortest letter in the Bible in terms of the number of words.

## Argument

The Book of 3 John teaches believers to show hospitality and support for true teachers sent from the church (missionaries) to enable them to spread the gospel freely. John wrote Gaius this "postcard" to commend him for this kind of hospitality. John first commends Gaius for his faithful support of these men (vv. 1-8), then condemns Gaius' opposer, Diotrephes, for rejecting the missionaries and those who supported them (vv. 9-11), and concludes with an introduction of Demetrius, who is worthy of support (v. 12) along with some personal matters (vv. 13-14).

## Synthesis

### Supporting missionaries

<b>1-8</b>	<b>Gaius confirmed</b>
1	Greetings
2	Prayer for health
3-4	Joy over godliness
5-6a	Past support commended
6b	Future support encouraged
7-8	Believers' responsibility
7	Not non-Christians
8	Partnership in spreading truth
<b>9-11</b>	<b>Diotrephes condemned</b>
9	for rejecting John's instructions
10	for opposing missionary support
10a	Gossip
10b	Inhospitableness
10c	Excommunications
11	for doing evil
<b>12</b>	<b>Demetrius recommended</b>
<b>13-14</b>	<b>Conclusion</b>
13-14a	Personal visit anticipated
14b-d	Affectionate greetings

## Outline

### Summary Statement for the Book

**John encourages Gaius to continue supporting missionaries such as Demetrius despite opposition from Diotrephes (a godless leader who opposes supporting them) to help the church to see its responsibility to finance God's work.**

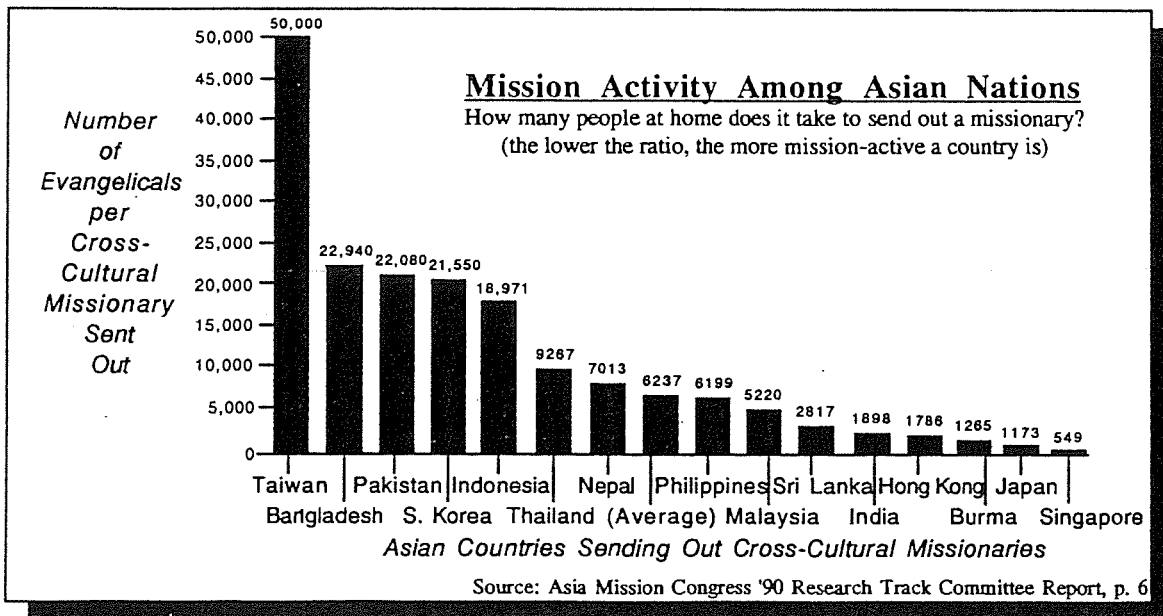
- I. **(1-8) John confirms Gaius for his godliness and missionary support so that he would continue to support missionaries despite Diotrephes' opposition.**
  - A. (1) John identifies himself as author and specifically addresses his letter to a dear Christian brother, Gaius, to indicate the apostolic authority the letter possesses and to give public commendation of Gaius before all who may read it, especially Diotrephes.
    1. (1a) The Apostle John, the leader of the Ephesian church, identifies himself in a short epistle in the latter years of his life so that whoever read the letter might know that its contents have the stamp of apostolic authority.
    2. (1b) John's beloved friend Gaius, a Christian man of material means, is specifically designated as recipient of the epistle to give public commendation of Gaius before all who may read it—especially Diotrephes.

- B. (2) John prays that Gaius' health and general well-being might be in as good of shape as his spiritual vitality to demonstrate his concern for both Gaius' physical and spiritual needs.
  - C. (3-4) John expresses the joy he had after hearing from some missionaries who had stayed with Gaius that Gaius faithfully lived the Christian life to commend him for his godly life as the best news John could ever receive about him or any other convert.
    - 1. (3) John expresses the joy he had after hearing from some missionaries who had stayed with Gaius that Gaius faithfully lived the Christian life to commend him for his faithfulness to God's workers.
    - 2. (4) John notes that the best news he could ever hear about someone he led to Christ is that he continue growing in Christ, obedient to the truth, so that Gaius might know that John couldn't be more pleased with him.
  - D. (5-6a) Gaius' hospitality and love towards missionaries whom he supported is confirmed so that he would continue to support them in spite of Diotrephes' opposition.
  - E. (6b) Further hospitality and support for these men is encouraged so that Gaius might understand that this ministry must continue.
  - F. (7-8) John reminds Gaius that since the missionaries' work is for Christ the world will not support it, thus reminding him and other believers of their personal responsibility to fund God's work.
    - 1. (7) Non-Christians have no interest in funding work done for Christ.
    - 2. (8) John reminds Gaius that missionaries must be completely supported by God's people in order to show that missionaries and supporters are partners in spreading God's truth.
- II. (9-11) John condemns Diotrephes for rejecting his teaching and for opposing missionary support so that his evil actions would not be imitated.**
- A. (9) John warns that even though the church where Gaius was had received a letter from John commending missionaries' support, Diotrephes, a leader in the church, rejected the appeal from personal ambition.
  - B. (10) John condemns in writing Diotrephes' opposition to missionary support shown in his gossip, lack of hospitality, and excommunication of hospitable believers, but John promises to condemn it again personally should he have opportunity to visit the church.
    - 1. (10a) John condemns the malicious gossip of Diotrephes to protect the integrity of the missionaries visiting the church.
    - 2. (10b) John condemns the inhospitable actions of Diotrephes to instruct the church that this lack of generosity is not to be imitated.
    - 3. (10c) John condemns the excommunication of hospitable believers by Diotrephes to reveal his egotism and opposition to the truth of God.
  - C. (11) John condemns Diotrephes to contrast his inhospitable, evil actions (which should be avoided) with the hospitable, good deeds of Gaius (which should be imitated).
- III.(12) John recommends Demetrius, probably a traveling missionary who carried the letter, with a threefold positive testimony so that Gaius would not hesitate to give him the same support he showed to other missionaries.**
- A. (12a) Everyone in the various churches who knew Demetrius spoke well of him, so Gaius would "imitate what was good" if he extended hospitality to Demetrius.

- B. (12b) Even if no one testified on Demetrius' behalf, if God's truth could talk it would also speak well of Demetrius since his exemplary behavior lined up with proper teaching, which would serve to encourage Gaius to take in Demetrius.
- C. (12c) John and his fellow-workers recommend Demetrius so that when Diotrephes rejects Demetrius, Gaius might take courage that Demetrius is highly endorsed.

**IV. (13-14) John expresses a desire to personally see Gaius, wishes him peace, sends greetings, and requests greetings to Gaius' friends on his behalf to reinforce both his displeasure with Diotrephes and his affection for Gaius.**

- A. (13-14a) Although John had much to write about supporting missionaries, Diotrephes' opposition and other causes, he expresses hope to tell these things personally to Gaius so that Gaius would know both John's affection for him and his displeasure with Diotrephes.
- B. (14b-d) John wishes Gaius peace, sends greetings from his friends and requests that Gaius' friends be personally greeted for him, thus ending the letter on an affectionate note to reinforce his love for Gaius and his friends.
  - 1. (14b) John requests that Gaius might know peace in the tumultuous situation in which he finds himself with Diotrephes to reinforce his love for Gaius.
  - 2. (14c) John sends greetings from the friends with him as an affectionate gesture.
  - 3. (14d) John requests that Gaius' friends be personally greeted for him as an indication of his individual concern and value placed upon every believer in Gaius' church.



# Jude

Contending Against Pretenders										
Why to Contend						How to Contend				
Intro		Pretenders' Practices				How to Avoid Pretenders' Snares			Praise for Preservation	
Verses 1-2		Verses 3-16				Verses 17-23			Verses 24-25	
Greeting 1	Blessing 2	Purpose of Epistle: Defend the faith 3-4	OT Pretenders 5-7 (Past)	Characteristics 8-13 (Present)	Judgment 14-16 (Future)	Remember Apostles' Predictions 17-19	Nurture Oneself in God's Love 20-21	Show Mercy to Pretenders' Followers 22-23	Source of Victory 24	Only Savior 25
Unknown Origin to Probably Palestine										
c. AD 75										

**Key Word:** Pretenders

**Key Verse:** "...Contend for the faith that was once for all entrusted to the saints. For certain men whose condemnation was written about long ago have secretly slipped in among you. They are godless men, who change the grace of our God into a license for immorality and deny Jesus Christ our only Sovereign and Lord" (Jude 3b-4).

**Summary Statement:** Jude warns Christians at large of *pretenders*—unbelievers who have infiltrated their churches masking themselves as Christians but perverting the truth by their lifestyles of license—in order to defend the *holiness* of the church.

**Application:** Do you fight those who introduce godlessness in the church—or do you let them get away with lowering the standard?

# Jude

## Introduction

- I. Title** The Greek title (Ἰουδᾶ *Iouda*) follows the tradition of naming General Epistles after the author.
- II. Authorship**
- A. External Evidence: Despite its small size and limited subject matter, Jude was accepted as authentic and quoted by the early Church Fathers, including Tertullian and Origen. It was also included in the Muratorian Canon (*ca.* AD 170).
- B. Internal Evidence: This is the only NT letter of Jude, half-brother of Jesus Christ and son of Joseph and Mary. Jude was also the brother of James (v. 1a), another half brother of the Lord (Matt. 13:55; Mark 6:3), the leader of the church at Jerusalem (Acts 15:13) and author of the epistle bearing his name (James 1:1). Jude is the same as Judah or Judas and means “praise” (cf. Rom. 2:29).
- III. Circumstances**
- A. Date: Most scholars believe Jude wrote between AD 67-80, especially since the readers themselves had heard the apostles (v. 17). For this course a date of about AD 75 will be used (Hoehner’s dating).
- B. Origin/Recipients: Jude does not specify an exact church (v. 1b), but the many references to the Old Testament (Egypt, Sodom and Gomorrah, Moses, Cain, Balaam, Korah, Enoch, Adam, and fallen angels) and to extrabiblical literature suggests that the original recipients may have been Christian Jews of Palestine who were gathered into local fellowships (E. Pentecost, *BKC*, 2:918).
- C. Occasion: The men Jude condemned were “denying the lordship of Christ (v. 4), exercising sinful license (vv. 4, 8, 16), rebelling against authority (vv. 8, 11, 18), giving into their own desires (vv. 16, 19), being concerned only with gain for themselves (vv. 11-12, 16), being divisive (v. 19), fault-finding (v. 16), and boasting (v. 16)” (Pentecost, 917). He wrote to inform the church of these men so that believers would not fall into their error, which evidently was more behavioral than doctrinal.
- IV. Characteristics**
- A. Like 2 John, this “postcard” warns against unbelieving false leaders—especially a beginning form of Gnosticism. Gnostics taught that the spirit was good and the body evil. Since the body was evil “you may as well live it up!” This led to all kinds of arrogant indulgences.
- B. Jude is the only NT book that refers to the Pseudepigrapha (“falsely ascribed” books). He alludes to the Assumption of Moses (Jude 9) and quotes 1 Enoch 1:10 (Jude 14-15). However, he does not affirm the authority of these books.
- C. Jude is fond of triads. For example, he uses triads in verse 1 (Jude, servant, brother; called, sanctified, preserved), verse 2 (mercy, peace, love), and verses 5-7 (people, angels, those who did not believe), etc. (*TTTB*, 503).
- D. The letter of Jude summarizes 2 Peter 2 in many respects. See pages 316a-b for comparisons.

## Argument

The Letter of Jude exhorts its readers to “contend for the faith” (v. 3b) which is endangered by pretenders seeking to lead the Lord’s people away from their moorings in Christ. After the greeting and blessing (vv. 1-2), Jude exposes the pretenders of the faith within the church (vv. 3-16) so their practices can be avoided (vv. 17-23). His closing doxology praises God as the only hope for protection from apostasy (vv. 24-25).



## Synthesis

### Contending against pretenders

<b>1-2</b>		<b>Greeting/blessing</b>
<b>3-16</b>		<b>Pretenders' practice</b>
3-4	3	Purpose of epistle: defend the faith
	4	Original intention
	4	Present intention
5-7		Old Testament pretenders
	5	Israelites in wilderness
	6	Chained angels
	7	Sodom, Gomorrah, nearby towns
8-13		Characteristics
	8-10	Speech rejects authorities
	11a	Religion devised
	11b	Greed
	11c	Rebellion
	12-13	Destructive lifestyle
	14-16	Future judgment
<b>17-23</b>		<b>How to avoid pretenders' snares</b>
	17-19	Remember apostolic predictions
	20-21	Nurture oneself in God's love
	20a	Study Scriptures
	20b	Prayer
	21	Look for Rapture
	22-23	Show mercy to pretenders' followers
<b>24-25</b>		<b>Praise for preservation from apostasy</b>

## Outline

### Summary Statement for the Book

**Jude warns Christians at large of pretenders—unbelievers who have infiltrated their churches masking themselves as Christians but perverting the truth by their lifestyles of license—in order to defend the *holiness* of the church.**

- I. (1-2) Jude identifies himself as author, affirms some unknown believers as recipients, and wishes upon them threefold graces of mercy, peace and love which they needed in their time of defending the faith from pretenders.
  - A. (1) Jude, the half-brother of Jesus Christ and full-brother of James, identifies himself as author and affirms his recipients as predestined, beloved and eternally secure believers.
    1. (1a) Jude, the half-brother of Jesus Christ and full-brother of James, identifies himself as author of the epistle.
    2. (1b-d) An unknown group of predestined, beloved and eternally secure believers are identified as recipients.
      - a. (1b) These believers are predestined by being called and chosen by God.
      - b. (1c) These believers are loved by God the Father with an incomprehensible, unconditional love.
      - c. (1d) These believers have been kept eternally secure by Jesus Christ and will continue to be saved [perfect tense].

- B. (2) Jude wishes for his recipients graces of mercy, peace and love to be multiplied in their lives because of the stiff opposition they are facing from pretenders.
1. (2a) Mercy is the first grace to be multiplied as God's protection from merciless pretenders.
  2. (2b) Peace is wished upon the readers in the midst of their war against false teachers.
  3. (2c) Love from God is wished upon the readers as protection and assurance in their trials.

**II. (3-16) Jude warns against, illustrates and describes the pretenders who have secretly infiltrated the church so that they can be recognized and avoided.**

- A. (3-4) Jude reveals the purpose of his letter as a warning to his readers to defend the faith because of pretenders who secretly infiltrated the church.
1. (3) Jude changes his original intention of writing concerning salvation to addressing the need to defend the completed doctrinal body of truth.
    - a. (3a) Jude's original purpose in writing was to give a treatise on the salvation he shares in Christ with his readers.
    - b. (3b) Through knowing the circumstances his readers faced and the Holy Spirit's impressions, Jude sees the need to change his theme to defending the completed body of doctrinal truth.
  2. (4) The reason Jude changes his original purpose in writing is because prophesied (e.g., Isa. 8:19-22; cf. Jer. 5:12-14) unbelieving pretenders have secretly infiltrated the church with libertine practices which deny the lordship of Jesus Christ.
- B. (5-7) Jude illustrates the characteristics of the present pretenders with Old Testament pretenders in order that they may be avoided.
1. (5) Of the two million Israelites who were delivered from Egypt, some did not believe God and thus were pretenders like those of whom Jude warns (cf. Korah, v. 11 in Num. 16).
  2. (6) Some fallen angels, after leaving their proper position in heaven to possess rulers who then seduced women [Gen. 6:1-4], are presently chained in punishment to await the Great White Throne Judgment and illustrate the pretenders' end in hell.
  3. (7) Sodom, Gomorrah, and the surrounding towns, who were judged for homosexual perversion, serve as an example of the pretenders who will suffer eternal fire.
- C. (8-13) Jude relates the characteristics of the present pretenders' practices and destiny so that his readers might be able to guard themselves from them and their practices.
1. (8-10) Their speech rejects all authorities, including angelic ones, unlike Michael's refusal to dispute with Satan over Moses' body.
    - a. (8) The pretenders are engrossed in practices that pollute their bodies and reject authorities, even speaking against angelic authorities.
    - b. (9) These men should never slander angels since Michael did not dispute with Satan over where Moses' body would be buried but left the matter in God's hands.
      - 1) (9a) These men should never slander angels since the archangel himself, Michael, did not argue with Satan, chief of the fallen angels, over where Moses' body is buried.
      - 2) (9b) Instead of arguing with Satan, Michael left the matter in God's hands [as recorded in the pseudepigraphal book, *The Assumption of Moses*].

- c. (10) The pretenders slander angels whom they don't understand and, like animals that cannot reason, fall headlong into destruction by practices whose effects they know full well.
  2. (11a) Their religion will kill others as Cain killed his brother Abel [Gen. 4:8].
  3. (11b) Their greed resembles Balaam's claim to speak for God, but for money [Num. 22].
  4. (11c) Their rebellion is against leaders whom God designated like the rebellion Korah led against Moses, God's anointed leader of Israel, and they will suffer the same, fatal fate [Num. 16].
  5. (12-13) Various pictures from nature graphically illustrate the destructive lifestyles of the pretenders to warn believers to stay clear of their practices.
    - a. (12a) Like hidden reefs on a shore that wreck ships before they are detected, these pretenders even participate in the most intimate practices of the church, such as fellowship meals, while they destroy the church within.
    - b. (12b) Like shepherds who feed themselves rather than the sheep, these men are leaders seeking only to satisfy their own desires.
    - c. (12c) Like clouds seemingly filled but waterless and blown around, these men appear saintly but have no teaching for thirsty souls due to lack of understanding of even major doctrines and are easy seduction by the latest theological trends.
    - d. (12d) Like trees which lack the expected autumn fruit, these men lack the character expected of a Christian but instead are dead in their sins and will experience the second death—eternal separation from God.
    - e. (13a) Like waves of the sea which direct ships nowhere, these men provide no helpful or edifying guidance but instead practice shameful actions.
    - f. (13b) Like “shooting stars” which move across the sky then vanish without producing light or providing direction, these men lead unwary followers astray from God's truth to join them in eternal judgment.
- D. (14-16) Jude reviews the future judgment of the pretenders for their selfishness so that his readers might be able to guard themselves from them.
  1. (14-15) Jude reviews the future judgment of these pretenders at the Second Coming of Christ that was prophesied by Enoch so that his readers might be able to guard themselves from them.
    - a. (14a) Enoch, accurately quoted by the pseudepigraphal *Book of Enoch* [1:9], prophesied of the pretenders' judgment as a warning to guard believers from them.
    - b. (14b-15) At His Second Coming with saints and angels with Him Christ will judge these men for their ungodly actions and words spoken against Him.
  2. (16) Jude denounces these pretenders for their selfish lifestyles demonstrated in many ways so that his readers would recognize and avoid them.
    - a. (16a) They complain about difficulties rather than rejoicing in them.
    - b. (16b) They find fault in others rather than encouraging them.
    - c. (16c) They lust for their own, sensual advantage rather than serving others.
    - d. (16d) They boast about their own accomplishments rather than praising others.
    - e. (16e) They flatter others for special treatment rather than minister to them unselfishly.

**III. (17-23) Jude shows three ways how to avoid the pretenders' snares so that his readers might be safeguarded from apostasy.**

- A. (17-19) Believers must remember apostolic predictions of these men and their characteristics so that they would not lead them astray without warning.
1. (17) The apostles warned about the pretenders to prepare Christians in advance to recognize and avoid them (cf. 2 Peter 3:1f.).
  2. (18-19) The specific characteristics the apostles warned about in the pretenders are scoffing, selfishness, divisiveness, sensuality and being void of the Spirit.
    - a. (18a) They scoff at the things which God and believers hold sacred.
    - b. (18b) They are led by desires which a godly person resists.
    - c. (19a) They divide the church into various camps with competing leaders, doctrines and emphases.
    - d. (19b) They follow sensual instincts without restraint.
    - e. (19c) They do not have the indwelling ministry of the Spirit as do believers.
- B. (20-21) Believers must nurture themselves in God's love by studying the Scriptures, praying as the Spirit prays, and looking for the rapture—all to protect them from the wiles of the pretenders.
1. (20a) Believers must nurture themselves in God's love by studying their holy faith as revealed in the Scriptures to protect them from the wiles of the pretenders.
  2. (20b) Believers must nurture themselves in God's love by praying in the power of the Holy Spirit in such fellowship with God that the Spirit's thoughts are their thoughts.
  3. (21) Believers must nurture themselves in God's love by looking expectantly for God's mercy that will be shown to them when He removes them from the earth at the Rapture, thus beginning their eternal life in His presence.
- C. (22-23) Believers must show mercy to the followers of the pretenders by encouraging them and witnessing to them while at the same time watching that they not fall into their errors.
1. (22) Believers must have mercy upon and encourage, rather than slander or accuse, other believers confused by the pretenders and in doubt whether to follow them.
  2. (23a) Believers must immediately share Christ with unbelievers following the pretenders rather than let them face eternal fire in Hell with them.
  3. (23b) Believers must show mercy to other followers of the pretenders in such a way that they guard themselves from becoming defiled by them and fall into their error like a disease that easily spreads to others from a contaminated garment.

**IV. (24-25) Jude praises God alone as the Source of victory over apostasy who will make believers sinless and deserves all honor to teach that believers cannot preserve themselves and can feel secure in God's unlimited resources.**

- A. (24) Jude affirms that God alone should be praised because as the Source of victory He can preserve Christians from apostasy and will make every believer sinless—truths which motivate believers to find their strength and security only in God.

1. (24a) Jude affirms that God alone should be praised because He is the Source of victory and can preserve Christians from apostasy so that his readers might understand that they cannot be preserved from error in their own strength.
  2. (24b) Jude affirms that God alone should be praised because in heaven God will present all Christians before Himself sinless and with great joy for both the saints and the Lord, a security which encourages believers to live for God now.
- B. (25) Jude affirms that God deserves honor as the only Savior who has unlimited majesty, strength and dominion through Christ in eternity past, present and future to encourage them that His unlimited resources can protect them from apostasy.

Christian American February 1994

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## NEW AGE DOCTRINES

# PC(USA) PROMOTES GODDESS WORSHIP

By Paul English

National staff and leaders of the Presbyterian Church (USA) gathered with feminist leaders from other World Council of Churches denominations to destroy patriarchal religion and worship the goddess "Sophia," according to an article in the January/February issue of the *Presbyterian Layman*.

Repeated themes in the November 4-7 conference, "Re-Imagining 1993," included destroying traditional Christian faith, adopting ancient pagan beliefs, rejecting Jesus' divinity and His atonement on the cross, creating a goddess in their own image, and affirming lesbian love-making.

According to the *Layman*, 24 PCUSA national staff members registered for the event. The denomination's Bicentennial Fund was the largest source of financial support for the conference with a \$66,000 grant.

Johanna Bos, feminist professor at Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary, was greeted with cheers and applause when she stated, "We have not come here to jump on the feminist band wagon, but to upset the patriarchal apple cart."

Part of the upset included religious

**"I don't think we need a theory of atonement at all. I don't think we need folks hanging on crosses and blood dripping and weird stuff."**

ideas from the East. Conference speakers taught "pranic healing" and leaders led the group in singing repeatedly throughout the 4-day event, "Oh great spirit, earth and wind and sea, you are inside and all around me."

Lesbian feminist Virginia Mollenkott picked up on that theme. "The monism I'm talking about assumes that god is so all-inclusive that she is involved in every cell of those who are thoughts in her mind and embodiments of her image," she said.

Conference participants worshipped the divine in each other by marking red dots on their foreheads to signify their divinity, and then bowing to each other in an act of reverence. They sang songs to the goddess Sophia, the

source of their divinity, the creator god who dwells within them and unleashes within them their divine power.

Traditional Christian teaching on the Atonement was completely overturned.

Delores Williams, professor at Union Theological Seminary in New York, told the group, "I don't think we need a theory of atonement at all. I think Jesus came for life and to show us something about life ... I don't think we need folks hanging on crosses and blood dripping and weird stuff."

Mollenkott claimed that Jesus' death was the ultimate in child abuse and a model for human child abuse. "I can no longer worship in a theological context that depicts God as an abusive parent and Jesus as the obedient, trusting child," she declared.

Arunda Gnanadason, director of the sub-unit on Women in the Church and Society of the World Council of Churches, condemned the church as a patriarchal institution that "centered its faith around the cruel and violent death of Christ on the cross, sanctioning violence against the powerless in society."

Lesbian sexuality was celebrated as normal and good, while Biblical ideas of sexuality were thrown out.

Lesbian Roman Catholic feminist



A speaker receives a blessing from the goddess Sophia at "Re-Imagining 1993," a pseudo-Christian conference promoting goddess worship and lesbianism, funded by the PC(USA).

Mary Hunt, co-founder of the radical group WATER (Women's Alliance for Theology, Ethics, and Ritual) proposed "friendship as a metaphor for family."

She explained her new metaphor, saying, "Imagine sex among friends as the norm, young people learning how to make friends rather than to date. Imagine valuing genital sexual interaction in terms of whether and how it fosters friendship and pleasure. Pleasure is our birthright of which we have been robbed in religious patriarchy. It is time to claim it anew with our friends. Responsible relational sexuality is a human right. I picture friends, not families, basking in the pleasures we deserve because our bodies are holy and our sexuality is part of creation's available riches."

Melanie Morrison, co-convenor of CLOUT (Christian Lesbians Out Together), told the group that liturgists in

her church read from the holy book of Isaiah and then from "a holy book" written by a lesbian author.

Earlier in the plenary session Morrison led a demonstration in which she invited all the lesbian, bisexual, and transsexual women to come forward, and all others to stand in solidarity. She then led the group in a song affirming their determination to celebrate lesbian sexual relationships.

The conference finished on Monday with a "milk and honey" ritual instead of the Lord's Supper. The women recited the litany, "Our maker Sophia, we are women in your image, with the hot blood of our wombs we give form to new life ... with nectar between our thighs we invite a lover ... with our warm body fluids we remind the world of its pleasures and sensations ... with the honey of wisdom in our mouths we prophesy a full humanity to all the peoples."★

## 2 Peter Quoted in Jude

Much correlation exists between 2 Peter 2 and Jude. They are so similar that 2 Peter 2, penned before Peter's death in AD 64, must have been summarized by Jude (AD 75). I have underlined the statements common to both passages in the parallel columns below.

### 2 Peter 2 (AD 64)

NIV 2 Peter 2:1 But there were also false prophets among the people, just as there will be false teachers among you. They will secretly introduce destructive heresies, even denying the sovereign Lord who bought them-- bringing swift destruction on themselves. <sup>2</sup>Many will follow their shameful ways and will bring the way of truth into disrepute. <sup>3</sup>In their greed these teachers will exploit you with stories they have made up. Their condemnation has long been hanging over them, and their destruction has not been sleeping. <sup>4</sup>For if God did not spare angels when they sinned, but sent them to hell, putting them into gloomy dungeons to be held for judgment; <sup>5</sup>if he did not spare the ancient world when he brought the flood on its ungodly people, but protected Noah, a preacher of righteousness, and seven others; <sup>6</sup>if he condemned the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah by burning them to ashes, and made them an example of what is going to happen to the ungodly; <sup>7</sup>and if he rescued Lot, a righteous man, who was distressed by the filthy lives of lawless men <sup>8</sup>(for that righteous man, living among them day after day, was tormented in his righteous soul by the lawless deeds he saw and heard)-- <sup>9</sup>if this is so, then the Lord knows how to rescue godly men from trials and to hold the unrighteous for the day of judgment, while continuing their punishment. <sup>10</sup>This is especially true of those who follow the corrupt desire of the sinful nature and despise authority. Bold and arrogant, these men are not afraid to slander celestial beings; <sup>11</sup>yet even angels, although they are stronger and more powerful, do not bring slanderous accusations against such beings in the presence of the Lord.

<sup>12</sup>But these men blaspheme in matters they do not understand. They are like brute beasts, creatures of instinct, born only to be

### Jude (AD 75)

NIV Jude <sup>4</sup>For certain men whose condemnation was written about long ago have secretly slipped in among you. They are godless men, who change the grace of our God into a license for immorality and deny Jesus Christ our only Sovereign and Lord.

<sup>5</sup>Though you already know all this, I want to remind you that the Lord delivered his people out of Egypt, but later destroyed those who did not believe.

<sup>6</sup>And the angels who did not keep their positions of authority but abandoned their own home-- these he has kept in darkness, bound with everlasting chains for judgment on the great Day.

<sup>7</sup>In a similar way, Sodom and Gomorrah and the surrounding towns gave themselves up to sexual immorality and perversion. They serve as an example of those who suffer the punishment of eternal fire.

<sup>8</sup>In the very same way, these dreamers pollute their own bodies, reject authority and slander celestial beings.

<sup>9</sup>But even the archangel Michael, when he was disputing with the devil about the body of Moses, did not dare to bring a slanderous accusation against him, but said, "The Lord rebuke you!"

<sup>10</sup>Yet these men speak abusively against whatever they do not understand;

caught and destroyed, and like beasts they too will perish. <sup>13</sup>They will be paid back with harm for the harm they have done. Their idea of pleasure is to carouse in broad daylight. They are blots and blemishes, reveling in their pleasures while they feast with you. <sup>14</sup>With eyes full of adultery, they never stop sinning; they seduce the unstable; they are experts in greed-- an accursed brood! <sup>15</sup>They have left the straight way and wandered off to follow the way of Balaam son of Beor, who loved the wages of wickedness. <sup>16</sup>But he was rebuked for his wrongdoing by a donkey-- a beast without speech-- who spoke with a man's voice and restrained the prophet's madness. <sup>17</sup>These men are springs without water and mists driven by a storm. Blackest darkness is reserved for them. <sup>18</sup>For they mouth empty, boastful words and, by appealing to the lustful desires of sinful human nature, they entice people who are just escaping from those who live in error. <sup>19</sup>They promise them freedom, while they themselves are slaves of depravity-- for a man is a slave to whatever has mastered him. <sup>20</sup>If they have escaped the corruption of the world by knowing our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ and are again entangled in it and overcome, they are worse off at the end than they were at the beginning. <sup>21</sup>It would have been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than to have known it and then to turn their backs on the sacred command that was passed on to them. <sup>22</sup>Of them the proverbs are true: "A dog returns to its vomit," and, "A sow that is washed goes back to her wallowing in the mud."

and what things they do understand by instinct, like unreasoning animals-- these are the very things that destroy them.

<sup>11</sup>Woe to them! They have taken the way of Cain; they have rushed for profit into Balaam's error; they have been destroyed in Korah's rebellion. <sup>12</sup>These men are blemishes at your love feasts, eating with you without the slightest qualm-- shepherds who feed only themselves.

They are clouds without rain, blown along by the wind;

autumn trees, without fruit and uprooted-- twice dead.

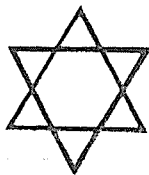
<sup>13</sup>They are wild waves of the sea, foaming up their shame; wandering stars, for whom blackest darkness has been reserved forever. <sup>14</sup>Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied about these men: "See, the Lord is coming with thousands upon thousands of his holy ones <sup>15</sup>to judge everyone, and to convict all the ungodly of all the ungodly acts they have done in the ungodly way, and of all the harsh words ungodly sinners have spoken against him."

<sup>16</sup>These men are grumblers and faultfinders; they follow their own evil desires; they boast about themselves and flatter others for their own advantage.

<sup>17</sup>But, dear friends, remember what the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ foretold.

<sup>18</sup>They said to you, "In the last times there will be scoffers who will follow their own ungodly desires." <sup>19</sup>These are the men who divide you, who follow mere natural instincts and do not have the Spirit.

# JEREMIAH OF JERUSALEM



Mr. Jesus Bar Joseph  
Joseph and Sons Carpentry  
Nazareth, Judea 20213

Dear Jesus,

Word has reached the city of your activities and aspirations. We are impressed and would like to suggest that it is time for you to consider employing a public relations firm to represent you.

Should you choose Jeremiah of Jerusalem, here are some of the things we can do for you . . .

1. We can do a complete analysis of your background and qualifications so that a personality profile can be developed. Such things as the rumors of your illegitimate birth, family background in Nazareth and your friendship with publicans and sinners will need to be played down, of course.
2. We can improve the image of your disciples. Some of them, as you know, have pretty seedy reputations. Our publicity department can do wonders with drawings that reduce the offense of long hair and beards. We could also suggest a couple of outstanding young men to replace the tax collector and the political radical zealot.
3. We can prepare your press releases so that all the political and religious factions hear what they want to hear. You can't be too careful in this regard and you obviously could use our expertise.
4. We can suggest other publicity stunts like the healings and miracles that you have already pulled off. That feeding of the multitude was a winner, but more follow-up was needed. How about jumping off the temple during a feast day or a grand entry into Jerusalem with a Roman legion escort, the temple marching band, and network press coverage?

Mr. Jesus Bar Joseph/Page 2


5. We can improve your relationships with those in high places. We have contacts with the religious and government biggies. Both Pilate and Herod are in our hip pocket. I'm afraid you've made some real blunders in this area, but we can fix things up, I'm sure.

6. We can establish offices for you in the heart of Jerusalem. Our understanding is that you have no headquarters and are difficult to reach as you roam around the countryside mingling with the commoners. This is no way to operate a successful Messiahship program.

I'm sure the need for our services has become obvious and we will be delighted to make a complete proposal. You'll find our commission percentage rate quite competitive. We have represented the best of Messianic hopefuls and we know you will find our experience unsurpassed. (John the Baptist turned down our help, and you know what happened to him!)

Yours for better P.R.,

*Jeremiah*  
JEREMIAH OF JERUSALEM

P.S.—A logo is needed for instant recognition that can be put on chariot bumpers, T-Togas, and jewelry. I have an idea you may like. How about this:  
 I designed it for a fish merchant who didn't buy it. If you'll notice, the first two letters are the first two letters of Jesus-Messiah in Greek. We could work something up for the rest, I'm sure.

JJ:jm

By Dave A. Sheffel  
"The Door" magazine  
From Issue #27/October–November,  
1975



## What is the Gospel?

(1 of 2)

*Recently an evening school student wrote to ask why it took Christ's blood to pay for our sin. With all the false gospels around today, his question reminded me of Jude's exhortation for Christians "to contend for the faith" (v. 3). Yet how can we contend for something we don't even understand? So below is my reply to his sincere and vital question (slightly edited).*

What a great question you asked. I agree that too few of us stop long enough to evaluate why Christ had to die for us. We must accept it as a fact to be saved, but I think it shows maturity on your part to ask the "why" question. I'll try to answer your question in as simple words as possible.

Part of the answer relates to the balance in God between His love on one side and His perfection and fairness on the other.

### Here's the problem...

God is perfect. This means He cannot stand sin. And the result for us is we cannot enter His presence with our sin. And because He is fair He must judge sin (require a penalty) so we all owe a debt to Him for our sin.

What is the penalty God requires? Our sin doesn't just separate us from a perfect God a little, so the penalty God requires for our sin is death (Rom. 6:23). This is what the Bible means when it says that His fairness can only be satisfied with the shedding of blood (death is what we all deserve).

Capital crimes always deserve capital punishment. Most of the time people don't think of themselves as having committed a capital crime like murder, but we all have. We look at ourselves in comparison to one another—and we generally prefer to compare ourselves to the worst people! This way we don't look so bad.

That works fine on a human plane when we are only trying to legislate society to the degree that everyone doesn't kill each other. But when we're talking about an issue of going to heaven and being with a holy God forever we must compare ourselves to this holy God! And He says that every one of us doesn't measure up (Rom. 3:23).

When we see things this way we finally realize that we are in an awful predicament. We really are in bad shape—even the best of us!

### Here's the solution...

There's good news though! God also loves us, so how can He show His love and yet not compromise His fairness? He in His love provides a way for His fair demands to be met with a substitute for us. God allows a substitute to take the penalty we deserve (Rom. 5:8).

Can a substitute really take our place? If I killed someone, would the government allow someone else to die by hanging instead of me? I can't answer this for Singapore law. Perhaps no one has ever volunteered before! But in some societies the demands of the law do not require that the one who takes the penalty be the one who committed the crime. In such cases a substitute is allowed.

So "without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness" (Heb. 9:22). This has always been true. In OT times the blood spilled was the blood of a lamb. The worshipper placed his hand on the head of the animal and he killed it himself. Read Leviticus 1 and you'll see that it wasn't the priest who did the actual killing. This was a graphic way to show the worshipper that sin has a price.

Of course, we now know that an OT lamb ultimately pointed to Jesus as the final sacrifice for sin. This is why Revelation 4 calls Jesus the "Lamb" with a capital "L."

**What is the Gospel? (2 of 2)**

How was Jesus the ultimate sacrifice? For one, He was greater than man (lambs are lower in God's eyes than people, the crown of His creation). He was God and man simultaneously so He could bear the sin of man perfectly to satisfy the justice (fairness) of God.

Another difference is that lambs actually never sinned. There is something innocent about little, cute lambs—perhaps because they have not been tainted by sin. Only humans can sin since only humans have a conscience and an ability to choose between right and wrong. And every human has failed—all have sinned.

But Jesus was the only person that was fully human and yet without sin. He's the only one who ever passed the sin test—being tried and found innocent in every respect. Had Christ committed even one sin, He would have had to die for that sin. This would have disqualified Him from bearing our sin.

But praise God, Jesus never did commit His first sin. This allowed Him, if He died, to die for those that were under the penalty of sin. So He chose to die for us, satisfying our debt to God's fairness and simultaneously demonstrating God's love.

Isn't that the most wonderful news you have ever heard? It was to me! Now God says that for Christ's blood to apply to us we simply accept this by faith.

Why can't Christ's blood apply to everyone—even to those without faith? If He died for the whole world, why then isn't the whole world saved from the penalty of death? In OT times, the person had to express his faith to God. This was done through offering a lamb at the temple. In like manner, today faith must be expressed for forgiveness to come.

But how is faith expressed? The New Testament doesn't prescribe only one way to express faith. Typically people express faith in Christ through prayer, but the NT never actually gives us a specific prayer to use. Nevertheless, I think that prayer is probably the best way to show God that we want Christ's blood to apply to us.

What should that prayer include? Tell God you trust (believe) that Christ died for you and you want His forgiveness. This is called accepting Him as Saviour (substitute for your sin). Included in this is what the NT calls "repentance," which literally means a "change of mind" concerning what you are trusting to save you from the penalty of sin. Don't trust your good works, church attendance, baptism, or anything else since none of these takes care of your basic problem: sin.

Sounds simple, right? Many think it's *too* simple—and they reject it for being too easy. In reality it is not hard at all, unless it is hard to humble yourself to the point of admitting that you can do absolutely nothing to save yourself! Notice that all these false ways people use to try to reach God (some listed above) are accomplished by us—and that can lead to pride. This is why Ephesians 2:8-9 says, "For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that is not of yourselves. It is the gift of God, not as a result of works, so that no one can boast." There's no such thing as a proud person in heaven.

So, are you sure you have accepted the real gospel explained above? Have you expressed your trust in Christ in this manner before? If not, may I urge you to do it even today? Be sure to let me know about it.

Your friend in Christ,

Rick

PS: You may have noticed that most verses cited above are from the Book of Romans. Since this is the best full-length explanation of the gospel in the NT, I recommend you study it. The best short explanation of how the gospel is Christ's death and resurrection for us is 1 Corinthians 15:1-11.

# Revelation

Sovereignty of Christ in Future Victory								
Sovereignty in His Person			Sovereignty over Churches	Sovereignty in End-Time Events				
Chapter 1			Chapters 2–3	Chapters 4–22				
“What you have seen” (1:19a)			“What is now” (1:19b)	“What will take place later” (1:19c)				
Past			Present	Future				
Christ Unveiled			Churches Unveiled	Consummation Unveiled				
God on Earth			God’s Ambassadors on Earth	Hell on Earth to Heaven on Earth				
The Judge			The Assignments	The Judgments & Rewards				
Subject 1:1-3	Worship of Trinity 1:4-8	Glorified Christ 1:9-20	Seven Churches of Asia: Ephesus Smyrna Pergamum Thyatira Sardis Philadelphia Laodicea	Tribulation 4:1–19:10	Second Coming 19:11-21	Millennium 20	Eternal State 21:1–22:5	Closing: Imminency 22:6-21
Island of Patmos (c. AD 95)								

**Key Word:** Triumph

**Key Verse:** “Write, therefore, what you have seen, what is now, and what will take place later” (Revelation 1:19).

**Summary Statement:** God discloses through John the *sovereignty of Jesus Christ* in His ultimate future triumph to encourage believers to *persevere despite internal compromise and external opposition*.

**Application:** Does your life show that you’re on the winning team? Do your goals, values, and disposition show that you represent the Victor of the World?

# Revelation

## Introduction

### I. Title

- A. The word “revelation” in the Greek title (Ἀποκάλυψις Ἰωάννου *Apocalypse of John*) means “disclosure” (BDAG 92), being the noun form of the verb ἀποκαλύπτω, to “uncover, reveal” (BDAG 92).
- B. What does Revelation reveal? Christians normally think this book primarily reveals the future as if the goal is to satisfy our curiosity about what lies ahead.
- C. However, the title notes that the book unveils the person, power, and program of Jesus Christ (1:1). How should we translate the genitive ἀποκάλυψις Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ?
  1. Most translations render 1:1 as “the revelation *of* Jesus Christ” in the sense of revealing who He is (KJV, NIV, NAU, NET). This is the normal meaning of this phrase and is preferred.
  2. However, other translations read “the revelation *from* Jesus Christ” (NLT) to show that Jesus is the source of the vision. While this is true, this is not the generally understood meaning of the Greek text.

### II. Authorship

#### A. External Evidence

1. *Earliest Witnesses*: Nearly all true believers since the first century have held that the Apostle John wrote Revelation. These include earliest witnesses such as Justin Martyr in Ephesus (*Dialogue* 81; ca. AD 130) and Irenaeus in Gaul (*Against Heresies*; ca. AD 185). Also citing Johannine authorship were Tertullian, Hippolytus, Clement of Alexandria, and Origen (Walvoord, *The Revelation of Jesus Christ*, 11-14; Guthrie, 934-35).
2. *Opposition*: However, some have taught that the author was not the Apostle John. Dionysius of Alexandria (ca. AD 264) questioned his authorship based upon linguistic, stylistic, and theological differences between Revelation and John’s Gospel (Guthrie, 935-36). Eusebius (*Hist. Eccl.* 3.39.4) affirmed in the fourth century that the author was a certain John the Elder. During the Reformation in the 1500s, Erasmus, Luther, and Zwingli denied Johannine authorship because Revelation teaches a literal 1000-year reign of Christ (Walvoord, *BKC*, 2:925). R. H. Charles also proposed a John the Prophet. One modern scholar even suggests that John the Baptist authored the book (J. Massyngberde Ford, *Revelation*, The Anchor Bible, 28-37).
3. *Response*: Nearly all of the early Church Fathers held to John’s authorship. They saw differences between the Apocalypse and John’s Gospel as negligible and also believed in a literal millennium. Since they were closest to the time of the apostles and their statements make good sense, it seems arbitrary to abandon their witness that the writer was John, apostle of Jesus Christ and author of the Gospel of John and 1-3 John.

#### B. Internal Evidence

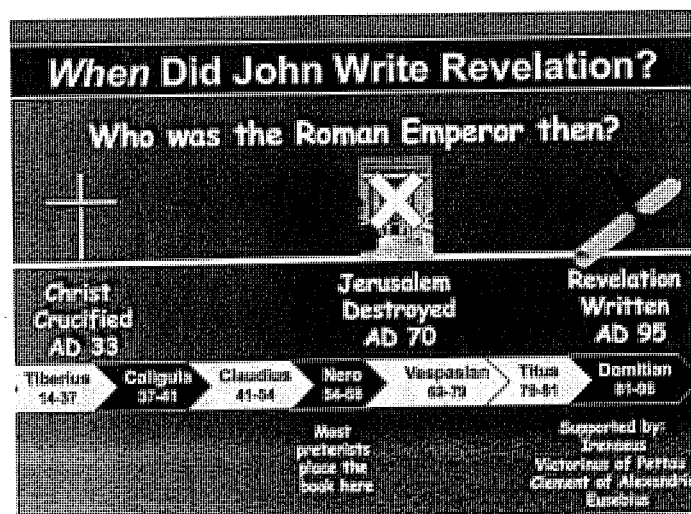
1. The author simply says he is John (1:1, 4, 9; 22:8), servant of Jesus Christ (1:1). The lack of further qualification shows that he maintains great authority.
2. Many characteristics of the book suggest this is the Apostle John, the brother of James and son of Zebedee (Guthrie, 936-40):

- a) He knows details of the history of the churches of Asia Minor (Rev. 2–3).
- b) Most apocalyptic works were in the name of an honored ancient man (e.g., Enoch, Ezra), but John prophesies in his own name conscious of divine inspiration (1:1, 11, 19; 10:10; 12:6-9).
- c) Like the Synoptics (Mark 3:17), Revelation depicts John as of a stormy disposition as a “son of thunder” who would call Jews worshippers of Satan (2:9; 3:9).
- d) Common ideas (e.g., use of contrast), theology, and terminology (e.g., *logos* in John 1:1; Rev. 19:13) exist between the Gospel of John and Revelation.

### III. Circumstances

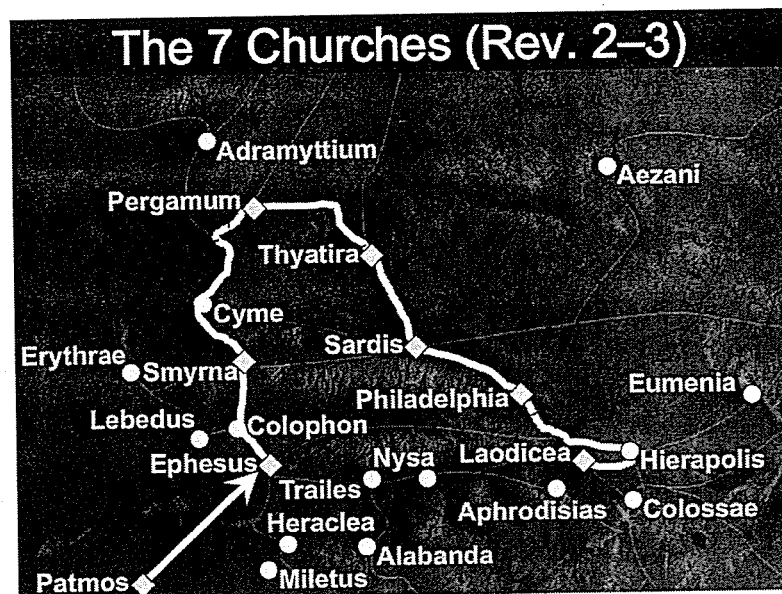
#### A. Date

1. The traditional view dates the book about AD 95 during the reign of the Roman Emperor Domitian (AD 81-96). John was banished to the small island of Patmos about seventy miles (112 km.) southwest of Ephesus in the Aegean Sea (1:9) and the earliest and weightiest evidence attests to this date in Irenaeus (*Against Heresies* 5.30.3; cf. Victorinus of Pettau, *Apocalypse* 10.11 (AD 304); Clement of Alexandria, *Quis Dives Salvetur* 42; Eusebius, *Historia Ecclesiastica* 3.17–18 [AD 260–340]). Other arguments in favor of this view are the imperial persecutions for refusing Emperor worship (the Beast in 13:4, 15f.; 14:9-11; 15:2; 16:2; 19:20; 20:4) and the spiritual decline in the churches that would have been more likely in the AD 90s than earlier.
2. However, dates late in Nero’s reign (AD 66-68) or during the reign of Vespasian (AD 69-79) have also been proposed, but with little evidence (Guthrie, 958-61). Also, the early church father Papias stated that John was martyred with his brother James in AD 44 (Acts 12:1; Walvoord, *BKC*, 2:925; Guthrie, 945). However, the stronger tradition argues that he lived to a ripe old age at Ephesus, which also better fits the data in the book of Revelation.
3. Preterists have theorized that the prophecy must have been written before AD 70 since 11:1-2 commands the measuring of the temple. However, this text refers to a literal future temple during the Tribulation. Also, the seventh bowl (16:17–21) does not picture “the great city” as entirely destroyed until after John’s time, so it looked to a future destruction. See the evaluation of the Preterist view in Appendix B (pp. 474-484).



## B. Recipients

1. The immediate destination of the prophecy is the seven churches of the Roman province of Asia (1:4, 11; Rev. 2–3): Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, and Laodicea. John was deemed to be the leader of this region with its capital at Ephesus.
2. However, the reoccurring phrase “hear what the Spirit says to the churches” (plural) indicates that these churches only represented a much wider Christian audience. This is supported by the fact that the seven churches were neither the only ones in the province nor the largest, as the small towns of Thyatira and Philadelphia could not compare in civic importance with Troas (Acts 20:7f.), Hierapolis and Colossae (Col. 2:1; 4:13, 16). W. M. Ramsay in *The Letters to the Seven Churches* (written in 1904, 468 pp.) discovered that a circular road connected the seven historical churches in the exact order they appear in chapters 2–3. This remains the best explanation why they were chosen as the means to distribute the prophecy to all the churches.



## C. Occasion

1. Later first century churches had both internal and external problems:
  - a) Internal Struggles: Many churches compromised at the end of the first century. Ephesus didn't love Christ (2:4), Pergamum tolerated heresy (2:14-15), Thyatira was immoral (2:21-24), Sardis was dead (3:1), and Laodicea was lukewarm (3:15-17).
  - b) External Persecution: These churches also endured severe testing from the Roman government (1:9; 2:9-10; 3:10). Tradition notes that John himself was boiled in oil but lived through it.
2. Therefore, John wrote a message of hope describing the ultimate victory of Christ to counteract compromise from within and to encourage perseverance in the midst of hostility from without. As readers see the final future triumph of Christ over evil they can gain confidence for the present.

#### IV. Characteristics

- A. Revelation is the climax of biblical revelation, bringing to completion the many prophecies of both testaments and providing numerous prophecies of its own. It closes all prophecy by warning like no other NT book not to add or subtract from it (22:18-19; cf. Deut. 4:2; Prov. 30:6; Gal. 3:15).
- B. Revelation is the only NT book that deals primarily with the future. Without it, eschatology would lack its clearest descriptions of these events: the Tribulation (Rev. 6–18), the second coming of Christ (19:11-21), Satan's binding and the length of the kingdom as 1000 years (20:1-6), and the great white throne judgment (20:11-15). John continually saw glimpses of the future. In fact, the exact verbal form "I saw" appears 45 times (1:12, 17; 4:1, etc.)!
- C. The book contains more symbolic, representative language than any inspired writing. But why? Warren Wiersbe provides three advantages to symbolic language (*Bible Exposition Commentary*):
1. Symbols are a "spiritual code" to hide the truth from the unbelieving (cf. parables)
  2. Symbolism is not weakened by time
  3. Symbols not only convey information, but also impart values and arouse emotions
- D. Revelation is the only apocalyptic writing in the New Testament. Apocalyptic literature is that which is characterized by secrecy, pessimism, end times emphases, warnings (not repentance), the triumph of God, determinism (God's control comforting people), etc.
- E. This book contains more allusions to the OT (250-550 allusions) than any NT writing. Ironically, Revelation also has very few quotes (1:7 quotes Zech. 12:10; 2:27 quotes Ps. 2:9).
- F. Chapters 2–3 record the only letters written by Christ that have been saved for us. This book also is the only NT writing with separate letters for various churches.
- G. This prophecy completes our scriptural understanding about Jesus Christ by including more about His glory than even the Gospels!
- H. Here is the only NT book written in response to a direct command from God (1:10-11, 19). In all other NT writings, the Spirit *prompted* individuals to write rather than directly *telling* them.
- I. Only Revelation was revealed in nearly its entirety as a vision by an angel (1:1).
- J. Revelation has more songs in its pages than any NT book. On 14 occasions the angels break into worship, making the book a model for worship. It especially parallels Ezekiel in its worship (see next page).

## Worship Parallels in Ezekiel & Revelation

Jim Seghers, *The Book of Revelation: Introduction* (<http://totustuus.com/revel.htm>)

Worship imagery abounds in the book. It is the most liturgical of all the New Testament books. Massey Shepherd points out that the architecture of the book corresponds to the early Church's worship, which had a predominant Paschal emphasis (Massey H. Shepherd, Jr., *The Paschal Liturgy and the Apocalypse*, Richmond: John Knox Press, 1960).

Scholars have also noted the remarkable parallels between the Apocalypse and Ezekiel. This step-by-step pegging of the Book of Revelation with similar passages in Ezekiel is designed for lectionary use in a liturgical service. "In other words, the Book of Revelation was intended from the beginning as a series of readings in worship throughout the Church Year, to be read in tandem with the prophecy of Ezekiel (as well as other Old Testament readings)" (Chilton, p. 22).

### *Revelation and Ezekiel Parallels:*

1. The Throne-vision (Rev. 4/Ezek. 1)
2. The Book (Rev. 5/Ezek. 2-3)
3. The Four Plagues (Rev. 6:1-8/Ezek. 5)
4. The Slain under the Altar (Rev. 6:9-11/Ezek. 6)
5. The Wrath of God (Rev. 6:12-17/Ezek. 7)
6. The Seal on the Saint's Foreheads (Rev. 7/Ezek. 9)
7. The Coals from the Altar (Rev. 8/Ezek. 10)
8. No More Delay (Rev. 10:1-7/Ezek. 12)
9. The Eating of the Book (Rev. 10:8-11/Ezek. 2)
10. The Measuring of the Temple (Rev. 11:1-2/Ezek. 40-43)
11. Jerusalem and Sodom (Rev. 11:8/Ezek. 16)
12. The Cup of Wrath (Rev. 14/Ezek. 23)
13. The Vine of the Land (Rev. 14:18-20/Ezek. 15)
14. The Great Harlot (Rev. 17-18/Ezek. 16, 23)
15. The Lament over the City (Rev. 18/Ezek. 27)
16. The Scavengers' Feast (Rev. 19/Ezek. 39)
17. The First Resurrection (Rev. 20:4-6/Ezek. 37)
18. The Battle with Gog and Magog (Rev. 20:7-9/Ezek. 38-39)
19. The New Jerusalem (Rev. 21/Ezek. 40-48)
20. The River of Life (Rev. 22/Ezek. 47)



- K. This is the only book in the Bible that promises a special blessing for reading it (1:3).
- L. This is the only book written by John that bears his name in the text itself (1:1, 4, 9). Titles to NT books were added later.
- M. Revelation alone has its own inspired outline within the text itself (1:19; cf. pp. 318, 340):
1. Past: “what you have seen” (Rev. 1:9-20)
  2. Present: “what is now” (Rev. 2-3)
  3. Future: “what will take place later” (Rev. 4-22)

N. Revelation has more interpretive views than any NT writing. The four major perspectives are (moving from the most radical/non-literal to the most conservative/literal):

1. The **idealist** (allegorical) approach interprets the book as a non-literal, non-historical (timeless) depiction of the triumph of good (God) over evil (Satan). It was most popular during the prominence of the Alexandrian school of theology in the third and fourth centuries but also finds support from modern liberals and evangelicals such as Beale, Hendiksen, and Hughes.

Response: This view ignores the historical context, fails to see that symbols represent real things, has no objective guideline, and contradicts the book's inspired outline in 1:19. Also, apocalyptic literature always symbolized specific events rather than giving general indications of good's triumph over evil as the idealist view advocates.

2. The **preterist** view argues that chapters 2–19 are past, being fulfilled in the early history of the church (e.g., during the time of Nero, Domitian, the AD 476 fall of Rome, etc.). Most German scholars, Ellicott, and Peak favor this view. Current advocates include Jay Adams, Kenneth L. Gentry, Jr., George P. Holford, Gary DeMar, Jessie E. Mills, Jr., Don Preston, and Ed Stevens (see p. 351b in these notes).

Response: When were the terrible judgments of chapters 6–19 already fulfilled? When in history has there been 75-pound hailstones (16:21) or an army of 200 million (9:16)? This view also goes against the early church fathers in its need to date the book before AD 70, as well as its need to say that Jesus came in the AD 70 destruction of Jerusalem. Unlike the worldwide judgments of Revelation, the AD 70 tribulation affected only Jews.

3. The **historicist** view says chapters 4–19 occurred between Christ's first and second advents as a symbolic depiction of the church age (but many such as Luther say chapters 2–3 show historical churches). Thus it portrays Western Europe through various Popes, the Reformation, the French Revolution, and leaders such as Charlemagne and Mussolini. This view was advanced by Luther, Ellul, Isaac Newton, and Elliott and now is held by amillennialists or postmillennialists.

Response: This view must spiritualize the 1000-year millennium and literal events. This subjective interpretation of symbols has led to much disagreement in this camp. It also is inconsistent with the scriptural teaching that Christ could come at any moment.

4. The **futurist** interpretation insists that events in chapters 4–22 are not yet fulfilled but will take place only after the church age. This includes the Tribulation (Rev. 4–18) during the last seven years prior to Christ's second coming (ch. 19), after which follows the Millennium and Great White Throne Judgment (ch. 20) and finally the creation of the New Heavens and New Earth (Rev. 21–22). It too emphasizes God's final victory. Advocates include Ladd, Mounce, Pate, Hamstra, Walvoord, Thomas, Johnson, Pentecost, Ryrie, Thomas Ice, and Hal Lindsey.

Response: The futurist perspective best correlates with the nature of the events predicted in the prophecy (i.e., takes them at face value) and this method follows the inspired outline of 1:19. It is the approach employed in the following argument and outline.

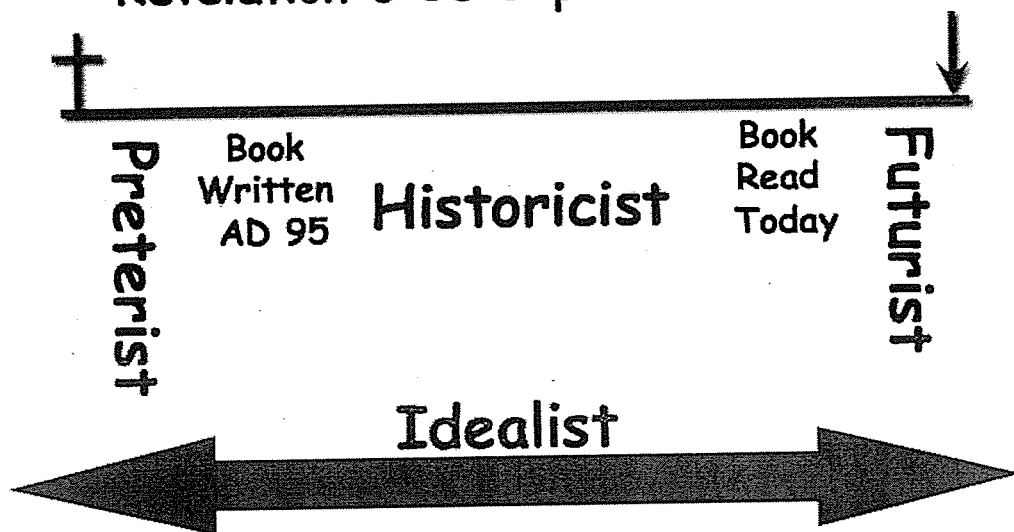
## Summary of Interpretations on the Book of Revelation

View	Millennial View	Rev. 1-3	Rev. 4-19	Rev. 20-22
<b>Idealist</b> Beale Hendriksen Hughes	Postmillennial (or Amillennial)	Historic Churches	Symbolic of the non-historical conflict between <u>good and evil</u>	Victory of good over evil (Church over the world)
<b>Preterist</b> Sweete Ellicott DeMar	Apocalyptic	Historic Churches	Symbolic of Events in <u>First Century</u> (Nero, Mt. Vesuvius eruption)	Symbolic of heaven and victory
<b>Historicist</b> Luther Newton Elliott	Amillennial (or Postmillennial)	Historic Churches	Symbolic of events in the <u>Church Age</u> (fall of Rome, rise of Islam & Catholics, Reformation, etc.)	Present age (amil) or future millennium (postmil), General judgment, heaven
<b>Futurist</b> Thomas Walvoord Ryrie Ladd	Premillennial	Historic Churches &/or seven stages of church history	<u>Future Tribulation</u> judgments on apostate church and Antichrist, return of Christ	Future millennium, judgment, heaven

Adapted from H. Wayne House, *Chronological and Background Charts of the New Testament*, 17

### Four Views on Revelation 6-18

Revelation 6-18 depicts which era?



## O. Four Interpretive Principles to Understand Revelation

1. Follow the normal sense unless it's nonsense.

a) 144,000 witnesses of Israel (7:4)

b) 1000 years of saint's reign (20:4)

c) 1260 days of prophesying (11:3)

d) 3½ days of death (11:9)

e) Euphrates dries up (16:12)

f) Weights (16:21) and lengths (21:16)

g) The number 7 points to completeness but also should be taken at face value.

(1) The number 7 in the rest of the Bible (representative examples):



- (a) Creation (Gen. 2:2)
- (b) Rain (Gen. 7:4)
- (c) Sabbath (Exod. 20:10)
- (d) Jericho (Josh. 6:4)
- (e) Sons (Job 1:2; Ruth 4:15)
- (f) Prophecy (Dan. 9:24)
- (g) Forgive (Matt. 18:21)



(2) The number 7 appears 55 times in Revelation (some examples):

- (a) Churches 1:4a
- (b) Spirits 1:4b
- (c) Lampstands 1:12
- (d) Stars 1:16
- (e) Seals 5:1
- (f) Eyes 5:6
- (g) Angels 8:2
- (h) Trumpets 8:2
- (i) Peals 10:3
- (j) 7000 killed 11:13
- (k) Heads 12:3a
- (l) Diadems 12:3b
- (m) Plagues 15:1
- (n) Bowls 15:7
- (o) Mountains 17:9
- (p) Kings 17:10

“It is worth noting that there are seven “beatitudes” in Revelation: 1:3; 14:13; 16:15; 19:9; 20:6; 22:7, 14.<sup>1</sup>”

- h) Revelation 11:1-12 is a “Test Case in Hermeneutics” that shows the reasonableness of taking the text in its normal sense. See the comparative study of three different views on the next two pages.

<sup>1</sup> Warren W. Wiersbe, *Revelation*, The Bible Exposition Commentary (Wheaton, Ill.: Victor Books, 1996, c1989), 5 (online edition).

## Three Views on Revelation 11

Based on a handout presented by Robert L. Thomas at the Evangelical Theological Society meetings in Boston, November 1999

Various hermeneutical approaches to the witnesses of Revelation 11 yield widely different evangelical interpretations. The following quotes and their page numbers come from Gregory K. Beale, *The Book of Revelation: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, and Carlisle, UK: Paternoster, 1999); ETS paper by Grant Osborne, 1999 (author of *The Hermeneutical Spiral*); and Robert L. Thomas, *Revelation: An Exegetical Commentary*, 2 vols. (Chicago: Moody, 1992, 1995).

Revelation 11:1-3 (NIV)

<sup>1</sup>I was given a reed like a measuring rod and was told, "Go and measure the temple of God and the altar, and count the worshipers there. <sup>2</sup>But exclude the outer court; do not measure it, because it has been given to the Gentiles. They will trample on the holy city for 42 months. <sup>3</sup>And I will give power to my two witnesses, and they will prophesy for 1,260 days, clothed in sackcloth."

Term or Expression	Beale <i>Symbolic</i>	Osborne <i>Symbolic-Literal</i>	Thomas <i>Literal</i>
1 "measure" (11:1)	"the infallible promise of God's future presence"; "the protection of God's eschatological community" (559); "until the parousia" (566)	"preservation of the saints spiritually in the coming great persecution" (5; cf. 7); "a prophetic anticipation of the final victory of the church" (8)	"a mark of God's favor" (80-81)
2 "the temple ( <i>naon</i> )" (11:1)	"the temple of the church" (561); "Christians" (562); "the whole covenant community" (562); "the community of believers undergoing persecution yet protected by God" (566)	The heavenly temple depicting "the church, primarily the saints of this final period but secondarily the church of all ages" (6; cf. 7 n. 4)	"a future temple in Jerusalem during the period just before Christ returns" (81-82)
3 "the altar" (11:1)	"the suffering covenant community" (563)	the [heavenly] altar of incense" (6)	"the brazen altar of sacrifice in the court outside the sanctuary" (82)
4 "the worshipers" (11:1)	"believers worshiping together in the temple community" (564)	"individual believers" (7)	"a future godly remnant in Israel" (82)
5 "in it" (11:1)	in the temple or the altar (571)	"in the church" or "at the altar" (7)	"in the rebuilt temple" (82)
6 "the court that is outside the temple ( <i>naou</i> )" (11:2)	"God's true people," including Gentiles (560)	"the saints who are persecuted" (8)	"the wicked without God" (83)
7 "cast outside" or "given to" (NIV) (11:2)	"not protected from various forms of earthly harm (physical, economic, social, etc.)" (569)	not protected from Gentiles/nations (8); God delivers his followers into the hands of sinners (9)	"exclusion from God's favor" (83)
8 "the Gentiles" (11:2)	"the Gentiles and Jews" (569)	"the church handed over to the Gentiles/nations for a time" (9)	"a group [of non-Jews] in rebellion against God who will oppress the Jewish remnant" (83-84)
9 "they will trample on" (11:2)	persecution of the church from Christ's resurrection until His first coming (567)	"the saints will suffer incredibly" in a physical sense (10)	"future defilement and domination of Jerusalem" (86)
10 "the holy city" (11:2)	"the initial form of the heavenly city, part of which is identified with believers living on earth" (568)	"the people of God" (9)	"the literal city of Jerusalem on earth" (84)

11 "forty-two months" (11:2)	"figurative for the eschatological period of tribulation" (565); "attack on the community of faith throughout the church age" (566)	"the 'great tribulation' at the end of history" (1, 12)	"the last half of Daniel's seventieth week" (85)
12 "the two witnesses" (11:3)	the church; "the whole community of faith" (573)	"two major eschatological figures... as a symbol for the witnessing church" (14, 16)	two future prophets, probably Moses and Elijah (87-89)
13 "the great city" (11:8)	"Babylon" = "Rome" = "the ungodly world" (591-592)	Jerusalem and Rome' secondarily, all cities that oppose God (27)	Jerusalem (93-94)
14 the resurrection and ascension of the two witnesses (11:11-12)	"divine legitimization of a prophetic call" (599)	"A proleptic anticipation of the 'rapture' of the church" (35)	the resurrection of the two witnesses (97)

**Summaries** (this strings the above descriptions into interpretive sentences of 11:1-3, 8, 11-12)

#### **Beale (Symbolic)**

<sup>1</sup>I was given a reed symbolizing the infallible promise of God's future presence and was told, "Go and protect God's eschatological community (which is the temple of the church) until the parousia and protect the suffering covenant community and count the believers worshipping together in the temple community. <sup>2</sup>But exclude God's true people, including Gentiles; do not protect this suffering covenant community of Gentiles and Jews because they are not protected from various forms of earthly harm (physical, economic, social, etc.). They will attack and persecute the whole community of faith throughout the church age which is the initial form of the heavenly city, part of which is identified with believers living on earth for the eschatological period of tribulation. <sup>3</sup>And I will give power to the church, and this whole community of faith will prophesy for the eschatological period of tribulation... [but after being killed] <sup>8</sup>their bodies will lie in the street of Babylon or Rome which means the ungodly world [then they will receive] <sup>11-12</sup>divine legitimization of a prophetic call.

#### **Osborne (Symbolic-Literal)**

<sup>1</sup>I was given a reed like a measuring rod and was told, "Go and preserve the saints spiritually in the coming great persecution (but secondarily the church of all ages) in anticipation of their final victory and measure (preserve?) the [heavenly] altar of incense, and count the individual believers in the church or at the altar. <sup>2</sup>But exclude the saints who are persecuted... because they have not been protected from Gentiles/nations as God delivers his followers into the hands of sinners for a time. The saints will suffer incredibly in a physical sense in the people of God for the 'great tribulation' at the end of history. <sup>3</sup>And I will give power to my witnessing church, and they will prophesy for 1,260 days, clothed in sackcloth... [but after being killed] <sup>8</sup>their bodies will lie in the street of Jerusalem and Rome which secondarily refer to all cities that oppose God [then they will receive] <sup>11-12</sup>a proleptic anticipation of the 'rapture' of the church.

#### **Thomas (Literal)**

<sup>1</sup>I was given a reed like a measuring rod and was told, "Go and measure as a mark of God's favor the future temple in Jerusalem during the period just before Christ returns and the brazen altar of sacrifice in the court outside the sanctuary, and count the future godly remnant in Israel in the rebuilt temple. <sup>2</sup>But do not measure as a mark of God's favor the wicked without God... because they have been excluded from God's favor [and are] a group [of non-Jews] in rebellion against God who will oppress the Jewish remnant. They will trample on Jerusalem for the last half of Daniel's seventieth week. <sup>3</sup>And I will give power to my two future prophets (probably Moses and Elijah), and they will prophesy for 1,260 days, clothed in sackcloth... [but after being killed] <sup>8</sup>their bodies will lie in the street of Jerusalem [then three and a half days later will] <sup>11-12</sup>be resurrected.

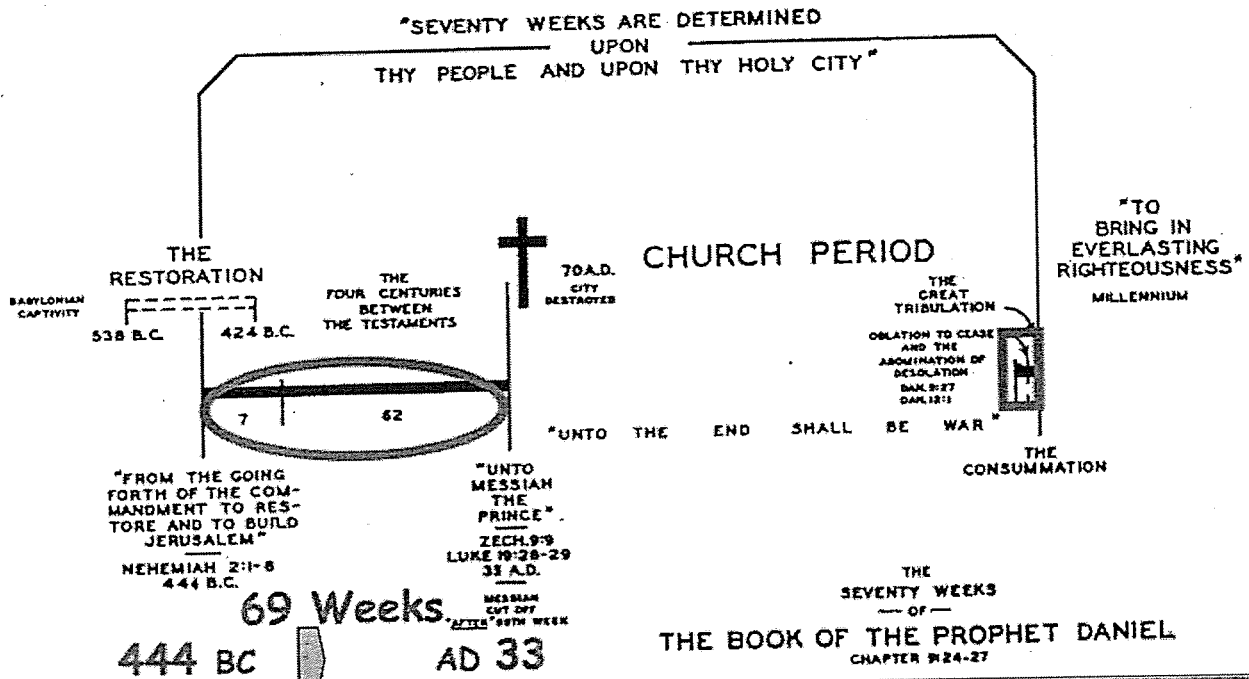
*Continuing point "O" on Four Interpretive Principles to Understand Revelation...*

2. Be consistent with Daniel's parallel prophecy.
  - a) Ten-horned Beast (Dan. 7:7-8): This denotes a world ruler aligned with Rome that John saw as still future (Rev. 17:3, 10-11).
  
  - b) 7-year covenant (Dan. 9:27): Daniel's teaching that halfway through this period a world ruler will desecrate the temple (cf. Rev. 13:14). Jesus also saw this as future from his time (Matt. 24:15).
  
  - c) 1290-day trial (Dan. 12:11): This correlates closely with the 1260-day trial of John's vision (Rev. 11:3; 12:6).

Outline of Daniel												
UNIVERSAL SOVEREIGNTY IN TIMES OF THE GENTILES												
Sovereignty over Daniel			Sovereignty over Gentiles							Sovereignty over Jews		
Chapter 1			Chapters 2-7							Chapters 8-12		
Narrative			Visions in Narrative							Vision		
Hebrew			Aramaic							Hebrew		
Gentile Names for God			Gentile Names for God							Jewish Names for God		
Third person ("Daniel")			Third person ("Daniel")							First person ("I")		
Daniel's Example			Daniel Interprets King's Dreams							Angel Interprets Daniel's Dreams		
The Man Daniel			Images		Kings				Israel's Future			
Exile	Food	Exalted	Varied	Gold	Neb.	Bel.	Dar.	All	Medo-Persia To Greece	Return to Seventy "7s"	Inter-testament Period to Tribulation	
1:1-7	1:8-16	1:17-21	2 Promoted	3 Furnace	4 Exile	5 Party	6 Lions	7 Beasts	8	9	10-12	
Babylon												
605-536 BC												



# Daniel's 70 Weeks (Dan. 9:24-27)



R. Ludwigson, *A Survey of Bible Prophecy* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1975), 49

## Dating Daniel's Seventy Weeks

March 5, 444 B.C.  
Nisan 1 of Artaxerxes' 20th Year  
Nehemiah 2:1-8

March 30, A.D. 33  
Triumphal Entry on Nisan 10 A.D. 33  
Luke 19:28-40

69 WEEKS

\* CHURCH AGE

70th WEEK

$69 \times 7 \times 360 = 173,880$  days  
March 5, 444 B.C. + 173,880 days = March 30, A.D. 33

1/2 Week    1/2 Week

### Verification

444 B.C. to A.D. 33 = 476 years  
 $476 \text{ years} \times 365.24219879 \text{ days} = 173,855 \text{ days}$   
+ days between March 5 & March 30 = 25 days  
173,880 days

\*Messiah cut off after 69 weeks—April 3, A.D. 33.

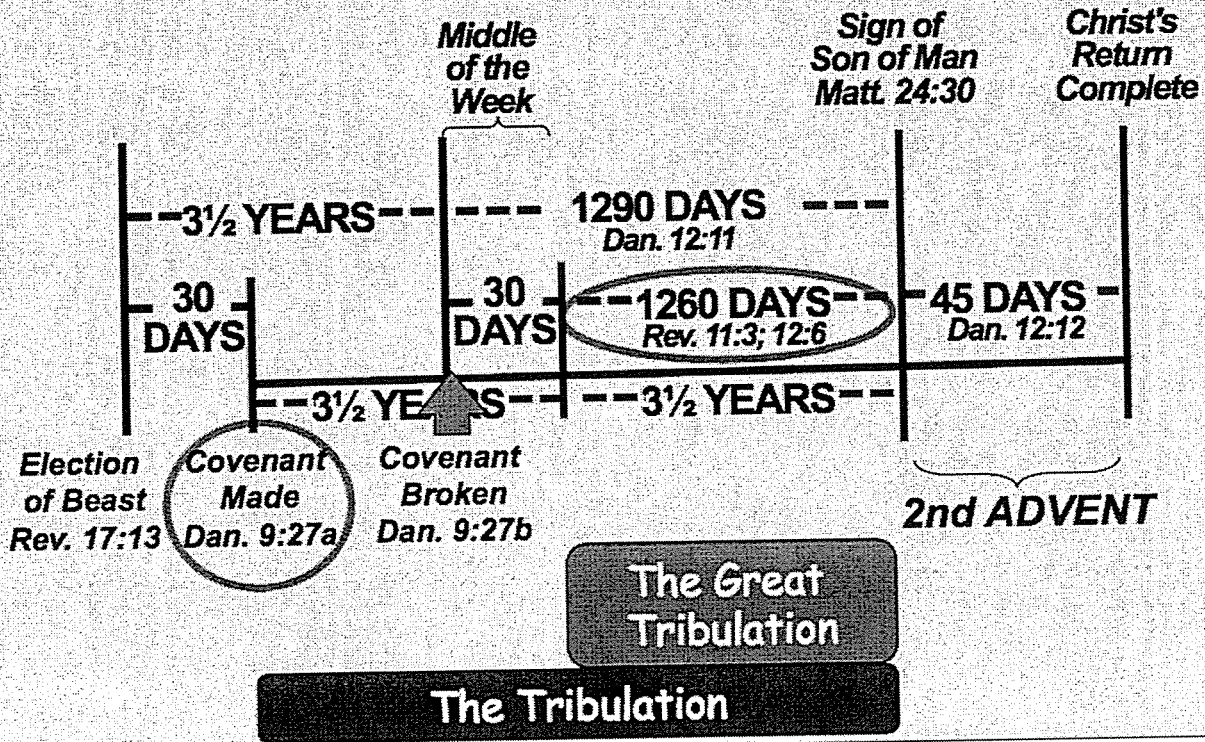
### Rationale for 360-Day Years

1/2 week—Dan. 9:27  
Time, times, 1/2 time—Dan. 7:25, 12:7;  
Rev. 12:14  
1,260 days—Rev. 12:6, 11:3  
42 months—Rev. 11:2, 13:5  
Thus: 42 months = 1,260 days = time.  
times, 1/2 time = 1/2 week  
Therefore: month = 30 days; year = 360 days

Harold W. Hoehner, *Chronological Aspects of the Life of Christ* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1977), 139

# Chronology of the 70th "Week"

Adapted from J. Dwight Pentecost, Dallas Theological Seminary, 1988



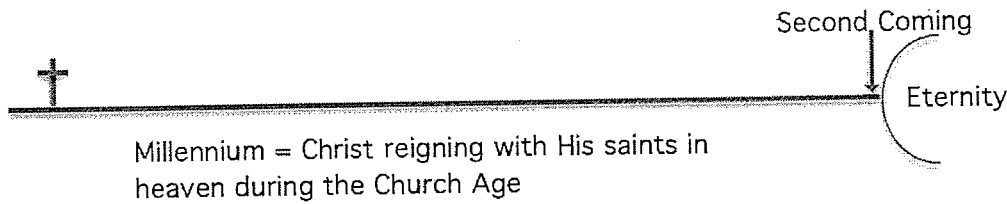
*Continuing point “O” on Four Interpretive Principles to Understand Revelation...*

3. Assume a chronological order.
  - a) The normal way to read a book is to assume, unless otherwise indicated, that the story proceeds from point A to point B in time. There is no reason not to follow this normally accepted practice when reading the Revelation to John.
  - b) However, *the recapitulation approach* has recently gained some following where the book is seen as depicting the present church age seven different times.
    - (1) According to this view, chapters 1–3 cover the same time period as chapters 4–7 as both supposedly cover the time period between Christ’s first and second comings.
    - (2) Five more sections follow to depict the same church period.
    - (3) This view is diagrammed on the next page.

## A Recapitulation Approach to Revelation

William Hendriksen, *More Than Conquerors*, 16-19

One common view of the book of Revelation by amillennial scholars sees it as presenting our present age seven times in parallel sections. Hendriksen is typical of this view which spiritualizes the 1000 years of Revelation 20:1-6 and applies this time period to our own Church Age. (Other commentators who see it this way are Lenski, Warfield, Sadlet, and S. L. Morris; cf. John Gilmore, *Probing Heaven*). In chart form the view would look like this:



### Premillennial Response

<p><b>Christ in the Midst of the Seven Lampstands (1-3)</b> Seven literal churches of Asia each depict conditions in congregations throughout the church age until Christ's return (1:7)</p>	<p>Correct except that 1:19 denotes the vision of Christ (1:9-18) as past, with 1:7 looking to his final triumph</p>
<p><b>The Vision of Heaven and the Seven Seals (4-7)</b> Christ rules from heaven now (5:5-6) until the second coming (6:16-17) at the end of the age with the triumphant church (7:16-17)</p>	<p>Rev. 5:5-6 and 6:16-17 do not say this, the seals have not yet happened, and 7:16-17 is about tribulation believers</p>
<p><b>The Seven Trumpets (8-11)</b> A series of repeated judgments in the present age afflicts the wicked (8-9) but the Church is protected (10-11) until the final judgment (11:15, 18)</p>	<p>Trumpets occur <i>after</i> the seals and in sequence; even a casual observation shows they have not yet occurred (e.g., 8:8-12)</p>
<p><b>The Persecuting Dragon (12-14)</b> A woman (the Church) gives birth to a child (Christ) but she is persecuted by the dragon (Satan) and his agents until the second coming (14:14, 16)</p>	<p>The woman is <i>Israel</i> that gave the Messiah and <i>Jews</i> will be persecuted 3 and 1/2 years (12:6)</p>
<p><b>The Seven Bowls (15-16)</b> The disappearance of islands and mountains (16:20) is the final judgment and chapters 15-16 are "events that will take place in connection with it"</p>	<p>Agreed, so these chapters <i>do not</i> denote the whole church age as Hendriksen claimed of each section</p>
<p><b>The Fall of Babylon (17-19)</b> Babylon (the world system of seduction) continues during the entire church age until its destruction at Christ's second coming (19:11-21)</p>	<p>This chronological parenthesis in the book shows how this entity <i>in the end times</i> will be destroyed</p>
<p><b>The Great Consummation (20-22)</b> The present age (20:1-6) is not a literal 1000 years and this "millennium" occurs <i>before</i> chapter 19 and is followed by a general judgment and the eternal state</p>	<p>It is more natural for Christ's return (Rev. 19) to precede his rule (Rev. 20) over a literal 1000 year period</p>

### c) Problems with the Recapitulation View

- (1) See rebuttals to the right of the Recapitulation diagram above.
- (2) Does Christ's return really appear repeatedly in the book? Even if it does (e.g., 1:7), these verses all look forward to Christ's ultimate return in chapter 19. This does not deny a basic chronological structure in the prophecy.

Beale defends the view this way: "The strongest argument for the recapitulation view is the observation of *repeated combined scenes of consummative judgment and salvation* found in various sections throughout the book."<sup>2</sup>

The sky was split apart like a scroll when it is rolled up (6:14 NAU)

(3) Evaluating a supposed example of recapitulation in 6:12-14:

- (a) The Text: The sixth seal is very early in the cycles of judgment yet states amazingly, "I watched as the Lamb broke the sixth seal, and there was a great earthquake. The sun became as dark as black cloth, and the moon became as red as blood. <sup>13</sup>Then the stars of the sky fell to the earth like green figs falling from a tree shaken by a strong wind. <sup>14</sup>The sky was rolled up like a scroll, and all of the mountains and islands were moved from their places" (6:12-14 NLT).
- (b) Recapitulation Claim: Beale, 398, notes that 6:12-14 has two descriptions of the sixth seal that correspond to the seventh bowl at the end of the tribulation in 16:17-21:
- (i) The great earthquake (6:12a) also happens in 16:18 (probably also in 11:13).
- (ii) Islands and mountains being removed (6:14b) also occur in 16:20. How could this happen twice?
- (c) Responses: Similar events do not necessarily indicate that the events are one and the same.
- (i) Earthquake: This is a huge earthquake never seen on the earth up to that point (6:12a), but this need not indicate Christ's return. In fact, the earthquake of 16:18 is deemed greater since "no earthquake like it has ever happened since man was on earth..."
- (ii) Stars: Must 6:13 be the end of the world? It may *sound* like it, if the verses refer to *all* the stars and to the *entire* sky. But the text must not be forced to read *all* of the stars. "The phenomenon is so large that it appears from man's perspective that the stars are falling, when in reality it is probably a very large meteor shower that invades the terrestrial atmosphere (Hailey)" (Thomas, 1:454).
- (iii) Sky: God will peel back the sky like scrolls on either side, but this will not signal the end of the world. He has done this at times in the past as well (e.g., Acts 7:55-56), but "the old heaven" or sky will not be replaced until later when God creates "a new heaven" (21:1). The sky still exists even in 16:21 since it emits hail.
- (iv) Islands and mountains disappear, but not entirely. That the sixth seal earthquake is not literal but exaggerated is supported by the following verses that show men calling on the mountains to fall on them (6:16).<sup>3</sup> Obviously, some mountains still exist in chapter 6. In contrast, following the larger earthquake of 16:18, "every island fled away and the mountains could not be found." The seventh bowl in Revelation 16:17 is the last chronological event prior to the return of Christ since Rev. 17-18 are parenthetical.

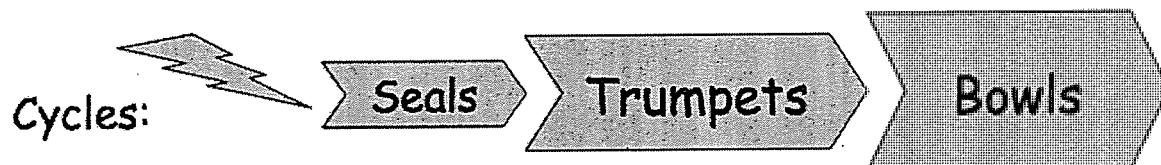
But Stephen, full of the Holy Spirit, gazed steadily into heaven and saw the glory of God, and he saw Jesus standing in the place of honor at God's right hand. <sup>56</sup>And he told them, "Look, I see the heavens opened and the Son of Man standing in the place of honor at God's right hand!" (Acts 7:55-56 NIV)

<sup>2</sup> G. K. Beale, *The Book of Revelation*, GIGTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999), 121, emphasis mine.

<sup>3</sup> Robert L. Thomas, *Revelation 1-7: An Exegetical Commentary* (Chicago: Moody, 1992), 455.

Continuing point "c" on Problems with the Recapitulation View...

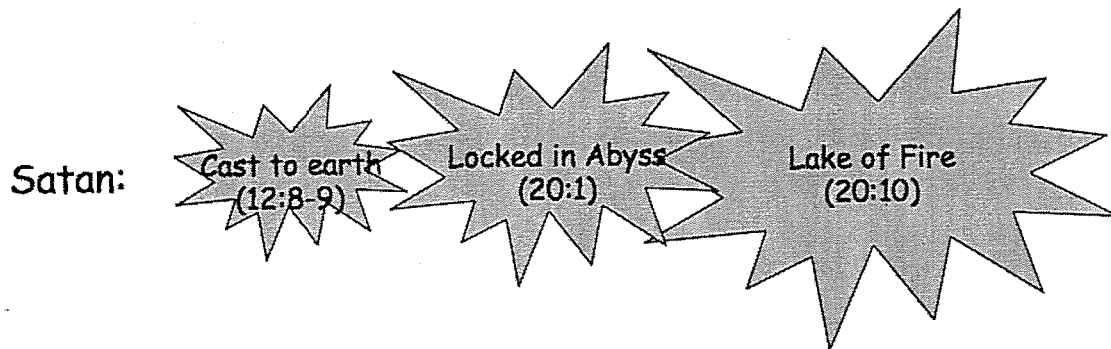
- (4) Judgments increasingly progress and intensify throughout Revelation.
  - (a) Seal judgments are not as severe as trumpet judgments, which in turn fail in intensity to the bowl judgments at the return of Christ.



<b>Content of the Judgments</b>			
	<b>SEALS</b>	<b>TRUMPETS</b>	<b>BOWLS</b>
<b>1</b>	White: conqueror	Hail & fire: 1/3 vegetation	Sores
<b>2</b>	Red: war	Fire: 1/3 sea creatures	Sea to blood
<b>3</b>	Black: famine	Star: 1/3 fresh water	Fresh water to blood
<b>4</b>	Pale: death	Dark: 1/3 sun, moon, stars	Sun burns men
		(Trumpets 5-7 are woes)	
<b>5</b>	Martyrs reassured	Woe #1: locusts	Beast's kingdom dark
<b>6</b>	Wrath: earthquake, signs	Woe #2: Euphrates prep	Euphrates dries up
	(144,000 sealed)	(Trump #7 = mystery)	
<b>7</b>	1/2 hour silence	Woe #3: victory imminent	Earthquake & hail

*Adapted from Robert Gramacki, NT Survey and H. Wayne House, Chronological & Background Charts of the NT, 19*

- (b) Satan's judgment is also progressive, from being expelled from heaven (2:8-9) to being locked in the Abyss for 1000 years (20:1) to finally being thrown into the lake of fire (20:10).



*Continuing point "O" on Four Interpretive Principles to Understand Revelation...*

4. Use Revelation's inspired outline in 1:19.

- a) Some deny this to be a chronological marker, such as Beale, 216:

"Among the numerous interpretations of this notoriously difficult threefold clause, the following six appear to be most plausible:

- (1) John is to write down the entire vision (v 19a), in particular that of chs. 1-3 (v 19b) and those of chs. 4ff., which follow historically after those of chs. 1-3 (v 19c).
- (2) John is to write down the vision in 1:12-18 (v 19a), as well as that of chs. 2-3 (v 19b), and those visions of chs. 4ff. that come in order after those of chs. 1-3 (v 19c).
- (3) John is to write down the entire vision that he saw (v 19a), which concerns realities pertaining to the present (v 19b) and the future (v 19c).
- (4) In line with the threefold clauses of 1:4 and 1:8, the threefold clause of v 19 expresses not only eternal duration, but a revelation which transcends historical time and uncovers the meaning of existence and of history in its totality.
- (5) John is to write down the entire vision that he saw (v 19a) pertaining to present realities (v 19b), which are to be understood as the beginning of the latter days and which will be concluded by the end of history (v 19c).
- (6) John is commanded to write a book containing a threefold literary genre, which is visionary-apocalyptic (v 19a), figurative (v 19b, rendered as "what they mean"), and eschatological (v 19c, viewed in an already-and-not-yet sense). Among these six alternatives, the last three are preferable.

The least plausible view is that which understands the verse as a sequential chronological outline of the entire book, v 19a as pertaining only to the time of the vision in 1:12-18, v 19b pertaining only to the church age described in chs. 2-3, and v 19c pertaining only to the future tribulation period directly preceding and including Christ's final coming (portrayed in chs. 4-21).

The meaning of v 19 is crucial since it is usually understood to be paradigmatic for the structure and the content of the whole book. For thorough discussion of the exegesis, alternative views, and interpretative problems of this verse see further pp. 152-70 above."

- b) Beale continues to argue that affinities between Daniel 2 and Revelation 1 argue that the two relate to the present age.
- c) What can be said in response to this claim that Revelation 4–22 does not refer to the future but to the present?
- (1) One wonders if Beale himself considers all of Revelation 4–22 as signifying the present age. Certainly he would agree that the final two chapters relate to eternity, so he is inconsistent by claiming that this large section refers both to the present (Rev. 4–20) and the future (Rev. 21–22).
  - (2) The inconsistencies of the recapitulation view have already been discussed.
  - (3) The seal, trumpet, and bowl judgments contain such incredible descriptions that they cannot be true of the present age without spiritualizing them.
    - (a) When in the present age have we seen one fourth of the world die by sword, famine or plague (6:8)?
    - (b) When has an army of 200,000,000 crossed the Euphrates River for battle (9:16; 16:12-14)?
    - (c) When has man witnessed 75-pound hail (16:21)?
    - (d) Many other examples can be cited.

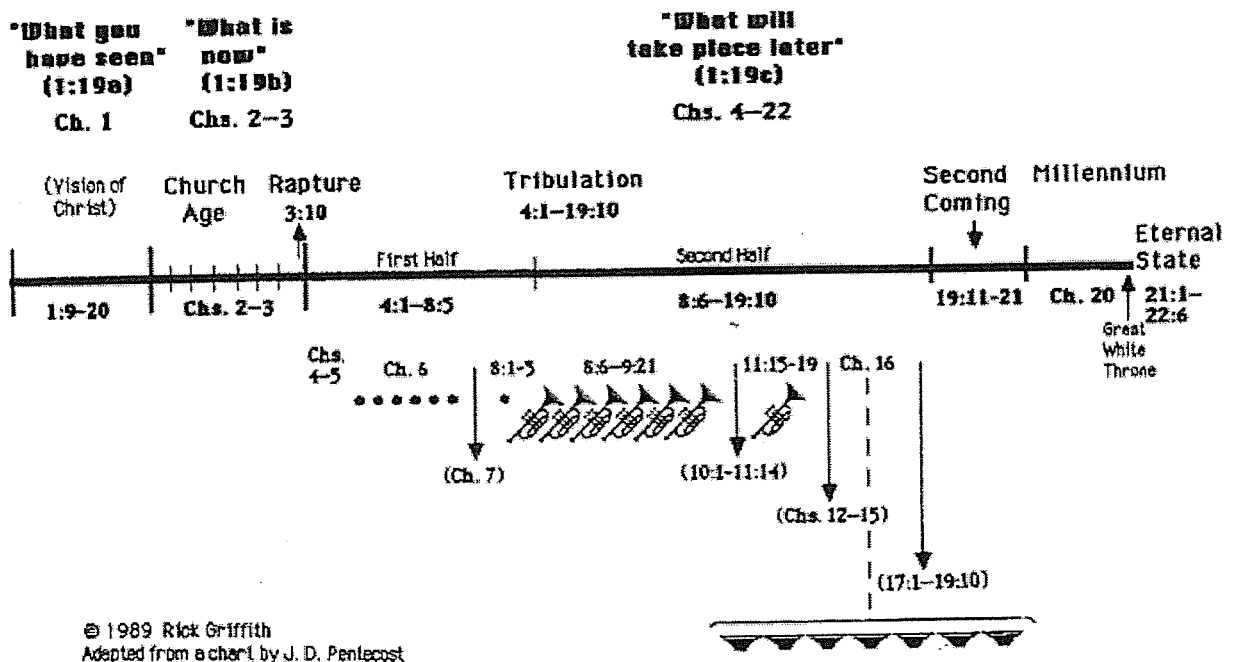


## Argument

The Gospel writers give only a limited picture of Jesus Christ as they depict His deity, life, authority, death, and resurrection almost entirely in veiled form (cf. Phil. 2:5-8). The book of Revelation removes this veil and clearly shows Christ's sovereignty in His future final triumph as King of Kings and Lord of Lords (17:14; 19:16). John records this triumph to encourage believers undergoing external opposition (Roman persecution) and internal compromise (deterioration within the churches) to give them hope.

As already mentioned, Revelation 1:19 provides an inspired outline of the entire prophecy. This begins with John's past vision of Christ's sovereignty (1:9-20), continues with a present description of Christ's sovereign authority over the seven churches (Rev. 2-3), and concentrates the bulk of the prophecy upon the future triumph of Christ over Satan and evil (Rev. 4-22).

# Chronology of Revelation



## Synthesis

### Sovereignty of Christ in future victory

<b>1</b>	<b>Sovereignty in person</b>	
1:1-3	Subject	
1:4-8	Worship of Trinity	
1:9-20	Glorified Christ	
<b>2-3</b>	<b>Sovereignty over churches</b>	
2:1-7	Ephesus	(Busy yet Backslidden)
2:8-11	Smyrna	(Suffering yet Steadfast)
2:12-17	Pergamum	(Continuing yet Compromising)
2:18-29	Thyatira	(Involved yet Immoral)
3:1-6	Sardis	(Distinguished yet Dead)
3:7-13	Philadelphia	(Mistreated yet Missions-Minded)
3:14-22	Laodicea	(Luxurious yet Lukewarm)
<b>4-22</b>	<b>Sovereignty in end-time events</b>	
4:1-19:10	Tribulation	
4:1-8:5	First half	
4-5	Christ's heavenly position	
4	Throne	
5	Scroll	
6:1-8:5	Seals	
6	#1-6	
7	(Saved Jews/Gentiles)      () = Parenthetical information in which the chronology is not carried forward	
8:1-5	#7	
8:6-19:10	Second half	
8:6-11:19	Trumpets	
8:6-9:21	#1-6	
10:1-11:14	(Saved protected/unsaved judged, 2 witnesses)	
11:15-19	#7	
12-14	(Satan's activity, etc.)	
12-13	Satan/agents	
14	144,000 triumph	
15-16	Bowls #1-7	
17:1-19:10	(Babylon's destruction)	
19:11-21	Second Coming	
20	Millennium, Satan's Doom, Great White Throne	
21:1-22:5	Eternal State	
22:6-21	Conclusion: coming imminent	

## A Chiasmic View of Revelation

One often-used literary arrangement in the Bible where subjects reappear in “mirror order” is known as a *chiasm*, named after the Greek letter *chi* ( $\chi$ ), which looks like the English letter “x.” Vern Poythress, in *The Return of the King*, provides this type of outline for Revelation below.

- A. Leading into the visions: the seer, the revealers, and the audience 1:1-11
  - 1. Prologue 1:1-3
    - a. Title 1:1a.
    - b. The witness 1:1b-2
    - c. Reading the prophecy 1:3
  - 2. Participants 1:4-11
- B. Christophany 1:12-20
- C. Recompense to the churches: church militant 2:1-3:22
- D. Throne vision 4:1-5:14
- E. 7 seals: rider judgments (1-4 focus on humans) 6:1-8:1
  - 1. Content of the judgments 6:1-17
  - 2. Preservation of the church 7:1-8:1
- F. 7 trumpets: angelic judgments (1-4 focus on nature) 8:2-11:19
  - 1. Judgment of the nations 8:2-9:21
  - 2. Preservation of the church 10:1-11:13
  - 3. Joy in heaven 11:15-19
- G. The redeemed 12:1-6
  - (with intermixed strife 12:3-6)
- H. Deceptive opponent (Satan) 12:7-17
  - I. Destructive opponent (Beast) 13:1-10
  - H. Deceptive opponent (False Prophet) 13:11-18
- G. The redeemed 14:1-20
  - (with intermixed strife 14:6-20)
- F. 7 bowls: angelic judgments (1-4 focus on nature) 15:1-19:10
  - 1. Judgment of the nations 15:1-16:21
  - 2. End of the pseudochurch Babylon 17:1-18:24
  - 3. Joy in heaven 19:1-10
- E. White horse: rider judgment (focus on humans) 19:11-20:10
  - 1. Content of judgment 19:11-21
  - 2. Preservation of the church 20:1-10
- D. Throne vision 20:11-15
- C. Announcement of recompense to the churches: church triumphant 21:1-8
- B. Theophany 21:9-22:5
- A. Leading out of the visions: the seer, the revealers, and the audience 22:6-21
  - 2. Participants 22:6-17
    - 1. Epilogue 22:18-21
      - c. Reading the prophecy 22:18-19
      - b. The witness 22:20
      - a. Colophon 22:21

The effect of this type of arrangement is to draw the reader’s attention to the middle of the structure, which, in this case, is the Beast. One must ask, though, if the Beast is to be the center of attention in Revelation!

## Outline

### Summary Statement for the Book

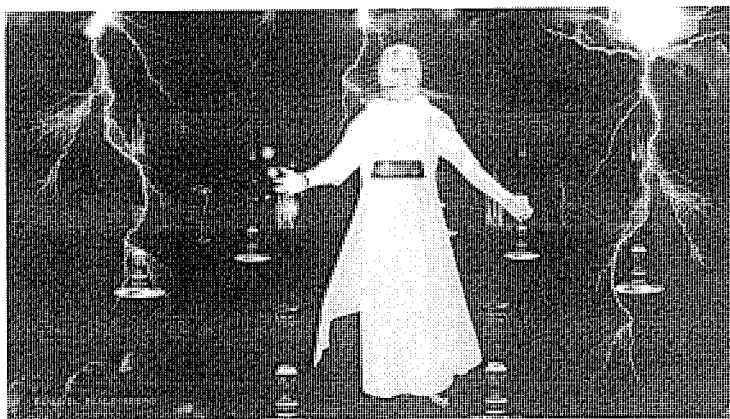
God discloses through John the *sovereignty of Jesus Christ* in His ultimate future triumph to encourage believers to *persevere despite internal compromise and external opposition*.

- I. (Ch. 1) God discloses through John the sovereignty of Jesus Christ, the subject of His prophecy, to encourage the church with Christ's ability to handle internal compromise and external opposition.
  - A. (1:1-3) John's prologue shows the divinely given prophecy unveils Jesus Christ's sovereignty and encourages applying it by promising blessing upon those who obey it.
    1. (1:1-2) Christ's sovereignty through future events that will rapidly take place is transmitted from the Father to Jesus to an angel (possibly Gabriel) to John to other believers to establish the prophecy's inspiration.
    2. (1:3) People who read, hear, and obey this prophecy are promised a special blessing from God since from His perspective these events are near.
  - B. (1:4-8) John addresses seven churches in Asia and worships the triune God, especially Christ as the soon-to-come sovereign Ruler, to exhort his readers to watch for His return.
    1. (1:4-6) John addresses seven churches in Asia as his original readers and worships Christ as Ruler of the world and Redemptive Resurrected Revealer of the prophecy to remind them of His sovereign authority over their lives.
    2. (1:7) John cites Christ's second coming in fulfillment of Zechariah 12:10 as the main feature of his following prophecy and as an exhortation to look for His coming.
    3. (1:8) John quotes God the Father who is Lord of time to demonstrate His ability to bring all the promises of the prophecy to pass.

C. (1:9-20) John relates his Patmos vision of the glorified Jesus Christ to substantiate Christ's ability to handle the Church's internal and external problems and to reveal the threefold outline of the book.

1. (1:9-11) Christ commands the exiled John on Patmos to prophesy to the seven churches of Asia to reveal Christ's sovereignty.

2. (1:12-16) John relates his vision of the glorified Jesus Christ to substantiate Christ's ability to handle the Church's internal and external problems.



3. (1:17-20) In response to the vision John is comforted, instructed to record the outline of the prophecy, and shown Christ's authority over the seven churches as an introduction to the letters to these churches.

a) (1:17-18) John is terrified at the presence of the glorified Christ but Jesus comforts him with His divine attributes.

b) (1:19) Christ commands John to record the threefold inspired outline of His prophecy: the vision which he had just seen (1:9-20), the present authority of Christ over the churches (Rev. 2-3), and the future events before, during, and after Christ's return (Rev. 4-22).

c) (1:20) Christ shows His authority over the churches when He reveals that the stars in His hand represent the seven churches and that the lampstands represent their witness for Christ in a spiritually dark world.

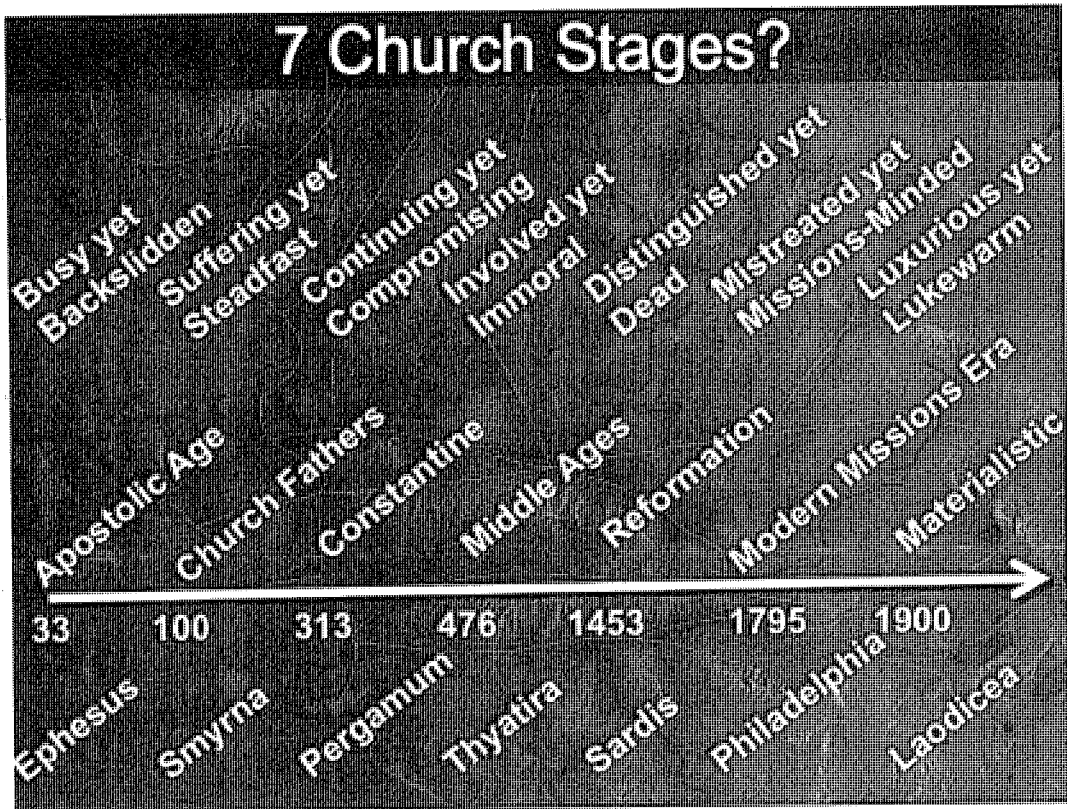


## Chart of the Letters to the Seven Churches

Church	Christ	Commendation	Rebuke	Exhortation	Warning	Promise
<b>Ephesus</b> (2:1-7)  <i>Busy Yet Backsliding</i>	He holds the seven stars in His right hand and walks among the seven golden lampstands.	I know your works and steadfast to endure for my name and not tolerate evil; you test self-named apostles; persist steadfastly and do not grow weary.	You have departed from your first love.	Remember the high state from which you have fallen and repent! Do the deeds you did at first.	If you do not repent, I will come to you and remove your lampstand from its place.	To the one who conquers, I will permit him to eat from the tree of life that is in the paradise of God.
<b>Smyrna</b> (2:8-11)  <i>Suffering Yet Steadfast</i>	He is the first and the last, the one who was dead, but came to life.	I know your distress and poverty (but you are rich) and the slander against you by self-called Jews that really are not, but are a synagogue of Satan.	(Absent)	Do not fear what you are about to suffer.	The devil will throw some of you into prison as a test and you will suffer for ten days.	Remain faithful unto death for the crown that is life itself. The one who conquers will not be harmed by the second death.
<b>Pergamum</b> (2:12-17)  <i>Continuing Yet Compromising</i>	He has the sharp double-edged sword.	You live where Satan's throne is. Yet you cling to my name and have not denied me, even when Antipas was killed in your city.	Some follow Balaam's idolatry and the Nicolaitan immorality.	Repent!	If you do not repent, I will make war against those people with the sword of my mouth.	You will get some hidden manna, and a white stone with a new name that no one else knows.
<b>Thyatira</b> (2:18-29)  <i>Involved Yet Immoral</i>	He has eyes like a fiery flame and feet like polished bronze.	I know your deeds: your love, faith, service, and steadfast endurance and that your recent deeds are greater.	You tolerate Jezebel's false prophecies, food sacrificed to idols and sexual immorality.	Her adulterers will have terrible suffering and a deadly disease so all churches will know His omniscience and right to judge.	Those avoiding "satanic secrets" must hold what you have until I come.	The conqueror who continues in my deeds will get authority over the nations and the morning star.
<b>Sardis</b> (3:1-6)  <i>Distinguished Yet Dead</i>	He holds the seven spirits of God and the seven stars.	I know your deeds.	You have a reputation that you are alive, but in reality you are dead.	Wake up and strengthen your incomplete deeds, obey and repent.	If you do not wake up, I will come like a thief against you.	You will dress in white with eternal security declared before my Father and His angels.
<b>Philadelphia</b> (3:7-13)  <i>Mistreated Yet Missions-Minded</i>	He is the Holy One, the True One, who holds the key of David, who opens doors no one can shut, and shuts doors no one can open.	I know your deeds. Look! I have given you an open door that no one can shut. You have little strength, but have obeyed my word and kept my name.	(Absent)	Hold on to what you have so that no one can take away your crown.	(Absent)	Jews from Satan's synagogue will confess that I have loved you. I will keep you out of the Tribulation. I am coming soon... You will be praised in the new Jerusalem.
<b>Laodicea</b> (3:14-22)  <i>Luxurious Yet Lukewarm</i>	He is the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the originator of God's creation.	(Absent)	I know your lukewarm deeds and will vomit out of my mouth you who say, "I am rich and need nothing," but really are wretched, pitiful, poor, blind, and naked.	Buy gold, white clothing and eye salve from me! All those I love, I rebuke and discipline so repent! Listen! I seek fellowship.	(Absent)	The one who conquers will sit with me on my throne, just as I too conquered and sat down with my Father on his throne.

For a discussion of whether the seven churches reflect seven ages of church history, see Robert L. Thomas, "The Chronological Interpretation of Revelation 2-3," *BibSac* 124 (1967): 321-31; James L. Boyer, "Are the Seven Letters of Revelation 2-3 Prophetic?" *Grace Theological Journal* 6:2 (Fall 1985): 267-73. This view is quite rare among interpreters.

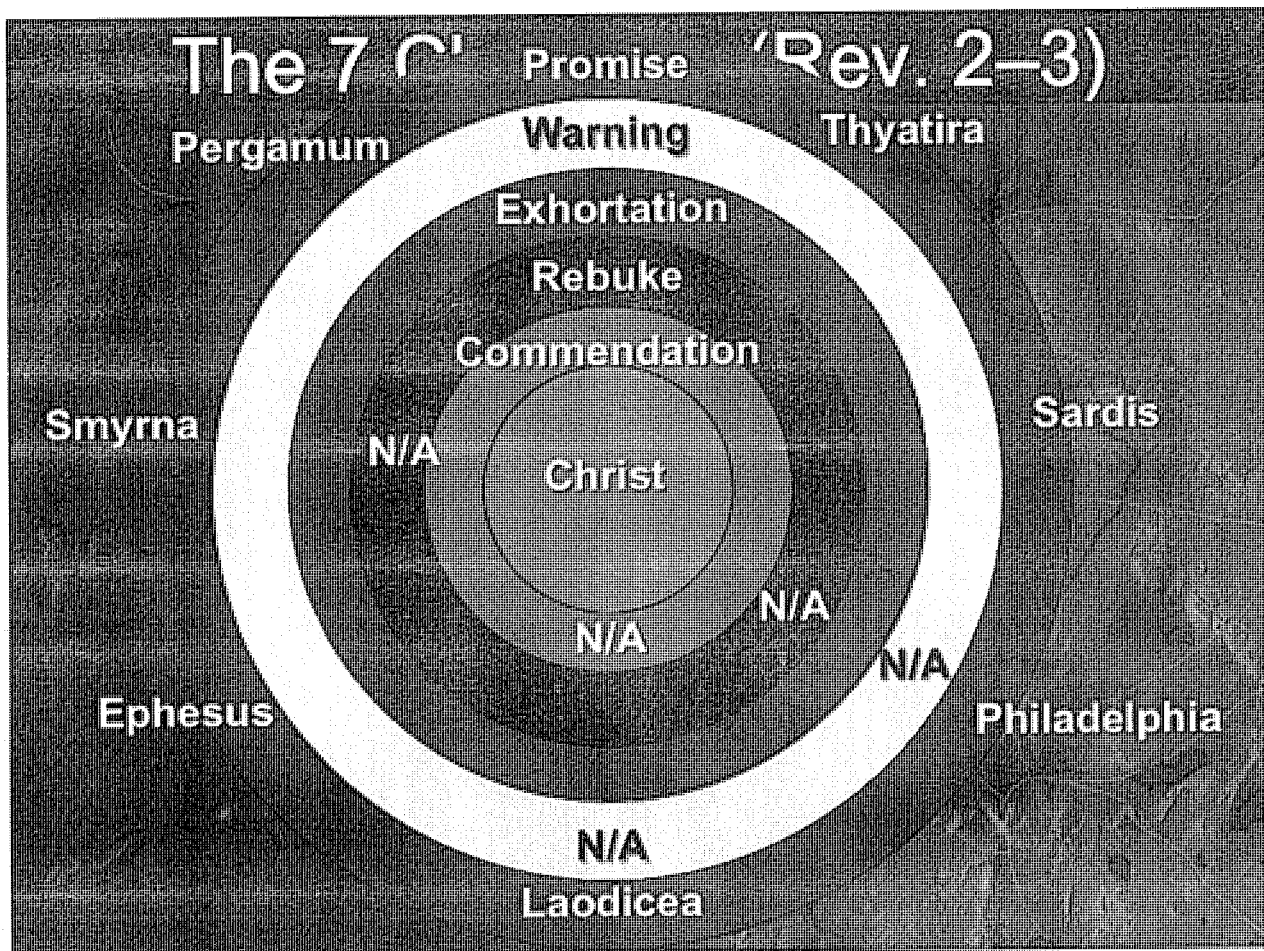
**II. (Rev. 2-3) Jesus revealed the internal compromise and external opposition of seven Asian churches in seven letters to show His sovereignty to judge all churches.**





## Sevenfold Letters from Christ

Like a skillful archer who can hit the “bull’s eye” 100% of the time, Christ is “dead on” in his assessment of every church. His evaluation of the seven churches of Asia Minor appears in a repeated pattern and is depicted below as if on a target where Christ first describes himself, and then accurately depicts six more declarations about each congregation.



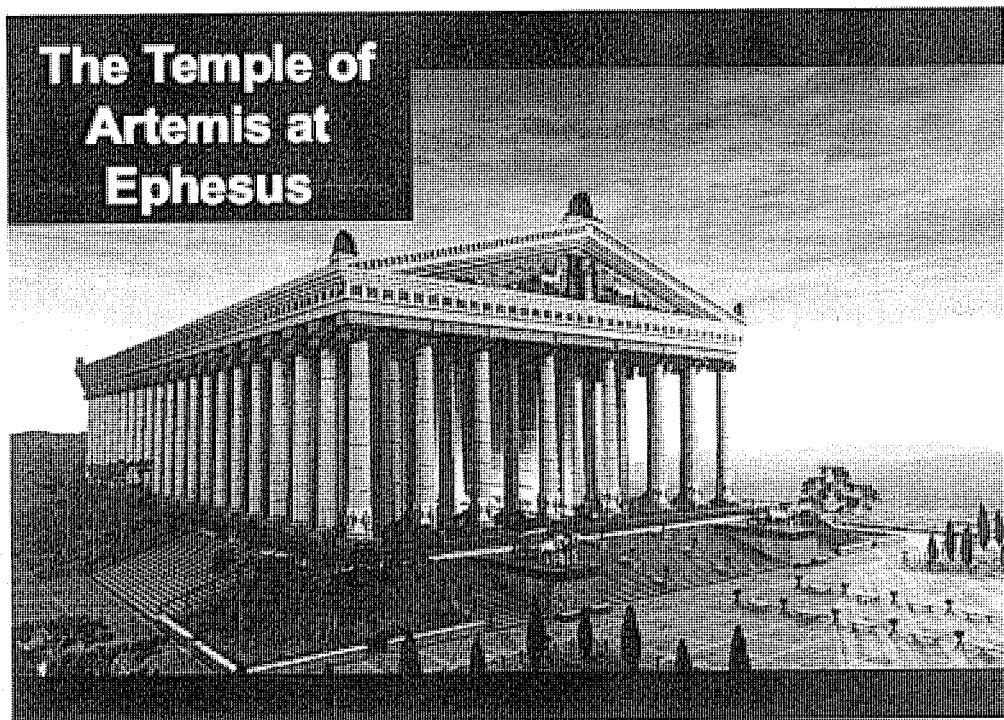
Though some exceptions exist (noted with “N/A” above), the basic pattern of the seven letters is a sevenfold outline:

1. Church name
2. Christ Described in a Unique Way for that Church
3. Commendation of Good Deeds among the Believers
4. Rebuke of Sin within the Church
5. Exhortation or Encouragement to Repent
6. Warning if the Exhortation is Disobeyed
7. Promise for Faithfulness

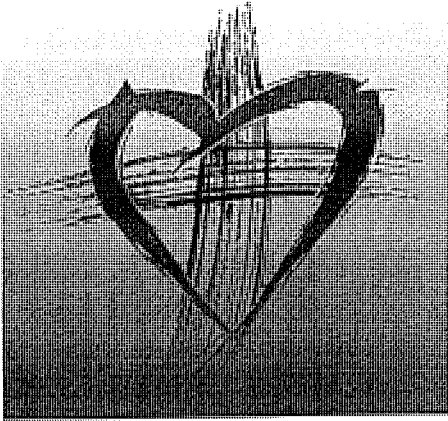
Notice also that each letter not only begins with a reference to Christ but ends with an appeal from the Spirit.

A. (2:1-7) Christ tells John to write the believers in Ephesus to commend their service and perseverance in God's truth and to exhort them to rekindle their former love for Christ (Busy Yet Backsliding Church: Apostolic Age).

1. (2:1a) Destination: Ephesus



2. (2:1b) Description of Christ: He has a firm grasp on the seven stars in His right hand and He walks among the seven golden lamp stands.
3. (2:2-3) Commendation: I know your works, labor and steadfast endurance for my name, and not tolerating evil; testing self-named apostles; persisting steadfastly and not growing weary.



4. (2:4) Rebuke: You have departed from your first love.

5. (2:5a) Exhortation: Remember the high state from which you have fallen and repent! Do the deeds you did at first.

6. (2:5b-6) Warning: If you do not repent, I will come to you and remove your lamp stand from its place.

7. (2:7) Promise: To the one who conquers, I will permit him to eat from the tree of life that is in the paradise of God.

B. (2:8-11) Christ tells John to write the believers in Smyrna to commend their suffering and poverty from satanic attack and to exhort them to fearless and faithful suffering (Suffering Yet Steadfast Church: AD 100-313 when Constantine made Christianity the official religion of the Roman Empire)

1. (2:8a) Destination: Smyrna

2. (2:8b) Description of Christ: He is the one who is the first and the last, the one who was dead, but came to life.

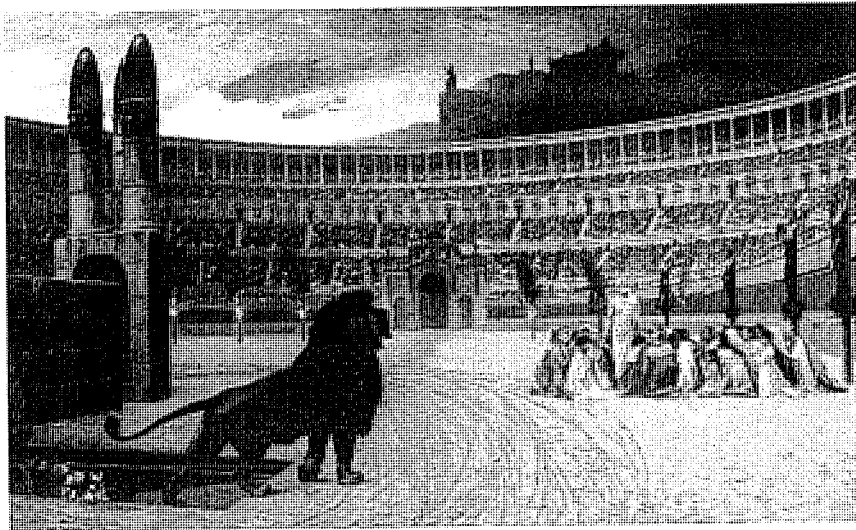


3. (2:9) Commendation: I know your distress and poverty (but you are rich) and the slander against you by self-called Jews that really are not, but are a synagogue of Satan.

4. (absent) Rebuke

5. (2:10a) Exhortation: Do not fear what you are about to suffer.

6. (2:10b) Warning: The devil will throw some of you into prison as a test and you will suffer for ten days.



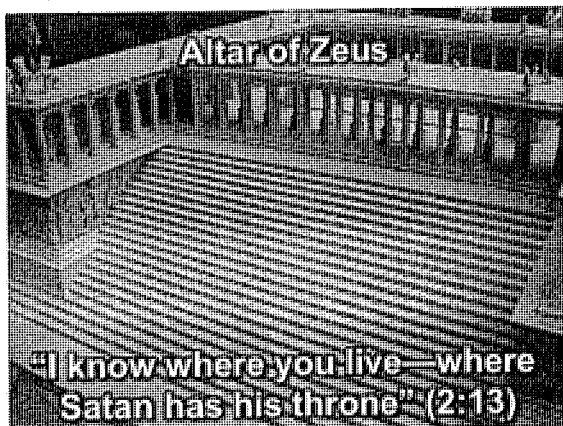
7. (2:10c-11) Promise: Remain faithful unto death for the crown that is life itself. The one who conquers will not be harmed by the second death.

C. (2:12-17) Christ tells John to write the believers in Pergamum to commend their faithfulness despite satanic attack and to exhort them to reject false teaching in the church (Continuing Yet Compromising Church: AD 313-Just Before Middle Ages)

1. (2:12a) Destination: Pergamum

2. (2:12b) Description of Christ: He has the sharp double-edged sword.

3. (2:13) Commendation: You live where Satan's throne is. Yet you cling to my name and have not denied me, even when Antipas was killed in your city.



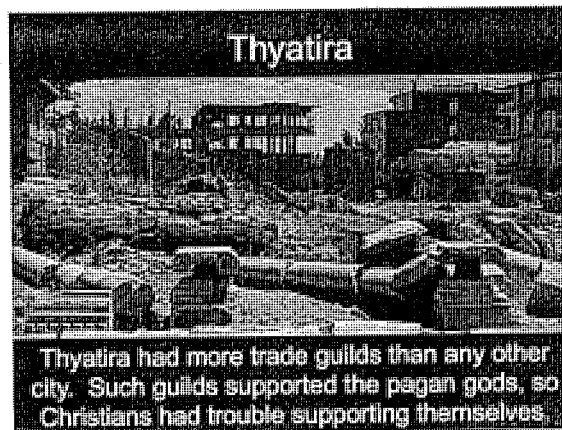
4. (2:14-15) Rebuke: Some there follow Balaam, who instructed Israel to eat food sacrificed to idols and commit sexual immorality and some also follow the Nicolaitans.



5. (2:16a) Exhortation: Repent!
6. (2:16b) Warning: If you do not repent, I will make war against those people with the sword of my mouth.
7. (2:17) Promise: The conqueror will get some hidden manna, and a white stone with a new name that no one else knows.

D. (2:18-29) Christ tells John to write the believers in Thyatira to commend the properly motivated, persevering service of some and to exhort the others to repent of immorality (Involved Yet Immoral Church: Middle Ages)

1. (2:18a) Destination: Thyatira



Thyatira was famous for its purple dyes and guilds for tanners, dyers, woolen and linen workers. These led to an extensive use of clay pots and pagan celebrations. Many Christians died rather than compromise in guild festivities.

To all who are victorious, who obey me to the very end,  
To them I will give authority over all the nations.  
<sup>27</sup>They will rule the nations with an iron rod and smash them like clay pots (2:26-27).

2. (2:18b) Description of Christ: He has eyes like a fiery flame and feet like polished bronze.

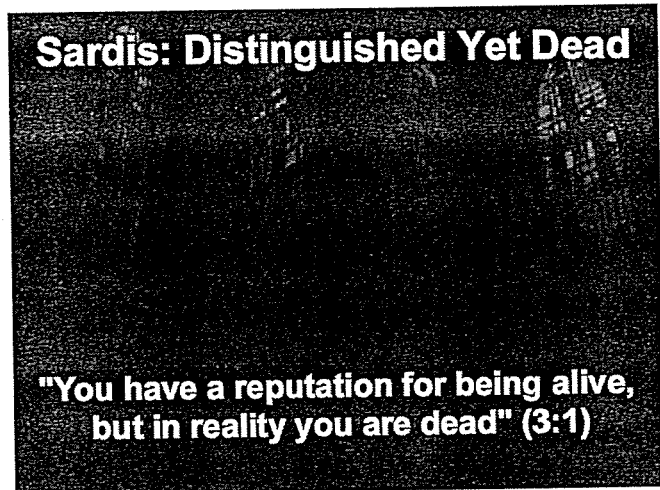
3. (2:19) Commendation: I know your deeds: your love, faith, service, and steadfast endurance and that your recent deeds are greater.





- E. (3:1-6) Christ tells John to write the believers in Sardis to commend their reputation for good deeds and to exhort them to rekindle their obedience to what they had been taught (Distinguished Yet Dead Church: Catholic Church during the Reformation-late 1700's)

1. (3:1a) Destination: Sardis

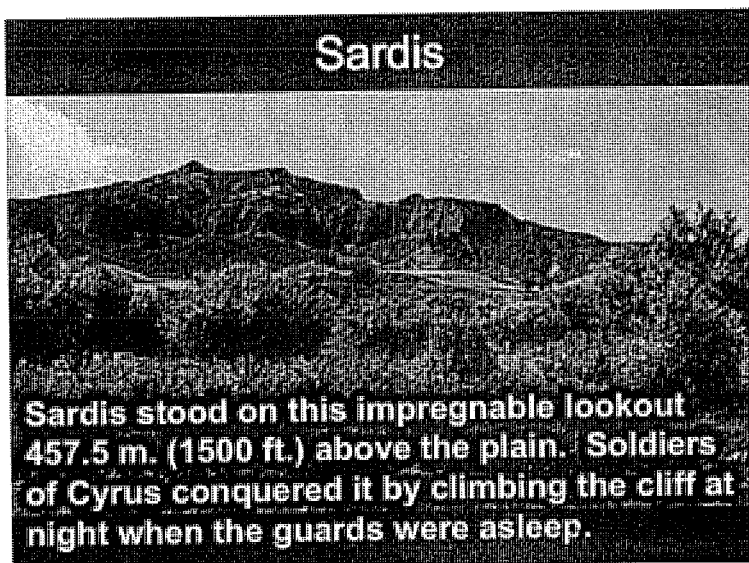


2. (3:1b) Description of Christ: He holds the seven spirits of God and the seven stars.

3. (3:1c) Commendation: I know your deeds.

4. (3:1d) Rebuke: You have a reputation that you are alive, but in reality you are dead.

5. (3:2-3a) Exhortation: Wake up and strengthen your incomplete deeds, obey and repent.



6. (3:3b) Warning: If you do not wake up, I will come like a thief against you.

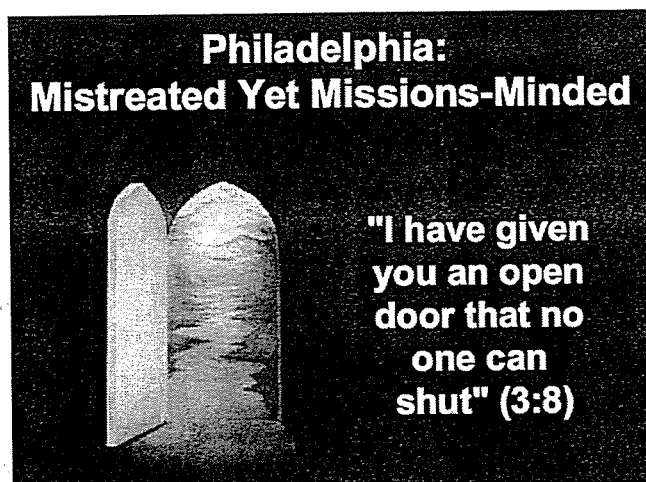
7. (3:4-6) Promise: Those with clean clothes will walk with me in white and the conqueror will also dress in white and I will never erase his name from the book of life, but will declare his name before my Father and His angels.

F. (3:7-13) Christ tells John to write the believers in Philadelphia to commend their endurance in evangelism despite opposition and to encourage them to persevere for reward (Mistreated Yet Missions-Minded Church: Modern Missionary Era [1795-early 1900's]).

1. (3:7a) Destination: Philadelphia

2. (3:7b) Description of Christ: He is the Holy One, the True One, who holds the key of David, who opens doors no one can shut, and shuts doors no one can open.

3. (3:8) Commendation: I know your deeds. Look! I have given you an open door that no one can shut. You have little strength, but have obeyed my word and kept my name.



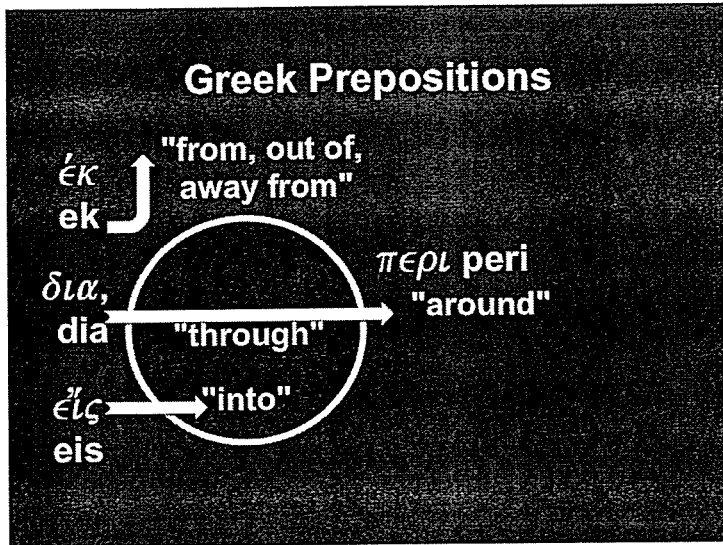
4. (absent) Rebuke

5. (absent) Warning

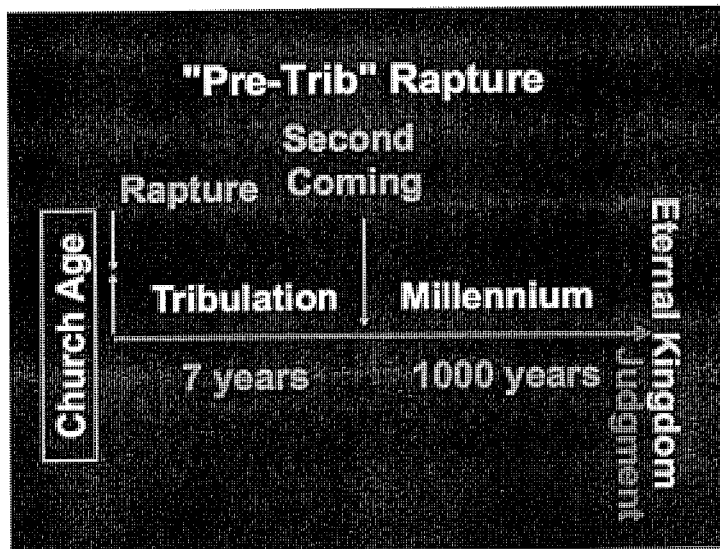


## Kept from the Hour of Trial (Rev. 3:10)

There are four key Greek prepositions used in relation to movement:



Of these four, which would one expect to indicate the believers and the Tribulation?



Not surprisingly, the one used is the preposition *ek*, meaning that Christians will be *kept from* that entire time of trial...

**"Pre-Trib" Rapture**

Church Age	ἐκ ek ↓ διά dia → εἰς eis	Rapture "from, out of, away from" Tribulation "through" 7 years "into"	Secor 1. "I will keep you from (ἐκ) the hour of testing that will come upon the whole world, to test those who dwell upon the earth" (Rev. 3:10)
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But how is the phrase "keep from" used in other NT passages? There exists only one passage...

**The Only Other NT Occurrence  
of "Keep From" (τηρέω ἐκ)**

The idea of being taken out of the world relates to being removed from the world	1. "I do not ask you to take them out of (ἐκ) the world, but to keep them from (ἐκ) the evil one" (John 17:15)
ἐκ ek ↘ sphere of "the evil one" "from, out of, away from"	Not kept in Satan's sphere parallels not kept in Tribulation Period

G. (3:14-22) Christ tells John to condemn the believers in Laodicea for their materialistic, selfish lifestyle so that they might repent and embrace Christ's Lordship in self-sacrifice (Luxurious Yet Lukewarm Church: Modern Materialistic Church).

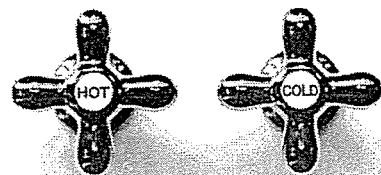
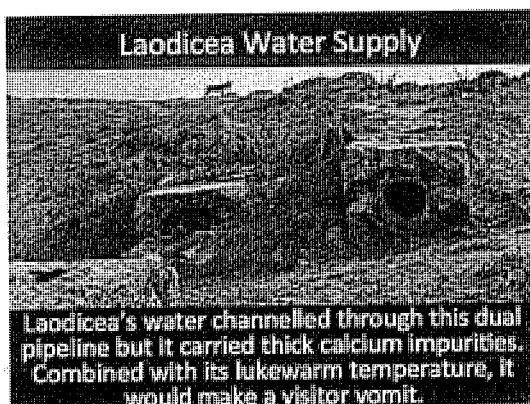
1. (3:14a) Destination: Laodicea



2. (3:14b) Description of Christ: He is the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the originator of God's creation.

3. (absent) Commendation

4. (3:15-17) Rebuke: I know your lukewarm deeds and for those I will vomit you out of my mouth! You say, "I am rich and need nothing," but really you are wretched, pitiful, poor, blind, and naked.





5. (3:18-20) Exhortation: Buy refined gold from me to become rich! Buy white clothing for your shameful nakedness, and eye salve to see! All those I love, I rebuke and discipline so repent! Listen! I seek mutual fellowship.



6. (absent) Warning

7. (3:21-22) Promise: The one who conquers will sit with me on my throne, just as I too conquered and sat down with my Father on his throne.

## Who are the “Overcomers” in Revelation 2–3?

The word for “overcomer” is used 8 times in the book for believers—seven times (once for each church) in the letters to the churches and one final time in the new Jerusalem near the end. Does this term indicate a *special category* of believers or does it refer to *all* Christians?

In each case Christ makes a promise to the person who overcomes ( $\nu\iota\kappa\omega\nu\tau\iota$  or  $\nu\iota\kappa\omega\nu$ , *nikon*, from which we get our English word “victor”):

*Ephesus*—Rev. 2:7 “He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes, I will grant to eat of the tree of life which is in the Paradise of God.”<sup>4</sup>

*Smyrna*—Rev. 2:11 “He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. He who overcomes will not be hurt by the second death.”

*Pergamum*—Rev. 2:17 “He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes, to him I will give some of the hidden manna, and I will give him a white stone, and a new name written on the stone which no one knows but he who receives it.”

*Thyatira*—Rev. 2:26 “He who overcomes, and he who keeps My deeds until the end, TO HIM I WILL GIVE AUTHORITY OVER THE 1NATIONS.”

*Sardis*—Rev. 3:5 “He who overcomes will thus be clothed in white garments; and I will not erase his name from the book of life, and I will confess his name before My Father and before His angels.”

*Philadelphia*—Rev. 3:12 “He who overcomes, I will make him a pillar in the temple of My God, and he will not go out from it anymore; and I will write on him the name of My God, and the name of the city of My God, the new Jerusalem, which comes down out of heaven from My God, and My new name.”

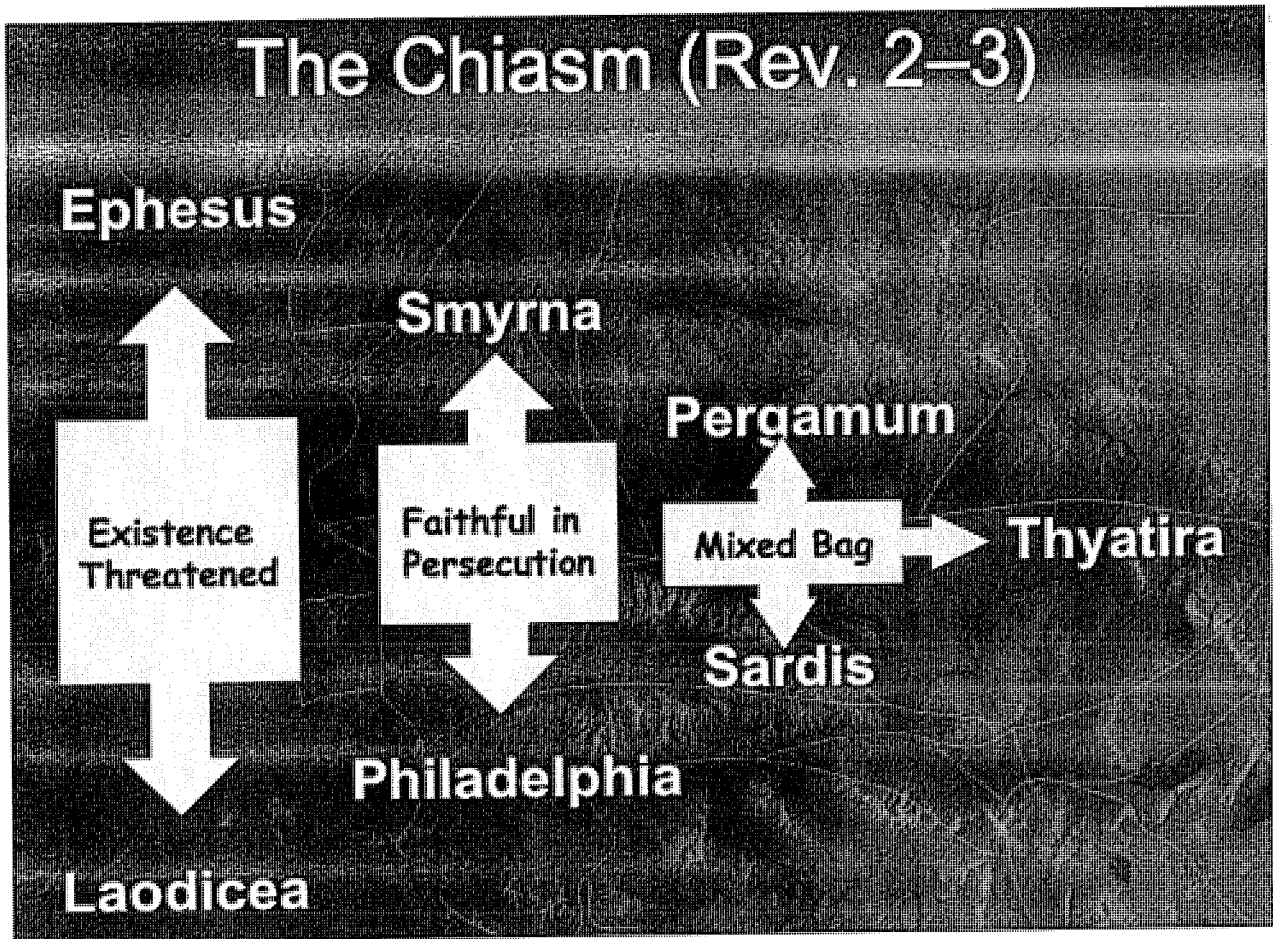
*Laodicea*—Rev. 3:21 “He who overcomes, I will grant to him to sit down with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne.”

*All Believers*—Rev. 21:7 “He who overcomes will inherit these things, and I will be his God and he will be My son.”

How can every Christian overcome the evil of the age? The same word is used of Jesus Christ. Since he overcame death itself, each of us “on his team” also has overcome the world and will receive the above promises!

**“... The Lion that is from the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has overcome so as to open the book and its seven seals” (5:5).**

<sup>4</sup> “This promise should not be construed as reward for only a special group of Christians but a normal expectation for all Christians” (John F. Walvoord, “Revelation,” in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: New Testament Edition* [Wheaton: SP Pub., 1983], 934).



*Continuing from the summary of chapters 2–3 on page 343...*

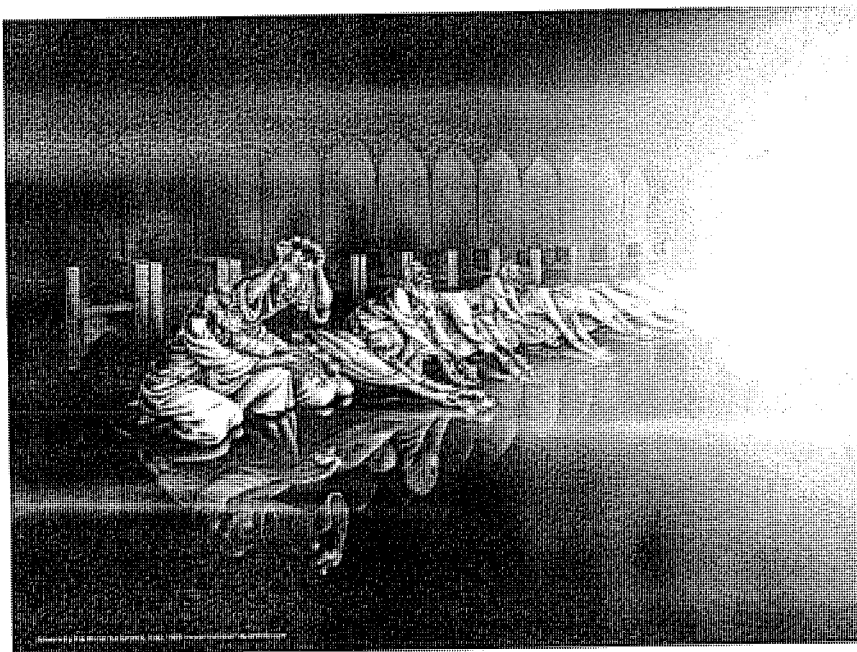
**III. (Rev. 4–22) John records future end-time events that demonstrate the sovereignty and final triumph of Jesus Christ as an encouragement to believers struggling with external opposition.**

- A. (4:1–19:10) Prophecies of the Tribulation cover all seven years and emphasize the second half (the Great Tribulation), yet the entire period shows Christ's sovereignty as worthy to judge the world.
1. (4:1–8:5) The first half of the Tribulation depicts Christ's sovereignty over Antichrist during this relatively peaceful period.
    - a) (Rev. 4–5) An introduction to the Tribulation judgments shows Christ's sovereign, heavenly position as the only one worthy to judge the world.
      - (1) (Ch. 4) The awesome heavenly throne points to the greatness of God (and therefore of Christ also) who dwells there due to his work of creation.

*Who are the 24 elders?*

- a) Many claim that these represent the church (with its 12 apostles) + Israel (with its 12 tribes).





- (b) A better view is to see this at face value as heavenly beings before God's throne.
- (i) Nothing in the text indicates that one should add  $12 + 12$  to get 24. Why not multiply the Trinity by the perfect number ( $3 \times 7 = 21$ ), and then add the Trinity to this for good measure to equal 24?
  - (ii) Even if we did add  $12 + 12$ , why not say that they represent the 12 OT tribal leaders and the 12 NT apostles? This does not seem plausible since it also goes beyond the clear teaching of the text.
  - (iii) The context puts the elders with four other heavenly creatures since, after all, this is a depiction of the heavenly court before the throne. This argues for them to be a class of angels also.
  - (iv) Redeemed humanity is explicitly noted in this vision as those from every tribe, nation, language and people (5:9; cf. 7:9), so it would be redundant to have the elders symbolize the church and Israel too. The elders refer to the church as "them" (5:10).
  - (v) An elder performs an explanatory purpose like angels (7:13-14).
  - (vi) Ironically, most scholars who claim that the 24 elders represent Israel here do *not* believe the 144,000 from the tribes of Israel (7:1) are actually Jews. Therefore, they find Jews where they are *not* mentioned (chap. 4) but deny the existence of Jews where they *are* explicitly mentioned!

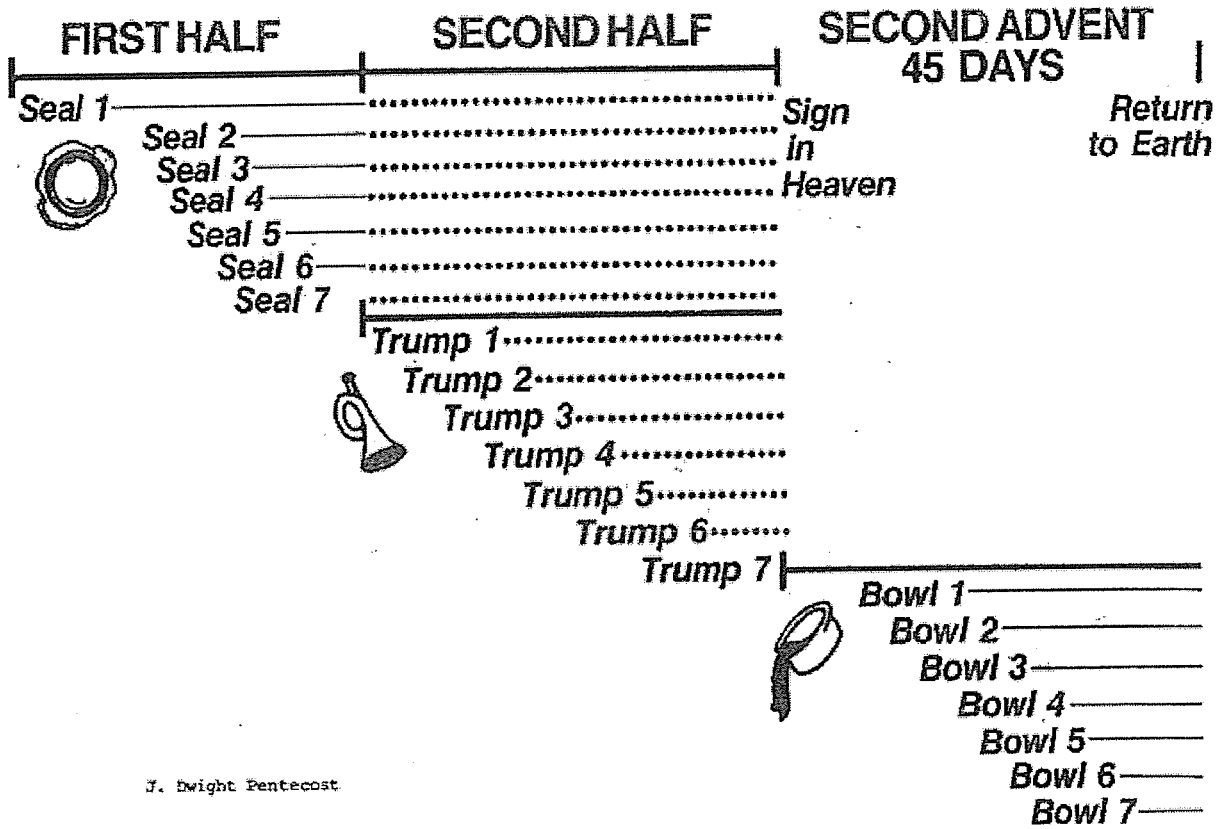
- (2) (Ch. 5) The Lamb (Jesus Christ) alone is sovereign to break the seals and judge the world due to his work of redemption.



**Then I saw a Lamb that looked as if it had been slaughtered, but it was now standing between the throne and the four living beings and among the twenty-four elders. He had seven horns and seven eyes, which represent the sevenfold Spirit of God that is sent out into every part of the earth"**  
**(Rev. 5:6 NLT)**

### Judgments of the Seventieth Week

J. Dwight Pentecost, Dallas Theological Seminary



J. Dwight Pentecost

## The Purposes & Names of the Tribulation

### If God is a God of love, why must there be a time of great tribulation on earth?

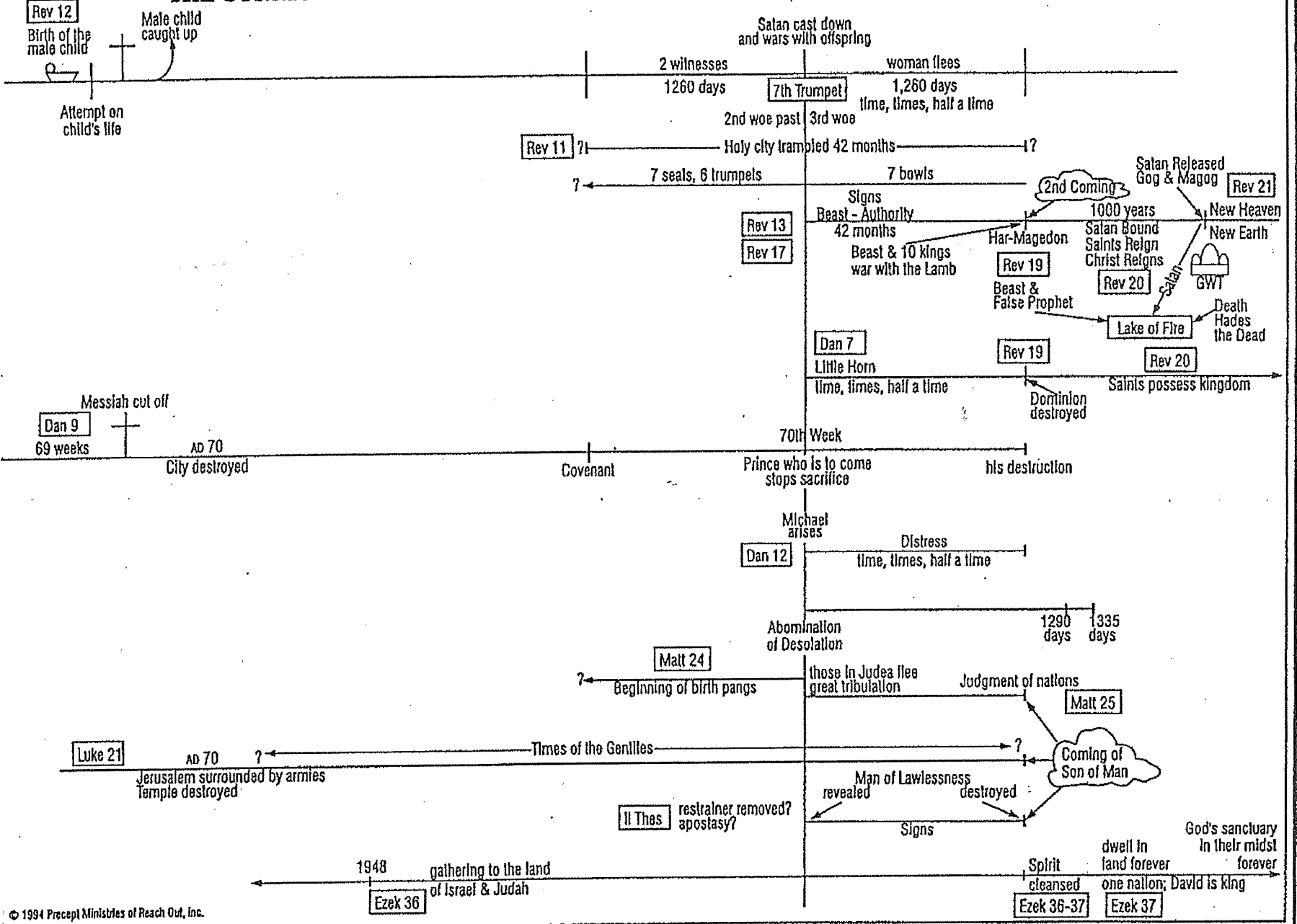
1. **To Judge the Nations:** God is a God of justice as well as a God of love. His wrath must be shown to demonstrate Him to be consistent with His balanced character (e.g., Zeph. 1:15; 1 Thess. 1:10; 5:9; Rev. 11:18; 15:1; 16:1).
  - This will be a period when God gives those who killed His people the fruits of their sin (Rev. 6:11; cf. Ps. 2:5; Jer. 25:30-32; Zech. 12:3; 2 Thess. 2:12; Rev. 3:10; 6:15).
  - God has always judged sin and does so at the present, so this period is not out of line with His actions in the past (Rom. 1:18-20).
2. **To Discipline Israel:** Israel will need a time of difficulty to turn her heart to the Lord in order to fulfill the prophecies of the nation's restoration in repentance (Deut. 30:1-3; Isa. 1:25; 4:2-4, etc.; cf. Eschatology notes, 119c point D).
3. **To Save Israel:** God's mercy will be shown to Israel by saving her after this time of trouble.
  - Jeremiah 30:7 refers to the "time of Jacob's trouble" that will lead to national salvation.
  - Daniel 11:36-45 shows how God will miraculously save Israel from the attacks of Antichrist.
  - Israel's spiritual restoration is especially highlighted by Isaiah in many texts:
    1. Israel cleansed by God's judgment before the kingdom (1:25; 4:2-4; 29:1-4; 30:26b; 31:6-7)
    2. Israel reunited and regathered to the land (11:10-13, 15-16; 43:1, 5; 49:6; 61:4; 65:8-9)
    3. Israel victorious over enemies (2:12-21; 11:14; 24:21-23; 41:11-14; 45:14; 61:2; 66:14b)
    4. Israel free from oppression (14:3-6; 42:6-7; 49:8-9)
    5. Israel believing in Messiah (2:5; 10:20-22; 25:8-9; 26:2; 29:23; 40:9; 45:17, 25; 52:3, 6-7, 9-11; 54:7-10; 62:12)
    6. Israel forgiven and righteous (1:25-27; 2:3; 4:3-4; 33:24; 44:22-24; 45:25; 48:17; 63:16)
    7. Israel blessed and rewarded by Christ (19:25; 40:10; 62:11; 61:8)
    8. Israel comforted by Christ (12:1-2; 40:1-2, 11; 49:12; 51:3; 65:18-19; 66:11-13)
    9. Israel filled/empowered by Holy Spirit as never before (32:15; 44:3; 59:21)
4. **To Establish the Millennial Kingdom:** The Tribulation will end with the elimination of the kingdoms of this world so they can be replaced with Christ's kingdom (Dan. 7:17-18; cf. Rev. 17-18 removes Babylon before Rev. 19-20 sets up Christ's reign).

### The various names for this period of time reveal some of God's purposes:

- "Day" or "Day of the LORD" (Isa. 30:23-25; 34:1-8; 35:1-10; Joel 2:28-32; 3:1-21; Zeph. 3:8, 16-20; Zech. 14:1-21) shows God has this specific time period planned in advance.
- "Tribulation" (Deut. 4:30; Matt. 24:9, 21, 29; Rev. 7:14) indicates that trials will be needed to get people's attention on God's purposes.
- "Time of Jacob's trouble" (Jer. 30:7) identifies Israel as a key focus of this people of testing.
- "Wrath of God" (Zeph. 1:15; 1 Thess. 1:10; 5:9; Rev. 11:18; 15:1; 16:1) notes that this period will satisfy the righteous anger of our Creator.
- "Seven" (Dan. 9:27) gives the length of the period as seven years.

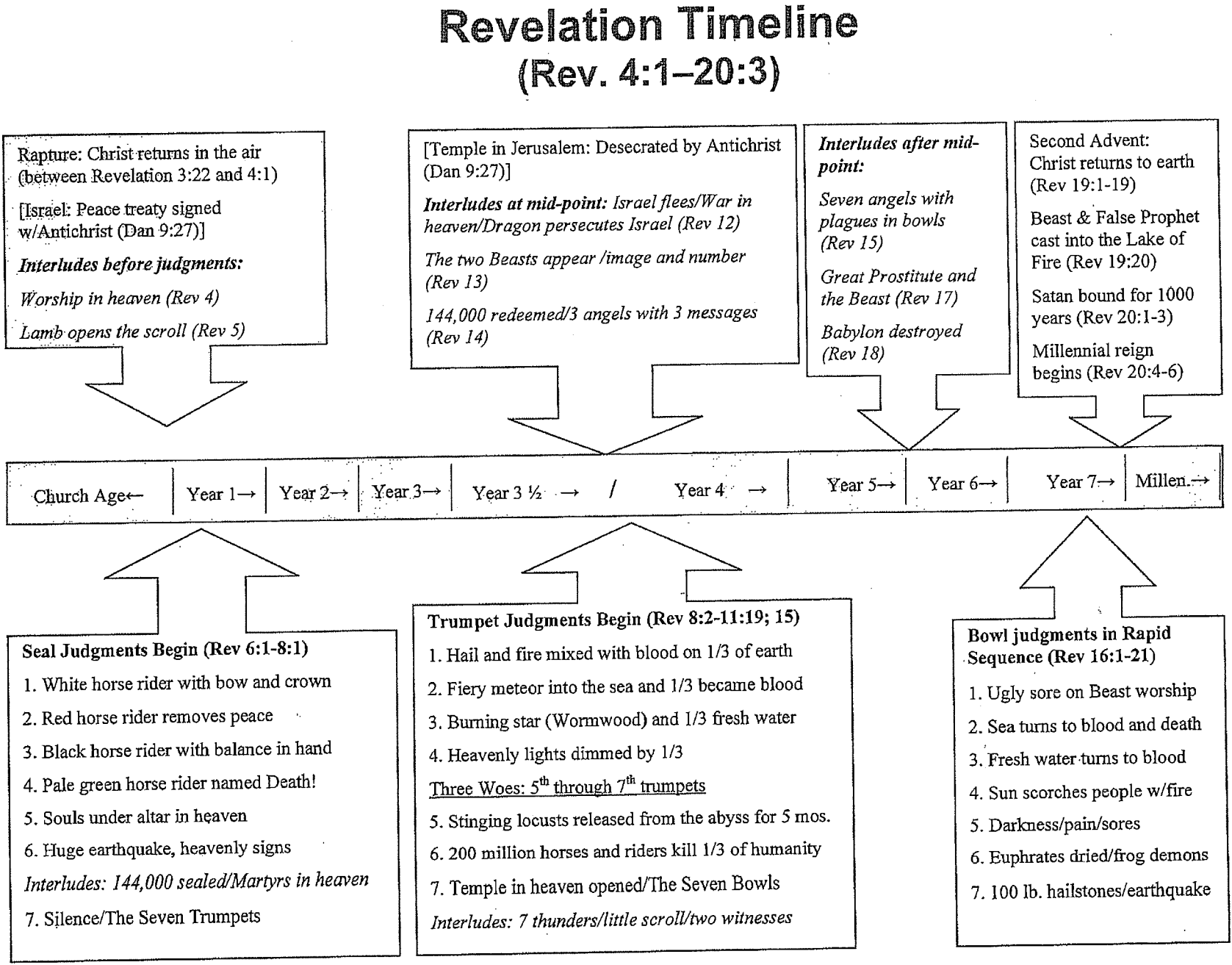


### THE CORRELATION BETWEEN REVELATION, DANIEL, MATTHEW, II THESSALONIANS

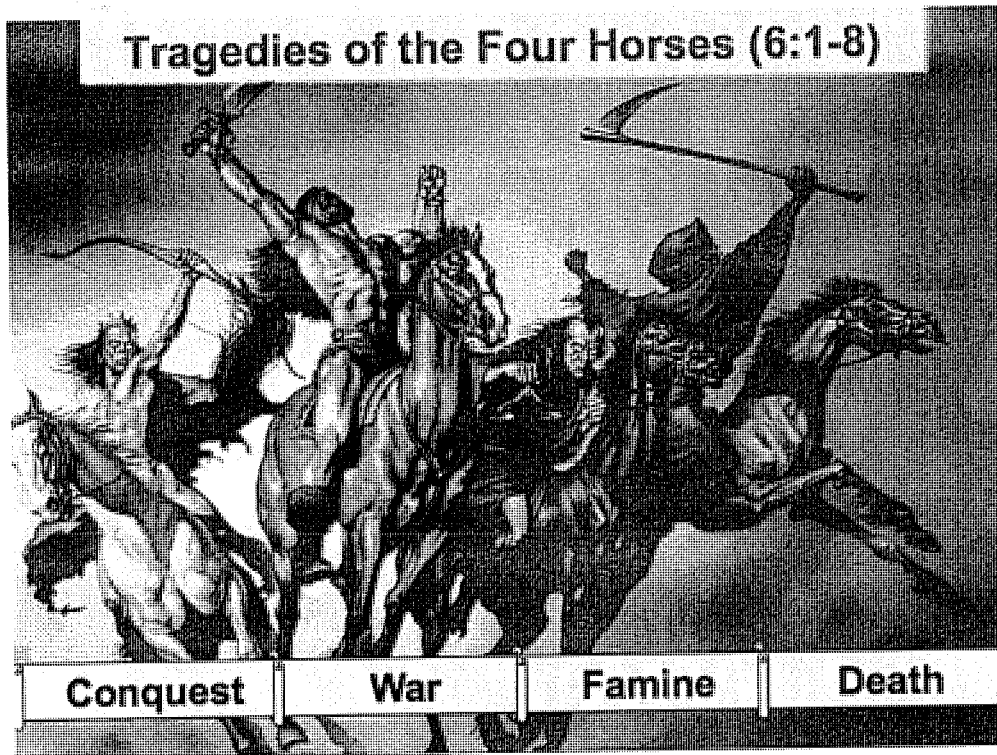


Adapted from Jon Treisven, in "Advanced Studies in the New Testament" by Dr. Rick Griffith, internetseminary.org

## Revelation Timeline (Rev. 4:1-20:6)



- b) (6:1–8:5) Christ opens seven seals to reveal His sovereignty to judge the world and save many during the first half of the seven-year tribulation.



- (1) (6:1-2) Christ opens the first seal (white horse) that allows the Antichrist to conquer the world through his world government and covenant with Israel (cf. Dan. 9:27) to show Christ's sovereignty over him.
- (a) Many believe this horseman is Jesus Christ due to similarities with Christ at the Second Advent (Rev. 19:11-16) and the white color of the horse (1:14; 2:17; 3:4, 5, 18).<sup>5</sup>

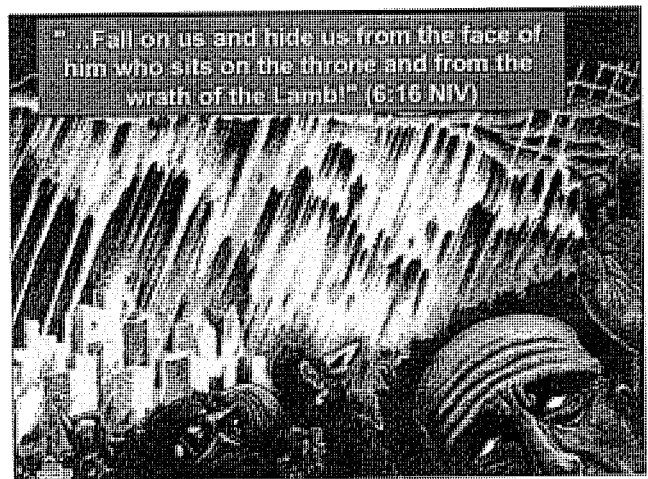
<sup>5</sup> Walter A. Elwell, *Evangelical Commentary on the Bible* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1996), 1209-10; William Hendriksen, *More Than Conquerors* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1944), 94-96; Zane C. Hodges, "The First Horseman of the Apocalypse," *Bibliotheca Sacra* 19 (Oct 1962): 324-34.

- (b) However, other factors reveal this to be the future Antichrist:
- (i) The Lamb breaks the seal to enact this judgment, so the Lamb and the rider must be different persons.
  - (ii) White does not always depict what is holy (Matt. 23:27; Acts 23:3) and thus may indicate that the rider only deceptively seeks to *appear* holy (cf. Matt. 24:5; crowns, 12:3; victories, 11:7; 13:7).
  - (iii) The only thing common to the riders of 6:2 and 19:11-16 is the white color. They differ in many respects, including their:
    - purposes (conquest vs. righteous retribution)
    - equipment (bow vs. sword)
    - names (anonymous vs. “Faithful and True”)
    - fellow riders (none vs. armies of heaven)
    - time (beginning vs. end of the tribulation), and
    - context (association with other evil riders vs. conquering the Antichrist).<sup>6</sup>
    - crown: “The word for *crown* in Revelation 6:2 is *stephanos*, which means “the victor’s crown.” The crown that Jesus Christ wears is *diadema*, “the kingly crown” (Rev. 19:12). Antichrist could never wear the diadem, because it belongs only to the Son of God” (Wiersbe).

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<sup>6</sup> For details on the above points, see Daniel K. K. Wong, “The First Horseman of Revelation 6,” *Bibliotheca Sacra* 153 (April-June 1996): 212-26.

- (2) (6:3-4) The second seal (red horse) brings war to depict how Antichrist controls the world as political leader (cf. Matt. 24:6-7a).
- (3) (6:5-6) The third seal (black horse) allows Antichrist to use famine to control commodity prices to show his global economic control (cf. Matt. 24:7b).
- (4) (6:7-8) The fourth seal (pale horse) affirms that death will come to over one billion people by war, famine, plague, or roaming wild beasts (cf. Matt. 24:9).
- (5) (6:9-11) The fifth seal depicts God's reassurance of martyrs in heaven that He alone is sovereign and they should trust in His plan.
- (6) (6:12-17) The sixth seal reveals that men will fear a glimpse of Sovereign God more than an earthquake leveling mountains and the opening of the sky (cf. Matt. 24:7c)!





- (7) (7:1-17) A parenthesis between the sixth and seventh seals provides hope that God will be merciful even in judgment by saving believing Jews and Gentiles from every nation. (See the chart on “Chronology of Revelation” on page 340 for the concept of various parentheses in the book of Revelation.)
- (a) (7:1-8) The sealing of 144,000 Jews composed of 12,000 from each tribe is described to show God's mercy on Israel even during the Tribulation.

*Many claim that these 144,000 are the church.*

*However, the 144,000 are Jews who will trust Christ since:*

- (i) The text could not be clearer that they are Jews in that it shows exactly which tribe each comes from.
- (ii) “Nowhere else in the Bible do a dozen references to the 12 tribes mean the church.”<sup>7</sup>
- (iii) Much more than 144,000 Christians are sealed to bring forth the message salvation during the church age, so why would it be so incredible that 144,000 of the present 15 million Jews in the world would also have a similar task in the future?
- (iv) This group is contrasted with Gentile believers in the next section.

<b>144,000</b>	<b>Great Multitude</b>
<b>7:1-8</b>	<b>7:9-17</b>
<b>Jews</b>	Gentiles from all nations
<b>Numbered</b>	Cannot be counted
<b>Listed by tribe of Israel</b>	From every nation, tribe, people and language
<b>“seal of God on their foreheads” (7:3-4)</b>	“washed their robes in the blood of the Lamb and made them white” (7:14)
<b>On earth</b>	Standing in heaven

This is not the *total* number of Jews saved in the Tribulation but only those specifically "sealed" (7:3-4). Romans 11:26 teaches us that “all Israel will be saved” at this time. Jews will finally place their faith in Jesus Christ as Messiah after centuries of rejecting him! Isaiah especially highlights Israel’s spiritual restoration throughout his prophecy (see references on p. 371).

*What is the significance of the sealing of these Jews?*

“While we are not told explicitly in Scripture that the 144,000 Jews are God’s special witnesses, and that the Gentile host is saved through their ministry, this appears to be a logical deduction; otherwise, why are they associated in this chapter? The parallel with Matthew 24:14 also indicates that the 144,000 will witness for the Lord during the Tribulation.”<sup>8</sup>

<sup>7</sup> Walvoord, *BKC*, 949.

<sup>8</sup> Warren W. Wiersbe, *The Bible Exposition Commentary* (Wheaton: Victor Books, 1996, c1989), on Rev. 7:1-

## Why No Tribe of Dan?

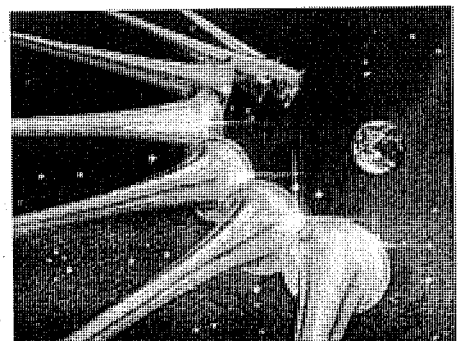
“Much speculation has arisen about why the tribe of Dan is omitted. Joseph and one of his two sons, Manasseh, are listed, but Ephraim, Joseph’s other son, is omitted. Thus if Dan were included, there would have been 13 tribes. According to J.B. Smith, Scripture contains 29 lists of the tribes of Israel in the Old and New Testaments and in no case are more than 12 tribes mentioned (*A Revelation of Jesus Christ*, p. 130). The tribe omitted was usually Levi, from which the priesthood came. Inasmuch as it is normal to have only 12 and not 13 tribes, the omission of Dan is not significant. Perhaps Dan was omitted here because it was one of the first tribes to go into idolatry (Jud. 18:30; cf. 1 Kings 12:28-29). However, Dan is mentioned in Ezekiel 48:2 in the millennial land distribution.

“The most important fact taught here is that God continues to watch over Israel even in the time of Israel’s great distress. There is no justification whatever for spiritualizing either the number or the names of the tribes in this passage, to make them represent the church.”<sup>9</sup>

- (b) (7:9-17) The salvation of Gentiles from every nation indicates God’s merciful fulfillment of the Great Commission during the Tribulation.



- (8) (8:1-5) The seventh seal has no judgment connected with it as it introduces the trumpet judgments in response to the prayer for vindication by the Tribulation martyrs (6:10).



<sup>9</sup> Walvoord, *BKC*, 949.



# Theories of Literary Structures of Revelation

Theories of Literary Structures of Revelation  
H. Wayne House, Chronological and Background Charts of the New Testament, 18

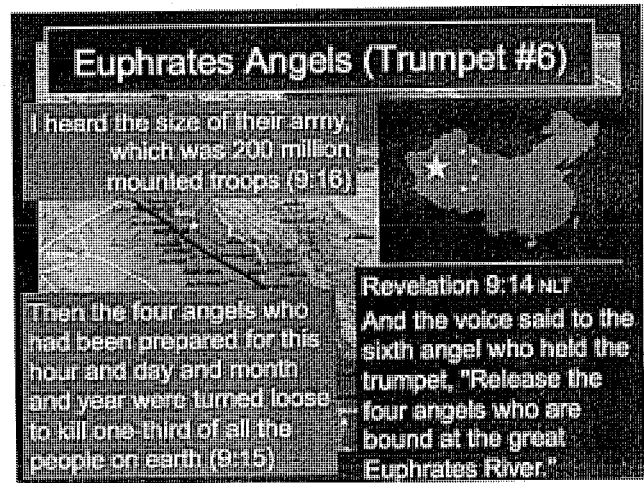
LITERARY CONSTRUCTION: 6:1-17; 8:1-9:21 and 11:15-19; 15:1-16:12 and 16:17-21:27											
	SEALS			TRUMPETS				BOWLS			
	1-6	( )	7	1-6	( )	7	( )	1-6	( )	7	( )
A parenthesis between 6th and 7th judgments' in each series:		7:1-17			10:1-11:14				16:13-16		
A parenthesis between the trumpet judgment and the bowl series:							12:1-14:20				
A parenthesis between the bowl series and the description of the second coming of Jesus											17:1-19:10
SUGGESTED INTERRELATIONSHIPS OF THE SEALS, TRUMPETS, AND BOWLS:											
Judgments are seen as occurring simultaneously, with repetition showing the intensification of the judgments.	<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; align-items: center;"> <div style="text-align: center;">Seals</div> <hr style="width: 100%;"/> <div style="text-align: center;">Trumpets</div> <hr style="width: 100%;"/> <div style="text-align: center;">Bowls</div> <hr style="width: 100%;"/> </div>										
This consecutive arrangement envisions a total of twenty-one judgments.	<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; align-items: center;"> <div style="text-align: center;">Seals</div> <div style="text-align: center;">•</div> <div style="text-align: center;">Trumpets</div> <div style="text-align: center;">•</div> <div style="text-align: center;">Bowls</div> </div> <hr style="width: 100%;"/>										
This telescopic arrangement has the seventh seal introducing the trumpet series and being explained by it, and the seventh trumpet introduces the bowl series and is explained by it. So, the seven bowls equal the seventh trumpet and the seven trumpets are the seventh seal.	<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; align-items: center;"> <div style="text-align: center;">             1 2 3 4 5 6 Seals           </div> <div style="text-align: center;"> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; margin: 0 10px;">             7th Seal              1 2 3 4 5 6 Trumpets           </div> </div> <div style="text-align: center;"> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; margin: 0 10px;">             7th Trumpet              1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Bowls           </div> </div> </div>										

Adapted from Robert G. Gromacki, *New Testament Survey* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1974), by permission.  
Source: House, 18

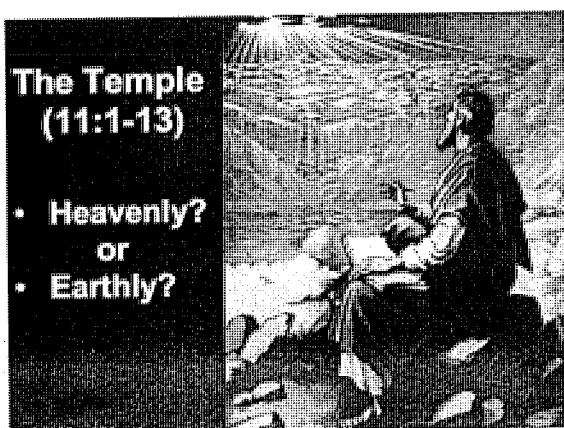
2. (8:6–19:10) The second half of the Tribulation (the Great Tribulation) is recorded in trumpet and bowl judgments with supplementary information to demonstrate Christ's sovereignty over the entire earth, its religions, and its political powers.
  - a) (8:6–11:19) Angels sound seven trumpets of judgment to reveal Christ's sovereign authority to judge the world.
    - (1) (8:6-7) The first trumpet burns up one third of the earth's vegetation by hail and fire.
    - (2) (8:8-9) The second trumpet destroys one third of the sea creatures and ships by a huge fiery object which turns one third of the saltwater seas into blood.
    - (3) (8:10-11) The third trumpet kills many people through the pollution of one third of the fresh water caused by the falling of Wormwood, a blazing star.
    - (4) (8:12) The fourth trumpet causes partial darkness from the striking of a third of the sun, moon, and stars.
    - (5) (8:13) An eagle warns of the seriousness of the last three trumpet blasts by calling them woes as they affect man directly (in contrast to the first four trumpets that destroy man's resources).
    - (6) (9:1-12) The fifth trumpet (woe #1) releases terrible, supernatural locust-like creatures to torment only non-Christians for five months.

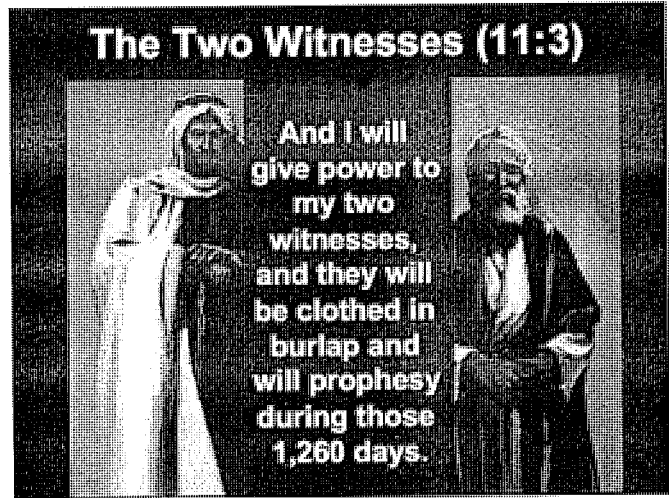


- (7) (9:13-21) The sixth trumpet (woe #2) releases terrible, supernatural horse-and-rider creatures from the Euphrates that empower 200 million soldiers to slay one third of Earth, yet the people still living cling to idols rather than repent.



- (8) (10:1–11:14) A parenthesis between the sixth and seventh trumpets shows Tribulation believers will experience God's protection while unbelievers receive His wrath.
- (a) (Ch. 10) An angel reveals to John undisclosed judgments and has him eat a little scroll to signify the sweetness of God's Word to believers protected from judgment and its bitterness to unbelievers experiencing His wrath.
- (b) (11:1-14) Two witnesses will prophesy and destroy their enemies for three and a half years, be martyred and resurrected before their enemies, and then 7000 enemies will die in an earthquake (see the 2-page study in the introduction on pages 329-330).





MONDAY, MARCH 19, 2012

NEW STRAITS TIMES | PAGE 13

PRIME NEWS

# 10,000 to join 'March to Jerusalem'

### UNITED: Gathering at Stadium Malawati to show solidarity with Palestinians

**MICHAEL MURTY**  
KUALA LUMPUR  
michaelmurry@net.com.my

ABOUT 10,000 people are expected to attend Malaysia's edition of the Global March to Jerusalem (MyGMJ), a worldwide movement aiming to free Jerusalem and Palestine without war, at Stadium Malawati in Shah Alam on March 30.

The gathering will be held in conjunction with other global marches worldwide and will see participants from Palestine and Israel's neighbouring countries march as close as they can to

Jerusalem in a bid to free the city and its people as well as liberate Palestine.

Other supporting countries will also hold events in their cities. Malaysia is one of 131 countries supporting the movement.

More than 600 Malaysians are expected to participate in the gathering.

MyGMJ chairman Dr Mohd Tahir Rahman said the gathering was in line to calls for an end to policies affecting the people of Jerusalem.

Tahir said the movement was non-violent and had garnered support from various religious leaders and international figures.



**STOP THE OPPRESSION**

A flash mob acting out scenes depicting the plight of the Palestinians at Dataran DBKL in Jalan Raja Laut, Kuala Lumpur, yesterday. About 120 students from Taylor's University, Universiti Islam Antarabangsa and other institutions of higher learning participated. Pic by Salhani Ibrahim

- (9) (11:15-19) The seventh trumpet (woe #3) has no specific judgment connected with it as it introduces the seven bowl judgments.
- b) (Rev. 12–14) A parenthesis between the trumpet and bowl judgments provides additional information about Satan's activity and previews the final judgments to assure believers of their triumph and of the unbelievers' judgment.
- (1) (Rev. 12–13) Extra teaching on Satan and his activity to thwart God in the Tribulation gives insight into Israel's persecution and what believers at that time should do.
- (a) (Ch. 12) Satan has long persecuted Israel and Christ.
- (i) (12:1-2) Israel, in the sign of a pregnant woman, travails to bring Jesus Christ into the world as a man.

*Is this woman Mary since she was the mother of Jesus?  
No.*



*Many claim that this woman signifies the church.<sup>10</sup>*

*Mounce, though a premillennial scholar, identifies the woman as “the messianic community, the ideal Israel ... the church (Rev. 12:17). The people of God are one throughout all redemptive history.”*

*However, the text clearly shows the woman to be Israel:*

- (a) The woman brings forth Christ, which Israel did (whereas the Church did not bring forth Christ).
- (b) “The woman symbolized Israel, as indicated by Genesis 37:9-11, where the sun and the moon referred to Jacob and Rachel, Joseph’s parents.
- (c) “The stars in the woman’s crown clearly related to the 12 sons of Jacob and identified the woman as Israel fulfilling the Abrahamic Covenant. J.B. Smith cites Isaiah 60:1-3, 20 as proof that the sun refers to Israel’s future glory (*A Revelation of Jesus Christ*, p. 182).”<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Robert L. Mounce, *The Book of Revelation*, 236.

<sup>11</sup> Walvoord, *BKC*, emphasis mine.



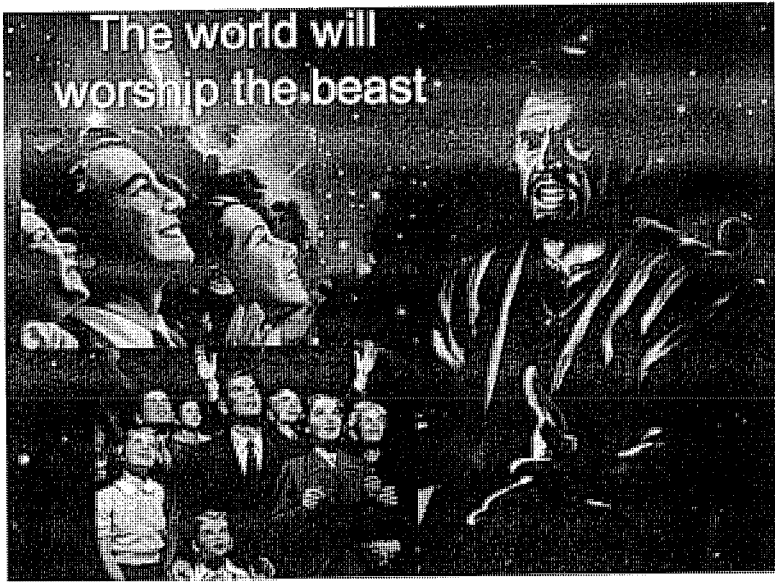


(b) (Ch. 13) Satan's agents (the Antichrist and False Prophet) are identified to enable readers of the Tribulation Period to resist them.

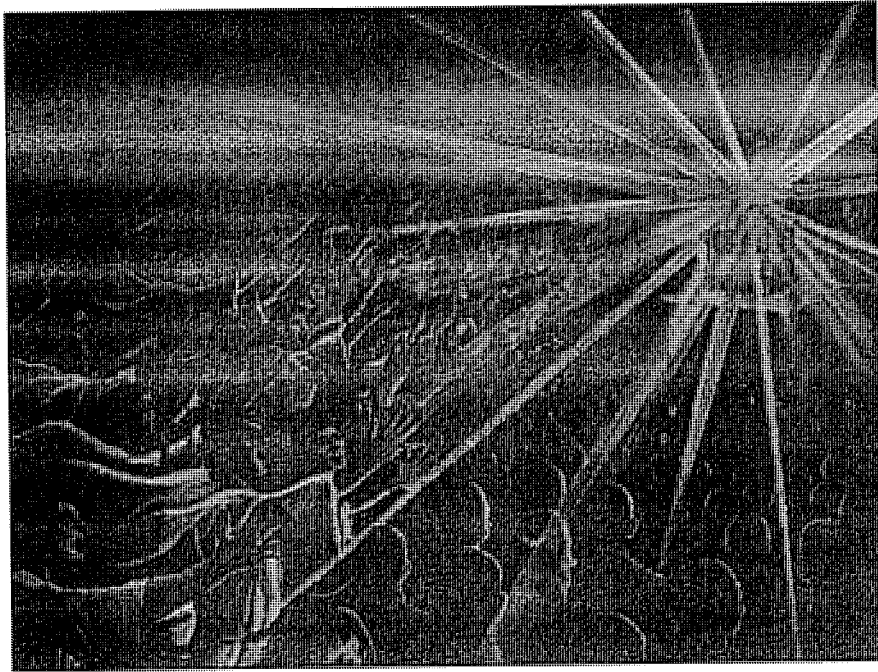
(i) (13:1-10) Antichrist, represented by the beast out of the sea, gains a worldwide following by unbelievers through satanic power and persecutes Christians.

(ii) (13:11-18) The False Prophet, represented by the beast out of the earth, glorifies the Antichrist and persecutes Christians who lack the mark of the Antichrist.





Who is the Beast?



(2) (Rev. 14) The triumph of 144,000 Jews and Antichrist's judgment (with his system) preview the judgments at the end of the Tribulation in chapters 15–17.

(a) (14:1-5) The triumph of the 144,000 Jews who escape martyrdom in the Tribulation anticipates Christ's triumph at His Second Coming.

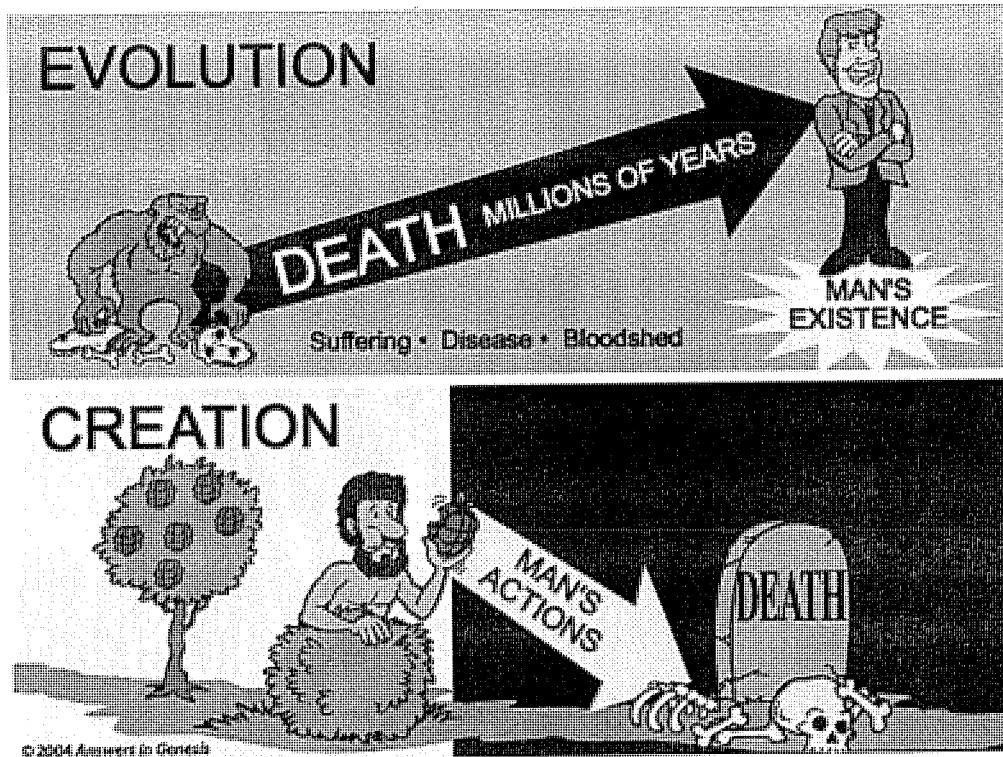
(b) (14:6-13) Three angels shout warnings to fear God by rejecting the mark of Antichrist since his system is doomed to encourage believers still living to wait patiently and faithfully for Christ's return.

### Revelation 14:6-7

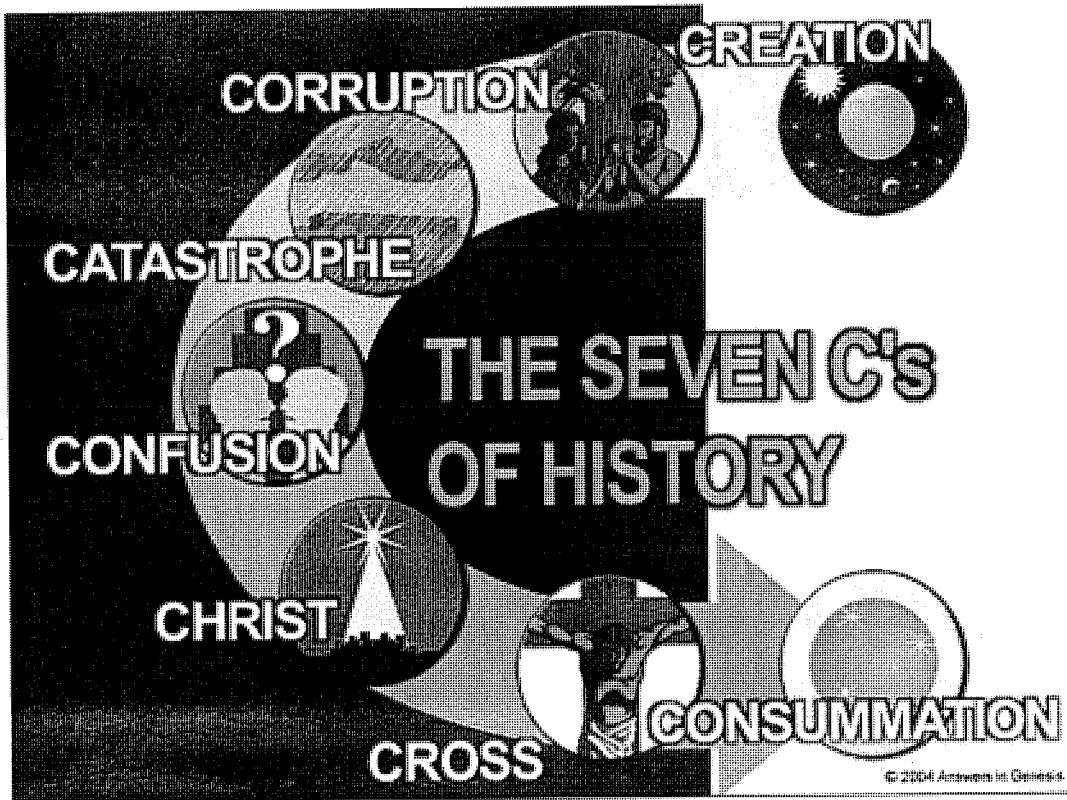
**<sup>6</sup>And I saw another angel flying in mid-heaven, having an eternal gospel to preach to those who live on the earth, and to every nation and tribe and tongue and people;**

**<sup>7</sup>and he said with a loud voice, "Fear God, and give Him glory, because the hour of His judgment has come; worship Him who made the heaven and the earth and sea and springs of waters."**

Satan is seeking to destroy belief today in Christ as creator through the lie of evolution...



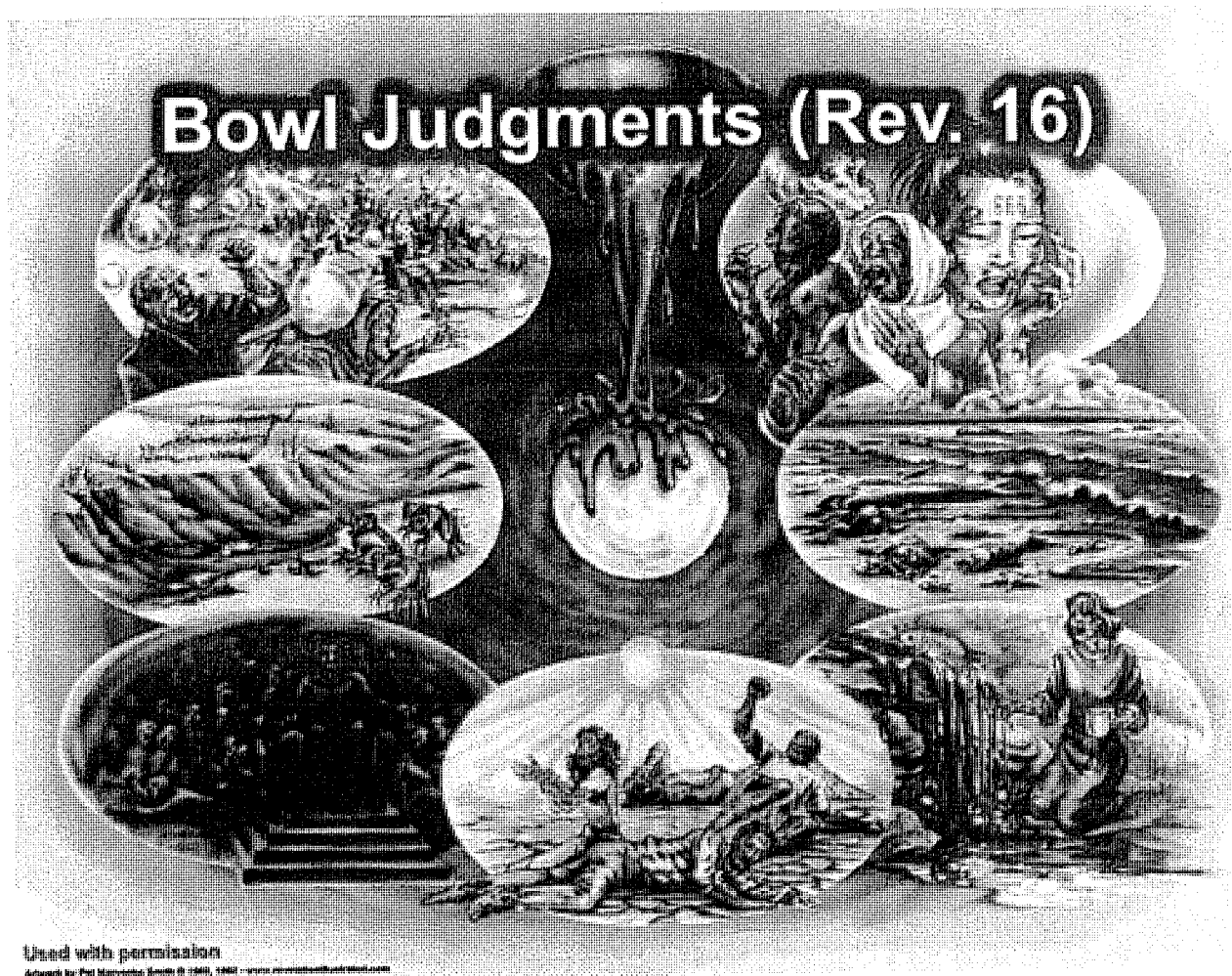
If one destroys the foundation in creation, then he also destroys the final creation where the first creation finds its consummation.



- (c) (14:14-20) The final judgment of unbelievers by Christ, with the assistance of three angels, is previewed through the figure of grapes trodden in a winepress.



- c) (Rev. 15–16) Angels prepare and pour out seven bowls of judgment to reveal Christ's sovereign authority to judge the world just before His Return.
- (1) (Ch. 15) Preparation for the bowl judgments of chapter 16 further heightens the reader's expectation for the climactic bowl judgments that immediately precede Christ's Return.



- (2) (Ch. 16) Angels pour out seven bowls of judgment to reveal Christ's sovereign authority to judge the world just before His Return.

- (a) (16:1-2) The first bowl afflicts ugly, painful sores on Antichrist's followers.

- (b) (16:3) The second bowl kills salt water marine life by turning seas to blood.
- (c) (16:4-7) The third bowl kills all fresh water marine life by turning all rivers and springs into blood.
- (d) (16:8-9) The fourth bowl burns unrepentant people with the sun's fire.
- (e) (16:10-11) The fifth bowl plunges the Antichrist's kingdom into darkness while the sores and burns continue, but they still refuse to repent.
- (f) (16:12-16) The sixth bowl dries up the Euphrates for the crossing of the Oriental armies for war against other nations at Armageddon, but Satan's purpose will be to gather them to fight Christ.

**What happens when the normal use of language is not followed?**

**100 commentaries**

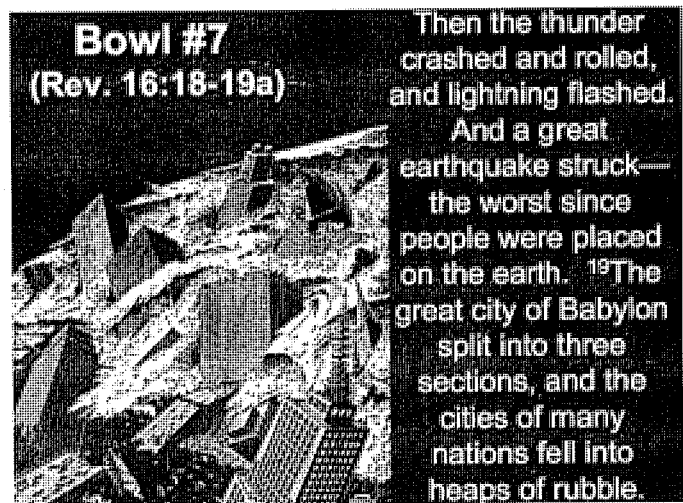
**57 interpretations!**

**Revelation 16:12**  
The sixth angel poured out his bowl on the great river Euphrates, and its water was dried up to prepare the way for the kings from the East.

Irwin, Frank, and Stewart  
© 1997, 2002, 2008, 4938  
Standard  
World Wide Web: [www.100commentaries.com](http://www.100commentaries.com)



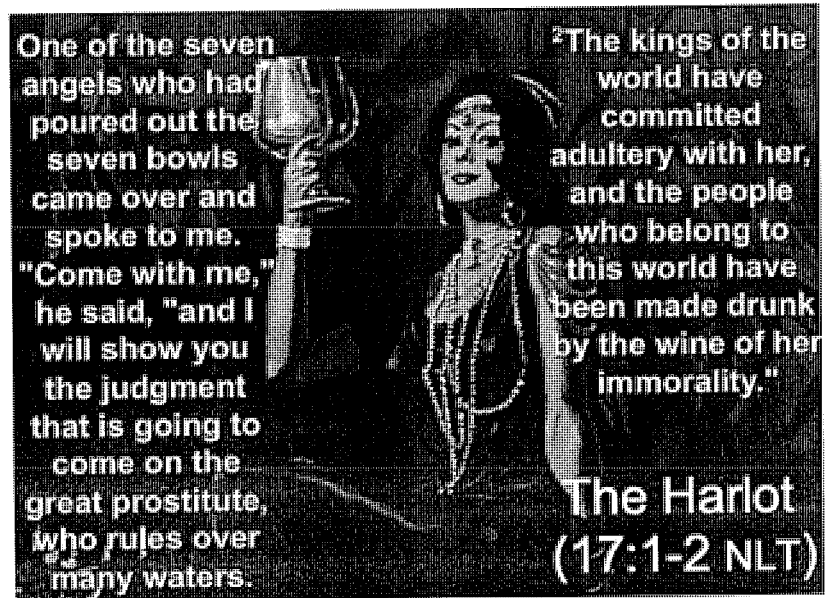
- (g) (16:17-21) The seventh bowl produces both an earthquake that levels mountains and islands, and one hundred pound hailstones.



This ends the Tribulation cycle of 21 judgments and immediately precedes the return of Christ. What follows in chapters 17–18 is parenthetical with a focus on Mystery Babylon.



- d) (17:1–19:10) The fall of the world system (or USA? See pages 409-413) and the responses of remorse on earth and rejoicing in heaven encourage readers that this “Babylon” will be removed before Christ establishes His own kingdom.



- (1) (17:1–18:8) The fall of the religious and commercial world system is detailed to encourage readers that it will be gone before Christ installs His own kingdom.
- (a) (Ch. 17) The fall of the religious world system, symbolized by the Harlot, Babylon the Great, comes after Antichrist is worshiped in the middle of the Tribulation.
- (i) (17:1-6) The fall of the religious world order is symbolized by a prostitute on a beast with seven heads and ten horns who adulterates with false doctrine and is named the Great Harlot, Babylon the Great.
- (ii) (17:7-18) The symbols represent the apostate world church and a ten nation confederacy headed by Antichrist, who replaces this church with self-worship in the middle of the Tribulation (cf. Dan. 9:27).
- (b) (18:1-8) The fall of the world's commercial system demonstrates Christ's superiority over this system and the need for it to be removed before He sets up His kingdom.

*Continued on page 414 after the Revelation 17–18 excursus ...*

## What is the Babylon of Revelation 17–18?

### *An Evaluation of Various Views*

#### Introduction

- A. The city of Babylon is the first city noted in Scripture, having been built by Nimrod (Gen. 10:10). It is also the origin of false teaching about God as Nimrod invented mother and son worship (later adopted by Egyptian and other religions, including Catholicism). After the city achieved prominence under King Nebuchadnezzar who destroyed Jerusalem (605-586 BC), Babylon was conquered by Persia in 539 BC and has lain virtually desolate for centuries.
- B. One key issue is whether the 539 BC fall of the city fulfilled prophecies that the city would never again be inhabited (Isa. 13:20; cf. Jer. 50:23, 39-40; 51:37).<sup>12</sup> This is important because if the prophecy is yet unfulfilled, then Babylon will still be rebuilt and *then* destroyed entirely.
- C. With this brief background, Revelation 17–18 describes in detail the destruction of a world-powerful entity under the image of a harlot riding a beast. Often this has been called “End Times Babylon” by seeing the adjective “Mystery” (17:5) as part of the title. However, a better translation is: “This mysterious title was found on her head: BABYLON...”<sup>13</sup> In the broadest sense this entity has three main dimensions: political, economic, and religious.
- D. Major Players of Revelation 17–18
  1. The Prostitute called Babylon (17:1-6)
  2. The Waters (17:1, 15)
  3. The Beast (17:3a, 7-8, 11)
  4. The 7 Heads (17:3b, 7)
  5. The 10 Horns (17:3c, 7, 12-13, 16)
  6. The 7 Hills (17:9)
  7. The 7 Kings (17:10)
  8. The Great City reigning over the earth (17:18)

---

<sup>12</sup> Isaiah and Jeremiah both note that Babylon was to be destroyed literally, suddenly, and completely. Isaiah says: “And Babylon, the glory of kingdoms, the beauty of the Chaldeans’ pride, shall be as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah. It shall never be inhabited, neither shall it be dwelt in from generation to generation: neither shall the Arabian pitch tent there; neither shall shepherds make their flocks to lie down there. But wild beasts of the desert shall lie there...” (Isa. 13:19-21). And Jeremiah says: “How is Babylon become a desolation among the nations!” (50:23); “Therefore the wild beasts of the desert with the wolves shall dwell there, and the ostriches shall dwell therein; and it shall no more be inhabited for ever; neither shall it be dwelt in from generation to generation. As when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah and the neighbor cities thereof, saith Jehovah, so shall no man dwell there, neither shall any son of man sojourn therein” (50:39, 40); “And Babylon shall become heaps, a dwelling-place for jackals, an astonishment, and a hissing, without inhabitant” (51:37). These authors argue that Babylon has yet to be rebuilt and destroyed: Richard Hayes McCartney, *The City of the Antichrist: Babylon in Chaldea* (New York: Revell, 1917); Charles Dyer, *The Rise of Babylon* (Wheaton: Tyndale, 1991). They point out that Babylon has never been without inhabitants so that the prophecy yet remains unfulfilled. In fact, in 331 Babylon received Alexander the Great with open arms. Though prophesied that Babylon’s stones will never be used to rebuild other Arab cities, many Arab villages and towns have been built from Babylonian stone, such as Seleucia, Ctesiphon, Al Modain, and Kufa (G. H. Pember, *The Antichrist, Babylon, and the Coming of the Kingdom* [London: Hodder and Stoughton, 2d. ed., 1888]).

<sup>13</sup> NIV Study Bible text note on 17:5.

### Identical Symbols of Rev. 17–18

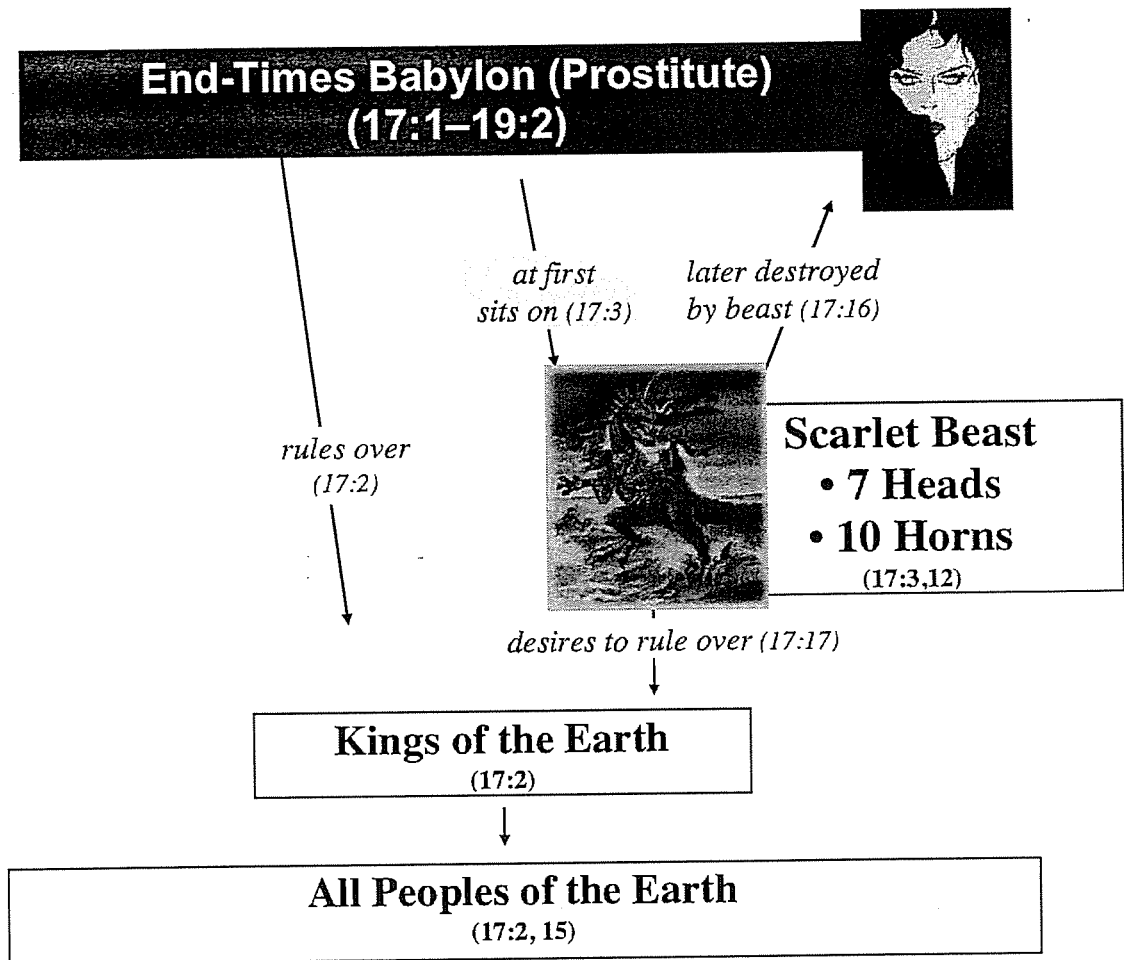
<b>Prostitute</b> (17:1)	=	<b>Great City</b> (17:18)
<b>Beast</b> (17:3a)	=	<b>8<sup>th</sup> King</b> (17:11)
<b>7 Heads</b> (17:7)	=	<b>7 Hills (17:9)</b> <b>7 Kings (17:10)</b>
<b>10 Horns</b> (17:3c, 7, 16)	=	<b>10 Kings</b> (17:12-13)

E. Characteristics

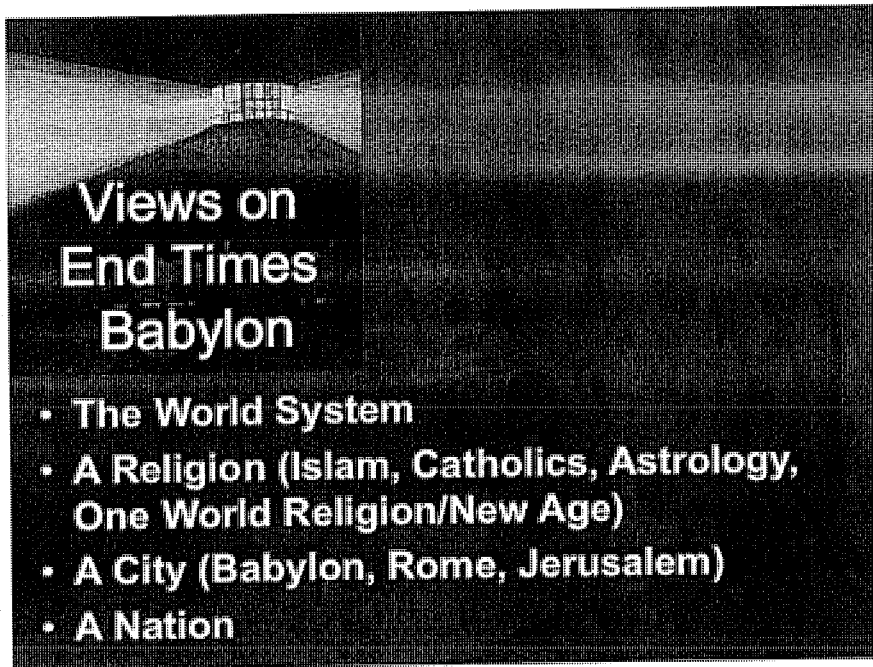
1. She is guilty of religious apostasy or idolatry that contaminates the world since the image of a prostitute is used of her (17:1a, 5; cf. 14:8). The harlot in Scripture sometimes depicts one who has strayed from her religious moorings in a “spiritual adultery” (e.g., Hosea 4:10-12). However, it also depicts the idolatry of nations that had never trusted in the Lord in the first place, such as Nineveh (Nah. 3:1, 4), Tyre (Isa. 23:15-17), and Babylon (Jer. 23:8-9).
  - a) Her blasphemy indicates her heretical stance (17:3).
  - b) She is filled with abominations (17:4-5).
  - c) Her spiritual association stems from the city of Babylon (17:5), which was the original center of false worship.
  
2. She has a world influence politically shown in her sitting on many waters (17:1b), which is a figure for many “peoples, multitudes, nations, and languages” (17:15), indicating an ecumenical nature. The breadth of her authority is over both the rulers and common people in the earth (17:2).

<b>Control of the World Political System:</b>		
<u>7 Heads</u>	<u>10 Kings</u>	<u>Beast (8<sup>th</sup> King)</u>
Roman	Worldwide	Worldwide
Consecutive	Simultaneous	Controls 10 Kings
Past	Future	Future
17:9-11	17:12	17:13

3. She initially controls the Antichrist since she rides the beast (17:3). The beast is a world ruler called the Antichrist (cf. Rev. 13:1-10) who himself controls two political entities: one comprised of seven nations and another of ten countries (17:3, 9, 12).



4. She is extremely wealthy seen in her precious gems, clothes, metals (17:4) and numerous other products (18:3, 11-16, 23).
5. She persecutes the people of God (17:6; 18:24).
6. She associates with Rome in that she “sits” on seven hills (17:9). Given that Rome is known from ancient times as a city built upon seven hills, this confirms that the Babylon of Revelation 17-18 has a link with Rome, the kingdom “that is” in power during John’s time of writing (17:10).
7. She will be completely destroyed by the Antichrist and his ten-nation confederacy (17:16a) by fire (17:16b; 18:8) in only one hour (18:10, 17, 19).



### **The Identity of End Times Babylon**

#### **A. World System (Political, Economic, and Religious)**

##### **1. Support**

- a) The worldwide influence of End Times Babylon could indicate that this entity is the world system itself that is organized against God (17:2).
- b) All of the present kingdoms of the world must be removed before Christ sets up His own kingdom (20:1-6).

##### **2. Problems**

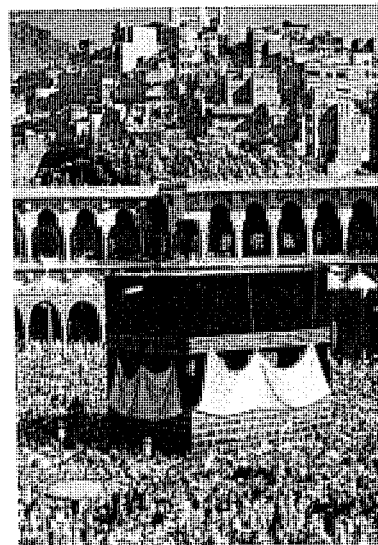
- a) Reference to End Times Babylon as a city (17:18; 18:21) which influences Rome (17:9) refers to an entity that is smaller than the world system as a whole.
- b) The destruction of End Times Babylon will be lamented by unbelieving political rulers (18:9-10), businessmen (18:11-16), and sailors (18:17-19). Since these mourners would be part of the world system themselves, they wouldn't be able to lament the destruction of the world system from afar.

## B. Religions

1. Islam<sup>14</sup>

## a) Support

- (1) Islam has been a great persecutor of the church (17:6).
- (2) Immorality is prevalent in Islam in respect to its polygamy and rape.
- (3) Islam has recently become a wealthy religion due to the vast Mid-East oil reserves and control of OPEC.



## b) Problems

- (1) Though some Mid-East sheiks are vastly affluent, Muslims in general are not wealthy (17:4).
- (2) Immorality within Islam seems to not be any more common than in other institutions and religions.
- (3) While Islam through its association with OPEC has increased say in the world, these entities are not presently controlling a ten-nation confederacy (beast) or Rome.

2. Roman Catholicism<sup>15</sup>

## a) Support

- (1) Babylon was the source of false worship. In fact, much of Catholicism has come from Babylon—mother and son worship in particular.<sup>16</sup> Add to this parallels in obelisks, relics, pilgrimages, indulgences, purgatory, pontiffs, celibate priests, transubstantiation, and both the Easter and Winter Festival.
- (2) Rome, with its seven hills, is the center of Catholicism (17:9).



## b) Problems

- (1) Even though the RCC derives many of its teachings from Babylonian mystery religion, this does not equate the two entities.
- (2) The seven-hilled city and End Times Babylon are not the same entity since the woman rides the beast with these seven heads/hills (17:3, 7).

<sup>14</sup> James M. McKeever, "Who is End Times Babylon?" END 151 (April 1991): 1-11 declares that a Muslim-OPEC partnership is in view; Ramon Bennett, *Philistine: The Great Deception* (Jerusalem: Arm of Salvation, 1995) declares that Islam is the greatest threat in the world today.

<sup>15</sup> Most Reformers saw Catholics as End Times Babylon (e.g., John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, IV, 2:12); Ralph Woodrow, *Babylon Mystery Religion* (Riverside, CA: Woodrow Evan. Assoc., Inc., 1966, 1981), 7, 12.

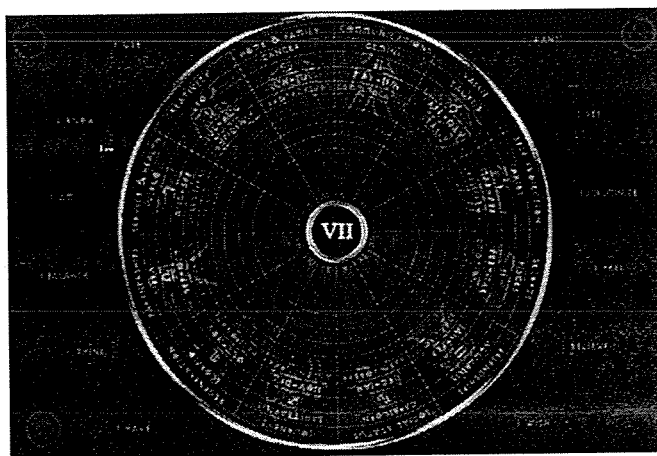
<sup>16</sup> See Alexander Hislop, *The Two Babylons*.

- (3) Italy has one of the weakest currencies in the world today, so it seems unlikely that the Vatican will achieve the economic envy of the planet.
- (4) While Catholicism is wealthy, it is overall in decline.

### 3. Astrology<sup>17</sup>

#### a) Support

- (1) The prominence of worshipping the stars is well known as horoscopes appear in every major newspaper and increasingly on the Internet.
- (2) Ancient Babylon was known for its emphases on astronomy and astrology, so the association with End Times Babylon would be consistent.
- (3) End Times Babylon is a home for demons (18:2), which describes the satanic associations of astrology.



#### b) Problems

- (1) It seems unlikely that politicians, merchants and sailors would lament the demise of astrology (18:9-20).
- (2) “Babylon” being a home for demons (18:2) and destroyed by fire (17:16; 18:8) better indicates a physical location more than a religion or philosophy.
- (3) No musicians, businessmen, or marriages better indicates a place (18:21-24).

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<sup>17</sup> Hal Lindsey, *The Late Great Planet Earth* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1970; reprint, Bantam, 1973), 103-23.

## 4. One-World Religion

a) Apostate Church Centered in Rome<sup>18</sup>

## (1) Support

- (a) End Times Babylon is a city with great influence (17:18; 18:18, 21). Rome has had this kind of influence both then and now through the RCC.
- (b) The harlot has a place of authority over “peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues” (17:15), so she rules the entire world beyond the bounds of the Roman Empire politically. This could be said of the RCC and apostate church.
- (c) The association with the seven hills (17:9) is Roman, but the ten nation Roman confederacy destroys End Times Babylon (17:12), thus showing that they are not one and the same.
- (d) Rome could be destroyed in an hour (18:10, 19).
- (e) The Apostate Church has absorbed many demonic influences (18:2).

## (2) Problems

- (a) The Apostate Church does not have the organized wealth characteristic of this Babylon (18:9, 11-13).
- (b) End Times Babylon is a limited geographical entity that has a worldwide influence, seen in its quick destruction (18:10, 19), marriages (18:23), and the fact that people will see its destruction from afar (18:9).

b) World Council of Churches<sup>19</sup>

## (1) Support

- (a) The WCC became an entity to unite various religious systems in 1948.
- (b) This view reflects the compromise of truth that is characteristic of the entity being deemed to be "Babylon" (17:5).

## (2) Problems

- (a) The WCC influence increasingly decreases rather than increases.
- (b) End Times Babylon is repeatedly referred to as a city (17:18; 18:18, 21).

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<sup>18</sup> Paul Benware, *Understanding End Times Prophecy: A Comprehensive Approach* 2d ed. (Chicago: Moody, 1995, 2006), 309. John Walvoord sees this as likely “a world religion which could conceivably embrace all branches of Christianity—Roman, Greek Orthodox, and Protestant—as well as non-Christian religions” (“Revival of Rome,” *Bibliotheca Sacra* 126 [October-December 1969]: 325; “Revelation,” *Bible Knowledge Commentary* [Wheaton: SP Publication, 1983], 17:6 notes). An adaptation of this view is to see this one world apostate church as the sum of the RCC (Roman Catholic Church) and the WCC (World Council of Churches).

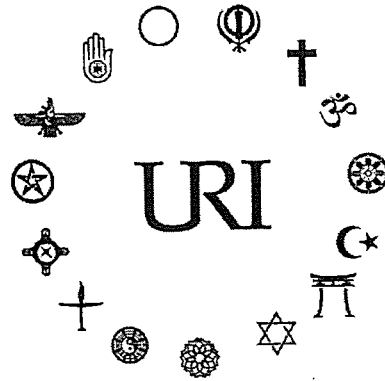
<sup>19</sup> Rene Pache, “The Ecumenical Movement, Part 4: Moving Toward the Super-Church,” *Bibliotheca Sacra* 108 (April-June 1951): 201.



C. United Religions Organization (including New Age Movement)<sup>20</sup>

## 1. Support

- a) The diverse elements of "Babylon" (17:1, 15) also make up the UR.
- b) The UR includes members of every religion but evangelical Christians.



## 2. Problems

- a) The UR has yet to become a great influence in the world.
- b) End Times Babylon is often called a city (17:18; 18:18, 21).

## D. Cities

1. Babylon, Iraq<sup>21</sup>

## a) Support

- (1) The natural reading of "Babylon" is to take it at face value, meaning the city of Babylon.
- (2) Although Babylon today is still largely in ruins, it has been in a process of rebuilding by Saddam Hussein since the mid-1980s.
- (3) John specifically said that End Times Babylon is a city (Rev. 17:18).

<sup>20</sup> Tim LaHaye and Jerry B. Jenkins, *Are Living in the End Times?* (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale, 1999), 177-78; W. B. Howard, *Endtime* 8 (May/June 1998): 12-14.

<sup>21</sup> W. Glyn Evans, "Will Babylon Be Restored?" 2 Parts. *Bibliotheca Sacra* 107 (July-September 1950): 335-42 and (October-December 1950): 481-87; Robert L. Thomas, *Revelation 8-22: An Exegetical Commentary* (Chicago: Moody, 1995), 279, 283, 288-89; Charles Dyer and Angela Elwell Hunt, *The Rise of Babylon: Sign of the End Times* (Wheaton: Tyndale, 1991), 158, 209-210. Arguing against the literal Babylon, Iraq is Homer Heater, Jr., "Do the Prophets Teach that Babylonia Will Be Built in the Eschaton?" *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 41 (March 1998): 23-43.

## b) Problems

- (1) John referred to this Babylon as a "Mystery," which probably implies that the literal city of Babylon is not meant.
- (2) It would be incredible, if not impossible, for even a rebuilt city of Babylon to attain the worldwide wealth and prominence to be the End Times Babylon. Present-day Iraq is virtually economically bankrupt and unlikely to rebuild Babylon to be more than just a tourist site.
- (3) The city referred to in Revelation 17:18 is indeed a city, but this city seems to be Rome more than Babylon: "The woman you saw is the great city that rules over the kings of the earth." Since Rome ruled the Roman Empire when John wrote this book, it is the more likely candidate than Babylon.

2. Babylon, Iraq in Revelation 18 but Catholicism (papal Rome) in Revelation 17.<sup>22</sup>

## a) Support

- (1) In Revelation 17 Babylon is a woman; in chapter 18 she is a city.
- (2) In Revelation 17 she is End Times Babylon; in Rev. 18 she is simply a city.
- (3) In chapter 17 Babylon is destroyed by the ten kings, probably in the middle of the Tribulation period; in chapter 18 these same kings lament over the destruction of literal Babylon, which is destroyed at the end of the Tribulation period, or when the Lord appears.
- (4) In chapter 17 Babylon is drunk with the blood of "saints and martyrs of Jesus" (17:6). In chapter 18 Babylon is drunk with the blood of the prophets and saints and all them that were slain upon the earth (18:24). The inclusiveness of Babylon's drunkenness indicates she is a different thing than End Times Babylon in chapter 17. There we have papal Rome; here we have the total world of evil wrapped up in one city.
- (5) The destruction of the city is a sudden thing. The phrase "in one hour" occurs several times in Revelation 18. This destruction is like that of Sodom and Gomorrah. There is some evidence that "End Times Babylon" (chapter 17) is destroyed over some length of time. But literal Babylon "in one hour."
- (6) Jeremiah's commands to "flee her" (Jer. 50:8; 51:6, 9) were not directed to the people of old Babylon, since many of them did not obey (e.g., Daniel). It is directed, therefore, to the people of the end-time.
- (7) Some of the expressions adopted by John in Revelation 18 are taken from the description of old Babylon by Isaiah and Jeremiah. Why? Because they all refer to the same literal, restored Babylon of the end-time.
- (8) The particular sin of Babylon in chapter 17 is spiritual fornication; of Babylon in chapter 18, evil commercialism. This agrees with Zechariah 5:8 where wickedness is personified as a woman.

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<sup>22</sup> Pember cites the first four arguments; the remaining arguments are from William R. Newell, *The Revelation* (Chicago: Scripture Press, 1935).

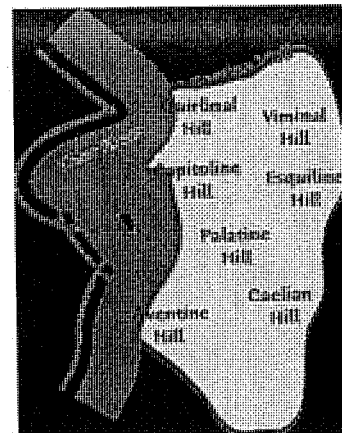
## b) Problems

- (1) It is not true that in Revelation 17 Babylon is only a woman and in chapter 18 she is a city, for "the woman that you saw is the great city..." (17:18). The two images are thus interchangeable. Also, the Babylon of chapter 18 is called a prostitute again later in 19:2.
- (2) As noted in the introduction, the word "mystery" is likely not part of the title at all. Since elsewhere the title is simply "Babylon" (18:2, 10, 21) so the entity probably does not have "mystery" in the title at all.
- (3) The kings who lament Babylon's destruction (18:9) are not said to be the same kings as those comprising the ten horns (17:7). Also, given that this entire account (Rev. 17–18) appears after the bowl judgments at the end of the Tribulation (Rev. 16), the chronology of the book of Revelation shows End Times Babylon to be destroyed at the end of the Tribulation too.
- (4) The supposed contrasts between whom Babylon persecuted in the two chapters are forced. In both chapters she tormented saints (17:6; 18:20, 24). That prophets and apostles are noted in 18:20, 24 whereas martyrs ("those who bore testimony" NIV) are noted in 17:6 is not a contrast as much as inclusive of both.
- (5) Those teaching this combined papal/Iraq view do not give any support that "End Times Babylon" (deemed papal Rome of Rev. 17) is not sudden. In fact, the only time reference in chapter 17 is the same period as chapter 18. The time in which the beast shares power with the ten-nation confederacy is also "one hour" (17:12), which occurs just prior to the return of Christ (17:14; 19:19), probably after the hour-long destruction of Babylon (18:10, 17, 19).
- (6) Even if Jeremiah's commands to leave Babylon apply only to the end-time city, this still would not warrant changing the identity of the Babylon of Revelation 17 to another entity in Revelation 18.
- (7) John's use of the prophetic language of Isaiah and Jeremiah does not equate the two Babylons. John elsewhere employs prophetic language in a heightened sense. For example, in Isaiah 65:20 the "new heavens and new earth" is where most people live beyond 100, which must be the millennium since death still exists; however, John employs new meaning to this same phrase by declaring that death is eradicated (Rev. 21:4).
- (8) Spiritual fornication (Rev. 17) is not contrasted with evil commercialism (Rev. 18), yielding separate entities. While the emphasis of chapter 18 is indeed trade, spiritual sin is also noted in chapter 18 with Babylon's association with demons (18:2), evil spirits (18:2), adulteries (18:3, 9; *πορνείας* is the same word as in 17:2, 4), and her "magic spell" (18:23). Similarly, her wealth is noted in 17:4.
- (9) The account flows naturally from one chapter to the next, so a change in referent would be very confusing; thus, it is unlikely that the Babylon of Revelation 17 is different than the Babylon of Revelation 18.

3. Rome<sup>23</sup>

## a) Support

- (1) "The woman you saw is the great city that rules over the kings of the earth" (Rev. 17:18) and Rome ruled the Roman Empire when John wrote this book.
- (2) Rome also was built upon seven hills (Rev. 17:9).



## b) Problems

- (1) While Rome was the most influential city when John wrote, this end-times Babylon is the most powerful entity during the Tribulation when the prophecy will be fulfilled.
- (2) The seven hills and kings relate to the *horns* on the beast (Rev. 17:7-9), not to the *woman* who rides the beast (17:3). These two entities should remain distinct.

4. Jerusalem<sup>24</sup>

## a) Support

- (1) Jerusalem definitely fits into God's prophetic program for the end-times (cf. Zech. 14:1-5). In fact, the Tribulation period is called the "time of Jacob's wrath" (Jer. 30:7), indicating suffering for Jews and Israel.
- (2) The woman "sits on" (controls) seven heads (kings) which indicates power over Rome (17:9). Jerusalem's present control over Catholicism is evident in its jurisdiction over the many Roman Catholic churches throughout Israel.
- (3) Jerusalem has killed many of the saints and prophets of God (17:6).



<sup>23</sup> Robert Mounce, *The Book of Revelation*, NICNT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1977), 306-36. Arguing against Rome and in favor of Babylon, Iraq is Thomas, 289.

<sup>24</sup> J. Massyngberde Ford, *Revelation*, Anchor Bible (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1975), 283-86.

## b) Problems

- (1) While Jerusalem is prominent in prophecy, its worldwide influence occurs only in the millennium (Isa. 2) rather than the Tribulation period (which is the context for Rev. 17–18).
- (2) Whereas the text indicates the woman controlling Rome, the opposite was the case in John's day and in our own. Also, though modern Israel controls the Catholic sites in her domain, she has little if anything to say about Catholicism worldwide.

E. USA<sup>25</sup>

## 1. Support (arguments from Chan Kai Lok)

- a) Babylon must be a nation since no single city in the world reigns over the earth (17:18) and a "city" is a nation in biblical symbolism.

- (1) The New Jerusalem is a city (22:14, 19) but also a country/nation (Heb. 11:13-16).
- (2) The New Jerusalem is a city (22:14, 19) but also the Bride of Christ (21:2, 10), the latter also being designated a nation (1 Pet. 2:9).
- (3) Contrasts in the text abound between End Times Babylon (an unholy city/nation, Rev. 17–18) and the New Jerusalem (a holy city/nation/Bride of Christ, Rev. 21–22).

- b) The US is Symbolized by a Woman (17:1-7, 18)

- (1) The key symbol of the US is the woman of the Statue of Liberty in New York Harbor.
- (2) America is the birthplace of modern feminism that has swept the globe.



- c) The US is a Prostitute in the Spiritual Realm (17:1, 15-16; 19:2)—Since the biblical meaning of adultery is to forsake one's spiritual roots, the US qualifies well in this respect as it has abandoned its Christian heritage established by the Pilgrims.

- d) The US is a Great Trading Centre (18:12-13)—End Times Babylon will be known around the world for its commerce.

- (1) The US is the largest business and financial hub in the world.
- (2) Wall Street is the largest stock market worldwide.
- (3) The US is the key player within the World Trade Organization.
- (4) US firms produce more goods overseas than any nation.
- (5) American trade spans the two major oceans in every item imaginable: precious metals and jewels (18:12a), clothing fashions and luxury items (18:12b), wheat and

<sup>25</sup> David Wilkerson, *Set the Trumpet to Thy Mouth* (Lindale, TX: World Challenge, 1985), 3; Chan Kai Lok, *Who is End Times Babylon?* (Singapore: by the author, 1992), 3.

meat production, along with other foods (18:13a), and "the bodies and souls of men" (human trade in prostitution, drug trafficking, and pornography, 18:13b).

- e) The US is Rich and Enriches Many Great Men (18:3, 14, 23).
- (1) No country or institution even begins to match the wealth of the US, with its abundance of cars, food, goods, and multiplied luxuries.
  - (2) The US dollar is the standard trading currency on the globe.
  - (3) Former poor nations have grown rich through US investment (e.g., Singapore, China)—even previous enemies of the US (e.g., Japan, Germany).
- f) The US Controls Many Nations (17:1, 15).
- (1) The global dominance of America has increased dramatically with the fall of the USSR, leaving the US as the sole "Super Power" nation.
  - (2) Washington's voice in the UN is preeminent.
  - (3) Some nations cannot act without US approval (e.g., Israel).
  - (4) American democracy is being embraced by the world increasingly.
- g) The US Could Be Destroyed by Russia's Nukes (17:3).
- (1) Whether the scarlet beast is Russia<sup>26</sup> or the G7 and EC or some other entity, the US exercises more control over them all than does any other entity.
  - (2) In any case, the Beast will destroy the Woman in one hour (18:8, 17, 19) by fire (17:16; 18:8-9). Even the destruction of a city by conventional fire takes several days (e.g., Great Chicago Fire, San Francisco Earthquake and Fire of 1906), so consumption by fire in only one hour almost inevitably must mean nuclear warfare. Russia has the greatest capacity to inflict this type of damage.
- h) The US is Hedonistic and Other Nations Copy Her (18:3, 5).
- (1) The US continually boasts that it is protecting American interests globally.
  - (2) Americans worship sex, material things, sports, entertainment, and pleasure—all of which are idols. The blatant idolatry of the TV show "American Idol" is mimicked around the world.
  - (3) US-sponsored trends are copied worldwide (fast food, clothing, music, pornography, drugs, scientific breakthroughs, skateboards, etc.).
- i) The US is Glorified and Lives in Great Comfort (18:7).
- (1) What nation or institution has the world's admiration more than the US?
  - (2) Glory has been accrued to the US more than any nation in numerous areas: space technology, scientific discoveries, the most Nobel Prize winners, the most inventions, and the attraction of the best brains in the world.

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<sup>26</sup> Chan identifies the 7 heads of the USSR beast as the 7 Warsaw Pact nations (East Germany, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Romania, Bulgaria and Russia) and the 10 horns as the 10 Soviet republics of the Commonwealth of Independent States, or CIS (p. 13). Such a specific designation can only be speculated though.

- (3) The US is obsessed with comfort. More Americans are overweight than any other country. Homes have all the latest conveniences at bargain prices. Even Christians readily admit that they "church shop" until "we find a place that is comfortable."
- j) The US is Occultic (17:5; 18:2-3).
- (1) The US association with ancient Babylon takes many forms.
- (a) Babylonian mystery religion is duplicated in the Catholic church in mother and son worship, celibate priests, purgatory, celebration of Nimrod's birthday on December 25, etc.<sup>27</sup> This teaching has been marketed to the world from Catholic American missionaries and, in the case of Christmas, US concerns for business profits.
- (b) Babylonian occultism is the root of numerous US secret societies (e.g., Gnostics, FreeMasons, Rosicrucians, Theosophists, Neo Nazis, etc.).
- (2) The end-times Babylon is "a home for demons and... every evil spirit" (18:2) and the US Bill of Rights safeguard of freedom of religion has enabled the country to have more cults than any nation (over 5000!).<sup>28</sup> Similarly, every major US city has a satanic church.
- (3) Secular humanism is now the protected national religion while prayer and anything Christian is outlawed in schools and many public arenas.
- k) The US is Immoral and Abominable
- (1) American immorality gives it the highest rates in the world for prostitution, rape, sex outside of marriage, divorce, abortion (over 55 million!), child abuse, drug use, and venereal disease.
- (2) The US has the distinction as the world's most influential marketer of media filth (all protected by America's "free speech" law).
- l) The US Deceives All Nations with Her Sorcery (18:23)—The Greek (φάρμακεία *pharmakeia*) for the "sorcery" (KJV) or "magic spell" (NIV) of end-times Babylon may actually refer to drug use ("enchantment with drugs"),<sup>29</sup> of which the US is the worst. This "sorcery, magic" (BDAG) may be drug induced.

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<sup>27</sup> See Ralph Woodrow, *Babylon Mystery Religion* (Riverside, CA: Woodrow Evan. Assoc., Inc., 1966, 1981); Frederick A. Tatford, *Five Minutes to Midnight* (London: Victory Press, 1980).

<sup>28</sup> Dave Hunt, *Peace, Prosperity and the Coming Holocaust* (Eugene, OR: Harvest House, 1983).

<sup>29</sup> Robert Young, *Young's Analytical Concordance*.

- m) The US Sits as a Queen, is No Widow, and Sees No Sorrow (18:7).
- (1) Babylon's claim, "I am not a widow" affirms that her men have not died on battlefields.<sup>30</sup> Such was the case in recent wars the US has fought. During the Gulf War (January 17-February 28, 1991) General Norman Schwarzhkopf so overwhelmed Saddam Hussein's forces that the ground war lasted only five days. The enemy was defeated at about 1000 enemy forces killed for each American soldier, and most of them were killed by friendly fire! The USA's overwhelming victory over the Taliban in Afghanistan was similar, as was the Iraq War that toppled Saddam Hussein.
  - (2) Babylon's claim, "I will never mourn (see no sorrow)" results from such war success. No army can better make this claim than the US Army.
  - (3) Given unequalled US military prowess, she sits as "queen" with increased credibility as the policeman and peacemaker of the world. In particular, US dominance over the Arab states and Russia are no longer in question.
  - (4) Believing that the Cold War is over, the sale of many US bases by the Department of Defense has filled the coffers as well, just like a queen's.
- n) The US has Killed the Prophets and Saints of God (17:6; 18:24).
- (1) At first this may not seem to be characteristic of the USA, which was founded upon freedom of conscience and has championed the cause of religious freedom worldwide. Tolerance of all viewpoints is the byword of the day.
  - (2) Yet end-time Babylon is also guilty "of all who have been killed on the earth" (18:24). Since no entity is guilty of every murder worldwide, this obviously is an exaggeration for effect. What is meant is that Babylon is guilty of being a partaker of other people's sins in the sense that the Pharisees were partakers of the sins of their fathers against the prophets (Matt. 23:29-32; Luke 11:47-52).
  - (3) In this sense the US is passively guilty of the blood of prophets and saints, for the US has abandoned its original commission of the Pilgrim days to witness for God. Instead, it approves of these sins in its midst: Satan worship, idolatry, drug trafficking, pornography, adultery, homosexuality, and the like.
  - (4) In another sense, the USA is *actively* guilty of killing many saints, for the wholesale slaughter of 55 million unborn in this generation alone has murdered millions who would have grown up to serve as God's witnesses around the globe. The other countries of the world have followed the US lead in the abortion holocaust, killing untold millions of God's children.

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<sup>30</sup> NIV Study Bible notes on Rev. 18:7.



## 2. Problems

- a) Although the woman of the Statue of Liberty is *one* symbol of America, it is not the primary one. The national symbol of the US is the bald eagle.
- b) Chan Kai Lok makes no attempt to prove that Russia is the beast of Revelation 13:1-10; 17:3f. He appeals rather to Revelation See's book *The Antichrist is Now Here!* In fact, though Chan's book appeared in 1992, he refers to the Antichrist as "USSR"—two full years after the breakup of the USSR in 1990.
- c) Chan has made numerous "prophetic" blunders. He predicted the economic collapse of the USA in 1992,<sup>31</sup> the return of Mikhail Gorbachev to power in 1992,<sup>32</sup> and the nuclear destruction of the USA by Russia in 1993.<sup>33</sup>
- d) Theological problems abound in the book. Dubious exegetical support is given to prove that the USA is the people of God or the "Joseph people" (descendants of Ephraim and Manasseh),<sup>34</sup> questionable theological teachings are based on the numbers 13 and 17,<sup>35</sup> adulterers are all deemed unsaved,<sup>36</sup> Maitreya is claimed to be the demon behind the Antichrist (other demons are also "identified"),<sup>37</sup> and the first three seals of Revelation 6 are incorrectly linked to events of 1990-1991.<sup>38</sup>

**Conclusion**

No one can identify the Babylon of Revelation 17–18 with certainty. However, for the reasons cited in this study, it would seem that Babylon is neither a city (Rome, Jerusalem, or Babylon, Iraq) nor a confederation of nations (which confuses Babylon with the beast and its ten horns and seven heads).

While one cannot be certain, the most plausible identification is the most powerful and influential nation in the world: the United States of America. This study does not endorse the sensationalistic features and date-setting errors of Dr. Chan Kai Lok. Nevertheless, a comparison of the characteristics of this end-time Babylon with America leaves no better option at the present time.

Of course, nothing excludes a more powerful entity than the US arising in the future, so one cannot be certain of the US as this entity. Until God reveals Babylon's identity without question, Christians should not be looking for Babylon but rather should be accomplishing the commission given to us by Jesus Christ to bring the gospel to the world.

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<sup>31</sup> Chan, 107.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid., 140.

<sup>33</sup> Chan, 107-8, 134, prophesies a nuclear destruction and pages 137, 145 specify the year as 1993.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid., 28, 60.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid., 29-39.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid., 80, 115-34.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid., 65.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid., 139-45.

## Charles Ryrie on End Times Babylon

Charles C. Ryrie has his own summary of the nature of End Times Babylon:  
*The Characteristics of End Times Babylon.*

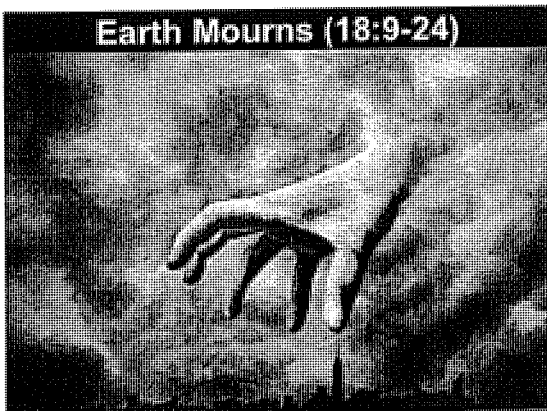
Certain characteristics of Babylon of Revelation 17 are specified.

- (1) She is a harlot (v. 1). This obviously means she is unfaithful. She professes to be a system of religious truth and is in reality one of falsehood. This is confirmed by the name she assumes—"End Times Babylon" (v. 5).
- (2) She is ecumenical (vv. 1,15). She sits upon many waters which are explained as being "peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues."
- (3) She unites church and state under her sway (vv. 2-3). By granting her favors to the kings of the earth she is able to dominate the beast (v. 3) who is the head of the western confederation of nations (vv. 12-13) and whose dominion coincides with that of the whore (13:7).
- (4) She is a "whited sepulcher" (v. 4). Outwardly she has great grandeur but inwardly she is filled with filthiness.
- (5) She is a federation (v. 5). Her name is "The Mother of Harlots" which seems to indicate that she is a sort of mother church incorporating a number of equally false religious systems. It is because of this designation that many understand that the apostate church will be meshed with the Roman Catholic system, but not restricted to it.
- (6) She is a persecutor of the saints (v. 6).
- (7) She is destroyed completely by the beast (v. 16). This probably occurs at the middle of the tribulation period. It is described as a decisive and complete overthrow of the power of the apostate religious system (Charles C. Ryrie, "Apostasy in the Church," *Bibliotheca Sacra* 121 [Jan-March 1964]: 51-52).

The ten nation Roman confederacy receives power along with the beast or Antichrist (17:12), thus showing that they are not one and the same.

*Outline continued from page 396...*

- (c) (18:9–19:10) The remorse on earth for Babylon's fall is contrasted with the rejoicing in heaven that readers may understand the fall from God's perspective and rejoice at the soon coming of Christ.
- (i) (18:9-24) The earth mourns over Babylon's fall because its businessmen can no longer profit from the system's commercial enterprises.

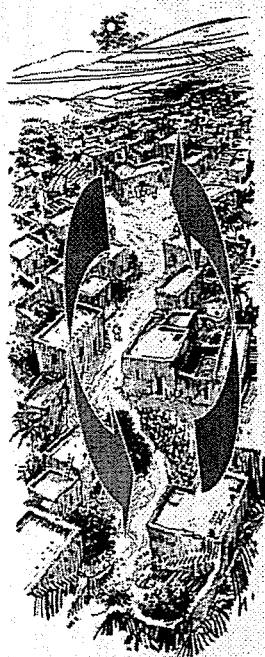


- (ii) (19:1-10) Heaven rejoices over Babylon's fall and the completed Church celebrates her union with Christ in anticipation of His imminent Second Coming to set up a righteous kingdom.
- (b) (19:1-6) Heaven rejoices over Babylon's fall because the destruction of the evil empire allows Christ to replace it with a righteous kingdom.

**Heaven Rejoices (19:1-2 NLT)**

After this, I heard what sounded like a vast crowd in heaven shouting,  
 "Praise the LORD!  
 הללויה Salvation and glory and power  
 belong to our God.  
<sup>2</sup>His judgments are true and just.  
 He has punished the great prostitute  
 who corrupted the earth with her  
 immorality.  
 He has avenged the murder of his  
 servants."

- (c) (19:7-10) The Church's final stage of being united with Christ, symbolized by the marriage feast of the Lamb with His bride, is celebrated in anticipation of the imminent Second Coming of Christ.



## The First Century Wedding Procession

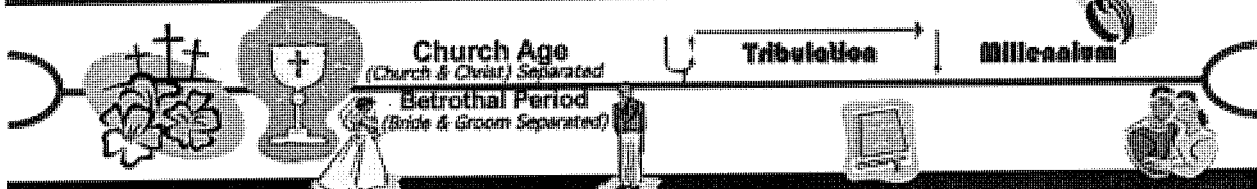
**Groom's House  
(at his Father's House)**

- The groom's procession parallels Christ's return for His Bride, the Church. At the Rapture, He will come to bring believers back to the Father's House.

**Bride's House**

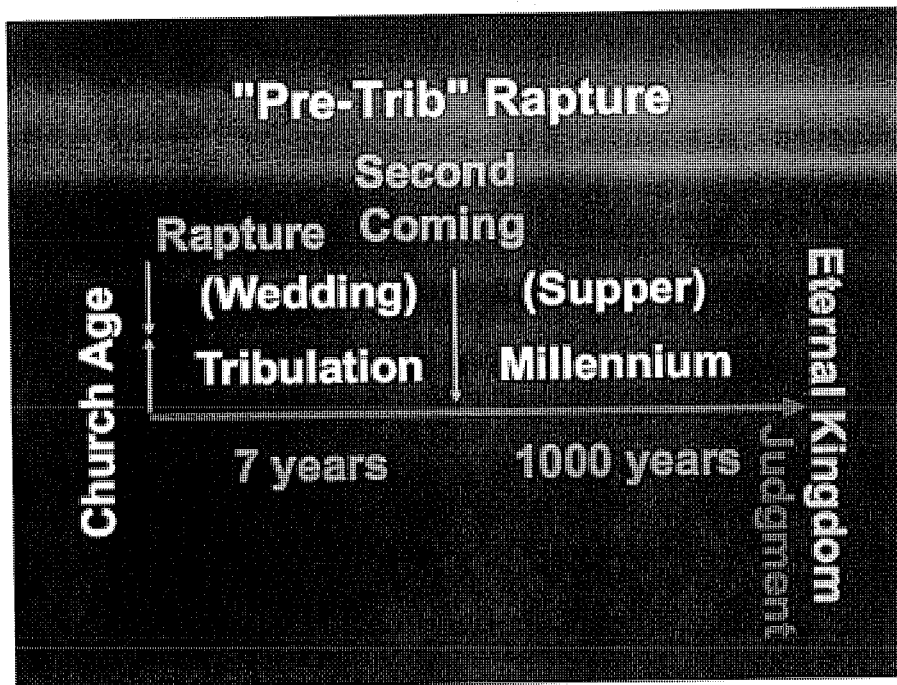
## Marriage & the Church Timeline

<b>Election</b> God the Father chose those to be saved (Eph. 1:5, 11)	<b>Purchase</b> Christ paid the Father His blood to redeem the church (1 Pet. 1:18)	<b>Sign</b> New covenant began with the Supper (Luke 22:20)	<b>Our Job</b> Holiness for Christ during church age (2 Cor. 11:2)	<b>Christ's Job</b> Preparing heaven for church until He returns (John 14:1-3)	<b>Rapture</b> Christ brings church to heaven at unexpected time w/ shout (1 Thess. 4:14-18)	<b>Wedding</b> Church cleansed & presented unspotted (rewarded) in heaven (Eph. 5:26)	<b>Supper to Come</b> Church unites with Christ & glorifies Him for imparting holiness (Rev. 19:7-9)	<b>Second Coming &amp; Supper</b> Saints & Christ return to earth to reign (Rev. 19:11-20:6)
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<b>Choice</b> (Shidduchin) Father chooses a bride for his son (Tobit 4:12-13; 7:9-13; Ecclesiast. 7:23; Sirach 7:25; Mishna Kiddushin 2:1)	<b>Purchase</b> (Mohar) Groom pays bride's father gold & silver or service as dowry (Tobit 8:21; Jub. 28:2)	<b>Sign</b> (Ketubah) Marriage covenant begins with contract & cup of betrothal (Tobit 7:14-15; Kidd. 2:2; Ketuboth 1:2)	<b>Bride's Job</b> (Kedeshe) Maintains virginity (set apart for groom) one year (Mishna, Sotah 1:1, 5; 5:1; Sirach 42:10)	<b>Groom's Job</b> (Huppah) Prepares bridal chamber and place in home of his father (1 Macc. 3:58; 2 Enoch 61:2)	<b>Procession</b> (Nissuin) Groom's arrival, calls bride & escorts her to his father's house (Adam & Eve 22:3; 4 Ezra 6:23)	<b>Wedding</b> (Sheva) Brecht = 7 Nuptial blessings) bride washes, adorns, presented by groom as beautiful virgin (Tobit 7:13) & declared married	<b>Wedding Supper</b> Intercourse (Mishna Ketuboth 1:1; 3 Macc. 1:19; 4:6) began a 7-14 day feast (Tobit 8:19-20; 9:5); guests given white linen & groom praised for beauty given to the bride	<b>Married Life</b> Bride & groom live in society to serve God together (Gen. 2:24; Matt. 19:4-5)
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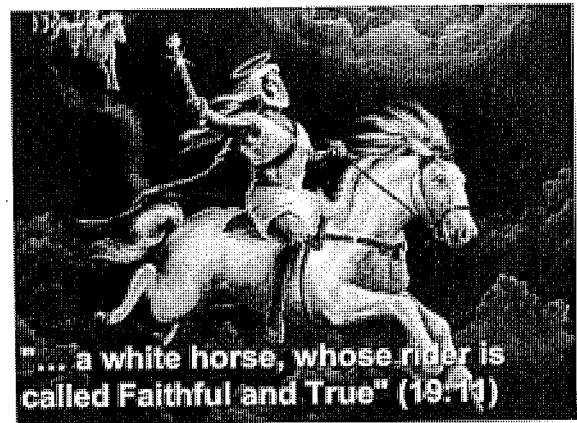
10<sup>th</sup> ed. 14 Apr 2011



<b>Contrasting the Marriage &amp; Supper (Rev. 19)</b>		
<b>Symbols</b>	<b>Wedding</b>	<b>Feast</b>
Verse	7	9
Tense	Aorist (past)	Present
Involvement	Church as Bride	Israel as Guests
Time Period	Tribulation	Millennium
Place	Heaven	Earth
Characteristics	Procession, Wedding	Friends invited to Wedding Feast
Explanation	Bride/Church brought to Father's house	Bride/Church introduced to friends/Israel
Scripture	Rom. 7:1-4; 1 Cor. 6:17; 2 Cor. 11:2; Eph. 5:27	Isa. 25:6-8; Matt. 8:11; 26:29; Luke 12:35-37

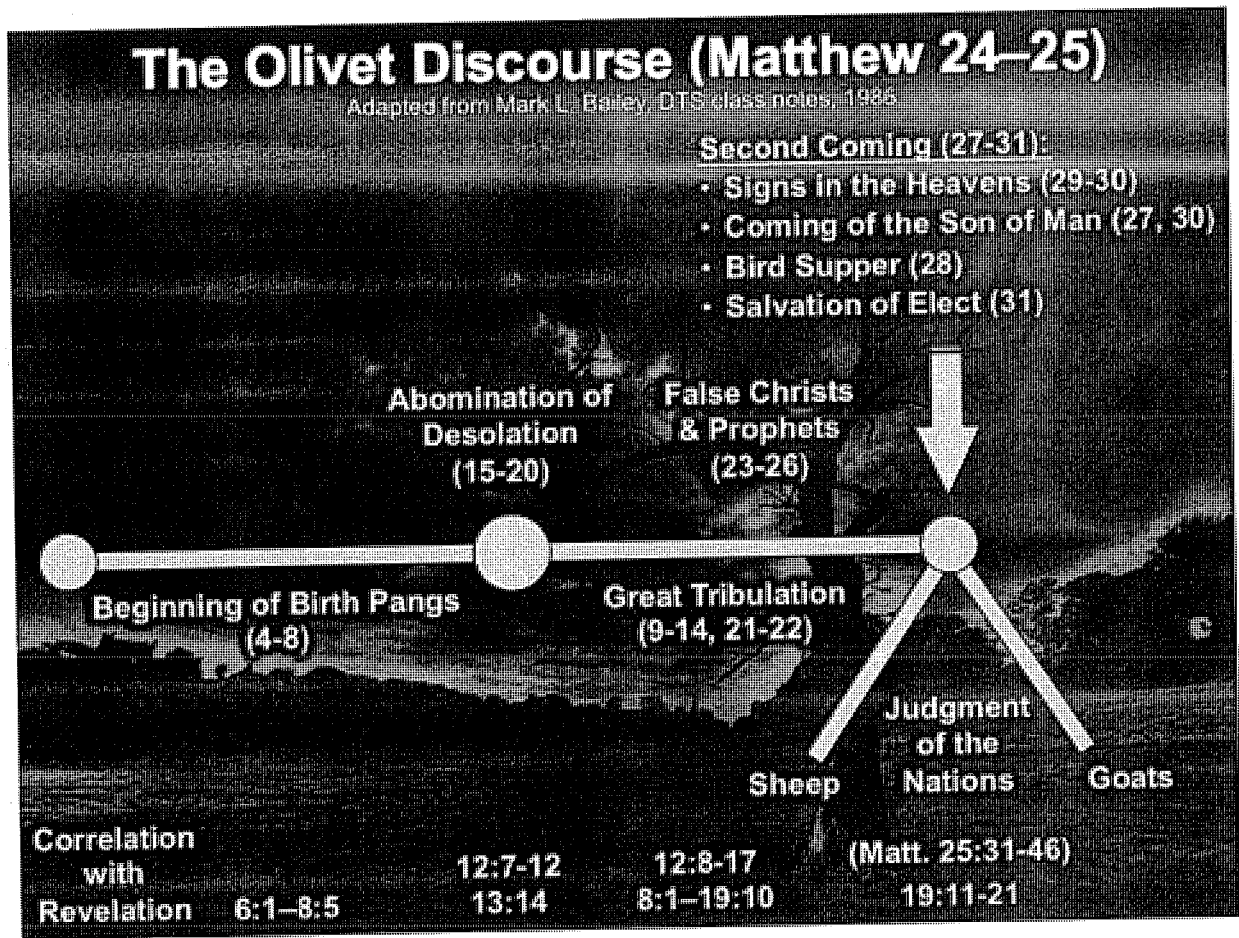
*Outline continued from the end of major point "A" on page 415 that concluded with 19:10...*

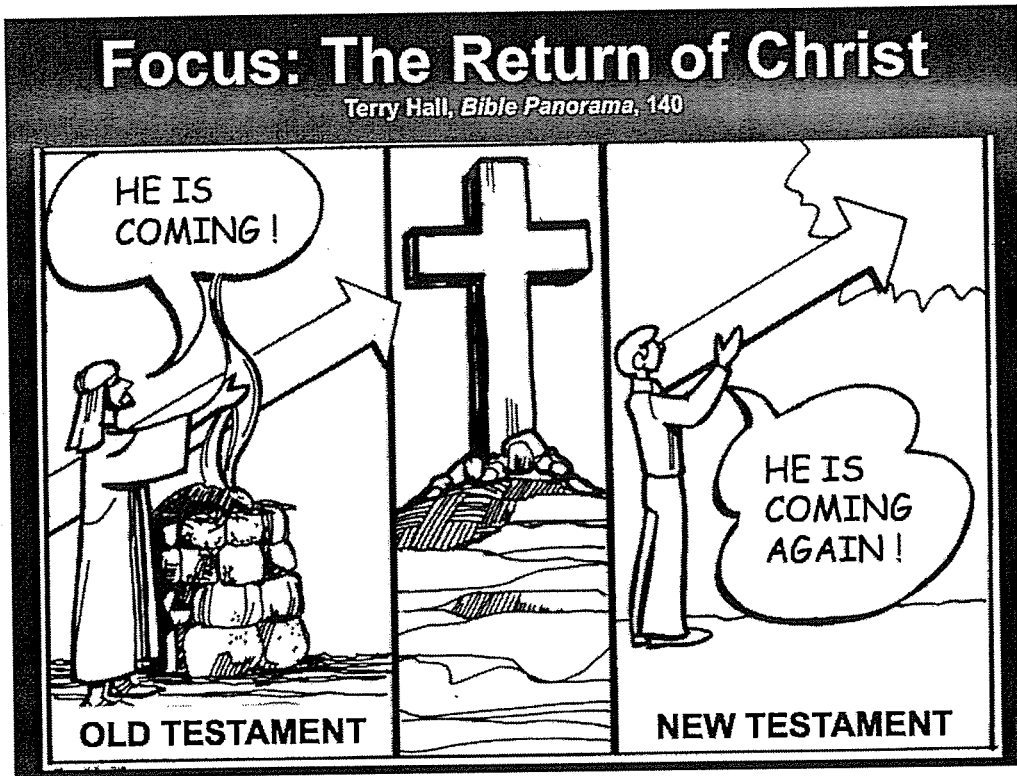
- B. (19:11-21) Christ's Second Coming encourages believers under persecution that Christ will be Ultimate Victor.
1. (19:11-16) Christ returns to the earth accompanied by angels and saints in great power to right the wrongs committed by the Antichrist and False Prophet and show Himself the Sovereign King of kings and Lord of lords.



2. (19:17-21) Christ proves Himself Ultimate Victor by defeating the Antichrist, False Prophet, and their armies at the Battle of Armageddon to encourage believers persecuted by enemies.





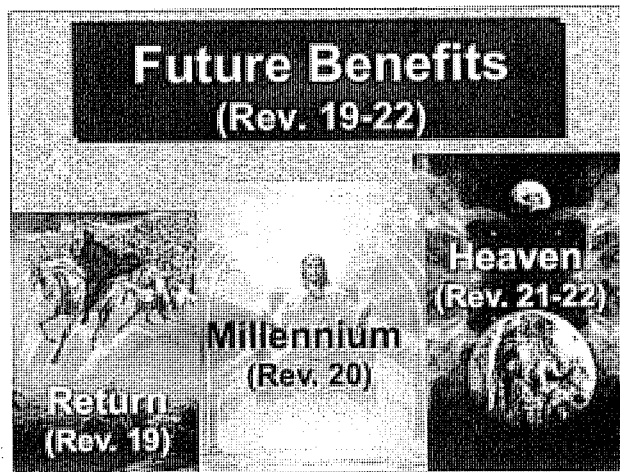




<b>Christ's Two Comings</b>	
 <b>FIRST COMING</b>	 <b>SECOND COMING</b>
Laid in a manger	Lands on a mountain
Came as a lamb	Comes as the Lord
Lowly and poor	Lavish and powerful
Died for His enemies	Death to His enemies
Tempted by Satan	Traps Satan in bottomless pit
Lived in a world of unrighteousness	Leads the world in righteousness
Died for sins and rose again	Directs and reigns

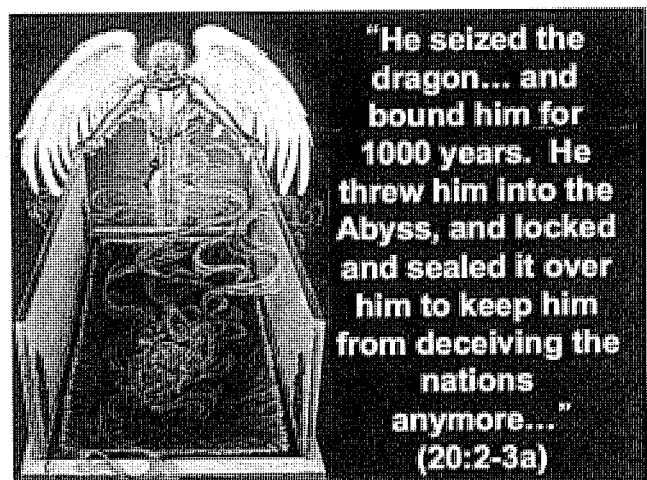
**(CHURCH AGE)**

Ruth & Larry Moody, cited by Terry Hall, Bible Panoramas, 117



*Outline continued from major point "B" that began on page 417...*

- C. (Ch. 20) The Millennium will show Christ's sovereignty as Ultimate Victor over the earth, Satan, and death itself.
1. (20:1-6) The Millennium will fulfill many OT prophecies with Satan bound and believers ruling with Christ on earth for 1000 years.
    - a) (20:1-3) Satan will be bound the entire length of the Millennium to prevent him from deceiving the nations for the 1000 years that Christ rules.



## (1) Does Satan deceive the nations now?

## (a) Amillennialists say “no.”

- (i) “For who is powerful enough to enter the house of a strong man like Satan and plunder his goods? Only someone even stronger—someone who could tie him up and then plunder his house” (Matt. 12:29)
- (ii) [Jesus told the seventy-two disciples], “I saw Satan fall from heaven like lightning! <sup>19</sup>Look, I have given you authority over all the power of the enemy, and you can walk among snakes and scorpions and crush them. Nothing will injure you” (Luke 10:17-18)
- (iii) “The time for judging this world has come, when Satan, the ruler of this world, will be cast out” (John 12:31).
- (iv) “In this way, [Christ] disarmed the spiritual rulers and authorities. He shamed them publicly by his victory over them on the cross” (Col. 2:15).

## (b) Premillennialists say “yes.”

- (i) The above verses show that Satan was ultimately defeated at the cross. However, none of them say that he has stopped tempting people today—and succeeding in deceiving them!

(a) Satan is on the loose: “Stay alert! Watch out for your great enemy, the devil. He prowls around like a roaring lion, looking for someone to devour” (1 Pet. 5:8).

(b) Others are succeeding over Satan: “Stand firm against him, and be strong in your faith. Remember that your Christian brothers and sisters all over the world are going through the same kind of suffering you are” (1 Pet. 5:9).

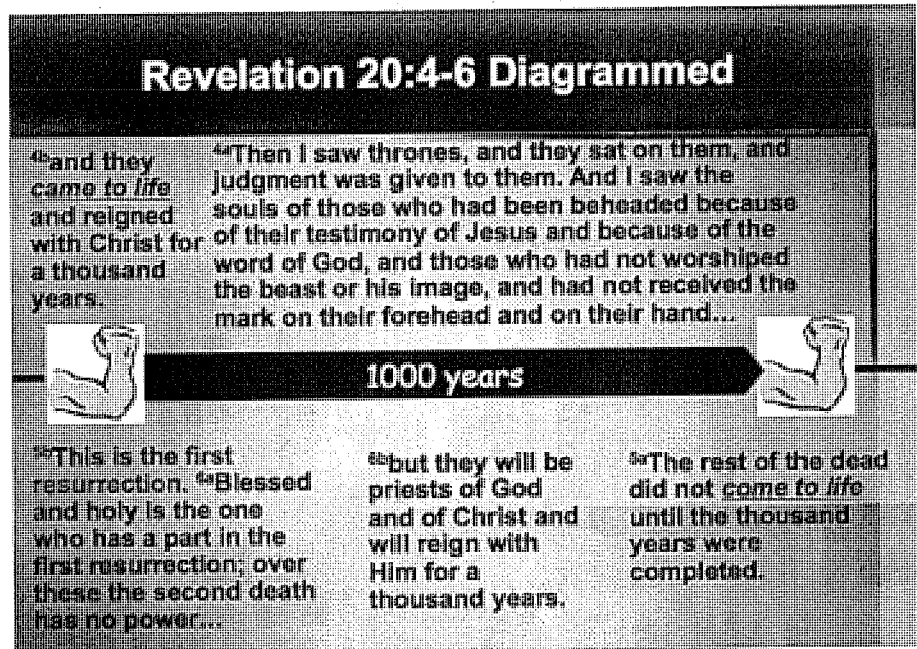


- (ii) “Satan, who is the god of this world, has blinded the minds of those who don't believe. They are unable to see the glorious light of the Good

News. They don't understand this message about the glory of Christ, who is the exact likeness of God" (2 Cor. 4:4).

- (iii) "These people are false apostles. They are deceitful workers who disguise themselves as apostles of Christ. 14But I am not surprised! Even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light" (2 Cor. 11:14).
- (iv) You used to live in sin, just like the rest of the world, obeying the devil—the commander of the powers in the unseen world. He is the spirit at work in the hearts of those who refuse to obey God. 3All of us used to live that way... (Eph. 2:2-3a).
- (v) Then they will come to their senses and escape from the devil's trap. For they have been held captive by him to do whatever he wants (2 Tim. 2:26).
- (vi) By the way, name a country now that Satan is NOT deceiving right now...

- b) (20:4-6) Christians, including believing Israel, will reign with Christ on earth for 1000 years to fulfill the Abrahamic Covenant and other promises about the kingdom of God.



### Purposes of the Millennium (20:1-6)

*Why must there be a 1000-year reign before the eternal state? Many reasons! Here are some:*

- (1) Believers will judge angels (Rev. 20:4a; cf. 1 Cor. 6:2-4).
- (2) Believers will rule the earth (Rev. 20:4b) to restore the rule originally God gave man (Gen. 1:26) that was lost in the fall (2 Cor. 4:4; cf. p. 9g top).
- (3) God will restore the world to pre-Flood conditions with longevity of life prior to eternity when death is no more (Rev. 21:4). Isaiah 65:20 says that death will still exist (among those with mortal bodies); however, those of us with glorified bodies will not be able to die and thus will live throughout the 1000 years.
- (4) Even without Satan tempting people, God will show the human heart corrupt so much that he will rebel against him and deserve judgment (Rev. 20:7-10).
- (5) God will fulfill His promises in the Abrahamic Covenant (Gen. 12:1-3; cf. p. 9g middle) and its unfolding covenants:
  - (a) The *Land Covenant* will have Israel occupy its promised borders (Ezek. 37:8-28; Ezek. 47-48) with Jerusalem as the world's capital (Isa. 2:1-5).
  - (b) The *Davidic Covenant* will be fulfilled with Christ ruling over Israel and the world (Isa. 11) with the saints (Rev. 5:10).
  - (c) The *New Covenant* will finally be fulfilled with a reunited, believing Israel with all who know the Lord (Jer. 31:31-34).

## Does 1000 years mean 1000 years?

Amillennial (Beale)	Premillennial
There is consistent figurative use of numbers elsewhere in Revelation (p. 995).	<p>All of these are literal numbers :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 7 churches (Rev. 2-3)</li> <li>• 144,000 Jews (7:1)</li> <li>• 200 million soldiers (9:16)</li> <li>• 42 months (11:2)</li> <li>• 1260 days (11:3)</li> <li>• 75 lb. hailstones (16:21)</li> </ul> <p>"The twelve apostles and the twelve tribes of Israel are literally twelve (21:12-14). The seven churches are in seven literal cities. Yet confirmation of a single number in Revelation as symbolic is impossible."<sup>39</sup></p>
The context has figures such as a chain, Abyss, dragon, serpent, locked, sealed, & beast.	<p>The Abyss is a literal place (Luke 8:1) where demons are chained (2 Pet. 2:4) but can be unlocked (Rev. 9:1-2), so why can't they be <i>actually restrained</i> there?</p> <p>Also, the designations at the left are literal <i>titles</i> for Satan and Antichrist.</p>
The entire book has a predominantly figurative tone as in multiples of a thousand in the book (5:11; 7:4-9; 9:16; 14:1; 21:16; p. 973).	<p>Each example cited are literal: "Thousands upon thousands" (5:11), the 144,000 (7:4-9; 14:1), 200 million troops (9:16), and the 12,000 stadia size of the new Jerusalem (21:16). None are figurative!</p>
The OT contains figurative use of "1000" (p. 995).	<p>"With the LORD, a day is as a thousand years" (Ps. 90:4) has a symbolic use of the word "day" but makes no sense unless "thousand" is understood literally.</p>
Jews and early Christians used "1000" years as a figure for the eternal blessings of the redeemed (pp. 1018-21).	<p>In actuality, the 6000-year idea of rabbis and early Christians assumed a <i>literal</i> 1000 years as a "Sabbath." It was the <i>amillennial Augustine</i> who taught that the "eighth" day signified eternity.<sup>40</sup></p>
The first "came to life" is a "spiritual resurrection" (20:4) but the second is a physical one (20:5).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Why see the same verb <i>differently</i> in same text?</li> <li>• "Came to life" <i>never denotes to a "spiritual resurrection"</i> in the Bible.</li> <li>• "Resurrection" always denotes <i>physical</i> bodies.</li> <li>• Believers are spiritually alive <i>now</i>, so no need!</li> </ul>
The number "1000" is for the "fullness of time" and thus symbolizes an indefinite era as in Psalm 50:10 and 2 Peter 3:8.	<p>Psalm 50:10 ("For all the animals of the forest are mine, and I own the cattle on a thousand hills") has nothing to do with time!</p> <p>2 Peter 3:8 ("A day is like a thousand years to the Lord, and a thousand years is like a day") shows Beale reads it as a literal 1000 years!</p>

<sup>39</sup> Robert L. Thomas, *Revelation 8–22: An Exegetical Commentary* (Chicago: Moody, 1995), 408-9.

<sup>40</sup> Augustine, *Sermons on the Liturgical Seasons* 259.2; *City of God* 20.7.

***All scholars before AD 300 were premillennial:***

- Clement of Rome
- Ignatius
- Papias
- *The Didache*
- *The Epistle of Barnabas*
- *The Shepherd of Hermas*
- Justin Martyr
- Melito of Sardis
- Theophilus of Antioch
- Apollinaris of Hierapolis
- Irenaeus
- Hippolytus
- Clement of Alexandria
- Tertullian
- Julius Africanus
- Cyprian
- Nepos
- Coracion
- Commodian
- Victorinus of Pettau
- Methodius
- Lactantius

After AD 300, the 1000 years began to be spiritualized by Augustine, Jerome, Theodoret and others. This non-literal view of the millennium lasted a literal millennium!

## Views on Revelation 20:1-6

	<b>Amillennial</b>	<b>Premillennial</b>
Selected Advocates	Anthony Hoekema, Leon Morris, William Hendrikson, John Gilmore	Herman Hoyt, John Walvoord, George Ladd, Robert Mounce
Outline of Revelation	Progressive Parallelism	Futuristic
Revelation 19-20 Timeline	Non-chronological Millennium (Rev. 20) precedes Christ's return (Rev. 19)	Chronological Christ's return (Rev. 19) precedes millennium (Rev. 20)
1000 years (six times in 20:1-6)	Non-literal	Literal (but some covenant premils such as Ladd say it is not literal)
Identity of Binding Angel (20:1-2)	Christ since: (1) He holds the keys of hades (1:5, 18; 3:7), (2) "angel" need not mean "angel" (cf. 2:1, 8, 12, 18; 3:1, 7, 14), and (3) Dan. 12:1 says the Messiah is Michael the archangel (Gilmore, 375-77). But Morris, 137 disagrees.	An angel since: (1) Christ could have given an angel the key, (2) Christ is called "the angel of the Lord" (Gen. 22:16 with Heb. 6:13; Gen. 22:11, 12 with Heb. 12:25), and (3) and Dan. 12:1 does not equate Michael and Christ.
Binding of Satan (20:2-3)	Present: restricted from deceiving nations but can deceive individuals by being "denied full control" (Gilmore, 378; Matt. 12:29)	Future: deceives both individuals and nations now, inconsistent to say he can deceive one and not the other (cf. 1 Pet. 5:8 says Satan is loose!)
Time of 20:4-6 rule	Present	Future (cf. Rev. 13:15 is future)
Place of 20:4-6 rule	Heaven	Earth (Rev. 20:1; cf. 5:10)
"Came to life" (ἐζήσαν in 20:4a) and "first resurrection" (ἀναστάσι" ηJ πρώτη in vv. 5b-6a)	Spiritual: Believer's <i>transition</i> from physical death to life in heaven with Christ <i>without</i> a resurrected body (Hoekema, 171): (1) this is the only time in the NT ἀναστάσι" means other than a physical resurrection, (2) the root of ἐζήσαν (ζάω) means being alive (3:1; 4:9, 10; 7:2; 15:7)	Physical: Believer's bodily <i>resurrection</i> as: (1) this is the normal use of the terms, (2) the resurrections <i>precede</i> the 1000 years, (3) all are resurrected together, not individually, and (4) arguing from a root is fallacious and provides no real parallel passages
"Came to life" (ἐζήσαν in 20:5)	A different meaning (physical resurrection here) than meant by the same phrase in verse 4 (spiritual there)	A consistent meaning of physical resurrection in both verses (which matches the physical meaning of the same Greek verb in 2:8)
Nature of the implied second resurrection	Believer's bodily resurrection (20:4-5)	Unbeliever's resurrection (20:12-13)
Number of Physical Resurrections (20:4-6, 12-13)	One general resurrection	Several resurrections—4 groups in 3 time periods (cf. class notes, 160 but Ladd says 2 time periods)
Persons Judged at the Great White Throne (20:11-15)	All people	Unbelievers only (though another resurrection of believers from the millennium is also possible)



## Questions on Revelation 20:1-6

And I saw an angel coming down out of heaven, having the key to the Abyss and holding in his hand a great chain. <sup>2</sup>He seized the dragon, that ancient serpent, who is the devil, or Satan, and bound him for a thousand years. <sup>3</sup>He threw him into the Abyss, and locked and sealed it over him, to keep him from deceiving the nations anymore until the thousand years were ended. After that, he must be set free for a short time.

<sup>4</sup>I saw thrones on which were seated those who had been given authority to judge. And I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded because of their testimony for Jesus and because of the word of God. They had not worshiped the beast or his image and had not received his mark on their foreheads or their hands. They came to life and reigned with Christ a thousand years. **5** (The rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were ended.) This is the first resurrection. **6** Blessed and holy are those who have part in the first resurrection. The second death has no power over them, but they will be priests of God and of Christ and will reign with him for a thousand years (NIV).

### Where do the saints rule (20:4)?

*Amils often say in heaven*

*But Revelation says it is on earth*

- "And you have caused them to become a Kingdom of priests for our God. And they will reign *on the earth*" (5:10).
- *No change of location* is noted from verse 3 (on earth) to verse 4, so we should assume verses 4-6 also to be on earth.

### When do the saints rule (20:4)?

*Amils claim it is now*

*But Revelation says it is future*

- "And you have caused them to become a Kingdom of priests for our God. And they *will reign on the earth*" (5:10).
- "...they *will* be priests of God and of Christ and *will* reign with Him for a thousand years" (20:6).

## The First Resurrection (20:4)

Revelation 20:4-6 mentions two resurrections—the “first resurrection” before the 1000 years that enables the saints to reign (vv. 4, 6) and another resurrection of the “rest of the dead” after the 1000 years (v. 5). The *timing* of these two resurrections is different (before and after the 1000 years), but is the *nature* of them different too? In other words, are these both *physical* resurrections? Or is there even any *other* type of resurrection besides a physical one?

**Beale (amil) refuses to equate the two resurrections with "came to life" (ἐζήσαν) at the "first resurrection."**

**Beale says "came to life" (from ζάω, "to live") can have three different meanings:**

- Physical resurrection (1:18; 2:8)
  - <sup>NLT</sup> Revelation 1:18 I am the living one. I died, but look—I am alive forever and ever! And I hold the keys of death and the grave.
  - <sup>NLT</sup> Revelation 2:8 "Write this letter to the angel of the church in Smyrna. This is the message from the one who is the First and the Last, who was dead but is now alive"
- Physical existence (16:3; 19:20)
  - <sup>NAU</sup> Revelation 16:3 The second angel poured out his bowl into the sea... and every living thing in the sea died.
  - <sup>NLT</sup> Revelation 19:20b ... Both the beast and his false prophet were thrown alive into the fiery lake of burning sulfur.
- Spiritual existence (3:1; 7:17; 13:14)
  - <sup>NLT</sup> Revelation 3:1 "Write this letter to the angel of the church in Sardis... "I know... that you have a reputation for being alive—but you are dead."
  - <sup>NAU</sup> Revelation 7:17 for the Lamb in the center of the throne will... guide them to springs of the water of life..."

Seeing both as physical advocates *two* resurrections but this contradicts the amillennial system that teaches only *one general resurrection* after the millennium (viewed as the present age). Therefore, this third (spiritual) meaning is the one Beale, 1004, applies to the “first resurrection” but not to the second one.

**So which of these three nuances is best in 20:4? And how can we tell?**

1. "Resurrection" (ἀνάστασις) in the NT only means physical, bodily life into a glorified body:

<sup>NLT</sup> John 11:25 Jesus told her, "I am the resurrection and the life. Anyone who believes in me will live, even after dying."

<sup>NIV</sup> 1 Cor. 15:12 But if it is preached that Christ has been raised from the dead, how can some of you say that there is no resurrection of the dead?

The same physical resurrection nuance is in 1 Cor. 15:13, 21, 42

2. Physical resurrection is also the clear meaning of the same word "resurrection" (ἀνάστασις) in verse 5.

Would it *not* make sense to interpret the same *word* the same *way* in consecutive verses, especially since "resurrection" by definition refers to physical life?

3. However, Beale and other amillennialists view the passage inconsistently where...
  - a. "resurrection" (ἀνάστασις) in verse 4 as "spiritual"
  - b. "resurrection" (ἀνάστασις) in verse 5 as "physical"

**Beale, 1004-5 defends his inconsistent use of "resurrection" (ἀνάστασις) in verses 4-5:**

"Elsewhere in the NT ἀνάστασις and ζάω (or the cognate noun ζωή, 'life') and synonyms are used interchangeably of both spiritual and physical resurrection *within the same immediate contexts*." For example...

<sup>NIV</sup> Romans 6:4 We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life.

**Rebuttals:**

1. Is this "both spiritual and physical resurrection"?

No. Only the first is a physical resurrection!

2. Are "resurrection" and "life" synonyms here?

No. But Christ's physical resurrection gives spiritual life.

**Beale, 1005 again defends his inconsistent interpretation of "resurrection" (ἀνάστασις) in verses 4-5:**

The "first death of believers... is physical and different in nature from the second death of unbelievers, which is spiritual."

<sup>NIV</sup> Rev. 20:4b They came to life and reigned with Christ a thousand years.

**Rebuttals:**

1. Is "came to life" = "the first death of believers"?

No. Coming to life does not refer to dying!

2. Are "first death" and "second death" in time (20:14)?

Of course, as 1000 years separates them!

3. Are these "two deaths" therefore "different in nature"?

No. There *is* no "first death"—only a "first resurrection"!

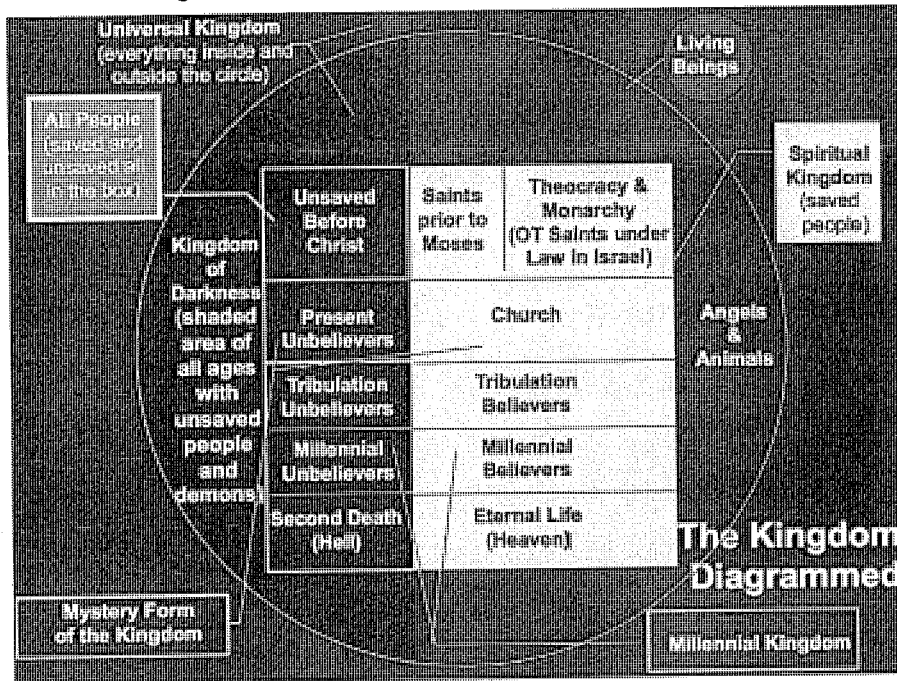
## Is There a Future for Ethnic Believing Israel?

The question of a future for Israel may seem like an irrelevant issue for those obsessed with theological trivia. However, this question relates intricately with who Israel really is today (her identity) and one's answer here will determine the meaning of literally hundreds of verses in the Bible. The answer falls basically into three distinct camps or viewpoints as seen in the circle chart at the right.



## The Kingdom Diagrammed

The word "kingdom" is used in a different sense in various texts of Scripture:



**Aspect of the Kingdom**

- Universal Kingdom*
- Spiritual Kingdom*
- Kingdom of Darkness*
- Unsaved Before Christ*
- Saints Before Moses*
- Theocratic Kingdom*
- Mystery Form*
- Church*
- Present Unbelievers*
- Millennium*
- Tribulation Unbelievers*
- Tribulation Believers*
- Millennial Unbelievers*
- Millennial Believers*
- Second Death*
- Eternal Kingdom*

**Description**

- All creation of every age
- All saved of every age (white above)
- All unsaved of every age (dark above)
- Unbelievers prior to Christ's death
- Those with faith in God (e.g., Noah)
- God's rule over Israel as mediators
- Present saved & unsaved
- Saved between Pentecost & Rapture
- Unbelievers in Church Age
- All people of the Millennium
- Unsaved of the Tribulation
- Saved of the Tribulation
- Unsaved of the Millennium
- Saved of the Millennium
- Unbelievers in Hell
- Spiritual Kingdom in new creation

**Scripture**

- Ps. 145:13; 1 Chron. 29:12
- Heb. 12:22-24; Col. 1:13b
- Col. 1:13a
- Gal. 3:21-22
- Gen. 6:9; 15:6 (Abraham)
- Exod. 19:6
- Matt. 13:24-30, 47-50
- Matt. 13:38
- 2 Cor. 2:15
- Isa. 65:20
- Rev. 16:10
- Rev. 20:4
- Rev. 20:7-10
- Zech. 8:23
- Rev. 20:14
- Dan. 2:44; Rev. 21-22

## Views on the Millennium

### Definitions

1. The word "millennium" means "a period of a thousand years" (Funk & Wagnalls Standard College Dictionary), stemming from the Latin *mille*, "thousand" and *annus*, "year."
2. Although the word "millennium" itself is not in the Bible, the term refers to the thousand year reign of Christ found six times in Revelation 20:2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7. According to premillennialists it refers to the 1,000 year earthly reign of Christ in fulfillment of the Abrahamic (Gen. 12), Land (Deut. 30), Davidic (2 Sam. 7), and New (Jer. 31) Covenants.
3. The Millennium is also called "Your kingdom come" (Matt. 6:10) and "the kingdom of God (Luke 19:11), the kingdom of Christ (Rev. 11:15), the regeneration (Matt. 19:28), the times of refreshing (Acts 3:19), and the world to come (Heb. 2:5)" (Ryrie, Synopsis, 1953). The "Sabbath rest" (Heb. 4:9) also likely refers to the Millennium.

### Major Questions Addressed in the Millennial Views

1. The millennial question generally concerns when Christ will come in relation to this millennium. Will He return before or after the millennium?
2. Also, "the millennial question asks what kind of Millennium there will be. That there will be a Millennium is a fact clearly taught in Revelation 20:1-6, but what *kind of* Millennium that will be is and has been strongly debated through the years" (Charles C. Ryrie, *What You should Know About the Rapture*, 10, emphasis mine).

### Major Questions Answered by the Millennial Views

<u>View</u>	<u>Time</u> When is the Millennium? Before/after Christ's Return? How long is it?	<u>Nature</u> What kind of Millennium?
1. Amillennialism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Between 1st &amp; 2nd advents</li> <li>• Before the Second Coming</li> <li>• Indefinite length</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Spiritual kingdom of Christ</li> <li>• The present age itself</li> <li>• No future for national Israel</li> </ul>
2. Postmillennialism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No Specific Beginning Point</li> <li>• Before the Second Coming</li> <li>• Indefinite length (but a few say it is a <i>literal</i> 1000 years, such as Boettner &amp; Chilton)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Literal rule of the Church on earth without Christ present</li> <li>• Similar to the present age (sin, marriage, birth &amp; death present but greatly reduced)</li> <li>• No future for national Israel</li> </ul>
3. Premillennialism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Future</li> <li>• After the Second Coming</li> <li>• Literal 1000 years</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Literal rule of Christ on earth</li> <li>• Similar to postmil except Jewish elements, topographical changes, etc.</li> <li>• Future for national Israel</li> </ul>

### Diagrams of the Millennium

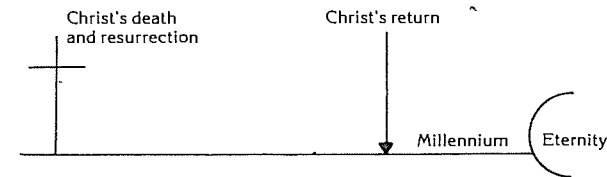
Charles C. Ryrie, *What You should Know About the Rapture* (Chicago: Moody, 1981), 10-11

#### What Is the Question?

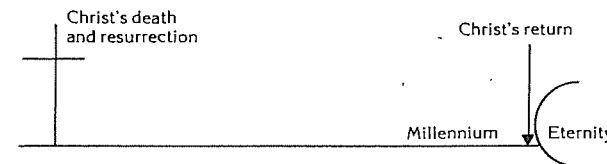
of Christ. Diagrammed, they look like this.

#### Views of the Time of Christ's Return

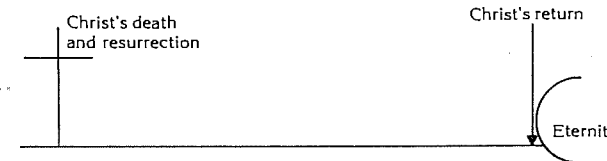
##### Premillennialism



##### Postmillennialism



##### Amillennialism



#### What You Should Know About the Rapture

popular presentations of prophetic truths have to interact with what is being said. Those who believe the Bible are engaging in debates over various aspects of prophecy.

Two of the most important areas of discussion are the millennial question and the rapture question.

#### THE MILLENNIAL QUESTION

The millennial question asks what kind of Millennium there will be. That there will be some kind of Millennium is a fact clearly taught in Revelation 20:1-6, but what kind of Millennium that will be is and has been strongly debated through the years. Early Christians expected the speedy return of Christ to establish an actual kingdom on this earth, over which He would reign for a thousand years.

When Christ did not return, the church's concept of the Millennium changed to a nonliteral one (amillennialism). Augustine (354-430) taught people to look for the Millennium, wholly spiritual in character, in the Christian dispensation. During the Middle Ages and the Reformation periods, the idea of an actual kingdom was not taught by mainline groups, some of whom considered such teaching heretical. In the seventeenth century a new millennial teaching, postmillennialism, appeared, affirming that before the return of Christ there would be a worldwide experience of peace and righteousness due to the efforts of the church.

Since then there has been a revival of premillennialism, a continuation of amillennialism, and, most recently, a resurgence of postmillennialism.

These viewpoints—pre-, post-, and amillennialism—concern the relation of the coming of Christ to the Millennium, or thousand-year reign



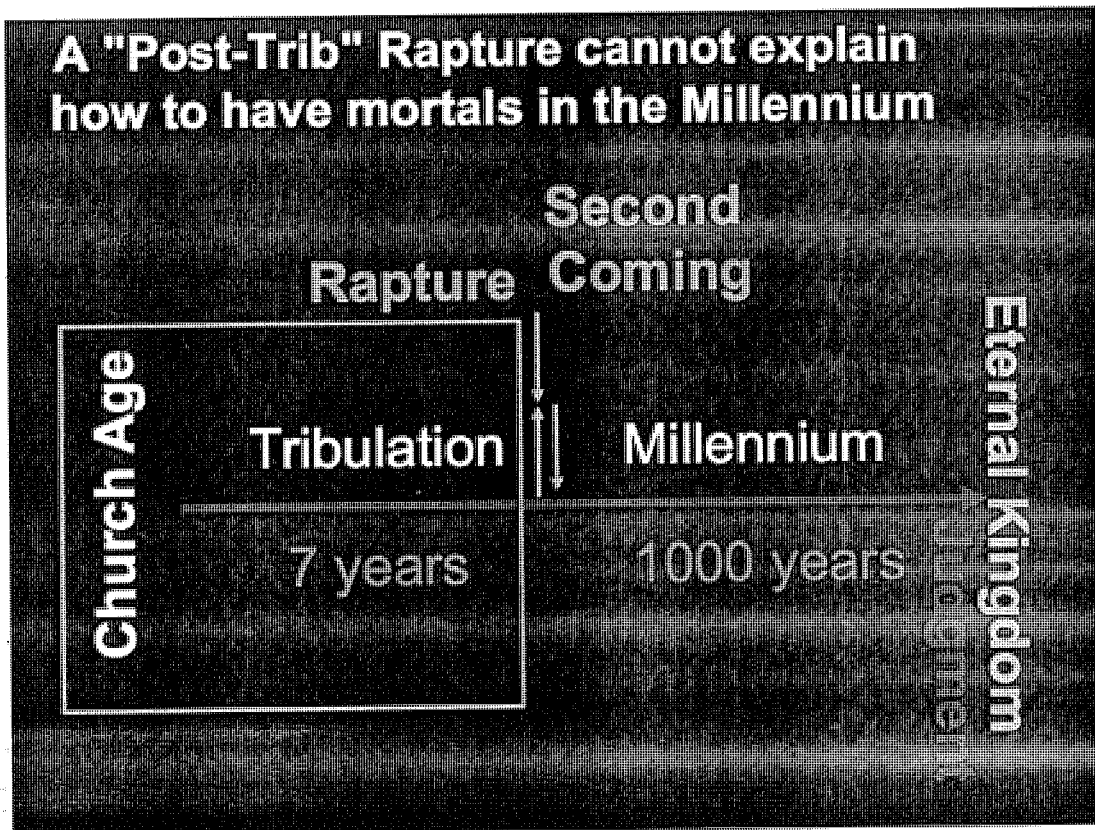
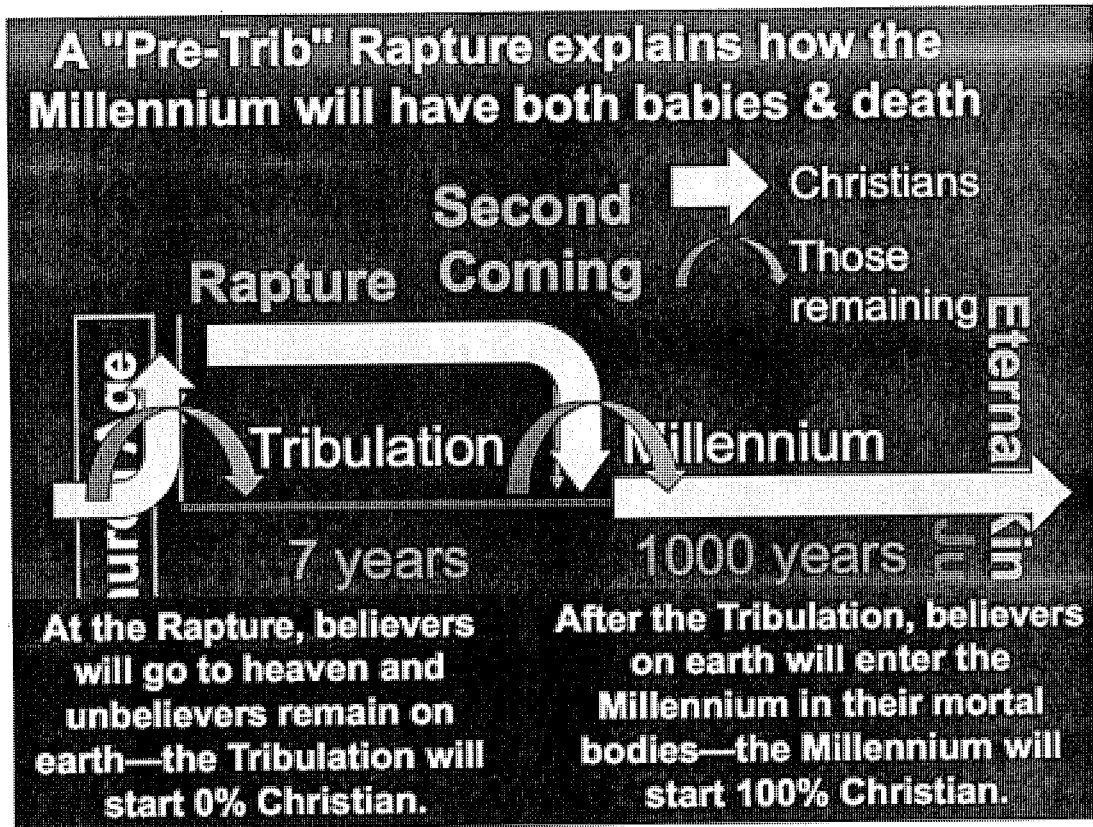
### Revelation 20:1-6 Chronology

- Satan bound 1000 years (1-3)
- Saints come to life = first resurrection (4b, 5b)
- Saints reign 1000 years (4a, 4c, 6b)
- Second resurrection (5, 13)

### Why am I premillennial?

- The best hermeneutic is a normal, literal, historical, and grammatical reading of a text.
- Rev. 19 (Christ's return) is before Rev. 20 (Christ's rule)
- It is the most natural way to see the 1000 years (20:1-6)
- OT prophets saw a future time that is neither the present age nor heaven:
  - Animal kingdom tamed (Isa. 11:6-9)
  - Long life but still death (Isa. 65:20)
  - Yearly observances after Messiah's return (Zech. 14:15-17)

### Millennium Mortals





*Continued point "C" that began on page 421...*

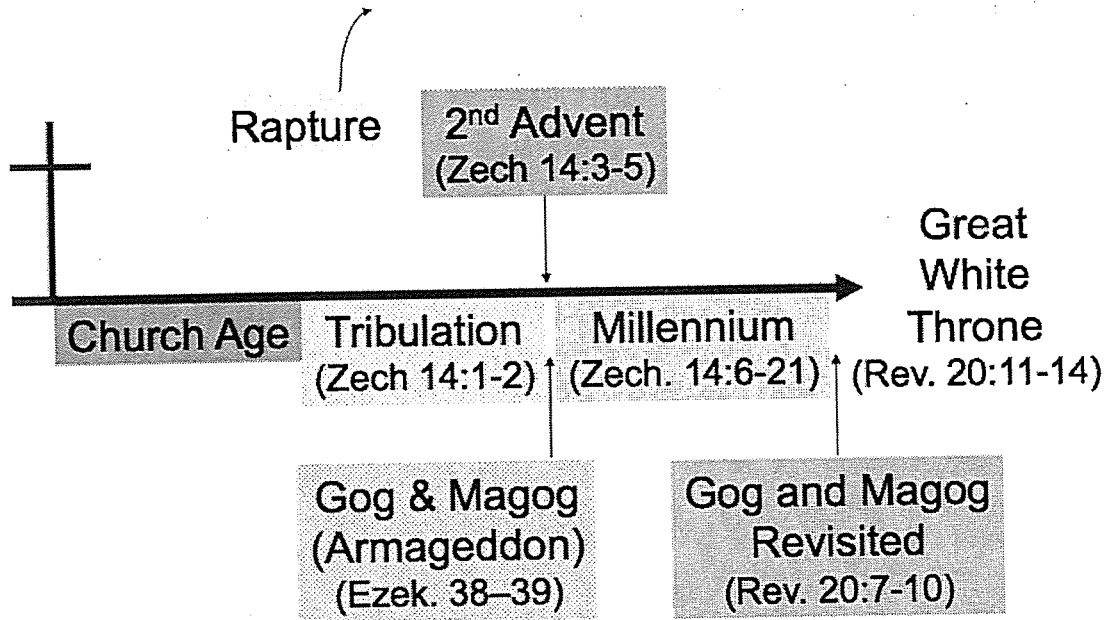
2. (20:7-10) Satan's final torment in the lake of burning sulfur after his defeat by Christ at the Battle with Gog and Magog will show Christ's victory over His long-time enemy.



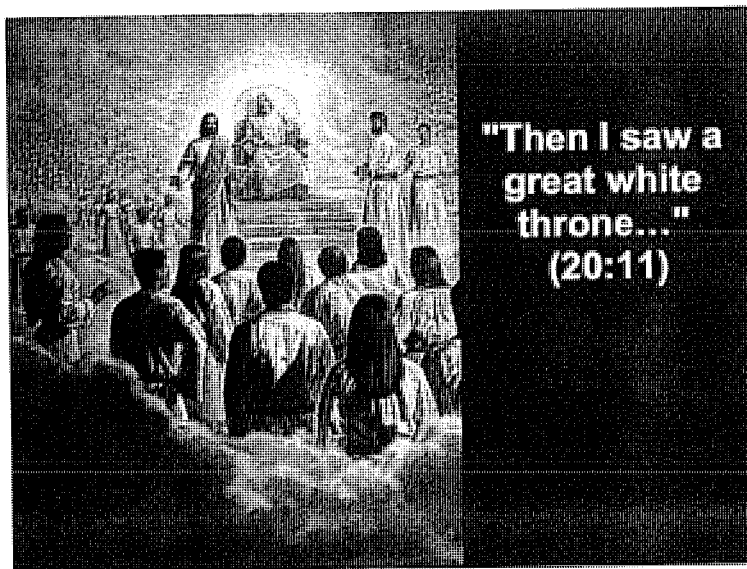
***Reasons Ezekiel's Gog & Magog is different from John's Gog & Magog in Revelation 20:7-10***

Ezekiel 38:2 Gog = Prince Magog = Land	Revelation 20:8 Gog & Magog = nations
Ezekiel 38:16 Gog against Israel	Revelation 20:8 Gog & Magog v. Messiah
Ezekiel 39:17-20 Great feast of corpses	Revelation 20:10 Satan cast into lake of fire
Ezekiel 38-39; Rev. 9:16; 16:16; 19:19 Events fit before restored millennial temple (Ezek. 40)	Revelation 20:7-10 Events fit after millennium in 20:1-6

# A Dispensational Timeline



3. (20:11-15) Judgment of unbelievers at the great white throne shows God's just vengeance upon all who opposed Him and His victory over the last enemy, death.

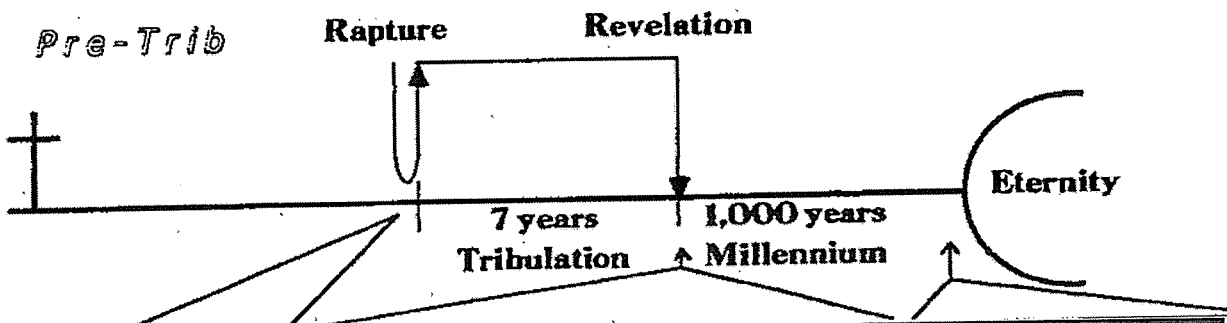


## Resurrections & Judgments in Revelation 20

### I. Introduction

- A. Amillennarians teach from John 5:28-29 one resurrection of the saved and lost, but the Bible records at least *four* different resurrected groups in three separate time periods (see below).
- B. It is inaccurate to speak of a single judgment day as Scripture records *seven* judgments.
- C. Multiple judgments should not sound strange to our ears as there has already been multiple judgments in the past: Lucifer and angels (2 Pet. 2:4; Jude 6), Flood (Gen. 6-7), Babel (Gen. 11:1-9), Northern nation of Israel (2 Kings 17:1-6), Judah (2 Kings 25:1-12), Ananias and Sapphira (Acts 5:1-11), and even the present (Rom. 1:18).
- D. Past judgments only applied to *some* people, but future judgments will apply to *all* people who have ever lived (Heb. 9:27). The general guide for severity of punishment will be: the greater the knowledge of the truth, the greater the judgment (Matt. 11:24; Luke 12:48).

### II. Chart of Resurrections and Judgments



Time	Rapture	Second Coming at End of the Tribulation				End of Millennium	
		Yes	Yes	No	No	No	Yes
Resurrection	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	Yes
Judgment	Judgment Seat of Christ	Old Test. Saints	Tribulation Saints	Nation of Israel	Nations (Gentiles)	Satan and Fallen Angels	Great White Throne
Persons	Believers of church age	Believers of OT times	Martyred Tribulation Believers	Jews who survive the Tribulation	Gentiles who survive the Tribulation	Satan and demons	Unbelievers of all times (except the Tribulation) + Millennium mortals
Place	Bema of Christ (heaven)	Earth?	Earth?	Wilderness (Ezek. 20:35)	Valley of Jehoshaphat (Joel 3:1-2)	Angelic sphere?	Great White Throne in Heaven
Basis	Works and walk of the Christian life	Faith in God	Faith in Christ	Faith in Christ shown in works (Mal. 3:2-3)	Faith in Christ shown in treatment of Israel (Matt. 25:40, 45)	Satan's fall (Isa. 14:12-17; Ezek. 28:12-19); demons follow Satan	Rejection of God's general revelation and/or special revelation in Christ
Results	Rewards or loss of rewards	Rewards	Reign with Christ in the Millennium	Believers to kingdom; rebels sent to Hades	Believers to kingdom; rebels sent to Hades	Lake of Fire (hell)	Lake of Fire (hell)
Scripture	1 Cor. 3:10-15; 2 Cor. 5:10; 1 Thess. 4:13-18; 1 Cor. 15:20-54	Dan. 12:1-3	Rev. 20:4-6	Ezek. 20:34-38; Matt. 25:1-30; Zech. 14:4	Joel 3:1-2; Isa. 34:1-2; Matt. 25:31-46	Matt. 25:41; 2 Pet. 2:4; Jude 6; Rev. 20:10	Rev. 20:11-15

## Questions on Resurrections and Judgments

Question 1: Daniel 12:2 says, “Multitudes who sleep in the dust of the earth will awake: some to everlasting life, others to shame and everlasting contempt” (NIV). Daniel 12:1 places the resurrections during the time when believing Israel is delivered at the end of the tribulation period. However, a resurrection of the lost at this time provides them immortal bodies 1000 years before their ultimate end in the lake of fire (Rev. 20:14-15). The preceding chart shows Daniel 12:2 relating to Old Testament saints, but doesn’t it relate to *all* who are *saved* as well as those *unsaved*? And how could the unrighteous be raised at this point since Revelation 20:5 clearly states that they would not be raised until after the 1000-year period?

Answer: This text is not as problematic as it may at first appear:

1. Technically, this verse teaches only that both groups will be raised after the tribulation. It does not exclude a time period in between the two resurrections. In fact, this would not be unusual as OT prophets often include events together which we see now as separated by large time periods (e.g., Isa. 61:1-2).
2. The best reconciliation of the problem lies in questioning whether the above translation is correct. “Actually the Hebrew seems to separate sharply between the two classes of resurrection. Tregelles, following earlier Jewish commentators, translated verse 2, ‘And many from among the sleepers of the dust of the earth shall awake; these shall be unto everlasting life; but... the rest of the sleepers, those who do not awake at this time, shall be unto shame and everlasting contempt.’ Robert Culver defends this translation by finding support in commentaries by Seiss and Nathaniel West” (Walvoord, *Daniel*, 287-88).
3. Note that the text says “many” who sleep rather than “all.” This is deliberate and thus does not indicate a general resurrection of all people but only of believing Jews. Some amillenarians suggest that “many” really means “all,” and this is true in some parallel passages (Leupold cites Matt. 20:28; 26:28; Rom. 5:15, 16). But other amillennial scholars disagree, taking the text in its more natural sense (e.g., Young, Beven).
4. The passage goes on to record the nature of the righteous’ reward (v. 3) but says nothing of the punishment of the wicked. While this does not *prove* that both groups are not raised at this point, it nonetheless supports the concept that the righteous are raised here while the wicked are raised at a later point. Revelation 20:14-15 shows this later time to be 1000 years later.

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Question 2: Why do so many premillennialists insist that believers will not appear at the great white throne judgment (Rev. 20:11-15)? Many point out that Christians are not mentioned here, but this argument from silence seems weak.

Answer: I agree. I do not feel it is necessary to exclude all believers. What about those who will be born in mortal bodies during the millennium and then come to faith in Christ? Surely they must also appear for judgment to receive glorified bodies for eternity. While such persons could not technically be called members of the Church (since this exists only from Pentecost to the Rapture), they still must be judged to determine the extent of their rewards (not for salvation). A separate judgment of rewards for them is not mentioned in Scripture, but logically must occur for them.

## Traditional versus Biblical Views of Hell

<b>Traditions on Hell</b>	<b>The Bible on Hell</b>
Man dwells with the devil	Man is alone (Luke 13:28)
“At least my friends will be there”	Yes, but you won’t see any of them (Luke 13:28)
Bodies will suffer mild discomfort	Bodies will suffer from burning sulfur and consumption by worms (Mark 9:47-48; Rev. 21:8)
Satan is tormenter over all inn Hell	Satan in torment with those tormented (Rev. 20:10)
A place of solid earth	A lake of suffering (Rev. 20:10)
People alone suffer there	Demons as well as people suffer (2 Pet. 2:4)
Satan rules with a pitchfork	Satan thrown into Hell without any emblems of dominion (Rev. 20:10)
Many now there	No one has gone to Hell yet

## Differences Between the Millennium and Heaven

	<b>Millennium</b>	<b>Heaven</b>
<b>Duration</b>	1000 years (Rev. 20:1-6)	Eternal (Rev. 22:5)
<b>Death</b>	Possible (Isa. 65:20)	Impossible (Rev. 21:4)
<b>Longevity of Life</b>	“Never again will there be an infant who lives a few days. He who dies at a hundred will be thought a mere youth” (Isa. 65:20)	No aging (Rev. 21:4 implied)
<b>Sin Nature</b>	Active (Rev. 20:7-9)	Abolished (Rev. 21:27)
<b>Inhabitants</b>	Initially Christian, but later includes unbelievers –no living with angels? (Matt. 25:34; Rev. 20:7-9)	Saints and angels alone (Rev. 21:27)
<b>Bodies</b>	Mortal and immortal living together (Isa. 65:20; 1 Cor. 15:42-44)	Only immortal (glorified) (1 Cor. 15:42-44)
<b>Satan</b>	Bound, but then released after 1000 years (Rev. 20:3, 7)	In lake of burning sulfur, never to be released again (Rev. 20:10)
<b>Political &amp; Religious Centre</b>	Jerusalem (Isa. 2:2-3; Micah 4:1-2, 7)	New Jerusalem (Rev. 21)
<b>Place</b>	Earth (Rev. 5:10)	New heavens and new earth (Rev. 21:1)
<b>Key Passages</b>	Psalms 72; Isaiah 2; 11; 65-66; Revelation 20:1-6	Revelation 21-22

*Outline continued from major point "C" on page 421...*

- D. (21:1–22:6) Prophecies of the Eternal State show the wonderful future of victors with Christ because He defeats the forces of evil.
1. (21:1) The new heaven and earth without continents separating men by sea are created since the first heaven and earth had passed away.
  2. (21:2-8) The conditions in the new Jerusalem describe the absence of all unpleasant circumstances experienced on earth as man again has complete fellowship with God.
  3. (21:9–22:6) The new Jerusalem is described as a city in the shape of a cube 1500 miles (2500 kilometers) each way with walls made of jewels and twelve gates, each made from a single pearl, lit by the presence of God, with the tree of life on the banks of the river of life.



## THE BIBLE'S MAJOR THEME: THE KINGDOM OF GOD

The Bible has many themes: redemption, the glory of God, covenants, the sovereignty of God, worship, promise, etc.

But is there one theme that is more prominent than any other? I think there is one. This is the kingdom of God.

1. Proponents: Kenneth L. Barker, "The Scope and Center of Old and New Testament Theology and Hope," in *Dispensationalism, Israel and the Church*, eds. Craig A. Blaising and Darrell L. Bock, 305; Eugene H. Merrill, *Kingdom of Priests: A History of Old Testament Israel* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1987); J. Dwight Pentecost, *Thy Kingdom Come* (Wheaton: SP Pub., 1990), 9; Roy B. Zuck, ed., *A Biblical Theology of the Old Testament* (Chicago: Moody, 1991), ix; Klein, *EvTh* 30 (1970): 642-70; H. Schultz, *OT Theology* (Edinburgh, 1892), 1:56.

Others advocate a modified kingdom theme. Seebass (1965) says the theme is the rule of God; Georg Fohrer, *ThZ* 24 (1965), 161 advocates "the rule of God and the communion between God and man"; and R. Schnackenburg, *NT Theology Today* (New York, 1965) says the key biblical theme is a dual kingdom-covenant idea. I agree with Schnackenburg in this dual kingdom-covenant theme as the central focus of the OT—and of the entire Bible as well.

2. Statement: "I am in essential agreement with the authors' stated center of biblical theology—basically the kingdom principle of Genesis 1:26-28. Most statements of a theological center are too limited (e.g., promise or covenant), too broad (God), or too man-centered (e.g., redemption or salvation-history). It seems clear that, although there are several great theological themes in Scripture, the central focus of biblical theology is the rule of God, the kingdom of God, or the interlocking concepts of kingdom and covenant (but not covenant alone). This theocratic kingdom is realized and consummated primarily through the mediatorial work of God's (and David's) messianic Son. Significantly, Ephesians 1:9-10 appears to indicate that God's ultimate purpose in creation was to establish His Son—the 'Christ'—as the supreme Ruler of the universe" (Kenneth L. Barker in Zuck, ed., ix).

This is similar to the sovereignty view, yet more complete in that it shows *how* God delegates limited rule to man in various ages until He gives ultimate rule to His Son (Ps. 2).

### 3. The Kingdom in Genesis 1

- Uncreated God (1:1)
- Creation by Word alone (1:4)
- Creation with ease
- Sun and moon [gods] created (1:16)
- Shared rule with man (1:26)

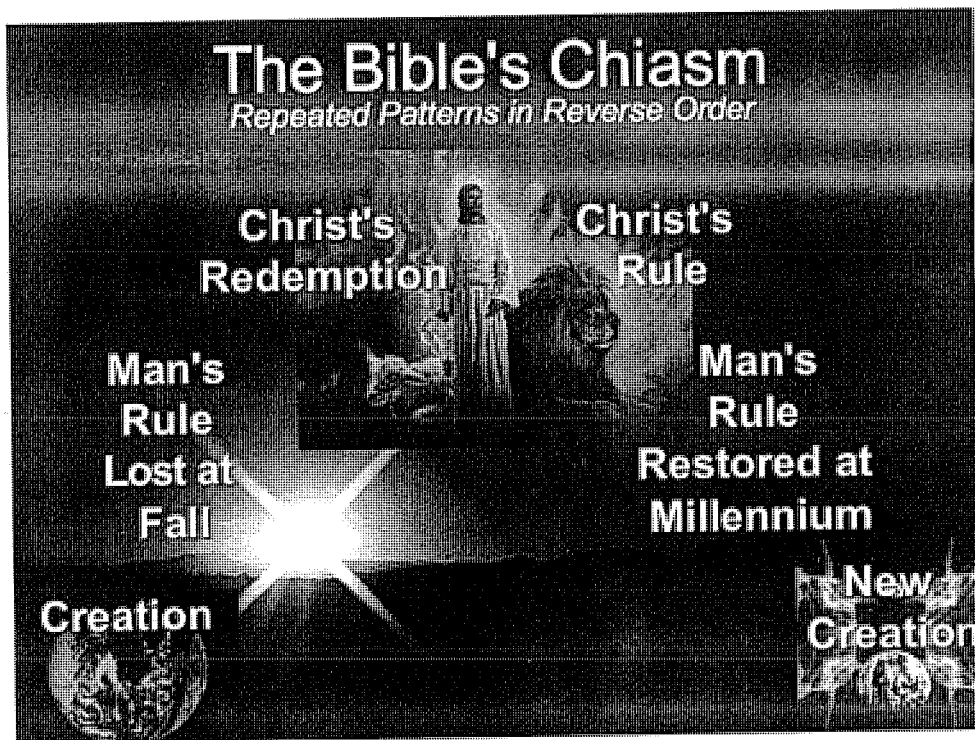
### 4. My View of the Bible's Theme

The Bible narrates

*God's restoring man to participate in His kingdom rule for His own glory*  
mandated in Eden but lost in the Fall  
and accomplished by redeeming man  
through Israel's role as a kingdom of priests,  
through the Church proclaiming Christ,  
and ultimately through the Messiah,  
who will reign as Savior and King  
in fulfillment of the Abrahamic Covenant

5. Key Texts: Gen. 1:26-28; 12:1-3; Exod. 19:5-6; Eph. 1:9-10; Rev. 22:5

	Gen. 1:26-28	Gen. 12:1-3	Exod. 19:5-6	Eph. 1:9-10	Rev. 22:5
<b>Event</b>	Creation Mandate	Abrahamic Covenant	Mosaic Covenant	Messianic Kingdom Rule	Saint's Rule
<b>Mediator or Co-Ruler with God</b>	Man (Adam)	Abraham	Israel	Jesus Christ	Believers
<b>Subordinates (what is ruled over)</b>	All creation except people (animals & nature)	All peoples	All peoples	All creation (people, animals & all nature)	All creation (animals & all nature)
<b>Passage</b>	<p>"Then God said, 'Let us make man in our image, in our likeness, and let them <u>rule</u> over the fish ... birds ... livestock ... all the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the ground...' God blessed them and said to them, 'Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and <u>subdue</u> it. <u>Rule</u> over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves on the ground.'"</p>	<p>"...I will make you into a great nation and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and <u>all peoples on earth will be blessed</u> through you."</p>	<p>"Now if you obey me fully and keep my covenant, then out of all nations you will be my treasured possession. Although the whole earth is mine, you will be for me a <u>kingdom of priests</u> and a holy nation."</p>	<p>"And he made known to us the mystery according to his good pleasure, which he purposed in Christ, to be put into effect when the times will have reached their fulfillment—to bring <i>all things</i> in heaven and on earth together under <u>one head</u>, even Christ."</p> <p>Note that "all things" includes both animals (Isa. 11:6-9) and nature (Matt. 17:27; Mark 4:36-41; 6:45-51; 11:2)</p>	<p>"And there will be no night there—no need for lamps or sun—for the Lord God will shine on them. <u>And they will reign forever and ever</u>"</p>





## THE NEW HEAVENS & NEW EARTH

A. **Terminology:** The Bible uses the term “heaven(s)” in at least four ways:

1. *Atmosphere:* The first “heavens” is the sky immediately above us (Gen. 1:6-8).
2. *Outer Space:* The second “heavens” contains the sun, moon, and stars (Gen. 1:1, 14).
3. *Abode of God and Saints:* Paul called this place the “third heaven” (2 Cor. 12:2) which he equated with paradise (v. 4). We will study this place in this section.
4. *Millennium:* This 1000 year period is sometimes called the “new heavens and new earth” (Isa. 65:17; 66:22) and the “kingdom of heaven” (Matt. 22:2; 25:1).

B. **New Heavens & New Earth:** We often refer to the eternal state of the redeemed as simply “heaven.” However, the scriptural term for our eternal home is the “new heaven and new earth” (Rev. 21:1). Some questions concerning this...

1. Is there an allusion to the first heaven and earth in Genesis 1 here? Yes! Revelation 20—22 contrasts with Genesis 1—3, best seen in this chart form adapted from Bruce Wilkinson and Kenneth Boa, *Talk Thru the Bible* (Nashville: Nelson, 1983), 515:

### THE CONSUMMATION OF ALL THINGS

Genesis 1–3	Revelation 20–22
“In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth” (1:1)	“Then I saw a <i>new heaven and a new earth</i> ” (21:1)
Fellowship with God <i>broken</i> (3:8-10)	Fellowship with God <i>resumed</i> (21:3)
“In the day you eat of it you will surely die” (2:17)	“There will be <i>no more death</i> ” (21:4)
“I will greatly <i>multiply your sorrow</i> ” (3:16)	“There will be <i>no more... sorrow or crying or pain</i> ” (21:4)
Husband and wife (2:18-25)	Lamb and bride (19:6-9)
“God made <i>two great lights</i> ” (sun and moon; 1:16)	“The city <i>does not need the sun or the moon</i> ” (21:23)
“The darkness He called <i>night</i> ” (1:5)	“There will be <i>no night</i> there” (21:25; 22:5)
Satan <i>appears</i> as deceiver of mankind (3:1)	Satan <i>disappears</i> forever (20:10)
<i>Initial</i> triumph of the <i>serpent</i> (3:13)	<i>Ultimate</i> triumph of the <i>Lamb</i> (20:10; 22:3)
Defilement <i>enters</i> the garden (3:6-7)	Defilement <i>never enters</i> the city (21:27)
Trees and rivers (2:8-14)	Tree and river (22:1-2)
<i>Prohibition</i> from the tree of life (3:24)	<i>Access</i> to the tree of life (22:14)
“ <i>Cursed</i> is the ground because of you” (3:17)	“ <i>No longer</i> will there be any <i>curse</i> ” (22:3)
Man <i>driven from God's presence</i> (3:24)	“ <i>They will see His face</i> ” (22:4)
Man's dominion <i>broken</i> in the fall of the first man, Adam (3:19)	Man's dominion <i>restored</i> in the rule of the new man, Christ (22:5)
First paradise <i>closed</i> (3:23)	New paradise <i>opened</i> (21:25)
First rest for God (2:1-3)	Final rest for man (14:13)

Adapted from Bruce Wilkinson and Kenneth Boa, *Talk Thru the Bible* (Nashville: Nelson, 1983), 515.

Here we see the first three chapters of the Bible (where man's fellowship with God is broken) compared to the last three chapters of the Bible (where man's fellowship with God is restored). Do you know what to call the rest of Scripture in the middle (Gen. 4—Rev. 19)? It's called missions!

2. Question: Does “then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had *passed away*, and there was no longer any sea” (Rev. 21:1) refer to a *different* galaxy and planet (annihilation and replacement of the present creation) or does it refer to this *same* planet and solar system which is judged with fire but renewed?

Answer:

- a. Annihilation View: Some verses seem to indicate that the entire solar system will be destroyed or annihilated after the millennium (Walvoord, 305-6, 311; Hal Lindsey, *There’s a New World Coming*, 287):

- 1) “But the day of the Lord will come like a thief. The heavens will *disappear* with a roar; the elements will be *destroyed* by fire, and the earth and everything in it will be *laid bare*... That day will bring about the *destruction* of the heavens by fire, and the *elements will melt* in the heat. But in keeping with his promise we are looking forward to a new heaven and a new earth, the home of righteousness” (2 Pet. 3:10, 12b). Does this fit annihilation more than a partial destruction followed by a remade planet?

- a) A figurative sense to the word “disappear” (παρέρχομαι) means to “pass away, come to an end, disappear” (BAGD 626a). This may denote annihilation:

- 1] “I tell you the truth, until heaven and earth *disappear*, not the smallest letter, not the least stroke of a pen, will by any means *disappear* from the Law until everything is accomplished” (Matt. 5:18; Luke 16:17). The words of Scripture are assured from disappearing. A concept of renewal cannot be sustained here (unless it refers to disappearing *as we know it?*).
- 2] “... this generation will certainly not *pass away* until all these things have happened. Heaven and earth will *pass away*, but my words will never *pass away*” (Matt. 24:34-35; Mark 13:30-31; Luke 21:32-33).
- 3] “...the one who is rich should take pride in his low position, because he will *pass away* like a wild flower” (Jas. 1:10). But after death he *will* still exist.
- 4] “If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old *has gone*, the new has come!” (2 Cor. 5:17). Yet it doesn’t mean annihilation of consequences.

Summary: In the above verses, the idea of nonexistence can be seen in the word “disappear.” However, this word doesn’t necessarily indicate the total *removal* instead of the renovation of the present planet.

- b) The word “destroyed” (λύω) used three times in 2 Peter 3:10-12 may mean either to “break up into its component parts” or “to destroy, bring to an end, abolish, do away with” (BAGD 483d). The first sense is used of a ship breaking up (Acts 27:41), the breaking up of a meeting (Acts 13:43), and the destruction of the barrier between Jew and Gentile in the church (Eph. 2:14). The second meaning refers to destroying the works of the devil (1 John 3:8) and the abolishment of the Sabbath (John 5:18). Most, if not all, of the above texts seem to connote a nonexistence, but this is debatable.
- 2) At the time of the end, the sky will be rolled up like a scroll (Isa. 34:4; Rev. 6:14) as it will be said that “earth and sky fled from [God’s] presence, and there was no place for them” (Rev. 20:11). This may denote annihilation (though the Rev. 6:14 text relates to the Tribulation, so over 1000 years will still remain).
- 3) Christ said he was going to his “Father’s house” (heaven) to “prepare a place” for his disciples until his return (John 14:2-3). Since this “place” is being created now, it must be separate from the present creation rather than a renovation of it. (However, “place” probably refers to the New Jerusalem, which is completely new, while at the same time allowing for a renovation of our present earth.)

- 4) The New Jerusalem will not need a sun or moon (Rev. 21:23), so celestial bodies may have been annihilated. (But the text does not specifically say that a sun or moon will not exist—it only notes that the city is not dependent upon them.)
- b. Renewal View: In contrast to the annihilation view, other verses seem to indicate that our same planet is judged and renewed without annihilation:

- 1) The final phrase of 2 Peter 3:10 notes that “the earth and everything in it will be laid bare” (NIV translation of εὐρεθήσεται, to “find, discover” BAGD 325a, c) implies continuing existence. This may mean “when the intervening heavens are burned away, the earth and its works, from the divine point of view, become visible. This provides an ironic contrast with the picture of the wicked trying to hide from God... (Isa. 2:19; Hos. 10:8; Rev. 6:15-16)” (Richard J. Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter* [Word Biblical Com.], 319). In other words, after God’s judgment of the earth, it is not entirely annihilated—only its sin exposed.

Response: The text is quite uncertain here with seven alternate readings. One of them is that the earth “will *not* be found” and thus explicitly teaches annihilation. In fact, all the other five options teach annihilation as well.

Rebuttal to Response: The NIV follows the best manuscript (κ) and is the most unusual rendering (and thus likely the original text).

- 2) The term “new” may indicate quality rather than age:

It is interesting to note that in the eschatological anticipation of Isaiah the prophet there is the strong theme of retaining the earth in a revised form, or its preservation by recreation (Isa. 34:4; 51:6; 65:17; 66:22)... The remaking of the heavens and earth does not mean something entirely new, but something qualitatively better than the old. The word *new* is the word *kainos*, which refers to something of superior value, functionally superior, a rejuvenated form. Age does not automatically disqualify the attribution of the adjective *new*, for the new Jerusalem used old-world jewels... ‘New wine’ or fresh wine was still wine...” (John Gilmore, *Probing Heaven*, 82; cf. Ryrie, *Revelation*, 119).

Response: While “new” refers to a better quality, Gilmore’s illustration of wine is inadequate. New wine may be of better quality, but because it is fresh it is also newer in time. The same can be said for the new heavens and new earth. It will be better in quality as well as newer in time (Walvoord, 316).

Also, *kainos* can also mean “something not previously present” or something “unknown, remarkable” (BAGD 394a). It repeatedly has this idea (Mark 1:27; 16:17; John 13:34; Acts 17:19, 21; 1 John 2:7f.; Rev. 2:17; 3:12; 5:9; 14:3).

Rebuttal to Response: When the word contrasts something old, however, it may have the meaning of superior in kind. For example, it is used of the new covenant (Luke 22:20; 1 Cor. 11:25; 2 Cor. 3:6; Heb. 8:8; 13:9, 15), a new believer (Eph. 4:24; Gal. 6:15), and the results of being converted (2 Cor. 5:17). Also, the new entity (church) is composed of Jews and Gentiles (Eph. 2:15).

Isaiah uses *kainos* of the new heavens and new earth (Isa. 65:17; 66:22), meaning the millennial (cf. below) reconstruction of the earth altered previously existing elements. It would make sense that the same meaning of “remade from existing parts” is intended by Peter (2 Pet. 3:13) and John (Rev. 21:1).

- 3) The context of 2 Peter 3 mentions the “destruction of ungodly men” (v. 7). A different word is used, but that these unsaved men are not annihilated may argue for parallel meaning concerning the destruction of the elements (vv. 10-13).

- 4) The “elements will melt in the heat” of God’s final judgment of the earth after the millennium. Melting only changes the form of a substance but does not cause it to cease to exist. This would argue for a reforming of the earth.
  - 5) The resurrected body will not be an entirely new body but a recreated old one (1 Cor. 15:35-54). This provides a natural parallel to the recreation of the old earth.
  - 6) Creation today “eagerly awaits” the redemption of both itself and God’s children (Rom. 8:19-22). This argues for recreating the earth, not replacing it.
- c. Conclusion: While one cannot be dogmatic on whether “new heaven and new earth” denotes an annihilation of the present creation or a renovation of it, the evidence seems to better support the renovation theory.
3. Question: Is John’s “new heaven and new earth” the same as Isaiah’s?

Answer: It has been thought that Isaiah 65:17; 66:22 uses the identical phrase “new heavens and new earth” used of heaven by Peter (2 Pet. 3:13) and John (Rev. 21:1). However, the latter two refer to “heaven” in the singular.<sup>41</sup> Also, even if the phrases were exactly the same, Isaiah is not required to point to the same referent since a term used in different contexts may not always have the same meaning. Even though my view is a minority view, I believe the authors refer to different time periods.

Most commentators see the new heavens and new earth in Isaiah 66:22 as the eternal state (the same time as in Rev. 21:1).<sup>42</sup> However, others like myself advocate Israel’s restored earthly kingdom,<sup>43</sup> and Peters combines these two views by advocating an earthly kingdom in the eternal state.<sup>44</sup> Another perspective is more ambiguous, seeing only a time of a new radical theology.<sup>45</sup>

However, Isaiah’s new heavens and earth is the kingdom age that *precedes* John’s new heaven and new earth (Rev. 21–22). It is different from John’s new heaven and earth as the context in Isaiah indicates an earthly millennial scene (see next page).

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<sup>41</sup>George N. H. Peters, *The Theocratic Kingdom*, 2:524-34, claims that Isaiah’s “new heavens and new earth” refers to the eternal state because of the usage by Peter and John. However, he provides patristic and scriptural support but never discusses the passage at hand in Isaiah (this context is addressed in the next paragraph above).

<sup>42</sup>Scholars who see the eternal state in view here include Rordorf, 46, n. 3; John L. McKenzie, *Second Isaiah*, AB, 200-201, 208, n. 22; Edward J. Young, *The Book of Isaiah*, NICOT, 3:536; Herbert Carl Leupold, *Exposition of Isaiah*, 2:378; Claus Westermann, *Isaiah 40–66*, 426-29. Nichol *et al.*, eds., *SDABC*, 4:332, 338, uses this text in an attempt to establish the perpetual obligation of the Sabbath, even in eternity. Sakae Kubo, *God Meets Man*, 65, agrees by stating that glorified believers in heaven will still meet every seventh day for worship.

<sup>43</sup>John A. Martin, “Isaiah,” *BKC*, 1:1120-1121; Feinberg, “The Sabbath and the Lord’s Day,” *BS* 95 (April-June 1938): 188-89; Unger, “The Significance of the Sabbath,” *BS* 123 (January-March 1966): 59; Chafer, *Systematic Theology*, 4:111-12; id., *Grace*, 263; id., *Major Bible Themes*, rev. ed., 291. Bacchiocchi cites the verse as referring to “the Messianic age of the ingathering of all the nations” (*From Sabbath to Sunday*, 23). However, the official Adventist perspective on the Millennium sees it as a literal one thousand year period in which the righteous are in *heaven* judging angels and investigating the wicked deeds of the unrighteous in preparation for the Great White Throne Judgment. Simultaneously, Adventists see Satan bound *on earth* (not in the Abyss as in Rev. 20:3), which is unpopulated (*Questions on Doctrine*, 489-508). Ironically, though the major dispensational works do not mention the Sabbath in the Millennium, many dispensationalists believe in a millennial Sabbath while Seventh-day Adventists do not.

<sup>44</sup>Peters, 2:499-505, says by “new” Isaiah refers to an eternal and renewed earthly kingdom, noted in Rev. 21 (2:499).

<sup>45</sup>R. N. Whybray, *Isaiah 40–66*, NCBC, 276, suggests that the prophecy “marks the beginning of a new radical theology, born of the despair of post-exilic life, which the apocalyptic writers later adopted and developed in even more critical times.” This teaching dates chapters 40–66 many generations after Isaiah’s time during the reign of Cyrus (ca. 538 BC; *ibid.*, 20-22), and thus focuses on the time of the prophecy rather than on its content.



### Contrasting Isaiah's and John's "New Heaven(s) and New Earth"

	Isaiah's New Heavens and New Earth (Isa. 65:17; 66:22) <sup>46</sup>	John's New Heaven and New Earth (Rev. 21:1)
English Term Used	Plural: "new heavens"	Singular: "new heaven"
Time Period	Millennium	Eternal State
Life Span of Inhabitants	Extended yet not infinite life (65:20)	Eternal Life
Death	Possible, though dying at 100 years old is "young" (65:20; cf. 66:24)!	No death (Rev. 21:4) since death is previously abolished at the great white throne judgment (Rev. 20:14)
Marriage & Childbirth	Possible (65:23)	Impossible (Matt. 22:30)
Construction	Building of houses and planting of vineyards (65:21)	Christ claimed that he himself would prepare a place for us (John 14:1f.).
Animal Activity	Peaceful cohabitation of wild animals (65:25a)	No animals are noted by John (except Rev. 19:11) or in other texts on heaven
Associated City	Protection by God in Jerusalem (65:25b) with other cities assumed	Focus is the new Jerusalem (Rev. 20-21) with no other cities assumed
Gathering of Nations	Brought to Jerusalem to see God's glory (66:18-20; cf. Zech. 14:16-19)	God's glory provides light for the nations (21:23-24)
Priesthood & Temple	Has a temple, priests, and Levites (66:20-21; cf. Ezek. 40-43)	Has no temple (21:22), so by implication no priests are needed
Celebrations	New Moon and the Sabbath (56:6-7a; 66:23) <sup>47</sup>	No need for these since there will be no need for rest in eternity <sup>48</sup>
Time	Still existent	Abolished with night (Rev. 22:5), so rest every seven "days" is absurd.
Place of Worship	Jerusalem (65:23)	Throne of God (22:3-4)

<sup>46</sup>Isaiah 66:22 makes a comparison between the endurance of new heavens and earth and the endurance of Israel, which may indicate that a specific time period is not in view here at all. However, if a time period is indeed envisioned, it certainly cannot be the eternal state for Israel will see bodies just slain by the LORD (66:17) and this will occur at the time of the celebration of the Sabbath and New Moon.

<sup>47</sup>Sabbath observance will be true of both Jews (Isa. 56:2, 4-5, 8) and Gentiles (Isa. 56:3, 6-7; 66: 23; cf. Zech. 8:20-23). As uncomfortable as this may seem to the modern Sunday observer, this is what the authoritative text indicates. The Sabbath, although not in effect in the present dispensation, will again find divine approval in the next. This teaching also supports a premillennial view of Scripture, for Isaiah affirms that Israel has a future.

<sup>48</sup>Nevertheless, Young suggests that worship in the new heavens and new earth (which he sees as heaven) "will be in accordance with and in observance of the prescribed seasons of the Old Testament dispensation" (Young, *Isaiah*, 3:536). Similarly, the *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary* notes that "the Sabbath is an eternal institution" (Nichol *et al.*, eds., *SDABC*, 4:338). Kubo agrees by stating that glorified believers in heaven will still meet every seventh day for worship (Sakae Kubo, *God Meets Man*, 65).



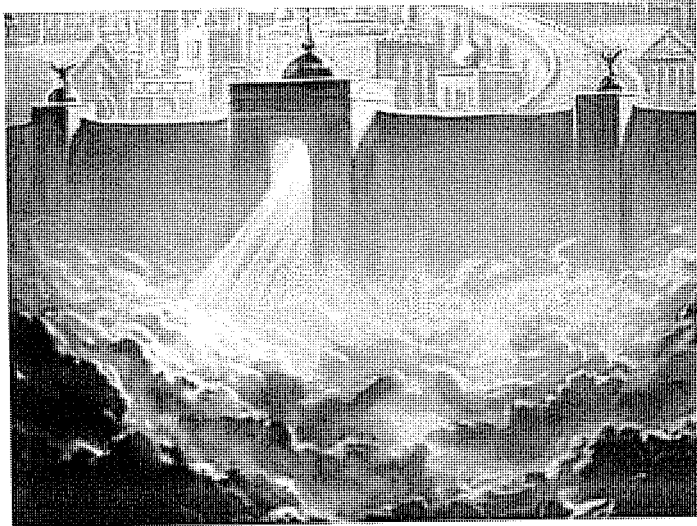
4. Question: Will the “new heaven and new earth” have the same stars as our present solar system? The new Jerusalem will not need the sun or moon to provide light (Rev. 21:23; 22:5) since this is provided by God. But does this mean that stars, planets and moons will not even exist as part of the entire new creation?

Answer:

- a. It is true that the text does indicate that the sun and moon are not needed in the new Jerusalem. However, it may be stretching it to imply that celestial bodies are not needed outside this city to illumine the new earth.
- b. However, another way to look at the phrase “new heaven and new earth” is to take the two as identical. In other words, heaven will have come to earth:

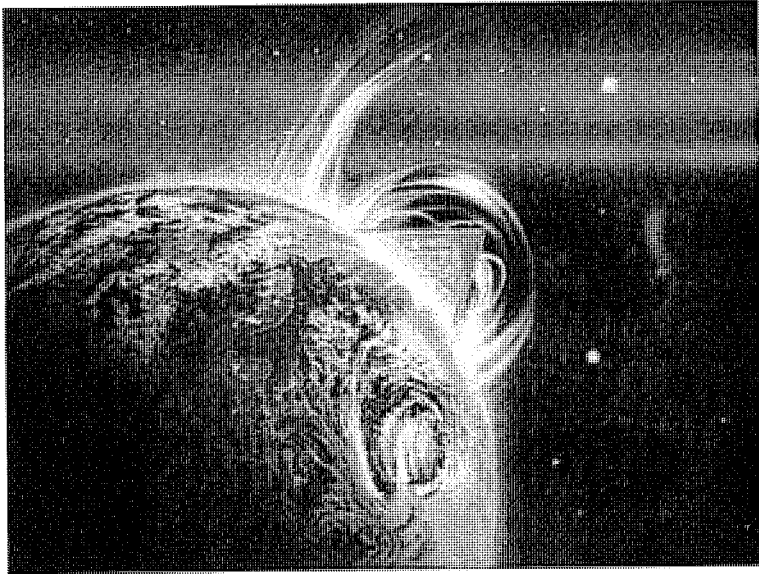
Since God will make the new earth his dwelling place, and since where God dwells there heaven is, we shall then continue to be in heaven while we are on the new earth. For heaven and earth will then no longer be separated, as they are now, but will be one (see Rev. 21:1-3).<sup>49</sup>

Response: Technically, God will not dwell on the new earth as Hoekema claims but in the new Jerusalem (Rev. 21:2-3, 10-11, 22-24).



- c. Up to this point in this study we have looked only in general at the relationship between the old heaven and earth to the new heaven and earth. But how do the heavenly designations relate to one another? It is difficult to tell from Revelation 21–22 the relationship between the new heaven (v. 1), the new earth (v. 1), heaven (v. 2), and the new Jerusalem (21:2–22:5).
  - 1) Evidently each of these four are different parts, for the “new Jerusalem” comes down *out of heaven* (3:12; 21:2, 10), so it must be separate from it. (But this does not explain why God’s throne is in the new Jerusalem as in 22:1).
  - 2) While “heaven” (v. 2) could be the same as the “new heaven” (v. 1), this also seems unlikely. Why would the present heaven itself need to be renewed or replaced? It would seem that the “new heaven” then refers to new galaxies.
  - 3) Certainly the “new earth” (v. 1) is separate from the “new Jerusalem,” for the latter is a city rather than a planet. Some feel that this city will be so huge that it couldn’t be on the new earth (see next section) so it hovers above the actual city of Jerusalem on the renewed earth. Thus the new city actually serves as a satellite city from which the saints may come and go to and from the new earth.

<sup>49</sup> Anthony Hoekema, *The Bible and the Future* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1979), 274.



### C. The New Jerusalem

1. *Figurative View:* Many scholars see this city as symbolic of the church (Morris, 242; Hendriksen, 199; Ladd, 276; Mounce, 370-71). These reasons are given:
  - a. The city is described as a “bride beautifully dressed for her husband” (21:2; see also vv. 9-10). Since the term “bride” often refers to the church (Isa. 54:5; Eph. 5:32; etc.), it would seem so here too (Hendriksen, 199). “Even in the Old Testament the Church is represented under the symbolism of a city (Isa. 26:1; Ps. 48; etc.)” (Hendriksen, 199).

Response: Contrary to popular belief, the church is never called the bride of Christ in the NT. Paul does use the husband-wife relationship to illustrate Christ’s love for the church (Eph. 5:32), but the word “bride” or “wife” is actually never used for the church. In fact, verses 9-10 denote the “bride” or “wife” as the new Jerusalem itself—not the church! Also, Isaiah doesn’t mention the church; this is reading the NT back into the OT. Even a casual glance at the above texts will show that they do not refer to the church but rather to Jerusalem (Ps. 48; Isa. 26:1) or Israel (Isa. 54:5). Finally, more than just the church will live in this city (Heb. 12:22-24) so it cannot be equated with the church. The inscription of the names of both the 12 tribes of Israel (21:12) and the 12 apostles (21:14) argue that both Israel and the church will inhabit the city—not simply the church.

- b. “One wonders if John means to identify the heavenly Jerusalem with God’s redeemed people, even as the church is likened to the temple of God in the New Testament (1 Cor. 3:16; Eph. 2:21)” (Ladd, 276-77).

Response: The church is indeed called a temple (Eph. 2:21), but it is composed of believers each of whom is also a temple (1 Cor. 6:19). However, just because it is called a temple in the epistles does not mean that it is a city in Revelation. The epistles do not contain detailed descriptions like John has here. If it is not to be taken literally, then why all the very physical depictions, including walls, pearls, specific jewels, and even measurements?

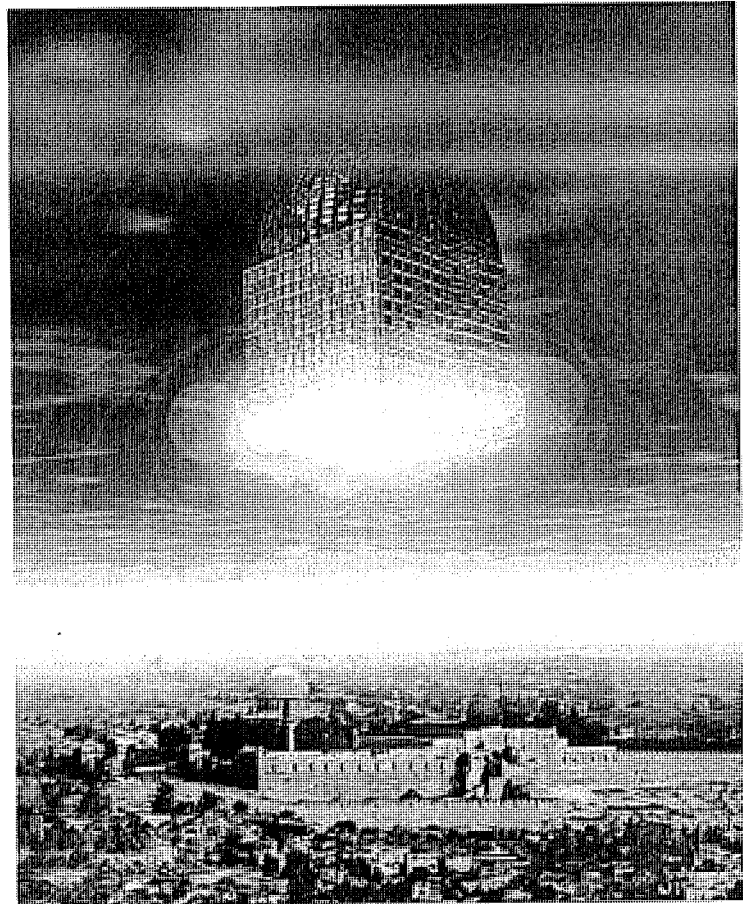
- c. The city and the bride are said to be one and the same. An angel told John, “‘Come, I will show you the bride, the wife of the Lamb.’ And he carried me away in the Spirit to a mountain great and high, and showed me the Holy City, Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God” (21:9b-10).

Response: The above observation (bride = city) is true. The problem is the identity of the bride. As noted earlier, the church is never called the bride of Christ. Also, Hebrews 12:22 clearly distinguishes the new Jerusalem from its inhabitants: “But you have come to Mount Zion, to the heavenly Jerusalem, the city of the living God...” Then the city and its inhabitants—angels, the church, OT saints (cf. Heb. 11:10), God, Christ—are specified in Hebrews 12:22-24 as separate.

- d. “There is a good deal of vivid description, sometimes of a very material kind. But when John speaks of streets paved with gold, of a city whose gates are made of single pearls, and the like, we must not understand him to mean that the heavenly city will be as material as present earthly cities. It is his way of bringing out the important point that the ultimate state of affairs will be very precious. He is concerned with spiritual states, not with physical realities” (Morris, *Revelation*, 242).

Response: Morris’ “sometimes of a very material kind” is a gross understatement. The *whole chapter* speaks of physical realities! The spiritualized view runs into great problems concerning authorial intent too. Would the original readers have spiritualized these things? I doubt it. Are we then arguing against a physical heaven like eastern mystics? Hopefully even those who argue against a literal view of the new Jerusalem still believe heaven is a literal place. We only have one physical description of heaven, so we must be careful not to throw it away so easily.

- e. Conclusion: The spiritualized view of the new Jerusalem is unlikely. Evidence for a literal view is clear from the following (some of this is review from above):
- 1) Physical measurements and specific descriptions (gates, walls, etc.) are given.
  - 2) The city is called the bride but the church is not.
  - 3) The city and its inhabitants are distinguished (Heb. 12:22).
  - 4) The original readers would most likely have interpreted this literally.
  - 5) Even those who argue *against* a literal view here generally believe in a literal heaven (though they deny that this description is it).
  - 6) The alternate interpretations (i.e., that this is the church, all the redeemed, etc.) do not have contextual support either here or elsewhere in the NT.



2. *Literal View*: A more natural view of the text takes the passage at face value (Walvoord, 313, 323-24; Ryrie, 120-22; Paul Lee Tan, *A Pictorial Guide to Bible Prophecy*, 210; Hal Lindsey, *There's a New World Coming*, 289). It says it is a city, so why not?

a. Names: Besides the “new Jerusalem,” this city has several other titles:

- the bride (Rev. 21:9a)
- the wife of the Lamb (Rev. 21:9b)
- Jerusalem (Rev. 21:10)
- the Holy City (Rev. 21:2, 10; 22:19)
- Mount Zion (Heb. 12:22a; Rev. 14:1)
- the Heavenly Jerusalem (Heb. 12:22b)
- the city of the living God (Heb. 12:22c)
- the dwelling of God (Rev. 21:3) or “tabernacle of God” (NASB)
- the city of my God (Rev. 3:12), “my” referring to Jesus
- the heavenly country (Heb. 11:16a)
- the city (Heb. 11:16b)

Note that the numerous references to the city argues for a specific, literal city.

- b. Inhabitants: Who will dwell in the new Jerusalem? Hebrews 12:22-24 mentions this city and then seems to give a rather full list of its inhabitants, although they are not specifically designated as such. These are listed in the following order:
- 1) *God* (v. 22a): The first thing John noted about this city is that it came from God in heaven so that God himself will dwell with men (Rev. 21:2-3). This wonderful aspect is often overlooked in our many questions about heaven. The best selling point for heaven is that we will be with God!
  - 2) *Angels* (v. 22b): These number “thousands upon thousands of angels in joyful assembly.”
  - 3) *Church Saints* (v. 23a): Each has his or her name written in the book of life (cf. Rev. 20:15).
  - 4) *Redeemed Outside the Church Age* (v. 23b): These “spirits of righteous men made perfect” are distinguished from the church and probably mean those redeemed before Pentecost (Noah, Abraham, Rahab, etc.) and those saved in the Tribulation (Rev. 6:9-11; 7:1-17; 20:4).
  - 5) *Christ* (v. 24a): He is noted as the mediator of a new covenant. John elsewhere promised that when we see him we shall be like him (1 John 3:2).

Question: If all these people are living in the city, then who lives in the new earth? and the new heavens? Or are these places simply locations to which we can make excursions from our “headquarters” at the new Jerusalem? This is boggling to even think about but we don’t have enough data to answer with any certainty.

- c. Time: Will the heavenly Jerusalem exist only during the eternal state or during the millennium as well? Some advocate that the new Jerusalem will be present during the 1000 year millennium (e.g., Lindsey, 289; Pentecost, *Things to Come*, 577; William Kelly, *Lectures on Revelation*, 459f., and *Exposition of Revelation*, 248f.). Ryrie agrees, for while Revelation 21:1–22:5 relates to the eternal state,

[Some commentators] feel that 21:9-21 reverts to a description of the millennial state. This would seem incongruent with the chronological pattern of the book and this section. Perhaps the best way to understand this entire section is to regard the new Jerusalem as the abode of the redeemed of all ages. Conditions within the new Jerusalem are conditions of eternity. Of course the redeemed will be inhabiting the city during the millennium as well as during eternity. Always the conditions within the city are eternal, even when the city is related to the millennium... [21:9-27] describes the city’s relation to the millennial state. In other words, there seem to be two descents of the city, 21:1-8 being the one in relation to eternity and 21:9–22:5 the one in relation to the millennium (Ryrie, 118, 120)

Support:

- 1) It would seem inappropriate for the church to have been raptured and living with Christ for seven years which is followed by 1000 years on the old earth again. This would also be a major “let down” for believers!
- 2) Some factors in Revelation 21:9–22:5 seem to indicate a millennial rather than eternal scene:
  - a) The descent of the city is noted twice. All agree that the first descent in verse 2 relates to the eternal state since the earth will have no sea. In contrast, many millennial passages mention bodies of water. It is possible that the second descent (v. 9) denotes a different time period, if contextual factors support it.

- b) The kings of the earth bringing their splendor into the heavenly city (Rev. 21:24, 26) is parallel to the same happening with the earthly Jerusalem (Zech. 14:16-19).
  - c) Leaves for the healing of the nations (22:7) would hardly be needed in the eternal state but would be handy in the millennium.
- 3) The book of Revelation is mostly chronological, but certain exceptions do occur. Some events in chapter 17 actually occur before some preceding chapters. Thus it is not totally out of character that 19:9f. occurs before 19:1-8.

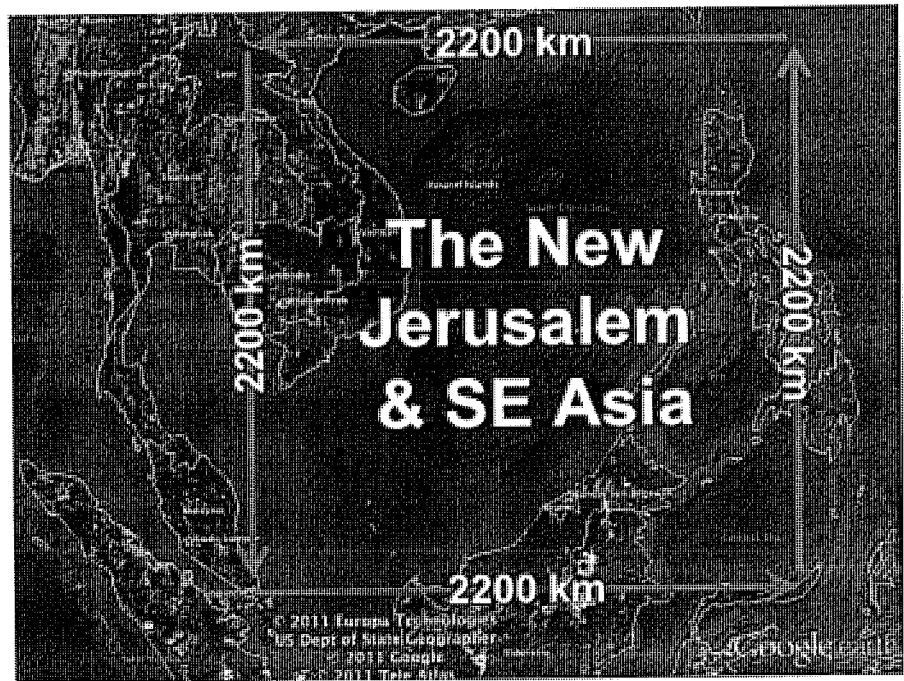
Response:

- 1) Ryrie notes that the redeemed of all ages will live in the city. This logic would also imply that the same is true of the present—that all saved people who have died presently live in the city.
- 2) It is best to argue for a chronological approach unless clear factors mitigate against it. The city is not revealed until after the millennium (20:1-6), judgments (20:7-15), and creation of the new heaven and new earth (21:1).
- 3) Other passages relating to the millennium note that believers will reign with Christ not from the suspended city, but will reign on the earth (Rev. 5:10; 20:4-6). However, we also will reign from the new Jerusalem as well (22:5), though these are in two different time periods.
- 4) The description of the city in 21:2 matches that of 21:9, so the natural reading is that both relate to the same event.
- 5) The implication that no temple exists during this time (21:22) is inconsistent with the millennial age when Ezekiel's temple will be on earth (Ezek. 40-43).
- 6) We do not know whether a return to a millennial earth after seven years with Christ in heaven will actually be a "let down" for us. After all, Christ himself will be reigning and we will reign with him.
- 7) The kingly splendor (21:24) finds a parallel to millennial descriptions, but just because the descriptions are similar, it does not mean they are the same. One clear difference is that Zechariah clearly had in mind the earthly Jerusalem whereas John's vision related to the heavenly city.
- 8) Leaves for the "healing of the nations" (22:2) do not necessitate a millennium. The word here should be understood as "health-giving" since the root meaning carries the idea of serving or ministering. "In other words, the leaves of the tree promote the enjoyment of life in the new Jerusalem, and are not for the correcting of ills which do not exist...as indicated in verse 3" (Walvoord, 330).
- 9) It is not unthinkable that mortal and immortal believers could live together on the earth with the latter living in a separate place. Jesus mixed with his disciples for 40 days in his glorified body, so by God's grace we could do the same.

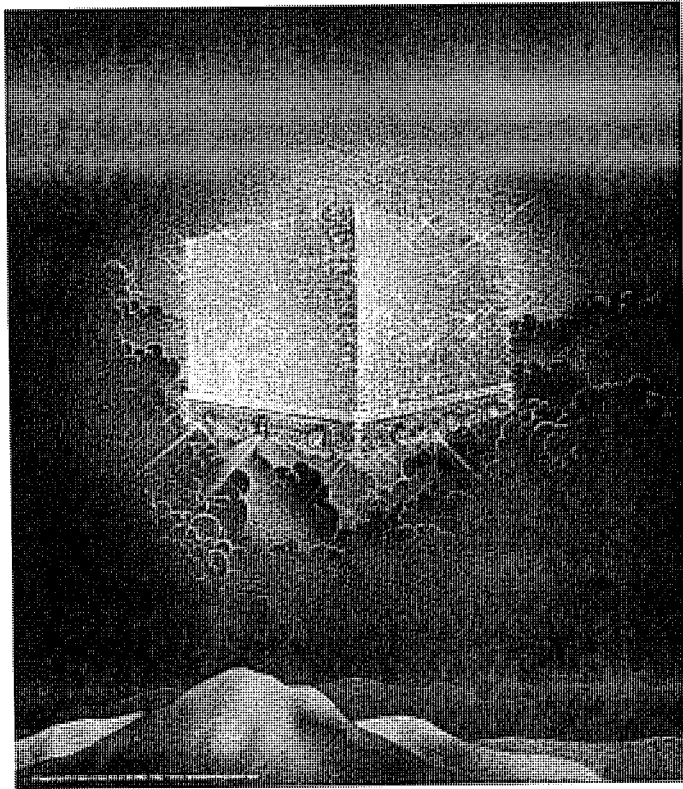
Conclusion: It appears that the new Jerusalem will be in the eternal state and not in the millennium.



- d. **Size:** Ancient people needed a city to guarantee security, so some scholars feel this “description of the church” in the form of a city of enormous size was given to comfort believers. However, this still doesn’t answer where believers will be for eternity. Is not a literal place needed to inhabit the saved from all ages? And would not heaven have to be very large (literally)! Just how large is it?
- 1) **City Size:** The width and length are equal at 2200 kilometers (Rev. 21:16). This is the same distance from Singapore (south) past Borneo to Sulawesi (east) to Manila (north) to China (west)! Such a city has never even been dreamed of being built on earth, for this place is roughly half the size of all southeast Asia!



- 2) **Wall Size:** The wall measurement is 144 cubits or 65 meters (216 feet). But no adjective appears to show whether it means “thick” (NIV text) or “high” (NIV margin; Ryrie, 121). If “thick” is correct and the walls extend to the top of the city this would make the wall 11,616,000 feet high (2200 kilometers)! However, if the 65-meter reference is to the *height* of the walls, then the walls will extend up only 0.000018595% of the city height! Either case is beyond imagination.



e. Shape: The height is the same as the width and length, but the actual shape of the city is not stated.

1) The three identical dimensions makes one think immediately of a cube—especially since it has walls (Rev. 21:12-14, 17-21; cf. Tan, 210). This also finds parallel in God's earthly dwelling place within the cubed holy of holies in the tabernacle (Exod. 26:15?) and Solomon's temple (1 Kings 6:20).

2) However, some see it as a pyramid shaped city (Hoyt, 226; cf. Walvoord, *Millennial Kingdom*, 334):

Christ, the chief cornerstone (Eph. 2:20), will appear at the top where the throne of God will be located, and from which there will issue the river of pure water (Rev. 22:1). From this point too will issue the light that floods the city and the surrounding region (Rev. 21:23).

3) J. Vernon McGee thinks that the city is a cube in space within a crystal sphere:

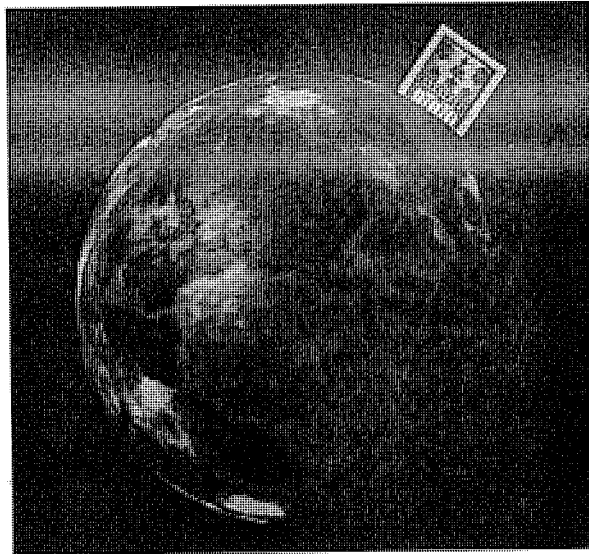
Several times attention is called to the fact that the city is like a crystal-clear stone or crystal-clear gold. This emphasis leads us to believe that the city is seen through the crystal. We live *outside* the planet called earth, but the Bride will dwell *within* the planet called the New Jerusalem. The glory of light streaming through this crystal-clear prism, will break up into a polychromed rainbow of breath-taking beauty (*Reveling Through Revelation*, 2:104-5).

Conclusion: The arguments for a pyramid shape could as easily be applied to a cube, but high walls seem out of place with a pyramid. McGee's view is also unlikely as the *city itself* is clear as crystal (21:11) and no sphere is noted. It appears that the traditional cube shape is a better option.

f. Colors:

- 1) General: The overall impression of the city is indescribable, but John did his best: “It shone with the glory of God, and its brilliance was like that of a very precious jewel, like a jasper, clear as crystal” (21:11).
- 2) City: Gold as “pure as glass” or “like transparent glass” is used for both the buildings (v. 18b) and the street (v. 21b). While hues abound, yet everything has a sense of translucence—after all, there will not be any reason to hide anything! “Also, no one wants to be out of sight of Jesus for very long, and this way you can see Him twenty-four hours a day!” (Lindsey, 292).
- 3) Wall: The wall is made of jasper alone (v. 18a).
- 4) Gates: White is prominent since each of the twelve gates is made from a single pearl (21:21). Some who deny the literal view question the “size of the oyster” but this only shows their lack of confidence in God’s abilities.
- 5) Foundations: The foundations are made from 12 precious stones (Rev. 21:19-20). It seems that God likes green as the foundation is probably green more than any other colour. However, several of these stones come in a variety of hues, with the following options (numbers refer to layer in the foundation):

Layer	Stones/Hues	Clear	Green	Blue	Red	Yellow	Brown	Purple
Wall	Jasper (v. 11)	x						
12	Amethyst							x
11	Jacinth			x	x			
10	Chrysoprase							
9	Topaz		x	x		x		
8	Beryl		x	x				
7	Chrysolite		x			x		
6	Carnelian				x			
5	Sardonyx				x		x	
4	Emerald		x					
3	Chalcedony		x					
2	Sapphire			x				
1	Jasper	x						

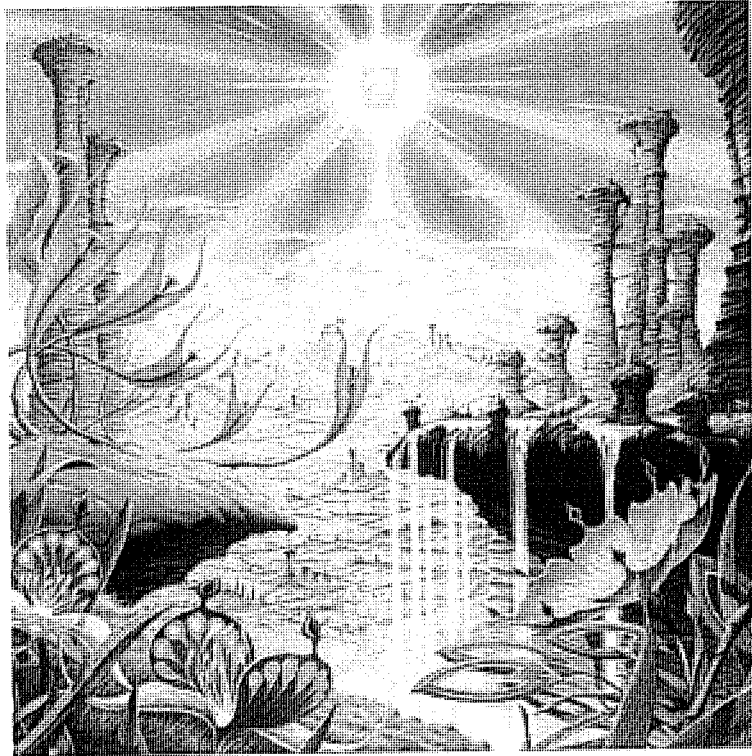


- g. Location: Does the city rest on earth or is it suspended above the earth? Some point to the foundations as evidence that it will rest on the earth (Lindsey, 289).

However, others note that the new Jerusalem will hover over the earth as a satellite city (Walvoord, 312-13; Pentecost, *Things to Come*, 577). If indeed this heavenly city exists during the millennium with the present Jerusalem still existing, it seems likely that the new city will be at the spot of the old, though not squashing it! While the city is seen descending to the earth (Rev. 21:2, 10) it is never stated that it actually reached earth. This may also explain how believers with mortal bodies (who lived through the Tribulation) could live on earth at the same time as those in glorified bodies. The latter would dwell in the suspended city.

- h. God's Presence takes the place of any temple (Rev. 21:22), where he formerly dwelt on earth prior to the giving of the Holy Spirit. We will serve him and actually see him face to face (22:3-4). The traditional view of heaven sees *us as going up* to God, but Scripture records *God as coming down* to dwell with us (21:3)!

- i. The River of Life flows from the throne of God (Rev. 22:1-5), presumably at the top of the city. Evidently the same tree of life that used to be in the Garden of Eden (Gen. 3:22, 24) is large enough to straddle the river that flows from “Main Street.” Incidentally, this is the only street mentioned in connection with the city.



#### D. Will There Be Degrees of Reward in Heaven?

1. Most Christians assume varying degrees of reward in the new Jerusalem. (Actually the Bible emphasizes millennial rewards more than in the eternal state; cf. Joseph Dillow, *The Reign of the Servant Kings*). Yet it does seem to teach heavenly degrees of reward:
  - a. John encouraged a woman to deny hospitality to false teachers so that she could “receive a full reward” (2 John 8). This would indicate that a reward of a lesser degree was possible due to her action. In fact, he warns her, “Watch out that you do not lose what you have worked for...”
  - b. Certain rewards are promised people who serve in various capacities (cf. rewards and crowns below on this page). This would mean that those who do not do them would not receive these particular rewards. Therefore, the reward is not equal for all. In this light, Paul noted, “The Lord will reward everyone for whatever he does, whether he is slave or free” (Eph. 6:8).
  
2. What is the nature of the heavenly rewards? What will these rewards be like?
  - a. Rewards of Responsibility (cf. W. A. Criswell and Paige Patterson, *Heaven*, 208-14)
    - 1) In Luke 19:11-27 (Parable of the Ten Minas) Jesus taught that before going on a journey, a nobleman gave each of his ten servants the same amount of money—one mina each. Upon returning, the master rewarded each accordingly with differing degrees of responsibility based on their faithfulness.
    - 2) Matthew 25:14-30 (Parable of the Talents) records a similar story, except each man received a different amount of money to invest for his master (the one who buried his master’s money depicts an unsaved man, v. 30). This parable also depicts varying degrees of reward: “His master replied, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master’s happiness’” (v. 21).
  - b. Rewards of Possession
    - 1) Five crowns (*stephanos*) are noted as personal possessions in heaven (cf. p. 76). These crowns are not kingly crowns (*diadems*) but victor’s wreaths made of vines or leaves (or even gold and silver in the form of a garland or wreath):
      - a) An *incorruptible crown* is for those who master their flesh (1 Cor. 9:25).
      - b) A *crown of hope or joy* is for those who bore fruit in others’ lives for Christ (1 Thess. 2:19). This is sometimes called the soul-winner’s crown.
      - c) A *crown of life* is for believers who patiently endure trials and suffering (James 1:12; Rev. 2:10).
      - d) A *crown of righteousness* is for one longing for Christ’s return (2 Tim. 4:8).
      - e) A *crown of glory* rewards spiritual shepherds who feed the flock (1 Pet. 5:4).
    - 2) We too often view ownership as sinful, though this is not scriptural.
      - a) As joint-heirs with Christ (Rom. 8:17; Heb. 1:2), we own what He owns! This is joint-ownership in a communal sense but “to deny private property inevitably ends in denying privacy” (Gilmore, 302) much like the mystical idea of blending

into the “Total One.” Ownership in heaven will not include the sinful possessiveness of earth.

- b) We have a heavenly inheritance which is “imperishable and undefiled, and will not fade away, reserved in heaven for you” (1 Pet. 1:4 NASB).

3. However, a recent article argues against levels of reward (Craig L. Blomberg, “Degrees of Reward in the Kingdom of Heaven?” *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 35 [June 1992]: 159-72). He provides some interesting thoughts:

- a. The vineyard worker parable teaches that each worker received the same pay no matter how long he worked (Matt. 20:1-16). This teaches that all believers are rewarded equally since all receive pay by grace. The ending, “the last shall be first, and the first, last” (v. 16), means that all positions in heaven are interchangeable.

Response: Do they indeed receive pay by grace? In each case the pay was for work, not faith. The main point that “the last shall be first, and the first, last” (v. 16) may better indicate that God’s system of ranking people in heaven differs from that which man uses on earth.

- b. Scholars do not agree on the form these differing heavenly rewards will take. Suggestions include capacity for service, added responsibilities, degree of bliss, possessions, and an enriched relationship with God.

Response: Our ignorance of the type of reward does not deny its existence (see preceding discussion for more details on types of reward).

- c. If heaven is perfection, how can there be varying degrees of perfection?

Response: This may seem inappropriate from our vantage point since we are not God, but he has made many perfect things which differ in quality even in our present world. For example, plants are perfectly made yet less durable than jewels.

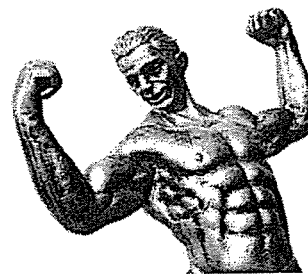
- d. Blomberg considers passages generally used to teach rewards not convincing.

- 1) The crown passages speak of the reward of eternal life itself, not something in addition to it (1 Cor. 9:25; 1 Thess. 2:19; 2 Tim. 4:8; Jas. 1:12; 1 Pet. 5:4). [But this does not seem to be the normal reading of each passage.]
- 2) The texts about those who are the “least” or “greatest” relate only to the “present aspects of the kingdom” (Matt. 5:19; 11:11; 18:4; Mark 9:34-35; Luke 9:48). [No, for people here are compared with the least of the people there.]
- 3) The quality of each man’s works and their rewards (1 Cor. 3:11-15) relates to degree of shame or satisfaction at the judgment (cf. 1 John 2:28), not the lasting results of it which persist for all time in an everlasting hierarchy. [Even this is not correct, since verse 14 declares that “if what he has built survives, he will receive his reward.” It is true that the nature of the reward is not stated, so the belief that it is merely momentary satisfaction may be true or false—no one knows. However, 2 Corinthians 5:10 does indicate that each will be judged for his deeds and “will receive what is due him.”]

Other arguments of Blomberg should be considered. This article is worth reading. Perhaps we need to re-evaluate long-held views in this area.

E. **How Will Our Bodies Be Different Than They Are Now?** This is a mystery somewhat, but here's some of my personal opinions...

1. We will have individual places for each believer to live (John 14:2)! The old KJV translation "in my Father's house are many mansions" is unfortunate as the word simply means "dwelling places" (NASB) or "rooms" (NIV). Since the new Jerusalem is far from being a literal "house" (as it is a city), we will have neither rooms in a mansion nor "mansions in a house." What kind of structure in the city we will live in is unstated. Perhaps more faithful ones will have better HDB flats (Heaven Development Board)!
2. We will have an ability to eat (Rev. 19:9?; 22:2?) but no need to do so!
3. We will be able to transport ourselves by thought as Jesus did in His glorified body (Luke 24:36).



Disagreeing with this is Hoyt, 229-31, who believes that saved humanity in the eternal state will be composed of two basic groups:

a. *Glorified (resurrected) saints* include...

- 1) Members of the Church in glorified (transformed) bodies (1 Cor. 15:51-54)
- 2) Old Testament saints and martyred tribulation saints whom "will experience glorification by resurrection (Rev. 20:4-6; Dan. 12:2; Isa. 26:19-21)" and a "special relation to the New Jerusalem (Heb. 12:22-24)" (Hoyt, 230)

b. *Mortal (unresurrected) saints* who will be saved in the Tribulation and enter the millennium in mortal bodies. Hoyt says that in heaven they'll lack the sinful nature that they had in the millennium and still have the ability to procreate in their natural bodies on the new earth. Perhaps Isaiah 60:19-22 supports this.

Response: Hoyt correctly notes that the Scripture does not say that the unresurrected millennial redeemed will receive transformed, glorified bodies. However, he assumes (though unstated as an assumption) that God annihilates their sinful nature which is active in the millennium. I feel that the transformation of their bodies into glorified bodies is just as likely as the elimination of their sinful nature—both about which Scripture remains silent. Also, angels and people are not married in heaven (Matt. 22:30). Finally, death will still be possible for those with mortal bodies in the millennium (Isa. 65:20), but Hoyt assumes death will happen only to non-Christian children of those believers entering the millennium from the Tribulation.

4. We will have the ability to recognize one another (same race, sex, color): Don't worry, you will still be Chinese! Many dispensationalists teach that the distinction between Israel and the church continues even throughout the eternal state (e.g., Hoyt, 232-33). Hoyt says that the church will have the highest position, OT and Tribulation saints second highest, and then those in natural bodies include Israel and the Gentiles. I need more study here, especially on the various heavenly groups in Hebrews 12:22-24.





F. **What Will We Do in Heaven?** How will we occupy our time?

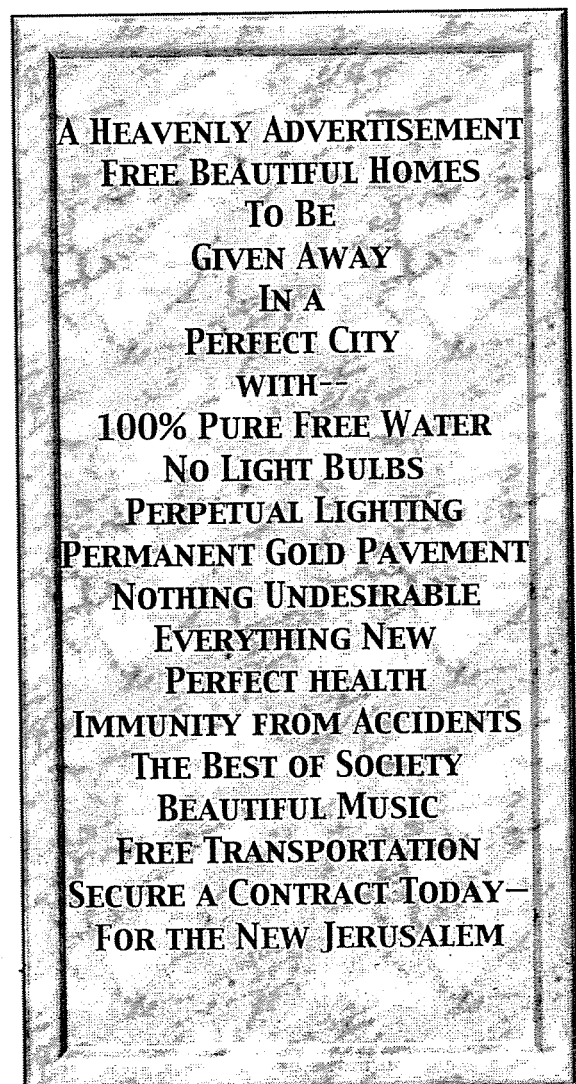
1. Oftentimes our focus is upon rest. Perhaps that's because we work too hard here! (When I ask Singaporeans, "How are you?" most respond, "Busy" or "Tired.")
2. It is true that Scripture refers to death as rest (Gen. 47:30; 1 Kings 1:21; Ps. 16:9; Dan. 12:13; Rev. 14:13).
3. However, the focus of Scripture is not rest, but service in heaven—restful work! Remember that Adam in the Garden of Eden was given purposeful work even before the Fall. In other words, work itself is not a curse—it's those cursed weeds that make the toil so hard. Service has always been part of heaven's environment.
  - a. The angels' job description is service. They don't just float around doing nothing!
    - 1) "Are not all angels ministering spirits sent to *serve* those who will inherit salvation?" (Heb. 1:14). This ministry of service for God by ministering to man includes delivering messages to those on earth (Luke 1:11-20, 26-38).
    - 2) Angels also serve God through *worship* (Isa. 6:3; Rev. 4:8-11; 5:8, 14), *singing* (Rev. 5:9-13; 15:1-4), and other ways. Since they are primarily servants, they refuse people to worship them (Rev. 22:9; cf. Col. 2:18).

b. The redeemed will also serve him in heaven:

- 1) "His servants will *serve* him" (Rev. 22:3b).
- 2) "They will *reign* forever and ever" (Rev. 22:5b).
- 3) "Jesus replied, 'No one who puts his hand to the plow and looks back is fit for *service* in the kingdom of God'" (Luke 9:62).
- 4) "...they are before the throne of God and *serve* him day and night in his temple; and he who sits on the throne will spread his tent over them" (Rev. 7:15).
- 5) "and has made us to be a kingdom and priests to *serve* his God and Father — to him be glory and power for ever and ever! Amen" (Rev. 1:6).
- 6) "You have made them to be a kingdom and priests to *serve* our God, and they will reign on the earth" (Rev. 5:10).
- 7) The redeemed will also sing (presumably in key, finally, for some!):
  - a) "Then I heard every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and on the sea, and all that is in them, *singing*: 'To him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb be praise and honor and glory and power, for ever and ever!'" (Rev. 5:13).
  - b) "And [the 144,000 redeemed Jews] sang a new song before the throne and before the four living creatures and the elders. No one could learn the song except the 144,000 who had been redeemed from the earth" (Rev. 14:3).

There still remains *much* about heaven that we do not know and will not know until we arrive. In the meantime let's praise God our place is reserved and say...

**"Amen! Come Lord Jesus!"**  
(Revelation 22:20)



## Traditional versus Biblical Views of Heaven

<b>Traditions on Heaven</b>	<b>The Bible on Heaven</b>
Man dwells with God	God dwells with Man (Rev. 21:3)
We go to heaven	Heaven comes to us on Earth (Rev. 21:2)
Our bodies have wings	Our bodies are like Christ's without wings (Luke 24:39-43; 1 John 3:2)
Live in clouds	Live in city (Rev. 21:2-22:6)
No Earth	New Earth (Rev. 21:1)
Peter at the gate	12 angels at 12 gates (Rev. 21:12)
No animals	Animals (Rev. 19:11, 14)?

# DOES MAJOR SIN PROVE A PERSON IS UNSAVED?

## REVELATION 21:8

by Bob Wilkin

*But the cowardly, unbelieving, abominable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolators, and all liars shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death.*

Recently I received a letter from a pastor who wondered about the meaning of this verse. The following is an expansion of my response.

### Current Behavior of the Unsaved Is in View

Many pastors and commentators suggest that this verse is teaching something about the present behavior of the unsaved. It is viewed as being given to help us determine if we or others are headed toward hell or not.

One group holding this view (Reformed pastors and commentators) suggests that the verse concerns those who have never been saved. Anyone who is guilty of major sins shows he is unregenerate. Of course, they usually qualify this by saying that the verse concerns people *habitually* caught up in sins like immorality and lying. And what does *habitually* mean? That's hard to pin down, they say. They suggest that the more a person sins, the more likely it is that he or she is unsaved.

Another group (Arminian pastors and commentators) suggests that this verse is teaching that anyone who is guilty of major sins *loses* his or her salvation. According to this view only those who regularly confess and repent of their sins can enter God's kingdom. A failure to confess and repent results in loss of eternal salvation.

Neither of these views, however, is consistent with Scripture.

All believers sin and sin repeatedly (e.g., 1 John 1:8, 10). Some believers actually wallow in sin

(1 Cor 3:1-3; 6:18-20; 11:30; Gal 6:1; James 5:19-20; 2 Pet 2:18-22; 3:14-18). So the view that this verse is teaching that habitual sinners must never have been saved in the first place is untenable.

And, the Bible also teaches that believers can't lose their salvation (cf. John 4:14; 6:35; 10:28-29; Rom 8:38-39). Once a person is born again, they can never be un-born. Thus the Arminian loss-of-salvation view is also unscriptural.

### Eternal Sinfulness Is in View

It is a mistake to think that this verse is describing the way the unsaved behave *here and now*. The verse says nothing about *the current* behavior of believers or unbelievers. Rather, it concerns *the eternal* sinfulness of unbelievers.

A parallel passage is John 8:24: "If you do not believe that I am He, you will die in your sins." Unbelievers die in a state of sinfulness. Forever they remain sinners. Believers, however, do not remain in a state of sinfulness because they are justified by faith: "Blessed is the man to whom the Lord shall not impute sin" (Rom 4:8; see also vv 1-7 and Rom 8:33-34).

Revelation 21:8 says nothing about whether believers actually sin prior to death or not. Of course we know that they do. However, that is not in view in Rev 21:8. What is actually in view is the continued unregenerate and unjustified state of the lost. Because unbelievers upon death are sealed permanently as those who are unjustified, they remain sinners in God's sight forever.

There will be no sinners and no sin in the new heavens and the new earth. According to 1 John 3:2, "when He is revealed, we shall be like Him."

It is interesting to note that this basic message is found three times in Revelation 21-22 (Rev 21:8, 27; and 22:15), the section of the book

dealing with the eternal kingdom. A comparison of these three passages, and particularly the first and last, supports the conclusion that the sinful state of those in hell is what is in view. Space restrictions will not allow this here so I will address Rev 22:14-17 in the next issue.

If we look closely at Rev 21:6-8, we will discover that three groups of people are in view: (1) all who have received the free gift of eternal life, (2) those who have received the free gift and who also overcame the world in their Christian experience, and (3) all who did not receive the free gift of eternal life. The text can be laid out as follows:

#### *All believers:*

"I will give...freely..." (v 6b)

#### *Overcoming believers:*

"He who overcomes shall inherit..." (v 7)

#### *All unbelievers:*

"But the cowardly...murderers...shall have their part in the lake which burns..." (v 8)

It is naive both biblically and practically to conclude that all believers live victorious overcoming lives. Certainly nothing in Rev 21:6-8 gives that impression (cf. Rev 2:1-3:22; 22:14-17).

### Conclusion

If the kingdom contained those still in a sinful state, it would not be as glorious as God intends. That would put an eternal damper on the joy the Lord Himself and we, His subjects, could experience.

Revelation 21:8 should be a joyous verse for us. Those who interpret it to mean that we need to examine our behavior to see if we are saved (or if we are still saved) have robbed it of its joy and replaced it with works-salvation gloom.

The kingdom will be truly joyful because everyone in it will be holy and sinless. ■

*Outline continued from major point "D" on page 443...*

E. The reason God shows himself living with us in our eternal home in the New Jerusalem is to live for him in light of the imminent return of Christ (22:7-21).

1. Christ encourages us to live as if he can come any moment (22:7-17).

a. His first announcement of his soon return promises blessing for obedience (22:7-11).

b. His second announcement of his soon return promises reward for obedience (22:12-17).

2. Christ warns of adding to or subtracting from this prophecy (22:18-19).

### **God guards His Word by judging those who tamper with it**

#### **A Stern Warning (22:18-19)**

**"I warn everyone who hears the prophecy of this book:**

- **If anyone adds anything to them, God will add to him the plagues described in this book.**
- **If anyone takes words away from this book of prophecy, God will take away from him his share in the tree of life and the holy city, which are described in this book"**

3. Christ promises us his imminent coming and grace (22:20-21).

a. His third announcement of his soon return promises assurance that Christ indeed gave this prophecy (22:20a).

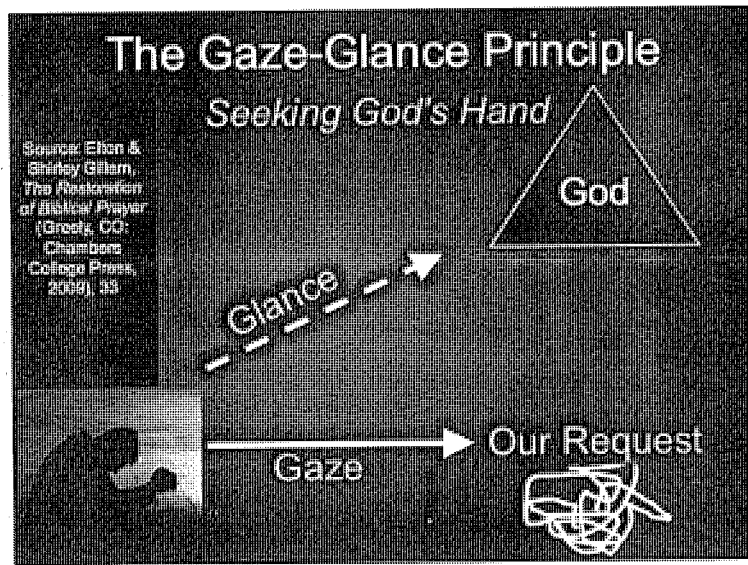
b. John replied to affirm Christ's return and grace (22:20b-21).

## Appendix A

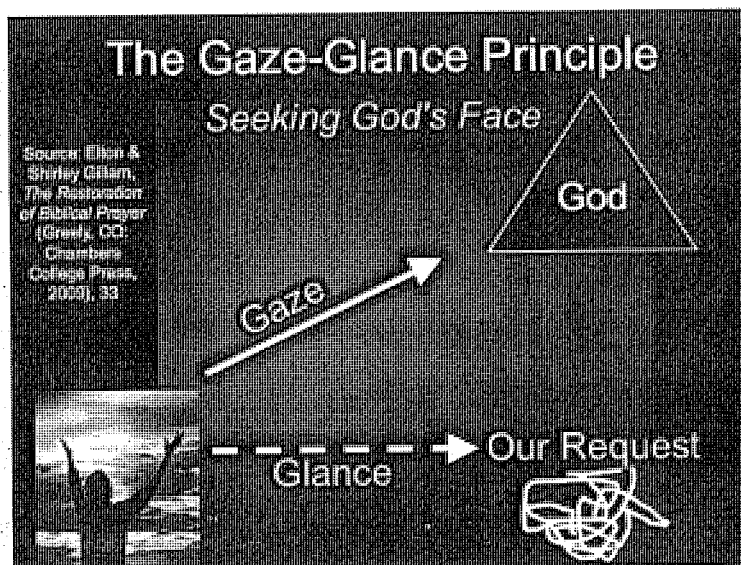
### The Gaze-Glance Principle

Believers living during the late first century struggled on two fronts: (1) the imperial, external persecution of the Emperor Domitian, and (2) the internal compromise of churches caught up in immorality and adherence to false doctrine.

In trying times such as these, Christians are tempted to look down at their circumstances rather than to look up to the Lord. When we do look to him, our normal pattern is but to gaze at our request to remove the difficulty and only glance at God. This has been deemed as looking to God's hand for him to change the situation, diagrammed below.



Rather than glancing at God and gazing at our requests, we must do the opposite—to gaze at God and only glance at the request. This looks at God's face instead of looking at his hand.



## Appendix B

### Preterists

One fourth-century view of the Book of Revelation now making a comeback is called the preterist view. Preterists see the book as largely fulfilled in the first few centuries of the church (*preterist* means "past"). In particular they look to the AD 70 destruction of Jerusalem as fulfilling many prophecies in the Apocalypse. To argue this way they must maintain an earlier date (pre-AD 70) for the book, whereas the rest of biblical scholarship sees it as the last NT book written around AD 95. They also must defend Nero as the Antichrist and advocate the return of Christ in AD 70!

Contemporary preterists include Jay Adams, Kenneth L. Gentry, Jr., George P. Holford, Gary DeMar, Jessie E. Mills, Jr., Don Preston, and Ed Stevens. These men offered the following books in the [www.preterist.org](http://www.preterist.org) website in March 2002 (the descriptions are theirs):

**RESULTS OF FULFILLED PROPHECY** -- by Jessie E. Mills, Jr. -- (reg. \$14.00) YOUR PRICE - \$13.00 (incl. USA shpg/hndlg). Written by a preacher who has been promoting the past fulfillment of prophecy since the 1950's. Takes a similar view of the resurrection as Stevens, Noe and Harden. Much excellent preterist material not found anywhere else. 200 pages pb

**THE DESTRUCTION OF JERUSALEM** -- by George P. Holford -- (reg. \$7.00) YOUR PRICE - \$6.00 (incl. USA shpg/hndlg). Subtitled: "An absolute and irresistible proof of the divine origin of Christianity." Written in 1805. Calamities which befell the Jews in AD 70 and how they confirm Christ's predictions. 69 pages pb

**THE TIME IS AT HAND** -- by Jay Adams -- (reg. \$14.00) YOUR PRICE - \$13.00 (incl. USA shpg/hndlg). Defends a partial preterist view of eschatology against premillennialism. Deals with the imminency TIME texts in the book of Revelation to show how they demand an early date and first century application. 138 pages pb

**THE BEAST OF REVELATION** -- by Kenneth L. Gentry, Jr., Th.D. -- (reg. \$16.00) YOUR PRICE - \$15.00 (incl. USA shpg/hndlg). Out of print for a few years. The first edition was outstanding. This revised edition has been significantly enhanced. Two major sections: "Who is the Beast?" and "When was Revelation written?" Presents much more evidence for the Nero identity of the Beast than any other book, including his other title "Before Jerusalem Fell." The second section on the early pre-70 date of Revelation has also been enhanced and is better than ever. The Preface says, "I have made numerous changes...strengthening the argument...very important emendations...easily justify the re-purchase of this title." Note that other sources for this book do not include shipping. Our price which includes USA shipping will save you \$3.00 or more. This is an excellent deal. Don't miss it. This book is not listed on our web site yet, so if you wish to order it on our web site you will have to mention it in our "Comments" box at the bottom of the Order Form. 246 pages pb

**END TIMES FICTION** -- by Gary DeMar -- (reg. \$16.00) YOUR PRICE - \$15.00 (incl. USA shpg/hndlg). Subtitled: "A Biblical consideration of the 'Left Behind' theology." Foreword by R. C. Sproul. A scholarly and pointed critique of the defective theology of the "Left Behind" series of books/movies. Here's what Gary DeMar has to say about the book: "The fictional Left Behind series by Tim LaHaye is a phenomenon to be sure, but does its message line up with what the Bible teaches? Can it survive an evaluation in the light of Scripture? Gary DeMar thinks not and he proves it in a scholarly, fair, and candid way. He exposes the poor exegesis of LaHaye's books and the inconsistency of his theology. *End Times Fiction* dares to challenge what millions of Christians uncritically accept as fact." This is one book you will want to read right away and share with your friends who are caught up in the *Left Behind* craze. Written from a mostly (if not totally) preterist viewpoint. Note that other sources for this book do not include shipping. Our price which includes USA shipping will save you \$3.00 or more. This is an excellent deal. Don't miss it. 232 pages pb.

# PRETERISM

Updated & Adapted from a Presentation by Joshua Rungtung, Joni Siau & Penny Quek  
For the SBC course Theology III (April 2009) for Dr. Rick Griffith

## I. Introduction

When speaking about the biblical prophecies and the timing of tribulation in history, there are basically four possibilities in which time is being referred:

1. Preterism – the tribulation is “past”
2. Historicism – the tribulation is “present”
3. Futurism – the tribulation is “future”
4. Idealism – the tribulation is “timeless”

In a very brief way of summarizing these four views, the preterist (the Latin word, meaning “past”) believes that most, if not all, prophecy has already been fulfilled during the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70. The historicist (remember we said this is “present”) sees much of the current church age as part of the tribulation period. In other words, the prophecies in the Bible are being fulfilled right now. This may overlap with the view of the idealist as well.

The futurist, on the other hand, usually believes that most of the prophetic events will take place in the future. To him, the tribulation of the seven years, the Second Coming of Christ, the 1000-year millennium as well as the eternal state are all future events. The idealist does not believe that the prophecies in the Bible have timing for the events nor does it believe that one can determine the timing of these prophecies. They see prophetic passages as teachings of great truth about God and are to be used as an application to our present lives.

### A. Definition:

Preterism is an eschatological viewpoint that sees most or all of Bible prophecy as being fulfilled sometime in the past. In other words, preterism holds that some or all of bible prophecies concerning the end times have been fulfilled in the 1<sup>st</sup> century AD after the death of Christ, at the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70. Those who believe in Preterism are called Preterists.

Historically, there is a general agreement that the first systematic Preterist exposition of prophecy was written in 1614 by the Spanish Jesuit named Luis De Alcasar.<sup>50</sup>

Kenneth Gentry, a modern preterist, has defined preterism as follows: “The word ‘preterist’ is based on the Latin term *praeteritus*, which means ‘gone by,’ or past. Preterism holds that the tribulation prophecies (of Matthew and Revelation) occurred in the first century, thus in our past.”<sup>51</sup>

The view of the Preterist is not new to the prophetic debate. Proponents of Preterism argue that this position was the original eschatological understanding of the early Christian church. This claim, of course, is contested by the historicists and others as well. Some other Preterists, however, hold that the view was developed in the 17<sup>th</sup> century. This brings us to the variants of Preterism but this shall be introduced in just a short while.

<sup>50</sup> Alan Johnson, “Revelation.” In *Expositors Bible Commentary*, Vol. 12, Edited by Frank E. Gaebelin, 397-603 (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1981), 409.

<sup>51</sup> Kenneth L. Gentry Jr. & Thomas Ice, *The Great Tribulation: Past or Future?* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 1999), 13.



Kenneth Gentry claimed that the preterist view had a powerful influence in the last few centuries and many writings by famous scholars such as John Calvin (1509-1564), Hugo Grotius (1583-1645), Henry Hammond (1605-1660), Thomas Scott (1747-1821), Moses Stuart (1780-1852) and Milton Terry (1840-1914) have been found.<sup>52</sup>

## B. Types of Preterism

Preterists can be classified into three broad categories. There are the Extreme Preterists, the Mild Preterists and the Moderate Preterists

1. Extreme Preterists: They are also known as Radical Preterists, Full Preterists or Consistent Preterists. They believe that all events predicted in the Scripture, including the Second Coming, the resurrection of the dead and the final judgments have already taken place.<sup>53</sup> Sproul writes concerning them, "Radical Preterism sees all future prophecies of the New Testament as having already taken place."<sup>54</sup> The Moderate Preterists and the non-Preterists see Radical Preterists as outside of Christian orthodoxy.<sup>55</sup>
2. Mild Preterists: The Mild Preterists believe that the tribulation was fulfilled within the first 300 years of Christianity when God judged His two enemies: (1) the Jews in A.D. 70 and (2) Rome by A.D. 313. However, these adherents still look towards the future Second Coming of Jesus Christ.
3. Moderate Preterists: They are also known as Partial Preterists. They teach that almost all prophecies have been fulfilled in the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70, but they also hold to a future Second Coming and bodily resurrection. Some of the proponents of Moderate Preterists are R C Sproul, Kenneth Gentry, etc.

Alan Johnson responds to the presupposition of the Preterists that Revelation 4-22 are events contemporary to John's time, "This approach identifies the book with the Jewish apocalyptic method of producing 'tracts for the times' to encourage faithfulness during intense persecution."<sup>56</sup> It needs to be noted that even if these prophecies were written to bring comfort and encouragement to those who are going through suffering, it does not rule out the fulfillment of the prophetic contents of God's word in the near or distant future.

For the sake of our presentation today, we will discuss some of the key issues that go across the various views of Preterists by analyzing their arguments and our responses.

## II. Arguments and Responses on Preterism

This study cannot cover all the views for supporting the Preterists of various forms, but we will highlight some few critical areas that would be important for our discussion.

<sup>52</sup> Kenneth L. Gentry Jr. & Thomas Ice, *The Great Tribulation: Past or Future?* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 1999), 13.

<sup>53</sup> Paul N. Benware, *Understanding End Times Prophecy: A Comprehensive Approach* (Chicago: Moody, 1995, 2006), 156.

<sup>54</sup> R.C. Sproul, *The Last Days According to Jesus* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1998, 2000), 24.

<sup>55</sup> Benware, *Understanding End Times Prophecy*, 157.

<sup>56</sup> Johnson, *Revelation*, 409. Johnson affirms that liberal interpreters have taken this particular methodology. He gives a bibliography of the books written by the Preterists and for further studies on Preterism, one can look it up at page 412. A more updated discussion is by Andrew M. Woods, "Have the Prophecies in Revelation 17-18 About Babylon Been Fulfilled?" in 2-parts, *Bibliotheca Sacra* 169-170 (Jan-March 2012 & April-May 2012): 79-100, 219-40.

### A. The Dating of Revelation: External Evidence

Critical to the position of the Radical Preterists is that they must date Revelation before A.D. 70 so as to affirm that all the prophecies of the book of Revelation and the Olivet Discourse of Matthew 23-24 have been fulfilled by A.D. 70. It is also important to note that Preterists believe that “when John wrote Revelation, it was prophecy.”<sup>57</sup> David Chilton supported an early dating of Revelation based on the conclusion that the “second-century church Father Irenaeus and most other ancient witnesses were wrong in dating the book.”<sup>58</sup> Chilton further cites “Athanasius as proof of the canon’s completion by A.D. 70.” Thomas critiques Chilton’s view writing, “Careful scrutiny of Athanasius’ quotation, his comment on Gabriel’s words in Daniel 9:24, reflects that Chilton’s interpretation of it is quite forced.”<sup>59</sup>

#### Response:

1. The traditional view of the dating of Revelation is around A.D. 95/96. Irenaeus states that the apostle John penned Revelation during the reign of the Roman Emperor Domitian. Eusebius quotes Irenaeus and confirms the same.<sup>60</sup> Most of the early church fathers agree with the date by Eusebius and Irenaeus, such as Tertullian, Clement of Alexandria, Jerome and many others.<sup>61</sup> Beale affirms as well that “the difference of dating could alter the interpretation of the book, since the occasion prompting John to write might be different.”<sup>62</sup> Thomas affirms the same that “most modern scholars concur” with the view that Revelation was written around A.D. 95/96.<sup>63</sup>
2. With such a vast testimony to the dating of Revelation in the A.D. 90s, the Full Preterists’ basis of argument that the tribulations of Rev. 6–19 (particularly the seal, trumpet and bowl judgments as well as the “beast of the book of Revelation”) to have occurred during the time of Nero stands unjustified for the simple fact that Revelation was not yet written at that point of time.
3. The Full Preterists argument that the Second Coming, resurrection of the dead and final judgment have taken place finds no scriptural support and most, if not all, other eschatological views would deem this theology unorthodox and unbiblical.

### B. Internal Evidence for Dating Revelation before A.D. 70

1. In Revelation 11:1-2, according to the Preterists, John mentions the temple as standing when he was given the vision. So, in their view, if the temple was still standing when John recorded his vision, then the book of Revelation must have been written before the

<sup>57</sup> Benware, *Understanding End Times Prophecy*, 164.

<sup>58</sup> Robert L. Thomas, *Revelation 1-7*, Wycliffe Exegetical Commentary (Chicago: Moody, 1992), 1:21.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid.

<sup>60</sup> Eusebius, *The History of the Church*, trans. By G.A. Williamson (New York, Penguin, 1989), 81. Eusebius noted that “There is ample evidence that at that time the apostle and evangelist John was still alive.”

<sup>61</sup> Benware, *Understanding End Times Prophecy*, 164.

<sup>62</sup> G. K. Beale, *The Book of Revelation: A Commentary on the Greek Text* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999), 4. Beale dated the book around 95 A.D. and affirmed that this is the current scholarly opinion. This view is held broadly across various eschatological views and there is a consensus on the same.

<sup>63</sup> Thomas, *Revelation 1-7*, 21. He clarified that if Irenaeus had been wrong, later church fathers and witnesses would have corrected him. Aune also discussed the external evidences for the dating of Revelation in his introduction to his commentary on Revelation 1-5 and affirmed from early church fathers like Justin Martyr, Polycarp and others that the book has to be dated during the reign of Domitian. For further details see, David E. Aune, *Revelation 1-5*, *Word Biblical Commentary*, Vol.52 (Waco, Texas: Word Books, 1997), lviii-lx.

temple was destroyed in A.D. 70.<sup>64</sup> Sproul, a moderate Preterist, does acknowledge that that “this is an argument from silence, but the silence is deafening.”<sup>65</sup>

### Response:

Too often eschatological viewpoints and the hermeneutics are imposed onto the book of Revelation. It matters greatly whether we see Revelation symbolically, allegorically, literally, historically or as a mixture of some of these hermeneutical presuppositions. It would be beneficial to study the fulfillment of the OT texts, especially those that pertain to prophecy and how they have been fulfilled literally. For example, a literal fulfillment would be the prophecy that kings would come from Abraham’s loins (Gen. 17:6) and Micah’s prophecy as to where Jesus would be born (Micah 5:2). Since there is literal fulfillment of OT prophecies, it would seem reasonable to assume a literal fulfillment of prophecies in the New Testament as well.

The simple response formulated by Benware seems to be the most appropriate. It is clear that when Ezekiel had the vision of the Temple in Ezekiel 40–48, the temple in Jerusalem was already destroyed 586 B.C. In the same way, it is not necessary for the temple to be standing for John to measure it. Herod’s temple was destroyed in A.D. 70 and John received this prophetic vision during the reign of Domitian. Hitchcock, after analyzing in detail the temple passages from Ezekiel, Daniel and Revelation, concludes that John was not measuring Herod’s temple anyway: “In light of Revelation 11:3-13 and the parallels in Daniel and Ezekiel it is best to view the temple in Revelation 11:1-2 as a future, reconstituted temple.”<sup>66</sup>

2. A second line of defense for the Preterists is the number of the beast, which is 666 in Rev. 13:18. This number is said to be the numerical value of Nero’s name and hence, Revelation must have been written during Nero’s time.<sup>67</sup>

### Response:

As discussed above, since Revelation was written in the A.D. 90s, this removes the possibility of linking the number of the beast back to Nero. Some eschatological groups that consider Revelation as history and not prophetic may also point it back to Nero as a possible point of argument. However, the statement in Rev. 1:1 and 4:1 which states that the author of Revelation would be shown “what must *soon* take place” or “what must take place *after this*,” removes beyond a shadow of doubt that the number of the beast must be future and not past or present. This is one of the contextual arguments for Revelation 13:18 favoring a future view.

<sup>64</sup> Kim Riddlebager, *The Man of Sin: Uncovering the Truth about Antichrist* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2006), 181. Benware also advanced this as one of the three main arguments from the internal evidence that seems to favor the Preterists view of the dating of Revelation before A.D. 70. For further details, see Benware, *Understanding End Times Prophecy*, 167. Beale brilliantly covers the arguments and responds to the early dating on the basis of internal evidences in his commentary (Beale, *The Book of Revelation*, 20-27). Beale responds based on his idealistic eschatological view that they were symbolic and that it does not refer to any literal temple, neither to Herod’s nor to any future temple.

<sup>65</sup> R.C. Sproul, *The Last Days According to Jesus* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1998), 147. Sproul admits that it would seem strange for the author of Revelation not to mention the destruction of Jerusalem had it been destroyed in A.D. 70 and the book was written in A.D. 96. This seems like a strong argument for the Preterists, but as we shall see, the internal evidence and the background setting of Revelation favors the dating of the 90s.

<sup>66</sup> Mark L. Hitchcock, ‘A Critique of the Preterist view of the Temple in Revelation 11:1-2,’ *Bibliotheca Sacra* 164 (2007): 219-236 (236).

<sup>67</sup> Benware, *Understanding End Times Prophecy*, 168.

Secondly, as Benware points out, “nowhere in Scripture is any number given specific theological meaning.”<sup>68</sup> The text surrounding Rev. 13 in relation to the beast which exercises authority for “forty two months” (Rev. 13:5) must be interpreted with other similar texts in Scripture. One must go to Daniel 9:24-27 and take into account the context of that chapter. Nero did not exercise authority for just “forty-two months” and neither did any other Roman emperor in the first three centuries. Neither did “all inhabitants of the earth” worship Nero or other Roman emperors (Rev. 13:8). Hence Rev. 13:8 does not refer to Nero or any Roman emperor, but it is future.

3. The third internal evidence for Preterists for dating Revelation before A.D. 70 is Rev. 17:10. Preterists see the “seven kings” as describing seven Roman kings from the first century. Then they argue that the sixth king is Nero.

**Response:**

The Preterists’ exegesis and hermeneutics have become creative here. “In order for Nero to be the sixth king, certain kings were not counted.”<sup>69</sup> They also ignore other scriptural texts like the prophecies of Daniel, which form the basis for this prophecy. There are those who do not want to connect Daniel’s prophecy with the book of Revelation as it weakens their theological persuasion. Osborne has a warning for such an approach to the Scripture. He writes, “Do not impose your theological system upon the text.”<sup>70</sup> He further notes, “Non-dispensationalists stress the symbolic more.” It will be important to note that OT prophets repeat similar judgments on the nations and Israel, and similar language like the “day of the Lord” is commonly used. It would be hermeneutical suicide to ignore other Scriptures that bear high similarity, especially those that pertain to end times.

Rev. 17:10 has no reference to Nero or Domitian as Beale affirms.<sup>71</sup> It is best to see it in light of the book of Daniel and Rev. 1:1 and 4:1 as future.

Hitchcock draws a parallel between Daniel and Revelation, showing successive kingdoms rather than interpreting them symbolically:<sup>72</sup>

<i>Daniel 7:1-8</i>	<i>Revelation 13:1-2; 17:9-12</i>
Four beasts (lion, bear, leopard, terrible beast with ten horns)	One beast that is like a leopard, bear, and lion (13:2) with ten horns (13:1; 17:3)
Seven heads representing four successive kingdoms	Seven heads representing seven successive kingdoms
Four kingdoms	Seven kingdoms
Ten horns (v. 7)	Ten horns (13:1; 17:3,12)

<sup>68</sup> Benware, *Understanding End Times Prophecy*, 168. Benware, quoting John J. Davis, further explained that such methodologies of giving theological values is of Greek origin and finds its development primarily among the Gnostics, Neo-Pythagoreans, and Jewish allegorists. Furthermore, he also points to the inconsistency of the Preterists as to why they should take the number of the beasts literally whilst the other numbers and judgments in Revelation are taken symbolically or allegorically.

<sup>69</sup> Benware, *Understanding End Times Prophecy*, 169.

<sup>70</sup> Grant R. Osborne, *The Hermeneutical Spiral: A Comprehensive Introduction to Biblical Interpretation* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1991), 219.

<sup>71</sup> Beale, *The Book of Revelation*, 870-875.

<sup>72</sup> Mark L. Hitchcock, ‘A critique of the preterist view of Revelation 17:9-11 and Nero,’ *Bibliotheca Sacra* 164 no 656 (2007): 472-485 (484).

So, the eight successive kingdoms in Rev. 17:9-11 are as follows:<sup>73</sup>

1. Egypt (Pharaohs)
2. Assyria (Assyrian kings)
3. Neo-Babylonia (Nebuchadnezzar)
4. Medo-Persia (Cyrus)
5. Greece (Alexander the Great)
6. Rome (Caesars)
7. Reunited Roman Empire (ten kings)
8. Final Gentile world kingdom (the Antichrist)

Hitchcock concluded rightly on Rev. 17:9-11:

The successive-kingdoms view avoids the nebulous nature of the symbolic view, is consistent with the Old Testament imagery from Daniel 7, and provides a consistent interpretation of the eight kings. For these reasons this is the preferred view. Therefore Revelation 17:9-11 offers no support for the early date of Revelation based on the idea that Nero is the sixth king.<sup>74</sup>

### C. The Timing of Fulfillment of the Prophecies in Revelation

It is very important to Preterists who accept the A.D. 96 dating for the book of Revelation that the prophecies will be fulfilled very soon. Their support lies in the phrase “must shortly take place” (Rev. 1:1, etc.). Preterists view the words like “shortly” or “soon” to relate to a short time and see the fulfillment of the many prophecies of Revelation as taking place during the first three centuries. This helps them to conclude the prophetic fulfillment of Revelation in the first three centuries.

#### Response:

The Preterists are inconsistent in their arguments. On one hand, they reiterate the literal view of “shortly coming.” On the other, they cannot explain the phrase “I am coming quickly” (Rev. 2:16; 3:11; 22:7, 12, 20). All Preterists (other than the Full Preterist) await the Second Coming.

When Osborne writes, “Prophecies of future events occur frequently,” he is not just referring to an immediate future, but also to a distant future.<sup>75</sup> A good example is the promise of the “seed” in Genesis 3:15 which was realized in Christ thousands of years later.

Secondly, they are not consistent in using the principles of hermeneutics as they use a literal understanding for phrases like “shortly,” while they employ symbolism for the Rev. 6–19 judgments within the same genre. Hitchcock argues from grammatical and syntactical analysis, concluding that the usage of words like “soon” in prophetic literature does not mean “immediate future” but it has the sense of the type of the “soon return of Christ” which can be distant future.<sup>76</sup>

<sup>73</sup> Ibid.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid.

<sup>75</sup> Osborne, *The Hermeneutical Spiral*, 212.

<sup>76</sup> Mark L. Hitchcock, ‘A Critique of the Preterist view of “soon” and “near” in Revelation,’ *Bibliotheca Sacra* 163 (2006): 467-478 (470-473).

Thirdly, as noted above, bodily resurrection, the Second Coming and the “wrath of God” (Rev. 6:17) through the seal, trumpet, and bowl judgments have not occurred yet and are future events. For a commentator to see these judgments as symbolic and current ongoing events requires great creativity. They must also draw in a lot of extra-biblical sources and pagan background literature to back up their claims.

#### D. The Timing of the Fulfillment of Matthew 10:23; 16:28 and 24:34

Important to the Preterists’ position is their understanding of the texts in Matthew. Matthew 10:23 says, “You shall not finish going through the cities of the land of Israel, until the Son of man comes.” In Matthew 16:28, Jesus declares to his listeners that some of them would “not taste death until they see the Son of Man coming in His kingdom.” Radical Preterists say that two verses coupled with “this generation” of Matthew 24:34 “prove that the Lord had to have come in the first century.”<sup>77</sup>

#### Response:

1. The text in Matt 10:23 is understood in its larger context to mean “the evangelization of the rebellious nation of Israel will not be finished by them but will await His return, which is the point made by Paul (cf. Rom. 11:25-29) and the prophets (Zech. 12:10).”<sup>78</sup> It is true that some portions of the text in Matt. 10:16-22 had been fulfilled in that generation. However those persecutions cannot be equated with the tribulation of Revelation, which will initiate the millennium.
2. The context of Matthew 16:28 is the “Son of Man coming in His kingdom.” In order to understand what kingdom Jesus is referring to, one must connect this with Matt. 22–25 and Revelation 19–20. Then this must be compared with OT texts like Isa. 9, 11; Daniel 2, 9 and the Davidic covenant in 2 Sam. 7. Putting these texts together in their respective contexts, it is clear that the “kingdom” refers to the unscheduled future after Daniel’s Seventieth Week and specifically refers to the millennium. The burden of proof lies with the Preterists to demonstrate the reality that the Son of Man has come. The text further says that we will “see” the Son of Man coming, and it is in our judgment that it has not taken place. This kingdom does not refer to the spiritual kingdom but one that will be established at the coming of the Son of Man.
3. “This generation” of Matt. 24:34 does not refer to the generation who heard Jesus. Its preceding and following passages give the context of what Jesus was trying to say. “This generation” refers to a time period when the “birth pains begin” (Matt. 24:8). It will continue until “the gospel is preached to the whole world” (Matt. 24:14), the “abomination of desolation” spoken of by Daniel (Matt. 24:15; cf. Dan. 9:24–27) has taken place, and the “great tribulation” (Matt. 24:21) has happened; *then* “the Son of Man will come” (Matt. 24:27). There were partial fulfillments of this prophecy at the destruction of the Jerusalem Temple in A.D. 70, but most aspects await future fulfillment. This is consistent with prophetic literature, as the prophets integrated near and distant future fulfillments. One example is Isaiah 61:1ff, which Jesus reads in Luke 4:18-19a but stops at “... to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor” (Luke 4:19a; cf. Isa. 61:1-2a). He saw Isaiah 61:2bff as future. This would not have been obvious to the Jews in the OT times. Hence to draw on Jewish “apocalyptic understanding” can be off tangent, considering the total revelation in the Canon.

<sup>77</sup> Benware, *Understanding End Times Prophecy*, 173-174.

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*, 175.

## E. The Olivet Discourse of Matthew 24–25

Central to the Preterist position is their interpretation of the Olivet Discourse of Matthew 24–25. They view all or most of these prophecies as fulfilled in the destruction of the Temple in A.D. 70. They would strongly depend on the phrase “this generation” of Matt. 24:34 to mean that generation who heard the Olivet Discourse. We have addressed some issues from Matthew above.

### Response:

1. Some important points to this text are addressed above. Some further contextual observations are necessary. Benware rightly points out that the preceding section of Matt. 23:35-39 clearly demonstrates Christ telling the Jews that the Jerusalem temple would be destroyed. However, Matt. 23:39 also looks into the future to a time when Israel will welcome the Messiah. The OT prophets foresaw into the future to a time when Israel, as a nation, would be restored to their land.<sup>79</sup>
2. Preterists view the “abomination of desolation” in Matt. 24:15 as fulfilled in the temple destruction in A.D. 70 at the hand of the Romans. However, Benware points out that the “differences between Matthew 24 and Vespasian’s destruction of the temple are great.”<sup>80</sup> The incidence and the texts surrounding Matthew 24 and Daniel 9 need to be taken into consideration. The background to the text lies in the three questions posted by the disciples in Matt. 24:3.

First, they ask Him, “Tell us, when will all these things take place?” “These things” refers to Matthew 24:1-2. The answers Jesus gave here move into the far distant future as Daniel was shown the seventy years of captivity (Dan. 9:1-2). As he was praying and confessing (Dan. 9:20), the angel Gabriel came and revealed the plan of God till the “end of sin,” which brings “everlasting righteousness” (Daniel 9:24ff).

The second question was “what will be the sign of your coming?” (Matt. 24:3). Jesus responded by giving the signs of His Second Coming that parallel Daniel 9 and other texts.

The third question raised was, “What will be the end of the age?” These last two questions are interlinked and this is the whole purpose of the Olivet Discourse. Deviating from the context of the disciples’ questions in these chapters will lead to a wrong meaning of the text and the timing of its occurrence. The “abomination of desolation” is to be particularly understood with the breaking of the covenant at midpoint of the tribulation (Daniel 9:27) necessitating further outpouring of God’s wrath in the bowl judgments of Revelation. The “abomination of desolation” must not be confused with the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70. The similarities must not mislead us into ignoring the differences between them. Differences, even if there is only one, must be given due consideration in prophetic literature.

<sup>79</sup> The texts are too numerous but we will highlight a few sample texts without priority or importance given to the order. Many texts see Israel restored in the future, such as Isa. 54 where God affirms an eternal covenant of peace. Ezekiel 36–48 sees Israel in the restored Temple worship. It is strange that we should bring our modern understanding into the text of this temple vision and make it symbolic. It needs to be noted that the vision of the ark and the holy place given to Moses was done exactly according to the given measurements (Exod. 39:32). It would seem even stranger to a non-Christian scholar to change the methodology of interpretation for Ezekiel’s vision of the temple within the same OT Canon.

<sup>80</sup> Benware, *Understanding End Times Prophecy*, 179.

The coming of Jesus has been dealt with above. Preterists would see the “signs in heaven” of Matt. 24:29-31 as a dramatic way of expressing national calamity or victory in battle.”<sup>81</sup> The dangers of such symbolism or allegorization of the text is very much present in the “health and wealth” gospel today. Spiritualizing such texts would legitimize the modern day gospel preachers and would do damage to the authority of the Scripture. It would then become a post-modernist way of looking at the text.

## Conclusion

Although Preterists tend to be eclectic in their hermeneutical approach, we must not totally disregard their view. It can be helpful to see another perspective of interpretation of Scripture.

That understanding is not there for us to criticize or fight about but for us to learn to see things from a different angle than our own. Paul, in his second letter to Timothy reiterated, “The Lord’s bond-servant must not be quarrelsome” (2 Tim. 2:24). We must understand that there are many different views and doctrines, but the point is not for us to push through our own understanding and interpretation.

This view needs to be weighed, so as to shed more light onto our own understanding. Perhaps it gives us an even firmer reason to stick to our own beliefs and understanding. Or, does it throw doubt at us? If so, we should then spur us to dig deeper into the Word of God for further study and understanding.

As pastors or teachers, this can then ensure that we are teaching the Scripture as it is (or at least the way we have understood it, having thought through and debated it) and not mislead others or have anything to do with “irreverent silly myths” or “worldly fables” as Paul warned about in 1 Timothy 4:7.

We cannot undermine the importance of the future aspect of the Second Coming, the bodily resurrection and the impending future Day of the Lord. It can serve to encourage the believers to live pure, holy and reverent lives before the Lord and before men. It also gives hope in the present time when one goes through difficulties, sufferings and persecutions.

This is what it means to live our lives on the “alert” as Jesus said in Matthew 24:42, where he warned, “Therefore be on the *alert* for you do not know which day your Lord is coming.”

Hence, regardless of which eschatological stand we take, we should do exactly that. Be on the alert—live pure, holy and reverent lives, tell others about Jesus and tell them to do the same!

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<sup>81</sup> Gentry and Ice, *The Great Tribulation*, 55. Their line of defense seems reasonable in light of OT texts like “the mountains quake at the presence of the Lord,” where in reality the mountains may not have quaked. This line of argument is taken up by the Preterists. Gentry further comments, “Prophets often express national catastrophes in terms of cosmic destruction.” This point is well taken but what they fail to recognize is that the context of whether the cosmic disturbance is referring typologically to some national destruction, or it is actually referring to actual cosmic disturbances. Contextual understanding and usage of such words by the prophets in view of the culmination of history with texts in Daniel and Revelation would affirm a real occurrence of such cosmic disturbance of immense proportions. Matthew 24:21 makes it clear that this “great tribulation,” referring to great cosmic disturbances, is perfectly in tandem with Revelation judgments, which have “not been from the beginning of the world until now, no and never will be.” No doubt there have been great calamities such as the Flood, destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, the rise and fall of nations in history, world wars, Jewish massacre by Hitler and Stalin, the recent Tsunami and the 9/11 bombings. These have happened, but they are not *the* “tribulation” referred to in Revelation 6–19 and Matthew 23–24.





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## Appendix C

## Outline of End-Time Events Predicted in the Bible

The Bible Knowledge Commentary: Old Testament Edition, 1319-1322

Outline of End-Time Events  
Predicted in the Bible\*

- I. Events Before, During, and After the Seven-Year End-Time Period. (This seven-year period is the 70th "seven" of Daniel, Dan. 9:27.)
  - A. Events immediately before the seven-year period
    1. Church raptured (John 14:1-3; 1 Cor. 15:51-52; 1 Thes. 4:16-18; Rev. 3:10)
    2. Restrainer removed (2 Thes. 2:7)
    3. Judgment seat of Christ (in heaven, 1 Cor. 3:12-15; 2 Cor. 5:10)
  - B. Events at the beginning of the seven-year period
    1. Antichrist (the coming "ruler") makes a covenant with Israel (Dan. 9:26-27)
    2. Two witnesses begin their ministry (Rev. 11:3)<sup>1</sup>
  - C. Events in the first half of the seven-year period
    1. Antichrist rises to power over the Roman confederacy (Dan. 7:20, 24)<sup>2</sup>
    2. Israel living in peace in the land (Ezek. 38:8)
    3. Temple sacrifices instituted (Rev. 11:1-2)
    4. World church dominates religion and the Antichrist (Rev. 17)
  - D. Events perhaps just before the middle of the seven-year period
    1. Gog and his allies invade Palestine from the north (Ezek. 38:2, 5-6, 22)<sup>3</sup>
    2. Gog and his allies destroyed by God (Ezek. 38:17-23)<sup>3</sup>
  - E. Events at the middle of the seven-year period
    1. Satan cast down from heaven and energizes the Antichrist (Rev. 12:12-17)
    2. Antichrist breaks his covenant with Israel, causing her sacrifices to cease (Dan. 9:27)
    3. The 10 kings under the Antichrist destroy the world church (Rev. 17:16-18)
  - F. Events of the second half of the seven-year period
 

These three-and-one-half years are called "the Great Tribulation" (Rev. 7:14; cf. "great distress," Matt. 24:21; "time of distress," Dan. 12:1; and "a time of trouble for Jacob," Jer. 30:7)

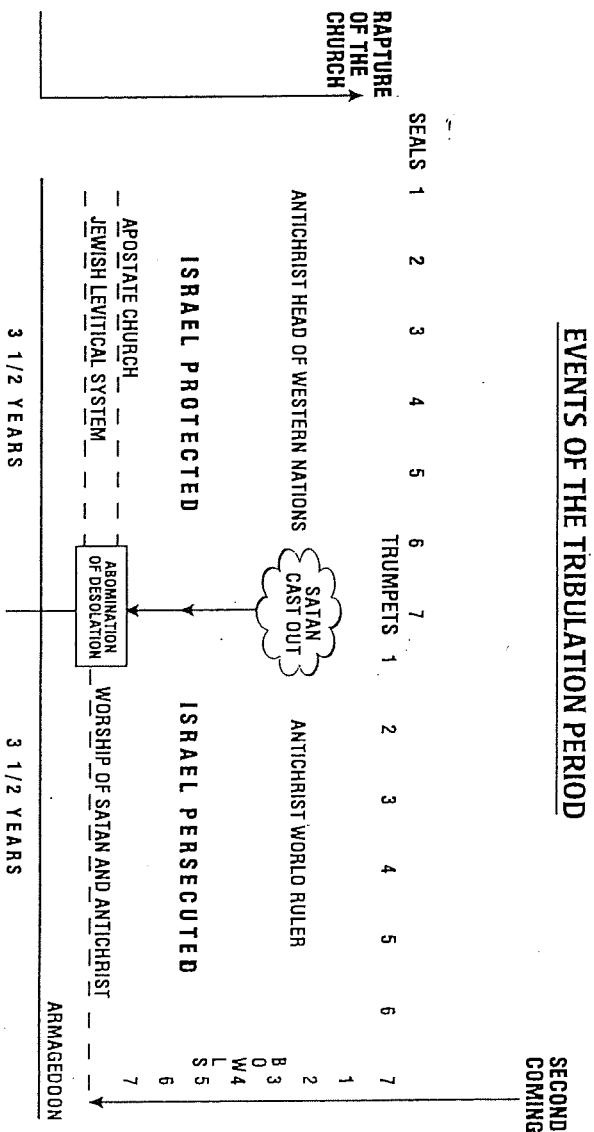
    1. Rebellion (apostasy) against the truth in the professing church (Matt. 24:12; 2 Thes. 2:3)<sup>4</sup>
    2. Antichrist becomes a world ruler (1st seal,<sup>5</sup> Rev. 6:1-2) with support of the Western confederacy (Rev. 13:5, 7; 17:12-13)
    3. Antichrist revealed as "the man of lawlessness," "the lawless one" (2 Thes. 2:3, 8-9)
    4. War, famine, and death (2nd, 3rd, and 4th seals,<sup>6</sup> Rev. 6:3-8)
    5. Converted multitudes from every nation martyred (5th seal,<sup>6</sup> Rev. 6:9-11; 7:9-14; Matt. 24:9)
    6. Natural disturbances and worldwide fear of divine wrath (6th seal,<sup>6</sup> Rev. 6:12-17)
    7. Antichrist's image (an "abomination") set up for worship (Dan. 9:27; Matt. 24:15; 2 Thes. 2:4; Rev. 13:14-15)
    8. The false prophet promotes the Antichrist, who is worshipped by nations and unbelieving Israel (Matt. 24:11-12; 2 Thes. 2:11; Rev. 13:4, 11-15)
    9. Mark of the beast used to promote worship of the Antichrist (Rev. 13:16-18)
    10. Two witnesses slain by the Antichrist (Rev. 11:7)<sup>7</sup>
    11. Two witnesses resurrected (Rev. 11:11-12)<sup>7</sup>
    12. Israel scattered because of the anger of Satan (Rev. 12:6, 13-17) and because of the "abomination" (Antichrist's image) in the temple (Matt. 24:15-26)
  - G. Events concluding the seven-year period
    1. The king of the South (Egypt) and the king of the North fight against the Antichrist (Dan. 11:40a)<sup>8</sup>
    2. Antichrist enters Palestine and defeats Egypt, Libya, and Ethiopia (Dan. 11:40a-43)<sup>8</sup>
    3. Armies from the East and the North move toward Palestine (Dan. 11:44; Rev. 16:12)
    4. Jerusalem is ravaged (Zech. 14:1-4)
    5. Commercial Babylon is destroyed (Rev. 16:19; 18:1-3, 21-24)
    6. Signs appear in the earth and sky (Isa. 13:10; Joel 2:10, 30-31; 3:15; Matt. 24:29)
    7. Christ returns with the armies of heaven (Matt. 24:27-31; Rev. 19:11-16) **Jude 14**
    8. Jews flee Jerusalem facilitated by topographical changes (Zech. 14:5)
    9. Armies unite at Armageddon against Christ and the armies of heaven (Joel 3:9-11; Rev. 16:16; 19:17-19)<sup>9</sup>
    10. Armies are destroyed by Christ (Rev. 19:19, 21)<sup>9</sup>
    11. The "beast" (Antichrist) and the false prophet are thrown into the lake of fire (Rev. 19:20)
  - H. Events following the seven-year period
    1. Final regathering of Israel (Isa. 11:11-12; Jer. 30:3; Ezek. 36:24; 37:1-14; Amos 9:14-15; Micah 4:6-7; Matt. 24:31)
    2. A remnant of Israelites turn to the Lord and are forgiven and cleansed (Hosea 14:1-5; Zech. 12:10; 13:1)
    3. National deliverance of Israel from the Antichrist (Dan. 12:1b; Zech. 12:10; 13:1; Rom. 11:26-27)
    4. Judgment of living Israel (Ezek. 20:33-38; Matt. 25:1-30)
    5. Judgment of living Gentiles (Matt. 25:31-46)
    6. Satan cast into the abyss (Rev. 20:1-3)
    7. Old Testament saints resurrected (Isa. 26:19; Dan. 12:1-3)
    8. Tribulation saints resurrected (Rev. 20:4-6)
    9. Daniel 9:24 fulfilled
    10. Marriage supper of the Lamb (Rev. 19:7-9)
    11. Christ begins His reign on earth (Ps. 72:8; Isa. 9:6-7; Dan. 2:14-35, 44; 7:13-14; Zech. 9:10; Rev. 20:4)
- II. Characteristics and Events of the Millennium
  - A. Physical characteristics
    1. Topography and geography of the earth changed (Isa. 2:2; Ezek. 47:1-12; 48:8-20; Zech. 14:4, 8, 10)
    2. Wild animals tamed (Isa. 11:6-9; 35:9; Ezek. 34:25)
    3. Crops abundant (Isa. 27:6; 35:1-2, 6-7; Amos 9:13; Zech. 14:8)
    4. Human longevity increased (Isa. 65:20-23)
  - B. Spiritual and religious characteristics and events
    1. Satan confined in the abyss (Rev. 20:1-3)
    2. Millennial temple built (Ezek. 40:5-43:27)
    3. Animal sacrifices offered as memorials to Christ's death (Isa. 56:7; 66:20-23; ← Begins with believers only (Matt. 13:40-43))

\*Though premillennialists differ on the order of some of these events (see notes at the end of this outline) they do include all these events in the pattern of the end times.

Outline of End-Time Events Predicted in the Bible (continued)

- 7. Others suggest that the two witnesses will be slain and resurrected in the first half of the seven-year period.
- 8. Some equate these events with the battle of Gog and his allies.

Source: *The Bible Knowledge Commentary Old Testament Ed.* pp. 1319-1322



- Jer. 33:17-18; Ezek. 43:18-27; 45:13-46:24; Mal. 3:3-4
- 4. Feasts of the New Year, Passover, and Tabernacles reinstated (Ezek. 45:18-25; Zech. 14:16-21) *Sabbath too (Ezek. 46:1; Isa. 66:23)*
- 5. Nations worship in Jerusalem (Isa. 2:2-4; Micah 4:2; 7:12; Zech. 8:20-23; 14:16-21)
- 6. Worldwide knowledge of God (Isa. 11:9; Jer. 31:34; Micah 4:5; Hab. 2:14)
- 7. Unparalleled filling of and empowerment by the Holy Spirit on Israel (Isa. 32:15; 44:3; Ezek. 36:24-29; 39:29; Joel 2:28-29)
- 8. New Covenant with Israel fulfilled (Jer. 31:31-34; Ezek. 11:19-20; 36:25-32)
- 9. Righteousness and justice prevails (Isa. 9:7; 11:4; 42:1-4; Jer. 23:5)
- C. Political characteristics and events
  - 1. Israel reunited as a nation (Jer. 3:18; Ezek. 37:15-23)
  - 2. Israel at peace in the land (Deut. 30:1-10; Isa. 32:18; Hosea 14:5, 7; Amos 9:15; Micah 4:4; 5:4-5a; Zech. 3:10; 14:11)
  - 3. Abrahamic Covenant land-grant boundaries established (Gen. 15:18-21; Ezek. 47:13-48:8, 23-27)
  - 4. Christ in Jerusalem rules over Israel (Isa. ~~24:23~~ 24:23; Micah 4:7; 5:2b)
  - 5. Davidic Covenant fulfilled (Christ on the throne of David, 2 Sam. 7:11-16; Isa. 9:6-7; Jer. 33:17-26; Amos 9:11-12; Luke 1:32-33)
  - 6. Christ rules over and judges the nations (Isa. 11:3-5; Micah 4:2-3a; Zech. 14:9; Rev. 19:15)
  - 7. Resurrected saints reign with Christ (Matt. 19:28; 2 Tim. 2:12; Rev. 5:10; 20:6)
  - 8. Universal peace prevails (Isa. 2:4; 32:17-18; 60:18; Hosea 2:18; Micah 4:2-4; 5:4; Zech. 9:10)
  - 9. Jerusalem made the world's capital (Jer. 3:17; Ezek. 48:30-35; Joel 3:16-17;

- Micah 4:1, 6-8; Zech. 8:2-3)
- 10. Israel exalted above the Gentiles (Isa. 14:1-2; 49:22-23; 60:14-17; 61:5-9)
- 11. The world blessed through Israel (Micah 5:7)
- D. Events following the Millennium
  - 1. Satan released from the abyss (Rev. 20:7)
  - 2. Satan deceives the nations (Rev. 20:8)
  - 3. Global armies besiege Jerusalem (Rev. 20:9a)
  - 4. Global armies destroyed by fire (Rev. 20:9b)
  - 5. Satan cast into the lake of fire (Rev. 20:10)
  - 6. Evil angels judged (1 Cor. 6:3)
  - 7. The wicked dead resurrected (Dan. 12:2b; John 5:29b)
  - 8. The wicked judged at the Great White Throne (Rev. 20:11-14)
  - 9. The wicked cast into the lake of fire (Rev. 20:14-15; 21:8)
- III. Eternity
  - A. Christ delivers the mediatorial (millennial) kingdom to God the Father (1 Cor. 15:24)
  - B. Present heavens and earth demolished (Rev. 21:1)
  - C. New heavens and new earth created (2 Peter 3:10; Rev. 21:1)
  - D. New Jerusalem descends to the new earth (Rev. 21:2, 10-27)
  - E. Christ rules forever in the eternal kingdom (Isa. 9:6-7; Ezek. 37:24-28; Dan. 7:13-14; Luke 1:32-33; Rev. 11:15)

- Notes
- Some Bible scholars say the work of the two witnesses will be in the second half of the seven-year period.
  - Some identify Antichrist's initial rise to power with the first seal judgment (Rev. 6:1-2)
  - Some place the battle of Gog and his allies at the very middle of the seven-year period; others place it later.
  - Some say the 144,000 will be saved and sealed in the first half of the seven-year period.
  - According to some, this apostasy will begin in the first half of the seven-year period.
  - Many premillenarians place the seal judgments in the first half of the seven-year period. *(this includes me, cf. p. 99)*

New Covenant

Abrahamic Covenant  
Palestinian Covenant

Davidic Covenant

## Appendix D

### HISTORY OF INTERPRETATION OF THE BOOK OF REVELATION

#### THE POST-APOSTOLIC PERIOD

For at least the first one hundred years after John wrote the *Book of Revelation*, what evidence we have from the post-apostolic period indicates that the church leaders were clearly premillennial in their perspective. They expected the Lord to return soon, accompanied by a resurrection of believers, a rebuilding of Jerusalem, a thousand-year earthly reign, and then a general resurrection and judgment.

#### A. Justin Martyr (ca. AD 100–165)

One of the earliest references to the Book of Revelation comes from Justin Martyr, a Christian apologist of the second century AD who sought to defend the Christian faith against misrepresentation and ridicule. According to Carey, Justin was born in the region of Shechem (near modern-day Nablus), and was converted to Christianity about AD 132.<sup>82</sup>

His reference to Revelation occurs in his work entitled *Dialogue with Trypho* (an apologetic work to a Jew by the name of Trypho). According to Chadwick, this was written sometime near the middle of the second century: “The *Dialogue with Trypho the Jew* was written after the first *Apology*, probably about 160, but is presented as an account of a discussion which Justin had with Trypho about 135.”<sup>83</sup>

Since Jerusalem and the Temple had been destroyed in AD 70, Justin asked Trypho if he believed the city would be rebuilt. He then went on to explain that it would be rebuilt during the 1000 year millennium:

But I and others, who are right-minded Christians on all points, are assured that there will be a resurrection of the dead, and a thousand years in Jerusalem, which will then be built, adorned, and enlarged, [as] the prophets Ezekiel and Isaiah and others declare.<sup>84</sup>

Then, Justin connects this belief to John’s writing in Revelation:

And further, there was a certain man with us, whose name was John, one of the apostles of Christ, who prophesied, by a revelation that was made to him, that those who believed in our Christ would dwell a thousand years in Jerusalem; and that thereafter the general, and, in short, the eternal resurrection and judgment of all men would likewise take place.

<sup>82</sup> J. D. Douglas, ed. *Dictionary of the Christian Church*, rev. ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Pub. House, 1978), s.v. “Justin Martyr,” by G. L. Carey.

<sup>83</sup> Henry Chadwick, *The Early Church* (London: Cox & Wyman Ltd, 1967), 75.

<sup>84</sup> Justin Martyr, *Dialogue with Trypho, A Jew in The Ante-Nicene Fathers*, vol. 1, ed. Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson (Edinburgh, 1867; reprint, Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 1981), 239.

Justin had not been the first post-apostolic father to espouse a premillennial belief. This was clearly attested by Papias (ca. AD 60-130), but Justin makes a clear reference to the Book of Revelation (see notes on the *Historical Background* for Papias).

B. Irenaeus (ca. AD 120–202)

Irenaeus made numerous references to the Book of Revelation, though apparently did not write a commentary on it. In his work *Against Heresies*, he clearly articulated an earthly millennial kingdom of 1000 years that would come about after the rule of the Antichrist. Furthermore, this kingdom would be set up in a renewed Jerusalem.

He equates the *beast* of Rev. 13 with the “little horn” of Daniel 7, both referring to the Antichrist that will rule in the end times (V.28.2).<sup>85</sup> Furthermore, he understood the “time, times and half a time” as a 3 ½ year period: “‘and [everything] shall be given into his hand until a time of times and a half time,’ that is, for three years and six months, during which time, when he comes, he shall reign over the earth” (V.25.3). He held that the present kingdom [i.e., Rome] would eventually be divided into ten kings, according to the prophecies of Dan 2 and 7 (V.26.1). He also stated that the number 666 was the correct reading according to the better copies of Revelation then circulating:

Such, then, being the state of the case, and this number being found in all the most approved and ancient copies [of the Apocalypse], and those men who saw John face to face bearing their testimony [to it].<sup>86</sup>

According to Irenaeus, the rule of the Antichrist would be terminated by the Lord’s return, following which there would be the kingdom:

But when this Antichrist shall have devastated all things in this world, he will reign for three years and six months, and sit in the temple at Jerusalem; and then the Lord will come from heaven in the clouds, in the glory of the Father, sending this man and those who follow him into the lake of fire; but bringing in for the righteous the times of the kingdom, that is, the rest, the hallowed seventh day; and restoring to Abraham the promised inheritance, in which kingdom the Lord declared, that ‘many coming from the east and from the west should sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.’<sup>87</sup>

Furthermore, Irenaeus contended vigorously that the kingdom should be in the same earthly sphere in which the people of God had experienced their earthly life. He argues that heretics are

. . . ignorant of God’s dispensations, and of the mystery of the resurrection of the just, and of the [earthly] kingdom which is the commencement of incorruption, by means of which kingdom those who shall be worthy are accustomed gradually to partake of the divine nature; and it is necessary to tell them respecting these things, that it behooves the righteous first to receive the promise of the inheritance which God promised to the fathers, and to reign in it,

<sup>85</sup> Irenaeus, *Against Heresies*, in *The Ante-Nicene Fathers*, vol. 1, 554.

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*, 558 [from V.30.1].

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.*, 560 [from V.30.4].

when they rise again to behold God in this creation which is renovated, and that the judgment should take place afterwards. For it is just that in that very creation in which they toiled or were afflicted, being proved in every way by suffering, they should receive the reward of their suffering; and that in the creation in which they were slain because of their love to God, in that they should be revived again; and that in the creation in which they endured servitude, in that they should reign.<sup>88</sup>

Irenaeus not only claims that the kingdom will follow the Second Coming and consist of a rejuvenated earth, but he claims that this was the tradition that had been passed down from John himself:

The predicted blessing, therefore, belongs unquestionably to the times of the kingdom, when the righteous shall bear rule upon their rising from the dead; when also the creation, having been renovated and set free, shall fructify with an abundance of all kinds of food, from the dew of heaven, and from the fertility of the earth; as the elders who saw John, the disciple of the Lord, related that they had heard from him how the Lord used to teach in regard to these things.<sup>89</sup>

In support of this contention, Irenaeus refers to the teachings of Papias to the same effect: "And these things are borne witness to in writing by Papias, the hearer of John, and a companion of Polycarp, in his fourth book; for there were five books compiled . . . by him."<sup>90</sup>

For Irenaeus, the expression "resurrection of the just" refers to this earthly kingdom period when God's people will be resurrected to enjoy the time of blessing. He does not state clearly when this resurrection itself occurs. Of quite some interest, however, are his comments to the effect that those who survived the Tribulation would go into the kingdom in their natural physical bodies. This seems to suggest that he did not hold to a post-tribulational view of the rapture:

For all these and other words were unquestionably spoken in reference to the resurrection of the just, which takes place after the coming of Antichrist, and the destruction of all nations under his rule; in [the times of] which [resurrection] the righteous shall reign in the earth, waxing stronger by the sight of the Lord; and through Him they shall become accustomed to partake in the glory of God the Father, and shall enjoy in the kingdom intercourse and communion with the holy angels, and union with spiritual beings; and [with respect to] those whom the Lord shall find in the flesh, awaiting Him from heaven, and who have suffered tribulation, as well as escaped the hands of the Wicked one. For it is in reference to them that the prophet says: 'And those that are left shall multiply upon the earth.' And Jeremiah the prophet has pointed out, that as many believers as God has prepared for this purpose, to multiply those left upon the earth, should both be under the rule of the saints to minister to this Jerusalem, and that [His] kingdom shall be in it . . .<sup>91</sup>

<sup>88</sup> Ibid., 561 [from V.32.1].

<sup>89</sup> Ibid., 562-63 [from V.33.3].

<sup>90</sup> Ibid., 563 [from V.33.4].

<sup>91</sup> Ibid., 565 [from V.35.1]. The latter reference to Jeremiah is actually to the book of Baruch (the scribe of Jeremiah). Irenaeus goes on to quote from Baruch 4:36-5:9.

Finally, Irenaeus discusses the New Jerusalem and the relation of the millennial kingdom to the new creation. He held that the millennial kingdom was something of a *training period* in preparation for the “new heavens and new earth.” He states,

When these things, therefore, pass away above the earth, John, the Lord’s disciple, says that the new Jerusalem above shall [then] descend, as a bride adorned for her husband; . . . Of this Jerusalem the former one is an image—that Jerusalem of the former earth in which the righteous are disciplined beforehand for incorruption and prepared for salvation . . . . And as he rises actually, so also shall he be actually disciplined beforehand for incorruption, and shall go forwards and flourish in the times of the kingdom, in order that he may be capable of receiving the glory of the Father. Then, when all things are made new, he shall truly dwell in the city of God.<sup>92</sup>

C. Hippolytus (d. ca. AD 236)

Hippolytus served as a presbyter and teacher in the church at Rome. He wrote a commentary on Daniel, and was also a premillennialist. However, he anticipated the millennium in the year AD 500. He identified the beast of Rev. 13 as arising from the fourth beast of Dan 7 (i.e., the Roman Empire). The Antichrist would rule for 3 ½ years, but the number 666 would not be understood until the future. He seems to have understood the great harlot and Babylon as Rome.

D. Victorinus (d. ca. AD 303)

Victorinus was a bishop of Pettau, near Vienne. He is noteworthy, in that his commentary on Revelation is one of the earliest extant commentaries to survive. Being influenced by Papias, Irenaeus, and Hippolytus, he understood Revelation in a literal, chiliastic sense (premillennial).<sup>93</sup> He held that the Antichrist would persecute the church, and hence the woman fleeing into the wilderness symbolizes believers fleeing from the hosts of Antichrist. The second beast in Rev. 13 would set up an image of the Antichrist in the temple at Jerusalem. Victorinus’s work is noteworthy for its record of two significant interpretative features:

1. His commentary is the first (at least that we have record of) to espouse the *Nero redivivus* theory, i.e., that Nero would return from the dead as the 8<sup>th</sup> king and the Antichrist (thought to be near at hand).
2. He articulated a recapitulation view of the trumpet and bowl judgments, i.e., that the bowls do not follow the trumpets in a continuous series, but are parallel with them and recapitulate them in another form.

Victorinus thought that the persecutions of his own day belonged to the *sixth seal*, and that the seventh seal would usher in the *End*.

<sup>92</sup> Ibid., 566 [from V.35.2].

<sup>93</sup> Apparently, there is some discrepancy concerning Victorinus, although he does appear to have been premillennial. Gregg states, “Victorinus’ commentary followed the allegorizing approach. It appears that Augustinian editors may have altered it, however, because in its present form it champions *amillennialism*, whereas Jerome (c. 345-420) listed Victorinus with Tertullian and Lactantius as a *chiliast* (that is, a premillennialist) [Revelation: Four Views, 30].”



## II. THE INFLUENCE OF THE SCHOOL OF ALEXANDRIA

Despite some continuing witness to the literal millennial kingdom view beyond the second century AD, the rise of the school of Alexandria towards the end of the second century was beginning to influence the interpretation of Scripture, including the prophetic portions (see notes in Appendix B on *Eschatological Systems*). The key factor was a shift from a basically literal hermeneutic to an allegorizing method. The most influential person connected with the school of Alexandria was Origen (who had been influenced by Clement of Alexandria).<sup>94</sup>

### A. Origen (ca. 185 – ca. 254)

Prior to Clement of Alexandria (c. 150-215), the post-apostolic fathers (in general) expected the soon return of the Lord to establish an earthly messianic kingdom. The delay of the *parousia* combined with the influence of Greek thought and the earlier writings of Philo led to non-literal views of the prophecies. Origen was vehemently opposed to the literal millennial views of the second century fathers. Although Origen did not write a commentary on Revelation, his views on it can be gleaned from his many writings. According to Origen, the mysteries of Revelation can only be understood by looking to the *spiritual sense*. Beckwith summarizes his views:

At a definite period the Lord will come, not visibly, but in spirit, and establish his perfected kingdom on earth. The time of his advent will coincide with the coming culmination of evil in the person of Antichrist, a future world-ruler, a child of Satan. The imagery of the visions is to be taken allegorically; for example, the seven heads of the dragon are seven deadly sins, the ten horns are serpent-like powers of sin which assail the inner life, the roll with seven seals is the Scriptures, whose meaning Christ alone can unseal; . . . .<sup>95</sup>

### B. Methodius (d. ca. AD 311)

Methodius (a bishop in Lycia), despite his attacks on Origen on certain doctrinal issues, followed the spiritualizing procedure of Origen. In general, the visions were to be taken allegorically. For example, the woman with child is the Church bearing children into spiritual life, and she is removed from the assaults of the devil (since the true life of these is with the Spirit in heaven).<sup>96</sup> The beast is a symbol of *fleshly lust*.

### C. Tyconius (fl. ca. AD 370–390)

Tyconius is known to have written his *Commentary on the Apocalypse* (which only survives in citations from the works of others). His views, however, are partially influenced by the struggles of his day. Tyconius was himself aligned with the Donatists who were regarded as heretics by the Catholic Church. Thus, Tyconius (as

<sup>94</sup> Concerning Clement's spiritualizing views of Revelation, Swete states, "Thus Clement sees in the four and twenty Elders a symbol of the equality of Jew and Gentile within the Christian Church; in the tails of the locusts of the Abyss, the mischievous influence of immoral teachers; in the many-coloured foundation stones of the City of God, the manifold grace of Apostolic teaching" (Henry Barclay Swete, *Commentary on Revelation*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. [London: Macmillan, 1911; reprint, Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Pub., 1977], ccviii).

<sup>95</sup> Isbon T. Beckwith, *The Apocalypse of John* (London: The MacMillan Company, 1919; reprint, Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1979), 323.

<sup>96</sup> *Ibid.*

other Donatists) regarded themselves as the true church which was being persecuted by the Satanic powers foretold in Revelation (for them, the Catholic hierarchy supported by the world-power). His method is thoroughly spiritualizing. For him, the millennial reign is realized in the Church, between the first coming of Christ and the second. Jerusalem symbolizes the Church, whereas Babylon symbolizes the antichristian world. He also adopted the recapitulation theory.

#### D. Augustine (AD 354–430)

Augustine was significantly influenced by Tyconius, despite his own efforts to avoid the “heresies” of the Donatists. This influence stemmed not just from Tyconius’s *Commentary on the Apocalypse*, but from another work by Tyconius entitled *Book of Rules*. The latter was the first Latin essay in hermeneutics, in which Tyconius presented seven keys to spiritual exegesis. In fact, Augustine’s elaboration of this in his own work (*On Christian Instruction*, 3:30:42–37:56) helped to ensure that Tyconius had a wide influence. As a result, Augustine adopted Tyconius’s spiritualizing method as well as his preference for the recapitulation theory (the latter includes the idea that Rev. 20 is a recapitulation of the period leading up to the 2<sup>nd</sup> Advent, not a chronologically successive period). Like Tyconius, Augustine held the view that the millennial reign was represented by the period between the two comings of Christ. What is noteworthy here is not so much Augustine’s originality of these views, but the fact that he was the more influential writer (and hence, did more to propagate these views). Augustine did not write a commentary on Revelation, but his interpretations on parts of it are reflected in his writings (especially *The City of God*, 20, 7 ff.).

Follow-up note: The expectation of a future millennial kingdom was still affirmed as late as the Council of Nicea in AD 325. At the Council of Ephesus in AD 431, however, the belief in the millennium was declared to be superstitious.

### III. FROM 500 TO 1000 AD

Most of this period is characterized by the influence of Tyconius and Augustine in favor of the spiritualizing method (with an occasional follower after the literal method of Victorinus). With the approach of the year 1000, chiliastic expectations did resurface. Tyconius’s views were perpetrated in the east through the commentary of Andreas, and in the west through that of Primasius.

#### A. Andreas (6<sup>th</sup> cent. AD)

Andreas (bishop of Caesarea in Cappadocia) is best known for his Greek commentary which relied on the spiritualizing method of interpretation for the most part. Beckwith highlights his views:

The kingdom of 1000 years, as with Tyconius and Augustine, begins with Christ’s earthly life and will continue till the knowledge of him is everywhere extended, the number of years being symbolical of completeness and multitude. The first resurrection is the believer’s rising from spiritual death; Babylon

represents, not Rome, but the sum of the world-powers; the temple is the Christian Church.<sup>97</sup>

Nevertheless, he did hold that an Antichrist would arise, though he rejected the association with the wounded head of Nero. He held that the first five seals were already past, though the remainder of judgments pertained to the future. He held that the seven kings (17:10) were seven embodiments of the world power, the sixth being Rome and the seventh Constantinople.

B. Primasius (6<sup>th</sup> cent. AD)

Primasius was bishop at Hadrumetum in N. Africa, and wrote a commentary on Revelation prior to AD 543-44. If for no other reason, his commentary is important for preserving almost completely the African Latin text of Revelation. He was strongly influenced and reliant upon the views of Tyconius and Augustine (which he acknowledges in his preface). There are, however, a few points when he departs from the spiritualizing method to adopt a realistic interpretation (e.g., the Antichrist will be a person who comes out of the tribe of Dan).

C. Berengaudus (9<sup>th</sup> cent. AD)

His main contribution was to see the judgment series as extending over broad sweeps of time. Beckwith (p 326) writes,

He interprets the first six seals as covering the time from Adam to the rejection of the Jews in the fall of Jerusalem; the first six trumpets are the preachers sent by God from the beginning of biblical history down to the latest defenders of the Church, the seventh trumpet represents the preachers who will come in the time of Antichrist; the horns of the beast are the barbarian tribes who destroyed the Roman empire.

Perhaps his approach paved the way for the later methodology that saw in Revelation a broad sweep of church history and the world.

#### IV. FROM AD 1000 TO THE REFORMATION

The approach of the year AD 1000 brought with it a heightened sense of expectation. Though Augustine had taken the "1000 years" as symbolic of an *indefinite period*, there were many who held that though the millennium represented the period between the two comings of Christ, it was a thousand year interval. Beckwith (p 327) explains the significance in relation to the approach and passing of AD 1000:

From the time of Ticonius and Augustine it had been a belief, nearly universal, that the kingdom of the thousand years began with the earthly appearance of Christ, or with his resurrection and ascension; Satan had been 'bound,' that is, his power had been in part restrained, but he was not destroyed, Antichrist and antichristian powers were still at work constantly in the world; at the end of the millennial period a final manifestation of evil in personal form would take place, with all its enmity toward the Church. Therefore as the ten centuries neared their end, a general unrest and fear seized society. Satan was about to be loosed for the last great conflict, the time of

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<sup>97</sup> Ibid., 325.

dread persecution was at hand, after which would come the judgment and the end of the world. The critical period however passed by, neither Antichrist nor the Lord appeared, nothing occurred in the experience of the Church or the world in which Christians could see their expectations and fears realized. This undisturbed passage of the time of expected crisis produced first of all a change of view in regard to the meaning of the thousand years. Augustine centuries before had taken it as symbolical of an indefinite period, and this understanding of it now became general.

A. Joachim of Fiore (ca. 1135–1202)

Joachim was a Cistercian monk in Italy. Clouse introduces him this way:

He recorded two mystical experiences which gave him the gift of spiritual intelligence enabling him to understand the inner meaning of history. At times he prophesied on contemporary events and the advent of Antichrist. He also meditated deeply on the two great menaces to Christianity, the infidel and the heretic.<sup>98</sup>

One of his published works was entitled *Exposition of the Apocalypse*. Joachim, as with others, vainly attempted to read prophetic expectations into his own time era. Believing that the New Testament period of grace would last for 42 generations of thirty years each, he was looking for a new age of the Spirit to begin in the year AD 1260 which would see a rise in new religious orders that would convert the world. Thus, for Joachim, the millennium was conceived of as future, but not of a literal thousand years.<sup>99</sup> Joachim saw this near-approaching time of bliss to be realized in perfected monasticism, an idea that gave a fresh spark of life and zeal to monks.

At times the Beast represents the Devil, but at other times the Beast is Mohammedism. The deadly wound is that which Islam suffered in the Crusades, but nevertheless survived and recovered from. The false prophet represented the heretics which plagued the church. Although he accepted the legitimacy of the papacy, he attacked the general worldliness that had crept into the church (which could be restored through monasticism).

Joachim's influence continued after his death, both through his writings and those pseudonymously attributed to him. The Franciscans, in particular, held him in high esteem and considered him a prophet. Consequently, many held to the idea that the church was living in the *last days*. The Book of Revelation was thus used to foster the idea of reformation within the church. In the ensuing years, the cries of reformation within the church led to an attack upon the Pope himself (in contrast to Joachim's support of the papacy). So, the Beast was understood to refer to the Pope (the Antichrist), and the Roman Catholic Church was the woman sitting on the Beast (Rev. 17). Keep in mind that this notion *predated* the Reformation itself!

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<sup>98</sup> J. D. Douglas, ed. *Dictionary of the Christian Church*, rev. ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Pub. House, 1978), s.v. "Joachim of Fiore," by Robert G. Clouse.

<sup>99</sup> Regarding Joachim's views, Swete (ccxii) adds, "Of the seven heads of the Beast the fifth is the Emperor Frederick I., and the sixth Saladin; the seventh is Antichrist; the destruction of Antichrist will be followed by the millennium, which thus recovers its place as a hope of the future."

## B. Nicholas of Lyra (ca. 1265–1349)

One of the other influential figures prior to the Reformation was Nicholas of Lyra, a Franciscan scholar who studied theology at Paris (ca. 1308). Norman describes him as departing from the general allegorical tendency: "The best-equipped biblical scholar of the Middle Ages, knowing Hebrew and acquainted with Jewish commentaries, notably Rashi, he was especially concerned to expound the literal sense of Scripture as against the current allegorical interpretation."<sup>100</sup> In regard to Revelation, Nicholas set a whole new course for interpreting the book, one which influenced many generations. In his view, the Book of Revelation was meant to portray all of church history from the apostolic era until the final consummation (progressively fulfilled throughout church history). He claimed to find references to such events as the rise and spread of Islam, Charlemagne, and the Crusades. However, he felt that the millennium (which began with the founding of the Mendicant orders) was already present, and anticipated that Satan would be released and return again before the complete end of history. Nicholas's idea that Revelation portrayed the whole general sweep of church history (the historicist approach) was to have a significant influence on later commentators, particularly those of the Reformation (including Martin Luther!).

## V. FROM THE REFORMATION THROUGH THE 18<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY AD

We cannot say that the historicist approach was the only one of this period, but it was certainly the dominant one of those outside the Catholic Church. The rise of the *literary-critical* school of thought, however, in the 18<sup>th</sup> century (with its attack upon the inerrancy of Scripture) provided alternative views to Revelation.

### A. The Historicist Approach of the Reformation (continuous-historical)

For Luther and other Reformers, the historicist approach was widely adopted. In their attack upon the Catholic Church, the Beast was readily seen as the Pope and the woman sitting on the Beast as the Roman Catholic Church (Rev. 17). In contrast, the Catholic Church viewed Luther and the other Reformers as the Antichrist, and the various Protestant sects as the False Prophet.

Though viewing the book as a panoramic sweep of church history, the interpretation of details would vary from one commentator to the next. Each generation seemed to find particular reference to events and persons of its own age (from Constantine to Napoleon). The historicist approach (made famous by Luther) was embraced by such notables as John Wycliffe, John Knox, William Tyndale, Ulrich Zwingli, Philip Melancthon, Sir Isaac Newton, John Wesley, Jonathan Edwards, George Whitefield, Charles Finney, C. H. Spurgeon, Matthew Henry, Adam Clarke, J. A. Bengel, and Joseph Mede. It has even continued into the 19<sup>th</sup> century through the works of men like Albert Barnes (1798-1870; Presbyterian minister and author of *Barnes Notes*), E. B. Elliott (*Horae Apocalypticae*, 1847), and A. J. Gordon (1836-1895; editor of the *Watchword* monthly periodical which focused on prophecy). Despite this list of

<sup>100</sup> J. D. Douglas, ed. *Dictionary of the Christian Church*, rev. ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Pub. House, 1978), s.v. "Nicholas of Lyra," by J. G. G. Norman.

prominent evangelical Protestant leaders who took the historicist approach, it is almost totally abandoned today by contemporary commentators.

Despite a common embracing of the historicist approach, commentators would differ on details. Some would take the recapitulation theory of the judgment cycles (that the trumpets and bowls essentially repeated the judgments of the seals), while others would view the cycles as one long unfolding of church history. Throughout this period, date-setting for the time of the end continued to be practiced, often utilizing the "year-for-a-day" principle.<sup>101</sup> This was particularly true as dramatic moments of history were faced, especially throughout the 1700's and leading up to the French Revolution (as well as the advent of Napoleon).

## B. Roman Catholic Approaches

In an attempt to counter the historicist approaches which focused upon attacking the Catholicism and the Pope, certain Catholic commentators provided alternatives.

### 1. Franciscus Ribeira (1537–1591)

A Spanish Jesuit and professor at Salamanca by the name of Ribeira (having a knowledge of both Greek and Latin commentators of the patristic period) published a commentary in the late 16<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>102</sup> In contrast to the historicist approaches, Ribeira stressed that most of the book had its fulfillment in John's near future or would be fulfilled in the *end-times*. Although he related the first five seals to a past age (from the Apostles to the persecution under Trajan), the rest of the book (beginning with the 6<sup>th</sup> seal) awaited the Last Days. Thus, he eliminated the speculative tendency of trying to relate various events of church history to details in Revelation. Of even more significance, he shifted the interpretation of the beast as the Pope to an individual yet to come in the future.

### 2. Luiz de Alcazar (1554–1613)

Another Spanish Jesuit named Alcazar (whose commentary was published in 1614) took a very different approach than Ribeira, in which he interpreted most of the book from a preterist view. Only the final chapters, 20–22, looked to the future. His system involved a division of chapters 4–22 into three parts:

- a. Ch 4–11 — This section supposedly depicts the church's struggle against Judaism, which culminated in the fall of Jerusalem in AD 70.
- b. Ch 12–19 — This section depicts the church's struggle with paganism (along with Judaism), ending with the fall of Rome in AD 476.

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<sup>101</sup> According to the "year-for-a-day" principle, advocates hold that the dates mentioned in both Daniel and Revelation are symbolic (often taking a day to mean a year). Gregg explains,

"On this principle, five months (150 days) is taken to designate 150 years. The significant period of 1260 days is interpreted as the same number of years. 'An hour, and a day, and a month, and a year' becomes (depending whether a year is 360 days or 365 days) 391 years and 15 days, or 396 years and 106 days.

In support of this procedure, appeal is made to Ezekiel 4:4-6, in which the prophet was required to lie on his left side for 390 days, and upon his right side for 40 days, representing the same number of years of judgment decreed upon Israel and Judah respectively" (Steve Gregg, *Revelation: Four Views*, 34-5).

<sup>102</sup> F. Ribeira, *Commentarius in sacram b. Ioannis Apoc.* (Salamanca, 1591).

- c. Ch 20–22 — Based on the assumption that the "1000 years" represents an indefinite period *during the present age*, Alcazar held that these chapters predict the "victory" of the church which began with Constantine and would continue on until the end of the world (for him, a triumph of the church as represented by Catholicism).

In one way, Alcazar's scheme is a type of historicist approach, with the book surveying the progress of the gospel throughout history. However, since most of this is correlated with church history prior to AD 476, it is basically preterist. One of the novelties in his interpretation is to identify the "strong angel" who binds Satan as Constantine. We should also observe that his approach basically eliminates any future tribulation or a future Antichrist. Although differing significantly from Ribeira's approach, both schemes were aimed at the same goal: countering the attack upon Catholicism by Protestants who followed the mainline historicist approach. Alcazar's model served to pave the way for later interpreters who followed a preterist approach of interpreting the book in light of the first few centuries when Imperial Rome persecuted Christianity.

## VI. DEVELOPMENTS OF THE 19<sup>TH</sup> AND 20<sup>TH</sup> CENTURIES AD

The past two centuries have seen anything but uniformity in approach to the Book of Revelation. Although there has been a shift away from the historicist approach of the Reformation and early post-reformation period, the past two centuries have witnessed the rise of the preterist approach, the "spiritual" approach, and the futurist approach. The latter approach, understanding the bulk of chaps. 4–20 as events waiting to be fulfilled in the future is the dominant approach today (though interpreters will do so in different ways according to their own eschatological grid).

### A. The Rise of the Preterist School of Approach (contemporary-historical)

#### 1. Early Forerunners of the Preterist Approach

Representatives of the preterist approach are primarily found in the past two centuries, and hence my reason for placing the discussion here. Having said that, however, traces of the preterist approach can be found much earlier. This was witnessed as early as the 6<sup>th</sup> century when Andreas of Cappadocia (though not a preterist himself) made mention in his commentary on Revelation of those of whom he was aware that understood the judgements as applying to the siege and destruction of Jerusalem by Titus in AD 70.<sup>103</sup> Further impetus was provided by Alcazar's *interpretative scheme* (AD 1614) in which ch 4–19 were assigned a fulfillment prior to AD 476.

Alcazar's approach was resisted by most Protestant scholars after the Reformation, who continued to see the Beast as a reference to the Pope and the harlot as Catholicism. In 1644, however, a Dutch Protestant named Hugo Grotius (1583-1645) wrote a commentary on Revelation that was strongly influenced by the Catholic Alcazar. He generally agreed with Alcazar's three-fold division of Revelation, but with modification to allow more correlation

<sup>103</sup> For citations, see Kenneth Gentry, *Before Jerusalem Fell*, 107. Another commentator by the name of Arethas, writing sometime in either the 6<sup>th</sup> or 9<sup>th</sup> century, held a similar view.

with the events of Constantine's day and latter events in church history. His work is significant for at least three reasons: (1) as a Protestant, his acceptance of Alcazar's basic model paved the way for other Protestant scholars to embrace a preterist approach; (2) he was one of the first Reformed exegetes to abandon the identification of the pope as the Beast; and (3) he was one of the first to call into question the *unity* of the book (thus pioneering the literary-critical approach to Revelation).

For the main, however, the preterist approach has had its strongest following in more recent times, though from three different camps: (1) critical scholars; (2) conservatives; and (3) reconstructionists. Preterists usually argue for their position on the advantage that it would be most relevant to the original audience. Furthermore, they would claim that internal notes about a *soon coming* are best understood from a preterist position. Furthermore, the instructions to John to "not seal up the book" in Rev. 22:10 seem to be deliberately contrasted with the instructions to Daniel to "seal up the book" (Dan 12:9). Advocates argue that this indicates an expectation of a fulfillment in the near future.

## 2. Critical Scholars

Johann Eichhorn (1752–1827)

Eichhorn was a noted German critical scholar whose liberal views gained him a reputation as the "father of Old Testament criticism." In 1791 he advanced a theory that the book of Revelation represented "a great historic poem picturing in dramatic form the victory of Christianity over Judaism and heathenism, symbolized respectively in Jerusalem and Rome."<sup>104</sup> As a noted scholar, Eichhorn's *dramatic approach* (with acts and scenes depicting the progress and victory of the Christian faith) influenced others to approach the book primarily in terms of what it meant for the original writer and his readers.

Other critical studies have stressed the examination of Revelation in light of other apocalyptic literature from before and during the first century, as well as assessing the unity and redaction of the book.<sup>105</sup> The outcome of the work of critical scholars, however, has been the view that John wrote with an expectation that there would be a vindication of Christianity *in the relatively near future*, but that this failed to materialize (and hence, that John was mistaken). Critical scholars following the preterist approach include R. H. Charles (in the *ICC* series) and J. M. Ford (*Anchor Bible Commentary*).

## 3. Conservative Scholars Following the Preterist Approach

There were other scholars who approached the book from a basically preterist position, but who held to the inspiration of Scripture and did not deny the unity of the book. Representatives would include Moses Stuart (writing in 1845), J.

<sup>104</sup> Beckwith, 333.

<sup>105</sup> One of the more significant early works to focus on the matter of apocalyptic literature was that of Lucke (*Einleitung in d. Offenbar. d. Johan.*, 2d ed., 1852).



Russell Stewart (1887), Milton Terry (1898) and Henry Barclay Swete, whose third edition of his *Commentary on Revelation* appeared in 1911.<sup>106</sup> Swete held that the book was written in the latter part of Domitian's reign, and was written primarily for John's own time (although he also combined this with the *spiritual approach*). Thus, the significance of the book is primarily for the early church, as that is where most of the fulfillment lies. Gregg points out some of the advantages to this approach:

This view has the advantage of immediate relevance to the original readers, a feature we would strongly expect to find in an epistle. It also is the only view that does not need an alternative to the literal sense of passages like Revelation 1:1 and 19, which affirm that the events predicted "must shortly come to pass" and "are about to take place"; and like Revelation 22:10, where John is told *not* to seal up the book, because "the time is at hand."<sup>107</sup>

Several who have written from a preterist approach have combined this with the spiritual approach (e.g., Swete, and Albertus Pieters).<sup>108</sup> There are not many writings from this perspective in recent years, but modern-day examples can be found in Morris Ashcraft and Jay Adams.<sup>109</sup> More recently, amillennialist teacher R. C. Sproul has taken a preterist approach, viewing the events of Matthew 24 as fulfilled in AD 70.<sup>110</sup>

#### 4. Christian Reconstructionists (Dominion Theology)

Over the last three decades, a modern form of postmillennialism has arisen advocated by those known as *Christian Reconstructionists*.<sup>111</sup> This modern movement has called for an imposition of Old Testament Law upon modern society at large (not just the Christian community!). Postmillennialism is an essential part of their theology, as they believe that society can and will become Christian (a glorious age!) as God's laws (including those of the Mosaic covenant) are applied to all of society. Hence, there is no room in their theology for an ungodly political system led by Antichrist which will be overthrown by the personal return of Jesus Christ. They alleviate the difficulties that Revelation would present to their system by relegating the fulfillment details to the first century AD with the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70. This has been reflected in the writings of David Chilton, Gary DeMar,

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<sup>106</sup> Moses Stuart, *A Commentary on the Apocalypse*, 2 vols (Andover, Mass.: Allen, 1845); J. Stewart Russell, *The Parousia: A Critical Inquiry into the New Testament Doctrine of our Lord's Second Coming* (1887; reprint, Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1983); Milton S. Terry, *Biblical Apocalypics: A Study of the Most Notable Revelations of God and of Christ in the Canonical Scriptures* (New York: Eaton and Mains, 1898; and Henry B. Swete, *Commentary on Revelation*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (London: Macmillan, 1911).

<sup>107</sup> Gregg, 38.

<sup>108</sup> Albertus Pieters, *The Lamb, the Woman, and the Dragon* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1937).

<sup>109</sup> Morris Ashcraft, *Hebrews—Revelation*, in *The Broadman Bible Commentary*, ed. Clifton J. Allen, vol 12 (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1972); and Jay Adams, *The Time is at Hand* (Phillipsburg, New Jersey: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co., 1966).

<sup>110</sup> R. C. Sproul, *The Last Days According to Jesus* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1998).

<sup>111</sup> For a helpful description and analysis of this movement, see H. Wayne House and Thomas Ice, *Dominion Theology: Blessing or Curse?* (Portland, OR: Multnomah Press, 1988). Early leaders of this movement have been R. J. Rushdoony, Gary North, and Greg Bahnsen.

and Kenneth Gentry.<sup>112</sup> In contrast to earlier preterists, reconstructionists argue for an early date of writing in order to connect the details of the book with the events leading up to AD 70.

## B. The Spiritual Approach (or Idealist; Symbolic)

This approach avoids the difficulties of historical correlation by looking for *spiritual lessons* or *principles* in the story. Such interpreters avoid identification of specific individuals or events in history. Thus the meaning of John's visions is to be spiritually understood. Gregg describes the results of the spiritual approach:

According to this view, the great themes of the triumph of good over evil, of Christ over Satan, of the vindication of the martyrs and the sovereignty of God are played out throughout Revelation without necessary reference to single historical events. The battles in Revelation may be seen as referring to spiritual warfare, to the persecution of Christians, or to natural warfare in general throughout history. The beast from the sea may be identified as the satanically-inspired political opposition to the church in any age, and the beast from the land as the opposition of pagan or corrupt religion to Christianity.<sup>113</sup>

This approach was seen as early as William Milligan whose commentary, *The Book of Revelation*, was published in London in 1889. It has been adapted and utilized by both liberal and conservative scholars. Sometimes, this would even be blended with the preterist approach.<sup>114</sup> William Hendriksen's 1939 work, *More Than Conquerors*, is essentially a *spiritual approach*, though he combines other approaches as well (e.g., the preterist and historical). He sees seven segments to the book which parallel one another, each of which concerns the entire church age.<sup>115</sup> However, he asserts that the goal is not specific identification of persons and events but of *principles*. More recently, some form of blended approach involving the *spiritual* has been followed in commentaries by Leon Morris and Michael Wilcock.<sup>116</sup> Sam Hamstra summarizes and defends the idealist view in *Four Views on the Book of Revelation*.<sup>117</sup>

## C. The Futurist Approach

Most contemporary evangelical scholars hold to some form of the *futurist approach*, in which ch 4–22 are to be fulfilled at some future point (they are future events to both John's day and most of church history). This has been popularized by

<sup>112</sup> A couple of the more noteworthy attempts at explaining eschatology from a reconstructionist view have been David Chilton, *Paradise Restored: An Eschatology of Dominion* (Tyler, TX: Reconstruction Press, 1985); *The Days of Vengeance: An Exposition of the Book of Revelation* (Fort Worth, TX: Dominion Press, 1987); and Kenneth L. Gentry, Jr., *Before Jerusalem Fell: Dating the Book of Revelation: An Exegetical and Historical Argument for a pre-A.D. 70 Composition* (Tyler, TX: Institute for Christian Economics, 1989).

<sup>113</sup> Gregg, 43.

<sup>114</sup> Examples of a blending of late-date preterist and spiritual approaches are seen in H. B. Swete, *The Apocalypse of St. John* (New York: Macmillan, 1906); and Ray Summers, *Worthy Is the Lamb: An Interpretation of Revelation* (Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, 1951).

<sup>115</sup> Such a structural understanding of the book was not new. A similar approach had been advocated earlier by R. C. H. Lenski (*The Interpretation of St. John's Revelation* [Columbus, Ohio: Lutheran Book Concern, 1935]), and Charles R. Eerdman (*The Revelation of John* [Philadelphia: Westminster, 1936]).

<sup>116</sup> Leon Morris, *The Revelation of St. John* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1969); and Michael Wilcock, *I Saw Heaven Opened: The Message of Revelation* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1975).

<sup>117</sup> C. Marvin Pate, ed., *Four Views on the Book of Revelation* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Pub. House, 1998).

dispensational writers, though they are not the only ones to take the futurist approach (i.e., one could subscribe to a futurist approach without being dispensational). We could suggest at least three different variations of the futurist approach:

- 1) Premillennial – Dispensational
- 2) Premillennial – non-dispensational
- 3) Amillennial

1. Dispensationalists hold that the church will be raptured prior to the tribulation and will not experience these judgments (hence, a rapture prior to Rev. 4). [But there are exceptions—see below]. Dispensationalists would also see the references in the book to Israel literally (hence, the woman in ch 12 is Israel, and Jews will be persecuted by the Antichrist during the tribulation). Since dispensationalists are also premillennialists, they would take the 1000 year reign in Revelation literally and equate this with the earthly millennium. Though there are certainly variations of opinion among dispensationalists on the details of the book, those who take this general approach have included J. N. Darby, C. I. Scofield (*The Scofield Reference Bible*), Clarence Larkin, Charles Ryrie, J. Dwight Pentecost, John Walvoord, Hal Lindsey, and Robert Thomas. More recently, C. Marvin Pate has attempted to espouse and defend a "progressive dispensationalist" approach to Revelation by applying an "already–not yet" hermeneutic.<sup>118</sup> According to Pate, there is an initial and partial fulfillment with ancient Jerusalem's destruction in AD 70, but also a future and more complete fulfillment yet to come in the Tribulation before the Second Coming. He sees the Beast as the Imperial Cult of Rome (as a partial fulfillment in the past), but also as a future antichrist. While it is true that dispensationalists in general (including most progressive dispensationalists) hold to a pre-trib view of the rapture, there are some progressive dispensationalists that embrace the post-trib rapture view. [Though some might question whether the latter are really dispensationalists, they can still be said to be in the *dispensational camp* on account of their views about the future of Israel].
2. Non-dispensational premillennialists reject the idea of a pretribulational rapture, and thus view the church as passing through the tribulation. Following the second-coming, there will be a millennial period. Some, like George Ladd, hold to a literal 1000-year millennium (just as the dispensationalists). Others might hold to a millennium, but not necessarily for it being a thousand years in duration (see Alan Johnson in *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*). There are two general views of the rapture by non-dispensational premillennialists: the prewrath view and the post-trib view.<sup>119</sup> The latter is generally referred to as "historic premillennialism."<sup>120</sup>
3. Some amillennialists (not all!) have taken a generally futurist approach (e.g., I. T. Beckwith, 1919). They would hold to a literal tribulation period on earth in

<sup>118</sup> Pate, *Four Views on the Book of Revelation*, 135-75.

<sup>119</sup> For an up-to-date treatment of these rapture views, see *Three Views on The Rapture*, rev. ed., ed. Stanley N. Gundry (Zondervan, 2010). In this work, Alan Hultberg argues the prewrath rapture view, Douglas Moo the posttrib view, and Craig Blaising the pretrib view.

<sup>120</sup> An up-to-date treatment can be found in *A Case for Historic Premillennialism; an Alternative to 'Left Behind' Eschatology*, ed. Craig L. Blomberg and Sung Wook Chung (Baker Academic, 2009).

which the Antichrist would be present. Following the Second Coming, however, there would not be an earthly millennium. Thus, when they come to Rev. 20, they would view this differently than premillennialists. For Hoekema (*The Bible and the Future*), this is a depiction of the entire age between the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> comings of Christ (he obviously spiritualizes the number 1000).

Although examples of the futurist approach can be found prior to the 19<sup>th</sup> century, it was primarily the writings of John Nelson Darby and the Plymouth Brethren movement beginning around 1830 that began to popularize this approach.<sup>121</sup> By the latter part of the century, the Bible Conference movement (beginning about 1876) did even more to establish the futurist approach. Two significant works in the year 1909 gave further impetus to this approach. The first was J. A. Seiss's *Lectures on the Apocalypse*, and the second was the publication of the *Scofield Reference Bible*. This approach continued to spread to the masses through the establishment of such schools as Moody Bible Institute and Dallas Theological Seminary. The publication of Hal Lindsey's *The Late Great Planet Earth* in 1970 (over 20 million copies sold!), despite some extremes in interpretation, brought the futurist approach to the forefront of American evangelicalism.

Since the futurist approach is held by scholars of varying millennial positions, it is not surprising that there would be variation in matters of detail. Furthermore, there are those who would not be considered strictly futurist. Robert Mounce and Alan Johnson, for instance, combine the futurist approach with the preterist. Nevertheless, the distinctive feature of the futurist approach remains, i.e., most of the events described in chapters 4ff. await a time shortly before the return of the Lord Jesus Christ for fulfillment. This is surely the most sensible approach to the book, though there will certainly be spiritual lessons for believers of all ages.

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<sup>121</sup> Steve Gregg (32) credits Samuel R. Maitland (1792-1866) as the one responsible for the "official entrance" of the futurist approach to Revelation around 1827. Maitland was an Anglican historian who had been trained at Cambridge. From 1823-27, he was perpetual curate of Christ Church, Gloucester, and at one time served as librarian to the archbishop of Canterbury.

In addition to Maitland's influence, the futurist approach was given further impetus in Europe through the influence of Isaac Williams in England (*The Apocalypse* [London, 1852]), and on the continent through the efforts of C. Stern (*Commentar u. die Offenbarung* [Schaffhausen, 1854]) and A. Bisping (*Erklärung der Apocalypse* [Munster, 1876]).

## Appendix E

### Where the Dead Go

Where do the dead go after death? This is a relevant question since nearly every one of us has known someone who has passed from this life. To answer this important query, let us begin with a study of three key terms in the Bible...

#### 1. Pertinent Terms (cf. Robert Morey, *Death and the Afterlife*, 72-93)

##### a. *Sheol* = Underworld (Hebrew)

- 1) Usage: “The Hebrew word *Sheol* is found 66 times in the Old Testament. While the Old Testament consistently refers to the body as going to the grave, it always refers to the soul or spirit of man as going to *Sheol*” (Morey, 72). Paul Enns disagrees, saying that the OT concept includes the grave as well as the place where good and bad people go after death (*Moody Handbook of Theology*, 374).
- 2) Lexical Meaning: “the underworld... whither man descends at death” (BDB [Brown, Driver, Briggs] 982).
- 3) KJV Confusion: The KJV mistranslates *Sheol* as “grave” (31 times) and “hell” (31 times) and “pit” (3 times). But *Sheol* cannot mean “grave” for several reasons. At least 20 contrasts exist between *Sheol* and grave (Morey, 76-77)...
  - a) OT writers always use the word *kever* when they speak of the grave. Never are *Sheol* and *kever* (“grave”) used as synonymous (e.g., in parallelisms).
  - b) The LXX never translates *Sheol* as “grave” (Gr. *mneema*) nor *kever* as Hades.
- 4) Sections: *Sheol* has two different parts, including a “lowest part”: “For a fire is kindled in my anger, and burns to the lowest part of *Sheol*” (Deut. 32:22 NASB; cf. Morey, 78).

##### b. *Hades* = Underworld (Greek)

- 1) Usage: *Hades* (ᾍδης) is the Greek counterpart for the Hebrew *Sheol*. “In the Septuagint, *Hades* is found 71 times. It is the Greek equivalent for *Sheol* 64 times. The other seven times... it is the translation of other Hebrew words, some of which shed significant light on what *Hades* meant to the translators of the Septuagint” (Morey, 81). These seven include Job 33:22; 38:17; Prov. 2:18.

The NT uses the word 11 times, the most significant being Acts 2:27, 31. Here Peter quotes the prophecy about Christ in Psalm 16:10, “Thou wilt not abandon my soul to *Sheol*” (NASB), using the Greek *Hades* for the Hebrew *Sheol*—thus equating the terms. Unfortunately, here the NIV mistranslates *Hades* as “grave.”

- 2) Lexical Meaning: “the underworld as the place of the dead” (BAGD 16).
- 3) KJV Confusion: “The KJV mistranslated the word *Hades* in every occurrence just as it did with the word *Sheol*” (Morey, 83). *Hades* does not mean “death” (*thanatos*, Rev. 1:18), nor “grave” (*mneema*), nor “hell” (*Gehenna*), nor “heaven” (*ouranos*), nor the place of eternal bliss for the righteous (the new heavens and the new earth; Rev. 21:1). *Hades* simply means the place of the disembodied spirits.

- 4) Sections: Prior to Christ's death *Sheol-Hades* had two different sections, or compartments: a place of torment for the wicked (specifically called Hades; Luke 16:23) and a place of conscious bliss for the righteous ("Paradise," or "Abraham's bosom"; Luke 16:22). It was referred to as a dual compartment place often in the intertestamental era (Morey, 84).

However, in Hades after His death (Acts 2:31) Christ proclaimed his resurrection to "spirits now in prison" (1 Pet. 3:18-22) when He took the righteous out of Hades and brought them to heaven (Eph. 4:8-9; *ibid*, 86). This is found in 1 Peter 3:18-22, which states that after His death, Christ "preached to the spirits in prison who disobeyed long ago..."

### Summary of Scripture on Hades

So believers who die now do not go to Hades but to Heaven to be with Christ (Phil. 1:23; 2 Cor. 5:5-9) and the angels (Heb. 12:22, 23) at the altar of God (Rev. 6:9-11). "Whereas 'paradise' in the gospel account (Luke 23:43) referred to the section of Hades reserved for the righteous, by the time Paul wrote 2 Cor. 12:2-4, it was assumed that paradise had been taken out of Hades and was now placed in the third heaven" (Morey, 86). Several confessions teach that believers go directly to Christ now at death: the Heidelberg Catechism, Westminster Confession, and Second Helvetic Confession (Berkhof, *Systematic Theology*, 679).

"According to the post-resurrection teaching in the New Testament, the believer now goes to heaven at death to await the coming resurrection and the eternal state. But, what of the wicked? The wicked at death descend into Hades which is a place of *temporary* torment while they await the coming resurrection and their *eternal* torment... (2 Pet. 2:9)...until Hades is emptied of its inhabitants... (Rev. 20:13-15)" (Morey, 86-87). Thus, so far no one has ever gone to hell.

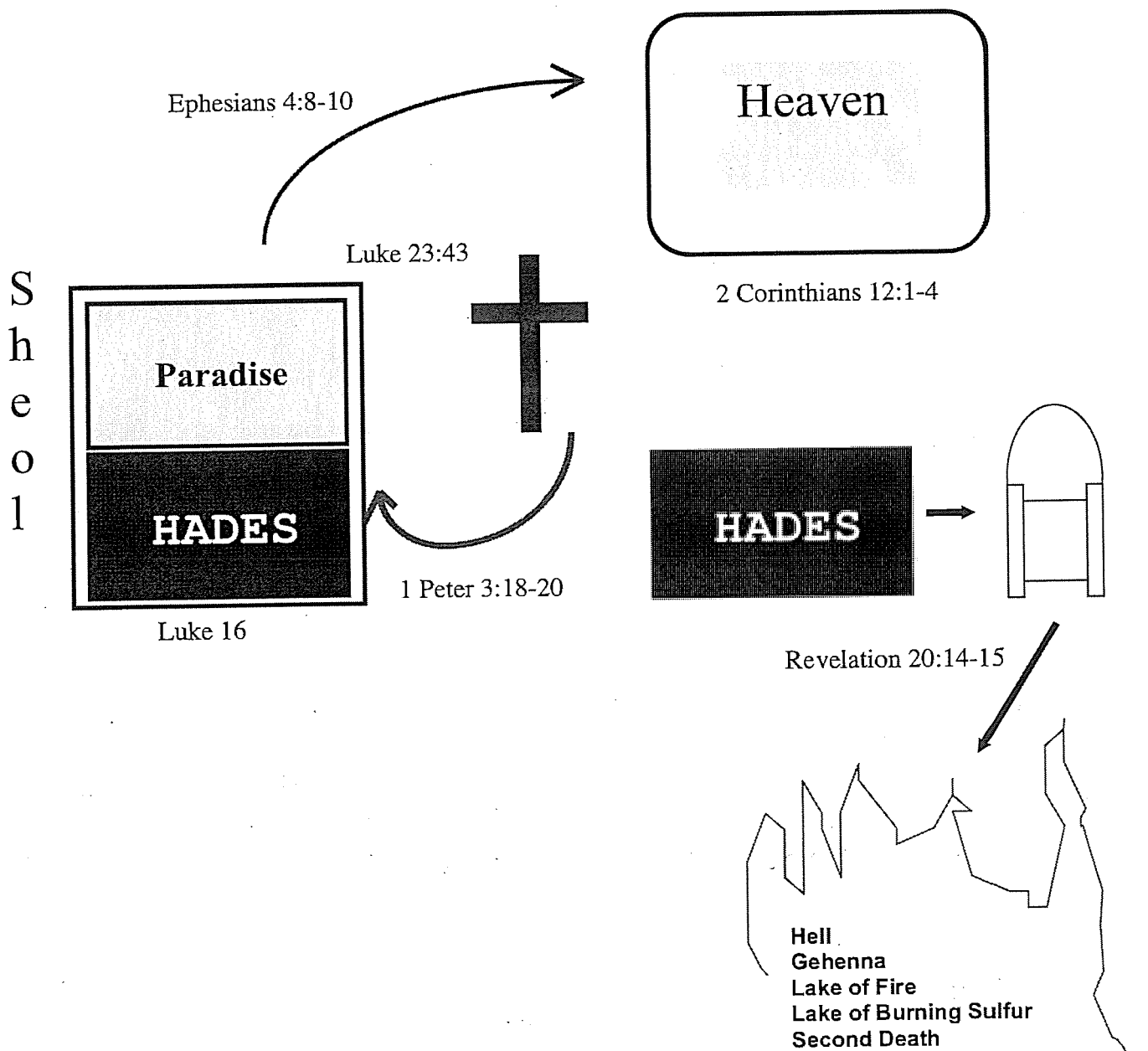
#### c. *Gehenna* = Hell (Greek)

- 1) Usage: *Gehenna* is found 12 times in the NT with the meaning of "hell." It describes the ultimate fate of the wicked (the lake of fire, Rev. 20:14-15) after the Great White Throne Judgment. *Gehenna* is the Greek equivalent for "the valley of Hinnom" (Josh. 15:8; 18:16; Neh. 11:30) that was the dump just outside Jerusalem where garbage and unclean corpses were tossed. Here "the fires never stopped burning and the worms never stopped eating" (Morey, 87).
- 2) Lexical Meaning: "The place of judgment" (BAGD 152).
- 3) KJV: The KJV correctly translates *Gehenna* as "hell" in every instance. Unfortunately, whereas Berkhof (p. 680), the Westminster Confession and Second Helvetic Confession correctly identify the place of the believer after death, they all incorrectly cite that unbelievers presently enter hell at death.
- 4) Sections: No sections are specified in Scripture, although Christ intimated that there would be different degrees of punishment after death (Matt. 11:20-24).

### Summary: Where Did/Do the Deceased Go?

	Before the Death of Christ	After the Death of Christ
<b>All People</b>	Sheol-Hades, a "dual compartment" place (Luke 16)	Paradise compartment emptied of OT saints and brought to Heaven (Eph. 4:8; Prov. 15:24; Matt. 27:50-53; Rom. 10:7; Heb. 12:23; 2 Cor. 12:1-4; Rev. 1:18)
<b>Believers</b>	Paradise or "Abraham's side" in Hades (Luke 16:22; 23:43)	Christ's presence in Heaven (Acts 7:55, 59; Phil. 1:23; 2 Cor. 5:8)
<b>Unbelievers</b>	Place of torment in Hades (Luke 16:23)	Place of torment = Hades (2 Pet. 2:9; Rev. 6:8)

### The Transfer of Paradise



2. If dead believers go to Christ and dead unbelievers go to Hades but the resurrection of their bodies comes later (cf. Eschatology, 160), are they then bodiless until the resurrection?
- a. No, for perhaps all the saved have an intermediate body (e.g., Moses in Luke 9:30).
- Certain texts strongly intimate that there is such a body. There is “a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal, in the heavens” (2 Cor. 5:1, KJV). This body is said to be eternal because it is finally merged with the resurrection body at the time of the resurrection. The preparation of the intermediate body is a miraculous operation of God. Therefore, to be clothed with this body during the intermediate state will not leave one naked (2 Cor. 5:2-4, KJV). This may be part of the explanation for the Old Testament saints who came out of the graves after the resurrection of Christ (Matt. 27:50-53, KJV). This may also explain the white robes of the tribulation martyrs under the altar (Rev. 6:9-22; cf. Rev. 7:9, 14, KJV)” (from Hoyt, 47).
- b. Likewise, by implication, every unbeliever must also have an intermediate body which experiences pain and torment (?)—unless this can be felt by a soul alone (?).
3. In light of the preceding Scripture, the Bible refutes all of the following erroneous intermediate state philosophies (see Eschatology, 163-70; Erickson, 1176f.; Hoyt, 47; Berkhof, 686-94):
- a. Universalism: all persons upon earth will be saved regardless of their belief (held by liberalism). See my response at Eschatology, 163.
- b. Annihilationism: the soul of unbelievers is not immortal and will die; thus the punishment for sin is missing out on heaven since there is no eternal hell (held by Jehovah’s Witnesses and “evangelicals” such as F. F. Bruce, John Stott, Clark Pinnock, and Philip Hughes). See my response at Eschatology, 164-67.
- c. Soul-Sleep: the soul cannot be conscious without a body; “the condition of man in death is one of unconsciousness... all men, good and evil alike, remain in the grave from death to the resurrection” (*Seventh-day Adventists Answer Questions on Doctrine* [Review & Herald, 1957], 13; cited by Millard Erickson, 1176).

Response (cf. Eschatology, 170):

- 1) Consciousness after death is revealed repeatedly: “remember” (Luke 16:25), “today” (Luke 23:43), Stephen’s prayer (Acts 7:59), OT persons (Matt. 17:1-8).
  - 2) Pain is experienced after death (Luke 16:24)
  - 3) After death Christians “live together with” Christ (1 Thess. 5:10; cf. Luke 20:38; Phil. 1:23; 2 Cor. 5:6, 8), so a soul sleep is impossible.
  - 4) Why would a soul need to sleep? Isn’t sleep a bodily function—not of the soul? How could a disembodied soul sleep? Sleep is but a euphemism for death (Matt. 9:24; John 11:11; Acts 7:60; 13:36; 1 Cor. 11:30; 15:6, 18, 20, 51; 1 Thess. 4:13-15).
  - 5) A body is not needed for consciousness (Holy Spirit, Father, angels, demons).
- d. Purgatory: an additional place for cleansing “venial” sins (but not mortal sins) between death and the resurrection awaits those who “are in a state of grace but not yet spiritually perfect”; it is “a state of temporary punishment for those who, departing this life in the grace of God, are not entirely free from venial sins or have not yet fully paid the satisfaction due to their transgressions” (Joseph Pohle, *Eschatology or The Catholic Doctrine of the Last Things: A Dogmatic Treatise* [St. Louis: B. Herder, 1917], 18). [Notice *who* pays for sin!] A related doctrine is that of *limbus infantium* whereby unbaptised babies suffer punishment for original sin, which is the loss of beatific vision or the presence of God, but they are not punished for *actual* sin. They also think Matt. 12:32 teaches forgiveness after death.

Response (cf. Eschatology, 167): The dead have a fixed state (Heb. 9:27) with no crossing over from one place to another (Luke 16:26). Matt. 12:32 teaches *no* forgiveness later.

- e. Reincarnation: the intermediate state is experienced over and over between various times an individual lives on earth (held by Hindus, New Agers, and many others). See my four-page study at Eschatology, 17a-d.



## Study Tips for the Online Final Exam

### Format

This exam has 80 questions of two types: multiple-choice (most of them) and matching. You will have two hours to complete it online, starting on the last day of class and ending at 10 PM on the last day of finals week. All questions are from the class notes (except see #1 below) since you have already been quizzed on your readings in ENT and IBS. The pages below relate to the class notes.

### Content

This is a difficult exam (15% of one batch of students failed it with a class average of 75%). This is designed to whittle down the many “A” students to have a course average of “B” unless they really know the NT well. Please give attention to the following issues to prepare for the exam:

1. Make sure you read chapter 2 in *Encountering the NT* on “The Middle East in the Days of Jesus” as the exam has 18 questions on this chapter. This is copied in these notes, 510-25. Most of these questions are fairly simple and also are covered in my NT Backgrounds (World of the NT) course; however, reviewing this chapter will prove helpful—especially for those who have taken the IBS edition of NTS since they will not have yet read this chapter, which the ENT students did earlier in the semester.
2. Study the *first page* of each NT book study that gives the book chart, key word, key verse, summary statement and application.
3. Fill in the *blank charts* on pages 29-32 as this will help immensely on the exam. These provide the basic issues addressed for each book throughout the course.
4. Know both the *chronological and canonical order* of the NT books.
5. Be able to *correlate* which books Paul wrote at different points in his life, particularly his journeys and imprisonments (cf. pp. 24 which is blank on the next page and 124). Note the three categories of Pauline epistles (p. 143) and be able to contrast and compare them. See also “Paul’s Dealing with Problems” (p. 222j) that shows the unique situation for each Pauline epistle.
6. Know not only the key word for each book (#2 above) but explain how this word helps us understand the basic thrust of the book (cf. pp. 24-27). The short statements throughout the notes immediately under the “Synthesis” division will help here. It is identical to the title of each book chart.
7. Know how each NT book is unique from the other books. This information is found in the “Characteristics” sections within the notes for each book. For example, be able to compare and contrast the gospels in their emphases. Put these into pages 29-32.
8. Most of all, pray that God will enable you to retain the knowledge you have gained from this course throughout your life—especially in ministry situations when an overview of the NT will be crucial to help others come to know Him in a deeper way.

## NT Book Chronological Summary

A Framework for Understanding the Entire New Testament as a Whole (answers on page 24)

#	Date	Book	Key Word	Paul's Journeys & Imprisonments	Doctrinal Classification
1					
2					
3					
4					
5					
6					
7					
8					
9					
10					
11					
12					
13					
14					
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25					
26					
27					

1. What general observations can you make from this chart in terms of the theological development of the NT writings?
  
2. In what decade were the most NT writings composed? Why was this?

## “The Middle East in the Days of Jesus”

Walter A. Elwell & Robert W. Yarbrough, *Encountering the New Testament*, 3d ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2013), 21-51 (1 of 16)

# 2

## The Middle East in the Days of Jesus

### Outline

- **The Land of Palestine**
- **The History of Palestine from the Return to the Destruction of Jerusalem**
  - The Maccabean/Hasmonean Period (166–63 BC)
  - The Domination of Rome (63 BC–AD 70)
    - The Rule of Herod the Great (37–4 BC)
    - The Rule of Herod’s Descendants (4 BC–AD 66)
      - Archelaus (4 BC–AD 6)
      - Philip (4 BC–AD 34)
      - Antipas (4 BC–AD 39)
      - Herod Agrippa I and II (AD 37–66)
    - The Jewish War and the Destruction of Jerusalem (AD 66–70)
- **Jewish Religion in Jesus’s Day**
  - The Unifying Factors in Judaism
  - Religious Groups
    - Pharisees
    - Sadducees
    - Essenes
    - Zealots
    - The Apocalyptic Movement
    - Other Groups in Palestine
  - The Samaritans

### The Literature of the Jews

- The Old Testament
- The Old Testament Apocrypha
- The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha
- The Dead Sea Scrolls
- Rabbinic Writings
- Other Writings

### • Conclusion

### Objectives

*After reading this chapter, you should be able to*

- Describe the essential geographical features of Palestine
- Outline the major historical events occurring in Palestine from 539 BC to AD 70
- Explain how various factors unified Judaism
- Identify the differences among the major religious groups of this historical period
- Contrast the writings of the Old Testament, the Apocrypha, and the pseudepigrapha
- List the various rabbinic materials and what they teach

W e search for *personal* meaning in a world that sometimes seems bent on denying it. Cosmology reveals that the universe is vast and we are fly-specks by comparison. World population tops seven billion; what is one person? By many measurements, our name is Statistic: a Social Security number, debit card number, cell phone number, student ID number, student loan number. And that is if we are lucky enough to have been allowed into this world: with developments in medical technology hundreds of millions have been aborted internationally during the past century (and especially since the 1970s). The self struggles for identity, a voice, a reason to get up and face things each day. No wonder one of the most penetrating statements to emerge from World War II and the Holocaust was Viktor Frankl's *Man's Search for Meaning* (original German title: *Ein Psycholog erlebt das Konzentrationslager* [A psychologist experiences the concentration camp]). It remains worth reading today. The human search for personal validation is acute in every generation.

Could a sense of personal meaning emerge from study of Scripture? Perhaps, but it is tempting to pick up the Bible, especially when it is slickly packaged with the latest and greatest study aids, and succumb to the suspicion that this is just church hype. What does some old book have to do with me, really? But the biblical documents, like God himself, appeal "to every nation and tribe and language and people" (Rev. 14:6 ESV). They are particular, not impersonal, in nature. They have the potential to lift souls swimming in dehumanizing anonymity and to confer on them dignity and personhood.

The New Testament especially is striking in its personal tone. Out of twenty-seven documents, twenty-four are personal letters,<sup>1</sup> and the remaining three Gospels are personalized accounts of the life and work of Jesus Christ.

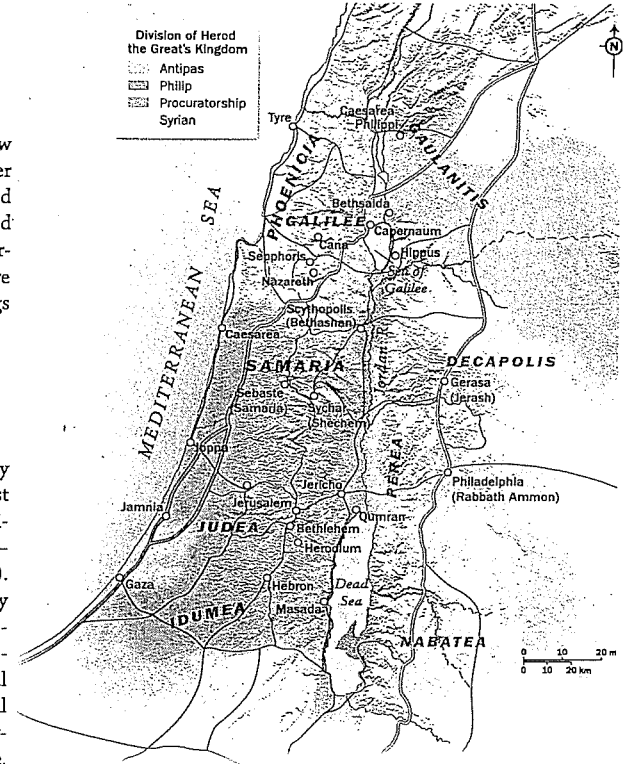
The apostle John begins his Gospel by telling us that the eternal **Word** of God, Jesus Christ, "became flesh and made his dwelling among us" (John 1:14); in his first epistle John says that he and the other apostles saw Jesus with their eyes and touched him with their hands (1 John 1:1–2). The Christian doctrine of the incarnation asserts that the Son of God became a human being and shared our human life with us. This means, of course, that he had to appear at a certain time, in a certain place. To enter history meant that Christ became a particular person (Jesus of Nazareth), at a particular time (during the reigns of Augustus [27 BC–AD 14] and Tiberius Caesar [AD 14–37]); and in a particular place (Palestine, on the MEDITERRANEAN SEA). When the apostle Paul spoke to the philosophers in Athens, he portrayed history as a prelude leading up to the coming of Christ, before whom we all must someday stand (Acts 17:22–31). This idea caused some of the early church fathers to speak of the history before Christ as a *praeparatio evangelium* (preparation for the gospel). Contemporary theologians speak of the "scandal of particularity"—the fact that Jesus is available for all but was to be found only in one place. All of this is important for New Testament students because it speaks of the significance of the particular history of which Jesus was a part and of the place he filled in it.

For this reason any study of the New Testament must begin with a look, however brief, at the circumstances that led up to and surrounded the major events that constituted the beginning of the Christian faith. Otherwise, it would be difficult to get a clear picture of Jesus and how his time on Earth brings personal meaning to us today.

## The Land of Palestine

The land of Palestine has always been very important to the Jews and to the Middle East in general.<sup>2</sup> About one-third the size of Illinois, it is approximately 45 miles wide (east–west) and 145 miles long (north–south). The region as a whole divides into basically five longitudinal regions,<sup>3</sup> with several subregions of varying importance. The main regions, going from west to east, are the coastal plain, the Shephelah or foothills, the central mountain range, the wilderness and the Jordan Valley, and the eastern mountain range. The striking ruggedness of the territory produces marked changes of climate from place to place, so that snow might be found in one place while a few miles away there are palm trees and sunshine. The "West–East" map provided (p. 24) shows something of this contrast by slicing into the land from west to east roughly through JERUSALEM. As you look at this map, imagine yourself standing in the desert to the south of Jerusalem, looking north.

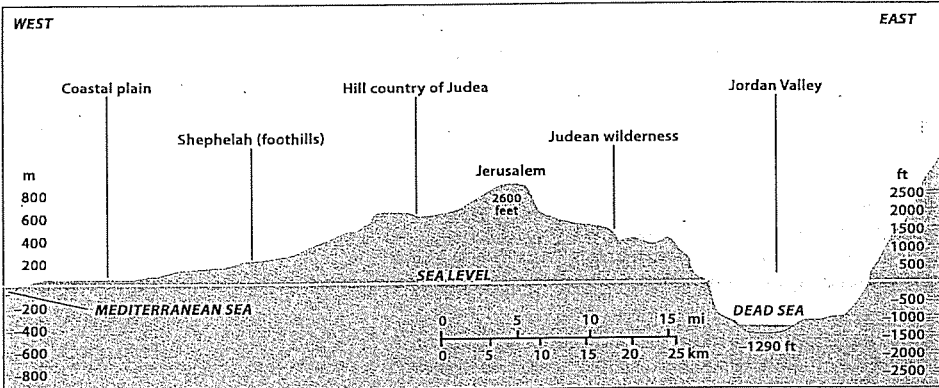
A look at the land as it lies north to south is also revealing, showing it to be almost impassable, except for the PLAIN OF ESDRAELON that cuts east to west between SAMARIA and GALILEE. In the "South–North" map provided (p. 25) you are standing on the eastern side of the JORDAN RIVER looking west. Sea level is the straight line that cuts horizontally through the land.



PALESTINE IN THE TIME OF CHRIST, AD 6–44

In Jesus's day the land consisted of several administrative districts governed by the Romans. Three were on the western side of the Jordan River: Galilee, Samaria, and JUDEA. East of the Jordan to the north was a collection of smaller districts, ruled by Herod's son Philip. Another, called the DECAPOLIS, was a sprawling area encompassing ten cities that were given a rather large measure of self-government. South of this was PEREA, an area ruled along with Galilee by HEROD ANTIPAS. Let's take a brief look at these districts.

The district of Galilee to the north, where Jesus grew up, is of great physical diversity, an area about thirty-three miles wide and sixty miles long (north–south), bordered by PHOENICIA on the northwest, SYRIA on the north, the Jordan Valley with the SEA



WEST-EAST CROSS SECTION OF PALESTINE gentiles

OF GALILEE on the east, and the Plain of Esdraelon on the south—Galilee, surrounded by the gentiles (Matt. 4:13–16).<sup>4</sup> The Sea of Galilee, which Jesus knew so well, is not really a sea at all but rather a medium-sized lake about twelve miles long by eight miles wide. It supplied the region with an abundance of fish. On its northwestern edge was the marvelous PLAIN OF GENNESARET, which produced fruits and vegetables almost all year long, even in the dead of winter. This was possible because it was more than six hundred feet below sea level and was not subject to the temperature extremes of higher altitudes.

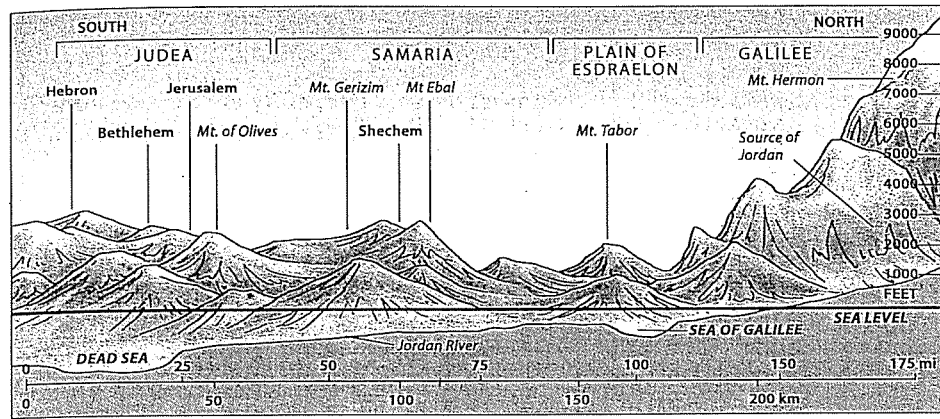
Samaria stands between Galilee and Judea. Its northern boundary is the Plain of Esdraelon. On the west is the Mediterranean Sea, and on the east is the Jordan River. To the south, it merges into Judea. The exact boundaries have always been somewhat fluid, so it is difficult to fix them precisely. Samaria was a mountainous area of rounded hills and fertile plains, where agriculture flourished, yielding fruits and grains of every sort. Large herds of sheep and goats also found pasture among its hills. It has remained so down to modern times. As William Thomson long ago observed, "One may be excused for becoming somewhat enthusiastic over this pretty vale of Nablus, sparkling with fountains and streams, verdant with olive groves and fig orchards, interspersed with walnut, apple,

apricot, orange, quince, pomegranate, and other trees and shrubs."<sup>5</sup>

Judea is directly to the south of Samaria, and extends from the Mediterranean Sea on the west to the Jordan River and the DEAD SEA on the east down to the desert on the south, including the old area of EDOM, or IDUMEA as it was called in New Testament times. Its major city was, of course, Jerusalem, but it also included many other ancient holy sites.

The physical features of Judea show the basic divisions of the land most clearly. The coastal plain and foothills were noted for their crops and pasturage. The west winds blowing off the sea provided enough moisture for everything to grow well, and throughout history these regions have been wonderfully productive. Up in the hills, olives and figs can grow, but the rough and stony land makes it difficult to farm. Flocks of sheep and goats abound. On the eastern side of the mountains lies the wilderness, a wild and barren area, utterly desolate, where little was to be found other than scorpions, jackals, and bandits. It was here that Jesus went to be tempted by the devil.

The eastern boundary of both Samaria and Judea is the Jordan River. In many ways it forms a region unto itself. It takes its rise in the mountains to the north, passes through the Sea of Galilee, and wanders through



SOUTH-NORTH CROSS SECTION OF PALESTINE

dense thickets for about sixty-five miles. It ends in the Dead Sea, so called because it is so salty from the evaporation of water that nothing can live there. JERICHO and its fertile plain are nearby, in stark contrast to the barrenness that surrounds it. The Dead Sea is the lowest natural place on Earth (more than 1,290 feet below sea level) and is surrounded by wilderness. A monastic group called the Essenes built a community here to get away from civilization and hid their precious library in its caves when the Romans attacked in AD 66. These documents were found in the mid-twentieth century and are called the Dead Sea Scrolls.

The area to the northeast of the Sea of Galilee was ruled by HEROD PHILIP (4 BC–AD 34). It consisted of some smaller districts that included Batanaea, Trachonitis, Auranitis, Gaulanitis, and the territory surrounding Pania, a city Philip rebuilt and named CAESAREA PHILIPPI. The entire area was excellent for farming and herding. Jesus traveled infrequently in the area but did cross it on more than one occasion. Best remembered is his extraordinary self-revelation of divine sonship and his messianic mission of suffering and death at Caesarea Philippi (Matt. 16:13–28). BETHSAIDA was also in Philip's territory, and it was here that Jesus performed some of his mighty works (Matt. 11:21–22).

The Decapolis was an extended area, mostly on the eastern side of the Jordan River, that contained ten Greek cities and their surrounding areas. They were probably organized at the time POMPEY invaded Palestine (66–64 BC). The area was rich in farming and herding, renowned in antiquity for its dairy products. Jesus made no extended trips through the area but did cross it on occasion (Mark 7:31). People from the Decapolis came to hear Jesus preach in Galilee (Matt. 4:25). Jesus's memorable healing of an out-cast demoniac took place in the Decapolis, on the eastern side of the Sea of Galilee. The pigs that rushed into the sea are evidence of the region's gentile population (Mark 5:1–20).

Perea was a rather large area east of the Jordan River and the Dead Sea that was ruled

Essenes

The Judean wilderness



The Middle East in the Days of Jesus

along with Galilee by Herod Antipas. JOSEPHUS, a first-century Jewish writer whom we will say more about at the end of this chapter, described it in this way:

The greater part of it is desert, and rough, and not much disposed to the production of the milder kinds of fruits; yet a moist soil [in other parts] produces all kinds of fruits, and its plains are planted with trees of all sorts, while yet the olive tree, the vine, and the palm tree, are chiefly cultivated there. It is also sufficiently watered with torrents, which issue out of the mountains, and with springs that never fail to run, even when the torrents fail them, as they do in the dog days. (Josephus, *JW*. 3.3.3 [Whiston])<sup>6</sup>

There was a large Jewish population in Perea, and many Jews from Galilee preferred to detour through it when traveling to Jerusalem rather than go through Samaria. John the Baptist preached and baptized in Perea (John 1:28; 10:40), and Jesus traveled extensively there in the six months prior to his death and resurrection. Jesus probably sent the seventy-two disciples into Perea to preach about the coming kingdom of God (Luke 10:1–17). MACHAERUS was a major fortress city of Perea. It was here that Antipas had his regional palace and that John the Baptist was imprisoned and, according to Josephus, executed for denouncing Herod's illegal marriage (Josephus, *Ant*. 18.5.2; see also Mark 6:17–29).

Overall, Palestine is a small land, but it has been of immense value historically because of its strategic location as a land bridge between the mighty nations surrounding it. It has been fought over throughout history. But its significance is not just geographical. For Christians, it stands as the land promised to Abraham and the land of fulfillment for the Lord Jesus Christ. It was here that God chose to effect his great plan of salvation through the **incarnation**, death, and resurrection of his only Son.

incarnation

### The History of Palestine from the Return to the Destruction of Jerusalem

When CYRUS became the king of Persia (modern Iran) in 559 BC, his vast empire spread from Greece to India and from the Caucasus to Egypt. His enlightened policy allowed conquered peoples who had been sent into exile to return to their native lands and reestablish themselves as semiautonomous units under his benevolent leadership. Numerous Jews living in exile in Babylon since the fall of Jerusalem in 587 BC were eager to return to their homeland. A series of emigrations brought many of them back to Palestine for a new start. This was the “time of restoration,” as it is usually called in surveys of the Old Testament. Life was far from easy for these returnees, and as the decades went by it was hard not to become thoroughly discouraged. In time, however, the walls of Jerusalem were rebuilt, the temple was rededicated, homes were established, and an uneasy existence was begun. The Jews had come to realize that they were no longer in charge of their own destiny but were part of the larger world scene, subject to the changing fortunes of the large nations around them.

During the fourth century BC, Cyrus's Persian Empire began to crumble and European might was felt for the first time in Middle Eastern history. It came in the form of ALEXANDER THE GREAT. A century earlier, the Persians had attempted to extend their borders into Greece. A seemingly invincible force, they burned and pillaged Athens; a disastrous naval defeat at the Sea of Salamis in 480 BC, however, forced their withdrawal back into Asia Minor. To avenge the desecration of the temple of Athena, Alexander pushed east to establish the rule of Greek civilization in what was formerly Persia's domain. He

died in 323 BC, and it was left to his military successors, called the **Diadochi**, to fight bitterly among themselves as they carved up his empire. Antigonos Cyclops seized the whole of Asia Minor, including Syria and Palestine; PTOLEMY took Egypt and North Africa; SELEUCUS Nicator took the enormous territory stretching from Mesopotamia east to India; and others took smaller, insignificant portions. In 301 BC, at the Battle of Ipsus, Antigonos was defeated and his territory was added basically to that of Seleucus, who founded the city of ANTIOCH in Syria in 300 BC and made it his capital. Meanwhile, Ptolemy had gained control of the Holy Land to the south of Syria. This set the stage for the bitter struggles over Palestine that raged until Roman military might made its presence felt there about a hundred years later.

In 198 BC ANTIOCHUS III, THE GREAT, ruler of the Syrian (Seleucid) Empire, defeated his Ptolemaic rival at the Battle of Panias and annexed Palestine to his territory. Later at Magnesia in Turkey, Antiochus was defeated by Scipio of Rome. The destiny of the region was in Roman hands for the next five hundred years.

ANTIOCHUS IV, EPIPHANES, was allowed by ROME to become the ruler of the **Seleucid Empire** in 175 BC. He set about hellenizing (forcing Greek ways on) all his territory. This program included the worship of the Greek god Zeus (the Roman Jupiter). A series of outrages over two years—including murder, treachery, the ravaging of Jerusalem, and the establishment of a pagan citadel in Jerusalem called the **ACRA**—finally culminated in the establishment of an altar to Zeus in the tem-

ple. Swine's flesh was offered there in December 167 BC (1 Macc. 1:54, 59; 2 Macc. 6:5). Daniel had mentioned this sacrilege earlier in his prophecy (Dan. 11:31; cf. Matt. 24:15).

#### The Maccabean/Hasmonean Period (166–63 BC)

In the small town of MODEIN, about seventeen miles northwest of Jerusalem, an aged **priest** named MATTATHIAS resisted Antiochus's attempt to force pagan worship on all of Israel by killing the king's representative (1 Macc. 2:19–26). He then fled into the hills with his five sons, John, SIMON, JUDAS, Eleazer, and JONATHAN. From there, with the help of the **Hasidim**, a group of pious warriors, they waged war against the Syrians. Leadership was exercised by this family, called the **Hasmoneans**, for the next 103 years until Pompey conquered Jerusalem in 63 BC.

Mattathias died shortly after the revolt started. His son Judas (nicknamed “Maccabeus,” probably meaning “the Hammer”) assumed leadership of the revolt. After defeating the Syrians at EMMAUS (156/165 BC) and BETH-ZUR (165/164 BC), the temple mount was cleansed and rededicated on Kislev 25, 164 BC, three years after it had been desecrated by Antiochus. The celebration lasted eight days and became known as the **Feast of Dedication** or of Lights (present-day Hanukkah) because the lamps in the temple were relit (see John 10:22). Judas won yet another decisive victory against a Syrian general, Nicanor, in 161 BC but was then killed in battle near Elasa that same year by the Syrian Bacchides.

Diadochi

priest

Hasidim

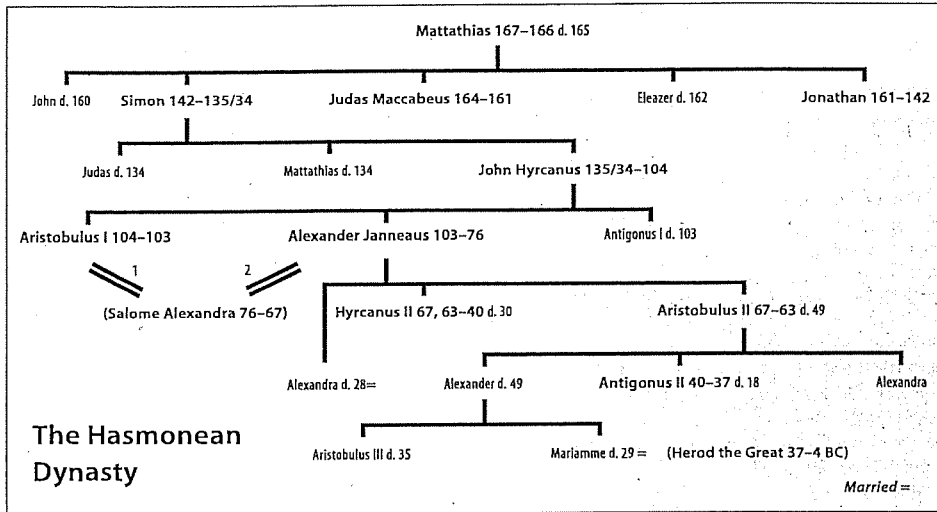
Hasmoneans

Seleucid Empire

Feast of Dedication



Coin featuring Antiochus IV, Epiphanes



Bacchides returned to Syria, and an uneasy peace prevailed, despite sporadic civil unrest. Jonathan, Judas's brother, assumed leadership and extended his authority to numerous areas of Palestine. Jonathan was wise enough to reestablish relations with Rome but in the end was foolish enough to trust a Syrian general named Trypho, who massacred a thousand of his unsuspecting troops and eventually Jonathan as well in 142 BC (1 Macc. 12:46-48; 13:20-24).

Simon followed Jonathan as leader, and from 142 BC until his death in 135/134 BC things were relatively calm.

He established peace in the land, and Israel rejoiced with great joy. Each man sat under his vine and his fig tree, and there was none to make them afraid. No one was left in the land to fight them, and the kings were crushed in those days. He strengthened all the humble of his people;

Pharisees

he sought out the law, and did away with every lawless and wicked man. (1 Macc. 14:11-14 RSV)

The people were so grateful to Simon that they bestowed the high priesthood on him and his family in perpetuity. Thus was founded the Hasmonean dynasty of priesthood. Simon also renewed his alliance with Rome, which no doubt strengthened his position against Syrian attack.

Simon's son, JOHN HYRCANUS I, ruled over the land from 135/134 to 104 BC. He secured his position by appealing to Rome for support, but he also hired a professional mercenary army rather than relying on a volunteer force of farmers and tradesmen. Because he was a good general and Syria's power was in decline, Hyrcanus was able, by a series of victories, to extend his territory through Samaria northward and Idumea southward until he ruled over a kingdom almost as large as that of David and Solomon. Hyrcanus had a falling out with the Pharisees (descendants of the Hasidim mentioned earlier). But his reign was generally remembered as a time of peace and prosperity. Josephus says, "He lived happily

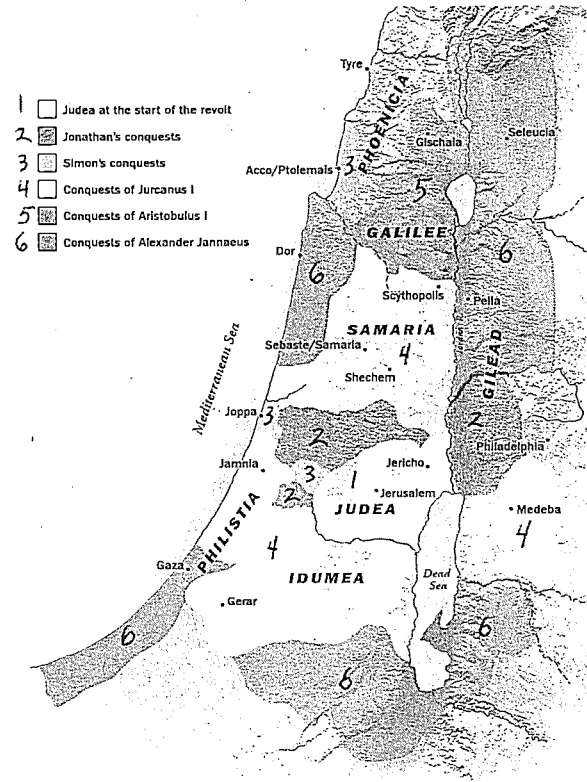
and administered the government in the best possible manner for thirty-one years. . . . He was esteemed by God worthy of three privileges—the government of his nation, the dignity of the high priesthood, and prophecy, for God was with him" (*Ant.* 13.10.7 [Whiston]).

The disastrous reign of Hyrcanus's son Aristobulus lasted only one year (104-103 BC), and was followed by the turbulent twenty-seven years of ALEXANDER JANNAEUS, his brother. Alexander was constantly embroiled in war, turmoil, and internal political dissension. He was unprincipled and ruthless and is said to have had hundreds of captives crucified in the center of the city to entertain himself and his mistresses during a drunken party. The falling out that Alexander's father, Hyrcanus, had with the Pharisees became an outright break during Alexander's reign. They considered him totally unworthy to be the high priest because of his evil ways. At one point Alexander had six thousand Jews massacred because they ridiculed him when he was officiating as the high priest (Josephus, *Ant.* 13.13.5).

When Alexander died in 76 BC, his widow, Alexandra, became the queen. She was well liked by the people, but the Pharisees at this time basically dominated the country. After the death of Alexandra in 67 BC, a war broke out between her two sons, HYRCANUS II and Aristobulus II. ARISTOBULUS II managed to stay on top until 63 BC, when the Roman general Pompey, who by this time had conquered virtually all the territory in Asia Minor up to Syria, arrived and conquered Jerusalem. In this way, the new power that was to control the area for centuries established its dominance, and a new era had effectively begun.

**The Domination of Rome (63 BC-AD 70)**

After conquering Jerusalem, Pompey appointed Hyrcanus II as the high priest, but without any royal title, and sent Aristobu-



lus II to Rome as a prisoner. Hyrcanus II's years of limited religious rule were filled with intrigues and political ups and downs, and culminated in his humiliation. He was taken prisoner by the Parthians, mutilated by having his ears cut off to disqualify him for the priesthood, and replaced by Aristobulus II's ineffective son, ANTIGONUS II, in 40 BC. Antigonus remained only a turbulent three years until the Romans confirmed Herod as the ruler in 37 BC, after a series of military victories, even calling him king.

**The Rule of Herod the Great (37-4 BC)**

As we saw, when Pompey captured Jerusalem in 63 BC, the fortunes of Palestine became tied up with those of Rome. During those uncertain years a new dynasty was aris-

PALESTINE UNDER THE MACCABEES

## Chronology of Herod the Great's Rule

BC	
37	Herod conquers Jerusalem Executions
31	Earthquake in Palestine Herod defeats the Nabateans
30	Hyrchanus II executed Herod confirmed king by Octavian
29	Mariamme executed
ca. 29	Alexandra executed
ca. 25	Herod rebuilds Samaria and names it Sebaste Famine and pestilence
ca. 22	Herod starts to build Caesarea
19	Herod starts to build the temple
14	Herod's sons, Alexander and Aristobulus, fall out
12	Augustus settles quarrel between Herod's sons
10	Dedication of Caesarea Increasing discord in Herod's family
ca. 7	Alexander and Aristobulus executed at Sebaste Antipater all-powerful at Herod's court
5	Antipater tried for conspiracy Herod falls ill
4	Herod puts down popular uprising led by rabbis Judas and Matthias Herod's health deteriorates Antipater executed Herod names Archelaus king and Antipas and Philip tetrarchs Herod dies five days after Antipater's execution

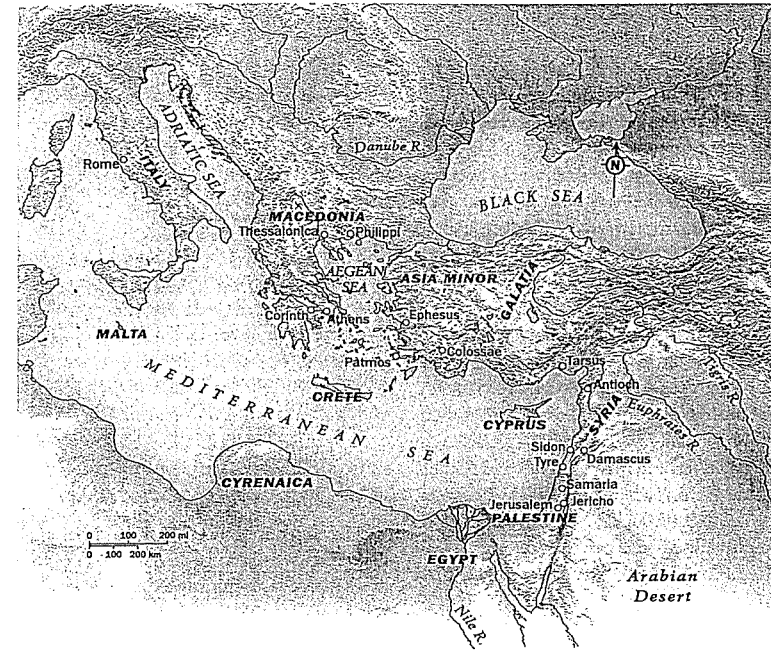
ing in the person of ANTIPATER, an Idumean (from the ancient kingdom of Edom, just south of Judea), who was astute enough to support JULIUS CAESAR when he was in need of help in Alexandria, Egypt, in 48 BC. For this, Antipater was rewarded by being made **ethnarch** (local governor or prince) of Palestine. In 47 BC Antipater appointed his son Phasael governor of Jerusalem and his son Herod as governor of Galilee. The assassination of Caesar on the Ides of March (March 15), 44 BC, threw the Middle East into turmoil. Two factions were vying for power: Cassius and Brutus against Anthony and Octavian (later CAESAR AUGUSTUS).

After Cassius and Brutus were disposed of, Anthony and Octavian fought for supremacy; Octavian ultimately triumphed. The Parthians had made Antigonus II the ruler of Palestine in 40 BC, but in that same year the Roman Senate had made Herod the king of Judea. War followed, and after a stubborn defense Jerusalem fell in 37 BC to the Romans; Herod was now the sole ruler of the territory. When Octavian became the supreme ruler (Caesar) of the Roman world after defeating Anthony in the Battle of Actium on September 2, 31 BC, Herod switched his allegiance to Octavian; he was accepted by Octavian as a loyal subject in 30 BC and confirmed as the king of Judea.

Herod had married MARIAMME, Hyrcanus II's granddaughter, to legitimate his claim to royalty, but he was also profoundly in love with her. His jealousy caused him to listen to court gossip started by his sister. Eventually he executed Mariamme and her mother, Alexandra. He had already had Aristobulus II and Hyrcanus II killed. After his ill-advised murder of Mariamme (she was innocent), Herod's none-too-stable mental condition deteriorated. His reign was filled with political intrigue, plots, murders, wars, and brutality until his death in April 4 BC.

In spite of his many obvious shortcomings, Herod accomplished some good for his territory. He could be quite generous when the occasion demanded it. He was often sensitive to the religious feelings of the Jews and was a master builder of cities. He rebuilt the temple in Jerusalem, built a port city at Caesarea, beautified and refortified other important cities, and kept Rome satisfied, thus providing a stability that Israel would not otherwise have known.

Herod died an agonizing death, perhaps from colon cancer, universally unmentioned, "a man of great barbarity towards all equally and a slave to his passions" (Josephus, *Ant.*



LANDS OF THE BIBLE

17.8.1 [Whiston]). It is ironic that during the reign of this brutal, inhumane ruler, the Prince of Peace was born.

### The Rule of Herod's Descendants (4 BC–AD 66)

Immediately after the death of Herod, riots broke out in Jerusalem that had to be put down by force. These riots continued while three of Herod's sons, ARCHELAUS, Philip, and Antipas, made their way to Rome to present their case before Caesar Augustus. Each wanted to be the sole ruler. After much scheming and intrigue, Augustus divided the land three ways. He gave Archelaus Idumea, Judea, and Samaria, and the title of ethnarch rather than king (Josephus, *Ant.* 17.13.5). Antipas was given Galilee and Perea and the title of tetrarch (local ruler). Philip received Batanaea, Trachonitis, and Auranitis, as well

as other territories to the northeast, and was also titled tetrarch. The riots that were occurring all over the country were brutally put down; Sepphoris in Galilee was destroyed, the temple in Jerusalem was burned and looted, and thousands were crucified by the Romans.

### Archelaus (4 BC–AD 6)

The rule of Archelaus was "brutal and tyrannical" (*Ant.* 17.13.2) and was strongly resisted from the very beginning. His evil reputation forced Joseph and Mary to take Jesus back to Nazareth, rather than return to BETHLEHEM, which was in Archelaus's territory (*Matt.* 2:22–23). He constantly interfered with priestly matters, caused great offense by his illegal marriage to a brother's widow, and treated his subjects harshly. When the Jews could stand it no longer, they



sent a delegation to Rome, where they bitterly complained of Archelaus's misrule. He was summoned to Rome and in AD 6 was banished to Vienne in Gaul, where he spent the rest of his life.

Archelaus's territory was placed under direct Roman rule that lasted from AD 6 to 41, when the nation was unified under Agrippa I. There were six or seven Roman governors, mostly called procurators, during this time, but only the fifth one is of importance for New Testament studies: PONTIUS PILATE, who was in control from AD 26 to 36. As procurator he would have resided in Caesarea. Yet he visited Jerusalem for festivals and notable events. He was a harsh and insensitive ruler, with little consideration for his subjects. His excessive and brutal behavior caught up with him in the end. He was deposed and then exiled by Tiberius Caesar in AD 36.

#### Philip (4 BC–AD 34)

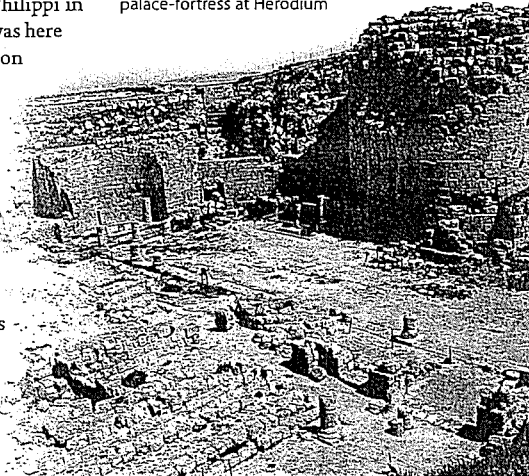
We know little about the reign of Philip except that he was universally praised. He limited personal ambition and kept extravagant building to a minimum. He rebuilt the ancient city of Pnias, north of the Sea of Galilee, renaming it Caesarea Philippi in honor of Caesar and himself. It was here that Peter made his great confession of Jesus's messiahship. Here too Jesus explained how he must go to Jerusalem to die and rise again (Matt. 16:13–27). Bethsaida, on the northeast coast of the Sea of Galilee, was also rebuilt and renamed Julias in honor of Augustus Caesar's daughter. Philip died a natural death (unusual for Herod's family) in AD 34 after ruling for thirty-seven years. Josephus describes his reign in this fashion:

He had shown himself a person of moderation and quietness in the conduct of his life and government: he constantly lived in that country which was subject to him; he used to make his progress with a few chosen friends; his tribunal also, in which he sat in judgment, followed him in his progress; and when any one met him who wanted his assistance, he made no delay, but had his tribunal set down immediately, wheresoever he happened to be, and sat down upon it, and heard his complaint: he there ordered the guilty that were convicted to be punished, and absolved those that had been accused unjustly. (*Ant.* 18.4.6 [Whiston])

#### Antipas (4 BC–AD 39)

Herod Antipas received the territories of Galilee and Perea and hence was ruler of two areas where Jesus ministered extensively. He was a vain, arrogant ruler who was also weak in times of moral crisis. He was married to the daughter of Aretas, the Nabatean king, but fell in love with HERODIAS, his niece, who was at that time the wife of his brother, Philip. He set plans in motion to marry her.

Excavated remains of Herod's palace-fortress at Herodium



Aretas was enraged, went to war with Antipas, and decisively defeated him. It was Herodias who engineered the death of John the Baptist because he denounced the marriage as illegal (Mark 6:17–29). John had been imprisoned at Machaerus in Perea, east of the Dead Sea (*Ant.* 18.5.2). The Jews attributed Herod's defeat in battle to God's judgment of Herod for having allowed John, whom they considered a prophet, to be executed.

It was this Herod to whom Jesus was sent by Pilate just before his crucifixion, while Herod was in Jerusalem for the Passover feast (Luke 23:6–12). Herod seems to have had some spiritual sensitivity (Matt. 14:9; Mark 6:20), but he was more interested in spectacular displays than in spiritual substance. The breach between Herod and Pilate, perhaps caused by Pilate's murder of some Galilean citizens (Luke 13:1), was, oddly, healed by their joint condemnation of Jesus (Luke 23:12).

Herodias proved to be Herod's undoing when she cajoled her husband into going to Rome and demanding of CALIGULA, the emperor, that he be made king rather than just ethnarch. For this he was banished to Spain, where he and Herodias died (*J.W.* 2.9.6; see also *Ant.* 18.7.2).

#### Herod Agrippa I and II (AD 37–66)

HEROD AGRIPPA I was the son of Aristobulus and Bernice and hence the grandson of HEROD THE GREAT and Mariamme. He had lived in Rome and was well known to Tiberius Caesar, his son Drusus, and Caligula. When Tiberius died in AD 37 and Caligula was made emperor, he bestowed the territories of Philip and Lysanias on Agrippa, after releasing him from prison. Agrippa was given the title of king (Acts 12:1). As we saw, Antipas and Herodias's jealousy drove them to Rome in AD 39 to seek the same title, but instead they were banished, so Galilee

and Perea were also given to Agrippa (*Ant.* 18.7.2). In AD 41, after exceptional service to the new emperor CLAUDIUS, Agrippa was awarded Judea and Samaria, thus making his domain almost as large as that of his grandfather Herod the Great. Agrippa was very sensitive to Jewish feelings (*Ant.* 19.7.3), even to the point of executing James the son of Zebedee, one of Jesus's apostles, and putting Peter in prison (Acts 12:1–4). He died unexpectedly in AD 44, while attending a festival in Caesarea and accepting acclamation as a god (Acts 12:21–23; see *Ant.* 19.8.2).

In time, Agrippa's son, HEROD AGRIPPA II, was made nominal ruler of much of his father's old territory. It was not given to him immediately because he was not old enough to rule. He was more like his grandfather than his father and cared little for the feelings of the Jews (*Ant.* 20.7.11; 20.8.4). Paul appeared before Agrippa II while he was imprisoned in Caesarea (ca. AD 60), but Agrippa arrogantly dismissed the apostle's words (Acts 25:13–26:32). When the Jewish War broke out in AD 66, Agrippa sided with the Romans and after the destruction of Jerusalem retired to Rome, where he died in AD 100.

#### The Jewish War and the Destruction of Jerusalem (AD 66–70)

During the AD 44–66 period a succession of bad procurators ruled over the territory of Judea and Samaria. This and other conditions would eventually lead to a disastrous revolt against Rome. These rulers were, in order, Fadus (44–46), Tiberius Julius Alexander (46–48), Ventidius Cumanus (48–52), Felix (52–60; see Acts 24:1–27), Festus (60–62; see Acts 25:1–22), Albinus (62–64), and GESSIUS FLORUS (64–66). Of these, the last two were exceedingly corrupt, greedy, and ruthless. The country by this time was in an uproar, heading toward the disaster that began in the spring of 66. There was

synagogue  
polytheistic  
syncretism

sacrifice

enormous religious unrest, which the Romans never really understood because their polytheistic syncretism did not involve such unshakable convictions. The Jews, however, could not bend, convinced as they were that their law alone was from God and that rival religions amounted to blasphemy. In addition to the religious persecutions, there were economic problems, unfair taxes, bands of robbers roaming the country, excessive interest charged on loans, political assassinations, brutal treatment of innocent citizens, and government corruption. It was, in short, a nation ready to explode. Also, the priesthood, which should have been leading the country spiritually, was as corrupt as everything else. The priests "used violence with the people, and were very ready to plunder those that were weaker than themselves. And from that time it principally came to pass that our city [Jerusalem] was greatly disordered, and that all things grew worse and worse among us" (*Ant.* 20.9.4 [Whiston]).

Aerial view  
of Masada



The spark that ignited the fire began in Caesarea, where a synagogue was desecrated by some Greeks in the month of Iyyar (April–May 66). A riot broke out that spread to Jerusalem, where it was brutally put down by Gessius Florus; more than 3,600 people were slaughtered. For the Jews the break seemed complete, and the daily temple sacrifice in honor of the emperor was suspended, which meant the war had begun in earnest. Josephus offers this account:

And at this time it was that some of those that principally excited the people to go to war, made an assault upon a certain fortress called Masada. They took it by treachery, and slew the Romans that were there, and put others of their own party to keep it. At the same time Eleazar, the son of Ananias the high priest, a very bold youth, who was at that time governor of the temple, persuaded those that officiated in the divine service to receive no gift or sacrifice for any foreigner. And this was the true beginning of our war with the Romans: for they rejected the sacrifice of Caesar on this account: and when many of the high priests and principal men besought them not to omit the sacrifice, which it was customary of them to offer for their princes, they would not be prevailed upon. (*J.W.* 2.17.2 [Whiston])

During the next three years the Romans systematically destroyed the country. The Jews occasionally met with some success against the battle-hardened Roman legions but in the end were no match for them, in large part because they were fighting among themselves. By the summer of 69 all that remained to the Jews were Jerusalem, the Herodium, Masada, and Machaerus. A civil war in Rome and the suicide of NERO in 69 caused VESPASIAN, the Roman general, to

back off his conquest of Jerusalem, and in July 69 he was proclaimed emperor when he departed for Rome. But in the spring of 70 he sent his son TITUS to finish the destruction of Jerusalem, and with four legions of soldiers Titus accomplished the task. It took about four months for them to break through the walls one by one and ultimately subdue the city. It was completely leveled with the exception of a few towers and walls to show how mighty the city had once been and how invincible the Romans were. The siege of the city was horrible, almost beyond description, and the slaughter of people when it fell was excruciatingly brutal. Thousands were tortured, crucified, or sold into slavery, and the city was left in absolute ruin.

To complete the story, more ruin was to follow. Masada fell in AD 73, thus ending the first Jewish revolt, and a second revolt occurred in AD 132–135, led by a messianic pretender named BAR KOKHBA, who promised a divine intervention that never came. The devastation of the city at that time was total, and a law was passed that forbade any Jew from ever setting foot in it again.

Jesus's dreadful prophecy (Luke 21:20–24) had come to pass. The Jews did not know the time of their visitation. Most of them had rejected God's offer of salvation. Because of the hardness of their hearts, only a frightful judgment remained, and they were forced to drink the cup to the bitter dregs.

The significance of the fall of Jerusalem for the Christians and the Jews at that time can hardly be overestimated. From the Jewish point of view, the break with the Christians was complete. Many Jewish Christians had fled Jerusalem because of Jesus's prophecy. Other Jews considered them traitors, and later rabbis even blamed the fall of the city on them. As for the Christians, they realized that they must now move away from Jerusalem; the center of Christianity would have to be

elsewhere, in fact everywhere, just as Jesus had said to the woman in Samaria when he told her that God must be worshiped neither in Jerusalem nor in Samaria but in spirit and in truth (John 4:21–24). Paul also emphasized this in Athens when he noted that God does not dwell in temples made with human hands but is everywhere (Acts 17:24–28). The fall of Jerusalem also contributed to the Christians' developing a new theological vocabulary and worship styles designed to reach the gentiles, who now became their primary mission. Out of this arose the New Testament canon that took its place alongside the Old Testament, thus creating the Bible we use today.

The widespread refusal of Jews to accept Jesus as their promised Savior was tragic, but the apostle Paul surveys the situation with a note of hope. This rejection by the Jews was the reconciliation of the world. God has something yet in mind for Israel (Rom. 11:25–29). In the great mystery of God dealing with us, he has bound all over to disobedience so that he might have mercy on us all (Rom. 11:32).

## Jewish Religion in Jesus's Day

The brief look we have just taken at the complex history of the Jews leading up to the New Testament era should prepare us for the colorful diversity of Jewish religious thought as it existed in Jesus's day. There was no single, normative point of view but rather overlapping or even conflicting collections of ideas and practices that all together are called Second Temple Judaism. Josephus mentions four in particular that are important, but there were others, some of which are themselves quite diverse. Nonetheless, they did hold certain beliefs or at least attitudes in common that set them apart from

Second Temple  
Judaism

rabbis

other religious groups among the Romans and the Greeks.

### The Unifying Factors in Judaism

What must be emphasized at the outset is that **Judaism** was primarily a way of life rather than an accepted set of doctrines. It is not that theological ideas weren't important, but rather no single interpretation was demanded with regard to them. Frequently a number of ideas about a given point were held within a group, but these views were not necessarily viewed as normative for members of other groups. Deviation on a matter of life or lifestyle, however, such as eating, washing, or ritual purity, would bring about instant ostracism from the group. A certain amount of doctrinal diversity could be accommodated but not much variation in style of life. This was one reason that the religious leaders saw Jesus as a threat: he took what they regarded as liberties in such matters.

The single most important idea that unified the Jews related to God and their own sense of uniqueness in the history of the world. They had been chosen by the one and only God to fulfill a singular destiny. He had established an eternal covenant with them. The experience of the exile (587 BC) had, of course, shocked them, but in the end they understood it as a

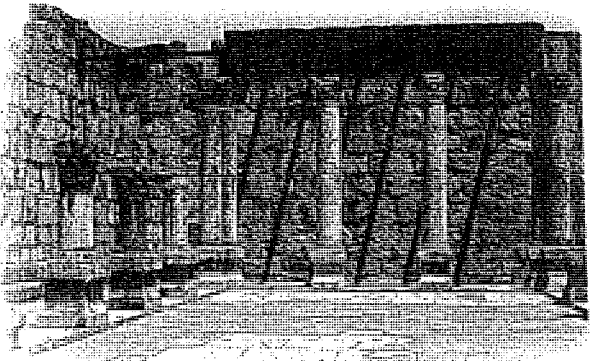
punishment for their sins, especially their sin of putting other gods before the Lord (2 Macc. 6:12–16). The exile had also forced them to see how small they really were when compared to the vast empires of the world, such as Babylon or Persia. They recovered from the initial shock with an even deeper sense of mystery—God chose them rather than any of the great nations of the world to be the bearers of truth. This called forth a profound sense of commitment to carry out their task. They had failed before, but nothing would shake them again. It was *God* who chose them, the *only* God. All the gods of the nations were idols and were to be despised. The Jews were unique because they worshiped the one true God of the universe, who had revealed himself especially to them in choosing them to be his people. They would never again allow the worship of idols, even if it cost them their lives.

Allied to this conviction regarding their historical uniqueness and their fierce monotheism was the idea that God had placed them in a particular place. God was the God of the whole universe and of all the nations, but he had placed the Jews in the land of Palestine, which was to be theirs forever. God had chosen Jerusalem to be the only place of true worship, and that city and the land of Israel must be protected and defended at all costs. What created a problem in Jesus's day, of course, was that the entire territory was under Roman occupation. How could this be? When would God do something about it? The Jews agreed that God would do something and it would involve the land he had chosen, but they disagreed about when and how this was going to be accomplished. Jesus looked beyond narrow nationalism to focus on the fact that God was seeking those whose worship was in the right spirit, not just in the right place (John 4:23–24). In fact, the days

were coming when all these "right places" would be destroyed (Luke 21:5–6, 20–24; John 4:21). John the Baptist told the Jews that their ancient privileges would avail them nothing if they were merely presumed. However, God could raise up children to Abraham from the rocks in the desert, if he so chose (Luke 3:7–8).

Messianic fervor was also prevalent at that time. There was widespread belief that God would send a chosen one, a messiah, who would defeat the Romans and usher in a time of universal peace, with the center of the world in Jerusalem. Opinions varied about who the messiah would be and precisely how he would accomplish the overthrow of the Romans. Some thought it would involve violence; others thought it would come in a more spiritual way. False leaders appeared in the midst of this confusion. Some even led people out into the wilderness to wait there for God's decisive intervention, only instead to be slaughtered by the Romans (see Acts 5:35–37; 21:37–38). But the hope persisted. God would send his messiah to save his people.

The synagogue was also a unifying factor for the Jews, especially those Jews who did not live in Palestine, the scattered Jews, or *Diaspora* as they are called. But even in Palestine there were numerous synagogues—at least one in every town, if some sources are to be believed. Jerusalem is said to have had 394 (*b. Ketub.* 105a) or 480 (*y. Meg.* 73d), with a synagogue in the temple itself. The origins of the synagogue are lost in the mists of antiquity, but they apparently arose sometime during or after the Babylonian captivity. With so many Jews scattered over that part of the world, the synagogue became the center of Jewish life. By Jesus's day it had four basic functions. It was primarily a school, where the children were taught the law and Jewish religious **traditions**. For some, such



Remains of the synagogue at Capernaum

as the Jewish writer **PHILO** of Alexandria (20 BC–AD 45), this was the epitome of what a synagogue should be. It was also a place of worship, where creeds were recited, Scripture was read, a homily or exposition of Scripture given, and prayers offered. The synagogue also functioned as a court where religious or civil questions were settled by the local council. Finally, the synagogue was a place of social interaction, where funerals and special meetings took place and even politics were discussed (see Josephus, *Life* 54). For the Christians in New Testament times, the synagogue served as the logical site to begin to preach the gospel ("to the Jew first, and also to the Greek"), until the time when Christians were no longer allowed entrance to share their message.

The law (*Torah*) and the traditions of the elders were also factors that bound most of the people together. Of central importance were those regulations that involved circumcision and **Sabbath** keeping. The Jews lived by the laws that they believed God had given to them—not only the 613 commandments they found in the Pentateuch but also the subsidiary regulations that surrounded them, which numbered in the thousands.

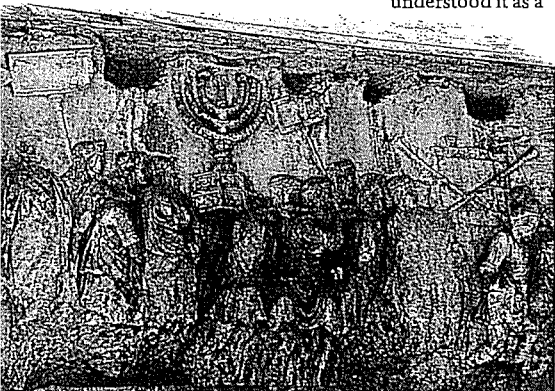
Finally, the temple, the priesthood, and the festivals also gave the Jews a sense of identity. The temple was a magnificent structure,

Diaspora

Sabbath

traditions

This relief of the Arch of Titus in Rome shows items taken in plunder from the temple in Jerusalem after it was destroyed by Titus in 70 AD. Notice the silver trumpets, the table for shewbread, and the menorah.



## Sadducees

cause with their political enemies, the Pharisees, in condemning Jesus to death (although the Pharisees wanted to be rid of Jesus for different reasons).

## Essenes

The Essenes were another important group, numbering about four thousand in all.<sup>9</sup> We know about them from several sources, including Josephus, Philo, the Roman writer Pliny, the church father Hippolytus, and the Dead Sea Scrolls. We are unable to draw a completely consistent picture from these sources. Taken together, they indicate that the term "Essene," which perhaps means "the pious" in East Aramaic, describes a spectrum of views that fall under the same heading rather than a single, close-knit movement.

The Essenes appear to have arisen sometime after the Maccabean revolt in 167–160 BC, with a significant number settling between 150 and 140 BC east of Jerusalem near the Dead Sea. They deserted this location, probably after an earthquake, in about 31 BC, but some of them returned following the death of Herod the Great in 4 BC. They were part of the revolt against Rome in AD 66–70 and fell along with the rest of the nation at that time. Some of their documents were hidden in caves near their community; the documents were discovered starting in 1947 and came to be called the Dead Sea Scrolls. The ruins of the site the Essenes inhabited have been excavated since that time.

The Essenes at QUMRAN were a strict, highly disciplined community that lived together communally, that is, holding all their property in common. They observed rigid ascetic principles. They rejected anything that smacked of luxury and practiced celibacy, though Josephus does mention some Essenes who were married. They devoted their lives to the study of Scripture, the copying of their own documents, prayer, and frequent

their laws, was too accepting of sinful people, and was open to contact with gentiles. He also made blasphemous claims about himself and his relation to God. For his part, Jesus opposed them because of their legalism, their hypocrisy, and their unwillingness to accept the kingdom of God as represented in himself.

## Sadducees

The second major group of Jews in Jesus's day were the Sadducees.<sup>8</sup> Both their origin and precise nature are now difficult to determine because they faded into oblivion after the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70, when the Pharisaic point of view became, in essence, Judaism. They came into prominence during Maccabean times by supporting the Hasmonean political aims under John Hyrcanus I (135/134–104 BC), but under Alexandra (76–67 BC) and Herod the Great (37–4 BC) their power and numbers drastically declined. With the coming of the Roman procurators in AD 6, however, their fortunes rose, and they played a significant role in the Sanhedrin and the priesthood until the Jewish revolt of AD 66–70, when the radical elements prevailed. After that the Sadducees disappeared from history.

Basically, the Sadducees were a priestly aristocracy that had attained power through its connection to high-priestly or aristocratic families. Theologically, they rejected almost everything the Pharisees (and most pious Jews) believed. They did not believe in angels or spirits, the resurrection, the last judgment, life after death, divine providence, or a coming messiah. The Sadducees who sought to discredit Jesus did so by attacking his belief in the resurrection (Matt. 22:23–32). Their opposition to Jesus essentially derived from their desire to maintain their own privileged position, which Jesus threatened (John 11:48). They consequently made common

with a new method of exegesis that allowed for a more liberalized interpretation of the law. GAMALIEL I (Hillel's son and teacher of the apostle Paul; Acts 22:3) was the leader of the Pharisees from AD 25 to 40. After the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70, Johanan ben Zakkai undertook reshaping Pharisaism at JAMNIA in AD 90; the foundation for mainstream Judaism down to modern times was thus established.

Theologically, the Pharisees developed a set of views based on the Old Testament and their own oral traditions, both of which they considered equally authoritative. They "delivered to the people a great many observances by tradition which are not written in the law of Moses," Josephus says (*Ant.* 13.10.6 [Whiston]). They believed in God (in almost a deistic fashion), angels and spirits, providence, prayer, the necessity for faith and good works, the last judgment, a coming messiah, and the immortality of the soul. Much of what the Pharisees believed was also accepted by the early Christians; Jesus could say of them, "You must be careful to do everything they tell you. But do not do what they do, for they do not practice what they preach" (Matt. 23:3). Paul could say to the Sanhedrin, "My brothers, I am a Pharisee, descended from Pharisees. I stand on trial because of the hope of the resurrection of the dead" (Acts 23:6). Although not entirely denying the grace of God, many Pharisees tended toward legalism, so much so that Jesus accused them of nullifying the commandments of God by holding to human traditions (Mark 7:8). These traditions were gathered together at the beginning of the third century AD by RABBI JUDAH THE PATRIARCH in a book called the Mishnah, which, in turn, formed part of the Talmud. (These writings will be discussed shortly.)

The Pharisees were hostile toward Jesus because they felt he was lax with respect to

and the Jews took great pride in it (Mark 13:1). Even the Romans respected Jewish commitment to the temple. At times they helped enforce the regulations prohibiting gentiles from desecrating it and protecting the Jews who entered. To speak against the temple was to speak against God, as far as the Jews were concerned. All of this helps to explain why Jesus's cleansing of the temple so angered his countrymen. He said, "Destroy this temple [referring to himself], and I will raise it again in three days" (John 2:19). Jesus was claiming nothing less than that he would prove to be the true temple where the will of God was done; God's will was not confined to some physical structure, however magnificent, where vulgar commerce was taking place. Some scholars have suggested that it was Jesus's antitemple attitude that ultimately led to his rejection by the Jews and his crucifixion.

## Religious Groups

## Pharisees

The Pharisees were the best known of the religious groups in Jesus's day.<sup>7</sup> Although they were a relatively small group (probably numbering about six thousand), they were extremely influential. Their point of view on many issues could be considered typical of a majority of Jews at that time. The name "Pharisee" probably derives from an Aramaic word meaning "separate"; hence, the Pharisees were "the separated ones." They emerged as a recognizable group sometime before the New Testament era. According to Josephus, they gained prominence during the reigns of John Hyrcanus I (135/134–104 BC) and Alexandra (76–67 BC).

By Jesus's time there were two different schools of Pharisaic thought—the followers of HILLEL and the followers of SHAMMAI. Hillel had revolutionized rabbinic thought

## oral traditions

## Sanhedrin

## Aramaic

## Mishnah

## Talmud

saint

pseudepigrapha

apocalyptic

ritual washing. New members were admitted only after an extended novitiate (two or three years; the sources differ on this) and a series of solemn vows.

Theologically, they were strict predestinarians, believing in the preexistence and immortality of the soul. They were anti-temple (perhaps because of their rejection of the Hasmonean control of the high priesthood) and strongly legalistic in matters of ritual purity. They considered themselves the righteous remnant living in the last days and looked for a political messiah or messiahs and the end of the age.

Some theologians have tried to find a link between John the Baptist, and even Jesus, and the Essenes at Qumran. This is unlikely, especially in the case of Jesus. If there is a con-

nection between John or Jesus and Qumran, it is certainly not a substantive one. There is no concrete evidence that either of them ever lived in or visited the community. In any case, the Essenes are never mentioned by name in the New Testament.

#### Zealots

Josephus refers to the Zealots as a fourth major group among the Jews.<sup>10</sup> He speaks of JUDAS THE GALILEAN as its founder. But the roots of the movement probably go back to Maccabean times, when those zealous for the law took matters into their own hands and sought by any means, including violence, to advance the cause of God. Josephus says of them: "These men agree in all other things with the Pharisaic notions; but they have an inviolable

attachment to liberty; and they say that God is to be their only Ruler and Lord. They also do not value dying any kinds of death, nor indeed do they heed the deaths of their relations and friends, nor can any such fear make them call any man Lord" (*Ant.* 18.1.6).

While acknowledging their high-mindedness, at least in theory, Josephus also points out that "all sorts of misfortunes also sprang from these men, and the nation was infected with their doctrine to an incredible degree; one violent war came upon us after another. [There were] seditions, murders, which sometimes fell on those of their own people and sometimes on their enemies, the taking and demolishing of cities, and at last, the very temple of God was burnt down by their enemy's fire" (*Ant.* 18.1.1). Although they considered themselves patriots, many of them were little different from what we call terrorists. One of Jesus's twelve apostles was a former Zealot (Luke 6:15).

#### The Apocalyptic Movement

This particular phenomenon was not a group of people as such but rather a distinctive point of view that cut across many groups.<sup>11</sup> It produced a large and fascinating body of literature, some of which still exists today. The apocalyptic emphasis can be found in parts of the Old Testament too, along with intertestamental literature, the New Testament, and early Christian writings.

The word "apocalyptic" comes from a Greek word meaning "to reveal." The information conveyed in such literature was thought to be a special revelation from God that unveiled the hidden secrets of the universe, especially the events surrounding the end of the age. Apocalyptic writings often took the form of some extravagant vision, highly symbolic in nature, that mapped out events to come. The one who received the vision was often puzzled and needed an angelic

interpreter to explain it. The writer frequently wrote in the name of an ancient saint, such as Enoch or Elijah. For this reason the material is sometimes called **pseudepigrapha**, meaning "wrongly titled." The book of 4 Ezra is an excellent example of apocalyptic literature:

It came to pass as I lay on the grass that my heart was again troubled as before. And I lifted up my eyes and saw a woman upon the right and lo! she was mourning and weeping and her clothes were rent and there were ashes upon her head. And I said, "Why are you weeping?" She said to me, "I was barren for 30 years but God looked upon my affliction and gave me a son, but when he was grown up and entered his wedding chamber, he fell down and died. Now I am grief-stricken and wish to die." I said, "No, woman, do not do so; be consoled by Jerusalem's sorrows." And it came to pass, while I was speaking to her, her countenance shone exceedingly and her aspect became bright as lightning, and my heart was terrified. Then, lo! an angel came to me as I lay on the ground as dead and said, "The matter is as follows: the woman thou saw is Zion and the son is the city David built after 3000 years of barrenness. The fall of Jerusalem is the death of the son in his wedding chamber, but her glory is yet to come." (9:26-10:57, selected portions)

The main theological characteristics of apocalyptic thought are:

- Stress on the sovereignty and transcendence of God.
- Description of the cosmic struggle of good and evil, God and Satan, angels and demons.
- Dominance of a mood of strain and tension, with pessimism concerning the present.
- Expectation of the ultimate triumph of God, seen as imminent, future, and wholly supernatural.

Zealots

Excavations  
at Qumran

- De-emphasis on human wisdom and strength in the declining world situation—this age is passing away. The age to come will arrive by divine intervention and according to the divine plan. Nothing can stop it.

There is obviously much in apocalyptic thought that rings true scripturally. One hears echoes of the Old Testament books of Daniel, Ezekiel, Zechariah, and Isaiah, and of Jesus's words in Matthew 24, to say nothing of the book of Revelation, the "Apocalypse" itself. Such literature may have given the oppressed Jewish people of Jesus's day hope for the future. It undoubtedly provided a backdrop for what Jesus and the early Christians had to say. Peter drew this practical point from his own apocalyptic outlook: "The heavens will disappear with a roar; the elements will be destroyed by fire, and the earth and everything done in it will be laid bare. Since everything will be destroyed in this way, what kind of people ought you to be? You ought to live holy and godly lives as you look forward to the day of God and speed its coming" (2 Pet. 3:10–12).

#### Other Groups in Palestine

In addition to those already mentioned, there were other groups, or at least emphases, that form a background for understanding the rise of Christianity.

The **Herodians** are mentioned three times in the Gospels (Matt. 22:16; Mark 3:6; 12:13).<sup>12</sup> They probably represent more of a political party than a religious group, but the two were not easily separated at that time. Josephus mentions a party of Herod the Great (*Ant.* 14.15.10; *JW.* 1.16.6), and if these groups are the same, their origin goes back to that time. In this case the Herodians who joined forces with the Pharisees in seeking to do away with Jesus would be those who

remained loyal to the Herodian dynasty in the person of Herod's son, Antipas. Some have sought to identify the Herodians with the Sadducees, but this association is by no means certain. They could not have been a very large group.

Philo's *On the Contemplative Life* speaks of a group called the Therapeutae, contemplative mystics who were prominent in Egypt but apparently widely dispersed. They are probably to be identified with the Essenes in some loose way and represent the mystical tradition that was also to be found in varying degrees within Judaism.

The influence of Greek thought on Palestinian Judaism has also been established to a degree not previously realized. Although no single party or group representing it explicitly was dominant in Jesus's day, it was quite pervasive. It could probably be found at all levels of society but was most in evidence among the educated and in the more urban areas. Some scholars argue that Greek influence was so widespread that Jesus taught in Greek as well as in Aramaic.<sup>13</sup>

The *Am ha-Aretz* (people of the land), or common people, was the largest group numerically but the least significant in terms of political influence. They formed that vast majority of people who affiliated with no specific group but simply tried to live their lives each day according to the will of God to the best of their ability. Their views were closest to that of the Pharisees, but they were despised by the latter as rabble that knew nothing of the law (John 7:49). Later rabbinic literature describes them as those who do not **tithe** regularly, do not read the **Shema** (Deut. 6:4–9) morning and evening, do not wear **tephillin** (a small leather box containing Scripture), have no **mezuzah** (a portion of Scripture in a case) on their doorposts (Deut. 11:13–21; Num. 15:37–41), fail to teach their children the law, and do not

associate with the scholars of the law.<sup>14</sup> To Jesus, these were the lost sheep of the house of Israel (Matt. 10:6), sheep without a shepherd on whom he had compassion (Mark 6:34). They were the common people who listened to him with delight (Mark 12:37), as opposed to the religious leadership who were angry about his teachings and sought to kill him. They were, in the end, the focus of his ministry. From their ranks came most of his apostles and disciples, the primary witnesses to the truth of the gospel.

#### The Samaritans

Finally, it is necessary to consider the **Samaritans** as part of the background for understanding the New Testament. Samaria was roughly the region occupied by the Old Testament kingdom of Israel. It had been destroyed by the **ASSYRIANS** in 722 BC, but the king of Assyria later resettled it with pagan peoples to replace the Israelites. "Each national group made its own gods in the several towns where they settled, and set them up in the shrines the people of Samaria had made at the high places. . . . They worshiped the LORD, but they also served their own gods in accordance with the customs of the nations from which they had been brought" (2 Kings 17:29, 33).

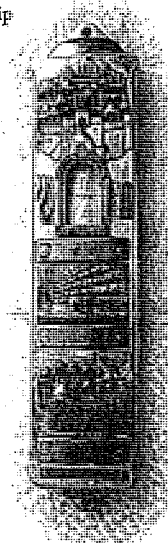
Samaria was a mixed population both ethnically and religiously. During Ezra's time its inhabitants were forbidden to help build the temple in Jerusalem (Ezra 4:3–4), causing them to set up their own temple on **MOUNT GERIZIM**; they never forgave the Jews for the insult. Bad feelings persisted over the years, and in about 128 BC John Hyrcanus invaded

Samaria, devastated the land, and destroyed their temple (Josephus, *Ant.* 13.9.1). After the removal of Archelaus in AD 6, the Samaritans sneaked into the temple in Jerusalem and defiled it by scattering corpses there (Josephus, *Ant.* 18.2.2). Later,

the Samaritans killed several Jewish pilgrims at **GINAE**, which started a civil war that ended only by Roman intervention in AD 51 (Josephus, *Ant.* 20.6.1–3). The hatred that each group felt for the other was long-standing and deep, and in Jesus's day the Jews had no dealings with the Samaritans (John 4:9).

Religiously, the Samaritans considered themselves to be Jews but worshiped in their own distinctive way. They were **monotheistic**, kept the festivals, were committed to the law, practiced circumcision, and looked for a coming messiah. They did not acknowledge the Jerusalem temple, however, but worshiped on Mount Gerizim (John 4:20), using only their own version of the Pentateuch as their Bible. It is said that they did not believe in the resurrection of the dead (*b. Sanh.* 50b). Most of what we know about the Samaritans comes from a later period, so many details of their faith are obscure to us.

It is remarkable that Jesus was so open to the Samaritans, traveling through their territory and even discussing theology with a Samaritan woman, revealing the profound truth to her that God seeks those who worship in the right spirit, not in the right place (John 4:1–42). He later spoke the parable of the "good Samaritan" (Luke 10:25–37)—to many Jews, there was no such thing—and at his ascension declared that the gospel must



Jewish people still write God's commands on the doorframes of their houses (Deut. 6:9) by hanging a mezuzah.

Samaritans

monotheistic

Am ha-Aretz

Herodians

tithe

Shema

tephillin

mezuzah

## Summary

1. The personal aim of the New Testament can be seen in how its twenty-seven books consist of twenty-four personal letters and three personalized accounts of the life and work of Christ.
2. Viewed north to south, Palestine consists of five regions: the coastal plain, the foothills, a central mountain range, the wilderness and the Jordan Valley, and the eastern mountain range.
3. Palestine had several administrative districts in Jesus's day: Galilee, Samaria, Judea, Philip's territory, the Decapolis, and Perea.
4. Herod's descendants who ruled Palestine from 4 BC to AD 66 were Archelaus, Philip, Antipas, Herod Agrippa I, and Herod Agrippa II.
5. Jerusalem was destroyed systematically by the Romans from AD 66 to 70.
6. The Jews considered Jesus a threat because he made controversial claims about himself and took liberties with Jewish customs.
7. The most significant unifying factors for the Jews were their relationship to God and their sense of uniqueness in world history.
8. Other factors that unified the Jews were (a) the idea that God had placed them in Palestine forever; (b) the messianic fervor of the time; (c) the synagogue; (d) the Torah and tradition, which included Sabbath keeping and circumcision; (e) the temple; (f) the priesthood; and (g) the festivals.
9. The best known religious group in Jesus's day was the Pharisees, who had two major schools of thought: the followers of Hillel and the followers of Shammai.
10. Other groups of this period included the Sadducees, the Essenes, the Zealots, the Samaritans, the Herodians, and the *Am ha-Aretz*.
11. The Apocrypha includes more than a dozen noncanonical books written between 200 BC and AD 100.
12. Rabbinic materials were developed over a period of six hundred years and were collected in the form of the Talmud, of which the Mishnah is the core.

## Further Reading

Arnold, Clinton E., ed. *Zondervan Illustrated Bible Backgrounds Commentary*. 4 vols. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2002.

Treats every New Testament book with an eye to its rootedness in the history, social setting, literature, and beliefs of the period. Colorful and nontechnical.

Barnett, Paul. *Jesus and the Rise of Early Christianity*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1999.

A historian reviews the sources and developments leading to the existence of early Christianity. Perceptive and reverent in its approach and findings.

Burge, Gary, Lynn Cohick, and Gene Green. *The New Testament in Antiquity: A Survey of the New Testament within Its*

*Cultural Contexts*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2009.

Important textbook focused on backgrounds. Cohick, Lynn. *Women in the World of the Earliest Christians: Illuminating Ancient Ways of Life*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2009.

Topical and historical in-depth look. Davies, William D., and Louis Finkelstein, eds. *The Cambridge History of Judaism*, vol. 2, *The Hellenistic Age*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989.

A standard history of Judaism during the time of Jesus and the early church. Ferguson, Everett. *Backgrounds of Early Christianity*. 3rd ed. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003.

A general introduction to both Greek and Jewish history. Covers social customs during Jesus's time.

## Study Questions

1. What were the main theological beliefs of the Pharisees?
2. What factors unified Judaism in Jesus's day?
3. What is the Apocrypha?
4. Why did the Jewish War of AD 66–70 take place?
5. Why was the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70 significant for Christianity?
6. What are the major geographical regions of Palestine?
7. Who were the Hasmoneans, and why were they important?
8. What were the strengths and weaknesses of Herod the Great?
9. How was the land of Palestine divided after Herod the Great, and what was the rule of his sons like?
10. What are the distinctive features of "apocalyptic" writings?

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Neusner, Jacob. *Rabbinic Literature: An Essential Guide*. Nashville: Abingdon, 2005. Introduces and summarizes the major rabbinic literature by type and provides a summary of "rabbinic theology."

Nickelsburg, George W. E. *Jewish Literature between the Bible and the Mishnah: A Historical and Literary Introduction*. 2nd ed. Minneapolis: Fortress, 2005.

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Pages 172–252 deal with the times and places treated in this chapter. Reed, Jonathan. *The HarperCollins Visual Guide to the New Testament: What*

*Archaeology Reveals about the First Christians*. New York: HarperOne, 2007.

With many photos and maps, introduces students to the field and findings of archaeology of New Testament sites.

Richardson, Peter. *Herod*. Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1996. The definitive work on Herod the Great and his times.

Shanks, Hershel. *Freeing the Dead Sea Scrolls: And Other Adventures of an Archaeology Outsider*. London: Continuum, 2010.

Sheds fascinating light on aspects of the study of Bible backgrounds in recent decades. Skarsaune, Oskar. *In the Shadow of the Temple: Jewish Influences on Early Christianity*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2002.

A thorough study of the Jewish backgrounds of the New Testament and their implications for historical and doctrinal development in the early church. Good for those new to this field of study.

VanderKam, James C. *The Dead Sea Scrolls Today*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994. A comprehensive introduction.

material back into New Testament times. If used cautiously this material can be of genuine benefit to students of the New Testament.<sup>24</sup>

The *Tosefta* (meaning "supplement") is still another large collection of material that arose more or less at the same time as the Mishnah. It is arranged in orders and tractates that parallel the Mishnah and almost all the areas covered. This material was not deemed as authoritative as the Mishnah at that time and so was excluded from it, but for the modern student the ideas found there are very helpful in understanding the Judaism of the first and second centuries AD.

Finally, we mention two well-known Jewish writers, Philo (ca. 20 BC–AD 50)<sup>25</sup> and Josephus (ca. 37–100).<sup>26</sup>

Philo of Alexandria (Egypt) was a philosopher and theologian whose goal was to reconcile Greek and Hebrew thought. He wrote extensively, and most of his writings still exist today. He developed the allegorical method of interpreting the Old Testament, which allowed him to find underlying Greek ideas in the Hebrew Scriptures. Later Christian thinkers such as Clement of Alexandria and Origen made extensive use of Philo's allegorical method, but it is not clear whether any New Testament books were influenced by his thought. Some see traces of it in the *Logos* (Word) idea in John 1:1–14 and the book of Hebrews, but this is by no means universally acknowledged. That aside, Philo provides rare insight into Jewish mystical thought during the time of Jesus and Paul.

Josephus was a Jewish military commander who lived through the difficult days leading up to the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70. He survived by surrendering to the Romans early in the rebellion. In return for his cooperation with Roman invaders, he was later given an apartment in Rome, where he wrote several famous works. His *History of the Jewish War*, published in AD 77–78, is our

primary source of information about those awful days as well as the events that led up to them. Josephus mentions James, John the Baptist, and even Jesus, saying he was "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" (*Ant.* 18.3.3).

### Conclusion

So what do all these complex ideas, this vast literature, and this complex history add up to? Three things stand out.

First and foremost is how God's overarching plan is being accomplished in the world. History is not just the meaningless interplay of purely this-worldly forces—human greed and violence, natural events like earthquakes, economic factors, political upheavals. Rather, woven through it all is a higher purpose, often discernible (at least in retrospect) to those who know God. They are able to see God at work, accomplishing his own purposes. Paul saw all of history this way (*Acts* 17:24–28), and the book of Revelation shows in dramatic fashion how the real spiritual world stands behind the events of this less-real material world where "history" is taking place.

Second and equally important is the observation that humans are not left out of the picture. Human choices are being made, and the consequences for good or ill are always being felt. We could almost wish that God did step in more directly sometimes, but most often he does not. He allows us our choices. We are responsible for them and their consequences. And sometimes the courage of a single person or family, such as the *Maccabees*, can change the course of history.

Third, the Christians of the New Testament era saw all past history as pointing to the coming of Christ as its fulfillment. The

### Key Terms

<i>Am ha-Aretz</i>	hell	polytheistic syncretism	Septuagint
apocalyptic	Herodians	praeparatio evangelium	Shema
Apocrypha	incarnation	priest	synagogue
Aramaic	Judaism	pseudepigrapha	Talmud
Diadochi	Law	rabbis	Targumim
Diaspora	Logos	Sabbath	tephillin
Essenes	Maccabees	sacrifice	tithe
ethnarch	mezuzah	Sadducees	Tosefta
Feast of Dedication	midrash	saint	tractates
Gemara	Mishnah	Samaritans	traditions
gentiles	monotheistic	Sanhedrin	Vulgate
Hasidim	oral traditions	Second Temple Judaism	Word
Hasmoneans	Pharisees	Seleucid Empire	Zealots

### Key People/Places

Acra	Cyrus	Jerusalem	Plain of Esdraelon
Alexander Jannaeus	Dead Sea	John Hyrcanus I	Plain of Gennesaret
Alexander the Great	Decapolis	Jonathan	Pompey
Antigonos II	Edom	Jordan River	Pontius Pilate
Antioch (Syrian)	Emmaus	Josephus	Ptolemy
Antiochus III, the Great	Galilee	Judas "Maccabeus"	Qumran
Antiochus IV,	Gamaliel I	Judas the Galilean	Rabbi Judah the
Epiphanes	Gessius Florus	Judea	Patriarch
Antipater	Ginae	Julius Caesar	Rome
Archelaus	Herod Agrippa I	Machaerus	Samaria
Aristobulus II	Herod Agrippa II	Mariamne	Sea of Galilee
Assyrians	Herod Antipas	Masada	Seleucus Nicator
Bar Kochba	Herodias	Mattathias	Shammai
Bethlehem	Herod Philip	Mediterranean Sea	Simon
Bethsaida	Herod the Great	Modein	Syria
Beth-Zur	Hillel	Mount Gerizim	Tiberius Caesar
Caesar Augustus	Hyrcanus II	Nero	Titus
Caesarea Philippi	Idumea	Perea	Vespasian
Caligula	Jamnia	Philo	
Claudius	Jericho	Phoenicia	

prophecies of the Old Testament, the unifying of the world under Rome, a universal language that connected peoples together, a time of relative calm that allowed travel and the exchange of ideas, the restless spiritual hunger of people for something more—all of

this converged at the coming of Christ and his offer of the gospel. The coming of Christ brought the end of all the earlier ages and the beginning of a new era of salvation. The time of preparation was now over and the time of fulfillment had come.

Tosefta

Logos

Maccabees



## The Hebrew Bible: Its Divisions and Contents

Torah (Law)	Nevi'im (Prophets)	Kethubim (Writings)
Genesis	Joshua	Psalms
Exodus	Judges	Job
Leviticus	Samuel	Proverbs
Numbers	Kings	Ruth
Deuteronomy	Isaiah	Canticles
	Jeremiah	Ecclesiastes
	Ezekiel	Lamentations
	Minor Prophets	Esther
		Daniel
		Ezra-Nehemiah
		Chronicles

go out from Jerusalem to Judea, to Samaria, and then to the ends of the earth (Acts 1:8).<sup>15</sup>

### The Literature of the Jews

#### The Old Testament

First and foremost of the literature that forms a background for understanding the New Testament are the Scriptures of the Old Testament.<sup>16</sup> The Old and the New Testaments comprise one Bible today, but in Jesus's day only the Old Testament existed. He (and the New Testament writers) used the formula "it is written" (which means "this comes directly from God") only in reference to the Old Testament Scriptures. Jesus never quoted any other sources, whether rabbis, Greek writers, Apocrypha, or other well-known sources of his day. For him, the Old Testament Scriptures alone were the Word of God. Until heaven and earth disappeared not the smallest part of it could be disregarded—all of it must be fulfilled (Matt. 5:18). The reverence that Jews felt for the Scriptures went back at least to Ezra's day (Neh. 8–10). A thousand years before that, Moses called for God's people to love God by loving his commands (Deut. 6:4–6). Allegiance to the law was so important that the rabbis would later say, "Whoever says that the Torah (Law) is not from heaven, he has no share in the

world to come" (*m. Sanh.* 10:1). By Jesus's time the three sections that comprise the Old Testament had been acknowledged as Scripture (Luke 24:44; see also the prologue to Ecclesiasticus). That it was written in Hebrew (with a small portion in Aramaic) created some problems for the Jews outside Palestine, as well as for some in Palestine who could no longer read Hebrew. A translation into Greek, called the **Septuagint** (abbreviated LXX), was done more than a century before Jesus and probably over a period of time, judging from the various versions of it that exist. The early Christians quote from it as often as they quote from the Hebrew Old Testament.

#### The Old Testament Apocrypha

The Apocrypha is a group of books, existing in Greek, that appeared roughly between 200 BC and AD 100. They are listed in the sidebar "Old Testament Apocrypha" in chapter 1. They deal mainly with the religious ideas and history of the Jews.<sup>17</sup> They are never quoted in the New Testament and were excluded by the Jews of Judea from their canon of Scripture. Because some of these books were included in part of the Septuagint, some second- and third-century Christians used them along with the Old Testament. But there was never any discus-

sion at that time about whether they were part of the Bible, or any agreement about which of them should be used. When Jerome translated the Bible into Latin in about AD 400 (the **Vulgate**, as it is called), he made a distinction between those books that were canonical (i.e., Scripture) and those that were not. The Apocrypha, he concluded, were not. They continued to be used by medieval Christians to varying extents until the Reformation, when the Protestants rejected them as Scripture. The Roman Catholic Council of Trent, at session 4 in 1546, accepted them as Scripture along with the Old Testament and the New Testament. The Thirty-Nine Articles (1562) of the Church of England states: "The church doth read [them] for example of life and instruction of manners; but yet it doth not apply them to establish any doctrine." In 1566 Sixtus of Sienna coined the word "deuterocanonical" to designate these books. Today Protestants pay respect to the apocryphal books as valuable sources of information about Jewish life and thought, but not as Scripture, while Roman Catholics and others revere them as part of their Bible.

#### The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha

These books are a large and diverse collection of writings that arose between approximately 200 BC and AD 200. They are falsely ascribed to some well-known ancient person, such as Enoch, Solomon, or Ezra. Hence the designation "falsely titled," or pseudepigrapha.<sup>18</sup> There were a great many of them, most of which have been lost, but we retain portions or at least knowledge of more than fifty. Fourth Ezra, itself one of these pseudepigrapha dating from about AD 120, notes the existence of seventy such books at that time (4 Ezra 14:45–46). Organizing and classifying this material is difficult because much of it has undergone complicated stages of editing,

some of which turned the books from Jewish into more or less Christian writings.

J. H. Charlesworth's literary classification is perhaps the most satisfactory. He finds five major groupings: apocalyptic literature and related works; testaments; expansions of the Old Testament and legends; wisdom and philosophical literature; prayers, psalms, and odes. There are also fragmentary remains that include poetry, oracle, drama, history, and romance. This material was written under an assumed name from antiquity presumably to assure its acceptance in a day when the prophetic voice was muted or even absent. The subjects engaged are varied but often concern fundamental theological issues such as God and the world; humanity, sin, and judgment; the kingdom of God and the future; heaven and hell. For this reason they provide an invaluable look at Jewish thought at that time as well as, in some later instances, what some Christians were thinking. Yet the pseudepigraphical books were never considered Scripture by anyone, Jew or Christian.

#### The Dead Sea Scrolls

The term "Dead Sea Scrolls" describes those literary works that were discovered beginning in 1947 at about eleven locations near the Dead Sea community of Qumran.<sup>19</sup> Tens of thousands of fragments were found; from Cave 4 alone the remains of nearly five hundred different volumes were discovered. From 1953 to 1956 a complex of buildings was excavated near the caves that was most certainly occupied by the community from which the scrolls came. The scrolls were probably copied or written between 250 BC and AD 68, when the community was destroyed by the Romans. The scrolls, which represented the library of more than eight hundred volumes belonging to the community, were hidden in the caves to save them from destruction.

Vulgate

hell

Septuagint

Apocrypha

Law

**Focus 2: Tradition!**

If you have seen the movie or play *Fiddler on the Roof*, you should have some insight into the meaning of “tradition” in the Jewish religion as it was emphasized by the main character Tevye. Since the earliest times Judaism has been primarily a way of life. This doesn’t mean that theological ideas aren’t important, but deviations there can be tolerated more than they can be tolerated in lifestyle.

The lifestyle of tradition can dictate matters of eating and washing as well as the celebration of numerous festivals. There are many laws and traditions in Judaism. The following examples are from the Mishnah:

<p>Laws pertaining to agriculture</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• various benedictions for the consumption of fruit</li> <li>• common prayers after meals</li> <li>• which corner of the field should be left for the poor</li> <li>• illicit mixture of seeds</li> <li>• how the firstfruits are to be brought to Jerusalem</li> </ul>	<p>Festival days</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sabbath</li> <li>• Passover</li> <li>• Day of Atonement</li> <li>• Feast of Booths</li> <li>• New Year’s Feast</li> <li>• Purim</li> <li>• Feast of Weeks</li> </ul>	<p>Laws pertaining to women</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• marriage contracts</li> <li>• sisters-in-law</li> <li>• how to cancel a wife’s vows</li> <li>• certificates of divorce</li> <li>• how to acquire a wife</li> </ul>
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faithfulness—and these must be done (Matt. 23:3, 23). Jesus taught much the same things as the rabbis, because like them he was building on God’s revelation in the Old Testament. Unfortunately, many of the rabbis had so buried that revelation beneath a mountain of rules that the truth could no longer be found. It was that fact to which Jesus objected.

**Other Writings**

By the time of Jesus and Paul, Hebrew was no longer the predominant language of the Jews. As we saw, this factor necessitated an Old Testament in Greek (the Septuagint) for the Jews outside Palestine. It also created the need for Aramaic Scriptures in Palestine, because that was now the most commonly spoken language there. These translations of the Bible into Aramaic were called **Targumim**. They developed in the synagogues and schools to train ordinary Jews in matters of religious ritual and moral life. Tradition puts the origin of this material back in Ezra’s day (fifth century BC), but even if it is not that old, it emerged before the time of Christ

and became an important part of Jewish life. Targumim for all of the Old Testament, except for Daniel, Ezra, and Nehemiah, still exist. The Targumim do more than just give a translation of the Old Testament material. They also include paraphrases, discussions of words, grammatical points, and explanations of various passages. The Targumim give us insight into Jewish thinking at that time, but it must be remembered that because they developed over a long period of time (over five hundred years), it is often difficult to date them exactly. They were used quite widely; fragmentary Targumim on Job and Leviticus were found even at Qumran.<sup>23</sup>

Another large body of material, called **midrash**, also seeks to explain the Old Testament Scriptures. This material consists of commentaries, homilies, explanatory notes, exegetical comments, and exhortations. All of it can be dated later than the New Testament, indeed, after the compilation of the Mishnah in the early third century AD, and some of it comes from the early Middle Ages. However, it is possible to trace some of the ideas and

midrash  
Targumim

**Rabbinic Writings**

This material developed over a period of some six hundred years, receiving final form in two large collections known as the Jerusalem Talmud (compiled at the end of the fourth or early fifth century AD) and the Babylonian Talmud (compiled at the end of the fifth century AD).<sup>20</sup> These large, complicated works (the Babylonian Talmud runs to some six thousand pages) represent Pharisaic teaching gathered over the centuries. The core of the Talmud is the Mishnah,<sup>21</sup> a collection of rabbinic sayings recorded by Rabbi Judah the Patriarch at the beginning of the third century AD. It consists of six major sections, divided into sixty-three tractates dealing mainly with legal matters related to temple ritual, civil and criminal law, marriage, the Sabbath, and the like. A good bit of this comes from Jesus’s day and earlier, but dating the material precisely is often difficult because it has been edited at a later date. To the Mishnah were added later sayings, comments, and expansions, collectively called the **Gemara**, and together they became the Talmud.

All this material is very useful in understanding the content of the New Testament, although care must be exercised in using it.<sup>22</sup> In some ways it is helpful in showing us what the New Testament is *not*, namely, a vast collection of minute and often contradictory rules. The emphasis found in Jesus and Paul is on the grace of God, who forgives sins and does not impose a weight of requirement that simply cannot be borne. It was rules such as those found in the later Mishnah that Jesus said were heavy burdens (Matt. 23:4) in contrast to the “burden” that he offered, which was light or easy to bear (Matt. 11:28–30). But we must also remember that Jesus said the law contained matters of great consequence—justice, mercy, and

Cave 4 at Qumran where some of the Dead Sea Scrolls were found

As we noted earlier, the Jews who lived here were probably Essenes, who believed they were living in the last days.

The scrolls naturally reflect the interests of the community. There are biblical texts representing every book in the Old Testament except Esther. They include apocryphal and pseudepigraphical material of the sort mentioned above; devotional material such as psalms, prayers, blessings, and hymns; Bible commentaries and paraphrases (Targumim); and numerous documents designed to govern community life, the Manual of Discipline being the best known. Taken all together these eight hundred volumes show the richness and variety of the literature and theology of the Jews during the time of Jesus.

tractates  
Gemara

