

New Testament Survey

(Between the Testaments through the Book of Revelation)

BNT - 100

International College of Bible Theology

ARE YOU BORN AGAIN?

Knowing in your heart that you are born-again, and followed by a statement of faith are the two prerequisites to studying and getting the most out of your ICBT materials. We at ICBT have developed this material to educate each Believer in the principles of God. Our goal is to provide each Believer with an avenue to enrich their personal lives and bring them closer to God.

Is Jesus your Lord and Savior? If you have not accepted Him as such, you must be aware of what Romans 3:23 tells you.

23 For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God:

How do you go about it? **You must believe that Jesus is the Son of God.**

I John 5:13 gives an example in which to base your faith.

13 These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God.

What if you are just not sure? **Romans 10:9-10 gives you the Scriptural mandate for becoming born-again.**

⁹That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. ¹⁰For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto Salvation.

Take some time to consider this very carefully. Ask Jesus to come into your heart so that you will know the power of His Salvation and make your statement of faith today.

Once you become born-again, it is your responsibility to renew your mind with the Word of God. Romans 12:1-2 tells us that that transformation of the mind can only take place in this temporal world by the Word of God.

I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. ² And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.

The Apostle Paul, giving instructions to his "son" Timothy states in *2 Timothy 2:15*:

15 Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.

What happens if we do these things? Ephesians 4:12-13 gives us the answer to this question.

12 For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: 13 Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ:

By studying the Word of God, you will be equipped for service in the Kingdom of God and you will also be ready to take the position in the Body of Christ to which God has appointed you. You will be able to walk in unity with other Believers and you will be a vessel of honor to God that can rightly divide the word of truth.

If you are not saved and you do not know what to say, consider this simple prayer.

Lord, I know that I have need of a saviour. I believe that Jesus died for my sins and the God raised Him from the dead three days later. I ask to be forgiven and for Jesus to come into my heart and be the Lord of my life. I believe now by faith that God has heard my prayer and I am born- again.

If you have prayed this prayer, accept by faith that your sins have been forgiven. It is important that you tell someone of your decision to accept the Lord. Also, it is our recommendation that you should attach yourself to a local church and undergo water baptism.

For those who have prayed this prayer with sincerity of heart, we welcome to eternal life in the Kingdom of God. May the blessings of God overtake you.

May God grant you wisdom, knowledge, and understanding in all of His ways.

ICBT Directors and Staff

THE VISION

As we have been commissioned by the prophet of God, we now set our hand to write the vision of International College of Bible Theology, so that: **"He that runs may read it, the vision having been clearly written and made plain" (Habakkuk 2:2).**

- 1) **UNITY** - To build up the Body of Christ by networking with all churches, as well as with local and international ministries. This networking is to provide experienced leadership ministries to the small, local Church, to encourage unity and fellowship among pastors, church leaders and para-church groups, through active service.
- 2) **GOSPEL** - To go with the lifeline of the Gospel, wherein we desire to educate with love, integrity, and without compromise.
- 3) **ONE CROSS FOR ALL** - To cross cultural, racial, and denominational lines for unity, fellowship, networking, and progress. To have an open door through I.C.B.T to all, of like faith, who desire to join with us in a common goal for the highest good. To proclaim one cross for all cultures, races, denominations, and peoples.
- 4) **GO YE** - To go wherever there is a need; to rich or poor, to majorities and minorities, to large and small churches, to free and incarcerated; to go where many fail to go and to meet the needs before us.
- 5) **THE CALLED** - To make opportunities available, to those called to minister, to expand their horizons through new associations and experiences. To aid new and/or younger ministers in fulfilling God's call on their lives.
- 6) **EDUCATION** - God has charged us with propagating the Gospel through education to whosoever will. This education is offered through certificate programs that teach the basics of Christianity and degree programs for those seeking more in-depth levels in Christian teachings.
- 7) **APPLICATION** - To make available to students the opportunity for education, as well as learning practical application, in traditional and non-traditional settings.
- 8) **DREAM A DREAM** - To cause all persons with which we associate to catch a vision, to dream yet another dream, and to keep their eyes on Jesus, the Author and Finisher of their faith.
- 9) **THE CALL** - To encourage each person (all persons) to move out of his/her (their) comfort zone, to be all he/she (they) can be for Christ and to fulfill the call upon their life (lives), to encourage each one (them) to pursue his/her (their) purpose, to live up to his/her (their) potential, and to produce the fruit of the Spirit.

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of
Bible Theology

*"Study to shew thyself approved unto God,
a workman that needeth not to be ashamed,
rightly dividing the word of truth"*
II Timothy 2:15

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New Testament Survey

90 pages of Commentary
11 Homework Assignments
5 Quiz Assignments
1 Midterm Exam
1 Final Exam
45 pages of Answer Keys for school sites only (Answer keys are not included in the student's copy of material.)

INSTRUCTIONS Read the entire Commentary.

Do Homework I, which covers pages 9-15 in the Commentary.
Do Homework II, which covers pages 15-19 in the Commentary.
Do Homework III, which covers pages 19-22 in the Commentary.
Take Quiz 1, which covers materials in Homework I - III.
Do Homework IV, which covers pages 22-32 in the Commentary.
Take Quiz 2, which covers materials in Homework IV.
Do Homework V, which covers pages 32-42 in the Commentary
Take Quiz 3, which covers materials in Homework V.
Take Mid-Term Exam, which covers materials in Homework I-IV.
Do Homework VI, which covers pages 42-53 in the Commentary.
Do Homework VII, which covers pages 53-58 in the Commentary
Do Homework VIII, which covers pages 58-65 in the Commentary
Take Quiz 4, which covers Homework VI-VIII.
Do Homework IX, which covers pages 65-73 in the Commentary.
Do Homework X, which covers pages 73-85 in the Commentary.
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I. BETWEEN THE TESTAMENTS

A. Inter-Testamental History

This is a brief synopsis of inter-Testamental history or the 400 silent years from Malachi to Matthew as it concerns the Jews. No study of the Bible is complete that does not take into consideration the events of the 400 years which elapsed between the Old and New Testaments. During this time no inspired writer, historian, or prophet appeared. Unbroken by revelation, this period is called the “period of silence.” The last prophetic voice of the Old Testament was that of Malachi, and the first in the New Testament that of John the Baptist. During this period of time, Judea was subject to Persia until about 330 B.C. at which time the empire of Greece was established as a world power under Alexander. In 167 B.C., under the Maccabees, we see Jewish independence. But, in 63 B.C., Judea came under Roman sway, and was subject to Rome at the time of the birth of Christ.

Covering this period, Daniel gives a marvelous prophetic outline of the world's history in predictions that have been literally fulfilled. Daniel 2:31-43 records Nebuchadnezzar's vision of the great image and Daniel 7 records the rise of four world empires under the figures of four great beasts. The image vision reveals the Babylonian Empire represented by the head of gold; Media Persia is represented by the breast and arms of silver, Greece by the belly and thigh of brass, and Rome by the legs of iron. Daniel 7 shows the same empires in successive supremacy; Daniel 7:4 represents Babylon by a lion with eagle wings, Daniel 7:5 represents Media Persia by a bear, and Daniel 7:7 represents the Roman Empire by a terrible monster. God worked out these prophecies in history.

During this period the Samaritans came into prominence, and we see the rise of the different Jewish sects such as the Scribes, Pharisees, Sadducees, Essenes and Zealots. Out of this period came the Synagogue, and such Jewish writings as the Mishna (oral law) and the Gemara (commentaries on the oral law), known as the Talmud; also the Halachot, known as the Traditions of the Fathers. The Septuagint version of the Old Testament was translated at this time (a translation of the Hebrew into Greek, the Bible in general use in the Greek-speaking world of Christ's days).

B. Changes Along Three Lines

Marked changes are noted along three different lines: politics, religion, and language.

1. In politics:

The political history of this period is in four parts:

a. Persian period (B.C. 536 to 330);

At the close of the Old Testament, under Cyrus, we saw the Jews returning to their own land. Please refer to notes in the Old Testament survey on "The Restoration," and the subject matter of Ezra and Nehemiah. We must not forget that only a "remnant" returned to Jerusalem and Judea. The greater part stayed on in Babylonia and Assyria under Persia rule where they were living more like colonists than captives.

b. Grecian period (B.C. 330 to 167);

One of the wonders of history is seen in the conquests of Alexander the Great. He conquered the Medes and Persians in 330 B.C., bringing the Jews under his control. This mighty conqueror is the "notable horn" in the "he-goat" vision of Daniel 8:1-7 and 20-21. In the brief time of 12 years, he was the conqueror of Greece, Asia, Egypt, and Syria. His ruling ambition was not just to conquer the world but of bringing the impress of Grecian civilization upon the nations of the world. His accomplishments changed the entire course of human history and brought to the world a universal language. His treatment of the Jews was favorable and they were allowed a choice of settlement throughout the empire. Alexander's untimely death (323 B.C.) brought about a four-fold break up of his empire under four generals: Ptolemy, Lysimachus, Cassander, and Selenus. This fulfilled Daniel's prophecy (Da.8:20-22). Palestine and Egypt now came under the Ptolemy dynasty. Upon the death of Ptolemy Soter, Ptolemy "Philadelphus" came into power and founded the renowned Alexandrian Library. During his reign the Septuagint translation of the Old Testament Scriptures was made from the Hebrew into the Greek language, which by this time had become the language of the civilized world. Upon the death of Ptolemy Philopator in 204 B.C., Antiochus the Great invaded Egypt and Judea, bringing them under Syrian rule. When Antiochus Epiphanes, the Syrian, took over in 170 B.C. he seized Palestine and subjected the Jews to monstrous cruelties. He slew 40,000 Jews, profaned the temple, and shocked their religious sensibilities by offering a sow on the altar. This 'desolation' is considered the type of the "*abomination of desolation*," in the final antichrist of Matthew 24:15 (Da.11:31).

c. Maccabean period (B.C. 167 to 63);

This is one of the outstanding periods of history. The revolt of the Jews that brought about Jewish independence began under Mathias. Upon his death the leadership passed to his son Judas Maccabeus (from the Hebrew word for "hammer"). The period received its name from this man. Angered and outraged by the persecution from Antiochus, a band of determined godly Jews under Judas Maccabeus rebelled and waged a successful war against the Syrians, winning their independence which lasted for 100 years. Jerusalem was retaken, the

Temple refinished, refurbished, and sacrifices were offered once again. At this time the High Priests were granted civil and priestly authority and given governing power over Jewry. The Hasmonean Dynasty (B.C. 142 to 63) was the controlling power and influence during this period.

d. Roman period (B.C. 63 to New Testament);

The latter successors of Judas Maccabeus did not possess his courage or leadership. They had conflict among themselves and eventually appealed to the Romans for help, who in turn, took over and secured possession of Palestine. Pompey, the Roman Ruler, granted political leadership of Palestine to Herod Antipator, the Edomite in B.C. 47. Upon the death of Antipator, and after a severe struggle, it was given to his son, Herod the Great, by Julius Caesar. Herod, who reigned from 40 to 4 B.C. as king of the Jews, seeking to win favor of the Jews, built an elaborate Temple (greater and grandeur than Solomon's). For the same reason he married Mariamne, a granddaughter of the High Priest John Hyrocanus. His reign was marked by intrigue and bloodshed. Always dominated by fear that his throne was not secure, he made a murderous assault on all who sought to replace him. He slew his wife's three brothers, later, even, his own wife, then his two sons by Mariamne, also his mother-in-law. Then later in the announcement of the Wise Men from the East that the King of the Jews had at last appeared, he was torn by further suspicion and added to his murderous deeds by slaying the infants in the hope that the infant Jesus would be destroyed. As we come into the New Testament period it might be well to note that on the death of Herod the Great, the land was divided among three of his sons: Archelaus taking Judea, Antipas taking Galilee and Perea, and Phillip taking the country northeast of the Sea of Galilee. After some years Archelaus was removed and a Roman governor placed over Judea. The holder of that office during the active ministry of Jesus was Pontius Pilate.

To distinguish the Herods, note that Herod Antipas (B.C. 4 to A.D. 39) is the Herod who was accused by John the Baptist of wrongfully marrying Herodias and who had John put to death (Mt.14:1-12). Jesus called him "*that fox*" (Lk.13:32). We find him later involved in the trial of Jesus (Lk.23:7-12). Herod Agrippa, A.D. 37-44, succeeded Antipas. This is the Herod who murdered James, imprisoned Peter, and was smitten to death by the Lord (Ac.12:1-2; 20-23). Herod Agrippa II, A.D. 5-100, is seen in the trial of Paul before Festus in Acts 25 and 26, when both gave verdict of acquittal (Ac.26:31-32). These Herods are in addition to Herod the Great.

We must not forget that in the working out of God's plan, the Romans did much in preparing the world for Christ. The greatness of the empire and all that Rome did in making roads for access to all corners of the world contributed greatly to the spread of the Gospel. The Jews in the dispersion were settled all over the Roman

Empire, to these persons, Paul made his first appeal in presenting the Gospel. This brief sketch gives the important historical events from Malachi to Christ as they concern the Jews.

2. Religion;

The New Testament reveals the presence of religious parties, sects, and institutions unknown in Old Testament times. A word of explanation is necessary relative to some of these new names, mentioned in the New Testament, that each might be seen and understood in correct perspective.

a. The Samaritans;

In II Kings 17:24-41, after the downfall of Israel in the Assyrian captivity of 721 B.C., the Assyrian emperor Sargon re-peopled the cities with a mixture of people from other regions. These people, living in the Israelite territory of Samaria, intermarried with the scattered Jews left from captivity, producing a 'mongrel' people, a mixed race with a mixed religion. They claimed Jewish descent and built a rival temple on Mount Gerazim. These were the Samaritans. The Jews were always resentful of this mixture and "had no dealing with the Samaritans" (Jn.4:9).

b. The Synagogues;

No Synagogues are mentioned in the Old Testament, but we find them located everywhere in the New Testament as the most influential of all Jewish institutions. The Synagogue originated during the exile. It was used not for "worship," but for "instruction" in the Scriptures, and the interpretation of the Law by a rabbi or teacher. The Scribes and Pharisees occupied the chief seats facing the congregation. The Synagogue was not intended to take the place of the Temple, but to supplement it. Jesus and the Apostles took advantage of this facility to expound the Scriptures.

c. The Scribes;

These men were writers, copying the Scriptures. They were scholars, men of letters, students of the Law, and its interpretation. During the Maccabean Period, they went beyond their profession, and created "traditions" which were added to the law. They were also called lawyers and doctors of law (Lk.5:17; 11:45). Their occupation made them greatly respected by the Pharisees.

d. The Pharisees;

They were known as the "separated ones." The ideal thinking of being separated from all others to Jehovah by observation of the Law was commendable, but led into an attitude to be condemned, making for hypocrisy, outward compliance, and empty form without real spiritual experience. The Scribes who specialized in the "written law" had much in common with the Pharisees. They became religionists without perspective, involved in a system of their own creation, with a religious pride in a display of themselves in a "holier than thou" attitude before others. Jesus denounced them, calling them "white sepulchers," "generation of vipers," "full of dead men's bones" (Mt.chp.23).

e. The Sadducees;

They were a smaller body than the Pharisees and radically different (Ac.23:8). They were very influential in the Sanhedrin. Annas and his son-in-law, Caiaphas, were both Sadducees (Ac.5:17). This is the group directly responsible for the crucifixion of Jesus (Lk.3:2; Jn.11:49; 18:13, 14,24; 19:15; Mk.15:11). The Sadducees were the "liberal party" of the day. They rejected the doctrine of the resurrection and that of the future life, likewise rewards and punishments after death. This present life was all they believed in. Neither did they believe in spirits or angels. Note how our Lord dealt with their unbelief (Mt.22:23-33; Mk.12:18-27; Lk.20:27-38).

f. The Zealots;

The Zealots were members of an ancient nationalist party coming out to the Maccabean period of Jewish independence, who were embittered against Roman rule and aggression. They had rebelled under Judas Gamala and being crushed, suffered terrible atrocities. The Jewish uprising of A.D. 66 was sparked by this group and ultimate defeat came with the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70 (Lk.6:15; Ac.1:13). Simon Zelotes, one of the Apostles, was a converted Zealot.

g. The Sanhedrin;

This was the Jewish "supreme court." It was the civil and religious tribunal, of the Jewish nation, that came into power when self-government was allowed the Jews. It consisted of 71 members made up of the High Priest, 24 chief priests, 24 elders of the people, and 22 scribes. Its religious judicial council enforced the Mosaic system in national and civil life. It was this group, in gross violation of their own law, which tried and sentenced Jesus to death (Jn.7:51; 18:13).

3. Language;

In his conquests, Alexander the Great was motivated by the compelling desire to conquer the world and establish the people of the world in the Greek culture and language. His time was brief but spectacular, and in his triumphant march across the world he changed the course of human history.

The language of the Old Testament was Hebrew. When Alexander conquered the eastern nations and brought them under Grecian control, the Greek tongue became an international language. The most important event, in this period during the reign of Ptolemy Philadelphus, was when the Old Testament was translated into the Greek language by 70 elders. This version is known as the Septuagint version.

The Greek language became the medium of expression for the Gospel, the Old Testament in Greek language, the "Septuagint version," was the Bible of Jesus' day. Most of the preaching was done in Greek and the New Testament Books were written in Greek. Aramaic, the language of Syria, had gradually displaced Hebrew and was the common language of the people and the language used by Jesus and His disciples, but Greek had become the universal language of the time.

This is a brief sketch of the history of the Jewish people with the existing background conditions at the birth of Christianity.

"But when the fullness of the time was come, God sent forth His Son" (Ga.4:4).

II. INTRODUCTION TO THE NEW TESTAMENT

A. New vs. Old

The title 'New' Testament implies that a Testament existed before this that now can be referred to as 'Old'. The word "Testament" means "covenant," and wherever there is a covenant, we will find two parties. Here the two parties are God and man. The New Testament is not only new in regard to time, because it follows the Old Testament, but is new in regard to quality because it follows the Old Testament, and is better and far superior to the former Covenant. This is the emphasis of the Book of Hebrews. Please note that the Old Testament centered on the Law, the New Testament is centered in Jesus Christ (Jn.1:17). The Old Testament was a shadow and promise, the New Testament was a reality and fulfillment. The Old was a beginning, the New a consummation.

The opening verses of the New Testament in Matthew's Gospel are linked directly to the Old Testament. Successive books show logical progression in God's program, even though the books themselves are not necessarily in chronological order.

B. Classification of Content

A general classification of the 27 books of the New Testament would give us four main divisions: THE FOUNDER in the Gospels, THE TRANSITION in Acts, THE FUNDAMENTALS in the Epistles, and THE FULFILLMENT in the Revelation. This shows the books in relationship to the past, the present, and the future, making known the Gospel of Jesus Christ first by introduction, secondly by application, and finally by realization.

As we examine the panoramic chart, the unfolding of God's plan and progressive revelation of truth in the New Testament is readily seen.

C. The Four Gospels

Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John are really four records of one Gospel. The word Gospel means "Good News." This Good News is revealed in the redemption provided for us by God in Jesus Christ; the heart of this message is seen in what He accomplished for us by His death and resurrection.

Worthy of note is the significant fact that the Passion Week, culminating in the death and resurrection of Jesus, receives not only prominent emphasis, but occupies more space than any other truth in the four Gospels. It occupies one-third of Matthew, one-third of Mark, one-fourth of Luke and one-half of John. John devotes seven chapters, about one-third of his book just to the last day of Jesus life.

D. The Twelve

Another fact worthy of note is the choice Jesus made of the 12 Apostles to be with Him in His ministry. It must be remembered that they were admitted into intimate fellowship with Christ, and not only heard His messages, but were given the added opportunity of private interpretation on truths they could not always grasp. These same 12 were also granted miraculous power like their Lord to demonstrate the power of God in works as well as words. After the ascension, when gathered in the upper room, with the exception of Judas Iscariot, they were endued with power from on high, as the Holy Spirit took possession of them to represent Christ in the formation of the Church as recorded in the Book of Acts. The Church continues to this day as the Body of Christ, the channel through which Christ expresses Himself by His Spirit to a needy, sinful world.

The 21 New Testament Epistles, or letters, have the distinguishing feature of being written to Believers. Thirteen of these were written by Paul, with many including Hebrews to make 14; nine of Paul's letters are congregational letters sent to churches; four are personal sent to individuals. In all of them we see how truth is made applicable to life and walk, whether in the Church or individual life, meeting every kind of demand, circumstance, and life situation, and all being presented on a firm doctrinal basis.

The prophetic outlook of Revelation, Apocalypse or unveiling, shows the consummation of all things to complete the Word of God.

E. The Coming Ministry of Jesus Christ

The coming of Christ is God's greatest self-revelation. He is *"God manifest in the flesh"* (1Ti.3:16) *"For in Him dwelleth the fullness of the God-head bodily"* (Co.2:9). The four Gospels, Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, are a revelation of how God in Christ identified Himself with the human race to work out man's eternal Salvation. Christ's ministry on earth presents to humanity the most eventful three year period in history. The Old Testament anticipated it as the great and only hope of man. We look back to it as the time when light shined in darkness and God in infinite mercy and compassion provided for sinful man a Saviour. This He did by defeating sin and death, bringing life and immortality to light, that man might be possessed with the hope of eternal life and glory.

F. Why Four Gospels?

When Jesus came to this earth, He came into the midst of four classes of people, each distinct and capable of appreciating one kind of presentation of truth more than another. We have before us the Jew, the Roman, the Greek, and the rest of humanity.

1. The Jew;

Intimately connected with the Old Testament Scriptures in history, prophecy, and promise, if the Jew was to be impressed, he must see Christ's coming in fulfillment of the Old Testament record. Matthew presents this kind of message to the Jews.

2. The Roman;

Not interested in Old Testament prophecies, the Romans needed a straightforward, authoritative message manifested with deeds rather than words. Mark's Gospel presents the answer by presenting the wonder working Christ as the Servant of Jehovah.

3. The Greek;

Looking for the ideal man in an outstanding life above reproach, Luke, a Greek physician, presents the Son of Man, Christ Jesus, as the Savior or mankind.

4. All men;

What about the masses that was without distinction? John has the message for "whosoever," presenting Christ to the world, as the only Saviour, showing Jesus as the Son of God, making known the fact that by believing in Him, man could have life through His name (Jn.20:31).

The four Gospels do not present a biography of life of Jesus, (Jn.21:25), only that which God felt was essential for a revelation of Himself in the ministry of His Son. The first three Gospels, Matthew, Mark, and Luke, are called the Synoptic Gospels, because unlike John, when viewed together giving a collective view, they present a synopsis of the ministry of Christ. John's Gospel presents the Deity of Christ, and is in a class by itself, giving a deeper aspect of truth and the spiritual life.

The four Gospels present different aspects of Christ's ministry to give a four-fold complete picture of His ministry amongst us, namely:

1. Matthew presents Jesus, the Messiah, and the King;
2. Mark presents Jesus as the Servant;
3. Luke presents Jesus as the Son of Man;
4. John presents Jesus as the Son of God.

G. Differences

It will be noticed that John brings to our attention the Judean ministry of Jesus, which is omitted by the others, while Matthew and Mark emphasize the Galilean ministry, which John largely omits. Luke gives to us far more of the Perea ministry than the rest, but all record rather fully the incidents of the last week of Jesus.

H. Some Things in Common in Matthew, Mark, and Luke

Some outstanding events common to the Synoptic Gospels give an emphasis to them that has made them familiar:

1. The Introduction of John the Baptist by Jesus (Mt.chp.3; Mk.chp.1; Lk.chp.3);
2. The Baptism of Jesus (Mt.chp.3; Mk.chp.1; Lk.chp.3);
3. The Temptation of Jesus (Mt.chp.4; Mk.chp. 1; Lk.chp.4);
4. The Transfiguration of Jesus (Mt.chp.17; Mk.chp.9; Lk.chp.9);
5. The Crucifixion of Jesus (Mt.chps.26,27; Mk.chps.14,15; Lk.chps.22,23);
6. The Resurrection of Jesus (Mt.chp.28; Mk.chp.16; Lk.chp.24).

III. THE EARLY CHURCH

A. Ministry of Christ Continued in, and by, the Power of the Holy Spirit

The ascension of the Lord Jesus is the closing scene in the Gospel of Luke. When Luke, the same writer, begins his message in the Book of Acts, it is significant to note that he opens with the same scene binding together the earthly life of the Lord Jesus with every expression of that life in the Book of Acts. This forms a bridge between the earthly life of the Lord Jesus and the heavenly manifestations of that life in the later revelations of Scripture. Note carefully Acts 1:1, 2. "*The former treatise have I made, O' Theophilus, of all that Jesus 'began' both to do and to teach 'until' the day in which He was taken up.*" These verses suggest to us that the story in the Gospel is an account of the work Jesus 'began' to do 'until' the day He was received up into heaven. Now we have before us in the Book of Acts the things He 'continued' to do. The Gospels do not give a finished story of Christ's life. In the Book of Acts we see the same Christ, but ascended; one Christ presented to us in the Gospels and in the Acts. In the Gospels we see Him as one person, geographically limited and localized, working out the Father's purpose in human form. In the Acts we see the same Christ, no longer limited and localized, but in an unlimited way indwelling and possessing the lives of believing men and women and expressing Himself through them. This Body of believing men and women is called His Church, "The Church which is His Body." They are called-out ones, identified by His name (1Co.12:12, 13, 27; Ep.1:22,23). The Book of Acts does not give a story of a complete movement. The Lord Jesus is still working by His Spirit in and through His own, and the work of His Church is still going forward. The risen ascended Lord is the living center of His Church, and the living Church is of one life with the living Lord. In the light of this, we suggest that the Book of Acts is not so much a record of the Acts of the Apostles but rather the Acts of the ascended Lord by His Spirit through the Apostles.

B. Witnesses

Acts 1:8, "...*Ye shall be witnesses unto me in Jerusalem, Judea, and Samaria, and unto the uttermost parts of the earth.*" The word "witnesses," is used over 30 times. In ever-widening circles of influence, the Apostles of that generation moved in every direction taking the Gospel to every nation of the then known world. This was done by:

- | | |
|---------------------------------------------------|-----------------|
| 1. Witnessing in Jerusalem | Acts 3:1-8:3; |
| 2. Witnessing in Judea and Samaria | Acts 8:4-12:25; |
| 3. Witnessing in the uttermost parts of the earth | Acts 13-28. |

Peter figures prominently in the first 12 chapters of Acts, and the Apostle Paul in three missionary journeys, closing with his imprisonment described in the rest of the Book.

Do not forget that this is an unfinished book. Our risen and ascended Lord still lives. "...*the uttermost parts of the earth*" have not yet been reached. Christ by His Spirit is still working in and through His own and the Acts of which we are a part go right on.

IV. THE ONLY MESSAGE FOR TODAY

Colossians 1:27 "*Christ in you, the hope of glory*"

Christ's victory over sin and death is the foundation of our eternal Salvation. That is the reason the resurrection message should fill and thrill our hearts with joy, for this is the occasion when the good news rings out that God, in Christ, has triumphed over Satan, sin, and death in resurrection power. By virtue of His victory, He has brought life and immortality to light. This message of Christ's resurrection is not only historically significant, but experiential and eternally vital to every believing soul whose trust has been placed in Christ. In the light of the historic fact of how death has lorded over the world, Peter's statement, found in the Book of Acts 2:24, is astounding. Peter did not say that death did not hold Him, but that it could not hold him; it was absolutely impossible. Is it possible that anything in the universe could capture or defeat the God who created it? Being who He was/is and what He was/is, He was bound to rise. Jesus stated in John 10:17 and 18 that He laid down His life that He might take it up again. In the events that led to Calvary, Christ was not overwhelmed by satanic forces or overpowered by men. He said, "*No man taketh it (My life) from Me, but I lay it down Myself; I have power to lay it down and I have power to take it again.*" In the working out of the Father's purpose for our Salvation, He identified Himself with us to put away our sin and died in our place, bearing our sin in His body on the tree. He surrendered to death, that death might be made to surrender to Him once and for all and forever, making Him Lord over sin and death. The resurrection of Christ from the dead is the sovereign achievement of Omnipotence, and the Father's vindication of absolute satisfaction with the work of His Son at Calvary. Man's bankruptcy in sin was adequately taken care of when "Jesus paid it all" by His death. The resurrection is God's receipt for Calvary. Upon the basis of Christ's resurrection, we find the assurance for our own (1Co.15:20-25).

A. What Saith the Scriptures?

Ideas about the future can only stem from two sources. The one is from men who do not know; the other from God who does know. The Bible is our final court of appeals. Hebrews 9:26 states of the Lord Jesus, "*He appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself,*" and that is what He did. Verse 24 states that He is entered "*...into heaven now to appear in the presence of God for us,*" and that is what He is doing. He "*shall appear the second time...*" (v.28), what He is going to do. Thus we see the work of the Lord Jesus in the past, present, and future showing how He died to save us, lives to keep us, and is coming to receive us.

In John 14:3, we have Christ's own declaration, "*I will come again.*" "*This same Jesus which is taken up from you into heaven shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him*

go into heaven" (Ac.1:11). I Thessalonians 4:13-17 gives the record of how the event will take place.

B. Why He Must Return

It was necessary for Him to come the first time to die for our sins; otherwise we must die in our sin. This brought to us the Salvation of the spirit and soul. But Salvation is for the entire man, including the redemption of the body. When Christ returns, it is to do for the body what He has done for the spirit and soul, completing the saving work He has graciously begun. Romans 8:23 tells us we are waiting for the redemption of our body. This will take place when Christ returns, and then I Corinthians 15:52-53 will be fulfilled, the dead shall be raised and the living changed, corruption shall put on incorruption, and mortality shall put on immortality. Then death, the last enemy to be destroyed (v.26), shall be swallowed up in victory (v.55). Possibly the most clear and comprehensive Scripture on Christ's second coming and its purpose is Philippians 3:20-21, where we see the place, the person, the purpose, and the power. Our citizenship is in Heaven (place), from whence also we look for the Saviour, The Lord Jesus Christ (person), who shall change our body of humiliation that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body (purpose), according to the power whereby He is able even to subdue all things unto Himself (power). This is Salvation consummated. Just as surely as God has saved the spirit and soul, so surely will He redeem and glorify the body.

One day these bodies that have been humiliated by sin, sickness, and distress will be gloriously transformed, made perfect and eternally beautiful without wrinkle, blemish, or spot, or any such thing, made in the likeness of our glorious Lord. We shall be like Him and bear His image (1Jn.3:2; 1Co.15:49). We shall be glorified together with Him (Ro.8:17; 2Th.1:10). To know the power of God is to know that He can do it, and to know the Word of God is to know that He will do it. It is nothing else and nothing less than "Christ in you" that makes possible this "*hope of glory*." With deep conviction this New Testament message must possess our souls. Therefore, we must pursue our study of the New Testament Books with diligence. Only as we believe the message and experience its truth, can adequate expression be made through our lives to the glory of His name.

V. THE GOSPELS - MATTHEW-JOHN

A. The Writer - Matthew

Matthew, Levi, the writer of the first book of the New Testament, was a former tax collector known as a Publican (Mt.9:9; Mk.2:14-15; Lk.5:27-29). Before meeting Jesus, Matthew was linked with the most disreputable class imaginable and despised by His own people, the Jews (Mt.18:17; 21:31-32; Lk.18:11). Tacitus, the Roman historian, tells of seeing a monument inscribed "To a good Publican." This was such a rare phenomenon it was worth raising a monument to his memory. Jesus raised a better monument than of crumbling

stone, a monument of lasting eternal significance, the first of the four (4) Gospels, the Gospel According to Matthew.

B. When was it written?

No exact date can be given for the writing of this book, but most Bible students feel that it followed Mark, but can be placed before the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70, making a date between A.D. 58 and 70.

C. For Whom Matthew was written?

Matthew was a converted Jew writing for Jewish readers, presenting Jesus in such a manner as to convince the Jews that He was the Jewish Messiah. Matthew 1:1 gives the key, showing Jesus Christ in covenant relationship with Abraham and royal relationship with David. This reveals that not Herod, but Jesus of the house of David through Joseph and Mary had the throne-rights to David's throne. In presenting Christ as King, Matthew gives His royal genealogy in the first 17 verses of his Gospel. More than 60 times we find the term "*fulfilled*," indicating Jewish prophecies that were fulfilled in Christ. Only Jews could fully appreciate the significance of such references and though some students think that Matthew was not written first, yet this book is in its proper order by being placed first as the most intimate link with the Old Testament Scriptures.

D. Key Words

The key word "*kingdom*" occurs some 50 times, and "*kingdom of heaven*" 32 times, showing Jesus as the Kingly Messiah, of Jewish prophecy. This is the emphasis of the Gospel of Matthew.

E. Features

One outstanding feature of Matthew's Gospel is the fact that one-fourth of his Book is taken up with the actual words of Jesus. Some 70 words used by Matthew are not found elsewhere in the New Testament. The number seven, ten, and twelve, with their multiples, repeatedly appear. Fourteen (14) entire sections are found only in this Book including four events in the infancy of Jesus, two miracles and ten parables. There are five outstanding discourses in this book and some Bible students see in this a five-fold division of the Book with one in each division:

1. The Sermon on the Mount 5:1-7:29;
2. The Twelve Commissioned 10:1-42;
3. The Kingdom Parables 13:1-53;

4. Humility and Forgiveness 18:1-35;
5. The Olivet Discourses 24:1-25:46).

F. The Writer - Mark

Mark was not one of the original 12 Disciples of Christ. John Mark was the son of one called Mary (Ac.12:12), and the nephew of Barnabas (Revised Version says cousin, Co.4:10). He accompanied Paul and Barnabas on their first missionary journey as far as Perga, then left the Apostles and returned home (Ac.13:13). Because Mark failed to continue on the first journey, Paul refused to take him the second time, and separated from Barnabas who desired Mark's company. Paul chose Silas as his companion (Ac.15:36-40). After being restored into fellowship, Mark became profitable in the ministry (2Ti.4:11) and was recognized by Paul as a fellow laborer (Co.4:10; Phl.v.24), becoming the chosen instrument under God to pen the inspired portion of the work that bears his name. Mark was attached to Peter, from him received, and expressed in writing His Gospel.

G. When was it written?

No definite date can be assigned to The Gospel of Mark, but because of his association with Peter, a date in the early sixties or even before seems most acceptable. Many students claim that Mark was the first to be written, giving a date as early as A.D. 50.

H. The Purpose and Message of Mark

The purpose of Mark's Gospel is seen in the character of his message. Mark is appealing to the Roman mind and one is impressed with the activity of Jesus. Here Jesus is at work revealing how His work vindicated His Words.

Not interested in Old Testament prophecy, the Romans needed a straightforward authoritative message manifested with deeds rather than words. Mark's Gospel presents the answer, by presenting the wonder-working Christ as the Servant of Jehovah.

No less than 40 times in this Gospel we find the word "*straightway*," or "*immediately*," as translated from the same Greek word. This is the servants' word. The Romans knew much of authority expressed in immediate action, and here the Servant of Jehovah is performing His God-given task in a miraculous way. In this Gospel there is few reference to Old Testament Scriptures, and no genealogy or record of Christ's birth, for the Romans were interested in the character, not the pedigree of a servant.

Philippians 2:6-8 describes the Son of God in this manner, "*Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But made Himself of no reputation and took upon Him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: And being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of*

the cross." This servant picture of the Lord Jesus is the portrayal of Mark's Gospel, for Mark is distinctly the book of the Obedient Servant. The key verse is 10:45 *"For even the Son of Man came not to be ministered unto but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many."*

I. Key Words

The characteristic word of Mark, "*straightway*," comes from a Greek word variously translated by 'immediately,' 'forthwith,' 'shortly,' which occurs 41 times, signifying punctuality in service. Mark is preeminently a book of deeds rather than words.

J. Features

The servant picture of Jesus in Mark is emphasized even by the very omissions and additions in the Book. No account is given of Christ's genealogy. Neither do we find mention of His preexistence, as in John, or His miraculous conception, as in Matthew. We do find a mature Christ presented ready for His mission. The Sermon on the Mount, the manifesto of the King is missing, likewise the judgment of the nations at Christ's second coming and the woes upon Israel. He records 18 of the miracles, but only four of Matthew's 15 parables, and these but briefly. In Mark, Jesus is seen as a worker rather than the Teacher, and He fulfills the prophetic "servant" picture (Zec.3:8; Is.42:1-21; 52:13-53:11).

In Mark the appeal is more to the Roman than to the Jewish mind. Therefore, he makes fewer references to the Old Testament than the other Evangelists. He explains Jewish words and usages (Mk.3:17; 5:41; 7:11, 34; 14:36). Also he time and again uses Roman or Latin words and phases (Mk.7:1-5; 14:12; 15:42).

In this briefest of the Gospel narratives, events come in rapid succession with word paintings, vividness, charm, and color. The Gospel of Mark is intimate with the looks, accents, and gestures of Jesus, moving swiftly toward its goal.

K. Outline

1. The Servant of Jehovah;
 - a. The Identity and Testing of the Servant 1:1-13;
 - b. The Mission of the Servant 1:14-10:52;
(Not to be ministered unto but to minister)
 - c. The Rejected Ministry of the Servant 11-13:37;
 - d. The Obedience and Death of the Servant 14-15:47;
 - e. The Victorious Resurrection and

L. The Writer - Luke

The writer of the third Gospel also wrote the Book of Acts, and addressed his message to the same person, Theophilus or "friend of God" of whom we know basically nothing (Lk.1:3; Ac.1:1). In Colossians 4:14, Luke is called "*the beloved physician,*" and in Philemon a "*fellow laborer*" to the Apostle Paul. From II Timothy we find that when the Apostle Paul was a prisoner in Rome and forsaken by others, Luke was with him and remained faithful (2Ti.4:11). We see also by Acts 16:10 that Luke joined Paul at Troas on the second (2nd) missionary journey, the change from "they" to "we" reveals that the writer had joined Paul's company. In Colossians 4:11, Paul mentioned those persons of the circumcision, then we find the names of three Gentiles and verse 14 contains the name of Luke. He is therefore the only writer in the Bible who was a Gentile. Written with its appeal to the Greeks, Luke the Gentile addressed his Gospel to the Gentiles. The same instrument was used in writing the Book of Acts that records a turning to the Gentiles with the Gospel after the Jews had rejected Jesus as their Messiah.

Note the preface to his Gospel (Lk.1:1-4). Luke knew that others had written about Jesus, yet feels definitely led, after careful investigation, to set forth an orderly accurate account of the Gospel narrative from the material and eyewitness reports he possesses.

M. When was it written?

Since Luke was an associate of Paul and possibly did his writing during Paul's imprisonment, a date about 63 A.D. seems acceptable.

N. Luke - For Whom Written

Luke presents Jesus as the Son of Man to the Greeks looking for the ideal man. The Greeks had searched for a long time hoping to find a perfect man in the ranks of humanity. Luke, in presenting Jesus, in His true humanity as the 'Son of Man,' reveals Him as the one and only Perfect Man. The Greeks created their gods in the likeness of man; to them man was greater than all things physical, greater than empires, even greater than the world itself. Through their culture they were aiming at realizing man at his best. Luke presents Jesus, the Perfect Man, as the Son of Man, seeking to save imperfect men whose lives were marred by sin, that they might realize the greatest life possible. "*For the Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which was lost*" (Lk.19:10).

The three outstanding peoples of history in Jesus' day were the Romans with governmental power, the Jews with their religious background, and the Greeks with their idealism in culture, literature and art. Mark wrote for the Romans, Matthew for the Jews, and Luke for the Greeks.

O. Key Words

The term 'Son of Man' is an outstanding and familiar phrase in Luke's Gospel and gives to us the key to the book. Luke 19:10 could well be the key verse, "For the Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which was lost."

P. Distinctive Features

The writing of Luke is more classical than the others and the most literary of the Gospels. This appealed to the Greeks with their culture and love for rhetoric and philosophy. This Gospel has been described as "the most beautiful story ever written." Inspiration does not destroy individuality. The different characteristics found in presentation of the message reveal the purpose of each Gospel.

In the Gospel of Luke, we see Jesus portrayed in His true humanity as the "*Son of Man*." Luke stressing the humanity of Jesus traces His genealogy back to Adam. Here we find the babe, the child growing, a 12 year old boy in the Temple, increasing in wisdom and in stature. Luke has more to say about the prayers of Jesus than the others (Lk.3:21; 6:12-13; 9:18,29; 22:32), and prayer is a human expression of dependence upon God. The perfect manhood of Jesus is seen from the outline. In showing Jesus as the Savior of humanity, we catch the emphasis that Jesus is a "*light to lighten the Gentiles*" (Lk.2:32), and "*all flesh shall see the Salvation of God*" (Lk.3:6), repentance and remission of sins shall be preached "*unto all nations*" (Lk.1:77; 3:3; 24:47).

Luke alone gives in parabolic form the two debtors, the Good Samaritan, the lost sheep, the lost coin, the lost son, the rich man and Lazarus, the Pharisee and the Publican, and five others. Luke alone records the miracles of the ten lepers and the miraculous draught of fishes, and four more. The one great matchless selection peculiar to Luke is seen in 9:51-18:14 known as the Jerusalem Journey. Note how it begins (Lk.9:51). Here we find a treasury of priceless sayings, parables and events not recorded by the other three Gospel writers.

Q. Outline

1. The Son of Man;

- | | |
|------------------------------------------|-------------|
| a. Introduction | 1:1-4; |
| b. Birth and Childhood of the Son of Man | 1:5-2:52; |
| c. The Preparation of the Son of Man | 3:1-4:13; |
| d. The Ministry of the Son of Man | 4:14-19:48; |

- e. The Rejection of the Son of Man 20:1-21:38;
- f. The Suffering and Death of the Son of Man 22:1-23:56;
- g. The Resurrection and Ascension of the Son of man 24:1-53;

R. The Writer - John

The writer of the fourth Gospel is referred to as the "*disciple whom Jesus loved...who has written these things*" (Jn.21:20, 24). He is identified with the beloved disciple and is referred to anonymously several times in this same manner (Jn.13:23; 18:15-16; 19:26-27). Of all the disciples, it would seem that John was not only near to the heart of Jesus but possibly the most intimate in fellowship with the Son of God. As we study the movements of our Lord and His Apostles, we soon become aware of an inner circle. This inner circle was called into fellowship in the more intimate and unusual experiences of His life, such as the raising of Jairus' daughter, the transfiguration, and Gethsemane. These Apostles of the inner circle were Peter, James, and John.

The name John signifies "the gift of Jehovah." Four different persons bear this name in the New Testament and we should be careful to distinguish between them. They are:

1. John the Baptist (Mt.3:4; 11:11);
2. John the Apostle (Mk.1:19-20; Mt.10:2);
3. John Mark (Ac.12:12,25; 15:37);
4. John of the Jewish Tribunal (Ac.4:6).

The writer of the fourth Gospel was a fisherman (Mk.1:19, 29; Mt.4:21). He became a disciple of John the Baptist and then followed Jesus (Jn.1:37-40). He answered the call to service and he was chosen as one of the 12 Apostles (Mt.10:2).

Under God, John wrote the Gospel that bears his name, three Epistles, and the Book of Revelation. His father's name was Zebedee (Mt.10:2; Mk.1:19-20), and his mother's name was Salome (Mt.27:56; Mk.15:40-41; 16:1).

John was the last of the 12 Apostles and we know that he lived until A.D. 98 and suffered imprisonment on the Isle Patmos (Re.1:9). John was called "*a son of thunder*" (Mk.3:17). This name gives insight into his nature. By intimate association with the Lord Jesus, his life was transformed and he became a man possessed with a burning zeal and the love of Christ.

S. When was it written?

The character and maturity of John's Gospel beyond the synoptic give evidence of a lapse of time both in Christian history and experience since the other Gospels were written. It seems likely that the Gospels and most of the other books of the New Testament were already written. The original 12 disciples were now dead and John's Gospel gives an emphasis of truth for second-generation Christians. According to reliable sources, John's later years were spent in Ephesus. This Gospel was probably written there. This would make for a date somewhere near A.D. 90.

T. The Purpose and Message of John

The purpose of John's Gospel is to set forth the Deity of Jesus Christ. This is clearly stated; *"But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through His name"* (Jn.20:31).

In this Gospel Jesus is repeatedly declared to be *"the Son of God."* To this end, witnesses and facts are introduced to present the Deity of the Lord Jesus.

1. Christ's witness as to His own Deity (Jn.3:13,17-18; 4:25-26; 5:17-30; 6:35-38; 7:28-29, 37-39; 8:42-58; 9:35-38; 10:15-18, 29, 33; 14:6-13, 20; 17:5);
2. The witness of His signs:
 - a. Turning water into wine (Jn.2:1-11);
 - b. Healing of the nobleman's son (Jn.4:46-54);
 - c. Healing of the paralytic (5:1-18);
 - d. Feeding of five thousand (6:6-13);
 - e. Walking on the water (6:16-21);
 - f. Opening the blind eyes (9:1-7);
 - g. Raising of Lazarus (11:1-45).
3. The witness of the seven great "I Am" sayings:
 - a. The Bread of Life, 6:35);
 - b. The Light of the World (Jn.8:12; 9:5);

- c. The Door (Jn.10:7-9);
 - d. The Good Shepherd (Jn.10:11);
 - e. The Resurrection and the Life (Jn.11:25);
 - f. The Way, the Truth, and the Life (Jn.14:6);
 - g. The True Vine (Jn.15:1).
4. The seven-fold witness of men:
- a. John the Baptist (Jn.1:36);
 - b. Nathaniel (Jn.1:49);
 - c. Peter (Jn.6:69);
 - d. Himself (Jn.10:36);
 - e. Martha (Jn.11:27);
 - f. Thomas (Jn.20:28);
 - g. John (Jn.20:31).
5. The witness of His knowledge:
- a. Peter declared, "*Thou knowest all things*" (Jn.21:17);
 - b. He needed no information from man (Jn.1:42; 1:47; 3:10; 4:17-19; 5:6; 6:26; 13:11-17).
6. The witness of the Father; see John 5:37; 6:27; 12:28-30.

U. Key Words

The significant word used most frequently in John's Gospel is to "*believe.*" It occurs some 98 times. Jesus is looking for a response from His hearers; making known that He alone can establish fellowship with the Father for mankind, and life is only gained by believing in

Him. In the light of this it is easily understood why synonymous words, such as receive (Jn.1:12), drink (Jn.4:14), come (Jn.6:35), eat (Jn.6:51), and enter (Jn.10:9) are used. Other important words that echo through the book are faith, light, life, and love. These words indicate the emphasis being made.

V. Features

John's Gospel gives us no genealogical record such as Matthew and Luke, but the astounding declaration that Christ lived before He was born and was "*in the beginning*" with God (Jn.1:1-2). When Christ, the eternal Word, came into this world, His incarnation revealed Him to be God manifest in the flesh (Jn.1:14). He was/is co-equal and co-existent with the Father. This Gospel is deeper and more profound than the other three (3) and every chapter presents the Deity of Christ.

1. Omissions;

In John we find no record of Christ's boyhood, His temptation, His transfiguration, His appointing of the disciples, no parables, no account of the ascension, and no Great Commission.

2. The titles for Christ in John's Gospel are significant;

"*Word of God*" (Jn.1:1, 14), the "*Only begotten of the Father*" (Jn.1:14), "*Lamb of God*" (Jn.1:29, 36), the "*Messiah*" (Jn.1:41), the "*King of Israel*" (Jn.1:49), the "*Savior of the World*" (Jn.4:42), and the "*Son of God*" (Jn.10:36).

VI. HISTORY - THE BOOK OF ACTS

A. The Writer of Acts

The writer of this book is Luke, "*the beloved physician*" (Co.4:14). He addressed this treatise to Theophilus, the same person to whom he addressed his Gospel as noted on the Gospel of Luke. We find Scriptural evidence that Luke was not only a "*fellow laborer*" with Paul, but must have personally witnessed many of the incidents which he records.

Passages such as Acts 16:10 and 20:5-6 are used to show by the use of "us," and "we," that Luke was with Paul in his ministry at these times.

B. When was it written?

The period covered by this book extends from the Ascension of the risen Lord to Paul's imprisonment in Rome, giving us a date between 30 and 63 A.D., and presenting the record

of what happened following the Ascension of Jesus Christ under the witnessing power of the Holy Spirit

C. Key Verse

Acts 1:8 is the key verse. This verse is seen by many to be the key to the Book because the rest of the Book seems to be the working out of this statement of Scripture. Chapters 1-7 are the witness in Judea; chapters 8-12 are the witness in Samaria; chapters 13-15 are the witness in Asia Minor; chapters 16-23 are the witness in Greece and over to Ephesus; and chapters 24-28 are the witness to Rome and beyond.

D. The Purpose and Message of Acts

The Book sets forth the post-resurrection ministry of the Lord Jesus (Ac.1:1-3); Therefore this Book is not to be considered as a beginning but a continuation. Note verses 1 and 2 where Luke states that the story in his Gospel is a record "of all that Jesus began both to do and teach until the day which He was taken up." The Book of Acts tells us what follows after that day and what the Lord Jesus went on to do and teach from heaven; the Book of Acts reveals the continued ministry of the Lord Jesus from Glory. The ministry in the Book of Acts is through the agency and power of the Holy Spirit, whose title appears about 72 times.

This record of the work of the Holy Spirit through dedicated lives is the first book on Church history. For this reason it is both important and basic since it reveals the beginning of the Church, the instrument God has ordained for the spread of Christianity.

E. Acts is Transitional

This Book is the bridge from the earthly ministry of Jesus in the Gospels through the ministry of Peter in the opening of Acts to the distinct ministry of Paul concerning the Church in the Epistles. This must be understood or confusion is bound to result in any attempt at an interpretation of the ministry of two outstanding witnesses of the book, namely Peter and Paul.

The Book begins with mercy extended to Israel and a renewed offer of the Kingdom; it closes with the rejection of the Gospel on the part of Israel and God's judicial sentence upon that nation. It opens with a ministry to Israel and closes with a ministry to the Gentiles. It begins with Peter's ministry inside the land and closes with Paul's ministry outside the land. Jerusalem is the center for Peter's ministry for the Jews; Antioch (Syria) is the center of Paul's ministry to the Gentiles. Peter's ministry is found in the first 12 chapters and Paul's from chapter 13 to the end.

F. Outline

Introduction - Apostles Commissioned.

1:1-11;

1. Ministry in Jerusalem

1:12-8:3:

a. Peter

1:12-5:42;

b. Stephen

6:1-8:3;

2. Ministry in Samaria and Judea

8:4-11:18:

a. Philip

8:4-40;

b. Paul's ministry begins

9:1-31;

c. Peter's ministry concludes

9:32-11:18;

3. Ministry to the Uttermost Parts

11:19-21:14:

a. Barnabas

11:19-12:25;

b. Paul's

13:1-21:14;

First missionary journey

13:1-14:28;

(Antioch {Syria}, Cyprus, Salamis, Paphos, Perga, Antioch {Pisidia}, Iconium, Lystra, Derbe, return to Antioch {Syria})

c. Council at Jerusalem

15:1-29;

Second missionary journey

15:30-18:22;

(Antioch {Syria} through Syria, Cilicia, Phrygia, Galatia to Troas, Philippi, Thessalonica, Berea, Athens, Corinth, Ephesus, Jerusalem, Antioch {Syria})

Third missionary journey
(With Luke and Timothy)

18:23-21:14;

(Antioch, Galatia, Phrygia, Ephesus, Macedonia, Greece, Miletus, Jerusalem).

4. Imprisonment in Jerusalem, Caesarea,
and Rome

21:15-28:31:

a. Arrest, trial and imprisonment;

-Jerusalem	21:15-23:10;
-Caesarea	23:11-26:32;
-Rome	27:1-28:31;

VII. THE BOOK OF ROMANS

A. When and Where Written - Romans

Paul's letter to the Romans was written during his third missionary journey from Corinth (Ac.20:2-3; 1Co.16:5-7) where he remained for three months before making a tour among the churches on his way to Jerusalem. Compare Acts 20:3-21 with Romans 15:22-25.

The first missionary journey is found in Acts 13:2-3 with Romans 15:25. The second in Acts 15:30 through 18:22. The third in Acts 18:23 through 28:31. Paul had been engaged in missionary endeavor for more than ten years before writing to the Romans, people he had not visited. Note the outline of Acts for his missionary itinerary.

B. To whom was it written?

This Epistle was written to Believers. Roman 1:6-7, they are "*The called of Jesus Christ, "beloved of God, called Saints,*" but less personal in tone than his other letters. How this assembly in Rome began is not fully known, but it was predominantly Gentile in character (Ro.1:5-6, 13-16; 11:13; 15:15-16), and their faith had become widely known (Ro.1:8).

C. The Position of the Epistle

Paul's letter to the Romans was not the first to be written, I and II Thessalonians, I and II Corinthians and Galatians all precede it. But, in the Word of God, it is the first of the Epistles in Divine and Canonical Order.

The Believer needs the indoctrination of Romans as a foundation for a full understanding and appreciation of all the Epistles that follow. The Epistles of Paul are "*...given by inspiration of God and are profitable ...that the man of God may be perfect*" (2Ti.3:16-17). Knowledge of the place, position, and teaching of the Pauline Epistles reveals the divine order according to this passage. The doctrine of Romans is necessary for an understanding of the reproof of Corinthians and the correction of Galatians. Romans contain the A.B.C. facts relative to Christian belief and experience.

D. The Teaching of the Epistle

It has long been recognized that Romans is a theological treatise and stands out as the most doctrinal of Paul's Epistles. Galatians is usually studied along with Romans, since both stress the doctrine of redemption and justification by faith, all on the background of the righteousness of God.

In the light of the emphasis placed upon ceremonials, the unbelief of the Jews and the upsetting conditions in Galatia, Paul makes the emphasis that justification is by faith alone, and any addition to this Gospel of Salvation by grace detracts from Christ's glory.

The Believers mentioned in this Epistle had found fellowship with God and each other by the Gospel of God (Ro.1:1-6). Later in the Epistle we are introduced to what Paul terms "*my Gospel*" (Ro.16:25-26). This is a message of good news hidden from former ages and given by revelation to the Apostle Paul, telling not only how a sinner is saved, but what God does with him in this dispensation of grace after he is saved. This is the reason why we must study the Epistles of Paul as a distinct group of writings, for they call us from the one nation, Israel, to the nations, from Jewish land to the heavenlies, from the kingdom to the Body of Christ, from truth given by prophecy and promise to truth hidden from ages and generations, from confirmation to revelation.

This emphasis in Paul's teaching was vigorously opposed by Judaizers, Jews who claimed to be Christians who insisted on circumcision and the keeping of the Law of Moses. These Jews denied his teaching, confused the converts and even made physical attacks upon him. Here in Romans is a grand defense of his doctrinal stand. Paul deals with profound basic truths, revealing that Salvation provided for man is a demonstration of the wisdom of God, vindicated in history and experience. The theme is revealed in the introduction (Ro.1:16-17), being the righteousness of God.

E. Features

In this Epistle, these words have great significance: "*law*" 78 times; "*all*," 71 times; "*righteousness*," 66 times; "*faith*," 62 times; "*sin*," 60 times; "*death*," 42 times; "*in Christ*," 33 times; "*flesh*," 20 times; "*impute*," 19 times; and "*God forbid*," 19 times.

In this Epistle we find no less than 70 direct quotations from the Old Testament. These are from about 14 of the Old Testament books, but Psalms and Isaiah head the list. Romans reveal more Old Testament quotations than all the other Epistles combined.

In this Epistle there are no less than 219 words not found in the other Epistles of Paul and 94 that can be found no where else in the New Testament.

F. The Analysis of the Epistle

There are three main divisions in this Epistle which, when understood correctly, will keep the student from much confusion. Chapters 1-8 are doctrinal in nature. Chapters 9-11 are dispensational in nature, and chapters 12-16 are practical in nature.

Note that chapters 9-11, marked "dispensational," form a parenthetical portion in the Epistle and stand as an explanation to the unchanged purpose of God concerning Israel. The subject matter of this portion must not be confused with the teaching of the rest of the book.

In Chapter one Paul is addressing *"all that be in Rome, beloved of God, called saints."* Romans 12:4-5 tells us that they are members of one Body, one Body in Christ. These are his brethren in the faith, but in chapter nine he turns to the nation Israel who are *"Israelites: to whom pertained the adoption, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the Law, the service of God, and the promises: Whose are the fathers, and of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came, who is overall, God blessed forever."* These are his brethren in the flesh.

After the doctrinal foundation of the first eight chapters, the student can pass from the last verse of chapter eight to the first verse of chapter twelve and find perfect order and development of thought. The foundation comes first, and then the exhortation based on the doctrine given, first Salvation and then practice.

G. Outline of Romans

Introduction - Paul's desire	1:1-1:15;
Theme: Righteousness of God	1:16-17;
1. Righteousness needed by men (Doctrinal)	1:18-3:20;
a. Condemnation:	
-Gentile	1:18-32;
-Jews	2:1-3:8;
-World	3:9-20;
2. Righteousness provided by God	3:21-8:39:
a. Justification	3:21-5:21;
b. Sanctification	6:1-8:17;

- c. Glorification 8:18-39;
- 3. Righteousness rejected by Israel 9:1-11:36:
(Dispensational parenthetical portion relative to Israel)
 - a. Past election 9:1-33;
 - b. Present rejection 10:1-21;
 - c. Future restoration 11:1-36.
- 4. Righteousness manifested by Believers 12:1-15:13;
- 5. Conclusion 15:13-16:27.

VIII. EPISTLES TO THE CORINTHIANS

A. The Epistle - 1st. Corinthians

We gather from the reference in I Corinthians 5:9 that before writing this Epistle, known to us as I Corinthians, Paul wrote an earlier letter that has not been preserved. Some Bible scholars believe that the content of this previous letter could have been incorporated in the letters to the Corinthians we possess, citing I Corinthians 6:12-20 and II Corinthians 6:14-7:1 as being definite interpolations.

B. When was it written?

It was on the second missionary journey that Paul first came to Corinth and remained there 18 months in intensive missionary activity (Ac.18:1-11). At this time he had the help of Aquila and Priscilla (Ac.18:2-4), and was eventually joined by Silas and Timothy. This must have been about A.D. 49-51. About five years later, when Paul was on his third missionary journey, he spent three years in Ephesus. During this time, he wrote his first Epistle to the Corinthians in response to questions relative to conditions that had arisen in the Church. This would make a date of about A.D. 55.

C. For Whom Written

This Epistle was written to the Church of God which is at Corinth. This Church was no doubt founded by Paul on his second missionary journey when he labored in the city for 18 months. Corinth was an outstanding city, one of the largest centers of travel and business

in the Roman Empire, but sad to say, its notoriety received another emphasis. Its reputation for immorality was so widely known that it is not surprising that the problems and difficulties in which the Church was involved were associated with these evil conditions. Paul writes to the Corinthian Church in answer to requests for a solution to the problems confronting the Church.

D. The Purpose and Message of First Corinthians

This Epistle is distinctly an Epistle of reproof. We know that the Corinthians had written to Paul relative to the problems in which they were involved, and only straightforward answers could give a solution to these desperate situations (1Co.7:1). The household of Chloe in Corinth had also brought him information relative to serious divisions (1Co.1:11). He had heard of cases of gross immorality (1Co.5:1), and sinful conduct being tolerated that deeply disturbed him. Paul renounces the wrongdoing and rebukes the wrongdoer.

No other letter deals with such specific problems in such a vivid, realistic way as Paul deals very definitely with the flagrant sins and difficulties of the Church living in the midst of this evil, pagan, corrupt society.

In this letter, with deep conviction, Paul deals with no less than a dozen subjects in a very practical manner. Although some of the subjects may seem irrelevant to us, the underlying principles expressed with spiritual power make these letters priceless in their abiding value.

E. Features

Worthy of note is the fact that in this book we have the earliest references to the Lord's Supper (1Co.11:20-34). The great love chapter is here in chapter 13, and the majestic Gospel message of the resurrection is found in chapter 15.

No less than 14 direct references are made to Calvary by such terms as cross, crucified, died, blood, and sacrificed and the Gospel is the power of God. Paul's Doctrine of the Cross is a thorough spiritual exposition of the historical facts.

Six times Paul refers to those who are inflated with pride and conceit; rather than possessed of love in humility, they are puffed up.

Worthy of note is the fact that our Lord's full title, Lord Jesus Christ, is rarely used in the New Testament, except when a writer is seeking to declare or emphasize the Lordship of Christ. How spiritually significant this is, for we find this title used six times in the first ten verses (2, 3, 7, 8, 9). The term Lord is very prominent in the Epistle. Is it not true that the disorders and difficulties that had crept into the Church had arisen through failure to recognize Jesus Christ as Lord?

F. Outline

Chapters

1. Factions in the Church	1-4
2. Discipline Necessary	5-6
3. Questions Relative to Marriage	7
4. Christian Liberty	8-11
5. Spiritual Gifts	12-14
6. The Resurrection	15
7. Conclusion	16

G. The Occasion and Circumstances of 2 Corinthians

Acts 19:23-41 gives the account of a tumult that arose when Paul opposed the work of the craftsmen making the silver shrines to the goddess Diana of the Ephesians. This hastened the departure of Paul from Ephesus and he made his way to Troas, preaching en route (Ac.20:1-5).

Paul had arranged to meet Titus on his return from Corinth to find out what response he had received to his first letter. However he became so troubled at Titus' delay that he crossed the Aegean Sea into Macedonia to meet him, eventually doing so at Philippi (2Co.2:11-13; 7:5,6). Indications are that Paul was probably sick at this time (2Co.1:8-10).

This Epistle is one of the most personal of Paul's letters, in which he makes a defense of both his ministry (chps.1-7) and his Apostleship (chps.10-13).

It would seem that Paul visited Corinth after hearing of further dissension but met with very poor response (2Co.2:1; 12:14; 13:1,2). As a result of this unhappy experience, Paul wrote to the Church at Corinth again.

H. The Purpose and Message of the Book

Paul was anxious to know the results of his first letter. In a measure there was a good response (2Co.7:7-16), but not all the problems were resolved to unite the various factions. Now the news of new peril and controversy had arisen, even that of Judaizing teachers coming to Corinth, denouncing the Apostleship of Paul and preaching another Gospel which produced a party very hostile to him. This necessitated the writing of this second Epistle (2Co.3:1-3; 4:2; 10:10; 11:1-4, 12-13). Many Bible scholars place the date around A.D. 59-60.

In this Epistle, Paul urges:

1. A spirit of forgiveness towards the repentant (2Co.2:6-9);
2. Warning the unrepentant (2Co.12:21; 13:2);
3. Exhorting them to be watchful for false teachers (2Co.11:3, 4, 13).

Paul vindicates his own Apostleship (2Co.chps.11-12), and appeals to their generosity in making a contribution to the poor saints at Jerusalem (2Co.8:7-15).

I. Outline	Chapters
1. Salutation	1:1-2
2. The Defense of the Christian Ministry	1:3-7:16
3. Stewardship and Christian Giving	8:1-9:15
4. Paul's Personal Defense	10:1-13:10
5. Conclusion	13:11-14

IX. THE EPISTLE TO THE GALATIANS

A. Introduction

There are two theories as to who Paul wrote this Epistle. The Northern Theory says that he wrote to the churches in north Galatia, that is, north-central Asia Minor, established on his second and third missionary journeys. The Southern Theory says that the churches Paul addressed were Antioch, Iconium, Lystra, and Derbe, churches that were in the southern area of Galatia, which Paul established on his first missionary journey. If the latter is true, this would be the earliest of Paul's letters. It is plausible, as there is no mention of the Jerusalem Council, which dealt with the very issues Paul addresses in the Epistle, the relationship of the Judaic Law to faith in Christ.

B. To Whom was it Written?

The people addressed in this Epistle are the Galatians, a mixed race, with Gauls predominating, belonging to "*Galatia*," the prominent province of Asia Minor that was constituted by Augustus B.C. 25. The Galatians had been conquered by Rome and held under her sway from B.C. 189.

We have the information that Paul visited Galatia on his first and second missionary journey (Ac.13:14-14:23; Ac.16:6), and then again during his third journey some three years later (Ac.18:23). During the first visit it seems that he was overtaken by a malady that caused him to stay there awhile (Ga.4:14). This sickness seemed to be of such a nature that, affecting his appearance, they could have despised him (4:13). Yet, under God it was this illness that gave to Paul the opportunity to present the Gospel of the grace of God to the Galatians, to which they responded with warmth that was remarkable. Looking on him as a heavenly messenger (Ga.4:14) they lavished their love upon him (Ga.4:15).

C. The Occasion for the Epistle

The second visit revealed a changed atmosphere however, which caused Paul grave concern. Paul had preached the Gospel of Grace, making plain the fact of the sufficiency of the finished work of the Cross to justify a man in the sight of God. Paul now found this Gospel he preached being perverted and Judaizers were undoing his work. Paul is amazed that his converts are faltering in loyalty to Christ and himself. "I marvel that ye be so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another Gospel which is not another but there be some that trouble you and would pervert the Gospel of Christ" (Ga.1:6-7).

Paul's work had been followed up by Judaizing teachers who were insisting that Gentile converts submit to Jewish rules, teaching that the Gospel of Grace was not sufficient for Salvation, but must be supplemented by the deeds of the Law. "They taught that *"unless ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses, ye cannot be saved."* So they constrained these Galatians to submit to circumcision (Ga.5:2; 6:12), in order to establish themselves in the faith. In presenting this perverted Gospel (Ga.1:6-7), these Judaizers sought to undermine the Apostleship of the Apostle Paul, attacking his authority in order to discredit his message.

To correct this error of Salvation by works, the Apostle Paul wrote this Epistle vindicating his Apostleship, setting forth in an unmistakable way the grounds of the Gospel of Grace, the very sufficiency of Christ's death to fully justify any believing sinner. The emphasis is "the vindication of the Gospel of the grace of God."

D. The Theme

The theme of this Epistle is "justification by faith," presented on the basis of the finished work of redemption at Calvary. This is Paul's answer to the Judaic teaching of Salvation by works. Because of this emphasis, it is readily seen why Galatians and Romans are linked with each other and studied together. Galatians was written first and is a strong defense of justification by faith. Romans, though presenting the same idea is not only more extensive, but more definite with positive declarations of doctrinal truth.

E. Time of Writing

The time or place of writing is not easily determined, but many Bible scholars favor an early date, about 48-49 A.D., soon after the establishing of the Galatians churches at the close of the first (1st) missionary journey. Others give a probably date of A.D. 58 during Paul's third visit to Corinth (Ac.20:1-3). The time and place of writing do not affect the message, and the emphasis remains.

F. Features

This Epistle of Galatians is the Christian's "Declaration of Independence." It was Luther's favorite Epistle and played an important part in the reformation. The Doctrine of Justification by faith is emphasized more than in any other of Paul's letters and is seen in marked contrast with 'externalism' presented by false teachers and foes. In this respect this letter to the Galatians has been called the '*Magna Carta*' of Christian liberty.

G. Content

Paul, following a brief and sober salutation, launches into a powerful and unassailable defense of his apostolic calling. Following this defense, Paul does not, as in other Epistles, give thanksgiving for the recipients. He quickly expresses his amazement that the Galatians are so soon deceived by another gospel. He mentions the ones who oppose him, claiming that what they preach is not worthy of being called a "gospel." The balance of the Epistle is divided into three parts:

1. Defense of Apostolic Qualifications (Ga.1:10-2:21);

This was not a humanly invented Gospel Paul preached. He was himself at one time an opponent of this Gospel. His ancestral zeal caused him to persecute the Church. Now Paul lets them know that he received his orders to preach the Gospel, not from men, but from God. Paul indicates his total lack of reliance upon the Apostles for his message or calling. It was 14 years after his conversion before he communicated with the Church leaders at Jerusalem his message. He came to full agreement with the leaders there, without compromising a bit with those who begrudged the Gentile Christians their freedom in Christ (Ga.2:1-10).

2. Justification by Grace Alone (Ga.3:1-5:12);

Paul defends the contents of the Gospel he preaches with great power and emotion. He rebukes the Galatians sharply, questioning whether they had been bewitched or not. Paul here gives a detailed argument from the Old Testament, which we can see is directed at the Judaizers. Paul tells them that Abraham himself had been justified by faith alone, and not just because of his circumcision. It was because of that faith that

Abraham became the father of many nations. Paul went on to tell them that the one who follows the Law will receive a curse, for no man cannot avoid transgressing the Law. Then he follows up by telling them that Christ bore the curse for them, so that the fulfillment of the promise could come through faith, rather than the works of the Law.

3. Regeneration through the Holy Spirit (Ga.5:13-6:10);

Taking what he said previously as to Spirit versus Law, Paul gives a fuller explanation of the life that comes through the Spirit. This life is one of freedom, not in the service of the flesh, which subdues the active enslavement of the flesh. Paul shows them in opposition to each other, in the terms of the manifestation of the works versus fruit. The opposition between the flesh and the Spirit is the complete background of his argument.

H. Outline

Introduction	1:1-10
I. A Personal Defense of Apostolic Authority	1:11-2:21
II. Paul's Doctrine of Justification	3:1-4:31
III. Christian Liberty	5:1-6:10
IV. Conclusion	6:11-18

X. THE EPISTLE TO THE EPHESIANS

A. Introduction

The most glorious revelation that God has given, the highest and deepest truth He has made known to man, He communicated through the Apostle Paul.

In this Epistle we find the loftiest expressions of truth to be found anywhere in the entire Word of God. Bible students have been a loss to adequately describe the book in the light of the impression it has made upon them. Because of its spacious grandeur, a man of God calls it:

1. The Grand Canyon of Scripture; another because of its lofty heights;
2. The Alps of the New Testament; another because of its awe inspiring sacred revelation of identification with Christ;

3. The Holy of Holies; and still another;
4. Paul's Third Heaven Epistle.

This book, beyond a doubt, stands without a peer in the whole range of inspired truth.

Ephesians is love that surpasses knowledge (Ep.3:19), and rights that are inseparable (Ep.3:8 with 1:7, 18; 2:7; 3:16). It tells us of Christ who is far above all principalities and power (Ep.1:20-23) the scope of the truth of this book takes us back to the time before the world began (Ep.1:4), and points to the glory (Ep.2:7 with 1:18). The fullness of the Believer's life is the fullness of God (Ep.3:19), the fullness of Christ (Ep.4:13), and the fullness of the Spirit (Ep.5:18). There is nothing conceivable to the Believer beyond this, for it goes beyond anything yet experienced and sums up all we ever will experience. Eternity alone will unfold all its meaning.

B. When and Where was it Written

This Epistle was written during Paul's first imprisonment in Rome. Acts 28:30 gives us the added information that Paul was under Roman guard, but in his own hired house where he dwelt for two whole years. Most Bible scholars set the date around A.D. 61-62.

Ephesians is looked upon as being the first in order of the Prison Epistles and was sent to its readers by Tychicus who also was the bearer of Colossians and Philemon. The other Prison Epistle is Philipians.

C. To Whom Written

The word's "To the Ephesians" are not found in the best manuscripts and Bible scholars are of the opinion that this Epistle can be accepted as a general or circular letter "*to the saints and faithful in Christ Jesus,*" or to all Believers of all times. It is possibly the Epistle Paul referred to when writing to the Church at Colosse (Co.4:16).

D. The Teaching and Message of the Book

The unique message of this Book concerns the true Church of Jesus Christ referred to as The Church which is "*His Body.*" This is not just an "organized assembly" but a revelation of a "living organism." Literally, a multiplied Christ is multiplied sinners saved by His matchless grace and all 'one' in Christ Jesus. This is the Church which is "*His Body*" the Body of Believers indwelt by Christ. This Epistle gives three distinct figures representing the Church:

1. A Building (Ep.2:21-22);

2. A Body (Ep.1:22-23; 4:15);
3. A Bride (Ep.5:25-32).

E. Keynote - "In Christ"

The keynote of the Book is "*in Christ*." In these two words we have the very sum and substance of the Epistle. This is the key that unlocks the door, occurring 93 times, giving the nature of the truth in the Epistle and the abiding life that is ours. Man, connected with "Christ," forms the most significant expression in all Scripture. These words or equivalents are used 14 times in chapter one alone. If you take Christ out of the Christian and out of God's sight, he must say "I am nothing" and "I have nothing."

F. Features

One can readily see why Ephesians has been called the "Joshua of the New Testament." Just as Israel under Joshua was engaged in warfare for the possession of Canaan, so the Christian on redemption ground finds a conquest for the possession of all that is truly his "in Christ." For this conquest the Christian is only adequate for the assignment when he puts on the "*whole armor of God*" and becomes "*strong in the Lord and the power of His might*" (Ep.6:10-11). Only then can he overcome, stand, and withstand the wiles of the devil for victory.

The Epistles to the Ephesians and Colossians have much in common. This is seen by the fact that more than 70 similar expressions are found in both books. The difference in emphasis noted by Bible scholars is the fact that Ephesians seems to focus attention upon the Church as the Body of Christ, as related to "Christ the Head," while Colossians centers our attention on "Christ the Head" as related to the "Body."

G. Theology of Ephesians

This Epistle is as other Pauline Epistles, theologically. The dominant note is God's design from before the foundations of the world to work out a plan for men to share in a family relationship with their Creator (Ep.1:4). Paul also expressed this in other Epistles (Ro.8:28-30). God's own sovereign will is the determining factor (Ep.1:5, 9, 11; Ro.9:19-26).

Another objective of the redemptive process in Jesus Christ is that God would be praised. Demonstration of God's extraordinary kindness in connection with Jesus Christ would be made in the succeeding ages (Ep.2:7). The praise of God is actualized as the Christian lives a life of good works. It is not an after-thought, nor is it human contribution for return of the Divine favor. It is integrally related to the redemptive design of God.

XI. THE EPISTLE TO THE PHILIPPIANS

A. Introduction

The Church at Philippi had its inception in a prison and ten years later, from a prison in Rome, Paul penned this Epistle.

In Acts 16:6-12, in a remarkable way, we see the hand of God directing Paul in his ministry. Paul had a mind to go into Asia, but being forbidden of the Holy Ghost, he and his companion traveled as far as Troas, where in a vision he received the Macedonian call, "*Come over and help us.*" To this call Paul responded and with conviction states, "*Assuredly gathering that the Lord had called us for to preach the Gospel unto them*" (Ac.16:10). At Philippi the Gospel was first preached in Europe. Here Paul saw his first European convert and here was established the first European Church.

Here is a persecuted Apostle writing to a persecuted Church. In the stress and strain of the ten or more years that have elapsed since first meeting these European converts (Ac.chp.16), Paul has ample opportunity for providing the reality of his faith and conviction in Christ (2Co.11:23-30). He has not been disillusioned and on the background of his own experience in this letter Paul reveals that Christ is the answer to every need.

B. To Whom Written

"*Saints at Philippi*" (Php.1:1) are the recipients of this Epistle. Philippi received its name from Philip, the father of Alexander the Great, and in Paul's day was a Roman colony in Macedonia about ten miles north from the shores of the Aegean Sea. This was the renaming of a city, as its first name was "Dartos" then "Krenides", literally a place on fountains, because of springs and wells found there. Philippi was the first place in which Paul preached the Gospel in Europe. This occurred during the second missionary journey (Ac.15:40-41). Very few Jews lived in Philippi and there was no trace of a Synagogue, just a place of prayer on the bank of the river (Ac.16:13). This was the place of Paul's first meeting and where Lydia, Europe's first convert, found Christ. With the conversion of the demon-possessed girl and the jailor, we have the beginning of the Philippian Church.

C. When and where was it written?

This Epistle was written during the Roman imprisonment. Definite references in the Epistle make the location quite plain. "While in bonds" (Php.1:7, 13, 14, 16), and "*Caesar's court*" or "*Praetorian guard*" is mentioned (Php.1:13), and "*Caesar's household*" (Php.4:22). Paul also is awaiting a decision in his case, which could only be given in Rome. The imprisonment lasted without trial or release for "*two whole years*" (Ac.28:30), and it was probably during the latter part of this period that the Epistle was written, probably about A.D. 61 or 62.

D. Occasion of the Epistle

Epaphroditus (Php.2:25-30), after bringing a gift from the Philippians assembly as an expression of love (Php.4:15-18), fell sick at Rome causing great anxiety in Philippi. Upon his recovery, and being well enough to return to the Philippi, Epaphroditus was entrusted with this letter expressing Paul's deep gratitude for their thoughtfulness and also his spiritual longing for the Philippians Believers.

E. Character of the Epistle

This Epistle is definitely Christo-centric (Christ-centered). Some 70 times in four brief chapters of just 104 verses, reference is made to Jesus Christ by noun or pronoun and always in relationship to the Believer. Because of this, the truth is intimate and experiential, shining with singular light and beauty, revealing true Christian love and deep personal affection. To know this Epistle is to know where Paul really lived and the joy and peace he experienced in believing. This Epistle is definitely practical, having to do with our condition rather than our position of Christ. Paul is not theorizing, but rather making known the proven reality of Jesus Christ's indwelling and the fact that in the vicissitudes (ups and downs) of life, Christ is the answer, and with Him we are adequate for any assignment and equal to any emergency (Php.4:13,19).

F. Keynote

"*Rejoice*" - Some 18 times the word "rejoice" occurs in varying forms expressing the triumph that is ours in Christ in all of life's demands. The Lord Jesus in His darkest hour spoke of "*my peace*" (Jn.14:27), and "*my joy*" (Jn.15:11), and with the consciousness of His indwelling in our own lives, His peace and His joy be ours at all times. "*Rejoice in the Lord always; and again I say, rejoice*" (Php.4:4).

G. Theological Document

Philippians is also a theological document as Ephesians. It offers essential contribution to the study of New Testament Christology, Ecclesiology, and Eschatology. Christ is first of all mentioned as the subject of apostolic preaching. Paul was arrested for preaching Christ, but this encouraged others to preach Christ also. Paul had a hostile environment to preach in, but what is important is only that Christ was made known everywhere.

Christ renounced the Divine fullness and Omnipotence that belonged to Him, as the Son of God, and instead, dispossessed Himself (Php.2:7a). This is the "*kenosis*" (Gr. = emptying), or in other words, Christ laying down His divine fullness, dignity, and power, so that He "*emptied*" Himself at His incarnation. Paul quotes the words in a free way and gives every detail a meaning in the present exposition. This emptying is known as Christ's humiliation.

Paul makes a special reference to Christian "*diakonia*." He reminds the readers that Christ took on the form of a servant. Isaiah prophesied of Christ's taking on this form, which is most glorious in God's eyes.

The Church at Philippi was overseen by bishops and deacons (Php.1:1). In earlier Pauline Epistles, these categories are not mentioned together, as there only some mention of specialists in "*diakonia*" (Ro.12:7; 16:1). Paul called the presbyters of Ephesus "*bishops*" (Ac.20:28). Since Paul addressed the bishops at Philippi in the plural, it seems they were not monarchic officers, but rather honorary authorities like presbyters who collaborated in the administration of community life.

H. General Outline Theme

"The Christ of experience" is the general outline theme with the keynote being "Rejoice."

1. Chapter 1: The Indwelling Christ, or Christ within, the Believer's life:
(Key verse: 1:21)
 - a. Application of the truth: Inward for experience;
 - b. Rejoicing in Him.
2. Chapter 2: The Historic Christ or Christ behind, the Believer's standard:
(Key verses: 2:5, 12)
 - a. Application of the truth: outward for conduct;
 - b. Rejoicing in service.
3. Chapter 3: The Prophetic Christ, or Christ before, the Believer's hope;
(Key verses: 3:13, 14, 21)
 - a. Application of the truth: onward for glory;
 - b. Rejoicing in outlook.
4. Chapter 4: The Exalted Christ, or Christ above, the Believer's resource;
(Key verses: 4:13, 19)
 - a. Application of the truth: upward for strength;
 - b. Rejoicing in victory.

XII. THE EPISTLE TO THE COLOSSIANS

A. Introduction

Ephesians and Colossians have much in common; it is said that 78 out of 95 verses in Colossians are similar in expression. Because of this similarity they have been referred to as twin Epistles; however upon close examination there is a striking difference in tone and style. In Ephesians we find strong assurance and peace. In Colossians Paul is perturbed, and truth is given to offset error. Here we find a serious deviation which corrupted Christian doctrine. Paul strongly refutes this teaching, warning the Colossians against danger of being taken captive by the injection of this new false emphasis.

B. When and where was it written?

Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, and Philemon are known as the Prison Epistles, written during Paul's first imprisonment at Rome about A.D. 61-62. Please note this same subject heading in the Ephesians and Philippians outlines.

C. The Colossian Church

Colosse was a city in the Roman proconsular "*Province of Asia*." This province is known today as Asia Minor. The capital of this province in Paul's day was Ephesus, situated on the western coast of the peninsula. About one 120 miles inland from Ephesus were the three cities of Laodicea, Hierapolis and Colosse in the valley of the river Lycus. Colosse was ten or twelve miles south of the other two situated on the river Lycus.

We have no information that Paul ever visited Colosse. We know that at the time he wrote this Epistle, he had not been there, but had only "heard" (Co.1:4, 9; 2:1) about their faith and love. Since Paul was three years in Ephesus (Ac.20:31), and there was a mighty moving of the Spirit of God throughout all Asia (Ac.19:10, 26) for the space of two years. It is assumed that under the impact of this spiritual awakening, the Colossian Church came into existence.

Possibly the one outstanding single person used of God in the ministry to the Colossians was Epaphras, who himself was a Colossian (Co.1:7; 4:12). In Philemon, Epaphras is called a fellow prisoner of Paul in Rome (Phl.1:23). From him, Paul received word of the spiritual condition of the Church and the heresy that had arisen within fellowship.

It would seem from Philemon verse 2 that the Early Church at Colosse met in the house of Philemon, for it was to Colosse that Paul returned Onesimus, the runaway slave of Philemon. Tychicus, who accompanied Onesimus with his letter from Paul to Philemon, was also the bearer of this letter at the same time to the Church at Colosse (Co.4:7-9).

D. The Purpose and Message of the Book

Epaphras extended warm greetings from the Colossian Church and while giving a good report in general to Paul (Co.1:8), he tells of the grave danger to the fellowship because of

the propagation of false doctrine (Co.2:8-23). This letter was written to counteract this erroneous teaching.

The false teaching ensnaring the Colossians was a peculiar form of heresy with a background of Jewish ritualism and Oriental or pagan mysticism that fostered intellectual pride and is known as "Gnosticism." The name "Gnostic" is from the Greek "gnosis" meaning "knowledge." The Gnostic's pride themselves on the possession of mysterious and superior knowledge, unknown except to the initiated. It went under the name of a "*philosophy*," (Co.2:8); and had a "*show of wisdom*" (Co.2:23); leaned on the "*tradition of men*" and affected "*humility*," (Co.2:18, 23); the "*worshiping of angels*," and expressed contempt for the body (Co.2:20-23).

E. The Corrective

The teaching of Colossians is profound, priceless and practical. The first two chapters are doctrinal and the other two are practical. Here Paul is seeking to stabilize and strengthen the Colossian Christians in the Gospel they had received.

To answer the false teaching of Gnosticism, this Epistle sets forth the all-supremacy and all-sufficiency of Christ the Lord. The dominant theme is the fullness and pre-eminence of Christ and the completeness, the fullness of life for all Believers in Him.

In chapter 1:15-18 Paul sets forth a seven-fold portrait of Christ as follows:

1. The image of the invisible God;
2. The firstborn of all creation;
3. By Him all things created;
4. He is before all things;
5. By Him all things consist;
6. He is the Head of the Body, the Church;
7. The firstborn from the dead.

There is no equal to Him; therefore He can have no rival. Christ's absolute sovereignty is established. How can these Colossians exchange or turn from Christ for inferior fancied greatness, angelic powers, philosophies and traditions of men? "*For it pleased the Father that in Him should all fullness dwell*" (Co.1:19). "*For in Him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead boldly*" (Co.2:9). "*And ye are complete (filled full) in Him*" (2:10). The two great truths we must see are the fullness of God in Christ, and all the fullness of Christ in us.

F. Key Verse

Because of the nature of this Epistle, several verses are referred to as key verses, namely Colossians 1:19, 28, with 2:9-10.

G. Colossian Heresy

There is no formal exposure of the Colossian heresy. The features of this heresy are inferred in Paul's references to it in the course of the Epistle. We can also see it in the truth Paul emphasizes in order to provide his readers with the antidote to it.

Basically, the heresy was Jewish, which is obvious from the legal ordinances, circumcision, food regulations, new moon, Sabbath, and other things Paul addresses that fit the Jewish calendar.

XIII. THE THESSALONIAN EPISTLES

A. Introduction

Both the internal and external evidence are such as to leave no doubt that the two (2) Epistles to the Thessalonians are genuine Epistles of Paul and it is generally agreed that they were the earliest written of Paul, about A.D. 50-52. In background and content no books are more exciting, dramatic, or spiritually stimulating.

B. The Historical Background

1. Paul's experiences;

Paul's experiences with the Lord, his conversion, call, and ministry are vitally connected with these Epistles; and his movements should be traced to understand how he got to Thessalonica and why he preached there and then wrote these letters to them so soon after leaving. All this is recorded in Acts, chapters 9, 16 and 17.

Paul apparently had not planned on going over into Macedonia after the Galatians ministry on the second missionary journey (Ac.16:1-6). It seems as though he had intentions of going over into Asia when a very unusual and remarkable incident occurred (v.6). The Spirit said "No." In verse 7, he had a mind to minister in Bithynia and again it was not God's plan and the Spirit said "No." However, as they came to Troas (v.8), God spoke (vs.9-10) to Paul in a vision. The man in the vision said, "*Come over to Macedonia.*" After being forbidden to go to two areas, Paul was allowed to go to Macedonia.

2. Ancient maritime city;

Thessalonica was a very ancient maritime city and a thriving seaport. In the time of Paul it was astride an important route known as the Egnatian Way, which led from Rome to the east, through the city. It was built or founded by Cassander, King of Macedonia, brother-in-law of Alexander the Great, in 316 B.C. He named it in honor of his wife, Thessalonica. Thessalonica had grown into a wealthy and popular city and was the greatest city in the northeast of the Roman Empire before the rise of Constantinople.

3. Natives of the Thracian race;

The natives of Thessalonica, like those of Philippi, were of the Thracian race. In Paul's day the city was inhabited by Greeks, Romans, and Jews. Outside of Judaism, idolatrous practices and worship of many gods prevailed, but Jupiter was particularly honored.

C. The Occasion for the Epistles

1. Released from prison;

After release from prison, passing through Amphipolis and Appoloniaa where they did not preach, Paul, Silas, Timothy, and Luke went on to Thessalonica to give them the first Gospel witness. The Jews here had three synagogues, showing their influence, power and wealth.

2. The effects of this ministry;

First, from the Synagogues ministry:

- a. A few Jews believed;
- b. A multitude of devout Greeks (proselytes to Judaism) believed;
- c. A few of the outstanding woman of nobility believed;
- d. From the Epistle we gather that a widespread revival had taken place, for outside of the Synagogues Paul labored night and day preaching the Gospel.

The home of Jason, his host, had been used as a meeting place (1Th.2:9; Ac.17:5-9), with the result that:

- e. Heathens were turned to God (1Th.1:9);

- f. A Church was founded, grounded, and established. In three weeks an unprecedented thing happened because of the blessing of God on his ministry and the amazing results to his preaching of the Gospel. Paul, in this short ministry under God, not only founded but grounded or established a church;

3. Persecution was inevitable (Ac.17:5-10);

The opposition from the Jews knew no bounds. So great was the uproar and so bitter the opposition that the lives of the Apostle and his companions were endangered and persecution of the converts increased; so for the safety of the converts and themselves they left the city, hoping to relieve the tension, and traveled by night to Berea (v.10).

Note the Berean ministry (Ac.17:10-15). Another God-blessed ministry until Thessalonian Jews, hearing of the results, came to Berea and stirred up the people against them. It became necessary again for Paul to leave, but Silas and Timothy remained in the vicinity as Paul goes to Athens to await their arrival with news (1Th.3:1-6). This news thrilled his heart.

After being in Athens with Paul, Timothy went on to Corinth and stayed eighteen (18) months (1Th.1:1).

D. The Purpose and Message of the Epistles

The big issue was the Second Coming of Christ and the establishing of His Kingdom. Paul had taught the Thessalonians relative to their "hope" in Christ and of His coming again. Now loved ones had been taken from them by death which caused them great uneasiness. They could not understand how Christ's coming could be any cause for rejoicing, if only those alive when He came could see and enjoy the "glory" of that event. This would put the living to a great advantage. To correct this misunderstanding, the most glorious truth on the second coming was given (1Th.4:13-18).

Paul had also taught them relative to the coming Day of Judgment and wrath that they would escape by the coming of Christ. When they found themselves going through bitter persecution, they began to wonder if this was the beginning of the "Day of the Lord", the day of wrath (2Th.2:1-3). He makes known that they had been "deceived" or "misled" by a forged letter contradicting Paul's teaching, yet written in Paul's name. It was to correct this spurious teaching and offset the upsetting work of Satan that Paul wrote this second Epistle.

All the truth of these Epistles is given in the light of the Second Coming. In these Epistles we have 20 references to Christ's return and this hope climaxes in each chapter (1Th.1:10; 2:19; 3:13; 4:17; 5:23).

E. Relation Between 1 & 2 Thessalonians

The interval between the writing of First and Second Thessalonians was short, for the Second does not show any major changes in the Church, or in the conditions under which Paul was writing. Silas and Timothy were both still with him, and since his companions were usually traveling constantly, both of these Epistles were written between missions.

The Second Epistle gives signs that will precede the Day of the Lord, and is more detailed than the First in eschatological statements. It appears that the Thessalonians did not get a clear picture of what Paul had written the first time (2Th.2:5), so they were in doubt as to what to believe when confronted with a different doctrine. Paul told them to adhere to the norm of faith that is embodied in the Gospel (2Th.1:8). This was the Gospel Paul preached to them, and had written to them in the First Epistle (2Th.2:15; 3:6; 3:14).

XIV. THE PASTORAL EPISTLES - TIMOTHY -TITUS

A. Title

The two Epistles to Timothy and one to Titus have been known collectively as the "Pastoral Epistles," because of Paul's alerting them of their pastoral duties. There are certain similarities, which is why they are treated as a whole. Most of the problems that would arise, they would both experience. However, there are some special characteristics to them individually.

B. Characteristics

A mark of difference is that these Epistles are written to individuals, rather than churches. However, they do have wider application than simply personal correspondence. They were written to strengthen Paul's co-workers, so are therefore valuable as to insight Paul would give to his helpers. We perhaps should call them semi-personal, as well as semi-ecclesiastical.

There is teaching in both on ecclesiastical problems and on conditions within the early Church. We can see also in 1 Timothy and Titus directions Paul gives on selection of church officers, while all three (1 & 2 Timothy and Titus) give guidelines for activity in the Church as well as Christian behavior instruction. Along with this "semiofficial" material, we see personal exhortations that were intended for the person addressed only. Timothy evidently had "rabbits feet" (desire to run away from the problems), as we can see Paul encouraging him more than once to face the problems courageously. As with the Christian behavior and activity guidelines, Paul exhorts in all three concerning false teachers and other sundry admonitions.

The more pronounced exposure of Paul's character and personality is in the Epistles to Timothy. Personal details come to light in Second Timothy which expose Paul's closing days. The cloak and parchments were precious to Paul, so he asked for them to be collected. It is clear that Paul felt this could possibly be his last communication with the

brother he loved so dearly. Paul's outlook on the end of his earthly race is especially enlightening.

XV. THE FIRST EPISTLE TO TIMOTHY

A. Introduction

The letters, addressed to Timothy and Titus are known as "The Pastoral Epistles" since the subject matter deals with the life and work of the pastor of the local church. The pastor is the shepherd of the flock.

B. To whom was it written?

Timothy, a name that is said to mean "honoring to God," was possibly not only the most intimate, but the best-loved disciple and friend of the Apostle Paul. His mother was a Jewess, his father a Greek (Ac.16:1) and he had a godly grandmother "Lois" who had a great influence on his young life (2Ti.1:5; 3:14-15). Paul met the family on his first missionary journey when at Lystra, and after leading Timothy to the Lord, looked upon him as "his son in the faith" (1Ti.1:2).

On his second missionary journey, on receiving a good report of Timothy's life and character, Paul chose him as companion in the Gospel ministry (Ac.16:1-3). In his last years Paul wrote to Timothy these two personal letters and it was Timothy that Paul wanted by his side when he was drawing near the end of his course (2Ti.4:9,13).

C. When was it written?

Since the ministry of Paul in the Book of Acts ends with imprisonment in Rome for two years (Ac.28:30) and he was anticipating release (Php.1:26; 2:24; Phl.22), we are led to believe that Paul was granted release, and after a period of freedom was again imprisoned, suffering a martyr's death.

During the period of freedom, Paul wrote this First Epistle to Timothy, possibly from Macedonia (1:3) while on his way to Nicapolis (note Titus 3:12). Timothy was in Ephesus (1:3) where Paul anticipated seeing him (3:14-15; 4:13). This would give a probable date of A.D. 64-65.

D. The Purpose and Message of the Book

These personal letters to Timothy are a "charge" concerned with instruction regarding the opportunities for service and the responsibilities and duties of a true minister in the Church of Jesus Christ.

Paul knew that his end was near, and false teachers were spreading error, so now, with a twofold objective, Paul must both warn again those who would pervert the Gospel, and encourage Timothy and all ministers of truth to live a holy life which alone can give power to the message (1Ti.3:15; 4:12).

In the First Epistle, Timothy is exhorted to remain true to the teaching he has received (1Ti.1:3), guarding it against false teachers (1Ti.1:4-20), to be much in prayer, to keep his life above reproach and to instruct women in their conduct and approach to life (1Ti.2:4-15). He is to set forth the qualifications of bishops and deacons and their wives and see that the truth is made applicable to old and young with special instruction to widows, rebuking sin whenever it is found (chapters 4 and 5). Timothy's personal life, in all its relationships, must be above reproach, guarding the truth which has been entrusted to him (1Ti.6:1-21).

XVI. THE SECOND EPISTLE TO TIMOTHY

A. The Occasion of the Epistle

This personal and touching letter was written by the Apostle Paul shortly before his martyrdom. It was a death which he suffered for the sake of the Lord he so dearly loved, and was the veritable seal of the Apostle's life, conviction, and testimony (2Ti.4:6-8).

The letter was written from Rome about A.D.67 during Paul's second imprisonment. The second imprisonment was far different from the first. During his first imprisonment, he was in his own hired, rented house (Ac.28:20) expecting release (Php.1:26; 2:24 with Phl.22). Now he is confined to the dark solitude of a dungeon-like prison to die (2Ti.4:6). In this second (2nd) imprisonment, Paul has no comforts and feels the effect of the isolation. Paul is older; he feels the approach of winter (2Ti.4:21), telling Timothy not to forget his cloak if he should come to visit him (2Ti.4:13). Fellowships were rare, many of his former friends are afraid to identify themselves with him, fearing persecution, yet he needed companionship now more than ever. What a good thing it was that Dr. Luke was with him at this time (2Ti.4:11), but he longed also for his precious books and parchments (2Ti.4:13).

Paul has a great longing to see Timothy (2Ti.1:4), but since life is uncertain and he knows not whether he will see him before his death, he writes to him this final word with deep feeling and appeal. The warning Paul gives him is about the heresies springing up, exhorting him to be patient in trial, sound in doctrine, zealous in the work, and to be faithful under all circumstances. Paul is eager that Timothy prove himself a worthy minister of Jesus Christ and be true to the trust laid upon him. As Paul gives his own testimony, the Epistle becomes rich with the triumph of the grace of God in his life over all the opposition of the enemy.

B. The Message and Purpose of the Book

This Epistle is addressed "*To Timothy, my dearly beloved son,*" reveals the deep affection of Paul for his son by faith. Since this is the last Epistle Paul wrote, one can feel the deep concern that is upon his heart in his message. There are references to 23 individuals and the very heartthrob of this man of God can be felt in the mention of their names.

The Apostle Paul has lived to see first a response and then a turning away from the truth (2Ti.1:15), and he is suffering for the testimony of his Lord (2Ti.2:9; 3:10-12. Apostasy is setting in, times of declension have come, things are getting worse instead of better, and it is with brokenhearted appeal that the Apostle writes this last letter, giving his final word for his Lord to Timothy, his son in the faith.

Paul exhorted Timothy to be willing to suffer persecution for Christ's sake and endure afflictions (2Ti.1:8; 4:5) and no matter what comes, "*hold fast*" to the truth (2Ti.1:13). "*Be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus*" (2Ti.2:1) and "*continue*" in faith (2Ti.3:14). He also tells Timothy to seek out men that are faithful, committing to them the truth and sending them out to preach to others (2Ti.2:2), reminding them of the fact that suffering for Christ's sake will not be without its reward (2Ti.2:11-12).

Paul stresses the point that the life and conduct of the Christian must in all things be above reproach. Testimony and walk, truth and conduct, must ever go hand in hand; the life must be the very driving force of the uttered word.

XVII. THE EPISTLE TO TITUS

A. Introduction

This letter to Titus was written by Paul before II Timothy, the last of Paul's Epistles, and falls in the period between the first and second imprisonment giving a probable date 64-65.

B. To Whom Written

Titus was a Gentile and converted to the Lord by the Apostle Paul who refers to him as "*mine own son after the common faith*" (Ti.1:4). Paul took Titus with him to the Council of Jerusalem when he stood up to defend his Gentile ministry (Ac.chp.15; Ga.2:1-3, 16).

On the third missionary journey Titus was sent to Corinth to find out the response and effect of Paul's letter to that church (2Co.2:12-13; 8:23, 24). Titus met the Apostle in Macedonia with news both of comfort and deep concern; note the outline of II Corinthians.

From this Epistle we learn that Titus was left in Crete (Ti.1:5) to minister to the Believers and deal with trouble that had arisen there. His background experience at Corinth fitted him for

this task. References to Titus show him to be a strong, enthusiastic character, very practical, sound in judgment, and discrete.

C. The Purpose and Message of the Book

This letter carries mainly the same general emphasis found in I Timothy, dealing with church order and organization but also carries with it a strong word of warning. A noteworthy feature is the reference to the return of the Lord (Ti.2:11-15).

Here Paul sets forth the qualifications of an elder (Ti.1:5-9). He counsels Titus concerning warning and rebuking the unruly (Ti.1:10-16), concerning conduct of aged men and women, young men and women, servants and Believers in general (Ti.chp.2). The Paul goes on to Christian conduct in relation to civil and social life (Ti.3:1-8), warning against heresy (Ti.3:9-11) and a conclusion dealing with some personal matters (Ti.3:12-15).

The outstanding passage is Chapter 2:11-14. This is a tremendous passage of Scripture, setting forth Redemption, past, present, and future. There is a revelation of all that has been accomplished for us by the death of Jesus Christ and how Salvation shall be consummated by the blessed hope of Christ's coming glory.

D. The Church at Crete

Crete is a large island in the Mediterranean. The Cretans must have presented a great challenge to any minister, for they had a bad reputation. Even a prophet of their own said "*Cretans are always liars evil beasts, and lazy gluttons*" (Ti.1:12) and "creticizing" was synonymous with "lying."

How Christianity got to the island and the Church was established we do not know except, that on the Day of Pentecost, Cretans heard the message of Peter (Ac.1:11). Some must have believed and carried the message back to the people. After being released from prison, Paul visited Crete (Ti.1:5) and left Titus there to minister to the people.

XVIII. THE EPISTLE TO PHILEMON

A. Introduction

Someone has said that even in the most famous art galleries there is always a space for choice miniatures. This little Epistle is a priceless gem. It has been given a place among the greatest of all writings even in the inspired Word of the Living God, the Bible.

The shortest of all Paul's letters, the most personal letter from his pen, is a masterpiece of Christian courtesy and intercession. A man of God states, "In every line and syllable, this note betrays Paul's personality. Nothing more genuine was ever written." This letter to

Philemon is classified as one of the "Prison Epistles" along with Colossians, Philippians, and Ephesians, note verses 9, 10, 13.

It is important to know the debased position of a slave under Roman law and the master-versus-slave situation Paul is dealing with. Then one can realize that only the Holy Spirit could move upon Paul to deal so thoroughly and tactfully with such a sensitive approach, so that the basis of appeal is sound, just, and Christian.

B. The Purpose and the Message of the Letter

The letter is addressed to Philemon, the master of Onesimus, including Apphia (probably Philemon's wife), and Archippus, a fellow minister who is thought to be the son of Philemon. The church in Philemon's house is also mentioned, since the personal appeal made to Philemon has in it a practical application for all. From verse 19 we gather that Philemon was converted under Paul's ministry.

Onesimus was a slave of Philemon, who had apparently run away to Rome. In Rome Onesimus finds Paul, while he is in jail, and becomes converted. Paul would have kept Onesimus, with him but Roman law demanded he be returned to his rightful master.

This letter from Paul captivately and persuasively pleads the cause of the slave, with the added note that any indebtedness incurred could be charged to Paul, and he would settle the account (v.18) *"If he hath wronged thee or oweth thee ought, put that on mine account."*

C. Application

In illustration, this letter is the crystallization of the story of redeeming love, giving the meaning of Calvary in a way we can all understand. As Paul was willing to bear the indebtedness of Onesimus saying *"put that on mine account,"* so the Lord Jesus has done this for every penitent Believer. On the cross Christ settled our indebtedness, all our sin has been charged to His account. "Jesus paid it all." As in verse 17, Paul says to Philemon of Onesimus *"receive him as myself,"* so for Christ's sake the father forgives and receives us and we are *"accepted in the beloved"* (Ep.1:6).

D. Contents

1. Paul salutes both Philemon and the church which meets in his house (Phl.1-3);
2. Paul thanks God for Philemon, while praying for him (Phl.4-7);
3. Paul gets to the point, tactfully requesting the receiving of Onesimus:

- a. Though Onesimus name means "profitable," he had been anything but, having run away, though he was now a "*bond-slave*," having been converted (Phl.8-13);
 - b. Paul would not presuppose to keep Onesimus without Philemon's consent. So, Paul feels that the temporary departure from Philemon will result in a new relationship between him and Onesimus (Phl.14-16).
4. Place it on my account (Phl.17-19);

Paul appeals to Philemon to "*place on my account*" any wrong Onesimus has committed against him. Then Paul clinches his statement with the reminder that Philemon actually owes his spiritual life in Christ to Paul.

5. Changed attitude of Onesimus;

Paul speaks of his confidence in Onesimus submission to Philemon, and then requests lodging for himself (Phl.20-22). Finally, Paul's companions greet Philemon, and the Epistle concludes (Phl.23-25).

XIX. THE EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS

A. Introduction

Of all the books in the Bible that focus our attention on the person and work of Jesus Christ, revealing Him to be the "key" to the Scriptures, this Epistle is undoubtedly the greatest and most important. If Christ had not come, the New Testament would not exist. Outside of Jesus Christ, there is no reason or explanation for the Word of God.

This Epistle deals specifically with the relationship of the Old Testament Scriptures to the New Testament revelation and is the unifier of both.

B. The Writer

There is no question whatsoever as to the authorship of this book. Its canonicity is beyond question and definitely established. God Himself is the author and the message was given under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. The authenticity and inspiration of this Book has never been questioned.

To the certainty of the human writer, many options have been expressed suggesting a person other than Paul, including Luke, Apollos, Barnabas, Philip and even Priscilla. Much valuable time could be spent looking into the various theories regarding the human instrument God used to write this Epistle; that is not the purpose of this outline. The writer is not mentioned by name and may be unknown to us, however, he was well known to his

readers (He.13:18-25). Because of the mentioned association with Timothy and anticipation of being "restored" and seeing his readers once again, many conservative Bible scholars felt that this fits in with similar situations in the Pauline letters regarding Paul's imprisonment, release and anticipation of seeing again those to whom he writes (He.10:34; 13:23).

C. To whom was it written?

This Epistle is clearly addressed to Hebrew Christians. The whole argument of the book is concluded against the background of Old Testament Judaism and the Levitical economy. The appeal is to those who had this Old Testament religious background to leave it for the provision of God in Christ. Gentiles are not mentioned once on this book.

D. The Time

It is evident from the Epistle that Jerusalem was still standing and the priests and Levitical service still maintained. We gather from this that the Epistle was written before the outbreak of the Jewish persecution and the Jewish revolts which culminated with the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple by the armies of Titus in A.D. 70. This would give us a probable date of 65 or 66 A.D.

E. The Purpose of the Epistle

The purpose is definite: to lead Hebrew Christians from Judaism into Christianity, but showing Jesus Christ superior to all that preceded Him. They must be made to see the all-eclipsing divine glory of Christ Himself, to the complete exclusion of all that pointed to Him.

The tremendous issue which is so adequately met and thoroughly dealt with is this: are the observances of the Old Testament Mosaic system, the sacrifices, rites and ceremonies still binding upon New Testament Believers? The answer is a definite no. Christ Himself has fulfilled and become the reality, the embodiment of all these outward religious symbols and representations, thereby rendering obsolete all these foreshadowing Old Testament ordinances which pointed to Him. In Jesus Christ the old economy is abolished, and no longer necessary, because it made perfect "but the bringing in of a better hope did" (He.7:19; 9:14).

F. Key Words

Revealing the character are the words of the Epistle, as these words were used: Better = 13 times; Perfect, perfection, perfected = 12 times; Eternal, everlasting, forever, evermore = 17 times; Heaven, heavens, heavenly = 16 times; Partakers = 6 times.

G. Purpose

A correct interpretation of Hebrews requires a discussion of the writer's aim. Many different opinions have been expressed. We will summarize them only. However, we should note that the author describes his own work as "my word of exhortation" (Gr. *"par'aklesis,"* He.13:22). He is referring here to the whole work, so we can see that it is not intended primarily as a theological writing, but as practical exhortation. Keeping this in mind, we can see that the passages of exhortation are not just inserted, but are actually essential to the purpose of the book. Thus we can see that the purpose includes:

1. Warnings against apostasy;

Chapters six and ten are couched in strong language, warning about a serious situation. The most generally accepted interpretation is that the readers were on the point of returning to Judaism. The glories of Judaism may have appeared in striking contrast to the absence of such external glories in Christianity. All of Hebrews sets forth the superiority of Christianity over the old religious order, thus Hebrews is well designed to offset any desire to return to Judaism.

2. To encourage the evangelization of the world;

Some have agreed that the readers were indeed Jewish Christians, but felt that the threat to these Christians was a failure to recognize that Christianity was universal in its appeal. Thus, the writers aim, according to this thought, is showing the universal truths of Christianity were far more important than the restricted Jewish religious system.

3. To set forth the absolute character of Christianity;

It could be argued, if the readers were mainly Gentiles, that the purpose of Hebrews was to show that Christianity is superior to all other religions. Perhaps the readers were being influenced by speculative Judaism. The elaborateness of the argument from Biblical material could hardly have been aimed at a Gentile Christian who was already convinced of the absolute character of his new faith.

4. To counteract a heresy;

The thought of some, is that a form of Gnosticism of a Jewish type is being refuted in this Epistle. Perhaps it was a sect of Jewish Gnostics who were attempting to get some Christians to apostatize to their views. Even, perhaps the Colossian heresy was in the writers mind. It is quite possible that the Colossian heresy was not just at Colosse, but a widespread heresy.

H. Outline

Keynote = "Better"

Subject = The Superiority of Christ	Chapter
I. Christ Superior to the Prophets (Seven-fold Superiority)	1:1-3
II. Christ Superior to Angels (Seven-fold Superiority) Parenthetical warning against Neglect and drifting	1:4-2:18 2:1-4
III. Christ Superior to Moses and Joshua Parenthetical warning against falling short by unbelief	3:1-4:13 3:7-4:13
IV. Christ Superior to Aaronic Priesthood Parenthetical warning against deaf ears and apostasy	4:14-7:28 5:16-6:20
V. Christ--His Superior New Covenant	8:1-10:18
VI. Christ--His Superior way to victorious living Parenthetical warning against Deliberate Sin Indifference to Heavenly things	10:19-12:29 10:26-39 12:15-29
VII. Conclusion and Benediction Warning against strange doctrine	13:1-25 13:9

XX. THE EPISTLE OF JAMES

A. Introduction

The Epistle of James is the first in a group of seven called "The General Epistles." These Epistles are so designated because they were not addressed to any particular individual or church, but to Christians in general. This group consists of James, I and II Peter, I, II, III, John and Jude.

In the Old Greek manuscripts these general Epistles follow Acts, but in our present day Bibles they are the last seven books before Revelation.

B. The Writer

The Epistle of James begins with "James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ" (Ja.1:1). This James is traditionally identified with James, the half-brother of our Lord (Mt.13:55; Mk.6:3).

The name "James" is found about 40 times in the New Testament relating to three different persons:

1. James the son of Zebedee and brother of John the Apostle;
2. James the son of Alphaeus called James the "less";
3. James the brother of our Lord (Mt.13:55; Mk.6:3).

The first of these was one of the Apostles and probably beheaded by a sword, at Herod's direction (Ac.12:1,2). This James was not the writer of this Epistle. James the son of Alphaeus was also one of the disciples (Mt.10:3) but rarely heard from. The only prominent person of this name and who is brought to our attention by Paul in Galatians 1:19, is James the Lord's brother, a pillar in the early church (Ga.2:9) and one who assumed leadership upon Peter's departure from Jerusalem (Ac.15:13-29). The last mention of him is in Acts 21:18. It must be remembered that the brothers of Jesus did not believe in Him during His beginning ministry (Mk.3:21, 31-35; Jn.7:3-9). But, after the crucifixion, resurrection, and ascension, we find them gathered in the upper room in Jerusalem praying and waiting for the promised Holy Spirit (Ac.1:13, 14). After this James is seen occupying a prominent place in the Early Church. This James, the brother of our Lord, is the one most Bible students credited with the writing of this Epistle.

C. To whom was it written?

The opening verse indicates (Ja.1:1) that this Epistle was written *"to the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad"*, which possibly refers to Jewish converts. It is true that a Jewish emphasis is seen throughout the Book. In this, the Epistle is like the Epistle to the Hebrews, but the application of truth is for Christians everywhere.

D. The Purpose of the Epistle

The early Christians suffered much for their identification with Christ. This Epistle encourages Christians who are being persecuted to be patient, endure, and look to the Lord in their time of trial. The Epistle makes it plain that a Christian should anticipate testing and suffering. These experiences come by God's permission and they are designated to test one's faith; but precious promises are given, showing that to overcome brings great reward (Ja.1:12). Thus, God makes our trials instruments of blessing.

E. The Character of the Epistle

The strong ethical teaching that characterizes the Epistle gives it a resemblance to the New Testament Sermon on the Mount and also The Book of Proverbs in the Old Testament.

The outstanding emphasis of the Epistle is seen in this, "*that faith without works is dead*" (Ja.2:20). A living, genuine faith always finds expression. Faith that is genuine cannot possibly be a dead or dormant thing, but out of necessity must produce. If one is barren of good works, we must conclude that in such a life genuine faith does not exist. Faith must be shown to be known. While it is true that Paul emphasizes faith and James works, there is no conflict between faith and works. The two go hand-in-hand and complement each other. James applies this teaching to every department of life.

F. The Time of Writing

Many Bible students believe that this Epistle was written quite early. Some place it first among the Epistles, possibly A.D. 45, because it reflects the severe trials of the Church in its beginning (Ja.1:2, 12; 5:10,11,13). Others using the same argument of trial give a late date to the Epistle nearer the persecution that preceded the downfall of Jerusalem. We shall see that Peter, who dwells much on the subject of suffering in his Epistles, deals with this problem referring to this later period.

G. Theological Themes

James is the least dogmatic Book of the New Testament. The great theological themes that are the hallmark of the Pauline Epistles and other New Testament Books are not to be found here. He makes no mention of the incarnation, and the name of Christ appears only twice (Ja.1:1; 2:1). Also, there is no mention of Christ's sufferings, death, or resurrection. However, there is great emphasis on the practical aspects of Christianity.

Another feature of the content of the Epistle is its Judaic flavor. Religious attitudes of Rabbinical Judaism would in most respects sum up the fundamental ideas of the Epistle of James. The distinctive Christian features of course remain; so James has "baptized" these rabbinical ideas into Christ. The outstanding theological themes of the Epistle are:

1. Trials;

These are typically Jewish teachings, namely:

- a. Joy in trials;
- b. The use of trials to build and perfect the character (Ja.1:2-4).

James also covers the origination of temptation. This reflects contemporary Jewish Theology.

2. Law;

The concept of Law shown here shows the transitional nature to the Epistle. It is concerned with ethics (Gr. "*didache*"), not proclaiming (Gr. "*kerygma*"). So, Christianity is presented with great emphasis on its ethical teachings as a perfect law, a law of freedom and of a royal or kingly law. James seems to be reassuring the Jewish Christian readers that there is still Law, though by the "Law," he does not mean the same thing as a non-Christian might understand by that term. Thus, he baptizes this concept into Christ. James proclaims it as a perfect law (Ja.1:25), and a "*law of freedom*."

3. Faith and works;

Faith, as James sees it is the basic element of piety (Ja.1:3; 2:5). It is the belief in God, not just His existence, but in His character as being good and benevolent in His relations with people (Ja.1:6, 13). Faith according to James includes belief in the power of God, in His ability to perform miraculous acts, and is closely associated with prayer (Ja.5:15f; 1:6). James has a dynamic concept of faith. Together they clearly show his contact with Judaism. However, James goes beyond Judaism to speaking of faith directed toward the Lord Jesus Christ (Ja.2:1).

4. Wisdom;

A basic Jewish tone to the Epistle is James treatment of wisdom. Wisdom is not necessarily philosophical, but practical. Reasoning power or the ability to apprehend intellectual problems is not identified with. It is not "why" or "how," it is by earnest prayer, a gift from God (Ja.1:5). These ideas find their roots in the wisdom literature (Pr.2:6).

5. Eschatology;

James brings forth three eschatological themes:

- a. Kingdom of God; Mention of the kingdom of God grows out of the discussion of partiality (Ja.2:1-7). James admonishes no partiality to be shown to the rich, which echoes Christ's teaching;
- b. Judgment; The dominant eschatological theme of James' Epistle;

Christians are exhorted to speak and act as those who are judged under the "*law of liberty*" (Ja.2:12). Thus James is communicating the thought that judgment will

be administered on the basis of works. He also addresses teachers and reminds them that the privilege of being a teacher requires more of them, and is a basis for judgment.

- c. *Parousia*; The hope of the soon return is at hand, a great stimulus for the right kind of Christian living that James exhorts the Christian to live. Suffering and trial is to be endured, for His return is near at hand (Ja.5:8). The expectancy of His return is powerful, reminding us of the eschatological tenor of the Thessalonian letters.

H. Outline

I. Introduction	1:1
II. The Testing of Faith	1:2-27
III. The Working of Faith	2:1-26
III. The Wisdom of Faith	3:1-18
IV. The Nature of Faith	4:1-17
V. The Victory of Faith	5:1-18
VI. Conclusion	5:19-20

XXI. THE EPISTLES OF PETER

A. The Writer - First Peter

As we study the movement of our Lord in the Gospels, we soon become aware of the inner circle called into fellowship in the more intimate, unusual experiences of His life. These Apostles of the inner circle were Peter, James and John.

Simon Peter was a fisherman of Bethsaida near the Sea of Galilee (Jn.1:44). He was married (Mt.8:14) and Andrew his younger brother brought him to Jesus who revealed to him that though unstable to begin with, he would one day be Peter the rock (Jn.1:40-42). Peter was one of the first four to be called into discipleship, to become a fisher of men (Mt.4:18-20; Mk.1:16-20), and later was made one of the twelve Apostles (Lk.6:13-16).

Peter was the first of the Apostles to confess that Jesus was the Son of God (Mt.16:16), first to deny Him (Mt.26:29-75), and the first of the Apostles to enter the empty tomb (Jn.20:1-6). The risen Christ, in a special message to the disciples, mentioned him by name (Mk.16:7), and appeared to him personally (Lk.24:24; 1Co.15:5). After the ascension, Peter took the

lead among the disciples in the ten days of waiting before Pentecost for the coming of the promised Holy Spirit. On the day of Pentecost, when the Church was born, it was Peter who stood up and both explained and interpreted the event (Ac.chp.2). Peter was the leader of the early Church and under God opened the door of the Gospel to the Gentiles (Ac.chp.10).

After the Council at Jerusalem in Acts 15 Peter is not mentioned again in the Acts and other references are few except for these two (2) Epistle (1Co.1:12; 9:5; Ga.1:18; 2:9,11). He suffered a martyr's death in 67 or 68 A.D.

B. When and where was it written?

From the content of these Epistles it seems almost certain that Peter wrote these Epistles from Rome during the persecution under Nero (after A.D. 64).

1 Peter 5:12 reveals that Silvanus was the recording scribe, probably the same as Silas in the Book of Acts (chapter 15-18) and called Silvanus in Paul's Epistles (2Co.1:19; 1Th.1:1; 2Th.1:1).

C. To whom was it written?

The opening verse states that the letter is to "*the strangers scattered abroad.*" These were "*the exiles of the Dispersion*" scattered over a wide area in Asia composed of both Jews and Gentiles, giving an application of truth to all Christians under trial and testing everywhere.

D. Key Word

The key word is "suffering," which occurs some 15 times in the Epistle, and determined the purpose of the Epistle, which is to give victory and hope during or in spite of suffering. In this, Peter has been called the Apostle of hope. The word "*precious*" gives seven precious things is worthy of note (1Pe.1:7,19; 2:4,6,7; 2Pe.1:1,4).

E. The Purpose and Message of the Epistle

When this Epistle was written, the Christians were suffering terrible persecution with more to come, and these conditions are reflected in the Epistle. Peter in dealing with these trying situations seeks to comfort and strengthen the oppressed, encourage faith, inspire hope and exhort patience. With this purpose in mind, attention is focused upon Christ, the Lord, mighty to save, and a victorious Lord in sufferings. "*For hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example that ye should follow his steps*" (1Pe.2:21).

Victory is suffering bring praise glory, and honor (1Pe.1:7), when we suffer for righteousness sake we can rejoice (1Pe.3:14). Christ is our example (1Pe.2:21; 4:1). Partaking of Christ's suffering "*according to the will be rewarded with exceeding joy at His coming*" (1Pe.4:12-

14). Suffering "*according to the will of God*" can be accepted by committing all to Him (1Pe.4:19). By grace of God suffering need not detract but "*make you perfect, establish, strengthen, settle you*" (1Pe.5:10). For encouragement, comfort, consolation and strength in suffering this Epistle has no equal. In all things we can be "*kept by the power of God*" (1Pe.1:5).

F. Theological Themes

If we take it in the strictest sense of teaching about God, First Peter is a document as theological as any in the New Testament. Peter's mind begins and constantly returns to the thought of God as Creator, Father, and Judge. It is on the One whose will determines all that will come to pass, shaping the destinies and determining the actions of those whom He has chosen as His own. It is the same God who supports and sustains them through their sufferings, which He uses to test them, and who will at last vindicate them and reward them eternally.

G. Outline

- | | |
|----------------------------------------------------|-----------|
| I. Salutation | 1:1-2 |
| II. Christian Conduct and Suffering | 1:3-2:20 |
| III. Christ the Believer's Example
in Suffering | 2:11-4:19 |
| IV. Service and Suffering | 5:1-11 |
| V. Conclusion | 5:12-14 |

H. Introduction - Second Peter

The writer of this Epistle identifies himself as Simon Peter (2Pe.1:1) and refers to a previous letter (2Pe.3:1) which we believe is I Peter, and from which we learn to whom the Epistles were written (1Pe.1:1). It will be noted that these two Epistles bring to our attention some of the same subject matter. Note the references to the end of the age (1Pe.1:5; 4:7 with 2Pe.3:3-10); predictive prophecy (1Pe.1:10-12 with 2Pe.1:19-20; 3:2); Noah and the flood (1Pe.3:20 with 2Pe.2:5 and 3:6); Christian liberty (1Pe.2:16 with 2Pe.2:19); called of God to show forth His glory and praise (1Pe.2:9 with 2Pe.1:3).

I. When was it written?

In this second Epistle, Peter speaks of the nearness of his death (2Pe.1:13-15) according to a previous declaration given by Christ (Jn.21:18-19). It must have been written when the

persecution of Christians was increasing after A.D. 64 and before the downfall of Jerusalem, A.D. 70.

J. Key Word

The key word of this Epistle is "*knowledge*" which occurs some 12 times in its various forms (2Pe.) 1:2,3,5,6,8,16,20; 2:20,21; 3:3,17,18 and is related to the Believer's spiritual life, perils and hope.

K. The Purpose of the Letter

The first word of this Epistle was designed to comfort and encourage Christians under trial and persecution. The second Epistle had the purpose of warning against false teachers and their corruptible ways. Darkness is to be met with the lamp of truth. Peter seeks to offset the false teaching of his day with the true knowledge of the Word of God given under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. He exhorts his readers to remember the things they have been taught and have received that they might be established in the truth (2Pe. 1:12,13; 3:1). To forget these foundational truths is to be exposed to grave danger (2Pe. 1:9; 3:8).

Peter states that it is essential for us to know that the Word of God is foundational because it came not "*by will of man,*" but "*by the Holy Spirit*" (2Pe. 1:20,21). He also makes it quite plain that the false teachers will come into judgment (2Pe. 2:1, 20), and the same fate can be expected by those who follow them (2Pe. 2:4-22). The second coming of Christ and "*the Day of the Lord*" will be a Day of Judgment for scoffers who deny the truth of this event, but the realization of God's purpose for the Believer. "*Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness*" (2Pe. chp.3).

L. Contents

1. Words of greeting;

Peter writes as an Apostle to those who have come to share the faith of an Apostle.

2. Things necessary for life and Godliness;

Peter speaks of eight virtues. These virtues begin with Divine power, and end with participation in the Divine nature.

3. Guarantees of the promises;

The exhortations and promises are what is already known by the readers. It comes from the unique authority of one who is about to die, and from one who has seen the

transfigured Christ; prophetic words as the utterances of the prophets of the Old Testament.

4. Warnings against false teachers;

Peter warns of the false teachers and false prophets who will invade the Church. They will be punished (2Pe.2:3), giving as an example the evil angels, the generation that died in the flood, and the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah.

5. Vindication of God's promise;

The teachings that the Believers had received were to be held onto in the face of specific threats. Heretics will scoff at the "*blessed hope*," not remembering the reason of the flood. They do not take into consideration the difference of God's timetable and mans. Therefore, Peter counsels us to faithfully await the sure fulfillment of God's promise.

XXII. THE EPISTLES OF JOHN

A. The Writer - First John

The writer of this Epistle is not mentioned by name, or is those to whom it is written. From earliest times no other name but John has been accepted as the writer. Internal evidence reveals the writer as an eyewitness of the person of the ministry of the Lord Jesus (1Jn.1:1-3). The strong similarity to the Gospel of John leaves us in no doubt that the writer of the Gospel, these three Epistles and Revelation is one and the same person, our Lord's cousin, John the Apostle, the son of Zebedee and brother of James. Note the outline of John for a background understanding of John and this Epistle.

B. When and where was it written?

It is generally accepted that since John resided in Ephesus, the Epistle was written from there, and is looked upon many as the last writing of the aged Apostle, A.D. 90 or later. In this respect it is the last written message to the Church from the last surviving of the 12 Apostles.

C. For whom was it written?

This is a general letter to Christians everywhere. John is in his declining years and as an aged servant of the Lord Jesus refers to his children as "*little children*" (1Jn.2:1, 12, 28; 3:7,18; 4:4; 5:21). With warm intimate tones he shows concern as he addresses them as "*brethren*" (1Jn.3:13) and "*beloved*" (1Jn.3:2, 21; 4:1,7,11). He also intimately associates himself with his readers by the familiar use of "you" and "we".

D. The Purpose and Message of the Book

The purpose of John's Gospel is very definite, *"That ye may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing ye may have life in His name of the Son of God"* (1Jn.5:13). Christ is the focal point of both books and in the provision of God our only source of life.

The Gospel in unmistakable language reveals Jesus as God incarnate, God manifest in the flesh; He was the God-man. The emphasis of the Epistle is to show that Jesus in the flesh was truly God in human form. How necessary this emphasis was, is seen in striking passages of Scripture given to combat the false teaching and errors that were causing trouble in the early Church.

Gnosticism (note the Colossian heresy), which stressed the conflict between spirit and matter, declaring that only the spirit was the good and matter was evil, was working its way into the early Church. It stated that the body of Jesus could not possibly be a manifestation of God or God incarnate. They denied the reality of Christ's humanity, thus denying His Deity. In the light of this false teaching the emphatic statements of John on this subject take on a new significance (1Jn.1:1-3; 2:22-23; 4:1-3,14,15; 5:1, 20).

E. Character and Content

This Book deals with some of the deepest realities of the spiritual life and is rich in its topical teaching, giving to us some outstanding key words. Various outlines of the book can be made out of the emphasis we give to specific words. Such words as *"light," "love," "life," "believe," "know,"* and *"fellowship,"* are found in varying frequently throughout the book. Light, love and life seem to have the greatest emphasis.

1. God is Light (1Jn.1:5);

This speaks of God's holiness as opposed to the darkness of sin and death, and the only basis for fellowship in the light is the blood of Christ (1Jn.1:7).

2. God is Love (1Jn.4:8);

Not only loving, but "love," who can sound its depths? This is the love that is shed abroad in our hearts and enables us to love one another (1Jn.3:11, 14, 23; 4:7, 11, 12, 21).

3. God is Life;

"This is the true God and eternal life" (1Jn.5:20). The only explanatory statement necessary under this topic is "And this is the record that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life" (1Jn.5:11, 12).

4. Fellowship;

This is an Epistle of fellowship, and it is readily seen how light, loves, know, and believe are all pointing fingers to a realization of true spiritual fellowship. *"Truly our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son, Jesus Christ" (1Jn.1:3).* This is the very benediction of fellowship. One of the greatest passages in the Bible relative to the condition for fellowship is I John 1:7.

5. Antichrist;

John makes it plain that in the future a person known as the Antichrist will appear on the scene (1Jn.2:18). But he also stresses the fact that an anti-Christian spirit of opposition to Christ, His Deity, person and work will deceive many. To offset with truth this working of Satan, he plainly warns against this antichrist spirit (1Jn.2:22; 4:3; 2Jn.7)

6. Contrasts;

One is impressed with the phrases showing marked contrast such as love and hate; light and darkness; life and death; truth and falsehood; flesh and spirit; sin and righteousness; children of God and children of the wicked (1Jn.1:6,7; 2:4, 5, 10, 17, 22, 23; 3:10, 18; 4:2, 3, 20; 5:12).

7. Conclusive Statements;

The statements of John show no suggestion of compromise. They are marked by a strong finality, leaving it unnecessary to make further explanation on the subject. This makes for positive assurance such as *"we know"* and *"hereby do we know that we know Him"* (1Jn.2:3). This is not presumption but confidence and authority in the use of God's revealed truth.

F. Crisis situation

John was written to address the situation with false teachers who had already seceded from the Church, but their teachings were still affecting the Church. John felt it necessary to write a statement of the apostolic faith for his friends, showing them the distortion of the false teaching.

These teachings seem to be the forerunners to the heretics who were responsible for the development of Gnosticism during the second century.

1. Deeper knowledge;

These false teachers saw themselves as superior to the ordinary Christian, having a "deeper knowledge" than the ordinary.

2. The content of this "deeper knowledge" is uncertain;

However, we find that they denied that Jesus was the Christ (1Jn.2:22), that He was the preexistent Son of God (1Jn.1:2; 4:15; 5:5, 10), who had come in the flesh (1Jn.4:2; 2Jn.1:7), to be the Savior of the world (1Jn.4:9f, 14). So, they actually rejected the basic Christian doctrine of the Incarnation and also, apparently, the Doctrine of the Atonement.

3. Sinless teachers;

These doctrinal views led to some strange teachings about the Christian life. The false teachers claimed they were "sinless" (1Jn.1:8, 10), probably because they felt they did not need the blood of Jesus Christ.

G. The Writer, Time and Place - Second John

In this second as well as the third letter, John calls himself "*the elder*" (2Jn.1; 3Jn.1). Similarity in style and content leave no doubt as to the common authorship of all three Epistles which must have been written at approximately the same time, A.D. 90 or later and from the same place, the city of Ephesus.

H. To Whom Written

This second Epistle is addressed to an "*elect lady and her children.*" This is the only book in the Bible written directly to a woman and is a sample of the personal correspondence of John as he writes to a Christian mother. There is also the thought that this is a veiled manner of addressing the Church.

I. Character and Content

This is a brief letter of affectionate greeting and warning regarding the spiritual welfare of a Christian mother. The emphasis of the letter is on "*truth,*" mentioned five times, which alone can stabilize the Christian in his walk, and enable him to counteract the ruinous effects of false teaching. John's statement about love for the truth and the exhortation that we should "*walk in love*" shows how necessary and basic are both truth and love.

J. Contents

Though closely related to First John in situation and content, the tone of Second John is much more personal, with practicality also seen as important. Though some scholars think an actual family is being written to, there can be little doubt that it is a cryptic manner of addressing the Church (1Pe.5:13). The whole matter of the address may have been to baffle any hostile person who might have intercepted the letter. It could also be that the word "*elder*" is the addressing of a church that John did not himself found.

K. To Whom Written - Third John

This third Epistle is addressed to Gaius. Since others of the same name are mentioned in the New Testament (Ac.19:29; 20:4; Ro.16:23; 1Co.1:14), and no specific reference is given to guide us, we cannot identify him.

John must have held Gaius in high esteem; note the first verse, "The elder unto the well beloved Gaius whom I love in the truth." Like the second Letter, this is genuinely personal and Gaius seems to have been a recognized leader in a church. Gaius is warmly commended for his loyalty to the truth, seen in the quality of his character.

L. Character and Content

The opening verses are words of encouragement and commendation for Gaius in the hospitality he had expressed, an open door offered to both "brethren and to strangers" (3Jn.5-6). It is a private letter to an individual and deals more with ecclesiastical problems. In particular, in an age when many Christian preachers traveled from church to church and were very dependent upon local hospitality, he is commended for looking after such preachers; by helping those who went out trusting in God, so he has made himself a fellow helper of and with the truth.

The name of Diotrephes is referred to as one in need of discipline because of his proud spirit "who loveth to have the preeminence" (3Jn.9), assuming authority not delegated to him, and casting out of the Church those who would not recognize him. He lacked the spirit of love and was a malicious troublemaker that would have to be dealt with.

Demetrius is now mentioned (3Jn.12), and is commended for his good life and its influence with the statement that he "*hath good report of all men.*" The conclusion reveals anticipation of meeting them again.

XXIII. THE EPISTLE OF JUDE

A. The Writer

In the opening verse of this book the writer identifies himself as "*Jude, the servant of Jesus Christ, and brother of James.*" This statement has been accepted by most conservative Bible scholars to mean that Jude was not an Apostle but the brother of James, the writer of the Epistle and therefore the brother of Jesus (Mk.6:3; Mt.13:55).

B. When was it written?

We have no definite proof giving to us exact time for the writing of Jude, but since passages in II Peter bear a close resemblance to Jude, many Bible scholars feel that Jude was written a little time before Peter and give an approximate date of A.D. 65. As we compare Jude with II Peter, it seems reasonable to believe that one of the two used and referred to the other's material. Compare Jude 4-16 with II Peter 2:1-18; and Jude 17-18 with II Peter 3:2-3. It is widely believed that Jude wrote his Epistle first.

C. For whom was it written?

That this Epistle is addressed to Christians in general is seen in the opening statement: "to those who are called, sanctified by God the Father and preserved in Christ Jesus" (Jude.1). Therefore we accept this as a message to the entire church and hold that it is rightfully placed among the "General Epistles".

D. The Purpose and Message of the Book

This Epistle is brief, yet it is one of the most solemn in the entire Word of God. It seems that Jude had intended to write a treatise on "*our common salvation*" (Jude.3). But, because false teaching and destructive heresies had become prevalent he is constrained by the Holy Spirit to change the emphasis of his letter and deal with these conditions. To this end, Jude exhorts his readers to "*earnestly contend for the faith*" (Jude.3). This admonition not only gives the key to the book, but reveals the definite purpose of the Epistle (Jude.3).

The Early Church was composed of born again Believers who had only recently been introduced to Christianity. Being young in the faith and not yet grounded in the Word of God, they could easily become confused and unsettled by the argument of false teachers. Jude recognizes this and warns against "ungodly men" who had "*crept in unawares*" and were "*denying the only Lord God and our Lord Jesus Christ.*" Both Paul and John had to deal with false teachers; now Jude with strong language denounces both the teachers and heresies they seek to propagate.

In six descriptive metaphors Jude exposes these apostate teachers calling them:

1. Hidden rocks;
2. Shameless exploiters;

3. Clouds without water;
4. Trees without fruit;
5. Raging waves of the sea;
6. Wandering stars (Jude.12 and 13).

The message exhorts the readers to contend for the faith (Jude.3). The reason is given in the first 16 verses, because of apostate teachers. How they should contend and what spiritual resources are provided is given in the remainder of the letter. This Epistle comes to a close with a sublime doxology, one that far exceeds in comparison to all others in the New Testament (Jude.24-25).

E. Content

A demoralizing faction has slipped into the congregations that come under Jude's concern. They are arrogant in their theological pretentious, boasting of visions and reviling angelic beings. They impose on the credulity of unsuspecting Believers and create divisions by their stratification, arranging in layers, of the church membership (Jude.16, 19). These teachers were self-centered, utilizing religion to spur on their own lusts (Jude.4, 8,15f).

Jude helps our understanding of their deadly character by Old Testament examples:

1. First group:
 - a. The murmuring Israelites who were left to die in the wilderness (Nu.chp.14);
 - b. The angels who mingled with the daughters of men and produced a race of giants (Ge.6:1-4);
 - c. Sodom and Gomorrah (Ge.chp.19).
2. Second group:
 - a. Cain, a type of sensualist and skeptic who has little regard for higher things;
 - b. Balaam, who misled Israel into idolatry and adultery (Nu.25:1ff; 31:16; Re.2:14). Balaam, in rabbinic tradition is the father of libertines, traitors, and false teachers. The emphasis is on Balaam's desire for gain, which suggests the greed of the false teachers;

- c. Korah, the rebel who challenged Moses' authority (Nu.chp.16), a type of the false teachers who refuse to recognize the authority of the duly constituted leaders in the congregations.

XXIV. THE BOOK OF REVELATION

A. Introduction

The Book of the Revelation is a sealed Book to a great many people; its symbols are perplexing, interpretation difficult, and it has been looked upon rather as being a mystery than a "revelation." Because of this, the Book has been sadly neglected. This is surely the work of the devil who knows that knowledge of this Book gives a greater knowledge of his downfall than any other.

No Book can be studied with greater profit. God says that this book is a "*revelation*." While it is true that all Scripture is profitable, this Book is more so, for it is the only Book in the Bible that begins and ends with a blessing pronounced on those who read and keep what is written. Note Re.1:3 and 22:7. It should also be noted that the Book closes with a serious warning to any who would presume to add or take away from "*the words of the prophecy of this book*" (Re.22:18, 19). This Book is the only prophetic book in the entire New Testament.

B. The Title

The opening verse gives to us the title; this Book is "*The revelation of Jesus Christ*", "The Apocalypse," which means an unveiling of that which has been veiled or hidden. This is a Revelation that unveils Jesus Christ, quite different and opposite to an Apocrypha, which really means "something concealed, doubtful, and not authentic." The Revelation is unveiling of our Lord Jesus Christ; He is the one great theme. Please note, it is not plural, but revelation, singular. This Book is one blessed continuous revelation of Jesus Christ, God's Son, our Savior, past, present and future. This is the Coronation Book of our wonderful Lord.

C. The Writer

The first verse informs us that, this message came from God through Jesus Christ and was signified by an angel "unto his servant John" (Re.1:1). We believe this is the same John who wrote the fourth Gospel and three Epistles which bear his name.

D. When and where was it written?

The Revelation was written from the Isle of Patmos (Re.1:9). This island was not far from Ephesus off the coast of Asia Minor in the Aegean Sea; it was little more than rock about 18 miles in circumference. According to early historians, the evidence seems conclusive that during the persecution of Christians under Domitian, about 95 or 96 A.D., John was

banished to the Island of Patmos for the testimony of the Word of God; from here the letter was written.

E. Interpreting the Book

Four basic methods have been devised by Bible scholars for an understanding and interpretation of this Book; each method has its followers. However, we feel that no one method of interpretation can be used exclusive of, or to the ignoring of the rest, if a full understanding of this book is to be realized. Therefore, while we lean to one particular viewpoint, we would not be opinionated or dogmatic saying that we are correct, and the others are wrong. In fact, we feel our own interpretation of the book is greatly enhanced by the contribution of others, and much insight is gained from other viewpoints that make for a fuller understanding of the book as a whole. We now simply state the various methods of interpretation without argument or discussion.

1. The Preterist Method;

This method interprets the Book as belonging to past history and therefore, looks upon its message as being already fulfilled. There is no future prophetic outlook in the message for us today; the teaching of the Book must be applied to the churches to which it was written.

2. The Historical Method;

This method makes the Book to portray and describe the unceasing conflict between Christ and Satan, the Church and the world from the time of the 12 Apostles until the end of the age. The events of history are brought to our attention and Scripture is used to interpret each crisis.

3. The Futurist Method;

This method sees the Book as being a prophetic forecast of events yet in the future for the realization of God's eternal purpose. With the exception of chapters 1-3 with its letters to the seven churches, which is taken as a symbolic message for the Church Age (Pentecost to the Second Advent), chapters 4-22 are regarded as being prophetic, predicting and specific happenings of the end time for the consummation of all things.

4. The Idealist Method;

This method is distinct from others in that the approach is spiritual or idealistic in contrast with the historical method which accepts the message as dealing with events that are factual and real. This method sees the spiritual conflict of the forces of good and evil with the ultimate victory of God and right. To the idealist it is the spirit of the Book that counts.

Surely it is impossible to press this Book completely into the mold of any one interpretation; therefore, we say that not one of these methods is sufficient in itself to give a full understanding of all the Book has to offer. Each has its obvious weak points; however, as we see self-evident truth brought to our attention, we do believe this may be used to advantage to give a full rounded concept of the Book and therefore should not be ignored. It is quite possible that the futurist approach gives us the best method of interpretation, if we do not forget the primary message to the first Christians to whom the Book was addressed and the pointed application to Christians in all churches until Jesus comes.

F. The Keynote

The key to an understanding of The Revelation is found in the verse, "*Write the things which thou hast seen, and the things which are, and the thing which shall be hereafter*" (Re.1:19). This shows the book in three major divisions:

1. Things past, "*the things which thou hast seen*";

This is the "Christophany," the revelation of the person and glory of Christ (Re.chp.1).

2. Things present, "*the things which are*";

The second is "Ecclesiology," dealing with the Church on earth (Re.chps.2 and 3).

3. Things future, "*the things which shall be hereafter*";

The third is "Eschatology," concerning the last things of the end of the age.

G. The Purpose and Message

Surely, the one grand purpose of this Book is unmistakable. It is the revelation of Jesus Christ, coming a second time with power and great glory to bring about the consummation of all things. As one reads and notes the emphasis of the messages to the seven churches, it is readily seen that Christians were undergoing persecution, even as John himself was banished to Patmos. Difficulties and problems were increasing within the Church; trials and tribulation called for endurance that God alone could give. The question confronting the Christians and one that must be answered was concerning the power of evil, and the possibility of the ultimate victory of satanic forces. These conditions manifest in the Early Church are such as have been experienced by the Church since its inception up to the present; therefore, we all need this message.

This Book is the revelation of Jesus Christ and His ultimate victory over Satan, sin and death. The Saints will overcome and be established forever (Re.12:11; 21:2, 3). Satan will

be overthrown (Re.19:20; 20:10). The glorified Lord Jesus shall reign supreme (Re.chps.21,22). This is the comforting, encouraging truth held out for all Believers.

A more glorious finish to the Word of God could not possibly be conceived. This is the grand climax to the greatest story ever told, the Coronation of the King of all Kings and Lord of all Lords.

H. Features

The opening verse (Re.1:1), states that the message was "*sent and signified*"; that is, it was given in the main by the use of signs, figures, symbols and parables that are representative of truth which has spiritual significance. Daniel and Ezekiel both had this peculiar ministry. It is said that 205 of the 404 verses in Revelation contain Old Testament language, while there are no less than 1,500 references to the Old Testament in this Book, and from the Old Testament we receive insight and answers for the understanding of The Revelation.

I. Nature of the Apocalyptic

The word "apocalypse" has been applied to a whole group of literature including Daniel, Revelation, and some non-canonical apocalypses written between 200 B.C. and 100 A.D. The later ones were written in imitation of Daniel, with the assumption prevailing that the entire group must have certain common characteristics. However, it is the opinion of some that we should both compare and contrast the Book of Revelation with the non-canonical apocalypses.

All apocalypses are revelatory, containing real or alleged disclosures from God of the secrets of the heavenly world, the advancement of history, and the coming Kingdom of God. Theological as well as historical judgments must be used to verify the reality of the visions. While some Old Testament prophets had ecstatic experiences, others did not. Somehow the Word of God gripped them on the inside to the point that they had to release it. Most of the non-canonical apocalypses use visions as a literary technique, as a substitute for the living Word of God which was not experienced in Israel at the time of their writings.

At one point, Revelation stands much apart from all other apocalypses. John styled his work a prophecy (Re.1:3; 22:7, 10, 18f). This classifies it with the Old Testament prophetic writings. Jewish apocalypses do not regard themselves as prophetic; indeed, they were written when the voice of the prophet had been stilled. So, Revelation shares the revival of the prophetic spirit in the Church.

Jewish apocalypses are pseudonymous, using names of Old Testament Believers who were prominent, so as to help authenticate the written message. Revelation bears John's name, which was very well known to the churches to which he wrote.

The theologies of John and of the Jewish apocalypses show similarities and differences. The most important similarity is the common conviction that the Kingdom of God cannot be achieved by powers within history, but with the breaking in of God upon history.

Revelation has the idea of eschatological Salvation, it does not imply that God's people suffer because He is no longer redemptively active in history or has abandoned His people to evil, as the Jewish apocalypses do. The basic theological motif is instead that eschatological Salvation rests directly upon what God had done in history. The Lion who will conquer is the Lamb who has been slain (Re.5:5f), the Christ who comes conquering on His white horse (19:11-16), who is the Jesus who died on the Cross.

The nature of Salvation allows a different explanation for the sufferings of God's people; they share the sufferings of Christ. Behind this scene of history is a spiritual struggle, which involves both the one destined to rule and those, who "bear testimony to Jesus (Re.12:4, 17).

Revelation is not a tract for bad times. It is not the reflex of Christian thought to martyrdom and persecution, as were the Jewish apocalypses. Rather, it is the progress of redemptive history, reflecting the same struggle between the Kingdom of God and satanic evil that under-laid Jesus ministry (Mt.12:29; Lk.10:18). This theology is supported by the Church's response to severe persecution and martyrdom. It did not produce further apocalypses to explain the fierce evils.

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"Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man? I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase. So then neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase. Now he that planteth and he that watereth are one: and every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labor. For we are laborers together with God: ye are God's husbandry, ye are God's building. According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise masterbuilder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon. For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ."

I Corinthians 3:5-11