

Bible Survey III

An Overseas Ministries Publication



BIBLE SURVEY III

The New Testament

by

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FOREWORD

For several years Overseas Ministries has made available to overseas Bible schools a textbook entitled *Bible Survey* written by Darline Kantola. Her outline of the various books of the Bible, with comments offered on various units within the chapters of the Bible, has been highly praised.

Recently, we have felt the need to expand the Bible Survey study series. Therefore, we are bringing to you three courses of study: *Introduction to the Bible*, *Old Testament Survey*, and *New Testament Survey*. My special thanks goes, once again, to Darline Kantola for her assistance in this, and we have added a new dimension with the capable and qualified contributions by Dorsey Burk and editing and typing by his wife, Beverly.

The commentaries in the Bible Survey series are intended for Bible school teachers, leaders of Bible study groups, Bible school students, and other serious students of the Word of God. I feel that this series will give solid help in understanding selected books of the Old and New Testaments. It is certainly not intended to be an exhaustive commentary. For each book there is helpful introduction discussing various subjects such as the authorship, date, purposes and giving of explanations and views set forth throughout the years. Each unit in the book is carefully examined and unfolded under the headings and subheadings of a unifying outline. Challenges are faced courageously and the meaning of each is explained with the hope that lessons for our day can be extracted and applied. The courses are not meant to deal with a lot of details, but with the main facts of each book and the content thereof.

The Bible contains 3,566,480 letters, 810,697 words, 31,175 verses, 1,189 chapters, and 66 books. It is, therefore, a "divine library," and demands not only spiritual illumination but also the practical application of reverent and diligent study methods in order to master its diversified subjects, as well as its unified message. I appreciate the authors of this series giving attention to the importance of the many aspects of the truths of God's Word. I thank the authors for not trying to entertain us, but rather give us a map with which to aid our study of the Word of God. It is my sincere thanks to the authors and it is my earnest prayer that their efforts will be prayerfully received. We certainly need men and women who live the Bible. May the Lord use these exceedingly useful volumes to help us all learn love and live the Word of God.

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THE FOUR GOSPELS

In our study of the life of Jesus Christ, we are limited mainly to four small books, written in Greek, called the Gospels. These give us four accounts which may be described as biographies of Jesus. Each gives a distinctly different aspect and picture of His life and ministry. To gain a better understanding of Jesus, we must study and compare these four records.

The fact that the four evangelists wrote their records from different viewpoints explains the differences between them, their omissions and additions, and their lack of chronological order. The writers did not attempt to produce a complete biography of Christ, but selected, under the direct inspiration of the Holy Ghost, those incidents and discourses which would emphasize their particular message to the people for whom they were writing.

The Gospels may be divided into two divisions:

1. The Synoptic Gospels—Matthew, Mark, and Luke. These contain an evangelistic message for unregenerated mankind and give a record of the same or parallel account of the life and work of Jesus, with the emphasis being upon His work.
2. The Autoptic Gospel—John. This biography of Christ has a spiritual message for the Christian. The focus is upon His words and deity.

As one reads the Gospels, he must remember that they are not given as the books of salvation. Instead, they reveal the cost of salvation which was paid by Jesus on the cross. In the Gospels we can find:

- * The birth and ministry of John the Baptist
- * The birth of Jesus
- * The life of Jesus
- * The ministry of Jesus
- * The calling of His disciples
- * His miracles
- * His sufferings
- * His death, burial, and resurrection
- * His ascension

Yet, we do not find any organized church structure, anyone receiving the Holy Ghost, or anyone being saved in the New Testament Church. The plan of salvation could only be given after the Church was purchased on Calvary. See Hebrews 9:16, 17, 22.

For a more complete study of the Gospels, one may read *Life of Christ*, a part of the *Overseas Ministries Training Series*.

I. MATTHEW

A. THEME

The theme of the first Gospel is Jesus of Nazareth, the Messiah-King of Old Testament prophecy.

B. AUTHOR

The author of this book is Matthew, a disciple who was also called Levi. Matthew is mentioned only eight times in the Scriptures—three of which he is called Levi. He was a Jewish publican, collecting taxes for the Roman government. As a result, he was hated by his countrymen and considered to be a great sinner. He undoubtedly was a man of wealth; this is demonstrated by the great feast he had in his home. However, when Jesus called him to discipleship, he left all and followed the Master.

C. DATE

Matthew's Gospel was written after Mark's, probably between 60 A.D. and 70 A.D. It was written at a time of fiery trials for Jewish Christians. It appeals to all waverers of the faith to trust the King. He may indeed tarry, but He is, nevertheless, all that Christians have believed Him to be. He is Israel's hope and the fulfillment of her prophecies—the true Seed of Abraham, the greater than Moses, the true Son of David, and the final Judge of His people and the world.

D. TO WHOM WRITTEN

Matthew wrote primarily to the Jews, seeking to prove to them that Jesus was the Messiah foretold in the Hebrew Scriptures. Consequently, he frequently quoted the Old Testament and made some sixty references to Old Testament prophecy fulfilled in Christ.

E. COMMENTS

Matthew was placed first in the New Testament as it links Jesus with the Old. Jesus is presented as the fulfillment of Old Testament Law, Prophecy, and Wisdom.

The portrait given of Jesus in Matthew is that of a King. The word *kingdom* is used fifty-five times, the phrase "kingdom of heaven" is repeated thirty-two times, and Jesus is called the "Son of David" seven times. Matthew desired to show that the kingdom of heaven as proclaimed by Jesus was not something new, but a fulfillment of an old hope—Jesus, the Son of David, is the true Messiah.

He and His kingdom were first offered to the Jews for their acceptance, along with warning of the consequences of rejection. The events leading up to the Passion are so narrated as to show that, in the face of these warnings, the Jews deliberately rejected both the Messiah and the kingdom.

Matthew also presented Jesus as the Teacher while emphasizing His prophetic and miraculous power.

F. CONTENTS

1. Birth of the King (Chapters 1 and 2)

In keeping with his desire to show Jesus as the Messiah, the Son of David, Matthew began where most Jews would, with a genealogy. Genealogies were extremely important to the Jews. A priest had to prove his descent from Aaron before he could be ordained. Would the requirements be less for the Messiah? Therefore, Matthew had to prove from the Old Testament that Jesus was the son of David with a legal right to David's throne. He did this by tracing the genealogy of Joseph, Jesus' legal father (1:1-17).

However, the Messiah was not only to be a descendant of David, He was also to be born the son of God of a virgin (Isaiah 7:14; 9:6). Consequently, Matthew proceeded to record the events of Jesus' miracle birth (1:18-25).

The regal biography continued as Matthew recorded the visit of the wise men (2:1-12). One should note that the wise men-exact number unknown-visited the mother and Child in a house, not at the stable as is often depicted. The men presented gifts worthy of a king to the Child. Three of the gifts, gold, frankincense, and myrrh, are well known. However, the first and most important gift is often over-looked:

And when they were come into the house, they saw the young child with Mary his mother and fell down and worshipped him: and when they had opened their treasures, they presented unto him gifts; gold, frankincense, and myrrh (2:11).

Before giving anything else, the wisemen presented themselves *in worship*.

Because the wisemen brought news of the Messiah to King Herod, Joseph was forced to flee to Egypt with Mary and the Babe. Herod, the cruel, unpopular king who lived in constant fear of his throne sought to destroy anyone whom he suspected of aspiring to wear his crown.

2. Forerunner of the King (Chapter 3)

The Old Testament prophecies foretold the coming of a forerunner of the Messiah whose purpose would be to prepare Israel to receive her King. This was fulfilled in John the Baptist.

Jesus placed His seal of approval on John's ministry when He asked John to baptize Him in the Jordan. Jesus was baptized in order that He might fulfill all righteousness. He did not come to destroy the Mosaic Law, but to fulfill it-to give it deeper meaning (Matthew 5:17). Therefore, He willingly submitted to the initiatory rites of the New Covenant of the kingdom, even though He was the sinless King.

3. Testing of the King (4:1-11)

Following His baptism, Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness where He met and vanquished the tempter. The first Adam fell to temptation in the garden of Eden. The Second Adam defeated Satan with the Word, "it is written. . ." May we all learn to stand on the Word of God during times of trial and testing.

4. Proclamation of the King (4:12-25)

Matthew 4:12-25 records the starting point of Jesus' ministry, His first disciples, and His first works.

5. Laws of the King (Chapters 5-7)

The Sermon on the Mount, which is recorded in chapters 5-7, gives the laws of the kingdom of God. These laws are oftentimes the exact opposite of man's carnal thinking and emphasize the difference between the kingdom of this world and the kingdom of God. In this section are the Beatitudes, the Lord's Prayer, the Golden Rule, and principles for basic Christian living.

6. Ministry of the King (8-16:12)

Jesus presented His credentials to the nation of Israel when He manifested His power as proof of His Messiahship. His miracles were signs of His deity (8:1-9:35). They were never performed for mere display, however, but for the relief of suffering humanity. His miracles demonstrated His power over disease, symbolic of sin; over demons, typical of the complete overthrow of Satan's kingdom; over death, revealing Him as the One who will quicken all dead; and over nature, showing Him as the One who shall deliver the whole earth from the curse.

The sending out of the twelve apostles is narrated in 9:36-11:1.

John the Baptist was imprisoned because of his fearless preaching. In prison he began to have second thoughts about Jesus and sent his disciples to Him to inquire if He was the Messiah (1:2-30). Jesus answered by telling John's disciples to tell him what they had seen-the miracles. From this we may learn that some questions are to be expected along our Christian journey; we shouldn't allow self-guilt when they come. However, we should do like John and take them to the One who has all answers. Jesus never turned anyone away because of their sincere questions.

As to be expected, the new King met with opposition. The most fierce antagonism came from the religionists of His day, the Pharisees (12:1- 45). While they accepted the whole of the Old Testament, they allowed a mass of tradition, which they considered authoritative, to obscure the true meaning of the Scriptures. Jesus did not heed these man-made traditions and lived: He operated by the heart of the Law. Consequently, the Pharisees accused Him of performing His works by the power of Satan.

Jesus had been teaching in plain language. In chapter 13 He switched to parables to prevent the Pharisees from distorting His words and using them against Him. A parable is a saying or story which teaches a heavenly truth by using an earthly illustration. These stories concealed the truth from the mockers and the opposers (13:13-15) but revealed it to those earnestly seeking truth (13:11, 16).

The miracles of feeding the 5,000 is recorded in chapter 14. It is always amazing what God can do with the little we have when we give our all. Opposition from the leaders in Judea and Galilee is found in 15:1- 16:12.

7. The Claims of the King (16:13-23:39)

The people had accepted Jesus as a prophet but not as the Messiah. And because they were looking for a temporal and not a spiritual kingdom, He refused to make a public proclamation of His personage. Instead, He made His claim in private to His disciples and forbade them to tell anyone that He was the Messiah. He then revealed how the kingdom would be ushered in: Through His death, burial, and resurrection. The disciples could not understand this. Peter tried to dissuade Him from death and was rebuked. Christ knew that this plan of salvation was the only one that could save mankind.

Chapter 17 records the transfiguration. This event was to encourage His disciples. Nevertheless, they were to remain silent as not to raise false hopes in the people. The triumphal entry into Jerusalem and subsequent rejection by the nation as represented by its leader are found in chapters 21 and 22. God's rejection of the Jewish nation and His turning to the Gentiles were foretold in the parables of the Wicked Husbandman (21:33-40) and the Marriage Supper (22:2-14).

8. The Death and Resurrection of the King (Chapters 24-28)

Knowing His destiny, Jesus tried to prepare His disciples for His coming death. In chapters 24 and 25 He gave a discourse concerning His second coming and the end times. His betrayal, arrest, and trial are recorded in chapter 26 and the crucifixion in chapter 27.

Chapter 28 displays the triumphant King through the resurrection. Jesus was slain because He declared Himself to be King; His resurrection proved it. Before, the people could not come into the presence of the Lord because the veil in the Temple separated the two. However, that veil was rent from the top to the bottom during the crucifixion and now all men may come boldly to the throne of grace through the atoning blood of the resurrected King.

Matthew closed his biography of Christ by giving the final instructions concerning the kingdom and the promise of the eternal King, "And, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world" (28:20).

II. MARK

A. THEME

The theme of the Gospel of Mark is Christ, the tireless servant of God and man.

B. AUTHOR

John Mark, the son of Mary of Jerusalem and one considered to be a convert of Peter, wrote the second Gospel which was called "Peter's Gospel" by some ancient writers. Ancient tradition certifies that he was a companion of Peter. Mark also accompanied Barnabas and Saul on their first missionary journey. Because he turned back at Perga, he became the reason for the apostles parting company for their second journey. Barnabas was determined to give him a second chance and Mark became successful. The Apostle Paul recognized this and spoke of him as being profitable (11 Timothy 4:11).

C. DATE

Mark, the first Gospel to be written, was penned between 50 and 60 A.D.

D. TO WHOM WRITTEN

It is evident from the book's literary style that Mark wrote his Gospel primarily for Roman or Gentile readers. Many Latin words, *such as centurion and legion*, are used and Jewish words and customs are explained. The book contains few references to the Old Testament. The average Roman cared little for doctrine and teaching but a great deal for action. Therefore, Mark's biography is filled with scenes of energy and movement. In this Gospel, the deeds, not the words, of Jesus are emphasized: nineteen miracles are recorded, but only four parables are listed.

E. COMMENTS

Undoubtedly, Mark represented the more accurate course and order of the incidents in the life of Jesus. Mark's writings, the simplest and shortest of the Gospels, are rich in detail—dramatic, graphic, and animated in style. It was written not long after the terrible persecutions began under Nero. The Christians were subject to horrible punishments, and when the Gospel is read with the bloody catastrophe as a background, we see why Mark stressed the sufferings of Jesus and gave prominence to His passion.

The order of the book is chronological, geographical and topical. It contains the

same basic matter as Matthew, though in a different arrangement.

F. CONTENTS

1. The Arrival and Identity of the Servant (1:1-11)

Mark's Gospel begins with the ministry of John and the baptism of Jesus. No mention is made of Jesus' birth or infancy; neither is a genealogy given.

2. The Fidelity of the Servant (1:12-13)

Mark 1:12, 13 record Jesus' victory over Satan in the wilderness.

3. The Servant at Work (1:14-13:37)

As stated above, Mark pictured Jesus as a man of action. In 1:14-20, He proclaimed His kingdom; in 1:21-2:12, He performed His first works; in 1:16-3:35, He enlisted subjects for His kingdom. He explained His kingdom in 4:1-34, and conquered nature, demons, disease, and death in 4:35-5:43. He withstood the opposition of the people (6:1-6), Herod (6:14-29), and the scribes and Pharisees (7:1-23, 8:10-21). In 8:31-38 and 10:28-45, He taught His followers how victory was to be won in His kingdom—by suffering and death. And finally in Jerusalem, He claimed His right to the kingdom by His triumphal entry (11:1-11), His cleansing of the Temple (1:15-19), His defeat of those leaders who questioned His authority (11:27-12:44), and His prophecy of His coming again in glory (13:1-37).

4. The Servant Obedient to Death (14:1-15:47)

Jesus Christ knew that He had one mission in life—to provide salvation for mankind by becoming the sinless Lamb slain for man's sin. In chapter 14, He prepared for His death in the garden; He yielded to death in chapter 15.

5. The Risen and Glorified One Still a Servant (16:1-20)

The resurrection of Jesus proved that He conquered death. He sent forth His followers to proclaim His triumph. He arose! Now the Servant still continues to serve as He works through us.

III. LUKE

A. THEME

Luke's Gospel gives a historical narrative which sets forth Jesus Christ as the perfect Divine Man, the Son of Man.

B. AUTHOR

Luke, the companion of Paul and native of Greece, wrote the third Gospel. His profession as a physician and his style of writing indicate that he was highly educated.

C. DATE

Luke penned his Gospel between 60 and 70 A.D.

D. TO WHOM WRITTEN

The Gospel of Luke was addressed to the Greeks and its style was especially suited for them. It is considered the most orderly of the histories of Jesus, with the emphasis upon the words of Jesus as opposed to His deeds. Because of its poetical eloquence, it has been called "the most beautiful book ever written." The book says little or nothing about Old Testament prophecy and the distinctly Jewish portions are left out.

E. COMMENTS

Luke is the universal Gospel. It describes Jesus as the Savior of all men, the Seeker of the lost among all people, the One through whom "all flesh shall see the Salvation of God." This universality is carried forth by such parables and stories as the Good Samaritan, the Lost Coin, the Lost Sheep, and the Lost Son.

God's love is portrayed most vividly in this Gospel. Luke drew a portrait of Jesus—the perfect Man, the ideal Man—which reached out to the Greeks with their ideals of perfect manliness. (The Romans felt it was their mission to govern, the Greeks to educate, elevate and perfect man.)

F. CONTENTS

1. Introduction (1:1-4)

Luke began his Gospel with an introduction, a practice common to Greek histories. He stated his goal: to write an orderly account of Christ's ministry. He gave his

qualifications: Having records from eyewitnesses and “having had perfect understanding of all things from the very first” (1:3).

2. The Advent of the Divine Man (1:5-4:13)

Luke included many details about Jesus’ advent that are not found in the other Gospels. He began with the annunciation of the birth of John the Baptist (1:15-25). This was the first recorded divine message since Malachi, about four hundred years earlier. Read and compare Malachi 4:5 with Luke 1:17.

Luke then proceeded to narrate the annunciation of Jesus’ birth to Mary (1:26-38). Matthew recorded the announcement to Joseph, Luke to Mary.

Mary’s visit to Elisabeth is recorded in 1:39-55; 1:56-80 reports the birth and childhood of John the Baptist. Joseph and Mary’s journey to Bethlehem can be found in 2:1-7, the message of the angels in 2:8-20, and the circumcision of Jesus and His presentation in the Temple in 2:21-39. To emphasize Jesus’ humanity, Luke summarized His childhood in 2:20-52.

Luke’s genealogy of Jesus (3:23-38) differs from Matthew’s. Matthew traced Jesus’ descent through David’s son Solomon, showing that Jesus had a legal right to the throne of David through Joseph. But since the Messiah had to be the seed of David according to the flesh, and since Jesus was not Joseph’s natural son, it follows that His natural right to the throne must also be proven. Luke did this by giving Mary’s genealogy, thus showing Jesus had a legal right to David’s throne by being born of a virgin who descended from David’s son Nathan.

3. His Ministry in Galilee (4:14-9:50)

Luke’s first section concerning Jesus’ ministry focused on His works in Galilee. The following details are peculiar to Luke:

- * The first rejection at Nazareth (4:14-30) at the synagogue
- * The miraculous draught of fishes (5:1-11)
- * The raising of the widow’s son (7:11-18)
- * The anointing of Jesus by the sinful woman (7:36-50)
- * The woman who ministered to the Lord (8:1-3)
- * Zeal without knowledge rebuked (9:49, 50)

4. His Ministry in Perea (9:51-19:28)

After the Galilean ministry, Luke narrated Jesus’ ministry in Perea.

The following accounts are unique to Luke:

- * Jesus' rejection by the Samaritans (9:51-56)
- * The sending forth of the seventy (10:1-24)
- * The Good Samaritan (10:25-37)
- * Martha and Mary (10:38-42)
- * The Parable of the Rich Fool (12:13-21)
- * A lesson on repentance (13:1-10)
- * The Healing of the woman with an infirmity (13:11-17)
- * Discourse on the strait gate (13:23-30)
- * Herod's warning (13:31-35)
- * Healing of the man with dropsy (14:1-6)
- * True hospitality and the Parable of the Great Supper (14:12-24)
- * Discourse on the cost of discipleship (14:25-35)
- * Parables of grace and warning: The Lost Sheep, the Lost Coin, the Prodigal Son, the Unjust Steward, and the Rich Man and Lazarus (chapters 15, 16)
- * A lesson on faith (17:1-10)
- * The ten lepers (17:11-19)
- * Parables of the Unjust Judge and of the Pharisee and the Publican (18:1-14)
- * The conversion of Zaccheus (19:1-10)
- * The Parable of the Talents (19:11-28)

5. His Crucifixion and Resurrection (19:29-24:53)

Luke recorded details concerning Jesus' crucifixion and resurrection which were not included by the other evangelists. These details include:

- * Christ weeping over Jerusalem (19:41-44)
- * Strife among the disciples for chief positions (22:24-30)
- * Warning to Peter (22:31-34)
- * Instructions to the disciples (22:35-38)
- * Jesus before Herod (23:8-12)
- * The lamentation¹⁷ of the women of Jerusalem (23:27-31)
- * The repentant thief (23:39-43)
- * The walk to Emmaus (24:13-35)
- * The command to tarry (24:49)

IV. JOHN

A. THEME

The Gospel of John was written and published at Ephesus by the request of the Apostle Andrew and the Asiatic bishops who desired to combat certain errors then prevalent concerning the deity of Christ. John shows what convinced men and women of all classes and positions that Jesus was God. More than any other Gospel, John portrays Jesus as the Christ, the Son of God.

B. AUTHOR

The Apostle John wrote the fourth Gospel. Of all the apostles, he enjoyed the closest intimacy with the Master. John belonged to the inner circle consisting of himself, Peter, and James. They alone were permitted to be present at the transfiguration and the agony in Gethsemane. It was John who leaned upon the Lord's breast during the last supper; he alone followed his Master to the judgment (18:15); he alone stood by the cross to receive Jesus' dying message (19:25-27). It was John who cared for Mary, the mother of Jesus, until her death.

C. DATE

John wrote his biography of Jesus about 97 A.D., some thirty years after the synoptic Gospels.

D. TO WHOM WRITTEN

The book was written to the church in general. The author took for granted that those to whom he was writing were acquainted with the other three Gospels, for he omitted most of the well-known incidents of the Lord's life, excepting those relating to the passion and resurrection. The emphasis is upon the deity of Christ, God manifested in the flesh.

E. CONTENTS

1. The Foreword (1:1-18)

John began his Gospel with a foreword concerning *Logos*. *Logos* is the terminology of the Greek philosophers meaning "word." To them the term signified that which they comprehended as the first principle and the prime cause of everything. They reasoned that behind each thing there must be a thought. That thought they called the *Logos*.

The Jews accepted that philosophy: but went a step further. They believed that behind everything there is a thought, and for every thought, there must be a *thinker*. It was in this sense that John used the word *Logos*: In the beginning was the Logos and the Logos was with God and the Logos was God (John 1:1).

He then moved on to the whole reason of the writing and declared the Logos (the thought) was made flesh and declared the *Logos* (the *thought*) was made flesh and dwelt among us. In other words, God, the Mighty God, clothed Himself in flesh, came down to earth in human form, “which we have seen with our eyes, which we looked upon, and our hands have handled” (I John 1:1).

Matthew and Luke told of the coming of the Messiah from the human standpoint, relating His genealogy and entrance into the world. John, on the other hand, spoke from the divine side: “And the Word was made flesh.”

2. Christ’s Manifestation to the World (1:19-6:71)

The testimony of John the Baptist (1:19-34) declared Jesus to be the Son of God. The sign of the dove descending was given to John to reveal just who Jesus was (verses 32-34). It was a private and infallible sign to John whereby he could identify the Messiah (verse 33). The dove alighting upon Jesus was purely symbolical. There was never a time when Jesus did not have the Holy Ghost and that without measure. He was the Holy Ghost embodied.

Jesus began calling His disciples in 1:35-51. The first two, Peter and Andrew, had been followers of John the Baptist. Andrew witnessed to Peter and they both followed Jesus. Jesus changed Peter’s name from Simon to Peter (Cephas) which means “a stone.” Jesus then found Philip, and Philip in turn found Nathanael.

Jesus’ first miracle is recorded in chapter 2. Verse 11 states, “This beginning of miracles did Jesus in Cana of Galilee.” This verse explodes all the theories, traditions, and foolishness of the Apocrypha and other writings concerning the miracles of His childhood. The Lord chose the hour to begin His ministry. It was Jesus’ divine power that transformed the water into wine. However, one should note the human aspect of the miracle. Very possibly the miracle would have never happened had the men not been obedient to the Lord. May we always be willing to do whatsoever He saith unto us.

There were two cleansings of the Temple. One was at the beginning of Christ’s ministry; the other was three years later. Only a prophet or the Messiah Himself could cleanse the Temple. The Jewish leaders asked the Lord to prove His authority by a sign. He gave them the sign of His death and resurrection.

Jesus' interview with Nicodemus is recorded in chapter 3. Many people base their doctrine of salvation on John 3:16, "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life," while ignoring the Master's earlier comment in verses 5-7:

Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again.

In this discourse, Jesus clearly taught that one can only enter the kingdom of God by being born into it. The new birth is by **water and Spirit** (verse 5).

Although Nicodemus came to Jesus by night, he testified for Him before the council (7:50-52) and later secured His body for burial.

In 3:22-36, Jesus described John the Baptist as the friend of the bridegroom. John's mission was to lead the bridegroom, the Messiah, to the bride. When this was done, his mission was completed.

Jesus' ministry in Samaria is narrated in 4:1-43. An interesting comparison can be made between the woman of Samaria and Nicodemus:

<i>The Woman</i>	<i>Nicodemus</i>
A woman	A man
A Samaritan (Gentile)	A Jew
A prostitute	A teacher of Israel
Unlearned	Learned
Unreligious	Religious
Came at noon day	Came at night
Confessed Jesus at once	A secret disciple
Brought the whole city to Christ	Brought (?) to Christ
Christ came to her	He came to Christ

The common need that they shared was for the Holy Ghost (3:5, 4:14).

The healing of the nobleman's son is found in 4:43-54; the healing of the impotent man is in chapter 5. This second healing, with its attending discourse, marked the beginning of Jesus' conflicts with the Jews concerning His claim of divinity.

Chapter 6 reveals the culmination of Christ's popularity. After the feeding of the five thousand, the people sought to make Jesus king. He quietly departed and was later

seen by His disciples as He walked on the water. A short while later Jesus reproved the multitude and thereby struck a death blow at His popularity. They believed their salvation was to be brought about by a glorious, conquering Messiah; Jesus taught them that it was to be effected by a dying Messiah. This shocking revelation was followed by the discourse on the Bread of Life. The message and revelations that Jesus presented shook the people.

3. Rejection of Christ's Claims (7:1-12:50)

The unbelieving half-brothers of Jesus advised Him to "go into Judaea, that thy disciples also may see the works that thou doest." He rejected their counsel for a public display and instead went privately with His band to Jerusalem. His arrival at the feast created intense excitement concerning the Messiahship. He taught in the Temple, confounding and amazing the people and leaders with His knowledge of the Scriptures, causing many to believe on Him.

On the last day of the feast, Jesus taught on the Holy Spirit which would be given after He was glorified (verses 37-39). The officers who were sent to arrest Jesus were so amazed at His words, they allowed Him to remain free. A division arose among the people as to who He was.

The scribes and Pharisees attempted to involve the Lord in a dilemma by bringing Him a woman caught in adultery. He settled the case by transferring the question to the court of their conscience.

Jesus proclaimed that He was the Light of the World, a claim to divinity. The Pharisees challenged that He was bearing witness of Himself. Jesus answered that though He bore record of Himself, His record was true. He had the testimony of own words and sinless life and the testimony of His Father which was the mighty power of God within to perform miracles. Both met the legal requirements. The Pharisees then manifested their lack of spirituality by inquiring, "Where is Thy Father?"

The discussion later continued with Jesus claiming to be the I AM. By doing so He was claiming the independent and continuous existence of the uncreated, eternal God. The crowd became enraged and picked up stones to kill Him. However, Jesus passed through their midst and left the Temple.

The healing of the man born blind is recorded in chapter 9. In the discourse on the Good Shepherd in chapter 10, Jesus contrasted the false leaders and teachers with Himself.

At the Feast of the Dedication (10:22-42), Jesus gave the final testimony to Himself before His passion. He was asked to tell them plainly whether or not He was the

Christ. This was not an honest question; they had already refused to accept His testimony. In reply, He declared the mute, but powerful witness of His works. The multitude did not believe because they did not belong to His flock. He then declared, "I and my Father are one." (See Colossians 2:9.) Once again highly enraged, the multitude sought to stone Him.

The raising of Lazarus (11:1-46) demonstrated Christ's power over death and the grave. Jesus purposely delayed going to Lazarus' home in order to bring greater glory to God. Through this incident He once more revealed Himself as I AM (verses 25-26). Notice in this miracle His power; the Lord never once did anything by the supernatural that man could do in the natural. *They* were given charge of taking away the stone and taking off the graveclothes of the risen Lazarus. Jesus only did what man could not do-raise the dead. Removing the stone also increased their faith-to do that which seemed foolish and impossible.

The raising of Lazarus led to the final rejection of Christ by the nation (11:47-12:50). The sensation caused by Lazarus' resurrection brought the priests and Pharisees together in council for the purpose of determining to put Jesus to death. Caiaphas desired His death for political reasons. He argued that if Jesus was allowed to continue His ministry, His popularity would cause a tumult, excite the suspicion of the Romans, and result in loss of power and office on the part of the Jewish rulers and calamity on the part of the nation. He reasoned that it was better for one man to suffer than the whole nation. He unconsciously uttered a prophecy of the atoning death of the Messiah (verses 51, 52).

Chapter 12 records several events that occurred prior to the Passover:

- * Jesus was anointed by Mary
- * The chief priests consulted to kill Lazarus
- * Jesus triumphantly entered Jerusalem
- * The Greeks sought to see Jesus
- * Jesus made His last appeal to the Jewish nation

4. ²²Christ's Manifestation to His Disciples (Chapters 13-17)

Jesus' final hours before the passion were spent with His disciples. With full knowledge of His deity, He stooped to the most menial of tasks by washing His disciples' feet and thereby He established a supreme example for humility for them to follow. The foot washing was followed by the Passover supper, during which time Jesus pointed out the betrayer, Judas.

As the supper continued, Jesus began His farewell address to the disciples. These chapters are among the tenderest words in the Bible. But even through the discourse,

the disciples failed to comprehend that Jesus was really going to be crucified.

In chapter 14, Jesus gave one of the great revelations about Himself: He and the Father are one. He who has seen Jesus has also seen the Father. The Father dwelling in Him does the works they have seen. He declared Himself to be not only the Father, but the Holy Ghost. (He dwells with you, but will be in you.) The Comforter will come in His (Jesus') name (14:26).

In chapter 15, Jesus explained to the disciples their relationship to Him during His absence. He was the Vine and they were the branches. The main plant of the vine does not bear fruit, but it is responsible for pulsating life through all of the branches so that they become the fruit bearers. Even so, life of the Lord is the life of the believers. And the believers are the bearers of the fruits of the Spirit so long as He abides. If the fruit is to be the best quality, a great deal of pruning is necessary.

In chapter 16, Jesus promised the Holy Ghost. He stated that it was necessary for Him to go away so that the Comforter might come. When He sent forth the Spirit, then He could be present within each one of His followers. They were told once again that His departure, which was at hand, was necessary. Only then could He send the Comforter. This did happen approximately fifty days later on the Day of Pentecost.

Chapter 17 records Jesus' great high priestly prayer. He prayed for Himself, verses 1-5, for the preservation and sanctification of His disciples, verses 6-19, and finally for the unity of all believers and their presence with Him, verses 20-26.

5. Christ's Humiliation and Glorification (Chapters 18-21).

John recorded Jesus' betrayal, arrest, and trial in chapter 18 and the first part of chapter 19. In the later part of chapter 19, John mentioned some details of the crucifixion not found in the other Gospels:

- * Pilate's writing of the accusation
- * The parting of Jesus' garments
- * The committing of Jesus' mother to John
- * The two utterances on the cross
- * The piercing of Jesus' side.

In his description of the empty tomb, John was careful to mention sufficient details to refute the false report that the disciples had stolen Jesus' body. See Matthew 28:11-15. The appearances of Jesus to His disciples are found in 20:10-21:25.

John closed his narrative by stating:

This is the disciple which testifieth of these things, and wrote these things: and we

know that his testimony is true. And there are also many other things which Jesus did, the which, if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written. Amen (21:24, 25).

V. ACTS

A. THEME

Acts of the Apostles is the continuation of Luke's Gospel and gives the history of the establishment and growth of the church. Acts gives the accurate record of its birth and growth for approximately the first thirty years.

If we desire to learn of the experiences of the early church, we must turn to the Book of Acts. The Epistles are written to those who are already saved. It is only in the Acts of the Apostles that one can read about how a person may be saved.

B. AUTHOR

The author of Acts is Luke, the physician. As with his Gospel, "the former treatise," Luke dedicated the book to Theophilus. Portions of this history of the early church were written in the first person and indicate that Luke companioned Paul (16:10-17, 20:5-15, 21:1-18, 27:1-28:16).

C. TO WHOM WRITTEN

Although addressed in particular to Theophilus—the name means "Lover of God"—the book is written for the whole church in general.

D. KEY VERSE

"But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth" (Acts 1:8).

E. CONTENTS

NOTE: For a more complete and detailed study on the Book of Acts, refer to **Acts** by Darline Kantola and Ralph Vincent Reynolds in the **Overseas Ministries Training Series**.

1. The Church of Jerusalem (1:1-8:4)

As stated above, Luke wrote Acts as a continuation of his Gospel. After introductory remarks to Theophilus, Luke picked up the narrative of his earlier work with Jesus addressing His disciples just prior to His ascension. He instructed His followers to return to Jerusalem and tarry there until they were baptized with the Holy Ghost, which He promised would happen not many days hence.

When they returned to Jerusalem, the first item of business for the company was to choose a replacement for Judas. After prayer, they “gave forth their lots” and chose Matthias.

Chapter 2 records the birth of the church:

And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance (2:1-4).

When the news was noised throughout the city, a large crowd gathered to see what was happening. In reply to their question, “What meaneth this?” (verse 12), Peter boldly stood up and preached Jesus unto them. Beginning with the prophecy of Joel and going on to the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus, Peter’s sermon brought great conviction to the people.

They responded by asking, “Men and brethren, what shall we do?” (verse 37).

The people’s belief in Jesus and recognition of their sins were evident by their reaction. Consequently, Peter’s answer summarized the remaining steps to salvation. He proclaimed:

Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call (2:38, 39).

Three thousand souls received his words and were baptized that day.

Jesus promised that the Holy Ghost would empower the life of the believer. That was manifested in the lives of Peter and John shortly after Pentecost. While going into the Temple for prayer, they were stopped by a lame man begging alms. The apostles didn’t have any money to give. But they did command the man to rise up and walk in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth. Instantly the man was healed and began walking, leaping, and praising God (3:1 -11).

Peter’s sermon in response to the healing created a stir and greatly upset the Jewish religious leaders. They ordered the apostles to quit preaching in Jesus’ name. However, the pair replied that they would obey God and could only speak of those things which they had seen (4:1-22).

Upon their release, Peter and John joined the other disciples who all prayed for more boldness to preach the word of God. As they prayed, the building was shaken by the power of God. It was shortly after this that the Christians began to sell what they had, to bring the proceeds to the apostles and to share according to their needs.

Ananias and his wife Sapphira were members of the early church. They saw what the others were doing and decided to follow the example. However, instead of bringing the full sale price to Peter, they kept a portion back for themselves. Because of their hypocrisy and deceit, God slew them (5:1-16).

Difficulty arose in the church over the division of the goods. The Grecians Christians complained because their widows were being neglected. To solve the problem, the apostles appointed seven deacons to oversee the administration.

One of the deacons was Stephen. He was brought before the Council, accused of blasphemy. Beginning with Abraham, Stephen boldly preached the Word of God. His preaching so enraged the Jews that they stoned him. Stephen was the first martyr of the Christian church, and his death was a portent of the persecution which followed (8:1-4).

2. The Transition Period: The Church of Palestine and Syria (8:5-12:23)

Philip, another of the seven deacons, carried the gospel to Samaria. The people “gave heed unto those things which Philip spake, hearing and seeing the miracles which he did” (8:6). Many were baptized in Jesus’ name, but none received the Holy Ghost until Peter arrived from Jerusalem and laid hands upon them. When Simon the sorcerer saw the miracle of the Holy Ghost being poured out, he desired to buy the power from the apostles.

In the midst of the great revival in Samaria, God told Philip to go to the desert. This seems like a strange request. In the desert, however, Philip met the Ethiopian eunuch and explained the Scriptures to him. The eunuch found water and requested to be baptized. He went on his way rejoicing.

Chapter 9 records a major turning point in the history of the early church: The conversion of Saul of Tarsus. He was an extremely devout Jew whose one desire was to stamp out the “heresy” being preached by the Christians. His hatred was so intense that he secured permission from the Jewish high priest to bind Christians in Damascus and bring them to Jerusalem. While enroute to Damascus, Saul saw a great light and heard a voice saying, “Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?” (verse 4). This was the beginning of a dramatic turn around in his life. He embraced his newly found

salvation with the same zeal and fervor with which he once fought it.

Chapter 10 records the conversion of Cornelius, a centurion, and the birth of the Gentile church. Although filled with the Holy Ghost, the Jewish Christians still failed to understand the Old Testament prophecies concerning the incorporation of the Gentiles into the kingdom of God. In their thinking, the Holy Ghost was a divine gift, exclusively for the Jews. Is it any wonder that Peter was shocked and confused when he was commanded to go to a Gentile's home and preach the gospel? His sermon, the first preached to the Gentiles, can be found in 10:19-38.

Cornelius was a Gentile, but one that the Bible declared to be devout, God-fearing, alm-giving, and prayerful. In a vision, he was instructed by an angel to send for Peter who would tell him what he should do. This he did. And because of the obedience of these two men, salvation was opened to the Gentiles. The experience of the Gentiles in chapter 10 was identical to that of the Jews in chapter 2.

In spite of the fact that the Holy Ghost fell on the household of Cornelius as it did the Jews and Samaritans, many of the Jews were upset that Peter had visited and preached in a Gentile home. His defense is recorded in 11:1-18.

Persecution caused the Christians to scatter from Jerusalem. As they went, they preached Christ, and many believed. When the news reached the assembly in Jerusalem concerning the converts in Antioch, Barnabas was sent to investigate and exhort. The persecution of the church under Herod is recorded in chapter 12.

3. The Church of the Gentiles (12:24-21:17)

With verse 24 of the twelfth chapter, the Book of Acts took a new direction. Previously it centered around Peter and the Jewish Christians, now the book focused on Paul and the Gentile church.

The record of Paul's first missionary journey is contained in chapters 13 and 14. The journey began in Antioch where the elders, under the direction of the Holy Ghost, laid their hands on Paul and Barnabas and then sent them on their way. The first journey took them to Cyprus, Perga, Antioch in Pisidia, Iconium, Lystra, and Derbe.

After Paul and Barnabas returned to Antioch, Jews arrived from Judaea who taught that the Gentiles had to be circumcised in order to be saved. As a result of the controversy, Paul, Barnabas, and several other men, went up to Jerusalem "unto the apostles and elders about this question." After much discussion, it was decided that the Gentiles would be required only to abstain from pollutions of idols, fornication, things strangled and blood (15:1-35).

Paul's second missionary journey (15:36-18:22) began about 50 A.D. Because of the

sharp disagreement between Paul and Barnabas concerning John Mark, the two parted company. Paul took Silas with him this time, visiting Syria and Cilicia, Derbe, Lystra, Iconium, Phrygia, Galatia, Troas, Philippi, Thessalonica, Berea, Athens, Corinth, Cenchrea, Ephesus, Caesarea, Jerusalem, and Antioch. Timothy joined the apostles in Lystra. Paul had the vision of the man from Macedonia at Troas. They were jailed in Philippi. Paul stayed a year and a half at Corinth and founded a great church. The pair returned to Antioch by way of Caesarea and Jerusalem.

Paul began his third missionary journey (18:23-21:17) after a short respite in Antioch. This trip lasted approximately four years, 54 A.D. through 57 A.D. Paul left Antioch and passed through Galatia and Phrygia, in route to Ephesus. Paul remained in Ephesus for three years. Through his labors there, the seven churches of Asia were established.

From Ephesus, Paul went to Troas. He then sailed to Europe, revisiting Philippi, Thessalonica, Berea, and Corinth. After taking care of troubles in Corinth, Paul returned by way of Philippi, Troas, Assos, and Mitylene. He briefly visited Chios, Samos, and Trogyllium. When he arrived at Miletus, he sent for the Ephesian elders and gave them his farewell address and charge. At Patara, Paul took another ship and sail for Phoenicia. From there he traveled to Caesarea and finally on to Jerusalem.

4. The Closing Scenes of Paul's Life (21:18-28:31)

The remainder of Acts is dedicated to Paul's last years. While at the Temple in Jerusalem, Paul was arrested by the Jews and falsely accused of blasphemy. As a result, he lived most of the remainder of his life in custody. The record of Acts ends with Paul living in his own hired house in Rome. Tradition states that he was martyred in Rome under Nero.

V. ROMANS

NOTE: More detailed and complete studies of the Epistles may be found in *Romans*, *Hebrews*, and *Epistles*, companion volumes of the *Overseas Ministries Training Series*.

A. TO WHOM ADDRESSED

Unlike Paul's other letters which were addressed to his converts, his Epistle to the Romans was written to a group of people he had never visited. The nucleus of the assembly at Rome probably had been formed by Romans who were in Jerusalem on the Day of Pentecost and who had received the Holy Ghost and been baptized by the apostles. In the intervening twenty-eight years, Christians from various parts of the empire had moved into Rome. Some of these were undoubtedly converts and friends of Paul.

B. THEME

The theme of Romans is the gospel of Jesus Christ. The word gospel means "good news." The gospel of Jesus Christ is the good news that He came to earth, died, and rose again to bring us back into eternal life (I Corinthians 15:1-4). This is the one and only way of salvation for both Jews and Gentiles. The key thought of Romans is: Justification by faith.

C. PURPOSE

While on his last visit to Corinth, Paul met a Christian lady named Phoebe who was going to Rome. He took advantage of this circumstance to send a letter to the saints at Rome with her. He wanted to tell the Roman Christians of his planned visit and give them a statement of the distinctive truths which had been revealed to him.

D. DATE

Paul's Epistle to the Romans was written during his last visit to Corinth, probably during the winter of 57-58 A.D.

E. CONTENTS

1. The Need of Salvation (1:18-3:20)

After the salutation (1:1-7) and introductory remarks (1:8-15), Paul set forth the theme of the book. Verse 16 contains, in brief, the subject of the whole epistle: The gospel is:

- * The power of God unto salvation
- * To everyone that believeth
- * To the Jew first, and also
- * To the Greek (Gentiles)

He stated the key thought in verse 17 as he quoted the Prophet Habakkuk, “The just shall live by faith.”

This is followed by Paul’s great argument for justification by faith laid down by first premise: The whole world is guilty before God and under condemnation. For example, the heathen (1:18-32) had a revelation of God in the beginning but rejected it, leading them to spiritual ignorance. On the other hand, the Jew (chapter 12), instead of being humbled by his knowledge of the law, became self-righteous and critical, blinded by the fact that in the sight of God, he is no better than the heathen. In fact, his knowledge of the law made him more guilty before God than the heathen. The Jew and Gentile are both under sin, without hope of being justified by the works of the law or any human means (3:1-20). Paul stated in 3:23, “For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.”

2. The Way of Salvation (3:21-8:39)

Having shown man’s need of salvation, Paul revealed the way of redemption. Justification, or righteousness, comes only by faith (3:21-28). This justification is universal (3:29, 30) and honors the law (3:31). For example, Abraham was justified by faith. This was apart from works (4:1- 6), ordinances (4:9-12), or the law (4:13-25).

In chapter 5, Paul began to enumerate the blessings of salvation which are made effective through the love of God—love manifested in the sacrificial death of Christ. The scope of this free gift of salvation is all encompassing. All may have redemption because of Calvary. However, even though salvation is free, it does not encourage one to continue in sin. Instead, it demands the crucifixion of man’s corrupt nature and the living of a life of holy service unto God (6:1-23)

Crucifying one’s carnal nature and living holy before God are impossible without the deliverance that only comes through Jesus Christ. Because of the mastery of sin, the good one would do, he does not. And the evil he would not do, he does. But God be thanked that Jesus has come to bring deliverance from the bondage of sin (chapter 7). Through faith in Him, one may have the new spiritual life of liberty and righteousness (chapter 8).

3. Israel (Chapters 9-11)

In chapters 9-11, Paul focused upon Israel and the Jews’ personal relationship with God. Paul considered such topics as:

- * Israel's special privileges (9:4-5)
- * Distinction between the natural and spiritual seed of Abraham (9:6-13)
- * The mystery of the sovereignty of God (9:14-24)
- * The call of the Gentiles (9:25-33)
- * Israel's rejection of salvation through faith (10:1-3)
- * Salvation by faith (10:4-18)
- * God's dealing with Israel (10:19-11:12)
- * Warning to the Gentiles (11:13-22)
- * Israel's restoration (11:23-36)

4. Practical The Results of Salvation (Chapters 12-16)

The first sections of Romans cover the theological aspects of salvation. Beginning with chapter 12, Paul discussed the practical applications of being saved. He started by stating:

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. 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 (12:1, 2).

Salvation is free by faith in Jesus Christ. And because one is saved, he has certain responsibilities such as consecration, service, and love to the brethren (12:1-21). The Christian also has duties as a member of the state (13:1-7), toward other members of the state (13:8-14), and to the weaker brethren (14:1 -15:13).

In a warm and friendly manner, Paul concluded his masterpiece on salvation in verses 15:14-16:27.

VIII. I CORINTHIANS

A. TO WHOM ADDRESSED

I and II Corinthians were written to the saints of the commercial metropolis of Greece. Corinth, one of the largest, richest, and most important cities of the Roman Empire, was noted for its art, culture, philosophers, and debased worship of Venus. Paul visited Corinth on his second missionary journey and founded one of his greatest churches.

B. THEME

The First Epistle to the Corinthians was written to correct disorders that had arisen in the Corinthian church and to set a standard of Christian conduct before the believers. The theme is then: Christian conduct in relation to the church, the home, and the world.

C. PURPOSE

In a letter now lost, Paul had written to the assembly at Corinth, instructing them as to their attitude toward sinning members of the church (I Corinthians 5:9). He received a reply (7:1) inquiring about Christian conduct. To correct the disorders that had broken out and to answer the inquiries, Paul penned this letter to the Corinthians. His purpose may be summarized as:

1. To correct disorders:

- * Division
- * Immorality
- * Disputes among saints
- * Disorders during the Lord's Supper
- * Disorders during worship

2. To answer questions:

- * Concerning marriage
- * Concerning the eating of meats offered to idols
- * Concerning the gifts of the Spirit

D. DATE

I Corinthians was written at the close of Paul's three-year residency at Ephesus (Acts 20:31; 1 Corinthians 16:5-8).

E. CONTENTS

1. Correction of Social and Moral Disorders (Chapters 1-8)

In his normal style, Paul began this letter with introductory remarks regarding his apostolic call and with greetings to the saints. He then quickly addressed himself to the first problem of the church, divisions among the saints. He stated the members needed to cleanse themselves of partyism, man worship, and glorying in worldly wisdom (1:10-31).

The Greeks had a profound admiration for learning and culture and were in danger of perverting their Christian experience with these views (1:17-2:16). (The same danger exists today.) Paul made no attempt to display his sophisticated education but sought to declare the wisdom of God, revealed to him by the Holy Spirit.

The Corinthians' carnality, divisions, envy and strife proved that they were immature Christians. As babes in Christ, they were not ready for the deeper things of God (3:1-8).

In dealing with the problems at Corinth, Paul considered the role of the minister of God. The minister should be regarded as:

- * A dispenser of the truth (3:1, 2)
- * A gardener (3:6-8)
- * A co-laborer with God (3:9)
- * A character builder (3:10)
- * A steward (4:1, 2)
- * A sufferer for Christ's sake (4:9-13)
- * An example (4:16, 17)
- * An administrator of discipline (4:18-21)

In chapter 5, Paul gave instruction concerning cleansing the church of immorality. In chapter 6 he discussed the subjects of saints at law and the sanctity of the body. Christians should be able to judge their own cases and disputes among themselves. Going to the courts of law with one another before unbelieving judges brings a reproach to the cause of Christ. Believers, as members of Christ's body and temples of the Holy Spirit, should purify themselves from all sensuality. Marriage is the theme of chapter 7. While stressing the paramount claims of the spiritual life, Paul reaffirmed the sanctification of marriage and all sexual relationships within the bonds of marriage. Chapter 8 centers on Christian liberty: The ideal Christian will sacrifice certain rights and privileges for the sake of the ignorant and weak. One example is

meats offered to idols.

2. Apostolic Authority (Chapter 9)

Paul asserted his apostolic authority in chapter 9. He surrendered certain rights and liberties for the sake of winning men to Christ.

3. Church Order (Chapters 10-14)

In chapters) 10-14, Paul discussed the matter of order in the church. First, he warned against falling from grace (10:1-13). Israel's example of infidelity should be a warning to the church. Second, Christian liberty and idolatry were touched on again in 10:14-33. Fellowship at the Lord's Supper demands separation from evil associations. The Christian must also guard his influence and witness in the matters of eating and drinking. Third, he turned to the conduct of women in the assemblies (11:1-16). The divine order is God, Christ, man and woman. Christ is dishonored by a man praying with his head covered; a man is dishonored by a woman praying with her head uncovered. Fourth, he discussed disorders during the Lord's Supper (11:17-34).

Chapter 12 is devoted to the gifts of the Spirit, chapter 13 to the pre-eminence of love, and chapter 14 to orderly worship. Chapter 15 is the resurrection chapter; chapter 16 is the conclusion.

VIII. II CORINTHIANS

A. THEME

II Corinthians is the most personal of Paul's letters to the young churches, revealing the innermost feelings and deepest motivation of his heart. The presence of false teachers at Corinth who were questioning his authority, attacking his motives, and undermining his authority, made it necessary for him to defend his ministry. In making this defense, Paul was compelled to relate experiences about which he would rather have been silent. Consequently, the theme can be summarized as: Paul's personal vindication of his ministry, its motives, sacrifices, responsibilities and effectiveness.

B. PURPOSE

The assembly at Corinth, as a whole, had responded to Paul's exhortations in his former letter, but a small minority refused to acknowledge his authority. Thus, he wrote the letter to:

- * Comfort the repentant members of the church
- * Warn the rebellious minority
- * Warn against false teachers
- * Resist the attacks made on his ministry by these false teachers

C. DATE

Paul probably wrote II Corinthians about 57 A.D. from Philippi while on his third missionary journey.

D. CONTENTS

This book is difficult to analyze as it is the least systematic of Paul's writing. The basic outline is as follows:

1. The Backward Glance (1:1-2:13)

- * Paul sustained by God in tribulation in order that he might in turn comfort others (1:1-11)
- * Paul's pure motives (1:12-14)
- * Paul's visit delayed (1:15-2:11)
- * Paul's anxious waiting for news from Corinth (2:12, 13)

2. The Dignity and Effectiveness of Paul's Ministry (2:14-16).

- * Paul's triumphs in the gospel (2:14-17)
- * Paul's defense against the Judaizers and evidence that the New Covenant is better than the Old (3:1-4:6)
- * Paul's strength comes from the power of God in spite of sickness, danger, and persecution (4:7-5:10)
- * Paul's secret for earnestness is his sense of responsibility to Christ (5:11-21)
- * Paul's defense for his faithfulness in preaching the gospel (6:1-13)
- * Paul's command to separation (6:14-7:1)
- * Paul's pleading with his converts to ignore the malicious and untruthful reports about him (7:2-4)
- * Paul's reason for waiting for Titus (7:5-16)

3. The Collection for the Jewish Saints (Chapters 8 and 9)

- * The example of the Macedonians and of Christ (8:1-15)
- * Paul's commendation of the bearers of the funds (8:16-24)
- * Paul's appeal for liberality in giving (chapter 9)

4. Paul's Defense of His Apostleship (Chapters 10-13)

- * Paul's contrast with false teachers (10:1-1-8)
- * Paul's urging to bear with one who loves you (11:1-6)
- * Paul's reasons for not asking for support (11:7-15)
- * Paul's right to apostleship (11:6-12:13) Divine signs and visions
Faithful service Sufferings
- * Paul's disciplinary warnings (12:14-13:10)
- * Paul's conclusion (13:11-14)

IX. GALATIANS

A. TO WHOM ADDRESSED

The Galatian churches were founded by Paul between 45 and 48 A.D. while on his first missionary journey. The people were country folk and were scattered over a wide rural area of central Asia Minor. John Phillips described the Galatians as generous, inconsistent, impulsive, and quarrelsome. It was to these converts, in such towns as Antioch, Iconium, Lystra, and Derbe, that Paul addressed this letter.

B. THEME

The question as to whether the Gentiles were to keep the law of Moses had been settled at the council at Jerusalem. The decision was that the Gentiles were justified by faith without works of the law. Nevertheless, the Judaizing party continued to insist that though the Gentiles were saved by faith, their faith was perfected by the observances of the Mosaic law. The Galatians had been influenced by this teaching. As a result, Paul's gospel was undermined as was his authority. The theme of his message is: Justification and sanctification are not by the works of law, but by faith.

C. PURPOSE

While in Greece on his third missionary journey, Paul received the news that the Galatians had taken the yoke of the law upon themselves. This led to the writing of the epistle to:

1. Oppose the influence of the Judaizing teachers who were attempting to undermine Paul's authority
2. Refute the following errors that they taught:
 - * Obedience to the law, mingled with faith, is necessary to salvation
 - * The believer is made perfect by the keeping of the law
3. Restore the Galatians who had fallen from grace

D. DATE

According to commonly accepted tradition, the Epistle to the Galatians was written during Paul's third missionary journey, approximately 57 A.D.

E. CONTENTS

1. The Apostle of Liberty (1:1-2:14)

After a short introductory salutation, Paul began his letter to the saints in Galatia by defending himself against charges of the Judaizers. They stated that Paul was not a true apostle of Christ, that he was only a teacher sent out by the apostles, that he was spreading teachings not approved by the council at Jerusalem.

Paul defended himself on the basis that:

- * The gospel that he preached came directly by revelation from Christ (1:10-16)
- * For years he was away from the church at Jerusalem and labored independently of the other apostles (1:17-23)
- * He was under divine direction in his work among the Gentiles (2:1-5)
- * The church at Jerusalem endorsed his apostleship and work among the Gentiles (2:7-10)
- * He had not hesitated to rebuke Peter and other Christian Jews when he saw that they were yielding to ritualistic tendencies (2:11-14)

2. The Doctrine of Liberty (2:15-4:31)

The major section of Galatians is a defense of the doctrine of justification by faith apart from the works of the law. Paul stated:

- * That it was folly for the Christian Jews to abandon their new faith and light and to return to the old legalism of the law (2:15-21)
- * That their past experiences should motivate them to continue in the truth (3:1-5)
- * That Abraham was justified by faith (3:6-9)
- * That the law had no redeeming power, but Christ brought redemption to the believer (3:10-14)
- * That the law could not disannul the covenant of salvation by faith (3:15-18)
- * That the purpose of the law was to serve as a schoolmaster (3:19-25)
- * That those who surrender their faith in Christ and relapse into legalism suffer loss (3:26-4:31)

3. The Life of Liberty (Chapter 5 and 6)

Paul urged the Galatians to hold fast to the liberty of grace and warned against false teachers (5:1-12). He stated that freedom from the legalism of the Mosaic law is not a license to sin; the Christian should walk in love, therefore fulfilling the law (5:13, 14). Paul then contrasted the works of the flesh and the fruit of the Spirit (5:16-26),

gave the characteristics of the spiritual life (6:1-6), and the law of sowing and reaping (6:7-9). He concluded his letter in verses 10-18.

X. EPHESIANS

A. TO WHOM ADDRESSED

Ephesus, located on the western coast of Asia Minor, was one of the great cities of the Roman Empire. The city was idolatrous, especially noted for its worship of Diana. Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians was written to his converts in this heathen environment.

B. THEME

The Epistle to the Ephesians is a great exposition of a fundamental doctrine of Paul's preaching, the unity of all the universe in Christ, the unity of Jew and Gentile in His body—the church—and God's purpose in that body for time and eternity. The theme may be summarized as: The church is redeemed and united in Christ; therefore, the church should walk in unity and in newness of life, in the strength of the Lord and by the armor of God.

C. PURPOSE

There were two dangers that threatened the assembly at Ephesus. One was a temptation to sink to heathen standards. The second was a lack of unity between Jew and Gentile. To offset the first danger, Paul set forth the holiness of the Christian's calling in contrast to their former sinful condition as heathens. To guard against the second, he presented the Lord Jesus as making peace between Jew and Gentile by the blood of His cross and making of the twain a new body.

D. DATE

The letter to the Ephesian saints was written during Paul's first imprisonment, 61-63 A.D.

E. CONTENTS

1. The Threefold Source of Our Salvation (1:1-8)

Following a short salutation, Paul began to discuss the threefold source of our salvation, the first being the predestination of the *church* (1:4-6). Individual man makes his choice by free will. The church, however, as a collective whole, is destined to salvation. We are adopted and, through Christ, accepted into the church or Christ's body. Second, we have redemption through the Son (1:7-12). And third, we are sealed by the Spirit (1:13, 14). This is the earnest—a first payment-of the complete

redemption which will be ours in the future.

2. The Threefold Manifestation of God's Power (1:10-2:22)

God's power was manifested in Christ through the resurrection, ascension, and exaltation (1:19-23). It is demonstrated in the individual through the spiritual resurrection, spiritual ascension, and the power to show forth good works and God's grace throughout eternity (2:1-10). The power is manifested in the whole of humanity through the Gentiles, Jews, and the church (2:11-22). The Gentiles are no longer strangers to the covenant, but were made nigh by the blood of Christ. They now have equal access to God in the spiritual temple as the Jews. Out of these two groups, God has constructed a building without hands, whose chief cornerstone is Christ and whose foundation is the apostles and prophets. The stones are the individual Christians.

3. A Threefold Statement Concerning Paul (Chapter 3)

In chapter 3 Paul made three statements regarding his ministry, prayer, and praise.

4. Threefold Exhortation to the Whole Church (4:1-5:21)

Paul exhorted the assembly to unity (4:1-6), a new life (4:17-32), and a new walk (5:1-20).

5. A Threefold Exhortation to the Family (5:21-6:9)

In his admonition to the family, Paul covered the relationships of husbands and wives (5:21-33), parents and children (6:1-4), and masters and slaves (6:5-9).

6. A Threefold Expression of Spiritual Life (6:10-24)

Paul closed his epistle with three expressions of spiritual life. He first exhorted the saints to put on the whole armor of God for power. He then encouraged the assembly to prayer (6:18, 19) and peace (6:20-24).

XI. PHILIPPIANS

A. TO WHOM ADDRESSED

The Epistle to the Philippians was written to the saints of the first church in Europe. Paul founded this assembly in Philippi about 51 A.D., in the early part of his second missionary journey (Acts 16). Luke is reported to have pastored this group for six years.

B. THEME

It may be said that the sum of Philippians is "I rejoice, rejoice ye." The letter is full of joy. In spite of imprisonment and in spite of the fact that he was resting in the shadow of the executioner's block, the apostle could rejoice. Consequently, the theme of Philippians seems to be: The joy of Christian life and service manifested under all circumstances.

C. OCCASION FOR WRITING

Epaphroditus, the messenger of the Philippian church and the one entrusted with a gift to the apostle, became ill on his arrival at Rome. On his recovery, he returned to Philippi and Paul took advantage of this circumstance to send a letter of and exhortation to the assembly about whose condition Epaphroditus had notified Paul.

D. DATE

Philippians was written about 64 A.D., during Paul's first imprisonment at Rome.

E. CONTENTS

1. Paul's Situation and Labors at Rome (Chapter 1)

As with his other epistles, and according to the style of his day, Paul began his letter to the Philippians with a salutation (1:1-11). He then went on to discuss his own situation. In spite of his bonds (1:12-14), in spite of those who preached from insincere motives (1:15-18) and in spite of the prospect of death (1:19-30), Paul was joyful in prison.

2. Three Examples of Self-Denial (Chapter 2)

Chapter 2 is Paul's exhortation to unity, which was in danger of being marred by some minor differences among the believers. Unity was to be affected by the spirit of humility and self-denial. He continued his theme by citing three examples of those

whose life principle was sacrifice for others: Christ (2:5-16), Timothy (2:17-24), Epaphroditus (2:25-30).

3. Warnings Against Error (Chapter 3)

Chapter 3 is a message of caution. The church was first warned against legalism (verses 1-4). Paul saw in their teaching of salvation by the externals of the law something that would undermine Christian life and faith. Justification and sanctification by faith in Christ had not lulled Paul into a careless security. He then urged them to follow the apostolic example (verses 15-17), to beware of the enemies of the cross (18-19), and to be heavenly citizens, looking forward to great a change at the coming of the Lord (verses 20, 21).

4. Concluding Exhortations (Chapter 4)

In his final exhortation, Paul urged the saints to steadfastness, unity, helpfulness, moderation, freedom from anxious care, prayerfulness, and high thinking.

XII. COLOSSIANS

A. TO WHOM ADDRESSED

Paul wrote this letter to the saints at Colossae, a town about 100 miles east of Ephesus. The assembly was filled with Gentile Christians, including Philemon.

B. THEME

The theme of Colossians is the preeminence of Christ. He is first in nature, first in the church, first in resurrection, ascension and glorification; He is the only Mediator, Savior, and source of life. Colossians may be considered a companion to Ephesians. Ephesians deals with the unity of the believers which is called the body of Christ. Colossians focuses of the head of that body, Christ.

C. PURPOSE

The Colossians, having heard of Paul's imprisonment, sent Epaphras, their minister, to inform the apostle concerning their state (1:7, 8). From Epaphras Paul learned that false teachers were trying to supplement the Christian faith by a doctrine which was a mixture of Judaism and heathen philosophy. Later this belief was known as Gnosticism. They declared that God was holy and all else was unholy. God could not span the gulf between Himself and man, so mediatory angels were used. They classified Jesus with these angels. To combat this error, Paul wrote this Epistle to the Colossians.

D. DATE

The epistle was probably written between 60 and 64 A.D.

E. CONTENTS

1. Introduction (1:1-12)

As with the majority of his epistles, Colossians opens with Paul's salutation and greetings.

2. Explanation (1:13-2:3)

Following Paul's greetings to the saints, he began to declare the doctrinal truths concerning the person and position of Christ (1:14-19), the work of Christ in reconciliation (1:20-2:3), and Paul's role as a minister (1:24-2:3).

It would do every student well to memorize Colossians 1: 14-19).

In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins: Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature: For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: And he is before all things, and by him all things consist. And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things he might have the preeminence. For it pleased the Father that in him should all fullness dwell.

3. Refutation (2:4-23)

Having stated the true doctrine, Paul sat about to refute the false. He warned against being led astray by false reasonings of philosophers. The fullness of divine revelation is in Christ. "For in him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily. And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principalities and power" (2:9, 10). He gave specific warnings concerning:

- * Gnosticism (verses 8-10) – There is no deeper wisdom than that already given in God's Word. The fullness of the Godhead dwells in Christ bodily and we are complete in Him.
- * Legalism (verses 11-17)-The legalism of the law was a shadow of things to come and pointed toward Christ. Now that He has come and fulfilled these types, they are no longer necessary. He had triumphed over them.
- * Mysticism (verses 18, 19)-Paul condemned the worship of angels.
- * Asceticism (verses 20-23)

4. Exhortation (3:1-4:6)

Because the believer is united with Christ, he must live holy by putting off the "old man" with the lusts of the lower nature (verses 5-9) and by putting on the "new man" with the cultivation of the graces and virtues of the new life in Christ (verse 10-17). In light of the requirement of holy conduct, Paul continued his exhortation to specific groups such as husbands and wives, parents and children, and masters and slaves (3:18- 4:1) and then gave general instructions for the whole body (4:2-6).

5. Conclusion (4:7-18)

Paul concluded his Epistle to the Colossians with salutations.

XIII. I THESSALONIANS

A. TO WHOM ADDRESSED

I and II Thessalonians were written to the believers of Thessalonica, a city in northeastern Greece. The church there was founded about 51 A.D. on Paul's second missionary journey (Acts 17:1-9).

B. THEME

This epistle's theme is the Second Coming of Jesus. Paul used the Lord's return as a source of encouragement and comfort and a reason for watchfulness and sanctification. Each of the five chapters, close with a reference to the Second Coming.

C. DATE

I Thessalonians is the earliest of the Pauline epistles. It was written about 54 A.D. while Paul was in Corinth.

D. PURPOSE

Paul wrote his first letter to encourage, stimulate, inform, indoctrinate, and warn the Thessalonian saints because much controversy and misunderstanding had arisen concerning Christ's return.

E. CONTENTS

1. Salutation and Thanksgiving (Chapter 1)

Chapter 1 is completely upbeat. In this chapter Paul stated his reasons for his thankfulness for the saints in Thessalonica: Their work of faith, labor of love, and patience in hope, receiving the word in much affliction, with the joy of the Holy Ghost.

2. Paul Ministry In Thessalonica (Chapter 2)

Chapter 2 is a review of Paul's ministry in Thessalonica, a ministry which may be described as courageous, sincere, Godfearing, truthful, unselfish (verses 2-5), humble, gentle, affectionate, industrious, irreproachable, and paternal (verses 6-12). The believers had readily received Paul's preaching and work among them as from God, in spite of suffering (verses 13, 14). Paul loved the saints at Thessalonica and greatly desired to visit them (verses 17-20).

3. The Messenger, Timothy (Chapter 3)

Because Paul could not personally visit the Thessalonian church, he sent Timothy to establish and to comfort them. He returned with a glowing report of their faith and charity.

4. Exhortations (4:1-12)

The first twelve verses of chapter 4 contain Paul's exhortations regarding personal and social purity (verses 1-8) and brotherly love and industry (verses 9-12).

5. The Hope of the Church: The Coming of the Lord (4:13-5:11)

The heart of the epistle is found in chapters 4 and 5. After complimenting and admonishing the assembly Paul turned to their cause for hope, the Second Coming of Jesus. His return is a comforting hope to the bereaved (4:13, 14). Then Paul stated:

For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words (4:15-18).

Paul continued by stating:

- * The time of the Advent is unknown (5:1, 2)
- * The Advent would not be expected by the unbelievers (5:3)
- * The children of the light should be ready for it (5:4-8)
- * The believers would be safe at the Advent (5:9-11)

6. Christian Duties, Closing Charge and Benediction (5:12-28)

Paul closed his first epistle to the Thessalonians with instructions regarding their duties as Christians and a benediction.

XIV. II THESSALONIANS

A. THEME

II Thessalonians' theme is similar to that of Paul's first letter to the believers at Thessalonica. Again, he wrote to them concerning the Second Coming of the Lord and its relationship to persecuted believers, unrepentant sinners, and an apostate church.

B. PURPOSE

Erroneous views and misinterpretations arose from Paul's first epistle to the Thessalonians. He wrote the second to correct the misunderstandings and to establish the church in truth.

C. DATE

This letter was probably written about 52 A.D., shortly after the first letter while Paul was still in Corinth.

D. CONTENTS

1. **Salutation** (1:1, 2)

The Pauline authorship of this epistle is revealed in its short introductory salutation.

2. **Thanksgiving and Prayers for the Believers Who Have Been Faithful Under Persecution** (1:3-12)

As before, Paul expressed his sincere appreciation and thankfulness for the faithfulness of the Thessalonians. He stated in verse 4, "So that we ourselves glory in you in the churches of God for your patience and faith in all your persecutions and tribulations that ye endure." Although they were now suffering, Paul stated that the Lord would take vengeance upon their persecutors when He returned to be glorified in His saints (verses 6-12).

3. **Instructions and Exhortations About the Second Coming** (2:1-12)

Some of the Thessalonians had misinterpreted Paul's first letter and were greatly disturbed by their erroneous views that the Second Coming was imminent or had already passed. Paul quieted their fears by stating that certain things were to occur

before the Lord came:

- * There would be a great falling away (apostasy) (verse 3)
- * The man of sin would be self-exalted (verses 3, 4)
- * The lawless one would be revealed in due time, accompanied by signs and lying wonders (verses 5-9)
- * This satanic person would be destroyed at the coming of Christ (verse 8)
- * A mighty delusion would deceive the wicked (verse 10-12)

4. Appeal to the Believers: Hold Fast to Sound Doctrine (2:13-3:15)

Because of the Second Coming of the Lord, Paul admonished the believers to hold fast to the traditions and doctrines that they had been taught. He also gave several other instructions necessary to their Christian growth and development.

5. A Comforting Benediction (3:16-18)

Paul closed his letter stating:

Now the Lord of peace give you peace always by all means. The Lord be with you all. The salutation of Paul with mine own hand, which is the token of every epistle: so, I write. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.

XV. I TIMOTHY

A. TO WHOM ADDRESSED

I and II Timothy were addressed to Timothy, Paul's son in the gospel. Timothy, a native of Lystra, was the natural son of a Greek father and a Jewish mother, Eunice. His grandmother was named Lois. Timothy joined Paul on his second missionary journey around 51 A.D. Tradition states that Timothy suffered martyrdom under Nerva or Domitian.

B. THEME

The theme of Paul's first letter to Timothy is the qualifications and duties of the Christian minister and his relationship to the church, the home, and the world.

C. PURPOSE

The letter was written to instruct Timothy in the duties of his office, to encourage him, and to warn him against false teachers.

D. DATE

While the actual date that Paul penned this epistle is uncertain, he is thought to have written it from Macedonia during the interval between his two imprisonments, possibly about 65 A.D.

E. CONTENTS

1. Sound Doctrine (Chapter 1)

After a brief salutation, Paul immediately began to give Timothy counsel concerning dealing with legalistic teachers (verses 3-11) and then related some of his own experiences (verses 12-16). These were followed by Paul's first charge to Timothy:

This charge I commit unto thee, son Timothy, according to the prophecies which went before on thee, that thou by them mightiest war a good warfare; holding faith and a good conscience; which some having put away concerning faith have made shipwreck; of whom is Hymeneus and Alexander; whom I have delivered unto Satan, that they may learn not to blaspheme (verses 18-20).

2. Public Prayer (Chapter 2)

Paul stated that intercessory prayer should be made for all men as Christ is the only mediator between God and man (verses 1-6). He then used his office as an apostle to the Gentiles to give instruction concerning the duties of men and women (verse 7-13).

3. Ministerial Qualifications (Chapter 2)

Chapter 3 opens with the qualifications of a bishop, followed by the requirements of a deacon. Many of the qualifications overlap. Basic ones include:

- * Blameless
- * The husband of one wife
- * Vigilant
- * Sober
- * Of good behavior
- * Given to hospitality
- * Apt to teach
- * Not given to wine
- * No striker
- * Not greedy of filthy lucre
- * Patient
- * Not a brawler
- * Not covetous
- * One that rules well his own house

4. The Mystery of the Incarnation of Christ: God Manifested in the Flesh (3:16)

Paul stated, "And without controversy, great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifested in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory" (3:16).

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5. Predictions of Future Apostasy (4:1-4)

Paul knew that the church has a glorious and bright future. However, he also knew that there would be those who would fall away from the truth. It was of these that he warned Timothy in chapter 4. His description is very fitting of many today who at one time had a knowledge of and an experience with God.

6. Counsels as to Teaching, Ministerial Conduct, Example, Etc. (4:6-16)

In keeping with his theme, Paul counseled Timothy regarding the marks of a good minister, the preeminence of godliness, the importance of a godly example, and giving diligence to reading, teaching and the exercise of personal gifts.

7. Ministerial Administration (Chapter 5)

Paul continued Timothy's lessons in ministerial duties and ethics in chapter 5. He touched on:

- * Courtesy to old and young
- * Attitude of the church toward widows
- * Duties of the church elders
- * Duty of impartial and deliberate action
- * Advice relating to personal matters

8. Concluding Exhortations (Chapter 6)

Paul concluded his letter to his son in the gospel with admonitions concerning:

- * Duties of servants (verses 1, 2)
- * Duties of separation from contentious teachers (verses 3-5)
- * The blessing of contentment (verses 6-8)
- * The peril of riches (verses 9-12)

XVI. II TIMOTHY

A. THEME

II Timothy was the last of the Pauline epistles to be written. It was penned during Paul's second imprisonment in Rome. He was now more restricted, realized that the time of his martyrdom was near and anxious to see his son in the faith, Timothy.

B. PURPOSE

The letter was written to request Timothy's presence in Rome, to warn him against false teachers, to encourage him in his duties and to strengthen him against coming persecution.

C. DATE

This epistle was written shortly before Paul's martyrdom at Rome, between 65 and 67 A.D.

D. CONTENTS

1. Introduction (1:1-5)

Paul began his last epistle with personal greetings, exhortations, and a recounting of his experiences.

2. Exhortations In View of Coming Suffering and Persecution (1:6-2:13)

The church was suffering persecution as Paul wrote his letter to Timothy. His own bonds were proof of the tribulation. However, he knew that the situation would worsen. In face of the coming hardships and trials, Paul encouraged Timothy to be constant (1:6-18), to hold fast to that which he had learned (2:1, 2), and to endure hardness as a good soldier (2:3-13).

3. Exhortations in View of Present Apostasy (2:14-16)

Persecution was not the only problem that the church faced as Paul wrote to Timothy. The second, and perhaps more dangerous, was apostasy. In view of the present falling away from truth, Paul admonished Timothy to:

- * Avoid idle discussions
- * Be a true teacher of the Word of God

- * Flee both evil doctrine and evil living
- * Follow, not only true doctrine, but also true living
- * Avoid foolish and superficial speculations

4. Exhortations In View of Future Apostasy (3:1-4:5)

Because apostasy would also be a future problem, Paul instructed Timothy to avoid false teachers, to abide loyally by his convictions., and to do his full duty as an evangelist. He stated:

I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom. Preach the word, be instant in season, out of season, reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long-suffering and doctrine. For the time will come where they will not endure sound doctrine, but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears (4:1-3).

5. Conclusion (4:6-22)

Paul concluded his final message to Timothy with an urgent request and special instructions. He then discussed the bitter opposition of Alexander the coppersmith and his first trial and defense. The closing verses contain salutations and a benediction.

One of the most encouraging passages is found in this section. Knowing his future, Paul wrote:

For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith: henceforth is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing (4:6-8).

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XVII. TITUS

A. TO WHOM ADDRESSED

Titus was a Greek and a beloved friend and helper of Paul. Paul left him in Crete to superintendent the churches there.

B. THEME

The letter is short, but comprehensive, containing instructions concerning doctrine, morals, and discipline. The theme could be summed up as: The organizing of a true church of Christ; and an appeal to the church to be true to Christ.

C. PURPOSE

The letter was written to instruct Titus in the organization of the Cretan assemblies and to direct him in the method of dealing with the people.

D. DATE

Titus was penned shortly after I Timothy, probably from some point in Asia Minor, about 65 A.D.

E. CONTENTS,

1. The Order and Doctrine of the Church (Chapter 1)

In writing to Titus, Paul discussed Titus' mission to Crete, the qualifications for elders, the duty of suppressing mercenary teachers, the evil character of the Cretan which demanded stern treatment, and inward defilement and hypocrisy.

2. The Conduct of the Church (Chapters 2 and 3)

Chapters 2 and 3 are discussions regarding the believer's conduct in relation to one another (2:1-15) and to the outside world (3:1-8), coupled with things to be avoided (3:9-11) and concluding instructions (3:12-15).

XVIII. PHILEMON

A. TO WHOM ADDRESSED

The letter to Philemon is the only example of Paul's private correspondence, that had been preserved for us. Philemon was a wealthy slave owner in whose home the Colossian church met.

B. THEME

The letter was written after the conversion of Onesimus, a runaway slave who belonged to Philemon. Paul wrote to entreat Philemon to accept back his runaway slave and to treat him as a brother in Christ.

C. CONTENTS,

1. The Story of Onesimus in Brief

Onesimus was a slave who ran away from his master, Philemon. Verse 18 infers that he had robbed his owner and fled to Rome. In Rome, he came under the influence of Paul and was converted (verse 10), becoming a devoted disciple of Christ (Colossians 4:9). Paul would have chosen to have detained Onesimus in Rome as a helper (verse 13), but not having the consent of Philemon (verse 14), he felt it to be his duty to send the slave back to his master. Consequently, Paul wrote a beautiful letter of intercession, pleading with Philemon to forgive and restore Onesimus to favor.

Christians of all ages should consider Paul's appeal in view of the wrongs they have suffered. May God grant us the ability to forgive those who trespass against us.

2. Synopsis of the Scripture

- * The cordial and commendatory greeting (verses 1-7)
- * The testimonial concerning Onesimus (verses 10, 11)
- * The tender appeal for forgiveness (verses 12-19)
- * Farewell salutations (verses 20-25)

XIX. HEBREWS

A. TO WHOM ADDRESSED

Although persons are not named, the Epistle to the Hebrews appears to be a general letter to all Jewish Christians in Palestine, especially those in Jerusalem. This is evident from the discussion relating to Christ and the Levitical priesthood and the Old Testament quotations.

B. THEME

The theme of Hebrews is that the religion of Jesus Christ is superior to Judaism, for it has a better covenant, a better high priest, a better sacrifice, and a better tabernacle.

C. AUTHOR

Hebrews is an anonymous letter. It has been ascribed to Paul, Barnabas, Luke, Apollos, and various other persons. Weight of opinion seems to favor Paul as the author.

D. PURPOSE

The epistle was written to check the apostasy of Jewish Christians who were tempted to return to Judaism. Halley suggests that it was written to prepare the saints for the coming destruction of Jerusalem.

E. DATE

This letter was unmistakably written before the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D. If Paul did pen this epistle, the date is probably 61- 63 A.D.

F. CONTENTS

1. The Superiority of Jesus to Old Testament Mediators and Leaders (1:1-8:6)

Jesus is superior to the prophets because God's revelations to the prophets in times past were partial, given at different times and in different manners (1:1). In this dispensation, God has given a perfect revelation through His Son (1:2, 3).

Jesus is superior to the angels for the following reasons:

- * No individual angel was ever addressed as Son (1:5)

- * While the angels serve, the Son reigns (1:7-9)
- * The Son is not a creature, but the Creator (1:10-12)
- * No angel is promised universal authority, for their function is service (1:13, 14)

In view of these foregoing statements, Paul urged the Hebrews to give a more earnest heed to the things they had heard (2:1-4).

Jesus was exalted above the angels. Why, then, was He made lower than they? The answers are:

- * So that human nature might be glorified and that man might take his God-given place as ruler of the world to come (2:5-8)
- * So that He might fulfill God's plan in dying for all men (2:9)
- * So that the Savior and saved might be one (2:11-15)
- * So that He might fulfill all the conditions of a faithful priest (2:16-18)

Jesus is greater than Moses because:

- * Moses was only a part of God's household; Jesus was the Founder of the same (3:2, 3)
- * Moses was only a servant; Jesus was a Son (3:5, 6)

Because Jesus is greater than Moses, the author warned the Hebrews against the sin of unbelief, citing the example of the Israelites (3:7-4:5).

Jesus is greater than Joshua. Joshua led the Israelites into the rest of Canaan which was only a type of the spiritual rest to which Jesus leads believers (4:6-13).

The believers are not without a high priest, Jesus. He can sympathize with human infirmity; He too suffered temptation but was without sin. He was called of God as was Aaron (4:14-5:10).

Words of rebuke, exhortation, warning, and encouragement are found in 5:11-6:20.

Christ's priesthood, symbolized by Melchizedec, is superior to Aaron's (7:1-8:6) for the following reasons:

- * The "order of Melchizedec" isn't dependent on human ancestry as was Aaron's, but is an ever-abiding priesthood (7:1-3)
- * Our "great high priest Jesus" is superior to the temporal and imperfect order of Aaron (7:4-10)
- * We have in Him (Jesus) a perfectly availing, sympathetic, merciful high priest who is far superior to the Aaronic order (7:11-28)

- * The Aaronic priests offered sacrifices every day; Christ offered one eternally efficacious sacrifice (7:26-28)
- * The Aaronic priests served in the Tabernacle which was but an earthly type of the Tabernacle in which Christ ministers (8:1-5).
- * Christ is the mediator of a better covenant (8:6). The new covenant is as much greater than the old as Christ's priesthood is greater than that Aaron's.

2. The Superiority of the Now Covenant to the Old (8:7-10:18)

The Old Covenant was only temporary (8:7-10:18). The Old Testament Scriptures taught that God would make a *new* covenant with His people. The ordinances and sanctuary of the Old Covenant were simply types and shadows that did not bring perfect fellowship with God (9:1-10). Christ, the true priest of the heavenly sanctuary, by one perfect sacrifice—His own person—brought eternal redemption and perfect fellowship with God (9:11-15). The New Covenant was sealed with better blood than that of calves and goats—the blood of Jesus Christ (9:16-24). The one sacrifice of the New Covenant is better than the many sacrifices of the Old (9:25-10:18).

3. Exhortations and Warnings (10:19-13-25)

In view of the fact that they have sure access to God through a faithful high priest, the writer exhorted the Hebrews to faithfulness and steadfastness (10:19-25). He also warned against apostasy (10:26-31) and admonished them to be patient in view of the promised rewards (10:32- 36).

The Hebrews were urged to walk by faith in 10:37-12:4. Faith is that which makes the believer confident that the objects of his hope are real and not imaginary. The Old Testament saints manifested faith by an implicit obedience to and trust in God, in spite of appearance and adverse circumstances. Having given a definition of faith in the beginning of chapter 11, the writer then gave several examples of great men and women of faith through the centuries who were victorious through faith. Of course, faith's supreme example was Jesus, the One who gave the first impulse to our faith, and who will bring it to its final maturity (12:1-4).

Because of their heavenly calling (12:18-24) and because of their heavenly Leader (12:25-29), the Hebrews were exhorted to scrupulous obedience. They were also exhorted to sanctified (13:1-7), steadfast (13:8, 9), separated (13:10-16), and submissive living (13:17).

XX. JAMES

The General Epistles are so called because, unlike the Pauline Epistles, they are not addressed to any particular church, but to believers in general. Two of them (II and III John) are addressed to particular individuals.

A. AUTHOR

There are three prominent persons named James in the New Testament. It is generally agreed that James, called “the Lord’s brother” by Paul, was the writer of this epistle.

B. THEME

Practical religion, manifesting itself in good works, contrasted with a mere profession of faith, is the theme of James.

C. TO WHOM ADDRESSED

James wrote to the twelve tribes scattered abroad (1:1), that is, to the Christian Jews of the dispersion. The whole tone of the epistle reveals that it was written for Jews.

D. PURPOSE

The letter was penned to comfort Jewish Christians who were passing through severe trials, to correct disorders in their assemblies, and to combat a tendency to divorce faith from works.

E. DATE

James probably wrote his letter about 60 A.D. from Jerusalem. It is believed to have been the first epistle written to the Christian church.

F. CONTENTS

1. Temptation as the Trial of Faith (1:1-21)

James stated that the purpose of temptation was to perfect the Christian’s character and that wisdom was a quality to be exercised in the successful endurance of temptation. This wisdom is a gift from God but is granted on the condition of unwavering faith. A source of trial and temptations is poverty and riches. A crown of

life is the reward for endurance of trial and temptation.

The source of inward temptation is outlined in verses 13-18. God does not tempt man with evil. Man is drawn away of his own lust. God gives us the power by which we are raised to a new and higher life. A Christian's proper attitude is discussed in verses 19-21.

2. Works as the Evidence of True Faith (1:22-2:26)

True faith is manifested in obeying, as well as hearing, the Word of God. It should also be manifested in practical religion and is shown by impartial dealing with people.

3. Words and Their Power (3:1-12)

The unbridle tongue is destructive in its influence. Blessings and cursing cannot proceed from the same mouth.

4. True and False Wisdom (3:13-4:17)

True wisdom is demonstrated in good conduct, which is pure, peaceable, gentle, easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy. On the other hand, false wisdom is earthly, sensual, and devilish.

5. Patience Under Oppression: The Endurance of Faith (5:1-12)

James urged the Christians to patiently endure their trials and tests because of their faith.

6. Prayer (5:13-20)

James closed his epistle with a dissertation on prayer. Prayer should be made in times of affliction or sickness, for "the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much" (verse 16).

XXI. I PETER

A. TO WHOM ADDRESSED

The Apostle Peter wrote his first epistle to the churches of Asia Minor (1:1). Although it is not stated in the Scriptures, it is assumed that Peter had visited these churches. Paul had written to some of these assemblies; other assemblies were addressed by John in Revelation.

B. THEME

The theme of Peter's first epistle is the sufficiency of divine grace and its practical application in relation to Christian living, the endurance of trial, and suffering.

C. PURPOSE

Peter wrote this letter with the intent of encouraging the believers to hold fast during suffering and to exhort them to holiness.

D. DATE

I Peter was probably written about 60 A.D. from "Babylon." It is generally thought that "Babylon" was a figurative expression for Rome instead of the ancient city on the Euphrates.

E. CONTENTS

1. Rejoicing In Suffering Because of Salvation (1:1-12)

Persecution brought suffering to the saints. Nevertheless, they could still rejoice in their salvation. To emphasize this fact, Peter related five aspects of their salvation:

- * The source of salvation (verse 2)
- * The result of salvation (verse 3)
- * The consummation of salvation (verses 4, 5)
- * The joy of salvation (verses 6-8)
- * The mystery of salvation (verses 9-12)

2. Suffering for Righteousness' Sake (1:13-3:22)

Peter followed his discussion of salvation with a series of exhortations. He exhorted them to:

- * Holiness (1:13-21)
- * An intense and sincere love for the brethren (1:22-25)
- * Spiritual growth (2:1,2)
- * Draw near unto Christ (2:3-10)
- * Live a blameless life (2:11, 12)
- * Be submissive (2:13-17)
- * Brotherly love (3:8-12)
- * Patient endurance of wrong (3:13-16)

3. Suffering With Christ (Chapter 4)

Suffering with Christ is the theme of chapter 4. Peter touched on death to sin (verses 1-6), the Christian's conduct in view of the imminence of the Lord's return (verses 7-11), and the glorious privilege of suffering with Christ (verses 12-19). He stated:

Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you: But rejoice, in as much as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings, that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy (4:12, 13).

4. Concluding Exhortations (Chapter 5)

Peter concluded his epistle with instructions for pastors (5:1-4) and for young men and the church in general (5:5-11).

XXII. II PETER

A. TO WHOM ADDRESSED

Simon Peter (1:1) wrote this epistle to a group of unnamed people. However, based on the phrase “second epistle” (3:1), it is assumed that he was again writing to the churches in Asia Minor.

B. THEME

I Peter deals with a danger without the church-persecution; II Peter centers on one within—false doctrine. The first was written to encourage, the second, to warn. Consequently, the theme of II Peter is: A full experimental knowledge of Christ is the stronghold against a false teaching and an unholy life.

C. PURPOSE

II Peter was written to give a prophetic picture of the apostasy of the last days and to urge upon the Christians that preparedness of heart and life which alone would enable them to meet its perils.

D. DATE

II Peter was probably written about 66 A.D., shortly before the apostle’s martyrdom.

E. CONTENTS

1. Exhortation to Growth in Divine Grace and Knowledge (Chapter 1)

After a brief salutation, Peter hurried to the heart of his message as he urged the saints to grow in grace and knowledge. The basis of saving knowledge is the promises of God (verses 3, 4). Experimental knowledge increases as the Christian matures (verses 5-11). The Christian life cannot be stagnant. There must be either progress forward, or there will be falling backward. The testimonies of the apostles (verses 12-18) and prophets (verses 19-21) are sources for saving knowledge.

2. Warning Against False Teachers (Chapter 2)

With reference to several Old Testament happenings, Peter warned against false teachers and the punishment in store for those who heed false doctrine.

3. Promise of the Lord's Coming (Chapter 3)

In spite of the scoffers who would arise, Peter reaffirmed the reality of Christ's Second Coming. He stated:

The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness, but is long-suffering to usward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up. Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness, looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat (3:9-12).

Because of the coming of the Lord, Peter concluded his letter with exhortations to godliness and a final warning against being led astray by false doctrine.

XXIII. I JOHN

A. TO WHOM ADDRESSED

Like the Epistle to the Hebrews, I John neither names its author or the person or persons addressed. Nevertheless, Halley states that it was recognized from the beginning as a circular letter from the Apostle John for the churches around Ephesus.

B. THEME

The Gospel of John sets forth the acts and words which proved that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; the First Epistle of John sets forth the acts and words which are obligatory upon those who believe this truth. The Gospel deals with the fundamentals of Christian faith; the letter with fundamental Christian life. The Gospel was written to give a foundation of faith; the epistle, to give assurance. The theme may be summarized as: the grounds of Christian assurance and fellowship with the Father.

C. PURPOSE

Four reasons are given in the letter for its writing:

1. That the child of God might have fellowship with the Father, His Son Jesus Christ, and one another (1:3)
2. That the child of God may have fullness of joy (1:4)
3. That he may not sin (2:1)
4. That he may recognize the grounds of his assurance of eternal life (5: 13)

D. DATE

John probably penned this letter about 90 A.D.

E. CONTENTS

1. Introduction (1:1-4)

John began his first epistle with the gospel, discussing its substance, guarantee, purpose of preaching, and results.

2. Fellowship With God (1:5-2; 28) Fellowship with

God is based on:

- * Walking in the light (1:5-7)
- * Consciousness and confession of sin (1:8-2:1)
- * Obedience to God's commands in imitation of Christ (2:2-6)
- * Love of the brethren (2:7-11)
- * Unworldliness (2:12-17)
- * Pure doctrine (2:18-28)

3. Divine Sonship (2:29-3:34)

The third section of John's epistle concerns divine sonship. A test of sonship is the righteous walk. The Christian is to show an absolute antagonism to sin (2:29-3:10). John wrote:

Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it both not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is. And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure. Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law (3:2-4).

The righteous walk and sonship will produce love for the brethren (3:11-18) and an assurance of salvation (3:19-24).

4. The Spirit of Truth and the Spirit of Error (4:1-6)

John appealed to the saints to test the teaching of a prophet, however eloquent and gifted the prophet may be (verse 1). The test of the message is the confession of Christ's incarnation (verse 2).

5. God Is Love (4:7-21)

John appealed to the saints to love one another because God is love (verse 8). The proof of divine love is God's sacrifice (verses 9 and 10), Consequently, God's love for us calls for love on our part toward our brethren (verse 11). The result of love on our part is the manifestation of God's presence (verses 12-16), boldness (verses 17), and absence of condemning fear (verse 18). The proof of our love is found in 4:19-5:3.

6. Faith (5:4-12)

Faith results in the victory that even overcomes the world. John stated:

He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself: he that believeth not God hath made him a liar, because he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son. 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 (5:10-12).

7. Conclusion: The Christian's Confidence (5:16-21)

John concluded his letter with instructions concerning dealing with a sinful brother and the four-fold knowledge of the believer which gives him confidence.

XXIV. II JOHN

A. TO WHOM ADDRESSED

The Apostle John, the “elder” of 1:1, was the last of the twelve apostles, the rest having gone on to be with Jesus. He wrote II John to the “elect lady.” Although the term may be applied to the church collectively, it seems that John was writing a personal note to the mother of some children who had impressed him with their devotion to truth.

B. THEME

John was well aware of the false doctrine that was creeping into the early church. This is reflected in II John’s theme: The duty of obeying the truth and avoiding fellowship with its enemies.

C. PURPOSE

John penned this letter to warn his friends against heresy and association with false teachers. He was writing at a time when Antinomian and Gnostic errors were attempting to undermine the foundation of faith and purity.

D. CONTENTS

1. Divine Truth in Relation to Believers (1:1-6)

Divine truth unites the believers in fellowship and eternally dwells in them. In connection with love, it characterizes the spirit of their greetings. Loving obedience to truth is the pathway which they must walk.

2. Worldly Error (1:7-11)

Worldly error has many deceitful advocates and denies the incarnation of Christ. These must be guarded against, for they depart from the teachings of Christ. Such teachers should be avoided.

3. Concluding Words (1:12-13)

John closed his letter in a warm and friendly manner.

XXV. III JOHN

A. TO WHOM ADDRESSED

III John is addressed to Gaius. There are three men in the Bible named Gaius. Although debatable, it is possible that this epistle was written to Caius of Corinth, a convert of Paul, in whose home the Corinthian church met. Tradition states that he later became John's scribe.

B. THEME

The theme of III John is the duty of hospitality toward the ministry and the danger of domineering leadership.

C. PURPOSE

This epistle was written to commend Gaius for entertaining those Christian workers who were entirely dependent on the hospitality of believers and to denounce the unhospitable, tyrannical attitude of Diotrephes.

D. CONTENTS

III John is a personal letter to Gaius, commending him for his hospitality to a group of itinerant evangelists who were very badly treated by Diotrephes, apparently a leading man or pastor of the church. Demetrius is also mentioned and commended for being a model churchman in contrast to Diotrephes.

XXVI. JUDE

A. AUTHOR

The Bible Mentions two Judes. One was one of the twelve apostles (Luke 6:16); the other was the brother of James and the half-brother of Jesus (Matthew 13:55). The latter is commonly regarded as the author of this epistle.

B. TO WHOM ADDRESSED

The nature of this letter suggests that it was written as a general letter to the churches of Asia Minor.

C. PURPOSE

The epistle was written to warn against apostates within the church, who though having denied the faith, still retained their membership.

D. DATE

The circular letter was probably written about 70 A.D.

E. CONTENTS

Jude was written as an earnest appeal to combat the influence of apostasy within the church. The author stated:

Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints (verse 3).

In a scathing attack on the apostates, Jude likens them to their Old Testament counterparts and reminds the church of the judgment of God for such sin. In these last days, may we take heed to the words of Jude.

XXVII. REVELATION

A. THEME

The climax of God's revelation of truth to man is the theme of Revelation. As Genesis gives us light regarding the beginning of things Revelation gives us light concerning their consummation. A balance between the two may be seen in the following:

Genesis	Revelation
Paradise lost	Paradise regained
The first city, a failure	City of the redeemed, a success
The beginning of the curse	No more curse
Marriage of first Adam	Marriage of the Second Adam
First tears	Every tear wiped away
Satan's entrance	Satan's doom
Old creation	New creation
Communion broken	Communion restored

The book of Revelation is the consummation of Old Testament prophecy. It is full of symbols and language borrowed from the writings of the prophets who were favored with glorious revelations concerning the end time - Isaiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, and Zechariah. It is a book of Christ's coming in glory. The theme may well be summarized as: The coming of the Christ in glory as the climax of the age.

B. PURPOSE

The book was written by John, the apostle, at the direct command of Jesus in order that there might be a book of prophecy for this dispensation.

C. DATE

It was written from the Isle of Patmos, a small island off the coast of Asia Minor, about 90 A.D.

D. COMMENTS

The interpretations of Revelation have been exceedingly varied. Hundreds of volumes have been written upon this book, giving widely diversified opinions concerning its meaning and teachings. It is quite possible that the interpretation of the book will become increasingly clearer as the time arrives for the fulfillment of its prophecies.

Apart from the interpretations of the book, there are so many valuable lessons to be learned, so many warnings to be heeded, so many promises to encourage, that Revelation is of real practical value to the Christ.

Since Revelation is a mosaic of Old Testament prophecies and symbols, the study of certain prophets—Isaiah, Ezekiel, Daniel and Zechariah—provides the key to much of the interpretation.

E. CONTENTS

The following is an outline of the Revelation of Jesus Christ:

1. **Concerning Christ: “The Things Which Thou Hast Seen”** (Chapter 1)

- * The introduction (verses 1-3)
- * The salutation (verses 4, 5)
- * The praise (verses 5, 6)
- * The proclamation (verses 7, 8)
- * The prophet (verses 9-20)
- *

2. **Concerning the Churches: “The Things Which Are”** (Chapters 2 and 3)

Note: The churches mentioned in these chapters actually existed in John’s day, and the conditions which prevailed there then called forth the Lord’s messages to them. However, they are also a type of the entire church (there were more than seven assemblies in Asia Minor in John’s time)—and therefore the messages may be applied to the church in every age.

- * The Church at Ephesus (2:17)

The assembly at Ephesus was commended for its work, patience, and abhorrence of false teachers. It was rebuked for its spiritual decline. The titles of Christ used is that of a superintendent subjecting their works and motives to a severe scrutiny. The church had lost its first love and He is the One walking in the midst of the seven candlesticks.

- * The Church at Smyrna (2:8-11)

The congregation at Smyrna was complimented for its endurance in persecution. There is no message of rebuke to this suffering assembly. To a church facing

persecution, the Lord revealed Himself as the One who suffered, died and rose again. The overcomer is promised deliverance from the second death.

* The Church at Pergamos (2:12-17)

The believers in Pergamos were commended for their faithfulness in testimony. They were rebuked for prevalence of licentiousness and idolatry. To a church tainted with immorality and idolatry, Christ is the One who will fight against it with His two-edged sword. The overcomer is promised hidden manna.

* The Church at Thyatira (2:18-29)

The saints at Thyatira were commended for their charity, service and faith, but rebuked for their toleration of corrupt teachers. Christ revealed Himself to them as the One with eyes as a flame of fire and the feet like brass (symbolic of judgment). The overcomer is promised power over nations.

* The Church at Sardis (3:16)

The church at Sardis was commended for its works, although they were imperfect. It was rebuked for spiritual deadness. To a church spiritually dead, Christ is the One holding the seven stars—churches—in His hands and also the seven spirits of God, the power of which is able to quicken those churches. The overcomer is promised to be clothed in white raiment and to have his name confessed before the Father.

* The Church at Philadelphia (3:7-13)

The Philadelphian assembly was complimented for their obedience to Christ's commands and steadfastness in testimony. There is no direct reproof, although the faint praise of "little strength" has a shadow of rebuke. To a church eager to enter the open door of missionary service, Christ is the One who has the keys that open doors that no man can shut. The overcomer is promised to be pillars in God's temple and to be given a new name.⁷⁵

* The Church at Laodicea (3:14-22)

There is no commendation given to the congregation at Laodicea. Nevertheless, it is rebuked for its spiritual lukewarmness. To a lukewarm church, unfaithful in testimony, Christ sat Himself forth as the Amen, the true and faithful witness. The overcomer is promised to share Christ's throne.

3. Concerning the Kingdom: "The Things Which Shall Be"
(Chapters 4-22)

- * The vision of God's throne and its surroundings (chapter 4)
- * A vision of the Lamb (chapter 5)
- * Opening of the mysteries: The seals (6:1-8:1)
- * The sounding of the seven trumpets (8:2-11:15)
- * The two wonders (chapter 12)
- * The two beasts (chapter 13)
- * The two pictures of Christ: the Lamb and the Reaper (chapter 14)
- * The early victors and their song (15:1-4)
- * The seven angels and the golden vials (15:5-8)
- * The outpouring of the seven vials of wrath (16:1-21)
- * The doom of Babylon (chapters 17,18)
- * The Second Advent (chapter 19)
- * The Millennium (chapter 20)
- * The new heavens and the new earth (chapters 21, 22)

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