

NT 552  
Johannine  
Literature  
& general  
epistles



Dr. Robert C. Newman  
Biblical Theological Seminary  
Hatfield, PA

**NT 552 Johannine Literature  
& General Epistles**

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## I. Johannine Literature: Gospel and Epistles.

Our basic exegetical courses at Biblical Seminary divide the NT into three parts: (1) Synoptic Gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke); (2) Acts and Pauline Epistles; and (3) Johannine Literature and General Epistles. The last of these contains under Johannine Literature: Gospel of John, 1-3 John, and Revelation; and under General Epistles: Hebrews, James, 1-2 Peter, and Jude. For the sake of some sort of combination of historical chronology and biblical order, we will cover John's Gospel and Epistles together at the beginning, but then go into the General Epistles, reserving Revelation for last.

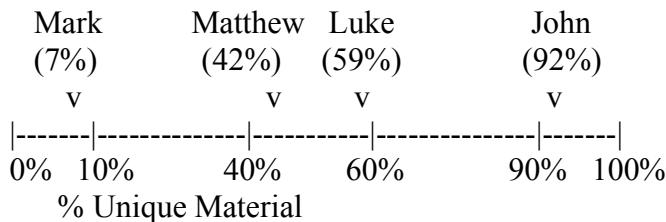
### A. The Gospel of John.

#### 1. Recent criticism of the Gospel of John.

In the last 200 years, with the various liberal lives of Christ, the Gospel of John has been more seriously questioned as to its authenticity than have the Synoptic Gospels. This is partly due to the supernatural elements prominent in John.

#### a. Differences in content between Synoptics and John.

##### 1) Unique material - 92% of John is not found elsewhere.



##### 2) Detailed chronology.

- Jesus' ministry of c3 years is more explicit in John than in Synoptics
- Liberals say that this is a different chronology and that John is less historical than Synoptics.
- This was popular view until Dead Sea Scrolls were discovered; not held quite so strongly now.

##### 3) Different themes.

missing from John: Kingdom of God, demons, repentance, prayer  
 new topics in John: truth, life, world, abiding, witness  
 but J & Synoptics share: Father, Son of man, faith, love, sending

### b. Explicit Indications of Jesus' Deity in John.

- Are definitely clearer in John, but are very strongly implied in the Synoptics.
- In all Gospels, Jesus says "I say", not "thus saith the Lord;" he claims power to forgive sins, raises the dead and controls the weather by command, rather than by prayer (as, e.g., Elijah does).
- Jesus' own statements are more cryptic than the narrator John is himself (or the Synoptics).
  - cf. John's prologue (1:1) with John 8:58 "... before Abraham was born, I AM."
  - Jesus did not openly claim to be God. He intended that His works would demonstrate who He was, but even then the disciples did not fully understand His nature until after His resurrection.
- Liberals do not like divine claims about Jesus, so want to assign a late date to John's writing.

c. Alleged Hellenistic Features in John.

- "Logos" (λόγος) is a common Greek word, but has a significant Greek philosophical background to it as well:
  - 1) General Greek philosophical use: the reason behind (controlling) the world.
  - 2) In Philo (Jewish writer): an intermediary between God and man.
- Other words also have Greek philosophical and pagan dualistic meanings: light and dark, truth and error, etc.
- Some say this shows John's Gospel was written to Greeks, on Greek soil, and not by a real disciple.
- But Dead Sea Scrolls show that many of these terms and phrases were common in Palestinian religious thought
- And "word" (Aramaic *memra*) appears many times in the Targums; used as a way to avoid anthropomorphisms of God (e.g., "The Word of God said" instead of "God said").

These features are thus not purely Hellenistic, but truly Jewish also.  
Perhaps they were chosen to reach out to Greeks using terminology they could relate to.

d. The Gospel claims to be from the closest apostle.

- This is the only (canonical) Gospel to make this claim directly.
- Some suspect fraud and reject John's picture of Jesus as not authentic, especially as 2<sup>nd</sup> cent. heretics often claimed apostolic authors for their writings: Gospel of Peter, Gospel of Thomas, etc.

2. Resulting Attitudes toward Gospel of John in liberalizing circles.

a. Bultmann

three or more sources, and two editors;  
work completed in current form in period 80-120 AD

- Sign source - Jesus' miracles in Semitic Greek
- Discourse source - Gnostic influence, poetic Aramaic
- Passion source - Semitic Greek

First edition by evangelist (not apostle) was disrupted;  
2nd ed. by ecclesiastical redactor who rearranged, added chapter 21 and refs. to church  
and sacraments

b. Raymond Brown - liberalizing Roman Catholic

written by "Johannine school" in several stages over many decades, beginning with oral  
traditions in 40s and completed by a friendly redactor about 100 AD

c. Martin Hengel

written by John the Elder, founder of Johannine school which lasted till about 110 AD

Actually the evidence for John's authorship is quite strong.

3. Attestation and Authorship of John's Gospel.

a. Internal evidence.

1) Indirect internal evidence sketched by Westcott in his *Origin of the Gospels*, 1860; looking at  
phenomena in the Gospel, Westcott suggests that:

a) Religious knowledge shows the author was a Jew.  
-Jewish activities are mentioned but not explained.

b) Geographical knowledge shows author was Palestinian.  
-Many are off-hand statements, which are striking since few Jews remained in Palestine at  
the time the Gospel was written (c90 AD, after 70 AD wars).

c) The standpoint of the narrative (reader's vantage point) suggests the author was an  
eyewitness, an Apostle, and one of the "inner 3"; but he is distinguished from Peter  
(author raced him to the tomb); and doesn't appear to be James (who died in 44 AD).

-Liberals often agree that these features point to John, but say the Gospel is an intentional

fraud.

2) Direct evidence.

Author does not name himself, but gives some hints.

- a) John 1:14 "we beheld" => author was beholder,  
"glory" - could be transfiguration.

1 John 1:1 "what we beheld" implies same author for 1 John as for Gospel

-Polycarp and Papias say he is the Apostle John.

- b) John 1:6,15,19, etc. - this is the only Gospel that calls John the Baptist just "John"; other Gospels, since they mention the apostle John by name, must distinguish him from John the Baptist, so add "the Baptist" to latter's name
- c) John 19:35 - The author was one standing at the foot of the cross. He is called "the disciple whom Jesus loved" (v.26-27).
- d) John 21:24-25 "This is the disciple ... who wrote these things", who is described in v.20 as "the disciple whom Jesus loved ... who also leaned back on His breast at the supper..."

b. External evidence.

1) Gospel is alluded to in some of earliest Christian writings.

- a) 1 Clement is earliest extra-Biblical writing (95 AD), but does NOT mention or allude to John's Gospel.

-John was probably written at about the same time, so Clement may not have seen it yet.

- b) Ignatius in ch. 7 of his letter to Philadelphians (c115 AD) alludes to John 3:8 (Lightfoot, p.80):

*For even though certain persons desired to deceive me after the flesh, yet the spirit is not deceived, being from God; for 'it knoweth whence it cometh and where it goeth,' and it searcheth out the hidden things.*

- c) Pseudo-Barnabas (c135), sec. 11, (Lightfoot, p.148)  
in the middle of a somewhat allegorical exegesis of several OT passages, quotes John 6:51:

*And whosoever shall eat of these shall live forever.*

-For this reason, Moffatt has given AD 115 as the latest possible date for the writing of John.

d) Justin Martyr (c150 AD).

-Mentions the "memoirs of the apostles, called Gospels."

-Calls Jesus the "logos" in *Dialogue with Trypho* in ch.127-128; this dialogue/debate occurred c135 AD, written up c150.

-Also used *logos* several times in his *First Apology*.

-Cites John 3:5 in *Apology* 61: "For Christ also said, 'Except ye be born again, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.'"

-In *Dialogue* 91 he explains the serpent in the wilderness like John 3:14 does.

e) Tatian's *Diatessaron* (c170 AD).

-Opens with and regularly uses the 4th gospel.

-Harnack notes that by this time, the 4 Gospels were already accepted, but no others.

f) Muratorian Canon (late 2nd cent. by anonymous Italian church official).

*The fourth (book) of the Gospels is that of John (one) of the disciples. When his fellow-disciples and bishops urged (him), he said: 'Fast together with me today for three days and, what shall be revealed to each, let us tell (it) to each other.' On the same night it was revealed to Andrew, (one) of the Apostles, that, with all of them reviewing (it), John should describe all things in his own name.*

-John, apparently reluctant to write, was urged by church leaders in Asia Minor who would review it.

-Idea of group review and approval agrees w/ John 21:24: "We know that his witness is true."

g) Irenaeus (c125-200 AD): Writing c170 AD in France.

*Afterwards John, the disciple of the Lord who also leaned upon his breast, he too published a Gospel while residing in Ephesus (in) Asia.*

*Against Heresies* 3.1.2 (Latin)

Greek in Eusebius, *Church History* 5.8.2

*John, the Lord's disciple, proclaims this faith (and) desires, by the proclamation of the Gospel, to remove the error which had been disseminated among men by Cerinthus and much earlier by those who are called Nicolaitans who are an offshoot of that knowledge falsely so called, that he might confound them and persuade (them) that there (is) one God who made all things through His Word, and not as they say that the Creator was surely one, and the Father of the Lord another .... Thus he began with the teaching (of) the Gospel: 'In the beginning was the Word ....'*

*Against Heresies 3.11.7*

- Irenaeus studied under Polycarp who died in 155 when Irenaeus was c30. Polycarp was martyred 86 years after he was baptized (in 69 AD) and had contact with the Apostle John, perhaps for nearly 30 years after being baptized.
- Implication: Both studied under their teachers as adults.
- So have pretty direct link back to Jesus.
- See John in Ephesus in Asia, fighting Gnostic thought.
- If John's Gospel is a fraud, must assume that the plot to fake it was a very good one in order to mislead Irenaeus, who would have known a lot about John.
- Cannot say that the modern gospel is a different one than Irenaeus had in view of his extensive quotations.

h) Theophilus of Antioch (c170-180):

*But when God determined to do the things which He had purposed, He brought forth this utterable Word, the first-born of all creation; He himself was not emptied of the Word but bringing forth the Word He always had consort with His Word. Hence the Holy Scriptures and all the inspired (writers) teach us (as) one of these, John, says: 'In the beginning was the Word, and (the) Word was with God'; showing that at the first God was alone and the Word was in Him.*

*To Autolycus 2.22*

- This letter to a friend is Theophilus' only known work.

i) Clement of Alexandria (c150-203): Written c200 AD.

*Last of all, John, noticing that the physical things had been set forth in the (other) Gospels, being urged by his companions and inspired by the Spirit, wrote a spiritual Gospel.*

*Outlines; cited in Eusebius 6.14.5*

- "Being urged" fits with the story in Muratorian Canon.
- Identifies Gospel, indicates it is last.

By the end of 2nd cent, Gospel of John has wide geographic recognition.

j) Eusebius (c270-340 AD) is much later.

*Yet of all the disciples of the Lord, only Matthew and John have left us (their) memoirs; and they, it is reported, had recourse to writing only (under pressure of) necessity ... But when Mark and Luke had already published their Gospels, they say that John, who the whole time had made use of unwritten preaching, finally resorted to writing also for the following reason: When the three previously written (Gospels) had already been delivered to all and to him, they say that (he) accepted (them), testifying to their truth, (but) said that there was likely lacking in the writing only the account of the things which were done by Christ during the first period and at the beginning of (His) preaching ... They say that, when he had been called upon for these reasons, the Apostle John handed down in his Gospel (an account of) the time passed over in silence by the former evangelists and (of) the things which were done at this time by the Savior B and these were the things which happened before the imprisonment of the Baptist ...*

*Church History 3.24.5-15*

-How much this statement is a deduction from the content of John itself or tradition from independent sources is hard to say.

#### 4. The Man John.

-Mentioned by name in 6 books: Matthew, Mark, Luke, Acts, Galatians, and Revelation.

-Mentioned more than any of the other Gospel writers.

-Not named as the author in the Gospel or Epistles, but we can find much information about him in these.

##### a. Background.

1) Father was Zebedee, (older?) brother was James, Mt 4:21. Mother was probably Salome, if Mark 15:40, 16:1 and Matt. 27:56 refer to the same 3 women.

2) His family were fishermen (Matt. 4:21), and relatively prosperous since they had hired servants (Mark 1:20).

3) Hints of connections with the city of Jerusalem:

John was known to the high priest, John 18:15.

May have had home there, where he took Mary, Jn 19:27.

=> Business was sufficiently prosperous that they had a market in Jerusalem and the high priest bought from them. (Could get ice from Mt Hermon & ship fresh in one day, or sell dried or salted fish.)

-Perhaps John belonged to priesthood, as ordinary (lower level) priests would do other work for a living.

4) John may have been a disciple of John the Baptist.

John 1:35, 37, 40: One (Andrew) is identified but other is not. Some think he is Philip (cf. v.43). Others say he is John since this fits his style of not naming himself.

-Recall that Gospel of John calls John the Baptist "John" it never refers to apostle John by name.

b. As Jesus' Disciple in Palestine.

1) John is involved in many incidents in the Gospels.

- He is one of the "inner 3" who are let in on a number of events in which the other disciples do not have a part.
- Was present at the transfiguration and the cross (apparently he was the only male disciple at cross).
- Races Peter to the tomb.

2) John recedes into the background in Acts and is seen only as a companion of Peter.

3) John is an important figure in the church at Jerusalem.

- Called a "pillar" of the church in Gal. 2:9.
- Date of Paul's visit to Jerusalem here in Gal. 2 is disputed.
- Could be Jerusalem Council of 50 AD, or earlier when aid was brought to Jerusalem church (44? 46?).

c. As Jesus' Disciple Elsewhere.

1) Left Jerusalem and Palestine, presumably before 70 AD.

- Not sure when he left; was still there around 50 AD.
- No tradition that he was at Jerusalem when it fell.
- As Eusebius relates and Lk 21:20-21 predicts, Xns were to flee Jerusalem before it was destroyed.

2) According to Irenaeus, John settled in Ephesus and was there until the end of his life.

- Probably moved there after the death of Paul (64-68 AD), as Paul's letters to Ephesians and 1 Timothy give no hint he had arrived.
- Could have left Palestine but not gone directly to Ephesus, so settlement there could be 70 or much later.

3) Exiled to Isle of Patmos (Rev 1:9), in the reign of Domitian at c95 AD, according to tradition.

- Patmos off the coast of Asia Minor, not far from Ephesus.
- John was on Patmos "because of the Word of God and the testimony of Jesus," (Rev. 1:9) a phrase used elsewhere in Rev of those who were persecuted as Christians.
- Domitian (3<sup>rd</sup> emperor in the Flavian line) was like Nero, persecuting Christians because they would not worship him.

4) Lived a very long life, until the time of Trajan (98-117 AD), according to Irenaeus.

- In *Against Heresies* 2.22.5.
- The death of John was probably c100 AD.
- Are not sure of his age; was probably in his 20's when he was with Jesus => about 90 years old when he died (note John 21:22-25 below).

5. Date of the Fourth Gospel.

- Variety of dating decreased a lot in 20<sup>th</sup> century.
- Even liberals now say: At latest *early* 2nd century.
- Conservatives generally say the end of the 1st century.
- Some (even liberal J.A.T. Robinson) go for pre-70 AD.
- DSS shows that some ideas ("light", etc.) were used in early Jewish sources, so need not date John very late.

a. Apparently not after the time of Ignatius (107-115), since he seems to refer to it.

- => Written long enough before so it had circulation and Ignatius and readers could be familiar with it.
- => Late 1st century or very early 2nd cent.

b. Last chapter (21:22-25) => John already was an old man.

- v.18 Predicts Peter will grow old.
- v.23 John corrects the rumor that he himself (John) would not die.  
Jesus apparently meant that it was none of Peter's business if Jesus had different plans for John than for Peter.

- John was apparently old already when he wrote this.
- Agrees with the strong tradition that everything by John was written when he was old.

c. Have no textual support for the liberal idea that ch.21 was written later than the rest, so the last decade of the 1st century is reasonable, but not certain.

- Most conservatives (incl. Newman) date it in the 90's.

- Some (even liberals) put in 80's 70's or even earlier.
- It appears to supplement the other Gospels so is probably after the mid 60's.

## 6. Purposes of John.

- a. The purpose stated by the author (John 20:30-31).

-Statement follows immediately after Thomas sees Jesus.

- 1) That readers who have not seen Jesus might believe Jesus is the Son of God, the Messiah.
- 2) That, as a result, they will have spiritual life.

-Shows an evangelistic purpose.

- b. Another purpose may be to supplement the other Gospels.

- 1) No direct statement by John to this effect.

-Though supported by tradition.

- 2) Clearly the Gospel does supplement, with some overlap.

-Most of the material is unique:

-Pre-incarnate existence, ministry before imprisonment of John the Baptist, some conversations and discourses.

-See some overlap as it fits in with John's purpose:

-Death and Resurrection: saving belief is based on Jesus' atonement.

-Feeding the 5000: One of 7 signs showing Jesus' deity

- 3) The Gospel does presuppose some knowledge of the life of Jesus on the part of readers.

John 1:29-34 John the Baptist tells 2 others about the Spirit descending at Jesus' baptism, but the Gospel does not narrate the baptism.

John 3:24 Allusion to Matthew and Mark=s references about John the Baptist's imprisonment assumes a chronological knowledge of Jesus' life.

John 6:53 Feeding of 5000 had recently occurred. This cryptic statement about eating flesh and blood turns off some disciples and is hard to understand (before Last Supper).

-John omits the Last Supper itself but has this explanation of it.

=> Readers expected to know about Last Supper and its significance.

John 11:2 Refers to "Mary who anointed the Lord with ointment, and wiped His feet with her hair..." But John does not report the incident until later.

- Thus John's Gospel is supplemental and assumes in several places that readers are familiar with events and persons from the Synoptics.

- Perhaps John recorded those statements of Jesus which the disciples did not use in their ministries because they were too hard for the general audience to understand.
  - Maybe they were too hard even for the disciples in their early ministries, but John had had a lot of time to meditate on them by the time he writes.
- c. Some other possible purposes.
- 1) refute false/antagonistic views about Jesus held by Jews of time; perhaps also to correct over-zealous veneration of John the Baptist.
  - 2) addresses Christians (esp 13-17), giving teaching about life in the church.
  - 3) polemic against gnosticism? more obv in 1 John; no doubt author aware of gnosticism, and Gospel functions as excellent weapon against it.

## 7. Characteristics and Techniques of John (courtesy Robert A. Peterson)

### a. Distinctive Vocabulary

#### (1) Words omitted in John (w/ frequency in Synoptics)

baptism (10)  
miracle (37)  
mercy/to show mercy (36)  
Gospel/to preach Gospel (30)  
to cleanse (18)  
to preach (30)  
repentance/to repent (23)  
parable (48)  
prayer/to pray (50)  
[demon] [6/43]

#### (2) Common in John, rarer in Synoptics (freqs in John/Synoptics)

love/to love (44/28)  
truth/true (46/10)  
to know (56/60)  
I am (54/34)  
life (34/16)  
Jews (66/16)  
world (78/13)  
witness/to bear witness (47/15)  
to send (32/15)

#### (3) Significance of these differences

John does not have a different theology than the Synoptics, but he does use different imagery. Thus while Jesus doesn't "preach the Gospel" in John, he does "bear witness to the truth" so that men may "come to know the Father" and have "eternal life."

- b. Explanatory Notes - a common feature in John which he uses to accomplish several purposes (see Raymond Brown, *Anchor Bible*, p cxxxvi):  
explain names & titles - 1:38 (Rabbi), 42 (Messiah)  
explain symbols - 2:21 (body = temple), 12:33 (lifted up = crucifixion)  
correct false impressions - 4:2 (Jesus not baptizing), 6:6 (knew what he would do)  
relate other events - 3:24 (John imprisoned), 11:2 (Mary anointing Jesus)  
identify characters - 7:50 (Nicodemus), 19:39 (ditto), 21:20 (disciple whom Jesus loved)
- c. Misunderstandings - used effectively by John to show how Jesus' hearers often misunderstand, thinking on earthly plane when he is speaking on heavenly  
2:20 - opponents think Jesus is speaking of earthly temple  
3:4 - Nicodemus thinks he speaks of physical birth  
4:15 - woman thinks he offers physical water  
6:26 - crowd looking for Jesus because they were fed
- d. Irony - statements of opponents intended negatively are true or more meaningful in a sense they don't realize; John sometimes leaves these unanswered to engage his reader  
4:12 - Samaritan woman: are you greater than Jacob?  
7:42 - crowd: how can Christ come from Galilee?  
11:50 - Caiaphas: better for one to die for people
- e. Double Meaning - John (Jesus?) plays on twofold meaning of words too frequently to be coincidental  
1:14 - made his dwelling/tabernacled  
3:3-8 - born again/born from above  
4:10-14 - living water/running water  
13:1 - end/uttermost
- f. Inverted Parallelism (Chiasm) - As opposed to regular parallelism (abAB, abcABC), chiasm uses the pattern (abBA, abcCBA); John often uses the latter to unify a passage  
1:1-14 creation incarnation  
    a - word (1)   B - light (9)  
    b - light (7)   A - word (14)  
6:36-40 - elaborate; see Brown  
12:38-41       a - Isa 53 quote (38)   B - Isa saw his glory  
                  b - Isa 6 quote (40)    A - Isa spoke of him

- g. Variation - Leon Morris (*Studies in Fourth Gospel*) suggests John's use of variation in vocabulary and word order is so common that it is insignificant, and that John is more likely to be making an emphasis when he doesn't vary!
- 1:11-12 - parelabon/elabon  
1:32-34 - theaomai/horao  
6:39-40,44,54 - arise on last day  
21:15-17 - agapao/phileo [I would disagree with Morris here]
- h. OT Allusions - John's Gospel is filled with OT allusions. Each of the first 12 chapters contain ideas with deep OT roots:
- 1:17 - law through Moses (Jesus as source of grace & truth)  
1:51 - Jacob's ladder, Gen 21 (Jesus as mediator)  
3:5 - water & spirit, Ezk 36:25-27 (eschatological cleansing)  
11:24 - resurrection on last day, Dan 12 (Jesus as resurrection)  
15:1 - vine & branches, Ps 80, Isa 5, Ezk 19 (Jesus as vine)
- i. Symbolism - though cryptic at first, effectively used to get readers to think through significance of Jesus' mission
- 2:19 - destroy this temple  
6:35 - bread of life  
9:39 - blind and seeing  
11:9-10 - walking in day/night...stumbling  
13:30 - and it was night
- j. Dualism - an ethical dualism rather than Gnostic ontological dualism
- 3:19-21 - light/darkness, good/evil  
3:31 - above/below, heaven/earth  
5:24 - life/death  
15:2 - fruit/fruitless
- k. Hyperbole - emphasis by stating in absolute terms what is actually relative (a comparison)
- 1:17 - law... Moses/grace & truth... Christ  
3:32 - no one receives his witness  
5:31 - testimony not valid  
12:44 - does not believe in me but in him who sent...  
15:22,24 - they would not have sin
- l. Inclusion (*inclusio*) - using same or similar words or ideas to mark off the beginning and end of a literary unit; John uses inclusio to emphasize themes and bind together sections of various lengths:
- 1:1 and 1:18 - Word was God; unique God  
1:1 and 20:28 - Word was God; my Lord and my God

- m. Repetition - repeating certain words or ideas to indicate emphasis and hold reader's attention
  - 13:20 - receives
  - 13:31-32 - glorified
  - 16:16-19 - a little while, see/behold
- n. Apparent Contradictions - John (Jesus?) perplexes his audience by apparently contradicting himself. This device causes the believer to think harder to resolve the contradiction, increasing reader involvement, while the unbeliever may go away in disgust/triumph. Cp Jesus' remarks on purpose of parables in Synoptics, and on sight/blindness in John 9.
  - 3:17 and 12:47 vs 9:39 - to judge or not?
  - 5:31 vs 8:14 - witness true or not?

## 8. John's Theology (following I. Howard Marshall)

### a. John as Revelation

to reveal Jesus' **glory** as Son of God

shared w/ Father before incarnation (17:5,24)

demonstrated by signs (1:14, 2:11)

to world (chs 1-12)

12:36b-50 ends w/ summary and clear break

turns to disciples (chs 13-17)

glory seen in humble service

disciples called to same

supremely glorified in passion (chs 18-21)

to reveal **truth** (1:14, 17)

world characterized by error, imperfection, sin

Jesus brings truth (18:37),

is truth incarnate (14:6)

followed by Spirit of Truth (14:17)

leads men to true worship (4:23)

frees them from errors of devil (8:44)

thru knowledge of truth (8:32)

brings true, real bread for souls of men in contrast to empty satisfactions

of

world (6:32, 55)

### b. Signs and Witnesses

revelation thru signs or works of Jesus

not just evidence of miraculous, supernatural power (4:48)

character shows they are from God (9:16) and they authenticate Jesus'

person (3:2; 6:14; 7:31); usually signs form basis of a dialog or discourse giving spiritual significance

also series of word-signs: seven or eight "I am"s (6:35; 8:12; 10:7, 11; 11:25; 14:6; 15:1; perhaps 8:24): current religious concepts taken over by Jesus to explain his person and mission; a veiled claim to deity

glory of Jesus attested by witnesses  
    Jesus himself (18:37)  
    John Baptist, etc. (12:17)  
    disciples (15:27)  
    witness at cross (19:35)  
    evangelist himself (21:24)  
    Scriptures (5:39)  
    Father (5:37)  
    Jesus' signs (10:25)

c. Person of Jesus – a series of titles

Word (1:14, 17)  
    Jews - separate being? (Ps 33:6; Pr 8:22ff)  
    Christians (Col 4:3; Eph 6:19)  
    educated pagans - principle of order, rationality (popular Stoicism)

Messiah (7:42)  
    see Jews' questions of 7:26ff; 10:24  
    disciples' confessions (1:41; 4:29; 11:27; 20:31)

Son of Man  
    a key term in Synoptic Gospels  
        hiddenness of Messiahship  
        necessity of suffering  
        eschatological judge  
    latent in John (12:34; 3:14; 5:27), emphasis:  
        sent from heaven as revealer & savior (3:13; 9:35)  
        glorified by being lifted up (12:23-24)

Son of God - most important in John  
    sent by God as savior (3:16)  
    to lead reader to recognize claim (19:7)  
    made confession of disciples (1:34,49;11:27)  
    reveals Father (1:18)  
    shares Father=s activities of giving life & judging (5:19-29)

God - follows from Son of God  
    Word is God (1:1)  
    confessed as God by men (20:28)  
        climax of Gospel of John

d. Work of Jesus - more titles

Life - John's favorite

men in state of death (5:24f),

headed for judgment (3:18, 36)

Jesus offers life - knowledge of God and Jesus (17:3)

Jesus himself called "life" (1:4; 11:25; 14:6)

offers living water (4:14)

living bread (6:33f)

Light - similar picture

light of world (8:12)

especially developed in chapter 9

men in state of blindness (9:39-41),

darkness (3:19; 12:46)

Jesus cures blindness,

gives light of life

Way (14:1-7)

a major OT theme (e.g., Ps 1:1)

similar to "door" in 10:9

Good Shepherd (ch 10)

fulfilment of OT promise

saving death on behalf of men (10:11)

flock introduces idea of church

e. The New Life

Savior - accept Jesus for new life (4:42; 5:24) or remain in darkness until judgment (12:46-48)

New Birth - radical change produced by Spirit, by which person becomes a son of God (1:12)

Faith - from human side, change produced by faith in Son of God (3:14-18); distinguishes two kinds of faith: 1st insufficient by itself

-- intellectual acceptance of Jesus' claims (11:42; 8:24; 11:27; 20:31)

-- full commitment (3:16; 4:42; 9:35-38; 14:1)

Knowledge

unsaved have no real knowledge of God (1:10; 16:3)

can know God thru knowing Jesus (8:19; 14:7)

analogous to way Jesus knows God (10:14f)

Love

characterizes new relationship

like that between Father and Son (3:35; 14:31)

directed toward Son rather than Father (14:23; 15:9; 17:26; 21:15-17)

Other Terms

abide - 6:56; 14:17; 15:4-10  
in (mutual indwelling) - 14:20-23; 17:21-26

f. People of God

Church - term does not appear, but see:  
Flock - w/ Jesus as shepherd  
Vine - 15:1-8 w/ Jesus as stem, source of life  
Love/unity (chs 13, 17)  
vs hate/persecute (15:18-16:4)  
Sending - 17:20; 20:21; ch 21

g. Eschatology

Continuing life of church (14:12)  
Spirit as replacement for Jesus (14:16-18, 26; 15:26; 16:7-11, 13-15)  
"Realized Eschatology" - already  
    Jesus comes again in Spirit  
    already have eternal life  
    judgment already at work  
But doesn't replace Future Eschatology - not yet  
    future coming - 14:3; 21:23  
    future judgment - 5:25-29

9. Outlines of John.

a. For Comparison with Synoptics

Scale: "|" = approximately 1 chapter.

Pre-existence, Incarnation	-----	1:19
Preparation for Ministry	-----	2:1

Ministry in:

Judaea (especially before the  
imprisonment of John the  
Baptist. Includes various  
feasts in Jerusalem.)

Galilee

Samaria (more than others)

----- 12:1

Last Week

----- 13:1

Betrayal, Trial, Crucifixion

(includes many speeches)

----- 20:1

Resurrection

-----

b. Showing John's Structure

A. Revelation of Jesus to the World (1:1-12:50)

1. Prologue (1:1-18)
2. Manifestation of Jesus (1:19-2:11)
3. The New Message (2:12-4:54)
4. Jesus, the Son of God (5:1-47)
5. The Bread of Life (6:1-71)
6. Conflict with the Jews (7:1-8:59)
7. The Light of the World (9:1-41)
8. The Good Shepherd (10:1-42)
9. The Resurrection and the Life (11:1-57)
10. The Shadow of the Cross (12:1-36a)
11. Epilogue (12:36b-50)

B. Revelation of Jesus to his Disciples (13:1-17:26)

1. The Last Supper (13:1-30)
2. The Farewell Discourses (13:31-16:33)
3. Jesus' Prayer for his Disciples (17:1-26)

C. Glorification of Jesus (18:1-21:25)

1. The Passion of Jesus (18:1-19:42)
2. The Resurrection of Jesus (20:1-31)
3. The Commission to the Disciples (21:1-25)

B. The Johannine Epistles.

1. Author of the Letters.

-Traditionally John the Apostle.

-Some moderns try to say it is "John the Elder," claiming evidence from 2 John 1 , 3 John 1, and Papias' statement from his "Exposition of the Oracles of the Lord" cited in Eusebius' *Church History* 3.39.3-4:

*And I shall not hesitate to append to the interpretations all that I ever learnt well from the presbyters and remember well, for of their truth I am confident. For unlike most I did not rejoice in them who say much, but in them who teach the truth, nor in them who recount the commandments of others, but in them who repeated those given to the faith by the Lord and derived from truth itself; but if ever anyone came who had followed the presbyters, I inquired into the words of the presbyters, what Andrew or Peter or Philip or Thomas or James or John or Matthew, or any other of the Lord's disciples had said, and what Aristion and the presbyter John, the Lord's disciples, were saying. For I did not suppose that information from books would help me so much as the word of a living and surviving voice.*

-Eusebius concludes from this that Papias refers to 2 Johns, since the name is listed twice in two categories): John the Apostle and John the Elder. He deduces that the Elder wrote Revelation (Eusebius was amillennial and not favorable to Rev) but that the Apostle wrote everything else.

-Note this is the **best** evidence Eusebius has to support his claim.

-Modern liberals often say the opposite: Rev was by the Apostle, while the Gospel and Epistles were by the Elder.

-While Eusebius' understanding of Papias is possible, it is hardly a necessary one. Note the following features:

- 1) Papias consistently calls the Apostles "Presbyters";
- 2) He shifts **verb tense** between the long and the short list: What presbyters "had said" (perfect) and what Aristion and John "were saying" (imperfect).

-Could be that he is referring to **two sources** rather than two persons: what people had said (previously) and what two authorities (about whom he occasionally hears) were saying now.

-Personal testimony in Gospel makes it difficult to get around John the Apostle as author, esp. his position at the table at the Last Supper.

-Style of 1-3 John is very similar to one another; 1 John strongly connects with the Gospel,

which is intended to be understood as by John the Apostle.

## 2. Background and Contents of the Letters

### a. 1 John

#### 1) Background

Genre

- not letter format
- more like a tract for particular situation

False Teachers

- left church(es) John writing to (2:18-19)
- trying to lead others out of church (2:26)

Heretical Group

- esoteric
- claims superior knowledge (2:20,27)
- shows little love (4:20)
- prob forerunner to later Gnosticism

Teachings of Heretics (as inferred from 1 John)

- Christology: denied major biblical features
  - Messiahship (2:22)
  - Pre-existence (1:1)
  - Son of God (4:15; 5:5,10)
  - come in flesh (4:2; see 2 Jn 7)
  - to provide salvation for mankind (4:9-10,14)
  - [some similarities to gnostic teacher Cerinthus]

Soteriology

- teachers claimed sinlessness (1:8,10)
- did not need Jesus' redemption?
- moral indifference (2:4,15; 3:4,7-8)
- [prob this is reflection of gnostic duality between (good) spirit and (bad) matter]

#### 2) Content of 1 John

Purpose (1:1-4)

- to explain what John has seen and heard re/ word of life manifest in Jesus
- to have joyful fellowship between readers, John and God

God is Light (1:5-2:6)

- fundamental proposition; no darkness in Him
- so slogans of false teachers are mistaken:

1:6a: we have fellowship w/ God (but walk in darkness)

1:8a: we have no sin

1:10a: we have not (never?) sinned

2:4a: I know Him (but don't keep commandments)

God's New Commandment: Love (2:7-17)

Christians called to obey

not really new, but characterizes new era that came with Jesus  
applies to love of brother also  
marks out who is in light and who in dark  
don't cling to world which is passing away

False Teachers (2:18-27)

presence a mark of new era  
left church as not really believers  
deny Jesus, and thus God  
claim special knowledge, but only real believers have such

Abide in Christ (2:28-3:3)

test selves & others by Christ-likeness  
privilege to be His children

Character and Christianity (3:4-10)

Xn's ideal & goal is not to sin  
false teachers make no such attempt

Love and Hatred (3:1-18)

believers commanded to love  
will be hated by world  
love is the mark of the Xn  
manifested in acts of care for poor

Our Confidence (3:19-24)

presence of love a mark of Spirit  
assures us even when conscience condemns  
gives us boldness in prayer

Test of Spirit (4:1-6)

false teachers also claim Spirit  
true belief about Jesus necessary

God is Love (4:7-12)

love comes from Him  
marks off those who are His  
His love shown in sending Jesus  
though we cannot see Him, we can see His love

Grounds of Christian Assurance (4:13-5:4)

possession of Spirit  
confession of Jesus Christ  
practice of love toward God and man

True Christian Faith (5:5-12)  
centered on Jesus Christ  
water - His baptism  
blood - His death

these, with Spirit, are God's testimony to Jesus  
so don't make out God to be a liar and so reject eternal life

John's Purpose (5:13-21)  
to assure believers of their salvation  
to give confidence in prayer, esp prayer for erring brothers (unless they have already died)  
Xns have power not to sin  
they belong to God  
they are in Jesus  
stay away from idols!

#### b. 2 John

##### Genre

standard letter format  
length about right for one sheet of papyrus

##### Recipients

elect lady and her children  
some make her a specific unnamed woman  
some have her named AKyria@ or AEklekte@  
probably symbolic for a church and its members  
(see 1 Pet 5:13 and standard practice re/ cities)  
perhaps to protect if letter intercepted

##### Occasion

similar to 1 John (cp 2 Jn 7 and 1 Jn 4:3)  
false teachers  
traveling from church to church  
denying real incarnation of Son of God

##### Content

warning against such teaching  
those who "go on" to such "higher" teaching actually leave Christ and God behind!  
don't extend hospitality to false teachers  
follow the truth you already have  
hopes to see them soon

c. 3 John

Genre  
like 2 John, short standard letter  
but here a private letter

Recipient  
Gaius, a leading member in some church

Occasion  
Diotrephes, seeking leadership in a church  
(Marshall suggests neighboring church rather than Gaius')  
perhaps one form of tension raised by development of settled church leadership  
alongside itinerant  
aspiring to be local "bishop" and resented any outside interference

Content  
Gaius commended (1-8)  
holding to truth  
practical love to traveling preachers

Contrast Diotrephes (9-11)  
seeking leadership  
resisting John  
withholding a previous letter?  
refusing to welcome traveling preachers  
excommunicating those who do

Demetrius commended (12)  
probably bearer of letter and traveling preacher

Closing (13-14)  
hope to visit  
greetings to and from friends

C. Narrative and Controversy Genres

1. Building Exegetical Competence

- a. English (native language) Bible Knowledge
  - OT has 929 chapters, NT has 260, total 1189
  - Need to read several chapters/day
    - Once thru per year: 3.26 chapters/day
    - 4 chapters/day: thru OT once, NT twice

- b. Biblical Language Competency
  - Keep up via regular translation, vocab review,
    - grammar (Pastor Al Jackson: thru Metzger yearly)
  - TVT recommends verse/day from each testament

c. Bible Background

Special study for specific passages  
commentaries, encyclopedias  
be realistic: don't overkill & then give up

Wide reading:

have read over 50 books/yr since 1968  
usually over 50 in religion

d. Spiritual Insight

Gained thru experience w/ own problems, plus learning  
via helping others with theirs  
Crucial to have a close communion, love for Lord

2. Genres in Johannine Literature & General Epistles:

Genre: a type of literature

may be as broad as distinction between prose/poetry  
may be as narrow as limerick, parable

Genres covered in class exegesis or term paper passages:

1. Narrative:

John 7:37-52 combines both (1) Narrative and (4) Controversy/Polemic  
Rare outside John in this part of NT (common in Synoptics)

2. Letter:

Found in all but John, tho not much letter form in 1 John or Hebrews  
TP: 3 John

3. Diatribe:

James 2:1-13  
James uses this genre heavily

4. Controversy/Polemic:

John 7:37-52  
TP: Jude 3-13  
Common in both Gospels and epistles

5. Exhortation:

Heb 12:1-13  
Common throughout epistles

6. Prophecy/Apocalyptic:

Rev 19:11-21  
Common in Rev, 1-2 Thess, 2 Peter

7. Parable/Allegory:

TP: John 15:1-8

Common in John, Revelation

8. Typology:

TP: Heb 7:1-10

Common in Hebrews, Revelation

9. Thanksgiving/Blessing:

TP: 1 Pet 1:3-12

Genres not covered in class or term paper passages:

1. Miracle Account:

Frequent in John; covered in Synoptics

2. Hymn, Poem:

Frequent in Revelation; covered in OT course on Poetry

3. Sermon/Discourse:

Frequent in John

Some think 1 John and Hebrews belong here

4. Doxology:

Frequent at end of epistles

e.g., Heb 13:20-21

5. Thanksgiving/Blessing:

Frequent at beginning of epistles

e.g., 1 Pet 1:3ff

6. Prayer Report:

Frequent near beginning of letters, e.g., 2 John 3

3. The Narrative Genre

a. What is a Narrative?

1) Definition

A narrative, very briefly, is a story, account, or tale of events. It may be either factual or fictional, though I understand all biblical narratives to be factual unless somehow marked. For example, narratives in parables are probably fictional; Jotham's narrative of the trees electing a leader (Judg 9:8-15) is presumably (!) fictional.

Narrative is a very broad genre, usually a subclass under prose, though poetic narratives do exist in literature (e.g., the Song of Deborah and Barak, Judg 5). It may be distinguished from prayer, exposition, dialogue or discourse, for instance, though these may be included in a narrative or even occasionally have a narrative included in them. E.g., the Gospels and Acts are narratives, yet include these other genres.

## 2) Components of Narrative

### a) Actors/Characters

The persons who appear in the narrative, causing the events narrated, or affected by them.

### b) Events/Action

Occurrences described by the narrative.

### c) Scenes

Where the events occur: time, country, region, town, indoors or out, etc.

### d) Plot

The interconnection and development of the events in a narrative. A complex narrative may have more than one plot, with the various plots interwoven in some way or other. The plot itself, often a conflict of some sort, may be subdivided into sections where, for example, tension is building, the climax is reached, the conflict is resolved, tension is released, etc.

## b. Types of Narrative within the Gospels

Leland Ryken, in *Words of Life: A Literary Introduction to the New Testament* (Baker, 1987), pp 36ff, suggests the following types of narratives occur in the Gospels:

### 1) Annunciation/Nativity Stories

Narratives of events surrounding the birth of Jesus. Emphasis on uniqueness of Jesus, historical validity, supernatural occurrences, fulfilment of prophecy, excitement, etc.

### 2) Calling/Vocation Stories

Narratives of Jesus' calling people. Who is called, in what circumstances, what is the nature of the call, what kind of response was made?

### 3) Recognition Stories

Narratives of people discovering who Jesus is. What were the circumstances which led to recognition, what did the person come to recognize about Jesus?

### 4) Witness Stories

Jesus or another character testifies who Jesus is or what he has done, and what the evidence is for this.

### 5) Encounter Stories

Representative stories of how Jesus seeks others. Begin with his or their initiative, continue with Jesus making some claim on their lives, end with their response, either acceptance or rejection.

### 6) Conflict/Controversy Stories

Most common in Gospels, pitting Jesus as protagonist against an opposing person or

group (antagonist). Note the defense, offense, how Jesus gets the advantage, what lesson we are to learn.

7) Pronouncement Stories (in Form Criticism, Apophthegm Stories)

An event is linked with a notable saying by Jesus. How do the story and saying interrelate?

8) Miracle Stories

We discuss this under the genre "Miracle Story," section III of Synoptics notes. Ryken suggests typical structure as follows:

- a) Need is established
- b) Jesus' help sought
- c) Person in need (or helper) expresses faith/obedience
- d) Jesus performs a miracle
- e) Characters respond to miracle/Jesus

9) Passion Stories

Narratives of events surrounding the trial, death and resurrection of Jesus. Can be viewed as whole section for each Gospel, or subdivided into separate stories.

10) Hybrid Stories

Narratives which combine elements of the above, e.g., miracle stories which produce recognition, pronouncement stories which are also encounters, etc.

4. Controversy Narratives (Ryken=s #6: Conflict/Controversy Stories)

- a. Jesus may not be addressing the particular controversy you are concerned about, since His first concern is with the controversy going on at His own time.
- b. Thus you need to see what the controversy was at that time.
- c. Who are the opponents? Where are they coming from?
- d. What is Jesus' view of the matter? Be careful, it may not be your view of the matter!
- e. How is Jesus arguing for His position? Remember that Jesus' opponents do not accept His claims, and therefore are not about to take His word for it. Can we understand His words as actually arguing from where they are to where He is?
- f. Jesus may leave out some steps of an argument as they would be easily understood by His original audience or opponents. It does not follow that we will understand Him unless we can supply those steps.
- g. Once we have gotten together what Jesus is saying to His original opponents and audience, we are then ready to see how this carries over to us and others living today.

## **II. The General or Catholic Epistles.**

We turn now to the so-called Acatholic@ or Ageneral epistles,@ the traditional names for all the non-Pauline letters in the NT, including 1-3 John. These names are not totally satisfactory, since they imply a general or catholic (universal) address for these letters. As we shall see, Hebrews at least was originally sent to some specific congregation.

### A. Hebrews.

#### 1. Authorship.

-Is probably the most contested of any Biblical book, both among liberals and conservatives, because it is anonymous.

##### a. Variety of views on authorship.

###### 1) Paul.

-This is the traditional view, but it is widely disputed due to dissimilarities with known Pauline letters.

-Many respected leaders in the early church went to various "combination theories" to explain its style (see below).

###### 2) Paul and Luke.

-Clement of Alexandria guessed that Paul wrote or preached it in Aramaic or Hebrew and Luke translated it.

-Do see some features of Luke's style in Hebrews.

-The Greek style would imply the translator had a free hand, as he uses a refined Greek rhetorical style.

###### 3) Paul and Clement of Rome.

-Eusebius suggests that Paul preached the message in a synagogue in Rome and Clement translated it.

-Probably guessed this because Clement is the first to quote from his letter (95 AD).

-But Clement's Greek style is nothing like that of Hebrews.

###### 4) Luke alone wrote it.

-Calvin suggested this, F. Delitzsch agreed; is not suggested by any early writer.

-Major problem is that Luke is not a Jew, but the writer is quite familiar with Jewish backgrounds.

###### 5) Barnabas.

-Tertullian (c200 AD) held this view, but don't know his reasons for it.  
-Bernard Weiss, Zahn, and Godet also take this view.

6) Apollos.

-Suggested by Luther (a new idea at that time).  
-Held by Alford, Farrar, Robertson, Lenski.  
-Does fit what we know about Apollos from the NT: Jewish, from Alexandria (Hebrews looks like Alexandrian Greek), very familiar with Scripture, skillful arguer with Jews.

----- some suggestions that are more off-the-wall -----

7) Clement of Rome alone.

-Erasmus and some modern liberals hold this, chiefly because Clement is the earliest one to quote from it.

8) Priscilla and Aquila.

-Adolf Harnack was big on this one.

9) Priscilla alone.

-Arthur S. Peake and Gloria Steinem maintain this, say culture then would not tolerate female author, thus is anonymous.  
-Certainly true that female authorship of surviving literature from the anc Greco-Roman world is very rare, but not unheard of.

b. Internal Evidence of authorship

1) Explicit indications in the letter rather few.

a) Author is an associate and traveling companion of Timothy (13:23). Can't tell if he is older, younger, or a peer.

b) Seems not to be one of the 12 original Apostles (2:3).

-Takes more of a 3rd person position as regards the source of the NT revelation, putting himself with his hearers.  
-Seems to be moving away from the Apostolic age (13:7) in mentioning that the leaders have passed on.  
-Bruce says "2nd generation" but leaders could have been martyred 5 years after this church got started.  
-But 1:2 counters this; probably not a 2nd generation Xian.

- Scholars argue that Paul would not have spoken this way.
- However, if Paul is speaking to a group which knew the Lord before he did, he would probably not emphasize his direct connections.
- c) Appears to be only one speaker (no major co-authors), as the writer uses a singular verb, pronoun, and accusative masculine singular participle when referring to himself "recounting" (11:32).

-Thus is probably not a woman either (masculine participle).

-Cannot argue strongly from the anonymity of the text, because the author seems clearly to be known to his original audience.

## 2) Content.

a) Contains some clear similarities to Paul's thoughts and language.

-In certain areas the same phrases occur:

1:4 = Phil 2:9 2:10 = Rom 11:36 7:18 = Rom 8:3  
7:27 = Eph 5:2 8:13 = 2 Cor 3:11 12:22 = Gal 4:25,26

-However, we also see similar thought and language between Paul and 1 Peter, which liberals use against 1 Peter's authenticity.

-Does imply a unity among the Apostles in terminology and doctrine.

## b) Some real differences in structure.

-No salutation or greeting as is typical of letters in general and of Paul's in particular.

-See doctrine and exhortation interspersed in Heb; in Paul's letters the doctrine and exhortation **usually** are separated into two distinct sections ("therefore" in Rom. 12:1).

-Unfortunately, we have no examples of the other candidates' writing to compare their style with that of Hebrews.

-Can maintain Pauline authorship by proposing this is his sermonic style (rather than his letter style), and Hebrews was written as a sermon to be delivered in his absence.

-Differences could also be due to the specifically Jewish audience. Other letters by Paul were written to Gentile groups but Hebrews does not even mention Gentiles and uses arguments which would have no strength for Gentile converts in danger of falling back into paganism.

c) Different emphases on the content of the OT.

-Paul usually looks at the OT as a system of laws, particularly of moral law.

-Author of Hebrews sees the OT as a system of types, particularly in the ceremonial law.

-This could be due to the difference in audience, but some find this too great an inconsistency for Paul.

3) Style.

a) Is more Hellenistic or Classical than any of Paul's (other) letters.

-This was recognized in early times: Eusebius says that Origen felt: "The thoughts are the apostle's, but the language and composition are someone else's." (*Eccl. Hist.* 2:77).

-Is not a matter of the "difficulty of the Greek." 2 Cor. is at least as difficult as Hebrews.

-The major factor is the rhetorical style.

b) Are some statistical differences in phrasing.

-"Lord Jesus Christ" occurs over 200 times in the (other) Pauline epistles.

-Does not occur at all in Hebrews.

-Find "Lord Jesus" and "Christ Jesus" each once, "Jesus Christ" 3 times.

-Could argue that this phrase was not common or popular in Jewish circles, like substituting "Yeshua" for "Jesus" in Messianic Jewish circles today.

c. External Evidence.

1) Hebrews is attested as early as any other NT work.

-Clement of Rome (1 Clement, c95 AD) makes extensive allusions to it.

-1 Clem. 36 refers to Heb. 1:3,4,5,7,13; 12:2, then uses the same OT passages as Hebrews to show that Jesus is their high priest.

-1 Clem. 17 refers to Heb. 3:2; 11:37 [not as clear].

-1 Clem. 43 refers to Heb. 3:5.

-However, Clement gives no hints as to its author, probably assuming the Corinthians were already familiar with it.

2) The Alexandrian fathers all refer to it.

-Pantaenias (before 200), Clement (c200 AD), Origen (c225 AD).

-These three were all heads of the Alexandrian "seminary."

-They note that the local churches favor Pauline authorship, but Origen says that no one knows who really wrote it.

3) Tertullian (c200 AD) assigns it to Barnabas.

-Gives no argument for this; perhaps Barnabas was the accepted author in his area.

4) Generally, the Western churches denied Pauline authorship (e.g., Hippolytus), while the Eastern churches pushed for it (while admitting an associate translated it).

5) In later centuries, the Western church shifted to favor Paul.

d. Summary on Authorship.

-The author is not Timothy!

-The single most likely **named** candidate is Paul; perhaps this reflects his homiletic style.

-But more likely is that the author is not Paul; the great proliferation of other alternatives so early makes one very hesitant to be dogmatic.

-Of the other candidates, perhaps Apollos or Barnabas is next best.

-Must conclude that the Lord let the knowledge of its authorship die out in the church.

-This is similar to many OT books for which we do not know authorship.

2. Destination of Hebrews.

a. The people.

-Were almost certainly Jewish (although some fringe scholars suggest a Gentile or mixed audience).

-Has no references to Gentiles or their controversies.

-Recipients were at least professing Christians (no evangelistic thrust to the message).

-Comparisons of Jesus with Moses, Joshua, angels, high priest, etc. would have no appeal to Gentiles tempted to revert to paganism.

-But these are strong arguments for religious Jews tempted to fall back into a non-Christian form of Judaism.

-Would have to use an entirely different line of argument with Gentiles, who would not have an ingrained respect for OT.

b. Location of Recipients.

-No clear indication: the usual suggestions are Jerusalem and Rome; sometimes Antioch, Alexandria

-The critical passage (13:24) is ambiguous:

"Those from Italy (οἱ περὶ τὴν Ιταλίαν) greet you."

-But can't tell if they are sending greetings home to Italy, or if they are in Italy sending greetings to others.

-Newman (following Lenski) favors Rome as the destination.

-Probably written to a Jewish house church in Rome facing Nero's persecution.

-The remark to greet all the other leaders in 13:24 (beyond the scope of the immediate recipients) implies a subgroup within a larger group, such as a house church within a city having many such.

### 3. Date.

a. Latest possible date: 95 AD (must precede 1 Clement).

-Some date it later by claiming that Clement had not yet written it yet, but ....

b. Earliest possible date.

-Is definitely after 30 AD.

-Verse 2:3 ("heard") implies the church is now working with secondary sources of information.

-Verse 13:7 ("considering the outcome of their lives") implies that their earlier leaders may already have died (martyred?).

-This would have happened in Jewish circles immediately, in Roman circles c64 AD.

-These imply, but hardly prove, a "2nd generation" church in the sense that the 1st leaders are now gone.

-This need only be 5 years, not 40 years.

c. More refinement attempted.

-Have many indications the Temple was still functioning, carrying on the OT liturgy.

8:4 -- "there are those who offer gifts according to the law."

8:13 -- "becoming obsolete ... ready to disappear..."

10:1 -- "they offer continually..."

10:8 -- "which are offered according to the law."

13:10 -- "those who serve the tabernacle have no right to eat."

13:11 -- "blood is brought ... and [bodies] are burned."

-All these references to the sacrificial service are present tense.

-Some argue these are gnomic presents and refer to the OT narratives, not the Temple. This is OK grammatically.

-But the argument that Jesus supercedes the sacrificial system would have been greatly

strengthened if the Temple had already been destroyed so that OT sacrifices were no longer being offered at all. This does not appear to be the case.

-Hardly seems possible that the author would have omitted some comment about its destruction if it has occurred.  
=> must date before 70 AD.

-The reference to Timothy (13:23) moves back the earliest date (if this is "Paul's" Timothy), since he does not appear on the scene until the 2nd MJ (50+ AD) and would not be important enough to imprison until the late 50's and beyond.

-The references to prison and the fear of persecution (10:32-34,35,39; 12:3,4,11-12) imply that it was not safe to be a Christian.

-If Hebrews was written to Rome, then they were not under persecution before Nero (c64 AD). Thus the "window" when it would be safe to be Jewish and not Christian would be between the Fall of 64 AD (after the fire in Rome) but before the outbreak of the Jewish War (c66 AD).

-The earlier trials under Claudius (problems with other Jews, forced to leave Rome c49 AD) would then fit with the references to earlier persecution (6:10, 10:32-34).

-If Hebrews was not written to Rome, but to any large city with a big Jewish population, then the window would be larger (starting c55 AD from Timothy reference), but would still close at c66 AD, when the beginning of Jewish War made the Jews at least as unpopular as the Christians.

#### 4. Background of the Recipients.

##### a. Their conversion.

-2:3 implies they were converted by the immediate disciples of Christ (but not necessarily any of the 12 Apostles), who had confirmed the truth to them with "signs and wonders" and "gifts of the Spirit" (2:4).

-Although they are warned to hold on to the end (3:14), the writer is confident that they are saved (6:9).

##### b. Their Christian life and ministry.

-The group had seen some persecution in earlier days (10:32-34). Some were thrown in jail, but all were mocked and apparently had their property seized.

-Had helped those who were persecuted (6:10; but this is a very general statement).

-Had not yet been physically harassed (12:4; or had recent martyrs, if we take "bloodshed" to be a euphemism for death).

- Had been Christians long enough to have their first leaders die (13:7, either naturally or martyred).
- But: they had stagnated.
- By now they should be teachers and leaders themselves (5:12), but were not.
- Had been Christians for a long time (perhaps 10+ years) and did well in the beginning, but now have a problem.

c. Their Problem.

- They knew the first principles of Christianity well (6:1), but were backsliding (5:12), disobedient (5:11 B not willing or ready to listen), and sluggish (6:12) in doing Christian works.
- Were in severe danger of apostasy (3:12, 6:4-8, 10:39; all of ch. 11 gives positive examples to reinforce 10:39).
- Apostasy did not involve paganism or corruption of a doctrinal point.
- Were apparently tempted to return to Judaism wholesale.

=> A situation where it was safe to be a Jew and where Christianity looked like it might be a mistake.

- If Rome => Nero's persecutions.
- If not Rome => Jewish persecution with arguments against Christianity.
- Writer argues that Christianity supercedes the OT covenant, and Jesus has fulfilled the ceremonial law.
- Has two emphases:
  - 1] The status of Jesus as our mediator.
  - 2] Jesus' typological fulfillment of OT sacrifices.

5. Argument of Hebrews (a condensed explanatory paraphrase).

God's message to His people has recently reached its climax in His Son, the World-ruler and Creator. This One is God's glory and perfect image, who holds the world together by His powerful word. Since completing His work of paying for sin, He rules as co-regent with His Father in heaven. (1:1-4)

His exalted status can be seen by contrast with that of the angels, as described in several passages of Scripture. He is the Son (in a sense the angels are not), the object of worship, the ruler forever, the creator of a new heaven and earth. The angels are His worshippers, His messengers, and His servants to help those being saved. (1:5-14)

So we need to pay close attention to the Good News we have heard. If God's word to our forefathers through angels was sure, and their disobedience earned punishment, how much worse will it be for us if we neglect Jesus' word, confirmed by eyewitnesses and by God Himself through the miracles they worked? (2:1-4)

He is the One predicted in Psalm 8, "made for a while lower than the angels" (to suffer death for us), but now "crowned with glory and honor" (in heaven with the Father), for whom one day God will "put all things in subjection under His feet" (when He comes again). It was fitting for Him C in making us His Father's children C to become like us by taking on flesh and suffering death, in order to deliver us from death and to become our merciful high priest through the experience of His own suffering and temptation. (2:5-18)

So, since we share in God's call, consider Jesus, the One He sent to call us: a messenger like Moses and a high priest like Aaron. Like Moses, He was faithful. Unlike Moses, He was not just a house-servant, He was the house-builder, God Himself, the Father's own Son. We, too, must be faithful if we are to be a part of His house, just as the Spirit warned the people in Psalm 95: "Don't harden your hearts like your fathers did in the wilderness. I was angry with them and swore they would not enter My rest." Don't let this happen to you, but encourage one another daily. For they too saw miracles and received blessings, but were finally unable to enter the land because of unbelief. (3:1-19)

We too must take care lest we fail to enter God's promised rest. Not just the Canaan-rest (after all, this Psalm 95 was spoken centuries after Joshua's time), but God's creation-rest, when we will rest from our labors as God did from His. But to enter we must trust and obey, and not think that somehow we will get in by exception or oversight. God's word of judgment will not miss a thing, and it is to Him that we must give an account. (4:1-13)

But Jesus is not only our messenger (like Moses), He is also our high priest C One who has entered heaven itself C sinless, yet able to sympathize with us. So hold fast, draw near to God, and you will find mercy and grace for help in this time of your need (4:14-16)

Notice what a high priest is and does: a mediator between God and men, he presents their gifts

and sin-offerings to God, sympathizes with sinners (being weak himself), asks forgiveness for his own sins as well, and is appointed by God rather than by himself. Compare Jesus: He, too was appointed by God (Ps 110), and made offerings through His prayers, but He learned obedience through suffering, was accepted for his perfect piety, so becoming the source of eternal salvation to those who obey Him. God has designated Him a high priest of the Melchizedek kind. (5:1-10)

We'd like to say more about Melchizedek, but you are too immature, still babies needing someone to give you milk when you ought to be teachers providing meat to others! Well, we can't lay the foundation a second time. Those who've experienced it all and still turn away can't be brought back again; they are like worthless land, only fit to be burned over. So we'll move on, since we think you're in better shape than this (having seen God's love working through you in service to others) and we want you to regain your hope and finally inherit God's promises. (5:11-6:12)

God's promises, after all, are certain. He made promises to Abraham with an oath, and Abraham (patiently waiting) inherited. For just as humans swear an oath by someone greater than themselves to put a question beyond dispute, so did God. He swore by Himself (there being no one greater) to show believers His plans wouldn't change. Thus we have great encouragement both from His mercy (in His promise) and His justice (to keep his oath) that enters into His very nature and presence, where Jesus has gone ahead for us, becoming a high priest forever, like Melchizedek. (6:13-20)

This Melchizedek (Gen 14) pronounced a blessing on Abraham and received his offerings. From his name and title he is "king of righteousness" and "king of peace." With no genealogy, birth or death record, he is made like the Son of God and is always a priest. Look how great he was! He received the tenth from the forefather of those Levites who would collect the tenth, though he himself was no Levite. He was greater than Abraham, pronouncing the blessing rather than receiving it. And Levi, so to speak, even paid him tithes. (7:1-10)

Now if the Levitical priesthood (on which the Law was based) was sufficient, why does Psalm 110 predict another priest like Melchizedek rather than Aaron? Doesn't this imply a change in the Law? Indeed, the One fulfilling this prediction comes from Judah, a non-priestly tribe. And He, too, fits the psalm's prediction of a priest "forever," not by physical descendants but by an indestructable life. So this psalm predicts the former commandments will be replaced by a better hope for coming to God. A better hope and better covenant because it is established by God's oath and rests in the permanent priesthood of Jesus, who can save forever because he lives forever. (7:11-28)

The point is this: Jesus' ministry is in the true sanctuary in heaven, not the mere copy of it on earth. He has a more excellent ministry as mediator of a better covenant, founded on better promises. If there were nothing wrong with the first covenant, there would have been no place for a second. But God through Jeremiah (31:32-34) finds fault and predicts the replacement: "I'm going to make a new covenant with Israel, not like the old one which they broke and so I abandoned them. Instead I will put my law in their hearts and be their God; all will know Me

and I'll forgive their sins." (8:1-13)

Consider the earthly sanctuary and services of the first covenant. The priests regularly entered the outer room; the inner room only the high priest entered, only once a year, only with blood, and only for sins committed in ignorance. By this God shows us that the way to heaven has not been opened while the tabernacle still stands, a symbol which cannot do what the spiritual reality will. (9:1-10)

But when Christ came as high priest of the better covenant, He entered the better tabernacle (not of this creation), offered His own blood (rather than that of animals), entered the holy place only once, and obtained eternal redemption. He is thus the mediator of a new covenant, inaugurated by the sacrifice of Himself, to pay for the sins committed under the old covenant and to provide an eternal inheritance. (9:11-15)

Wherever there is a covenant, it does not come into force until the inaugurating sacrifice has been killed. So at Sinai, Moses sprinkled the blood of calves and goats on the covenant book, the people, the tabernacle and its vessels, saying "This is the blood of the covenant." And by the Law itself, nearly everything is cleansed with blood, and without blood there is no forgiveness. So too in heaven, the originals of which these are the earthly copies were cleansed, but with the better blood of Jesus, who entered into God's very presence, made a single offering of Himself, and will one day appear a second time to those who eagerly await Him. (9:16-28)

The Law, a shadow of the coming good but not the reality, could never by its sacrifices make the worshippers whole; otherwise they would stop coming for forgiveness since their consciences wouldn't bother them. Rather the repeated sacrifices were a repeated reminder of sin, as animal blood cannot really take it away. In fact, God predicted the remedy in Psalm 40 where, when Jesus comes into the world, He says: "You didn't really want animal sacrifices, but you made me a body/slave. I've come, O God, as predicted in Scripture, to do Your will." As the passage notes, God wasn't really satisfied with animal sacrifice (though He commanded it). But by Jesus doing God's will, He takes away the first covenant to establish the second. By one act in offering His body, Jesus makes us holy, while the repeated sacrifices of the earthly priests can never take away sin. And this is what the Holy Spirit says in Jeremiah 31: "This is the covenant I will make with them... their sins I will remember no more." (10:1-18)

Since we have this new and living way to God through Jesus, let us draw near to Him, hold fast the faith we profess, stimulate one another to love and good deeds, keep meeting together, and all the more as you see the end approaching. But if we keep on sinning after accepting the truth, there isn't any other sacrifice for sin, just the terrifying expectation of judgment. If rebellion against the Law of Moses meant death, what do you think a person will deserve who has trampled on God's Son, treated His blood as unclean, and insulted the Holy Spirit? It is a terrible thing to face the righteous vengeance of the living God! (10:19-31)

Instead you should remember your former time of persecution, when you faced reproach, identified with suffering believers, lost property, yet rejoiced in the knowledge that God would provide better and lasting possessions. Don't throw all this away! You need to endure to His

coming, not shrink back to destruction. You need to have faith for the preservation of your soul! (10:32-29)

Faith is assurance and conviction regarding the future and the unseen world. Our forefathers were commended for it. That's how we understand that the universe and its history were prepared by God's word from what we cannot see. Consider the examples of Abel and Enoch. To come to God, you must believe He exists and will reward those who really seek Him. Noah, too, had faith to believe what God warned him about; by building the ark, he saved his whole family and condemned the world. (11:1-7)

Abraham, too, had faith. He didn't know where he was going when he left Ur for Canaan, but he trusted God's promise. He and his sons lived as aliens in the promised land, looking for a city built by God all the while they lived in tents. Sarah, too, was able to conceive far beyond the normal age, since she trusted God. So from this sterile pair an innumerable multitude were born, as God promised. Yet they all died still trusting, without receiving what was promised, and only "seeing" it by the eyes of faith. They welcomed the promises, considered themselves aliens on earth, sought God's better country rather than returning to the old one. And God is not ashamed of them, and indeed He has prepared a city for them. (11:8-16)

Abraham showed his faith by offering up Isaac, trusting God's promises and His ability to raise the dead (from which in symbol he received him back). Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau about the unseen future. Jacob blessed the sons of Joseph, and Joseph predicted the Exodus and asked them to take his bones along. (11:17-22)

Faith caused Moses' parents to hide him in spite of Pharaoh's orders. And faith led Moses to renounce his royal position and cast his lot with God's people, putting the kind of rejection Jesus faced ahead of Egypt's treasures. By faith they sprinkled the blood on their houses to save their firstborn, and passed through the Red Sea which drowned the Egyptians. By faith the walls of Jericho collapsed, but Rahab did not die with its inhabitants, for she too had faith. (11:23-31)

Time would fail me to complete the list. Mighty acts of faith led to mighty victories, but also to defeat. Many were mistreated, tortured, even martyred, not accepting release in order to gain a better resurrection. The world didn't deserve these faithful people! And they C though approved by God for trusting Him C have not yet received the promises, for God will not bring them to pass until the full roll call of the faithful is complete. (11:32-40)

With such a crowd of spectators watching, let us not get entangled but run our race with endurance, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the starter and finisher, seeing how He ran the race. And don't forget that this life is our childhood in which we are being disciplined by our heavenly Father to prepare us for our coming of age. If we can see the benefit we derived from our earthly fathers' discipline, can't we apply that to this situation? So shape up and watch where you're running, lest you throw something out of joint. (12:1-13)

Chase after peace and holiness, which you have to have to see God. Watch out for bitterness, immorality and even that "no-nonsense practicality" of Esau's, who sold his birthright when he

was very hungry. He never could get it back, though he tried to with tears. (12:14-17)

We are not those of the first covenant who came to Sinai, with the death penalty for touching the mountain, the blazing fire, the darkness, smoke and whirlwind, the trumpet blast and fearful voice, who begged to hear no more. We have come to Zion, God's city, the heavenly Jerusalem, the multitude of angels, to God, the Judge of all, to the righteous ones now made perfect, to Jesus, the mediator of that better covenant, whose sprinkled blood brings mercy rather than vengeance. (12:18-24)

So see to it that you don't turn back from the One who is speaking to you. If they of Sinai who disobeyed did not escape the One who warned them on earth, how shall we escape the One who warns us from heaven? Yes, His voice shook the earth that day, but one day it will also shake the heavens. And then both heaven and earth will be removed, along with all created things, so that the kingdom which cannot be shaken will be established. Since we are to receive such a kingdom, let's show God our gratitude by serving him with reverence and awe. For God is a consuming fire. (12:25-29)

Continue loving one another; show hospitality even to strangers (some were angels!); remember those in prison for their faith; honor marriage; don't love money (God will supply), nor be afraid of what people can do to you. Don't forget your leaders; remember their example, and imitate their faith. Jesus doesn't change; He'll be with you as He was with them. (13:1-8)

Don't be led astray by false teaching: it's God's grace that gives strength, not special diets. And those who eat the temple sacrifices can't eat the Lord's supper. Just as animals whose blood was offered in the holy place had their bodies burned outside the camp, so Jesus, to sanctify His people, suffered outside the gate. So let us go out there with Him too, being despised as He was. For this is not our lasting city; we seek the one to come. Through Jesus, then, let us always offer up a sacrifice C praise to our God C and first-fruits C the speech of our lips thanking Him. Don't neglect doing good, God is pleased with that kind of sacrifice. Obey your leaders; they're guarding your souls; let them do it with joy. Pray for us, especially that I may come to you soon. (13:9-19)

Now may God, who raised our Good Shepherd Jesus, through His blood equip you to do His will in everything, through Jesus Christ, to whom be the glory forever, Amen. (13:20-21)

Thanks for bearing with this word of exhortation. I hope to see you soon, with Timothy, who has just been released. My greetings to all. All from Italy send their greetings. God's grace be with each of you. (13:22-25)

6. Outline: adapted from Hughes & Burdick in *NIV Study Bible*.

Prologue: God's Revelation Climaxes in the Son 1:1-4

The Son Superior in His Person to the Old Covenant Mediators 1:5-7:28

Christ Superior to Angels 1:5-2:18

Christ Superior to Moses (& Joshua) 3:1-4:13

Christ Superior to Aaronic Priests 5:1-7:28

The Son Superior in His Work to the Old Covenant Provisions 8:1-10:39

Better Covenant 8:1-13

Better Sanctuary 9:1-12

Better Sacrifice 9:13-10:18

Exhortations 10:19-39

Final Plea for Persevering Faith 10:19-12:29

Concluding Exhortations 13:1-25

## 7. Exhortation Genre

Sources:

M. B. Thompson, "Teaching/Paraenesis," *Dictionary of Paul & His Letters* (IVP, 1993): 922-23.

Richard N. Soulen, "Paraenesis," *Handbook of Biblical Criticism* 2nd ed. (Knox, 1981): 140-41.

a. Technical term for exhortation is *paraenesis* (Greek word for "advice")

b. Pauline Epistles: exhortation is often given in a concluding section of letter:

Rom 12:1-15:13:

to righteousness in the church (ch 12)

to righteousness toward the world (ch 13)

to relations between weak and strong (14:1-15:12)

Gal 5:1-6:10:

exhortation to freedom (5:1-12)

life by the Spirit, not by the flesh (5:13-26)

call for mutual help (6:1-10)

Eph 4:1-6:20:

- call to unity (4:1-6)
- call to maturity (4:7-16)
- call to renewal of personal life (4:17-5:20)
- submission in personal relationships (5:21-6:9)
- strength in the spiritual conflict (6:10-20)

Col 3:1-4:6:

- the old self and new self (3:1-17)
- rules for Christian households (3:18-4:1)
- further instructions (4:2-6)

1 Thess 4:1-5:22:

- about personal life (4:1-12)
- about the second coming (4:13-5:11)
- about church life (5:12-22)

c. In other Pauline letters, exhortation is scattered throughout:

1-2 Corinthians, Philippians, Pastorals

e.g., 1 Corinthians:

- divisions (4:14-21)
- moral and ethical disorders in the church (chs 5-6)
- instructions on marriage (ch 7)
- questionable practices (10:23-11:1)
- public worship (11:2-14:40)

d. General Epistles:

Hebrews calls itself a "word of exhortation" (13:22), has its exhortations interspersed with doctrine.

James basically paraenesis throughout.

1 John, Jude, 2 Peter build paraenesis from dangers of heresy.

e. Characteristic Features of Exhortation:

Background in Greek traditional moral exhortation concerned with practical issues of living

Clear down-to-earth advice given

Typical topics: friends, sex, money, parents, food, etc.

f. Content:

- (1) Conventional wisdom approved by society
- (2) General in nature, so widely applicable
- (3) So familiar that it is presented as reminder
- (4) Illustrated by individual models
- (5) Given by experienced teacher

g. Form:

- (1) Sometimes simple imperatives
- (2) Sometimes developed with contrasts, illustrations, similes, proverbs, quotations
- (3) Jewish paraenesis often used "two ways" motif:  
Deut 30:15ff; Prov 4:18-19; Ps 1:6; T Asher 1:3-5; 1QS 3:13-4:26
- (4) Catalogs of virtues and/or vices common:  
e.g., Gal 5:19-23; 2 Pet 1:5-8
- (5) Household codes (German *Haustafeln*):  
reciprocal duties of husbands/wives, parents/ children, masters/slaves

B. James.

1. Author of Letter.

-Several people named James (Gk *Jacobos*) in the NT. Most important ones:

James the Less (or Little) C apostle; know nothing about him.

James, son of Zebedee C apostle; martyred 44 AD.

James, the brother of Jesus C in list of Matt 13:55.

-How does English get "James" for his name instead of "Jacob"?

-development of name in late Latin into a variant *Jacomas*

-in medieval Europe, both carried into various languages

-probably King James had something to do with choice in NT!

-James (Jesus' brother) is usually assumed to be the author, as James of Zebedee died so early;

James the Little never seen as author except when identified w/ James, Lord's brother;  
latter is the James who would be recognized without any further identification, since he  
became the leader of the Jerusalem church. Liberals have sometimes suggested work is  
(1) pre-Xn or (2) a reworked Xn homily from 70-130 AD.

-Peter after his escape says "Tell James ..." (Acts 12:17).

-At Jerusalem Council (c50 AD) James summarizes the arguments and provides the suggestion  
adopted as solution (Acts 15:13).

-At Paul's visit (c58 AD) he gives Paul advice (Acts 21:18).

=> James was in charge.

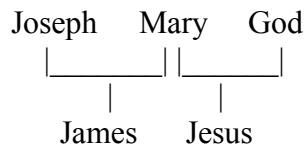
-Prob Apostles did not want to lead Jerusalem church themselves, as they needed freedom to  
travel as evangelists, church planters, overseers, etc.

-James' relation to Jesus: "Lord's brother" (Gal 1:19; Mt 13:55)

-3 suggestions proposed here for meaning of "brother":

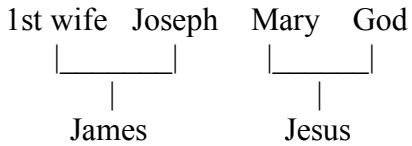
1) Helvidian - half-brother (James son of both Joseph & Mary)

(Helvidius; the common Protestant view)



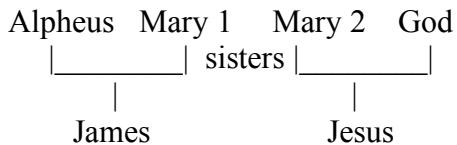
2) Epiphanian - step-brother (James son of Joseph by his previous wife)

(Epiphanius; rarer Protestant view)



-Claims Joseph a widower, with children by previous marriage.

- 3) Hieronymian C cousin (James son of Alpheus & Mary's sister)  
(Jerome; standard Catholic view)



- Jerome argued that Mary 1 (mother of James) was the one at the cross. (this entire discussion can be found in his treatise *Against Helvidius*)
- He points out OT passages where more distant relatives (Laban - Jacob, Abraham - Lot) are called "brothers."
- It does seem rather unlikely to have 2 daughters from the same immediate family with the same first name (Miriam was not so popular as later in Catholic circles).

2) and 3) have Mary remain a virgin, and so James is not a blood relative of Jesus in these 2 schemes

-James' conversion:

- He was not a Christian during Jesus' ministry.
- Presumably became a Christian when Jesus appeared to him after His resurrection (1 Cor. 15).
- Is mentioned at the beginning of Acts, and quickly became an important figure by the 50's.

-His death:

- Not recorded in NT, where Acts does not refer back to Jerusalem after Paul's arrest in 58 AD
- Killed by stoning 62 AD under high priest Ananus before new Roman governor could reach Judea (cf. Josephus, *Antiquities* 20.9.1).

## 2. Date of Letter of James.

Hard to prove authorship at this remove, but "there is no sentence in the letter which a Jew could have written but a Xn could not" and the letter shows several primitive features which fit James' lifetime.

If James, the Lord's brother, is author, then the book must have been written before 62 AD, when he died.

J Gresham Machen and P H Davids suggest shortly before Jerus Council (late 40s)

- Is reasonable: after 44 AD the apostles "go into hiding" and James is the important leader in the church which is still mainly Jewish.
- James is writing to dispersed Jewish-Xn congregations.
- helps explain problem w/ faith/works dispute below.

So James is one of the earliest books of the NT.  
-Perhaps Matthew or Galatians is earlier, perhaps not.

### 3. Content of James.

- a. Addressed to "the 12 tribes who are dispersed abroad," 1:1.  
-Apparently to Jewish Christians outside Palestine.
- b. Claimed contradiction of Paul on salvation.

James teaches salvation by faith plus works?

2:14 Can faith (without works) save a man?  
2:17 "Faith, if it has no works, is dead."

Paul teaches salvation by faith without works?

Gal 2:16 "... by the works of the Law shall no flesh be justified."  
2:21 "... if righteousness comes through the Law, then Christ died needlessly."  
3:21 "... for if a law had been given which could make alive, then righteousness would indeed be by the law."  
Eph 2:8-9 "... you have been saved through faith ... not as a result of works..."

-These are **verbal**, but **not real**, contradictions which can be resolved by looking at the contexts. "Confusion" in terms suggests a pre-50 date.

James recognizes that one cannot keep the Law perfectly:

2:10 "For whoever keeps the whole law and yet **stumbles** in one point, he has become guilty of all."  
3:1-2 "... For we all **stumble** in many ways. ..." -"stumble" is same verb in both verses.

-Law is like a soap bubble: one hole and it breaks.

-Shows we cannot be acceptable to God by keeping the law.  
-James is emphasizing that a real Christian will have works in his life (cf. 1 John and Rom. 6).

Paul's teaching is the same as James' - salvation is by dependence on Christ, not on our works.

Gal 5:3 "I testify to every man who receives circumcision that he is under obligation to keep

the whole law."

Gal 6:13 "For those who are circumcised do not even keep the law themselves..."

Gal 5:6 "For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision means anything, but faith **working** through love."

Paul and James are here responding to different heresies:

-James - antinomian: faith only, can live as you please.

-Paul - legalism: works are required to save.

c. James is more practical than doctrinal in emphasis.

-Similar to many OT books in this regard;

-And to Jesus' teaching in Gospels.

d. James is familiar with the Sermon on the Mount.

James      Matthew

1:22	7:24-27 - doers, not hearers.
2:5	5:3 - poor of this world.
2:10	5:19 - one point of the law.
3:12	7:16 - fruits
4:11	7:1f - judging
5:9	7:1f - judging
5:12	5:34-37 - oath, yes yes

James 1:27; 2:5,15 are like the judgment scene in Mt. 25.

-Also check cross references on 1:2,20; 2:8; 4:4.

-Matthew may have been written by this time, so James may have used it. But James could be based on common apostolic preaching material.

#### 4. Outline of Letter of James.

##### a. Thematic (after Davids)

###### 1) Introduction

Greeting (1:1)

Themes Presented (1:2-27)

Test of Faith

Speech and Spirit

Piety and Poverty

###### 2) Themes Developed

Piety and Poverty (2:1-26)

Speech and Spirit (3:1-4:12)

Test and Result (4:13-5:6)

3) Conclusion (5:7-20)  
with themes restated

b. Acrostic (after Huddleston)

- 1) *Working* patience through trials.
- 2) *Obedience* accompanies true faith.
- 3) *Restraining* the unbridled tongue.
- 4) *Keeping* calm in conflicts.
- 5) *Sick* and suffering saints.

5. Argument of James (a condensed explanatory paraphrase)

From James, a servant of God and Christ:  
Greetings to the scattered tribes of Israel! (1:1)

You should rejoice in all your difficulties, because they are sent to give you patience and maturity. Ask God for spiritual wisdom to go through them, and learn to trust him as he leads. We must not let circumstances throw us off balance, for then we will not get what God is giving us. (1:2-8)

You who are poor should rejoice about how rich you are in Christ, and you rich consider how poor you are, for all your riches will one day pass away. We all need to be steadfast in our trials, for then we will one day be crowned with eternal life. (1:9-12)

We should not view temptation as something God is doing to us; the temptation comes from our own sinful nature, which seeks to lead us into sin and death. All the really good things come from God. He cannot change and he has given us new life. (1:13-18)

All of us need to be quick at listening and slow at speaking or getting angry, for these work against God's plan for us. Humbly trust God's word to work in you and to rescue you from your sins. And don't merely listen to God's word, obey it! Those who just listen never find out what they're really like; those who obey do, and they are the ones who will finally receive the blessing. Real religion is controlling our speech, caring for those in need, and not being corrupted by the sin around us. (1:19-25)

As those who trust in our glorious Lord Jesus, we must not act as though we can judge people's worth by their wealth. After all, God chose the poor to inherit his kingdom, and it is the rich who oppress you, sue you, and mock the name of Jesus. To love your neighbor as yourself, you cannot show favoritism; and if you break this command, you have broken them all. We must live and speak as those who are going to be judged as we have judged; so show mercy that you may receive mercy. (2:1-13)

What good is a faith that has no works to back it up? Is that saving faith? What good is it if we wish a person well but never help them? We show our faith by how we act, and mere belief in

God is something even the demons have. Look at how Abraham's faith was demonstrated by his willingness to offer up his son Isaac, thus demonstrating that he trusted God, was really righteous and really God's friend. It is our actions that declare us to be righteous, not mere talk of faith. Rahab, too, showed her righteousness by her actions. Living faith produces works. (2:14-26)

It is dangerous to be a teacher, because teachers face a stricter judgment, and the tongue is especially difficult to control. Like the bit in a horse's mouth, the rudder of a ship, or a spark in a forest, the tongue can produce enormous effects. When it is used for evil, it will ruin your whole life and then will itself be ruined in hell. Though humans have learned to tame all sorts of wild animals, they have never been able to tame the tongue, always active, always poisonous. Look how inconsistent it is, praising God but cursing people! (3:1-12)

Wisdom and understanding are demonstrated by goodness and humility, not by envy and ambition, which some boast about and others hide away. That sort of "wisdom" is earthly and devilish, for envy and ambition lead to all sorts of evil. Heavenly wisdom is pure, peace-loving, considerate, merciful, and sincere, producing a crop of righteousness. (3:13-18)

Where does fighting and quarreling come from? Doesn't it come from your evil desires? You covet something, then you fight, even kill, to get it. Instead you should ask God for it, and if you don't get it from him, it's because you want it for the wrong reasons. But rather you are being unfaithful to your marriage vows to God, you are getting in bed with the world, and thus making yourself an enemy of God. His Spirit is very jealous that we be faithful to him. He will give us far more than we deserve, if we will humble ourselves. So submit to God, and then you can resist the devil. Draw near to him, cleanse yourself, repent and mourn, and God will lift you up. Don't slander and judge one another, for that is taking upon yourself a job that God reserves for himself. (4:1-12)

And don't boast about tomorrow, as though you were God and could control what is going to happen. Your life is so fragile that you don't even know you will be around tomorrow! Instead you should acknowledge your dependence on God, rather than bragging about what you're going to do. And if you know what you ought to do, then it is a sin not to do it. (4:13-17)

Now listen, you rich people who oppress the poor. You should be wailing about the disaster that is coming! All your wealth will corrode and rot, and it will testify against you. The cries of those you have mistreated have risen to God. Your luxury has fattened you up for the slaughter, in repayment for the innocent people you have killed. (5:1-6)

So be patient, my suffering brothers. The Lord is coming. Wait for him like a good farmer waits for the rains and the harvest. Don't let your bad circumstances lead you to complain against one another, or you will face the Lord's judgment when he comes. Remember the prophets, especially Job, how they were patient in suffering, what God did for them, and how we honor them today. God is full of compassion and mercy. Trust him and don't try to take things into your own hands. (5:7-12)

Are you in trouble? Pray! Are you happy? Praise God! Are you sick? Call for the elders to

pray for you and anoint you, that the Lord may raise you up and forgive you. The prayers of righteous people are powerful; remember how God answered Elijah's prayers. If anyone wanders away and someone brings him back, he saves him from death and rescues him from many sins. (5:13-20)

## 6. Diatribe AGenre@

- a. Common Modern Usage: *Webster's New World Dictionary*, College Ed. (1954):  
a bitter, abusive criticism or denunciation.
- b. Historical (Literary) Definition: *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters* (1993):  
a method or mode of teaching and exhortation used in the ancient schools of philosophy
- c. History
  - originated among Sophists, certainly before 200 BC
  - adopted by Cynics and Stoics
  - used by traveling philosophers who taught on popular level
  - not strictly a literary genre, but an oral teaching method which could, however, be used in written form
  - typically a lecture or writing on moral or philosophical topics of popular interest, e.g., divine providence, self-control, self-sufficiency
  - Stoic philosopher Epictetus (AD 55-135) noted for his use of this method
  - in the NT, Paul and James especially use the techniques of diatribe.
- d. Characteristics
  - not a genre *per se*, so no set structure like (say) a letter
  - uses a number of **dialogue type** features:
    - imaginary opponents or interlocutors
    - questions and answers given
    - hypothetical objections considered
    - false conclusions refuted/rejected
  - uses a number of standard features of Greco-Roman **rhetoric**:
    - amplification – adding details
    - personification – referring to a thing as if a person
    - maxim/proverb – brief statement of general principle or moral rule
    - censure/praise – negative or positive evaluation of person, principle
    - saying/action of famous people
    - comparison
    - historical example – reference to famous event or person
    - list of virtues/vices
    - parallelism – lines which have similar features
    - antithesis – negative parallelism or contrast of opposites

irony – meaning intended is opposite of what the words normally mean  
sarcasm – sharp, cutting remark or put-down, often ironic  
paradox – statement which seems contradictory, mistaken or absurd, which is nevertheless true

C. The Petrine Epistles.

1. Authenticity.

a. 1 Peter

- Denied by many liberals, although accepted by some.
- Usual objection is that it sounds too much like Paul.
- If Peter and Paul are that close and have the same view of Christ, it is hard to postulate a split between them (and the Gospels also) as liberals do.
- If Peter, Paul and the Gospels look too much alike, it is hard to propose that they are wrong.
- Apostolic unity is tough on most liberal models.
- Conservative liberals say Peter's view is original.
- 1 Peter was recognized early in the Christian church.
- Evidence for its use as widespread as for most NT epistles.
- Authorship then was never doubted.

b. 2 Peter

- Almost universally rejected by liberals.

Their arguments:

- 1) Style is different from 1 Peter => different author.
  - Liberals have split up the Pauline Epistles this way also.
- 2) 2 Peter refers to Pauline epistles as Scripture, 2 Pet. 3:15-16.
  - Baur did not like the favorable statement about Paul since he thought Peter and Paul did not get along.
  - Liberals generally reject idea that NT was viewed as Scripture in the first century; that would imply that great care would have been taken so no forgeries would have gotten into canon.
  - They typically date 2 Peter at c130 AD to overcome this problem.
- 3) Resemblance to Jude.
  - Many liberals claim 2 Peter borrows from Jude.
    - => it is not by Peter since an apostle would not have copied from a lesser figure, and Jude is late.
- 4) There are no clear references to 2 Peter until late 2nd century.
  - Some leaders in the early church (late 2nd and 3rd cent.) questioned authorship.

Answers to liberal arguments:

1) Style difference.

1 Pet. 5:12 "through Silvanus ... I have written"

-Suggests that Silvanus is co-author of 1 Peter.

-If this is Silas who was with Paul on 2nd MJ, he prob had better Greek language ability than Peter.

-But we don't know for sure. The style of 2 Peter is not bad Greek, but it is different.

-Despite these differences, no book is closer in style to 2 Peter than is 1 Peter.

2) Favorable reference to Paul as writing Scripture.

-This is only a problem if you reconstruct a history in which Peter and Paul did not get along.

-But from Acts and Pauline Epistles, we see they did agree.

-Peter recognized Paul's ministry to the Gentiles.

-Peter would have known of Paul's writings as he was living at the same time.

-But ... did the apostles expect more Scripture?

-If so, who did they expect to write it?

-Jesus told them that the Holy Spirit would teach them.

-They were given the right Ato bind and to loose. @

-In Rabbinic idiom, this phrase means "they have the authority to set up rules and to say others are no longer in force. @

=> they expected to write Scripture themselves.

-2 Pet. 1:12f => Peter knew he would die soon and wrote "I will be diligent that at any time after my departure you may be able to call these things to mind."

-Peter claimed he wrote something that was to be kept, i.e., it should be counted as Scripture.

-Paul quotes Luke as Scripture (1 Tim. 5:18 citing Luke 10:7).

-Apparently, Jude quotes 2 Peter as Scripture (see below).

So the concept of Scripture being written by the apostles existed while the apostles were still around.

3) Resemblances to Jude.

-2 Peter does resemble Jude in several places.

-Possibilities: 2 Pet copied Jude, Jude copied 2 Pet, or both copied some other source.

-Actually looks like Jude copied from 2 Peter (see below under Jude).

4) Lack of early attestation.

Should not be overemphasized. Yes, no other book in canon is so poorly attested, but no other book excluded from canon is as well attested. Some book in NT has to be last!

Possible explanations:

a) 2 Peter did not exist until late (c130 AD).

-Liberals like this, but it creates a problem for their position.

-How would it get into the canon if written 35 years after any other canonical material?

-Considering the many apocryphal works being written in 2nd cen, incl several ascribed to Peter, why did only this one get in?

b) It existed, but it was not mentioned.

-Is a statistical fluke: we see that the Apostolic Fathers did not quote from some OT books which they accepted as canonical.

c) It did not have the wide circulation that 1 Peter did.

-No locations of recipients are given in 2 Pet (unlike 1 Pet, which was sent to Xns in a large area), so it may have been written to a smaller group.

However, there are some apparent allusions to 2 Peter in the Apostolic Fathers.

1 Clement 11 may refer to 2 Pet 2:6-9.

-Notes piety of Lot, God knows how to rescue the godly.

Ps Barnabas 15 "day of Lord shall be as a 1000 years" is quoted as if it is Scripture.

-Ps 90:4 has same length of time, but opposite order.

-But 2 Pet 3:8 is very close.

-Perhaps quoting Jesus directly, but is more likely quoting 2 Peter.

Again, Jude apparently quotes 2 Peter (see below, under Jude).

2. Date of 1 & 2 Peter.

Taking 1 and 2 Peter to be genuine, then they must have been written before 68 (Nero's suicide) since Peter was killed under Nero's reign.

2 Pet 3:1 "This is the second letter I am writing to you"

=> 2 Peter was written after 1 Peter (with some overlap of recipients)

-1 Peter is worded like the persecution has already begun, implying a date no earlier than fall of 64 AD.

-Was written to warn churches of the change in Roman policy.

2 Peter - probably close to his death, but not in prison yet.

=> before 68.

-Thus the range 64-68 AD is best for both, with 1 Peter earlier.

### 3. Content of 1 Peter.

a. Is written from "Babylon" (5:13). "She" here is probably the church, rather than Peter's wife.

Where is "Babylon"?

1) Probably not the ancient city itself as it did not exist in NT times. However, that region of Mesopotamia was called "Babylon" by the Jews.

2) The Cairo area was also called "Babylon" in NT times.

-Cannot rule out the possibility that Peter went to either or both of these places, as they each had large Jewish populations; but connection of 1 Pet with Mark and Silas makes 3) below more likely.

3) Figurative for "Rome."

-Rev 17:9 refers to Rome under the guise of Babylon

-A seven hills@ seems to be a clear reference to Rome as neither of the literal places Mesopotamia or Egypt had hills and the "seven hills" a standard way of referring to Rome in ancient writers.

-Peter may have gotten the figure from OT background of Israel's enemies rather than from Revelation, which prob was not written yet.

Why would Peter use this expression?

-If Nero was looking for Christian leaders, they would not want to disclose where they were in a letter which might be intercepted.

4) Could possibly mean "the dispersion" since Babylon was the reason the Jews were scattered in OT.

-But "Babylon" seems to refer to a location, not a condition.

What early evidence we have gives the best support for 3), as we are fairly sure Peter was in Rome, but know nothing about his being in Mesopotamia or Egypt.

b. 1 Peter is written to Asia Minor (to all but 2 south coastal provinces), largely to areas where we know that Paul ministered.

-Perhaps Peter had ministered in these areas (recall that the Spirit kept Paul out of Bithynia).

-Perhaps Paul is in Spain and unable to warn his churches of the sudden outbreak of persecution, so Peter does.

-Peter seems to be writing mainly to Gentiles, not Jews.

c. Main theme: to encourage Xns in midst of persecution.

-See several references to persecution:

1:6-7 C "distressed by trials ... tested by fire."

4:4 C verbal abuse.

4:12-13 C "fiery ordeal ... testing ... sufferings of X."

4:16 C "suffers as a Christian."

-Sounds like there is organized persecution throughout Asia Minor, suggesting that Nero's persecution extended beyond Rome (consistent with Pliny's letter later).

-Peter encourages believers in 2 ways:

1) To look back to Christ's suffering

-we "share" in it in the sense that the world hated him and hates us also; cf. John 17:14.

1:11 C Prophets predicted Christ's suffering.

2:21f C Christ's suffering is an example (like Heb. 12).

3:17f C Suffer for doing right...

4:1 C Prepare to suffer like Christ did.

4:13 C Share sufferings of Christ.

2) To look forward to His coming.

1:3f C "A living hope... imperishable inheritance"

3:22 C Jesus has already gone to heaven.

4:7 C "The end of all things is at hand..."

4:13 C Will rejoice at His coming.

d. A second theme: Peter exhorts the saints to holy living.

1:13ff C "Gird up your minds for action..."

2:12ff C "Keep your behavior excellent..."

4:1ff C "Live no longer for the lusts of men..."

4. Outline of 1 Peter.

a. Topical (after Willingale)

- 1) Address and greeting (1:1-2)
- 2) Thanksgiving (1:3-12)
- 3) The implications of salvation (1:13-2:10)
- 4) Christian relationships (2:11-3:12)
- 5) Suffering and the will of God (3:13-22)
- 6) Holy living (4:1-11)
- 7) The fiery trial (4:12-19)
- 8) Address to elders (5:1-4)
- 9) General address and benediction (5:5-11)
- 10) Personal comments and greetings (5:12-14)

b. Acrostic (after Huddleston)

- 1) **T**rials prove your faith.
- 2) **R**espond as Christ did.
- 3) **I**nnocent conscience quiets foes.
- 4) **A**ttitudes pleasing to God.
- 5) **L**eaders to serve humbly.

c. Argument of 1 Peter (a condensed explanatory paraphrase):

Peter to God=s chosen C strangers in this world C scattered throughout Turkey: (1:1-2)

Praise God for the new birth he=s given you, for an imperishable inheritance, for protection to keep you safe till he comes. Rejoice in these, even though you now suffer all sorts of trials. The trials are designed to demonstrate the true character of your faith and to bring praise to God and yourselves at Jesus= coming. You love Jesus and trust him (though you haven=t seen him), and this fills you with joy as your souls are being rescued from sin. (1:3-9)

The prophets wondered what it was all about when the Spirit predicted the sufferings of Jesus and the glory to follow. But he told them that these things were to help you C things that even the angels long to understand. (1:10-12)

So get ready for action: put all your hope in what Jesus will give you when he comes rather than in the things you longed for when you were unsaved. Be holy, just as God is holy; that=s what he=s called you to. Since your Father is an impartial judge, show him the proper respect and remember what it cost him to rescue you from sin, the death of Jesus, his lamb. (1:13-21)  
Since you have been purified, love one another truly and deeply, for your new birth is forever, just like God=s word which caused it to happen. So get rid of all sin against one another, and desire God=s word so that you may become mature. (1:22-2:3)

Just as Jesus is the Living Stone, so you are living stones God is building into a temple. Remember the prophecies about Jesus C the chosen cornerstone, the one rejected by the builders, the stumbling stone C so unbelievers stumble as predicted. You, however, are the chosen people, the royal priesthood declaring the praises of God who rescued you from darkness. Once you were not a people, but now you are his. Since you are aliens in this world, stay away from its desires, and live such good lives that unbelievers who slander you will finally have to admit your good deeds. (2:4-12)

For God=s sake submit to earthly rulers, who exist to punish wrong and reward right. God wants you to silence slander by doing good. You are free, but your freedom is not to be an excuse to do evil, but an opportunity to serve God. So respect fellow believers, fear God, and honor the king. If you are a slave, serve and respect your master, whether he deserves it or not. It is praiseworthy if we suffer unjustly for God, but what is so great about suffering if we deserve it? Follow Jesus= example, who when he suffered, committed no sin, did not retaliate nor threaten, but trusted in God, who judges justly. Look at what he accomplished for us in so doing! (2:13-25)

Wives, submit to your husbands in the same way. They may be converted by your godly behavior even if they won=t listen to your words. Don=t depend on external beauty, but develop an internal beauty, like Sarah did, who trusted God and submitted to her husband rather than giving way to fear. Husbands, be considerate; treat your wives with respect as you would delicate china, as co-heir with you, or your prayers will be hindered. (3:1-7)

All of you should live in harmony, full of sympathy, love, compassion and humility. Repay mistreatment with blessing, since this is what you were called to do. Who will harm you if you are eager to do good? But even if someone does harm you, don=t be afraid. Set Jesus apart as your Lord, and be ready to respond when anyone asks you why you believe what you do. Keep a clear conscience, so that those who slander you will be ashamed. Better to suffer for doing good than for doing evil. That=s what Jesus did, and the Spirit raised him to life. Through the Spirit he preached to spirits in bondage in the days of Noah, yet only eight people were saved. You are saved through water just as they were, a picture of cleansing, resurrection and union with Christ. (3:8-22)

Since Christ has so suffered, arm yourselves with the same attitude and be done with sin. You=ve already spent enough time sinning, now live for God. Though pagans will think you strange for not joining in their sins, and revile you for it, they will have to answer for all this one day. That is why the Gospel has been proclaimed, that we may live for God though we are judged by men. (4:1-6)

The end is near, so be clear-thinking and self-controlled in order to be able to pray. Love each other deeply, enjoy being hospitable, use your gifts to serve others, so being a channel of God=s grace. Speak God=s words, serve with your God-given strength, so God may be praised through Jesus. (4:7-11)

Don't be surprised at these trials you're suffering. You are actually participating in Jesus' sufferings, and you will be overjoyed when he comes. It is a blessing to be insulted for Christ's sake; it shows we are his. Don't let your suffering be for criminal behavior, but don't be ashamed to suffer for Jesus. Judgment must begin with us, but what will finally happen to those who continue in unbelief? So commit yourself to our faithful Creator and keep doing what is right. (4:12-19)

To you elders, my appeal is: Be shepherds over God's flock C not unwillingly, or greedily, or tyrannically C but eagerly, selflessly, serving as examples. Jesus, the Chief Shepherd, will reward you when he comes. Young men, submit to those who are older, humble yourselves under God's hand, and he will one day exalt you. Be self-controlled and alert, for the devil is seeking to devour you. Resist him by standing firm in your faith, and remember that other Christians are suffering likewise. The God who has graciously called you to eternal glory in Christ will restore you after you have suffered a while. To him be the power forever. Amen. (5:1-11)

With the help of Silas I've written to you to encourage you to stand fast in God's grace. She who is in Babylon sends her greetings, so does Mark. Greet one another, and God's peace be upon you. (5:12-13)

## 5. Content of 2 Peter.

-Address is very general (1:1)

"To those who have received a faith of the same kind as ours"

-Does this cover all Christians or some partial group?

-There seems to be some overlap with audience of 1 Peter, as in 3:1 Peter says, "this is the 2nd time I've written you..."

-Peter's intention here is to leave them his reminder of certain key themes:

growth (ch 1)

apostasy (ch 2)

2nd coming (ch 3)

## 6. Outline of 2 Peter.

### a. Topical (after EMB Green)

1) Salutation (1:1-2)

2) Truth of Xn faith attested (1:3-21)

    a) personal experience (1:3-11)

    b) testimony of eyewitnesses (1:12-18)

    c) fulfillment of prophecy (1:19-21)

3) Condemnation of false prophets (2:1-3:10)

    a) share judgment of OT false prophets (2:1-9)

- b) unrestrained sinners (2:10-18)
- c) lead to slavery (2:19-22)
- d) doubt 2nd coming (3:1-4)
- e) but pictured by Flood (3:5-7)
- f) delayed by God's mercy (3:8-9)
- g) certain to come (3:10)
- 4) Duties of believers (3:11-18)
  - a) be holy (3:11-14)
  - b) recognize God's patience (3:15-16)
  - c) watch out for deception (3:16-17)
  - d) grow in grace (3:18)
- 5) Benediction (3:18)

b. Acrostic (after Huddleston)

- 1) *Add* virtues to faith.
- 2) **D**eeds of false teachers.
- 3) **D**iligence before Lord's return.

D. Jude.

1. Author.

- Have 7 different Jude's or Judas's in the NT:
  - 1) Ancestor of Jesus (Luke 3:30),
  - 2) Galilean rebel leader (Acts 5:37),
  - 3) Iscariot (Mark 3:19),
  - 4) of Damascus (Acts 9:11),
  - 5) Barsabbas (Acts 15:22),
  - 6) Apostle [son or brother of James] (Luke 6:16, Acts 1:13, John 14:22) also called Thaddeus or Lebbaeus.
  - 7) Brother of James and Jesus (Matt. 13:55, Mk. 6:3).
- "Jude", "Judas", and "Judah" all translate the same Hebrew name.  
(In English we tend to associate Jude = good, Judas = bad, Judah = Jewish, but this is artificial).
- Most of the above 7 are obscure, but show that Judah was a very popular name in NT times (nearly every household had one).

-The author of Jude (if any of these) was prob either:

#6: "Jude, of James" (genitive of relation, so connection is not made explicit in Luke 6:16).

#7: "Jude, brother of James and Jesus" (note Matt. 13:55).

-#7 seems best, since James the brother of Jesus became the most famous James (leader of Jerus. church) and only one whose identity would be assumed if no further information was provided.

-The Roman Catholic Church identifies the Apostles James and Jude with Jesus' brothers James and Jude (seen as cousins).

-Protestants say this is impossible as Jesus' brothers did not believe in Him until after His resurrection, whereas Jesus certainly chose professing believers as his apostles.

## 2. Connection with 2 Peter.

-There are very strong parallels between Jude and 2 Peter 2:1-3:2.

-This implies one of the following relationships:

(where --> indicates direction of flow of information)

Jude --> Peter; Peter --> Jude; 3rd source --> both J & P.

-Cannot rule out the 3rd source idea as each could be drawing from some unrecorded comments of Jesus.

### Similarities of Jude (left) and 2 Peter (right):

(4) Certain persons have crept in unnoticed, those who were long beforehand marked out for this condemnation.

(5-7) [destruction brought upon Jews in wilderness, angels, Sodom and Gomorrah]:

And angels who did not keep their own domain, but abandoned their proper abode, He has kept in eternal bonds under darkness for the judgment of the great day.

Just as Sodom & Gomorrah and the cities around them, since in the same way as these they indulged in gross immorality and went after strange flesh, are exhibited as an example,

(8-10) Yet in the same manner these men, also by dreaming, defile the flesh, and reject authority, and revile angelic majesties. But Michael the archangel, when he disputed

(2:1) There will also be false teachers among you, who will secretly introduce destructive heresies ... bringing swift destruction upon themselves.

(2:4-7) [destruction upon angels, people at flood, Sodom and Gomorrah]:

For if God did not spare angels when they sinned, but cast them into hell and committed them to pits of darkness, reserved for judgment;

and if He condemned the cities of Sodom & Gomorrah to destruction by reducing them to ashes, having made them an example to those who would live ungodly thereafter.

(2:10-11) and especially those who indulge the flesh in its corrupt desires and despise authority. Daring, self-willed, they do not tremble when they revile angelic majesties,

with the devil and argued about the body of Moses, did not dare pronounce against him a railing judgment, but said, "The Lord rebuke you." But these men revile the things which they do not understand, and the things which they know by instinct, like unreasoning animals, by these things they are destroyed.

(11) [examples of Cain, Balaam, & Korah]:  
they have gone in the way of Cain, and ran greedily after the error of Balaam for reward, and perished in the gainsaying of Korah

(12) These men are those who are hidden reefs in your love feasts

(12-13) clouds without water, carried along by winds, autumn trees without fruit, doubly dead, uprooted; wild waves of the sea, casting up their own shame like foam; wandering stars, for whom the black darkness has been reserved forever.

(17-18) remember the words that were spoken beforehand by the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ, that they were saying to you, "In the last time there shall be mockers, following after their own ungodly lusts"

whereas angels who are greater in might and power do not bring a reviling judgment against them before the Lord. But these, like unreasoning animals, born as creatures of instinct to be captured and killed, reviling where they have no knowledge, will in the destruction of those creatures be destroyed.

(2:15) [example of Balaam]:  
following the way of Balaam, the son of Beor, who loved the wages of unrighteousness

(2:13) They are stains and blemishes, reveling in their deceptions, as they carouse with you

(2:17) These are springs without water, and mists driven by a storm, for whom the black darkness has been reserved.

(3:2-3) remember the words spoken beforehand by the holy prophets and the commandment of the Lord and Savior spoken by your apostles. Know this first of all, that in the last days mockers will come with their mocking, following after their own lusts and saying ...

-Liberals say Jude is used by 2 Peter so they can date 2 Peter late.  
-Conservatives say 2 Peter is used by Jude as this seems most natural.

-Note in 2:1, Peter predicts that false teachers and prophets will come into the church.  
-Jude 4 sees the false teachers as already present.

-In 3:2-3, Peter reminds readers of predictions made by the apostles.

- Jude 17-18 quotes 3:2-3 saying, "The apostles warned you..."
- Thus Jude reads most naturally as if Jude is reminding his readers of predictions made by Peter before he died, which are now (some years later) starting to come true.
- Liberals to avoid this must say that 2 Peter is "cleverly disguised" to look as if Jude is quoting from it. This is a fraud theory (and not a very convincing one), though they try to cover it over by saying that fake-authorship was common (perhaps) and accepted in the early church as OK (but no evidence for this).

### 3. Connection of Jude with Apocalyptic Literature.

- 2 passages in Jude seem to quote from the OT Pseudepigrapha.
  - a. Jude 14-15 draws from 1 Enoch 60:8 ("7th from Adam") and esp from 1 Enoch 1:9 (long quote about the Lord coming).
    - Who quotes from whom, or is there a common source?
      - Seems most likely that Jude is quoting Enoch, since scraps of 1 Enoch 1 have been found at Qumran which contain fragments of the quote Jude cites, so 1 Enoch existed before Jude written.
      - The quote does fit naturally into the 1 Enoch 1 context.
      - Of course, Jude may be drawing from a common oral tradition behind 1 Enoch.
    - b. Jude 9 (Michael and the body of Moses) refers to an incident not recorded in the Bible.
      - Several early church fathers (Clement, Origen, Didymus) tell us that this is a quotation from "The Assumption of Moses," although our copies of this work quit before this point in the narrative is reached.
      - Liberals use these quotations to **discredit** Jude (obviously he felt they were inspired => early church had no good criteria concerning what was "Scripture").
      - Occult types say these citations **validate** the apocalyptic literature, thus they get interested in "the lost books of Moses" and other flaky books.
      - Conservatives often wonder what to do with these quotations.
    - However, quoting a work does not prove it is Scripture:
      - Paul cites Greek poets in Acts 17:28 (Aratus or Cleanthes): "we are his offspring"; 1 Cor. 15:33 (Menander): "bad company corrupts good morals"; Titus 1:12 (Epimenides): "Cretans are always liars, evil beasts, lazy gluttons."
    - Secular sources do have valid truth. We need to see if the NT cites them as "scripture" or as merely correct on this point.
    - What Jude cites from 1 Enoch is a true statement about the Lord's coming. But did Enoch ever say this?

- There is a possibility that this quotation does preserve the antediluvian speech of Enoch, but it seems slight.
- Oral traditions from that far back are shaky.
- It is possible that Jude is referring to the book, not the person Enoch when he cites this (cp "the Law says ...").
- Thus Jude may be citing a book accepted by the heretics he is arguing with to show that even their own authorities condemn their behavior.
- Why would an antinomian group respect Enoch?
  - Robert Grant (liberal) thinks that the 2nd cent Gnostics (antinomian, anti-Jewish) may have come from the 1st cent Essenes (legalistic, Jewish).
  - Grant sees that the Gnostics were interested in Jewish traditions (Cain, serpent in the garden, etc.).
  - Grant suggests Essenes were expecting their Messiah in the 70's and when he did not appear they shifted views while retaining their scriptures (parallel to liberal Methodists today). Of course, this is admittedly speculative.
- Thus, Jude's citation of Enoch could mean:
  - 1) Jude considered Enoch as Scripture [liberals, occult].
  - 2) Jude felt this information was a valid tradition which went back to Enoch.
  - 3) Jude knew the book was respected by the heretics so he used it against them.

Of these, 3) seems most reasonable. Today, some Xns witness to Mormons using their own scriptures (citing orthodox elements in the Book of Mormon and contrasting this with Smith's later writings). Some Xns also witness to Muslims using the Qur'an.

#### 4. Occasion of Jude.

Verse 3 indicates Jude had been planning to write his hearers (otherwise unidentified) about "our common salvation."

The appearance of heretics in their midst (4) has changed his plans, so that now he appeals to them to "contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints."

These heretics are described in detail in the letter, as:

- having crept in unnoticed (4) (deceptive)
- turning God's grace into licentiousness (4) (antinomian)
- denying Jesus in some way (4) (lordship? Messiahship?)
- dreaming (8) (claimed visions?)
- defiling the flesh (8)
- rejecting authority (8-10)
- dangerous (12)
- selfish (12)
- don't deliver on their promises (12-13)
- unstable (12)
- spiritually dead (12)

grumblers (16)  
lustful (16)  
arrogant (16)  
flatterers(16)  
causing divisions (19)  
worldly-minded/merely natural (19, cp 10b)  
not having the Spirit (19)

5. Argument of Jude (a condensed explanatory paraphrase).

False teachers have slipped into the church. Their teaching needs to be exposed and refuted as an essential part of defending the faith, even though it takes time and effort away from more positive things. (1-4a)

These teachers and their activities have not gone unnoticed by God, even though they are currently prospering; He predicted their coming and judgment long ago. Just as the unbelieving Israelites were killed in the wilderness, the fallen angels imprisoned to await judgment, and Sodom was burnt up with fire, so it will happen to these too. (4b-9)

They are using dreams and visions to justify their sinful behavior and to reject authority, violating even their own "Scriptures." They don't understand what they rebel against, and are destroying themselves in the process. They are following the OT examples of Cain, Balaam and Korah in self-righteousness, envy, greed and rebellion. (10-11)

But they are a danger to you also, and their presence in your most sacred assemblies can wreck the ship of your faith. For they do not fear God, they care only for themselves, they don't deliver what they promise, they are unstable, spiritually dead, dredging up their own shame, reserved for the judgment of hell's darkness. Even their own books warn of their coming judgment, as 1 Enoch does when its speaks of God's coming. And the description of ungodliness there fits them to a T. (12-16)

You, at least, ought to remember our Scriptures, how the apostles warned us that such mockers would come in the last times. (17-19)

So we need to do what is necessary to build ourselves up in the holy faith. At the same time, we should reach out to rescue others from doubt, sin and judgment, not forgetting our own vulnerability to these things. Praise God, He is the One who is able to keep us and sanctify us through Jesus Christ! (20-25)

6. Outline (by verses)

- 1-2: Greeting.
- 3-4: Arrival of apostates.

- 5-7: Examples of divine judgment.
- 8-16: Apostates characterized.
- 17-19: Predicted by apostles.
- 20-23: Keep yourselves, rescue others.
- 24-25: Benediction.

Acrostic (after Huddleston):

- 1-4            *Jude warns against apostasy.*
- 5-7            *Unbelief seen throughout history.*
- 8-19            *Description of false teachers.*
- 20-25          *Exhortation to stay faithful.*

### **III. Johannine Literature: the Revelation.**

#### **A. Introduction to Revelation.**

We turn now to the last book in the NT according to our traditional order, and the book that appears to have been written last of all. This book has been given the most diverse interpretations of any of the NT books (even, any of the books of the Bible), and has partly for that reason been less studied in many circles than most of the others.

##### **1. Authorship.**

###### **a. Traditional view: The Apostle John.**

-This position is supported by most of our ancient sources:

###### **1) Justin Martyr (c150 AD)**

*And further, there was a certain man, even with us, whose name was John, one of the Apostles of Christ, who prophesied in a revelation which came to him that those who believed in our Christ will spend a thousand years in Jerusalem, and after that, the general and, in short, the eternal resurrection and judgment of all will come to pass at one and the same time.*

*Dialogue with Trypho* 81.4

-The Dialogue was written around 150 but it records a debate which apparently occurred in the late 130's as it refers to the "recent" Bar Kochba War.

###### **2) Eusebius, who is not in favor of apostolic authorship, writes about 3 men who refer to John's Revelation. As he does not use them to support his view, presumably they felt the Apostle wrote it. These 3 were:**

- Melito of Sardis (c170 AD);
- Theophilus of Antioch (c180 AD);
- Apollonius (c180 AD).

###### **3) Muratorian Canon (c 170-190 AD)**

*... since the blessed Apostle Paul himself, imitating the example of his predecessor, John, wrote to seven churches only by name.... For John also, though he wrote in the Apocalypse to seven churches, nevertheless he speaks to them all.... We accept only the Apocalypses of John and of Peter....*

-The reference to the Apocalypse of Peter is problematic, but may be a textual problem (see Guthrie) or perhaps a reference to 2 Peter.

###### **4) Irenaeus (c170 AD)**

*John also, the Lord's disciple, when beholding the sacerdotal and glorious advent of His kingdom, says in the Apocalypse: 'I turned to see the voice that spake with me. And being turned, I saw seven golden candlesticks....'*

*Against Heresies 4.20.11*

*Afterwards, John, the disciple of the Lord, who also had leaned upon his breast, did himself publish a Gospel during his residence at Ephesus in Asia.*

*Against Heresies 3.1.1*

-"Sacerdotal" presumably refers to the priestly garments Jesus is wearing in the vision.

-Note in the 2nd quote that Irenaeus calls John the apostle a disciple

=> 1st quote refers to the apostle also.

## 5) Hippolytus (c 170-236 AD)

*Isaiah, then, prophesies these things. But let us see if John uttered things similar to his. For this man, being in the island of Patmos, saw a revelation of awe-inspiring mysteries, which he relates unreservedly and teaches to others. Tell me, O blessed John, Apostle and pupil of the Lord, what have you seen and what have you heard about Babylon? Awake and speak, for she also banished you. 'And there came one of the seven angels, who had the seven vials....=*

*Of Antichrist 25-26*

-Note the Babylon = Rome connection ("Babylon ... also banished you.")

-See John called both "apostle and pupil [disciple]."

## 6) Origen (185-250 AD)

*What shall we say of him who reclined on the breast of Jesus, I mean John? who has left one gospel, in which he confesses that he could write so many that the whole world could not contain them. He also wrote the Apocalypse, commanded as he was, to conceal, and not to write the voices of the seven thunders.*

*Commentary on John 5; cited  
in Eusebius' Ch History 6.25*

-Links Gospel writer with Apocalypse.

-Thus there is a large amount of testimony from c130 AD on regarding the apostle John's authorship of Revelation.

b. Opposition to the traditional view.

-Revelation and Hebrews are the only NT writings to have early opposition to them as being really Scripture.

1) Usually opponents propose that someone else named John wrote Revelation.

- Eusebius: John the Elder
- More recently: John Mark
- Anchor Bible: John the Baptist [actually his circle].
- Dionysius: Cerinthus.

2) Proponents of non-apostolic authorship.

-Some arose in moderately early times.

a) Dionysius of Alexandria (231-264 AD)

*But it is highly probable that Cerinthus, the same that established the heresy that bears his name, designedly affixed the name [of John] to his own forgery. For one of the doctrines that he taught was that Christ would have an earthly kingdom."*

*On Promises* 2; cited in  
Eusebius' *Church History* 3.28

-Dionysius was immediate successor to Origen at Alexandrian school.

-Note his reasoning: because of the mention of an earthly kingdom, it must be from Cerinthus.

-Appears to be an overreaction in the early church to the Montanist heresy's teachings (2nd cent.) about the earthly kingdom (and their extravagance with it).

-Ignores the possibility that there might really be one, as Justin Martyr clearly thought.

b) Eusebius (c 270-340 AD)

*For it is probable that the second, if it be not allowed that it was the first, saw the revelation ascribed to John."*

*Church History* 3.39

-This is his conclusion after finding in Papias a comment which allows him to postulate the existence of two Johns who taught Papias (see above, under authorship of Johannine Epistles, page 19).

-Eusebius ranked Scripture in 3 categories with respect to canonicity:

- 1) accepted by all;
- 2) disputed;
- 3) spurious but orthodox.

Strangely, he puts Revelation in either (1) or (3).

-A few of the fathers were antagonistic to the book of Revelation, but they could not deny that

their predecessors had used it.

3) Arguments against the Apostle John.

a) Its style is not like John's Gospel and Epistles.

-As Greek students know, Revelation is among the easiest NT books to translate; but it has many peculiar constructions (Hebraisms and apparent inventions) which do not show up in the Gospel/Epistles.

-See invention of past & future participles of "to be."

-See a use of  $\square\pi\in$  with the nominative (app to express the unchangeableness of God's attributes).

-This feature implies something like one of the following:

(1) A different author wrote Revelation. (non-apostolic)

(2) Rev. was written early in John's career (during Neronian persecution, 64-68 AD) before he had a solid mastery of Greek. (early date)

(3) John had the help of an amanuensis (secretary) in writing the Gospels and Epistles since he was in a cultural center (Ephesus).

-Rev. finds him alone on Patmos, and he apparently wrote it while the revelation was going on (cf. command not to write down what the 7 thunders said; Rev. 10:4).

(4) The vision may have been in Aramaic and John translated it into very literal Greek to preserve the content as accurately as possible.

-Thus the style does not rule out authorship by John.

-We should note in passing that the book claims to be mainly by Jesus, and that John himself is not much more than a scribe.

b) Papias' statement implies there were 2 Johns.

c) In Ephesus there are two traditional tombs of "John."

4) Responses to the above arguments:

a) There is **no tradition** against apostolic authorship.

-Dionysius' remark is an inference from Rev.; Eusebius' is an inference from Papias.

-If either of these had had more solid information, they would have cited it to support their speculations.

b) Papias' statement regarding the 2 Johns can be understood differently.

- There is no clear tradition of an "elder John" distinct from the apostle John.
- Even if the Elder John existed, there is no link connecting him with Revelation.
- While John was a fairly common name, that a second John was important enough to have also taught Papias is doubtful.
- We have no evidence at all for John Mark or John the Baptist being author; there is enough anti-gnostic material in Rev. to rule out Cerinthus.

c) The "2 tombs" is probably an artifact of tourism.

d) Positive evidence:

- Clear tradition that the Apostle wrote the Gospel.
- Author calls himself John.
- Very similar styles between Gospel and Epistles, where John calls himself "elder" in 2-3 John.
- The author of Rev. uses the term "logos" to refer to Jesus.
- Gospel of John is the only other writing using that term.

e) Stylistic differences should not be overemphasized.

-See explanations (2)-(4) in section 3) a) above, page 70.

## 2. Date of Revelation.

### a. Internal evidence.

1) Author is on Patmos, apparently exiled (1:9, 10:4).

- Does not explicitly say he is exiled, but strongly hints in that direction.
- Reference to writing during the vision (10:4,7) implies it was written at that time.
- But when was this exile? Some put it in Nero=s reign, some in Domitian=s.

2) Some try to use 13:18 ("666") and 17:10,11 (7 kings) to identify the Roman emperor reigning at the time of writing.

- They are not very successful.
- Can force "666" to refer to Nero (using Hebrew and variant spelling), but many names will fit.
- By starting the "7 kings" with Julius Caesar, one can get Nero also, but Julius was never a king.

-Newman suggests the "7 kings" refer to 7 empires like the 4-empire lists in Dan. 2 and 7, but this one starts earlier (with the Assyrians and Egyptians).

-Problem: Does the "is" in 17:10 refer to the time of John or the time to which he is transported in the vision?

b. External evidence.

-Not as unanimous for date as for authorship, but still pretty strong.

1) The end of Domitian's reign (95-96 AD).

a) Irenaeus in *Against Heresies* 5.30.3.

-Is early, studied under one of John's students and talked with another.

-There was a persecution going on in 95-96 AD.

b) Eusebius' chronology dates it in the 15th year of Domitian (95-96 AD).

c) Jerome accepts the same date.

2) Other dates

-Several of the witnesses date it other than Domitian's reign.

a) Epiphanius (c403 AD, contemporary of Jerome).

-Dates it during Claudius' reign (c50 AD), but then says John was 90 years old! [Could John at age 70 have outrun Peter to the tomb?!]

-Probably a slip on the emperor's name; age would fit Domitian's reign.

b) Theophylact (11th cen).

-Says it was written 32 years after the ascension.

-This would put it during Nero's reign (62-64) but prob before the start of the persecution (fall 64).

c) 6th cent. Syriac translation.

-Introduction dates it in the exile under Nero.

d) Dorotheus (6th cen), *Life and Death of the Prophets*

-Dates it under Trajan (98-117 AD).

c. Dating summary.

- The best and earliest tradition dates the writing at around 95 AD under Domitian.
- As Laodicea was destroyed by an earthquake in 60 or 64 AD (ancient sources disagree), the city would not be "rich and prosperous, in need of nothing" in Neronian times, as they would be rebuilding the city then and would not have recovered yet.
- The picture of the Asian churches (Rev. 2-3) is more consistent with Paul being gone for some time.

B. Interpretation of Revelation.

1. Schools of Interpretation.

Because Rev. is loaded with figures, it has been given a wide variety of interpretations; these can be broadly classified into four approaches. Note that none of these are distinctively pre-, a- or post-millennial, though the first 3 relate to the time of fulfillment.

a. Preterite Interpretation (term derived from name of past tense in Latin).

1) Proponents.

- First advocated by Alcasar, a Jesuit, c1614, to counter the view that the Babylon harlot was the Catholic Church and the beast was the Pope.
- Other proponents: Hugo Grotius, Moses Stuart, recently Jay Adams.

2) Features.

- Sees most of the book fulfilled early in church history, either about 70 AD or around 400 AD.
- According to Alcasar, Grotius, Adams:

- Ch. 1: Introduction.
- Ch. 2-3: Are real churches.
- Ch. 5-11: Symbolically predict the victory of Christianity over Judaism (fulfilled near the end of the 1st century).
- Ch. 12-19: Symbolically predict the victory of Christianity over paganism (fulfilled near the end of the 4th century).

Only the 2nd Coming, Last Judgment, and the eternal state have yet to be fulfilled.  
**Extreme** preterists believe all has been fulfilled (spiritually).

b. Historical Interpretation.

1) Proponents.

- First advocated by Berengaard, c11th cent.
- Held by Wyclif, Luther, many A-mills, Alford (pre-mill).

2) Features.

- See fulfillments scattered throughout church history, including the Middle Ages and modern times.
- Predictions are not necessarily in chronological order.
- Interpretations usually must be revised every couple centuries as new events happen which have to be fit into the picture.

c. Futuristic Interpretation.

1) Proponents.

- Apparently held by the early church fathers although it is hard to distinguish between these views when very little church history had yet occurred. Generally they saw the events in Rev. as still to come.
- Ribera, a Jesuit, c1580, revived this model to take the heat off the Pope.
- Is held by most modern pre-mills.

2) Features.

- See most fulfillment (ch. 4 on?) as still future, just before the Lord's return.
- Pre-mill dispensationalists often see ch. 1-3 as historical and ch. 4 on as futuristic.
- Newman sees ch. 1-3 as relating to contemporary events of John's time, opening of seals as spanning most of ch history, events from seal 6 and onward as still future.

d. Idealistic (Topical) Interpretation.

1) Proponents.

- Held by Auberlen (19th cen), Milligan, perhaps Lenski.

2) Features.

- Does not link most of the prophecies to specific events in the past, present or future.
- Sees features as picturing general teachings on the struggle between good and evil, using illustrative imagery.

2. Some Principles of Interpretation.

a. Revelation is Scripture.

1) So it is inspired, inerrant.

Don't interpret in such a way that its predictions are falsified.

-e.g., Liberals take "soon" to imply a 1st century 2nd Coming which did not occur (thus Christianity is wrong).

"Soon" can also be translated as "quickly" or "suddenly." "Suddenly" fits better with the thief at night idea and Peter's remark that 1000 years  $\leftrightarrow$  1 day.

-Also, it is common for Scripture to speak to the audience as if they will see the fulfillment of the prediction, even if it is intended for the far future (cp Jacob's predictions about his sons in Gen. 49, which actually apply to the tribes many years later).

2) It is intended to be understood.

Don't interpret in too arcane a manner.

Interpretations should make some reasonable sense to original audience. [This can be over-driven so that Bible cannot predict!]

-Revelation makes us think through eschatological material and assimilate it with many OT passages.

-In studying it, we must be sure to be (and remain) more familiar with the text than the various views about it, as this is the only way to judge between views.

b. Revelation is a revelation.

1) commentators tend to get sidetracked into what John as author is allegedly doing, when he tells us that most of what he says is describing actual visions he saw.

2) according to Rev 1:1, the author is God, the revealer is Jesus Christ, the messenger is an angel, the recipient is John. This may explain some of the stylistic differences between Rev and the Gospel of John, and 1-3 John.

c. Revelation makes considerable use of figure.

1) e.g., Jesus as lamb (5:6), as priest with sword coming from mouth (1:16). etc.

2) much of this figurative material comes from the OT, which is used or adapted by Jesus (not John!) in Revelation; e.g., lampstands (2:2), two witnesses as olive trees (11:4), trumpets (8:6), etc.

3) some of this appears to come from contemporary Greco-Roman culture; e.g., seven seals (5:1), white stone (2:17), etc.

4) possibly, some of the figures were chosen to pick up ideas that were previously circulating in pagan circles (note how Jesus, in John 12:24, does something of this sort in response to the Greeks coming to see him).

d. It appears that more than one of the schemes in #1, above, is useful in understanding Revelation.

1) the figures may have been chosen to resonate with the experience of Xns throughout the church age.

2) many interpreters who do not hold to the Historical View (1b, above) still think some

sections of Revelation span church history (e.g., 7 churches, or 7 seals, or dragon, woman & child).

-Most commentators feel the 3 series of 7 seals, trumpets, and bowls overlap (at least somewhat) rather than being one continuous sequence.

3. Outline. (adapted from George E. Ladd, *A Commentary on the Revelation of John*)

1. Prologue (1:1-8)

2. **The First Vision (1:9-3:22): The Present**

- a. Vision of Glorified Christ (1:9-20)
- b. His Seven Letters (2:1-3:22)

3. **The Second Vision (4:1-16:21): The Future**

- a. The Heavenly Throne-Room (4:1-11)
- b. The Seven Seals (5:1-8:1)
  - (1) The Scroll & the Lamb (5:1-14)
  - (2) Six Seals Opened (6:1-17)
  - (3) The Seal Interlude: Two Multitudes (7:1-17)
    - (a) The 144,000 (7:1-8)
    - (b) The Innumerable Multitude (7:9-17)
  - (4) The Seventh Seal (8:1)
- c. The Seven Trumpets (8:2-11:20)
  - (1) Trumpets Prepared (8:2-6)
  - (2) Six Trumpets Sounded (8:7-9:21)
  - (3) The Trumpet Interlude: Two Witnesses (10:1-11:13)
    - (a) The Angel with the Scroll (10:1-11)
    - (b) The Temple & the Two Witnesses (11:1-14)
  - (4) The Seventh Trumpet (11:15-20)
- d. The Second Vision Interlude: Beauty & Beast (12:1-14:20)
  - (1) The Dragon, the Woman & Her Seed (12:1-17)
  - (2) The Two Beasts (13:1-18)
  - (3) The 144,000, the 3 Angels & the 2 Harvests (14:1-20)
- e. The Seven Bowls (15:1-16:21)
  - (1) Bowls Prepared (15:1-8)
  - (2) Seven Bowls Poured Out (16:1-21)

4. **The Third Vision (17:1-21:8): The End**

- a. Babylon Destroyed (17:1-19:5)
  - (1) The Woman on the Beast (17:1-18)
  - (2) The Judgment of Babylon (18:1-19:5)

- b. Final Victory (19:6-21:8)
  - (1) The Marriage of the Lamb (19:6-10)
  - (2) Christ's Second Coming (19:11-21)
  - (3) The Millennial Rule (20:1-10)
  - (4) The Last Judgment (20:11-15)
  - (5) New Heavens & New Earth (21:1-8)

5. **The Fourth Vision (21:9-22:5): The Beginning**
  - a. The New Jerusalem (21:9-27)
  - b. The River of Life (22:1-5)
6. Epilogue (22:6-21)

### C. Apocalyptic Genre

1. Definitions (adapted from Richard N. Soulen, *Handbook of Biblical Criticism* 2nd ed. [Knox, 1981], 19ff, 148ff)
  - a. **Apocalyptic** - those ancient visionary writings (or parts) which purport to reveal the mystery of the end of the world/age and of the glories of the world/age to come.
  - b. **Prophecy** - an utterance, oral or written, of a prophet, one who claims to speak for God. Since often pertained to the future, comes to be identified with foretelling future events. Usually distinguished from narrative, law, psalms, wisdom; but not strictly a category of form, but rather of claimed source.  
So apocalyptic is a subclass of predictive prophecy which is claimed to be distinctive re/ form and subject matter.
2. Some Characteristics of Apocalyptic Literature  
(few would contain all these features)
  - a. Revelation of visionary sort
  - b. Extensive use of symbolism
  - c. Tendency to pessimism re/ human nature
  - d. Cosmic perspective
  - e. World-shaking events
  - f. Triumph of God
  - g. Deterministic: events are set
  - h. Dualistic: struggle of good, evil
  - i. Pseudonymous: claim famous ancient author \ liberals apply these to many biblical
  - j. History rewritten as prophecy / apocalypses, conservatives don't
3. Biblical Material Usually Considered Apocalyptic
  - a. Numbers 23-24 - Balaam's oracles re/ future of Israel, Amelek, etc.
  - b. Isaiah 24-27 - Events of end of age
  - c. Ezekiel - Chariot w/ cherubim, departure of glory, visionary temple, invasion of Israel; parabolic visions
  - d. Daniel - parabolic visions & dreams re/ future & end of age
  - e. Zechariah - parabolic visions; events of end
  - f. Olivet Discourse (Mt 24-25; Mk 13; Lk 21) - Christ reveals signs of end, 2nd coming to disciples
  - g. 1 Thessalonians 4-5 - 2nd coming, resurrection, end of age

- h. 2 Thessalonians 1-2 - 2nd coming; man of lawlessness
- i. Revelation - visions of heaven, end of age; symbolism

#### 4. Extrabiblical Apocalypses

##### a. 1-3 Enoch

- 1 Enoch (Jewish, oldest parts c200 BC) visionary journeys of Enoch thru world & underworld; emphasis on angels, Messiah; vision of world history (to end of age) in symbols
- 2 Enoch (medieval Xn, dep on Jewish material 1st AD) visionary journey of Enoch thru heavens; revelation of creation & world history down to flood
- 3 Enoch (Jewish, 5th-6th cens AD) visionary journey of R. Ishmael to heaven, learning secrets from Metatron/Enoch incl cosmology, eschatology

##### b. 2-3 Baruch

- 2 Baruch (Jewish, 2nd AD) preview of world history to Messiah via symbolic visions
- 3 Baruch (Jewish & Xn, 1st-2nd AD) B's complaint re/ destruction of Jerus leads to visit to different heavens

##### c. War of Sons of Light vs Sons of Darkness (1QM) rules for conducting end-time war against Gentiles

- d. Assumption of Moses (Jewish, 1st AD) Moses, before departure, reveals to Joshua history of Israel from conquest to dawn of golden age
- e. Martyrdom & Ascension of Isaiah (Jew & Xn, 2nd BC-4th AD) Isaiah visits heaven in vision, sees events to end of world; Isa sown in two by Manasseh
- f. 4 Ezra (Jewish, cAD 100, w/ Xn additions later) seven visions answering Ezra's Qs re/ destruction of Jerus, # of saved, gives world history to Messiah
- g. Shepherd of Hermas (2nd AD) visions of Hermas re/ woman and shepherd who give allegorical instructions on Xn life, esp repentance
- h. Apocalypse of Peter (2nd AD) X on Mt. of Olives describes heaven & hell to Peter, with special emphasis on various punishments of sinners
- i. Apocalypse of Paul (4th-5th AD) Paul carried up to 3rd heaven, sees how things work, meets angels, patriarchs, etc.; details on blessing of righteous, punishment of wicked
- j. Apocalypse of Thomas (no later than 5th AD) X reveals to Thos events leading up to end in a 7 day scheme

## 5. Summary on Apocalyptic Genre

Diverse materials here

Origin of genre is earlier than intertestament period; also continues later than IT period

Not restricted to canonical materials, but not clear that canonical material borrowed from non-canonical (exception: Jude app uses 1 Enoch, poss Assumption Moses)

Rather, dependence seems to go other way: Enoch, etc., dependent on Ezekiel, Daniel; Hermas, Apoc Peter, etc. dependent on Revelation.

Does not mean canonical apocalyptic cannot use symbolism, imagery existing in culture of time, but will need to test this (I think there is some Greco-Roman symbolism in Revelation: seven-sealed book, white stone, etc.)

No real evidence of pseudonymity in canonical apocalyptic

What does this cash out to for interpretation?

B end of age, end of Ahistory@

B final judgment

B fate of wicked

B eternal state

B New Jerusalem

See these as real events to come in human history.

## IV. The Canon of the New Testament.

### A. The Canon Controversy.

#### 1. The Term "Canon."

##### a. Etymology.

The term "canon" in English is derived from the Greek κανών, the early meaning of which was "measuring rod," something like a ruler with marks on it used for measuring length and drawing straight lines. The term came to be used metaphorically for "standard", a norm for comparison. Also used metaphorically for a "list", probably from the series of marks on the rod.

##### b. Technical/theological uses of "canon".

- 1) Scriptures functioning as our norm or standard, i.e., as our ultimate rule of faith.
- 2) The list of books belonging to the Scripture.
- 3) A list of rules or decisions made by a church council (combines "list" and "standard").

Our interest here is use b. 2): What books properly belong in the Bible?

#### 2. Divergent views on the **Extent** of the canon.

An important reason for studying this subject is the disagreement which exists in the world and even the professing church of the extent of the canon.

##### a. Traditional Protestant View.

The 66 books (the number is not strict, but their content is):

OT = 39, matching the traditional Jewish view.  
NT = 27, matching the traditional Christian view.

##### b. Larger canons.

- 1) Roman Catholic and Greek Orthodox add the Apocrypha as a part of the OT.  
(They agree with Protestants on the extent of the NT canon.)

The Apocrypha is some 8 additional books (plus additions to some other books): 1-2 Maccabees, Judith, Tobit, Prayer of Manasseh, 3[-4] Ezra, Ecclesiasticus, Wisdom of Solomon; plus additions to Daniel (Song of the

3 Holy Children, Susanna, Bel & Dragon), Esther (don't have separate titles), Jeremiah (Letter of Jeremiah, Baruch).

2) Mormons accept the Protestant Bible, and add:

Book of Mormon.	\ called
Doctrine and Covenants.	"Triple Combination"
Pearl of Great Price.	/ when bound in 1 volume

c. Smaller canons.

1) Marcion (c150 AD)

Felt that the God of the OT really existed, but was different (inferior) being than the God of the NT. Accepted one gospel (Luke) in an altered form, plus 10 epistles of Paul, also altered. We do not have any copies of Marcion's text.

2) Swedenborgians (Church of the New Jerusalem).

Follow Emanuel Swedenborg (1688-1772).

NT: accept only the 4 Gospels and Revelation (sort of mirror image of Marcion's canon). No epistles accepted.

Only 29 books accepted in the OT: not Ruth, 1-2 Chron, Ezr, Neh, Est, Job, Prov, Eccl, SS

3) Theological liberalism.

There is a range of views among liberals. Some say nothing is God's revelation, as there is no real revelation (so no canon). Others find a "canon" within the canon: would say that some parts of the Bible are from God. Both groups would recognize an "ecclesiastical" canon (books traditionally recognized by the church). Often do not mind including the Apocrypha as they do not think the true canon is inerrant or more inspired.

### 3. Divergent Views on the **Basis** of Canonicity.

Not only is there disagreement on what books (if any) belong in the canon, there is disagreement on what constitutes canonicity.

a. Recognition by a church council (very common view).

Liberals argue that the church decided which books should be in the Bible (and tend to deny or minimize inspiration).

RCs and GO also say that the church chose the Bible. Argue that the church existed first, thus the church has the greater authority. Say that God worked through the church to make the canon. They tend to support inspiration (but the church is also inspired).

There are serious problems with this view (see below). But it should be admitted that the action of a council is typically the means by which a particular institutional church formalizes its submission to the Bible.

- b. Other views attempt to define how the canon came about without dependence on councils.

History shows that councils came at the end rather than at the beginning of canonization discussions (cf. Nicea, Jamnia), therefore one must ask, how did something of a consensus arise before the councils met?

Liberals and rationalists deny inspiration, so they must find another mechanism for this origin of the canon which is independent of God and revelation.

- 1) The "old books" were accepted as canonical.

People had reverence for, and ascribed authority to, ancient writings.

Problem: The Bible mentions other old books which are not in Scripture. E.g., Jasher, Book of the Wars of the LORD already existed when the canonical book which refers to it was being written. Liberals will typically claim these had been lost before canonical decisions made.

Problem: Age was not a necessary criterion. New books were recognized as authoritative immediately. E.g., the book of the Covenant which was placed beside the ark. Liberals who hold this theory must deny the historicity of such passages.

- 2) Books of Great Religious Value were recognized as Canonical.

Obviously they must have been thought to have had religious value, but this is not a sufficient condition. Christians (and Jews) have always felt that many non-canonical books were of great religious value, yet these were not included.

Biblical view: Authority is what counts, not "value".

- 3) New Books which agreed with Previous Revelation were taken in.

This is a necessary condition and a good test, but not a sufficient reason.

Does not explain origin of the initial books either.

c. The Necessary and Sufficient Condition (Basis) for Canonicity is Inspiration.

The Bible claims this. "Canonical" is (or ought to be) parallel to "inspiration." That is, non-canonical books are not inspired and canonical books are.

Exception: God may have inspired some writings which are not preserved (e.g., Paul's other letters to Corinth).

Basic Idea: God is the origin of the Bible.

But: when we move from the causal (what *makes* something canonical?) to the epistemological (how do we *determine* what is canonical?) we have to look to testable criteria.

Metaphysical question: What makes a book canonical? Answer: God's inspiration.

Epistemological question: How do we recognize an inspired book when we see one?

## B. The Recognition of Canonicity.

### 1. The Importance of the Time-Perspective.

#### a. Loss of information with the passage of time.

The further removed we are from an incident, the less information (typically) we have about it. We say "typically" because: lost information may be recovered; the level of information we have may stagnate at some minimum level.

Example: Activities of Alexander the Great. Eyewitnesses write and tell incidents about him. The next generation remembers some stories. Several generations later: no reliable oral stories have survived. Only the written material is of value. If some written material was lost, perhaps it can be recovered, perhaps not. Also, some tight-knit group may preserve oral traditions.

Thus we quickly lose information about an event unless it was written down. Historical information levels off rather quickly (2 or 3 generations) to a very low percentage of what was initially known.

Therefore, determining the canonicity of a book which was written 100's or 1000's of years ago is a big problem. Important information available to the generation in which the book was written has been lost.

- b. An Important Distinction exists between recognition soon after writing and long after writing.

The tests are rather different. Initially, could ask the author or direct recipients of the writing who wrote it, how they got it, etc.

Since the OT and NT are not "just written," we must see if the contemporary people applied reasonable principles in their time to check for canonicity. How were the "just written" principles applied back when the OT and NT were themselves "just written"?

However, we can test modern claims directly ourselves.

Example: The Book of Mormon (c1830). We are getting near the time-limit, since no people are now alive from then. However, in upstate NY there is still a courthouse where old papers were recently found in the basement with record of court costs for the trial of Joseph Smith as a "glass-looker." Information agrees with that from other documents now lost which reported that J.S. was a "glass-looker" [copy of earlier court transcript in *Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge*].

For Jeanne Dixon, Wilkerson's *Vision*, Moon's *Divine Principle* we can apply such tests as below.

## 2. Recognition of a Work Recently Written.

How do we recognize an inspired book recently written? We could use arbitrary principles by inventing our own, but this is dangerous if they were not God's principles! E.g., the Pharisees wanted a sign "from heaven". Jesus pointed out to them that in judging the weather, they looked carefully at what signs were available. We too should look at what signs are available, the signs which God gave, and not set up our own, which He might or might not meet.

God gave tests to His people because false prophets were around. The people were responsible to apply the tests.

The tests:

- 1) Connection with supernatural phenomena, including revelation.
- 2) Connection with earlier inspired books or revelation. Important: the connection should be made both ways, i.e., the successor should have been predicted. There should be specific indications of what he will be like.
- 3) Agreement with earlier inspired books or revelation. That is, the new stuff (1) cannot contradict; but (2) can explain and clarify.

These tests were all used by the people of God in OT and NT times. We will trace this below in 4 periods of biblical revelation:

Mosaic Law	Prophetic Prophets	Christ Gospels	Apostles Epistles
Old Covenant -----		New Covenant -----	
Establishment Development		Establishment	Development

- a. Connected with supernatural phenomena, including revelation.

God chose to have revelation be attested by great supernatural power to limit the number of candidates. Fakes would at least have to give some "miraculous" signs.

- 1) Moses gives signs to Pharaoh and Israel.

Rod/snake, leprous hand, various plagues. Eventually escalates beyond the magicians' powers. After crossing the Red Sea and coming to Sinai, then we get the revelation which forms the basis for the whole covenant. Thus the covenant is well-attested by miracles of Egypt and desert.

- 2) The Prophets.

Their messages are attested by miracles and short-term prophecy.

Deut. 18 contrasts pagan forms of divination with God's means. Note the different purpose: pagan divination arises from men seeking to get specific information, God's prophets reveal God's choice of information. Human agenda vs. God's.

Israelites were to put to death the prophet "if the prediction does not come to pass." No mistakes allowed!

If test properly applied, it tends to discourage attempts to set up a lucrative

business. Note that Deut. 13 ("gives a sign or wonder") implies that the burden of proof is on the prophet.

Some examples of both short and long range predictions:

1 Kings 13:

Jeroboam becomes king of Israel (Ephraim) and does not want the people to go to Jerusalem to worship (weakens his kingdom), so he sets up altars and calves at Bethel and Dan.

Prophet comes w/ message: "Josiah will desecrate the altar" (long-range) and "the altar will split in two" (short-range). Also withers Jeroboam's arm (miracle & short-range prophecy).

1 Kings 22:

Ahab and Jehoshaphat going up to Ramoth-Gilead to fight Syrians. Micaiah contradicts Ahab's prophets by predicting Israel will be scattered and Ahab will die.

Zedekiah (false prophet) gets mad at him; statement probably means "I know I am a prophet, what about you?" Michaiah's answer: "You will find out when you hide yourself... "If you return safely, the LORD has not spoken through me"

Thus supernatural events back up and often are related to prophetic messages. By this means, Israel was to test her prophets and not follow false ones.

Implies God's prophets will give good evidence.

3) Jesus.

Worked many miracles, gave many short-term prophecies about His death, resurrection, fall of Jerusalem, etc.

4) Apostles.

See many references to supernatural powers in Acts. Paul in 2 Cor. 12:12 "the signs of a true apostle were performed among you." Hebrews 2:3-4 "God bearing witness [to His apostles] by signs and wonders."

Summary: Evidence from these 4 periods show that inspired books are connected with supernatural signs.

This is not a sufficient condition because God is not the only one who can do miracles (Deut. 13), or at least things we cannot distinguish from miracles.

But if there is no attestation given, then we have no reason to believe the alleged spokesman has any divine word.

We are not able to test this for every Biblical book, as we were not there, and information is lost with time.

But we can apply this criterion to alleged prophets today and to some long range OT prophecies. We give some examples of latter in our book *Evidence of Prophecy*.

b. Connection with earlier inspired books or revelation.

This tie should be in both directions, otherwise anyone can claim to be a new prophet in your religion. The connection should especially be forward, that is, one should be expecting the arrival of some such person.

Consider the forward and backward connections in each period:

Start-up: General revelation has been continuous from all generations and there appear to have been believers in all generations. Probably also special revelation, at least in form of tradition from patriarchs. So Abraham has to decide if he is getting direct revelation. Note that he is an individual, not a group.

1) Moses.

Is sent by the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

His way was prepared by revelation in Gen 15:13f where God tells Abraham about 400 years of oppression to come in foreign land, after which his descendants will be delivered by God with many possessions. This makes the connection forward.

Moses says the God of Abr, Is and Jac has sent him to deliver them from slavery, so he makes the connection backward.

Perhaps this prediction faked later? This is not a test we can apply to Moses, due to the time-perspective we have been talking about. We are here only trying to show the biblical standards.

The Israelite slaves in Egypt knew if their family tradition contained such a prediction.

Moses then makes provision for the prophets who will come. People know what to expect and how to test them when they begin to show up, since the tests in Deut 18 and 13 had been provided.

## 2) The Prophets.

Using Moses' criteria, Israel within the generation of the prophet could tell if he was a true prophet: i.e., Jeremiah vs. Hananiah (Jer 28; w/in 2 yrs H. died). This provides the basis for the books which we have.

Within a generation it was clear who was a false and who true prophet. True prophet's works were preserved.

The true prophets also made a major connection back to Moses' law in their teaching, vs. some false prophets who led them into Baal worship or encouraged setting up golden calves again.

The key thing here is the advance prediction about the prophets.

The prophets tell about a deliverer to come, the Messiah. This is the next forward connection. The Jews did not know how to fit all these prophecies together, but they did know he was coming.

## 3) Jesus.

Jesus makes many back references. Note Matthew and Hebrews for forward connections via fulfilled prophecy (including typology). This was a major apologetic of the early church, that Jesus fulfilled the messianic prophecies.

## 4) Apostles.

The apostles have an immediate connection with Jesus, which was public knowledge. The people recognized them as having been with Him (see Acts 4 before the Sanhedrin).

Jesus predicts their functions: John 14:26 => commission for teaching and organizing the church. John 15:27 => power to make and cancel regulations with respect to church practice (cf. 'binding and loosing' in rabbinical usage).

The Apostles look forward to: primarily the second coming of Christ; secondarily, the 2 witnesses who are specifically described in Rev 11.

5) Situation Today: It is very difficult to establish a claim to be one of the 2 witnesses. Need to do what they are described as doing: working miracles, including fire from heaven on opponents.

Thus Moon, Swedenborg and other false prophets more often claim to be the second coming of Christ. Swedenborg says ***his teaching*** is the second coming. Moon says that Christ failed the first time and he is now doing Christ's job (having divine children).

But the Bible says that you will not need to be told when Christ returns, it will be obvious (lightning and vulture analogies in Matt 24).

Bible indicates that the eschaton is next. Any new guy on the scene must be one of the following:

- a) A false prophet or false messiah.
- b) The Antichrist or his False Prophet.
- c) One of the two witnesses.
- d) Christ (in His second coming).

The Mormons have tried to get around this limitation on the future by interpreting Ezekiel's prophecy of the two sticks as referring to their revelation, where the Bible and the Book of Mormon are the two sticks. This view ignores the interpretation which follows immediately, that the sticks are the two kingdoms. This does show that J. Smith was aware of the need for forward attestation.

Only Reorganized Mormons accept J. Smith's amplified Bible with its prophecy at end of Genesis about "another Joseph".

Unfortunately some Charismatics really muddy the water here by saying that (charismatic) error in prediction shows that "your gifts are not perfected yet". This departs from the Biblical standard.

c. Agreement with earlier inspired books or revelation.

1) Cannot contradict.

This is derived from Deut. 13:1-3. Not every time that a false prophet prophesies will he be wrong. Even normal people can guess the future occasionally, and this one may have demonic help. Thus we must also test the message.

He should not teach something which contradicts those things which were previously proven to be canonical.

Note that this test shoots down Mormonism, as they say there are many other gods. Also liberalism and other heresies which have a different god than the one pictured in the Bible.

Also note that this is also a test of **our** faith (Deut.13:3). God is sending a test to see if we love Him or if we only follow the religion which seems most glamorous, exciting at the time.

Acts 17:11 shows the responsibility of the people to test teaching against Scripture. Should always be doing this with our teachers, but especially with those who claim "My connection with God overcomes my failures, so I am infallible and you have no right to test me."

This test implies that we have the 'right' to demand evidence (signs) from a new prophet.

What about Jesus refusing signs to Pharisees? Jesus had already been giving sufficient evidence.

Paul says (Gal 1:8-9) that even if another gospel comes from an angel, do not accept it.

Isolation mentality among Christians today is not good (i.e., shield your people from heresy, rather than teach them so that they will be strong enough to handle it).

## 2) Can explain and clarify.

We should not press the above principle to the point where a prophet can never add new revelation. We may (correctly) think God has completed Bible, but how would this have worked for the Pharisees? And how help persons not convinced by our "day of revelation over" exegesis?

Otherwise why would God send more prophets after Moses?

Revelation probably stopped with the apostles because they explained all that was necessary.

Jesus clarifies who the Father is (John 1:17-18), and how can we go beyond that? The theme of the gospel is to reveal the Father. Also see this in 1 Peter 1:10-12, where Peter comments that the OT prophets did not always understand what they were writing. The NT clarifies their writings.

We must also leave room for the two witnesses.

Note: All three of the above criteria [a), b), c)] are needed to have an air-tight test. Remember that these tests can often only be effectively applied to works recently written.

### 3. Recognition for a Work Written Long Ago.

The biblical prophets and apostles presented themselves to the people of God of their times as having really come from God with important messages that we ignore only at our peril. We cannot properly do or redo what was done at that time. We do find in the Christian materials evidence of supernatural activity in Scripture: fulfilled prophecy, miracles, changed lives.

Instead we suggest the following as a check that the Bible really is what it claims to be:

#### a. Christian evidences point to Christ and salvation through Him.

This is the first step. Acceptance of Scripture's historical trustworthiness via supernatural evidence leads to accepting Christ. We do not base our beliefs re/ inerrancy or limits of canon on this level of understanding.

#### b. Christ as Lord explicitly endorses the OT and implicitly the NT.

Christ explicitly endorses the block of material called "Scripture" by the Jews (see J. Wenham, *Christ and the Scriptures*).

He implicitly endorses the NT by:

- 1) Selecting apostles and looking forward to their ministry.
- 2) Approving the providential process that led to the canonization of the OT, and which would also lead to canonization of the NT.

#### c. Canonicity then reduces to historical questions:

We must depend on the people then living to apply for us the tests for an inspired book recently written.

We can then ask these two questions:

- 1) What writings had Palestinian Jews come to recognize by the time of Christ as Scripture?

Answer: Orthodox Jewish [= Protestant] Old Testament (this covered in

OT Introduction course).

- 2) What Christian writings did Christians come to recognize in the few centuries after Christ, when substantial information was still available?

Answer: Orthodox Christian NT (same for Prot, RCs, GO).

We cover question 2) here below.

### C. Historical Information Recognizing the N.T.

Much of this material comes from Geisler & Nix, *General Intro to the Bible*

#### 1. Stimuli to Recognition.

There were several driving forces which required the early church to think through the canon question. Some of these were active even in the days of the apostles. All were at work long before the canon decisions of the councils (after 325 AD).

##### a. The Need for Revelation.

The church has enough problems today, but would be in much worse shape without revelation as a standard and authority. Already see this need in AD 60's, late in the Apostles' lives.

1 Timothy 3:14-15 -> You need to know some things so I am writing you now in case I never get to talk to you again.

Interesting for charismatics that Timothy needs to be told these things rather than receiving them by direct revelation. And he did have spiritual gifts!

The details in context relate to church function. Also applies to knowledge about Christ's ministry and the content of the gospel.

See a parallel idea in 2 Peter 1 where he writes in order to "bring to remembrance".

In 1 John we find the phrase "I am writing these things for ... [some good reason]" over 20 times.

1 Timothy 4:13 -> "Give attention to reading" (see also Revelation 1:3).

2 Timothy 3:16-17 -> Good passage on the value of Scripture. Note the areas of value:  
teaching - theoretical;

training - practical;  
correction and restoration - church function.

b. The Problem of Persecution.

This starts with Jewish persecution in Jerusalem soon after Pentecost. Local Gentile persecution occurs off and on during the apostolic period. Official persecution by the Roman Empire begins in 64 AD with Nero and the fire in Rome.

Persecution raises the question: "What books should I protect with my life because they are God's word, and which ones are merely human productions and so not worth it?"

c. The Priorities of Translation.

Soon after Christianity begins to spread the need for translation arises (there may have been some initial need to translate into or out of Hebrew).

By the 2nd century there is a need for Latin versions in the West.

Raises the question: "What should have the highest priority among the Christian literature?"

The answer has always been Scripture. Not even good books like "Pilgrim's Progress" are translated before the Bible.

Obviously there are priorities within the biblical books on which to translate first.

d. The Threat of Heresy.

This was a problem from early times. Note the problems with Judiazers in Acts and Pauline epistles, with antinomians in Paul and James.

See reference to an apparent attempt to forge a Pauline letter to the Thessalonians in the 50's AD. The hint in 2 Thess 2:2 is the earliest known.

The "Gospel of Thomas" (gnostic) is probably the earliest extant fake gospel. Of interest that it claims to be by Thomas but that it had been kept secret, implying some sort of canon existed at that time.

2. NT Evidence of Preparation and Recognition of Inspired Writings.

The NT provides our earliest evidence that the concept of "Scripture" was understood to apply to Xn writings (not just the OT), and that the preparation and recognition of such

was already underway in the apostolic period.

a. Selection of materials for inclusion.

The NT shows an awareness that writing was going on. We see that the Apostles themselves are involved in the selection process.

The Apostles made the decisions about what elements of the ministry of Christ were important to preserve.

John 20:30 "Many other signs which are not written", but enough is given so that we can recognize who Jesus is and trust in Him.

John 21:25 "Many other things which Jesus did..." Can't write down everything he did.

Luke 1:1-4 See evidence of careful investigation, selection, and concern for accuracy.

b. Protection from Error.

Luke did a careful investigation as there were apparently amateurs who had not.

John claims to be an eyewitness, and corrects (to its original ambiguity) a popular interpretive error in what Jesus said (John 21) about John "not dying."

2 Timothy 1:13-14 Paul is concerned that people guard the treasure entrusted to them.

2 Timothy 2:2 "The things which you heard from me in the presence of many witnesses..." Paul did not just make up this stuff, these witnesses backed up Paul's message. Implies there were still many witnesses alive.

2 Timothy 2:14 "Remind them of these things and do not wrangle about words." Concerned to protect the message from word games.

2 Timothy 3:16-17 Says that Scripture is from God, and implies that we should study it.

2 Thess. 2:2 apparently refers to an early attempt to forge a letter from Paul. "Spirit" is someone standing up and speaking, and claiming to be a prophet. "Message" is someone who has arrived and claims to have talked to Paul. "Letter as if from us" is obvious. This verse is very general about the actual situation: one (or more) of the three?

2 Thess. 2:15 seems to narrow it down to either a message or letter.

2 Thess. 3:17 strongly implies that it was a forged letter, and Paul makes it clear in this passage that he "signs" each of his letters.

All this at least shows an awareness of and safeguarding against the problem. People who knew his handwriting and who had the autograph could use this test. We cannot. (the distinction between work recently written, etc.)

There are private letters on papyrus from Egypt which are "autographs," as only one copy was made. Many of these have a nice professional penmanship for the body of the letter (the paid scribe), but the greetings at the end are in amateurish script (the real sender).

This is similar to our use of signatures on typed business letters today.

c. Public reading in the churches.

See public reading commanded in several places: 1 Thess 5:27, Col 4:16, Rev 1:3. This is an important criterion as a test, because when the churches got together across the Empire after the persecution ended, this was one of their main questions: Do we know this book was read in the "old" churches?

d. Circulation among the churches.

Copies of NT writings were also circulated from church to church, rather than the recipient church keeping their letters, etc. a secret. Rev 1:3 shows the apocalypse was sent to 7 churches. In Col.4:16, Paul commands Colossians to be read in Laodicea & vice versa (Laodicean letter probably = Ephesians or Philemon).

Even before this, we see this done in Acts with the decision letter from the Jerusalem Council (c50 AD). In Acts 16:4, see that Paul circulates it in the regions of Galatia, to churches beyond those to which it was originally addressed.

Thus the theory that Paul's letters were local and forgotten after his death to be revived 30 years later and then popularized (view of E.J. Goodspeed) is not true. They were circulated widely from the beginning.

e. Collection.

The NT was not bound into one volume initially, as papyrus was not strong enough to work well as the paper for thick books. The biggest papyrus codex that survives (<sup>p<sup>45</sup></sup>) contains the Gospels and Acts, and it apparently has no close surviving competitors for size. Usually one volume would contain Paul's Epistles; another 1 or 2 Gospels; another Acts (or Acts & General Eps); another

Revelation, so that the whole NT would take up several volumes. With use of parchment we start getting the whole Bible in one volume. But doubtless this was rare even then, due to cost of such a large book.

Some early evidence of collection:

2 Peter 3:15-16 "The things which Paul wrote to you". Peter is apparently addressing scattered churches in Galatia and elsewhere in Asia Minor. Peter refers to a group of Paul's letters which he himself knew about and his audience knew of. This indicates that Paul's letters were already collected, circulating, and generally known. Liberals do not like this passage; they claim the whole book of 2 Peter is a late forgery (c130 AD), as this evidence of collection is "too early".

f. Quotation as Authoritative.

Even in the NT, some other parts of the NT are cited as Scripture:

2 Peter 3:15-16 "Distort Paul's letters as they do the rest of Scripture..." implies Paul's letters are Scripture.

Have 2 quotations in NT which show authority:

1 Timothy 5:18 refers to OT and NT (Luke 10:7) under the heading, "Scripture says...", i.e., Paul is citing Luke 10:7 as Scripture. So Gospel of Luke was in existence by this time.

Jude's parallels to 2 Peter 2 and 3. The bulk of Jude is like 2 Peter chapters 2 and 3. Liberals say that 2 Peter must be late as it quotes Jude (which is known to be late). But situation is actually the other way around: 2 Peter is so early that Jude quotes it!

Note: Jude says "The false teachers have arrived!" 2 Peter says "The false teachers are going to come!" Note which way the tense changes. Also Jude 17-18 cites "mockers" by noting that "the apostles said this". He is quoting from 2 Peter 3:3. Thus Jude quotes Peter to warn that the false teachers the apostles predicted are now here. Liberals claim that 2 Peter is a fraud, and one which is cleverly disguised to make it look like Jude is quoting it!

Summary: Already in the NT there is the recognition that more than the OT is Scripture.

3. Indications of recognition as Scripture in Apostolic Fathers (95 to 130 AD).

The term **A**postolic Fathers@ is used to denote a number of very early Christian writings from outside the NT. Four of these works come from known church leaders:

1 Clement - c95 AD - Bishop of Rome;  
Ignatius - c105-115 - Bishop of Antioch;  
Polycarp - c105-115 - Bishop of Smyrna;  
Papias - c130 - Bishop of Hierapolis.

The authorship or authority of the other literature in this group is more fuzzy:

Shepherd of Hermas - c110-130 AD - Written by a Roman Christian whose brother Pius was bishop of Rome.  
Pseudo-Barnabas - c130 - author unknown, not likely to have been Barnabas.  
Didache - c110 - Church manual written and revised over a long period of time.

In this literature we find many allusions to the NT, and 3 explicit references to the NT as Scripture:

a. 1 Clement 47:

*Take up the epistle of the blessed Paul the Apostle. What wrote he first unto you in the beginning of the Gospel? Of a truth he charged in the Spirit concerning himself and Cephas and Apollos, because that even then you made factions.*

Clement's letter to the Corinthians during Domitian persecution. Church having similar problems as when Paul wrote. Had a schism and booted out their elders without charges. Clement obviously is citing 1 Cor. When he says, "as Paul charged you in the Spirit." he implies it is inspired Scripture. Clement also assumes Paul's letter is widely known.

b. Polycarp to Philippians 12:

*For I am persuaded that you are well-trained in the sacred writings, and nothing is hidden from you. But to myself this is not granted, only, as it is said in these scriptures, 'Be ye angry and sin not,' and 'Let not the sun set on your wrath'.*

Cites Ephesians 4:26 as included in "sacred writings" and "these Scriptures".

c. Pseudo-Barnabas 4:

Very allegorical. In an exhortation, quotes Matthew 22:14 under the heading, "As it is written."

d. Allusions to the NT.

Find many allusions in the Apostolic Fathers, citing the NT as authoritative. These form a spectrum of citations, ranging from direct quotes to similar ideas; the cutoff between allusion and similar teaching is hard to pin down. There is some dispute over how many NT books are alluded to in the Apostolic Fathers. But compare allusions to NT with allusions to OT in same works.

New Testament Books Alluded to in the Apostolic Fathers		
Source	NT Books (#/total)	OT Books (#/total)
Roberts/Donaldson, <i>ANF</i>	25/27	28/39
(not 2 or 3 John)		
Lightfoot, <i>Apostolic Fathers</i>	23/27	22/39
(not 2, 3 Jn, 1 Thess, Phm)		
Oxford Comm	20-22/27	no indication
(not 2, 3 Jn, Phm, Jude, 2 Pt; Col? 1 Thess?)		

We can use their citation of OT books as a control, since we know all of them were in existence by the time the Apostolic Fathers were writing. OT books not cited are irrelevant historical books [Judges, Nehemiah, Ezra], and several small books [Ecclesiastes, Amos, Micah, Obadiah] of little application to the early church.

Thus the lack of citation does not mean that the book did not exist or was not yet recognized as Scripture, but only that it was short or contained no "relevant" material for the particular topic the apostolic father was writing about.

e. Summary.

The concept of "Scripture" is not limited to OT material alone either by apostles or early Xn leaders. By c130 AD, all but the few shortest books are definitely mentioned as authoritative.

4. Recognition in Early Heretical Writers.

Heretics of the evangelizing sort tend to concentrate on turning aside professing Xns from the Xn faith to their own faith rather than trying to win pure pagans. Apparently Satan has little interest in evangelizing those who are safely in his camp. Thus we can often learn from them what Scriptures were accepted by the orthodox, since they use these to attract prospective converts rather than their own particular heretical works.

When we look for allusions in writings of the gnostic heretics, we find they too make use of many NT works.

- a. **Basilides** (c120-140 AD) quotes from 1 Corinthians as Scripture. He alludes to several others (Mt, Lk, Jn, 2 Cor, Eph, Col, possibly 1 Tim, 1 Pet) as authoritative.
- b. The **Ophites** (c.120-140) were a gnostic sect which thought the snake in Eden was the good guy. Their writings refer to Matthew, Luke, John, Romans, 1 & 2 Cor, Eph, Gal, and probably Heb, Rev.
- c. **Marcion** (c140) taught that the OT God who created matter was a real but lesser god compared to the God of the NT. Marcion prepared the earliest known competing NT canon, which included only edited forms of Luke and 10 Pauline Epistles. According to Tertullian, he removed NT references which would clearly identify the God of the NT with the God of the OT.
- d. **Valentinus** (c140) authored the *Gospel of Truth*, recently recovered among the Nag Hammadi papyri after being lost in ancient times. This work (among others in this group) shows that the church fathers really were pretty accurate in quoting and explaining the views of the various gnostic teachers. Valentinus cites Ephesians as Scripture and makes other references to Mt, Lk, Jn, Rom, 1 Cor, and perhaps Heb, 1 John.

e. Summary on Early Heretics

- 1) They too applied the concept of Scripture to the NT.
- 2) We see clear evidence among them for all Gospels but Mark (which, ironically, liberals like to say was the earliest), and for all the Pauline epistles but the pastorals (which heretics would not like as they were explicitly directed against them. See remarks by Irenaeus, *Against Heresies*, 3.11.7).

## 5. Recognition in the Late 2nd Century.

By the end of the 2nd century, we have even more explicit Christian evidence. Irenaeus' *Against Heresies* is as large as the gospels and is full of direct quotes, naming books, citing works as "Scripture", etc.

Thus we do not see the idea that the canon grew slowly over time. It appears rather to be recognized as soon as received, then (usually) circulated widely. The idea of Scripture extending beyond the OT canon to NT writings is very clear.

Some problem books:

Hebrews was extensively cited early, then doubted as the authorship was not known.

Revelation was also used extensively early, but later doubted because of the millennial problem.

- a. **Justin Martyr** (130-160 AD) in his two apologies and his dialogue with the Jewish scholar Trypho refers to the "Gospels" called "memoirs of the apostles & those who followed." He uses the canonical four and no others. Justin also uses Rom, 1-2 Cor, Col, 2 Th, Heb, and Rev, speaking of the last as by the apostle John.
- b. **Irenaeus** (b 125-40, d c200), wrote *Against Heresies*, the extensive writing mentioned above. He quotes from all the NT but Phm, 3 Jn, and poss 2 Pt and Jude. He does cite Hermas with "Scripture says." He argues against heretical scriptures on basis of the histories of churches founded by the apostles.
- c. **Muratorian Canon** (c180) is the oldest canonical list preserved from orthodox side, prob from Rome (certainly Italy). It is fragmentary at beginning and end, poss also in middle, surviving only in a poor Latin translation of the 8th cen. It starts with Luke as 3rd Gospel. Its present form lacks Heb, Jas, 1-2 Pt, poss 3 Jn. It definitely rejects Hermas as a recent work. It rejects works by Gnostics and Montanists, speaking of forged Pauline letters to Laodiceans and Alexandrians.
- d. **Tertullian** (c200) converted to Xy as an adult, was trained as a lawyer and rhetorician. His voluminous writings quote from all the NT but Phm, Jas, 2-3 Jn. He definitely accepts Jude as authoritative. He mentions origin of Acts of Paul & Thecla (*de Bapt* 17).
- e. **Clement of Alexandria** (c200) uses some of the non-canonical Gospels, but distinguishes these from those "that have been handed down." Eusebius says Clement commented on all the Cath Eps, but this work has not survived. Clement comments on Ps-Barnabas, Apocalypse of Peter, and respected Hermas and the Preaching of Peter.

## 6. Towards Formal Recognition: 200-400 AD.

a. **Origen** (c230) gives us some insight into the status of the canon question at his time. He notes that 2 categories were commonly observed by the orthodox:

- 1) Books acknowledged by all Christians (21/27):  
4 Gospels, Acts, 13 Paul, 1 Peter, 1 John, Rev.
- 2) Books disputed by some Christians (6/27 + 4 outside):  
Hebrews, 2 Peter, 2 and 3 John, James, Jude;  
plus Ps-Barnabas, Hermas, Didache, Gospel of Hebrews

b. **Eusebius** (c325) about a century later, provides 4 categories:

- (1) Acknowledged (21-22/27):  
Gospels, Acts, Paul (+ Heb), 1 Peter, 1 John, Rev.[?]
- (2) Disputed but familiar to most (5/27):  
James, 2 Peter, 2 and 3 John, Jude
- (3) Spurious but orthodox (0-1/27):  
Acts of Paul, Hermas, Apoc. of Peter, Ps-Barnabas,  
Didache, Rev.[?], Gospel of Hebrews
- (4) Heretical:  
Gospels of Peter, Thomas, Matthaias, etc.;  
Acts of Andrew, John, others.

c. **Athanasius** the great opponent of the Arians, later becomes bishop of Alexandria. In his *Festal Letter* of 369 AD, all 27 NT books are listed as canonical. He is supported by Jerome, Augustine, Gregory of Nazianzus and Cyril (except the latter lacks Rev).

d. Decisions of **Church Councils**. Several decisions by regional church councils bring the discussion of canon to a close. These include:

- (1) Synod of Laodicea (365). All but Revelation,  
with some doubt about authenticity of list.
- (2) Synod of Rome (382).
- (3) Synod of Hippo (393).
- (4) Synod of Carthage (397).

## 7. Summary on Canon.

The final details of the NT canon decision seem to have been providential rather than revelatory. This is the same situation we have for the OT canon, except that we have Jesus' (implicit) stamp of approval on the OT results.

The councils and scholars who considered the matter after Xy became legal about 325 AD appear to have made good use of the historical information available to them (mainly continuity of use in the oldest churches). Given a view of Scripture as revelatory and inspired, no one has suggested any other good candidates for admission.

Questions were raised about some of the shortest NT books and about Hebrews and Revelation. Though we would not want to do without any of these, no major doctrines of Xy depend on them alone.

What is clear is that the category of Scripture was applied to NT writings already in the apostolic age, and that nearly all of the NT canon was recognized as authoritative in the writings of church leaders from the early second century.

With this we must be satisfied. We have neither time machines nor all the information we would like on how these books came to be recognized as Scripture, but it is clear that they did. God has retained in his hands the direction of history, however much we want to be able to control it or pass judgment on whatever happens. God has promised that he will carry out his word whether we believe it or not. So we might as well trust him and do our best to be on his side rather than the other.