

EAST AFRICA BIBLE COLLEGE
International Pentecostal Holiness Church

New Testament

Survey

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New Testament Survey
East Africa Bible College

The Historical Context of the New Testament

I. The Importance of Context

- A. In general, context is the circumstances in which an event or events take place that contribute to understanding and interpretation
- B. The context of an event or writing contributes to how we should interpret or understand the event or writing
- C. General Context includes:
 - 1. Historical Setting
 - 2. Political Setting
 - 3. Religious Setting
 - 4. Geographical Setting
 - 5. Special Circumstances
 - 6. Literary Considerations (see literary context below)
- D. Literary Context Includes
 - 1. Author
 - 2. Date of Writing
 - 3. Style of Writing
 - 4. Location of Writing
 - 5. Original Language
 - 6. Intended Recipients and Location
 - 7. Reason for Writing

II. The Old Testament

- A. The last writings of the Old Testament include Nehemiah, Ezra, and Malachi.
 - 1. These books were written around 450 – 400 BC and include historical information beginning from 549 BC when Cyrus became defeated the Babylonians and allowed the Jews to return home.
 - 2. They were products of post-exilic Israel. Old Testament History is divided in the following categories:
 - i. Creation
 - ii. Patriarchs
 - iii. Egyptian Bondage
 - iv. Exodus
 - v. Judges

- vi. United Kingdom
- vii. Divided Kingdom
- viii. Exile
 - a. The Northern Kingdom was taken first by the Assyrians
 - b. The Southern Kingdom was taken second by the Babylonians
- ix. Post-Exilic

B. The last time period of the Old Testament (the post-exilic) is the time period that includes the return of many Israelites from exile in Babylon to their homeland. Some, however, did not return. They settled and spread outside of Israel. This is part of the reason why Jews are found in many places outside of Israel in the New Testament.

III. Intertestamental History (Historical Setting of the New Testament)

A. 549 - 515 BC – The division between the Samaritans and the Jews begins.

1. Samaria was originally part of the Northern Kingdom of Israel during the divided kingdom period of the Old Testament. It was overcome by the Assyrians in 722 BC. Pagan people groups were sent there by the Assyrians to settle and the Jews who remained intermarried with these Gentiles and even mixed Judaism with their pagan religion.
2. When the Jews from the southern Kingdom were allowed to return to Jerusalem after 549 BC, the Samaritans offered to help them rebuild the Temple. However, the Jews who returned declared that the Samaritans were forbidden from helping to rebuild the Temple since they were Jew-Gentile mix and would defile the site. As a result, the Samaritans built their own temple on Mount Gerizim around 400 BC and the severe division between Jews and Samaritans was birthed.
3. The Jews attacked Samaria in 722 BC with violent devastation. The Samaritan temple was destroyed and the land was ravaged. As an act of revenge, some Samaritans secretly entered the Jerusalem temple and placed several dead bodies inside it to defile it.
4. Samaria was often dominated and oppressed by Jerusalem until the Romans liberated them around 63 BC.
5. Religiously, Samaritans were very similar to the Jews. They kept all the feasts and festivals, looked forward to the Messiah, and had a Bible (Old Testament) that was nearly identical (with some variations in the Pentateuch).

B. 515 BC – The Second Temple is built in Jerusalem to restore the First Temple (Solomon's Temple) that has been destroyed by the Babylonians.

C. 515 – 330 BC – After Cyrus and the Persian Empire overthrew the Babylonian Empire, they remained the dominant power in the region but experienced slow decline. As the Persian Empire declined, Israel became increasingly autonomous and independent.

- D. 330 BC – The Greek Empire, led by Alexander the Great takes over Israel. The Greeks had been rising in power, overcoming the Persian Empire, and taking territory once controlled by the Persians. From Israel, Alexander would take his forces to Egypt and take the territory there as well.
- E. 323 BC – Alexander the Great dies and his kingdom (which stretched from Italy to Egypt) was divided mostly between four of his generals.
- F. 323 – 285 BC – Ptolemy I (a general under Alexander the Great) controls Israel. Although he implements Greek culture in the region, he also allows for Jewish culture and religion to remain.
- G. 285 – 246 BC – Ptolemy I's son Ptolemy II becomes ruler of the region which extends from Israel to Egypt. Under his leadership, the Jewish Scripture (the Old Testament) is translated from Hebrew to Greek in 250 BC. This translation was known as the Septuagint or LXX because it was translated using a team of 70 translators.
- H. 203 BC – Control of Israel remained in the family of Ptolemy until Antiochus III captured Jerusalem in 203 BC.
1. Antiochus ruled a portion of the divided Greek Empire in Syria and Asia. He wanted to take all the territory of Ptolemy but only succeeded in taking portions including Israel.
 2. Antiochus III was friendly towards the Jews and allowed them to retain their culture and religion.
- I. 175 BC – Antiochus IV (Epiphanes) takes over control from his father. His name, Epiphanes, translates loosely to “the manifestation of a god.”
1. Antiochus IV was much different from his father in terms of his treatment of Jews. He discouraged expressions of Jewish culture and religion and sought to make all of Israel a Greek styled region.
 2. The process of imposing Greek culture in a region was called Hellenization. Antiochus Epiphanes sought to Hellenize Israel. Some Jews went along with this while others resisted.
- J. 168 – 167 BC – After a riot against Antiochus IV (Epiphanes) broke out in Jerusalem, he began to persecute the Jews severely. He nearly destroyed Jerusalem and even desecrated the Jewish temple by dedicating it to a false idol (the Greek god Zeus) and sacrificing a pig on the altar. He outlawed Judaism and imposed Greek culture on the people as the law of the land.
- K. 167 BC – Jews revolt against Antiochus IV.
1. The revolt was led by Judas Maccabeus. He was a priest who sought to uphold Jewish culture and Judaism. He was given the name Maccabeus (which means “hammer”) since he was so zealous for his cause.

2. The revolt was eventually successful and the Jews retook Jerusalem and the surrounding territory between 164 - 162 BC.
 3. The group became known as the Maccabeans and they oversaw the reestablishment of Jewish religious practices in the Jerusalem Temple.
- L. 160 BC – After the death of Judas Maccabeus, controls of Israel would be overseen by either his brothers or his descendants. This era became known as the Hasmonean Dynasty after the family name.
- M. 135 BC – As Roman Empire begins to rise, reach the region of Israel, and develop relationships with Jewish leaders, divisions among the Jews arose. Various sects form, including the Pharisees and the Sadducees. (See “Jewish Sects” below).
- N. 76 BC – Civil war breaks out in Israel after the death of King Alexander Jannaeus of the Hasmonean Dynasty.
1. His sons, Hyrcanus and Aristobulus fought each other over the throne.
 2. The Romans decide to intervene during this time of weakness to take control of the region.
- O. 63 BC – The Romans take control of Jerusalem and the surrounding territories under General Pompey.
1. At this time, Rome was still controlled by a Senate in Rome. Pompey was aided by the Roman political leader Julius Caesar.
 2. The Romans still allowed the Hasmonean family to be the local leaders in Jerusalem. They appointed Hyrcanus II as the ruler in 63 BC.
- P. In 47 BC, Antipater (the father of Herod the Great) became a high ranking official under Hyrcanus II.
1. Antipater helped to get his son, Herod, promoted to governor of Galilee in 47 BC.
 2. Herod was also introduced to the Romans and became a strong ally of Rome.
- Q. 40 BC – Hyrcanus II was forced out of Jerusalem and into exile when members of his family aligned himself with an invading army of Parthians (from Persia) in an attempt to take over the region.
- R. 40 BC – Herod the Great appeals to Rome for assistance. The Romans intervene to defeat the Parthians but replace Hyrcanus with Herod as “King of the Jews.”
1. Herod’s father was from Edom and a convert to Judaism. Thus, Herod was Jewish but not of Jewish descent. This delegitimized his credibility and right to the throne.
 2. Herod did several things in an attempt to gain authority and credibility as the appointed King.
 - i. He married Mariamne, the granddaughter of Hyrcanus II.

- ii. He brought Hyrcanus II back from exile and appointed him as a high ranking advisor for a time (eventually, however, Herod put him to death in 30 BC in fear he would try to reclaim the throne.)
 - iii. He started large building projects including a massive restoration of the Jerusalem Temple in 20 BC.
 - iv. This begins the Herodian Dynasty which we see in the New Testament.
- S. 27 BC – Augustus become the first Emperor of Rome.
- T. 10 BC – Herod also had to remain in good standing with Rome in order to retain power. Thus, he built a beautiful city for Rome called Caesarea (named for Caesar).
- 1. This city will go on to play a large role in the New Testament.
 - 2. This city will also become the Roman headquarters in the region, the city where the Roman governor lived.

Major Jewish Sects

Pharisees

Sadducees

Name	From the Aramaic for "separated" or "separated ones"	From the Hebrew for "sons of Zadok." Zadok was the first high priest in the first Temple (1 Chronicles 24:6).
Numbers	approximately 6,000	Unknown. Made up of family members, descendants of previous high ranking priests.
Origin	Arose after the defeat of Greeks by Judas Maccabaeus and his nephew, John Hyrcanus, who established a new monarchy (the Hasmonean dynasty) in 152 BC, in which religious leaders were granted great political authority. They sought to maintain Judaism among exiles and residents of Judea in the wake of changing culture and anti-Jewish conflict.	Also arose during the Hasmonean dynasty (see Pharisee origin) as a priestly class but became more prominent politically by supporting the Romans (which the Pharisees never did). Eventually developed into an aristocracy concerned with maintaining power. Became enemies of the Pharisees.
Prominent Leaders	Hillel and his son, Gamaliel (25-40 AD). Josephus was also a Pharisee.	The High Priests and many Temple Priests
Established Leadership	Held seats in the Sanhedrin. Led local synagogues. Made up much of the rabbis.	Held more influence in the Sanhedrin. Made up the High Priests and many Temple Priests
Belief and Practices	<p>Held the Old Testament and oral tradition to be equally authoritative and practiced literally.</p> <p>Major beliefs include God, angels, evil spirits, divine providence, prayer, faith, good works, the coming Messiah, the judgement of the world, resurrection, and eternal life.</p>	<p>Theologically similar to the Pharisees yet rejected more of the supernatural elements of Judaism including angels, evil spirits, the resurrection of the dead, the judgement of the world, eternal life, divine providence, and the coming Messiah.</p>
Acceptance	<p>Very legalistic and zealous for traditions.</p> <p>Their views were held as the majority view of the population and many Pharisees were regarded as very popular among the people.</p>	Supported by the Romans but not liked by the people.
Endurance	Because of their emphasis on teaching Jews in the diaspora, the sect was able to survive the Roman destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD. Modern Judaism traces much of its beliefs and practice to the Pharisees. The closest Jewish belief system to Christianity.	Destroyed in the fall of Jerusalem in 70 AD.

Essenes

Zealots

Name	From the Aramaic for "pious."	A name given by the community (not by themselves) as a result of their zealous behavior.
Numbers	approximately 4,000	Unkown
Origin	Arose shortly after the appearance of the Pharisees and the Sadducees during the Hasmonean dynasty. They preferred to live in the desert because they felt the leadership in Jerusalem had become corrupt and disobedient to Old Testament Law.	Although there were Zealot movements during the Maccabean revolt against the Greeks (perhaps the Macceabeans were closely associated with the Zealots) they did not rise to prominence until the beginning of the Roman occupation of Israel.
Prominent Leaders	None are known. John the Baptist may have been loosely associated with the group.	Josephus records that Judas the Galilean (Acts 5:37) was the founder of the group. A disciple of Jesus named Simon was from the Zealot sect (Luke 6:15).
Established Leadership	Appointed them own leaders, priests, teachers, etc.	Loosely held faction.
Belief and Practices	Held to the Old Testament more strictly than the Pharisees. Valued Scripture over oral tradition. Believed in highly disciplined, communal life. They rejected luxury and often practiced ascetic rituals including celibacy. They rejected the secular world and believed that life should be devoted to studying scripture, prayer, and ritual. Membership was difficult to obtain. They were anti-Temple, anti-Pharisees, and anti-Sadducees. Saw themselves as the "righteous remnant" who alone would welcome the coming Messiah.	Their theology was mixed and muddled. While they proclaimed allegiance to God, their emphasis was on nationalism and freeing the land for foreign invaders.
Acceptance	Rejected as cultish by the mainstream Jews and the Romans who would destroy them in 70 AD.	Although they claimed to be patriots, the people saw them as murderers, assassins, terrorist, and bad people.
Endurance	Made meticulous copies of the Old Testament and hid them away. Once found, they became known as the Dead Sea Scrolls and are one of our greatest sources for Old Testament translation.	Destroyed by the Romans in 70 AD.

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The Literary Context of the New Testament

- I. The New Testament Canon
 - A. What is the Canon: the collection of books accepted as genuine and inspired holy scripture by the Christian church
 - B. The English word Canon is derived from the Greek word *kanwn* which means “rule” or “measure.”
 - C. The New Testament Canon is the collection of books in the Bible from Matthew through Revelation which are accepted as genuine scripture.
- II. Why Did the Early Church Establish a Canon:
 - A. Many people wrote letters, books, and stories in the early church.
 1. Some were viewed as authoritative and scripture, others were seen as valuable but not on the level of scripture, and some were full of lies and harmful to the church.
 2. The early church wanted to create a standard so Christians could determine or know if a writing was good or bad. There were three distinctions made among the early church in regards to literature:
 - i. Literature as Scripture
 - ii. Literature that was useful but not as authoritative as Scripture. Often this writing was based on and/or explaining Scripture.
 - iii. Literature that was heretical and in opposition to Scripture.
 - B. The Canon of Scripture:
 1. Establishes Orthodoxy (Standards)
 2. Defense Against False Doctrine
 3. Defense Against Heresy
- III. Qualities of a Canonized Book: The Early church used the following criteria to determine which writings were Scripture and which were not:
 - A. Apostolic Origin - attributed to and based upon the preaching/teaching of the first/Biblical Apostles (or their immediate colleagues).
 - B. Universal Acceptance - acknowledged by all major Christian communities in the early era of the church.
 - C. Liturgical Use - read publicly when early Christian communities gathered for the Lord's Supper (their weekly worship services) – used by the early believers for teaching and preaching.

D. Consistent Message - containing material in complete harmony with the entirety of recognized Scripture.

IV. The History of the writing of the New Testament Canon:

A. The Gospels were written and began to be used in the church during the late 1st century and 2nd century AD.

B. The letters of Paul and the other apostles were most likely written before the Gospels and began to be used by the whole church in the mid 2nd century AD and 3rd century AD.

C. During the 3rd and 4th centuries AD most of the Gospels and the letters were accepted as Scripture with some debate about Hebrews, 2 and 3 John, 2 Peter, and Revelation. Eventually these books were accepted as Scripture.

D. The New Testament Canon as we see it now was well in place and widely used by the 5th century AD.

E. The New Testament Canon is a Closed Canon: No more books can be added or taken away, it is final.

V. The Genre of the New Testament

A. The word “genre” refers to the classification of literary works.

B. Since the New Testament is a collection of 27 different writing by several authors, we cannot classify the New Testament into one literary genre.

1. Authors of the New Testament

- i. Paul wrote the most content in the New Testament – 13 letters.
- ii. John also wrote a significant part of the New Testament – three letters, one Gospel, and the book of Revelation.
- iii. Luke wrote two books – the Gospel of Luke and Acts.
- iv. Peter wrote two letters.
- v. Matthew wrote one gospel.
- vi. Mark wrote one gospel.
- vii. The author of Hebrews is unknown.
- viii. James wrote one letter.
- ix. Jude wrote one letter.

2. These writings are classified into the following genres:

- i. Gospels
- ii. History
- iii. Letters (or Epistles)
- iv. Apocalyptic

3. Each genre must be taken into consideration. We do not read a letter in the same way we read a history book. Each of these genres will be discussed in our study of the New Testament.

VI. The Language of the New Testament

A. The majority of the New Testament was written in Koine Greek, the international or marketplace language of the day.

1. This is different from both Classical Greek and Modern Greek.

2. Koine Greek represents the form of the Greek language in between Classical (early) Greek and the Greek language spoken in Greece today.

B. Some parts of the New Testament include Aramaic, the language of Palestine in that day.

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The Gospels

I. What are the Gospels?

A. The term “Gospel” comes from the Greek word εὐαγγέλιον meaning “Good News.”

1. Gospel writers are often called evangelists because they told the good news.
2. Why are the Gospels good news? They tell the story of salvation by grace through faith in Jesus:

- i. John 6:63, 68
- ii. John 14:6
- iii. Luke 4:18-19
- iv. Luke 7:22

B. The New Testament contains four Gospels written by four authors: Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John.

C. The first three Gospels are called the Synoptic Gospels because they have numerous similarities when read together (Synoptic means “seen together”). John is quite unique among the four Gospels.

D. The Gospels are a form of biography.

1. Above all, the Gospels are filled with stories about Jesus. These stories were selected and arranged by the authors to record and report his life and his mission.
2. These stories do not look like modern biographies but are actually similar to ancient biographies. The authors skip directly from birth to ministry with little information about the boyhood years of Jesus’ life. Great emphasis is also placed on the last week of Jesus’ life.
3. Like modern biographies, the stories are based on first-hand, personal knowledge and/or the testimony of eye witnesses.
4. Gospels are biographies with a higher, spiritual purpose. They are Christ-centered stories told with the intent of introducing people to Jesus and bringing them into the Kingdom of God through saving knowledge of Christ.

II. The Writing of the Gospels

A. Immediately after the ascension of Jesus into heaven word about him spread only by word of mouth.

B. The preaching of the disciples and the oral retelling of Jesus’ spoken teachings were the only methods of communicating the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

- C. The oral method of spreading the word about Jesus lasted for about 40 years until the gospel of Mark was written.
- D. The written Gospels began to appear in about 30 years after the resurrection of Jesus.
- E. The first Gospel written was mostly likely the Gospel according to Mark.
- F. Matthew and Luke were written independently but most likely used Mark as a source. They probably had a second common source that Mark did not have.
- G. John was written much later and from a different perspective than the other three Gospels in order to supplement the synoptic Gospels.
- H. The Gospels were written specifically to certain groups of people in certain geographical locations.
- I. The Gospels did not include the names of the authors but they were added nearly 100 years later by early church leaders.

III. The General Purpose of the Gospels

- A. Each Gospel has specific purposes based on the intent of the author but they also have two general purposes:
 1. To tell the story of Jesus through selected material/stories.
 2. To convey an important message to the original readers and us today concerning the Kingdom of God and Salvation.
- B. Remember that each author does have a specific purpose for writing and you need to discover those individual purposes to help you understand the material.

IV. How to Read the Gospels

- A. When reading in the Gospels, we have to look for the meaning of each individual story as well as the meaning of the larger section where two or more stories may be linked together. To help in this you can ask two questions:
 1. What does this individual story tell us about Jesus?
 2. What is the author trying to say to the readers by linking together the smaller stories?
 3. It is essential to view each story individually and as a part of the larger section.
- B. Look for the main idea in each story or group of stories. You can do this by asking the following questions:
 1. What does this story teach me about Jesus?
 2. What does Jesus teach in this story?
 3. What do I learn from the actions of Jesus in this story?
- C. Reading the Individual Stories:
 1. Ask the standard questions that should be asked of any story:
 - i. Who are involved?
 - ii. What is happening?

- iii. When is this happening?
- iv. Where is this happening?
- v. Why is this happening?
- vi. How is this happening?

2. Take note of and study direct discourse:

- i. When you see a conversation set off by quotation marks (“ ”) make a note. This is dialogue.
- ii. Dialogue involving Jesus is extremely important and often designated in scripture with red letters.

D. Reading a Series of Stories

- 1. When reading a series of stories, the most important thing to look for are the connections. What connects or unites these stories? What message or main point is being conveyed through the combination of these stories?
- 2. Look for common themes or patterns.
- 3. Pay attention to cause and effect relationships.
- 4. Pay attention to transition statements and/or conjunctions that connect stories.
- 5. Compare the characters, the differences, the similarities, and the settings.
- 6. Pay attention to the response and actions of Jesus throughout the series. Also focus on how the people in the series respond to him.
- 7. Always keep the larger context in view.

E. Literary Devices in the Gospels: In the gospel you will find language tools called literary devices. These literary devices are creative uses of language used in order to convey a message.

- 1. Overstatement - To amplify a truth in such a way that the resulting statement forcefully communicates the point that is attempting to be made.

Examples include:

- i. Luke 14:26
- ii. Matthew 5:29-30, Mark 9:43-47
- iii. Matthew 5:38-42

- 2. Hyperbole - To amplify a truth in such a way that the resulting statement becomes impossible to fulfill yet emphatically communicates the point that is attempting to be made.

Examples include:

- i. Matthew 23:23;24
- ii. Matthew 7:3-5
- iii. Matthew 6:2-4
- iv. Mark 10:24-25

When you find exaggerations (overstatements of hyperboles) you should ask, what is the actual point behind this exaggerated statement?

3. Simile - A comparison between two things that are essentially unlike each other and that is introduced by connective words such as “like” or “as.”

Examples include:

- i. Matthew 10:16
- ii. Luke 13:34
- iii. Matthew 23:27

4. Metaphor - A direct comparison between two essentially unlike things. (without the use of “like” or “as”).

Examples include:

- i. Matthew 5:13-14
- ii. Matthew 23:33
- iii. John 6:35
- iv. John 15:5

5. Proverb - A concise saying that contains in a remarkable way a memorable saying.

Examples include:

- i. Matthew 6:21
- ii. Mark 3:24
- iii. Matthew 26:52

6. Paradox - Statements or phrases that appear contradictory but illustrate a truth.

Examples include:

- i. Mark 10:43-44
- ii. Mark 8:35
- iii. Luke 12:3

7. Rhetorical Questions

- i. These are questions asked where the answer is known and expected.
- ii. To help you understand these questions, try making the question into a statement.
- iii. Examples include:
 - a. Matthew 16:26
 - b. Mark 12:15-16
 - c. Mark 7:18

8. Intentional Action - Teaching or illustrating a point through a particular (and often non-verbal) activity.

Examples include:

- i. Luke 19:1-7
 - ii. Mark 1:9
 - iii. John 2:1-11
9. Parable - The process of communicating a spiritual truth through a story that utilizes the language and cultural context of the audience.
10. Forms and Examples:
- i. Similitude Parables
 - a. These are expanded simile and the shortest of all the parables.
 - b. Mark 4:26-29, for example.
 - ii. Story Parable: Matthew 21:28-31
 - iii. Example Parable: Matthew 18:23-35
 - iv. Allegorical Parable (expanded metaphor): Mark 4:3-9

V. The Gospel According to Matthew

A. Author

1. The writer of this Gospel never gives us his name.
2. Church history tells us that the author was Matthew. The early church historian Papias identified Matthew as the author in 140 AD

B. Who was Matthew?

1. Little is known of his life story.
 - i. Matthew, like the other writers of the Gospels, rarely wrote about himself.
 - ii. He focuses on writing about Jesus rather than himself.
2. Two Theories about the Identity of Matthew
 - i. The author is the disciple named Matthew called by Jesus in Matthew 9:9-13 (or Levi in Mark 2:14 and Luke 5:27).
 - a. An educated Jew working for the Roman government as a tax collector.
 - b. Most likely, he was wealthy and disliked by his fellow Jews.
 - ii. The author is a disciple of one of the Apostles and not an eyewitness of Jesus' ministry.

C. Date of Writing: 70-89 AD

D. Place of Writing: Antioch in Syria

E. Intended Recipients: The Church(es) of Antioch including both Jewish and Gentile Christians

A. Reasons for Writing:

1. To record an accurate account of the life of Jesus.
2. To describe the impact Jesus had (has) on those who encountered him.

3.To preserve information from the eyewitnesses.

4.To teach and reach believers and new converts.

B. Themes and Emphasis:

1. The Good News of the Kingdom
2. Jesus as the Messiah or Christ
3. Jesus as the fulfillment of OT prophecy
4. Jesus as the supreme teacher and interpreter of Mosaic Law
5. Jesus as the provider of ethical standards for Christians.
6. Jesus as the initiator of a new covenant.
7. The Kingdom of Heaven
8. Jesus as the Son of God
9. Jesus as King

VI. The Gospel According to Mark

A. Author

1. The writer of this Gospel never gives us his name.
2. Church history tells us that the author was Mark.
3. Mark was a companion of both Paul and Peter.
 - i. Colossians 4:10
 - ii. 1 Peter 5:13
 - iii. Acts 13:13
 - iv. Acts 15:36-40

B. Who Was Mark?

1. Little is known of his life story but we do have some reliable information from the Bible and church history:
2. The son of a wealthy family in Jerusalem (Acts 12:12-14)
3. The cousin of Barnabas
4. A close follower of and helper for Peter
5. Traveled some with Paul and assisted him in Rome (2 Tim 4:11)
6. Mark, along with the other writers of the Gospels, rarely wrote about themselves but rather focused on Jesus.

C. Date of Writing: 57-66 AD

D. Place of Writing: Rome

E. Intended Recipients: The church or churches in and around Rome, focusing mainly on Gentile converts.

F. Reasons for Writing:

1. To record a proper account of the life of Jesus.
2. To describe the impact Jesus had (has) on those who encountered him.

3. To strengthen the believers in Rome facing severe persecution.
4. To teach new believers what it means to be a disciple.

G. Themes and Emphases

1. The Good News of the Kingdom
2. Jesus as Son of God and Son of Man
3. Jesus as the Messiah or Christ
4. Jesus as a Servant
5. The Messiah did not come as the people expected
6. The Messianic Secret
7. The Way of the Cross for Jesus and His Disciples
8. The Suffering, Death, and Resurrection of Jesus

VII. The Gospel According to Luke

A. Author

1. The writer of this Gospel never gives us his name but he does give us some hints (see “we” passages below).
2. Church history makes it clear that the author was Luke. Muratorian identifies Luke as the author around 200 AD.

B. Who was Luke?

1. The traveling companion of Paul.
 - i. Colossians 4:14
 - ii. 2 Timothy 4:11
 - iii. Philemon 1:23-24
 - iv. Refers to himself by using the pronoun “we” or “us” in his second book called Acts following his Gospel:
 - a. Acts 16:10-17
 - b. Acts 20:5-15
 - c. Acts 21:1-18
 - d. Acts 27:1-28:16
2. Paul’s Letters and Church tradition give us some information regarding Luke:
 - i. Well educated, perhaps a Roman citizen.
 - ii. Not an original disciple of Christ but a disciple of Paul.
 - iii. A participant in some of the events of Acts.
 - iv. A God-fearing Gentile very knowledgeable of Judaism.
 - v. Understood the cultural, political, and social conditions of the Greek culture and Roman Empire.
 - vi. A devoted friend to Paul.
 - vii. Luke was the only Gentile writer in the New Testament.

viii. Luke was most likely from Troas (Acts 16).

C. Date of Writing: 60-64 AD

D. Place of Writing: Rome

E. Intended Recipients:

1. Theophilus

i. Means “Lover of God” or “Love of God”

ii. From two Greek words:

1. θεοῦ (theos) meaning God

2. φιλεῖν (phileo) meaning love

iii. Who was Theophilus? Three suggestions have been offered by scholars:

1. A person of high ranking authority who had converted to Christianity and maybe sponsoring Luke’s writing through financial assistance.

2. A name used to represent Greek converts to Christianity (lovers of God, God-fearers).

3. A potential convert in a place of authority, possibility a judicial official connected to Paul’s trial in Rome.

2. Christians Churches and Converts Throughout the Roman Empire

F. Reasons for Writing:

1. To record an accurate account of the life of Jesus (Luke 1:1).

2. To preserve information from the eyewitnesses (Luke 1:2).

3. To teach believers and new converts about the person and teachings of Jesus (Luke 1:3).

G. Themes and Emphasis:

1. The Good News of the Kingdom

2. Jesus as the servant personally interested in the concerns of the poor, weak, and outcast.

3. Jesus as the example of compassionate and loving.

4. The as the supreme teacher and interpreter of the OT Law

5. Jesus as the provider of hope for Christians.

6. Jesus as the initiator of a plan for Salvation.

7. The Savior, Messiah, Christ.

VIII. The Gospel According to John

A. Author

1. The writer of this Gospel never gives us his name but does refer to himself in John 21:24.

i. The author refers to himself as “the disciple whom Jesus loved.”

- ii. This is mentioned in John 13:23, 19:26-27, 20:2, 21:7, 21:20
- iii. The “disciple who Jesus loved” is frequently seen with Peter in the Gospel. This companion of Peter is named in Acts by Luke as John, son of Zebedee.

2. Church history also tells us that the author was John.

- i. Irenaeus, a church father and historian, was informed by Polycarp, a disciple of John, that John was the author.
- ii. Irenaeus writes that Polycarp testified that “John, the disciple of the Lord, who leaned back on his breast, published the Gospel while he was resident at Ephesus in Asia.”
- iii. Some dispute John’s authorship but the majority supports this view.

3. Who was John?

- i. The Bible records a large amount of information about John.
- ii. One of the original twelve disciples.
- iii. John was a Galilean (Mark 1:14).
- iv. John was the son of Zebedee and had a brother named James who was also a disciple of Jesus (Mark 1:19).
- v. John was a fisherman on the Sea of Galilee and was called there by Jesus to be a disciple (Mark 1:16, 20).
- vi. Member of the inner circle and witness to the transfiguration, many healings, and other works of Jesus.
- vii. Present at crucifixion and appointed as caretaker of Jesus’ mother, Mary.
- viii. Witness to the resurrection (John 20:8).
- ix. Ministered with Peter during the early days of the church (see example Acts 3).
- x. A leader in the early church (Galatians 2:9).
- xi. Later ministered in Ephesus.
- xii. Wrote three other pastoral letters that were also canonized (1, 2, 3, John).
- xiii. Exiled by Roman authorities to the Island of Patmos for preaching the Gospel (Revelation 1:9).
- xiv. Wrote the book of Revelation on the Island of Patmos.
- xv. Believed to be the only Apostle who died a natural death rather than being killed (martyred) for the Gospel.
- xvi. Died around the age of 94.

B. Date of Writing: 65-85 AD.

C. Place of Writing: Ephesus

D. Intended Recipients:

1. The Church or churches in and around Ephesus including Jewish Christians and Gentiles closely associated with Jews.
2. The Church at Large

IX. Reasons for Writing:

1. To record the account of the life of Jesus as John witnessed.
2. To address the concerns of the Jews after the destruction of Jerusalem.
3. Possibly to combat some heresies and misunderstandings that had arisen in the church.
4. To convert and teach Jews and the world.

X. Themes and Emphasis:

1. God as "the one who sent" Jesus.
2. Jesus as Messiah and Son of God
3. The Preexistence of Jesus (1:1, 1:14, 8:58, 12:41, 17:5)
4. Jesus as "I Am" (6:35-51, 8:12, 9:5, 10:7-9, 10:11-14, 11:25, 14:6, 15:1)
5. The deity and humanity of Jesus
6. The role of the Holy Spirit as a helper to Christians
7. Salvation through the crucifixion and death of Jesus
8. Eternal life for believers.

XI. John and the Synoptic Gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke):

1. John's Gospel is very different from the synoptic Gospels.
2. The synoptic Gospels include the following events and characteristics that John does not include:
 - i. Narrative or story parables
 - ii. Teaching on the "Kingdom of God"
 - iii. Teaching on the Eschatology (end times)
 - iv. The Sermon on the Mount (including the Lord's Prayer)
 - v. Jesus' Baptism and Temptation by Satan
 - vi. The Lord's Supper (communion)
 - vii. The Transfiguration
 - viii. Demon exorcisms
 - ix. Events in the Garden of Gethsemane
3. The Gospel of John includes aspects of Jesus not seen in the synoptic Gospels:
 - a. Certain literary devices
 - i. Allegories: speech or sermon using an extended metaphor (ex. John 15)

- ii. Discourses: long speeches rather than short parables or teachings (ex. John 14)
 - b. Teaching on “Eternal Life”
 - c. Extended accounts of Jesus with John the Baptist, Jesus in the Upper Room, and Judas’ betrayal.
- 4. Why is John different from the synoptic Gospels?
 - a. John intended his Gospel to be a supplement to the other Gospels.
 - i. Stated by Clement of Alexandria (an early bishop from Rome).
 - ii. John 20:30-31 and John 21:25 suggest that other works of Jesus have been recorded and told.
 - b. John presupposed that his readers have read another Gospel.
 - i. John 1:40
 - ii. John 3:24
 - iii. John 4:44
 - iv. John 11:1-2
 - v. John 6:67, 71
 - c. John had a different point of view, like each of the Gospel writers.
 - i. John focused on the theological message of Jesus.
 - ii. John had the perspective of the inner circle.
- 5. Historical Context of John’s Gospel
 - a. Expulsion of Christians from Jerusalem (Acts 8).
 - b. The Destruction of Jerusalem Temple in 70 AD.
 - c. Tension between Jews and Gentiles.
 - d. Christian Persecution.
- 6. Themes:
 - a. Incarnation - The deity and humanity of Jesus (1:1-3, 14)
 - b. Light and darkness (1:4-9)
 - c. Salvation through Jesus Christ (1:10-13 and 3:1-17)
 - d. Rejection of Jesus by men

New Testament Survey

East Africa Bible College

Jesus in the New Testament

IV. The Dating of Jesus

A. Biblical Dating:

1. Luke gave the most precise dating of Jesus birth found in scripture in Luke 2:2 when he wrote, “This was the first census that took place while Quirinius was governor of Syria.”
2. In Matthew 2:1, Matthew simply describes the birth of Jesus as happening “during the time of King Herod.”
3. John gives us a clue as to the timing of Jesus birth when he writes in John 2:20 that the first Passover mentioned in Jesus’ ministry took place in the 46th year of Herod’s refurbished second temple.
4. Mark gives no dating information.

B. The science of dating events was not really perfected until the 1500 – 1700s. Until then, dating events was problematic because people were still grappling with their understanding of the movements of the sun and the earth.

1. For example, it was known by the time of Julius Caesar that the solar year was not exactly 365 days. To compensate, the astrologers implanted leap years to add days to the calendar when needed. However, they miscalculated and added too many days. Thus, when Pope Gregory XIII implemented a new calendar for the Catholic world in 1582, 11 days had to be shaved off in order to make up for having had too many leap days over the previous 1600 years.
2. The early church used various methods of dating the events of the New Testament but many of those early dates are unreliable.
3. The creation of AD and BC (and thus the first numerical dating of Jesus’ birth) was made by a Romanian monk named Dionysius Exiguus in 525 AD.
 - i. The Julian calendar was in use at that time after being established by Julius Caesar in 46 BC. This system used the name of Roman emperors and leaders to distinguish years.
 - ii. Dionysius felt it was disrespectful to use the name of those who persecuted Christians in dating Christian events so he worked to create an alternative method.

- iii. He used a Catholic Church timeline to proclaim that at the time of his writing, he was living in the 525th year after the incarnation of Jesus.
- iv. Using the Biblical, archeological, and historical evidence available to us now, scholars have determined that Dionysius was about 4-6 years off in his date. That is why you will often see the date for Jesus birth being recorded around 4-6 BC.

C. Based on the information mentioned above, we can draw a timeline of Jesus life as follows:

- 1. Jesus' Birth and Youth: 6 BC – 26 AD
- 2. Jesus Begins his Public Ministry: 26-27 AD
- 3. Jesus' Ministry in Galilee: 27-29 AD
- 4. Jesus' Traveling Ministry: 29 AD
- 5. Jesus' Ministry in Judea: 29 – 30 AD
- 6. The Triumphant Entry, Crucifixion, and Resurrection of Jesus in Jerusalem:
April, 30 AD
- 7. The Ascension of Jesus: June, 30 AD

V. New Testament Names and Titles for Jesus

A. Jesus

- 1. Name given in Matthew 1:21; Luke 1:13; 2:21
- 2. The meaning of "Jesus"
 - i. From Greek: *IhsouV*
 - ii. Hebrew and Aramaic: *Yesua* meaning "Yahweh Delivers" (or rescues)
 - iii. A form of the name Joshua
 - iv. In Jesus day, many considered the name "Jesus" to be a proclamation and expectation of God's Salvation.
 - v. The name Jesus was very common in this time period.

B. Christ

- 1. A title, not a name.
- 2. Matthew 16:16
- 3. Greek *CristoV* meaning "anointed one"
- 4. The Greek version of "Messiah"

C. Messiah

- 1. A title, not a name.
- 2. John 1:41
- 3. From the Hebrew meaning "anointed one"
- 4. References are found throughout the Old Testament to a Messiah who would deliver and redeem the people of Israel. See some examples below:

- i. Isaiah 9:6-7; 11:1-4; 53:3-7; 61:1-11
- ii. Zachariah 9:9
- iii. Micah 5:2

D. Emmanuel or Immanuel

1. Isaiah 7:14 and Matthew 1:23
2. From the Hebrew meaning “God with us”

E. Jesus of Nazareth

1. Used 17 times in the New Testament (Mark 10:47, for example)
2. Refers to Jesus’ hometown, Nazareth

F. Lord

1. A title
2. Matthew 17:4, for example
3. From the Greek *kurios* meaning “master”

G. Savior

1. A title
2. Luke 2:11, for example
3. From the Greek *soter* meaning “savior or deliverer”

H. God

1. Describes the deity of Jesus
2. John 20:28, for example
3. From the Greek *theos* meaning “god”

I. Other Names and Titles (not an exhaustive list)

1. The Son of God (and other variants, Luke 1:35 for example)
2. Son of Man (Matthew 8:20)
3. Logos (*logos*)
 - i. Greek for “Word”
 - ii. John 1
 - iii. Has significance for both the Jewish and Greek Cultures
 - a. In Greek philosophy, this term was developed to describe the greatest truth that can be known; a truth beyond the many gods that they worshipped.
 - b. In Judaism, the word of God is demonstration of God’s power in the world. The creation story describes the formation of the world using God’s breath or words. (See Genesis 1-2 - God *said* let there be light. . .)
4. Lamb of God (John 1:29)

5. The Good Shepherd (John 10:11)
6. Light of the World (John 8:12)
7. Bread of Life (John 6:35)
8. Rabbi
 - i. Mark 9:5, for example
 - ii. Aramaic for “teacher”
9. King of the Jews (Matthew 2:2)
10. King of Kings and Lord of Lords (Revelation 17:14)
11. Great High Priest (Hebrews 4:14)

VI. New Testament Teaching About Jesus

A. Jesus was Divine (fully God)

1. Christ Existed Eternally Before Creation

- i. John 1:1 and 1 John 1:1 – Jesus existed “from the beginning”
- ii. John 1:1-2 – Jesus was with God in the beginning
- iii. John 17:5 – Jesus was before the world was
- iv. Jesus is not a created being and was not created at his birth. He always has been in existence. This eternity is an attribute of God.

2. Christ Participated in the Creation of the World

- i. John 1:3 – “Through him all things were made. . . .”
- ii. John 1:10 – “the world was made through him . . .”
- iii. Colossians 1:16-17 – “For by him all things were created. . . .”
- iv. 1 Corinthians 8:6 – “there is but one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom all things came and through whom we live.”

3. Christ Possesses Divine Attributes:

- i. Holy (Acts 3:14)
- ii. Eternal/Uncreated (John 1:1; 8:58; 17:5; Colossians 1:15)
- iii. Omnipresent (Matthew 28:20; Ephesians 1:23)
- iv. Omniscient (John 16:20; 21:17)
- v. Omnipotent (John 5:19)
- vi. Immutable (Hebrews 1:12; 13:8)

4. Christ Possesses Divine Authority

- i. Creator (John 1:3; Colossians 1:16)
- ii. Sustainer (Colossians 1:17)
- iii. Ruler (Ephesians 1:22)

5. Christ Possesses Divine Rights

- i. Able to forgive sin (Matthew 9:2; Luke 7:47)
- ii. Able to perform miracles and healings (Luke 9; Mark 6:56)

- iii. Able to raise the dead (Mark 5:41-42; John 5:21; 11:25)
 - iv. Able to judge mankind (John 5:22)
6. Christ Identified Himself with the Old Testament Name for God, I AM (John 8:58)
7. Christ Possesses Other Divine Names
- i. Revelation 22:13 – Alpha and Omega
 - ii. Mathew 1:22 - Immanuel/Emmanuel
 - iii. Matthew 7:21 – Lord
 - iv. John 10:36 – Son of God
 - v. 2 Peter 1:1 – God
8. Christ Demonstrated Divine Knowledge and Authority in Teaching (Matthew 7:28-29)
9. Christ Demonstrated Divine Relationship with the Triune God
- i. He expresses the image of God (Colossians 1:15; John 14:9; Heb. 1:3)
 - ii. He is one with the Father (John 10:30)
 - iii. Divine Sonship revealed at Baptism (Matthew 3:13-17)
10. Christ is Included in the Trinity
- i. In Baptism Instructions - Matthew 28:19
 - ii. In Epistles – 2 Corinthians 13:14
11. Christ Claimed to be God
- i. Examples are found in John 8:58; John 10:30; John 17:5
 - ii. He claimed deity in the face of Satan (Matthew 4:7)
 - iii. His prayers reflected equality with God (John 17:11; 22)
 - iv. He made these claims at all levels of society
 - a. To the Religious Leadership (Luke 5:20-26)
 - b. To the Governmental Leadership (Mark 15:2)
 - c. To the General Population (John 4:25-26; 9:35-38)
 - d. To the Disciples (Matthew 16:13-17)
12. Christ was recognized as God by multiple witnesses (John 1:1, Titus 2:13; 1 John 5:20)
13. Christ hears and answers prayer (John 14:13-14)
14. Christ had authority over supernatural beings (angels and demons)
- i. Matthew 13:41-42
 - ii. Matthew 26:53
- B. Jesus was Human (fully man)
- 1. Jesus had a normal human birth (Matthew 1:18-2:11 and Luke 1:30-38).
 - 2. Jesus experienced normal human development (Luke 2:50-52).

3. Jesus appeared as a man (John 4:9).
4. Jesus experienced normal human weakness (Isaiah 53:4).
 - i. He became weary (John 4:6 and Matthew 8:24).
 - ii. He became hungry (Matthew 4:2; 21:18).
 - iii. He became thirsty (John 19:28).
 - iv. He was tempted (Matthew 4:1-11 and Hebrews 2:18; 4:15).
 - v. He suffered physical pain (Hebrews 13:2).
 - vi. He suffered emotional pain (Luke 22:44).
5. Jesus experienced normal human emotions
 - i. Grief (John 11:35)
 - ii. Anger (Mark 3:5)
 - iii. Humor (Mark 3:17)
 - iv. Compassion (Matthew 9:36)
 - v. Frustration (Luke 9:41)
 - vi. Stress (Matthew 26:37)
 - vii. Sorrow (Matthew 26:38)
 - viii. Joy (Luke 10:21)
 - ix. Affection
 - a) Mark 10:16
 - b) friendship, not romantic
6. Jesus was called human by those who knew him:
 - i. By John the Baptist (John 1:30)
 - ii. By the Apostle Paul (1 Timothy 2:5)
 - iii. By those to whom He ministered - John 4:29
7. Jesus claimed to be man and accepted and used the title "Son of Man" (Luke 4:4; Matthew 16:13; Mark 10:33; John 6:53)

C. Jesus Fulfilled Old Testament Prophecy

1. Sometimes the writers of the New Testament say this explicitly. See Matthew 1:22 and 12:17 for examples.
2. Other times, the fulfillment is written about but not explained in detail. See Luke 2:1-7 and Micah 5:2 for an example.

D. Jesus was the Supreme Authority and Teacher of Old Testament Law

1. Matthew 5:17, 38-42 – Jesus fulfills the law (something no man had done before.)
2. Matthew 22:22-33 – Jesus has greater understanding of the law.
3. Matthew 22:34-40 – Jesus clarifies and interprets the law.
4. Mark 10:1-12 – Jesus understands the intent of the law.

5. Luke 4:32 – Jesus taught the law with authority.

6. Galatians – Jesus changed our approach to the law.

7. Hebrews 9:11-15 – Jesus informs our understanding of the law. We now see the Old Covenant through the lens of the New Covenant.

E. Jesus truly suffered and died on the cross, was buried in the tomb, rose again, and ascended into heaven.

1. These points have been questioned and debated from both inside and outside the church from the earliest history of the church. The Bible, however, is clear that these events were:

- i. Real, not imagined
- ii. Literal, not figurative (symbolic, spiritual)
- iii. Historically accurate (witness and written about independently by multiple people)

2. The Suffering and Death of Jesus

- i. Found in all four Gospels
- ii. Matthew 27:27-54
- iii. Mark 15:16-39
- iv. Luke 23:26-47
- v. John 19:1-37

3. The Burial of Jesus

- i. Found in all four Gospels
- ii. Matthew 27:57-66
- iii. Mark 15:42-47
- iv. Luke 23:50-56
- v. John 19:38-42

4. The Resurrection of Jesus

- i. Found in all four Gospels
- ii. Matthew 28:1-10
- iii. Mark 16:1-11
- iv. Luke 24:1-12
- v. John 20:1-18

5. The Ascension of Jesus

- i. Mark 16:19-20
- ii. Luke 24:50-53
- iii. Acts 1:1-11

VII. The Teaching of Jesus in the New Testament

A. Much of Jesus' teaching will be covered in the Gospels course. However, we can summarize some of his teaching here as well as the nature of its presentation in the Gospels.

B. The Nature of Jesus Teaching

1. The Gospels do not give a systematic exposition of Jesus' teaching. Rather, the teaching of Jesus is presented situationally. Some have called this applied theology (rather than systematic theology).
2. The teaching of Jesus unfolds in a variety of ways and places, with a variety of people, and with a variety of methods. Jesus taught in real life.
3. This situational teaching is also what we find in the letters of the New Testament. The authors respond to a specific situation in a specific area. Romans, however, does resemble a systematic teaching.
4. The systematic structuring of the teaching of Jesus happened many years after the Gospels were written and many are still undertaking this project today.
5. The forms followed in the Gospel reflect more of storytelling than theological teaching. The authors structure their writing around events, trips, and people rather than themes and topics.
6. Thus, we should read the individual stories of the Gospels within the context of their original situations.

C. The Content of Jesus' Teaching

1. Even though Jesus does not lay out his teachings thematically, we can see certain themes and topics in his teaching.
2. God and His Kingdom
 - i. Jesus revealed the nature and plan of God to humanity.
 - ii. God's plan involves a kingdom that encompasses this world but is not of this world. The principles of God's kingdom often run counter the principles of the kingdoms of man.
3. Jesus and His Salvation
 - i. Jesus demonstrated God's plan for salvation.
 - ii. Jesus did not only demonstrate the reality of his human and divine natures, he also demonstrated the necessity of both these natures:
 - a. It was necessary for him to be fully human so that he might die for the sins of humanity. God cannot die but true sacrifice requires death. Thus, the human of Jesus serves partly to accommodate for this sacrificial death.

- b. It was necessary for Jesus to be fully God in order to apply the work he achieved on the cross to the lives of believers into eternity. Humanity is not powerful to affect eternity but God can do works that have eternal implications.
 - iii. The salvation Jesus provides is achieved on a cross.
 - a. On the cross, Jesus dealt with the effects and guilt of human sin (Justification).
 - b. On the cross, Jesus defeated the power of evil.
 - c. On the cross, Jesus destroyed death.
 - d. On the cross, Jesus made a way for mankind to be reconciled with God, creation, and each other (a reversal of the curse).
 - e. On the cross, Jesus worked out the healing of all creation (Redemption).

4. The Ethics of the Kingdom

- i. Not only did Jesus teach about the nature of God's kingdom, he also taught about the standards of God's Kingdom.
- ii. Relationship with God through salvation does not only give one entry into God's Kingdom, it changes the way that person lives.

New Testament Survey

East Africa Bible College

The Book of Acts

I. Authorship

A. Luke is credited as the author even though he never mentions himself by name in the book of Acts.

B. How do we know this?

1. The Text: Compare the introduction of Luke and Acts (Luke 1:1-4 and Acts 1:1-3).

2. Church History:

- i. In 180 AD, Irenaeus wrote that Luke was the author. Irenaeus was a student of Polycarp who was a student of the Apostle John.
- ii. Other early church fathers writing independently of Irenaeus also indicate that Luke is the author. This possibly reflects an oral tradition passed on by the Apostles and earliest Christians concerning the author of Acts.

C. Who is Luke?

1. See notes on the Gospel of Luke

2. Luke is only mentioned by name three times in scripture: Colossians 4:14; 2 Timothy 4:11; and Philemon 1:23-24.

3. Even though Luke does not mention his name, he does indicate his presence in the book of Acts. Acts has several “we” or “us” statements that indicate Luke was present.

- i. Acts 16:10-17
- ii. Acts 20:5-15
- iii. Acts 21:1-18
- iv. Acts 27:1-28:16

4. Based on the Biblical record and early Church History we find that Luke was:

- i. Well educated – High standard of Greek writing and title of doctor.
- ii. Not an original disciple of Christ but rather a disciple and devoted friend of Paul. Perhaps also Paul’s personal physician.
- iii. An eyewitness to much of the events of Acts.
- iv. Understood the cultural, political, and social conditions of the Roman Empire.

- v. A God-fearer - A gentile with both great knowledge and respect for Judaism. Luke is the only Gentile writer in the New Testament.

5. A rough sketch of Luke's involvement in the New Testament would be as follows:

- i. Luke met Paul in Troas during Paul's second missionary journey at a critical point in Paul's ministry. In Troas, Paul determines to venture into Europe rather than Asia at the leading of the Spirit and via a dream given by God (Acts 16). Luke joins him at this point.
- ii. Luke was an eyewitness to much of the events of the second half the second missionary journey including the ministry in Philippi, Thessalonica, Berea, and possibly Athens in Acts 16-17. Eyewitness in Corinth, Ephesus, and Caesarea in Acts 18.
- iii. Luke accompanied Paul back to Paul's sending church in Antioch and heard Paul's report to them in Acts 18.
- iv. Luke was with Paul for most or all of the third missionary journey to Galatia, Phrygia, Ephesus, Macedonia in Greece, Troas, and Miletus in Acts 18-20.
- v. Luke accompanied Paul to Jerusalem and met James and "all the elders" in Acts 21. Here he did additional research for the writing of the Gospel of Luke and the first part of Acts.
- vi. Luke remained near to Paul during his imprisonment and accompanied Paul to Rome.

6. Additional Information

- i. Luke was most likely a Roman citizen, like Paul.
- ii. Church tradition tells us that Luke never married and died at the age of 84 in Greece, near the city of Thebes.

II. Date and Place of Writing:

- A. Between 62-64 AD
- B. Paul seems to be alive at the end of Acts. Paul was beheaded in Rome in 64-67 AD under order of Nero.
- C. If this is the date, Acts was written about 30 years after crucifixion.
- D. Based on the ending of Acts, Luke is probably writing from Rome.

III. Recipients:

- A. Theophilus (See notes from Gospel of Luke)
- B. The wider audience would include all believers but especially Gentile converts.

IV. Reason for Writing:

- A. Acts is a sequel or continuation of the Gospel of Luke. We see an intentional overlap in Luke 24:50-53 and Acts 1:6-11 with the story of the ascension.
- B. Luke explains his reason for writing in Luke 1:1-4
 - 1. To provide a defense of the Gospel and the ministry of Apostles. Luke does this in Acts:
 - i. By providing a thoroughly accurate, historical account of key events and people.
 - ii. By describing the primary theological beliefs of Christianity and how those beliefs look in real world experiences.
 - iii. By emphasizing the present power of the Holy Spirit in the lives of the believers.
 - iv. By detailing the explosive growth of the early church.
 - 2. To provide a defense for Paul as he faces trial in Rome. Craig Keener has noted that in every court proceedings detailed in Acts, Paul and Christianity was declared “not guilty” even though some Christians were killed or held in custody by government officials.

V. Genre

- A. Historiography – a purposeful collection of narrative, historical records, and biographical sketches compiled and organized by the author to meet a specific need or make a specific point.
- B. Although there are historical writings in the Old Testament, Acts is unique in the New Testament that serves as an appropriate bridge between the Gospels and the Epistles.
- C. Acts continues the story of the activity that began with Jesus.
- D. 30% of Acts is the sermons or speeches of key leaders.
- E. The book of Acts is one of the first complete works designed to be a type of apologetics (a defense of Christianity).

VI. Central Characters

- A. Peter (Acts 1-8, 10-12)
- B. Paul (Acts 9, 13-28), also called Saul

VIII. Advice for Reading Acts:

- A. As with the Gospels, we should read and interpret Acts by looking at both the individual stories and the connected stories that create the larger context.
- B. Remember to ask the following questions:
 - 1. What is the central or main message of this individual story?
 - 2. What is Luke trying to convey to his readers by connecting these individual stories together into a larger section? (Look for connections.)

- C. When reading Acts, we must examine how the descriptions of the early church apply to Christian churches today:
1. Is this information a model all churches? If so, this information demands imitation.
 2. Is this information merely describing the churches in Acts? Such information does not demand imitation.
 3. Even though some passages are still being debated, we recognize that in Acts there is a mixture of information. Some passages are models for all churches and other passages are simply describing certain events in the early which we are not given for us to do today.
 - i. All that Luke has written has value to the reader but some information is binding on the church today and some information just describes a characteristic of the church then and is not binding on the church today.
 - ii. The difficult part of this question is knowing what information is actually normative and what is descriptive.
 - iii. This affects interpretation. We must interpret normative information as binding and develop our universal principle around it. Then we must look at descriptive information and try to determine how it affects the universal principle.
 4. The following questions can help you determine if a piece of information is normative or descriptive:
 - i. What does Luke intend to communicate to his readers through this particular account?
 - ii. Are the characters or situation giving a positive example or a negative example to the reader?
 - iii. How does this passage relate to the overall story or message of the Book of Acts and the entire New Testament?
 - iv. Do other parts of the Book of Acts clarify or give hints to whether this passage is normative or descriptive?
 - v. Does this passage include any repeated patterns or themes from the Book of Acts?

IX. Content of Acts

A. The Work of the Holy Spirit

1. Believers and Spirit Baptism
2. The Day of Pentecost (Acts 2)
3. The Spirit's Work in the Life of the Believer
 - i. The Spirit empowers for ministry (Acts 1:4-5; 2:14-41; 4:31).

- ii. The Spirit gives direction (Acts 16:6-10).
- iii. The Spirit gives discernment (Acts 16:16-34).
- iv. The Spirit gives wisdom (Acts 6:8-10)
- v. The Spirit gives information (Acts 27:10).
- vi. The Spirit gives endurance (Acts 28:30-31).

B. The Expansion of the Church Geographically

- 1. The plan for expansion (Acts 1:8)
- 2. The fulfillment of that plan:
 - i. The church begins in Jerusalem
 - ii. The church moves into Judea as a result of persecution (Acts 8:1).
 - iii. The church moves into Samaria as a result of persecution (Acts 8:4)
 - iv. The church moves into the rest of the world first through Philip (Acts 8:26-27), then Peter (Acts 10), and finally Paul beginning in Acts 13.

C. The Expansion of the Church Culturally/Ethically

- 1. The birth of the church on the Day of Pentecost sets the tone for how the church should be – multicultural.
- 2. This Spirit empowered multiculturalism was met with conflict by some in the church.
 - i. Conflict between Grecian and Hebraic Jews (Acts 6:1-7)
 - ii. Conflict between Jews and Gentiles (Acts 10-11; 15). Also see Acts 22:21-22 and Acts 28:22-28.

D. The Success of the Church in the Midst of Persecution

E. The Practices of the Church

- 1. Proclaim the Word of God - Acts 6:1-10
- 2. Care for the Community (locally and globally) – Acts 11:27-30
- 3. Support the Expansion of the Kingdom (evangelism and missions) – Acts 13:1-4
- 4. Provide Accountability - Acts 8:14 and 11:22
- 5. Provide Discipline – Acts 5:1-11

X. Acts and the Epistles

- A. Acts and Biblical Letters are closely connected. When you read from the letters, it is helpful and read the sections from Acts that relate to that letter.
- B. 1 and 2 Corinthians – Acts 18
- C. Galatians – Acts 13-15
- D. Ephesians – Acts 19
- E. Philippians – Acts 16
- F. 1 and 2 Thessalonians – Acts 17
- G. 1 and 2 Timothy – Acts 16:1-5

New Testament Survey

East Africa Bible College

New Testament Letters

I. What are the Biblical Letters?

- A. The New Testament contains 21 letters. These letters make up about 35% of the content of the New Testament are written by 5 or 6 people including Paul (13 letters), John (3 letters), Peter (2 letters), James (1 letter), Jude (1 letter), and the author of Hebrews.
 - 1. The word “Epistle” comes from the Greek word *επιστολη* and simply means letter.
 - 2. The term “Epistle” is an older term for letter and we will use the term “epistle” and “letter” interchangeably with no differences intended.
- B. These letters include elements of casual, informal, private correspondence and formal, literary, official letters. These are great pieces of literature but they also contain very personal communication.
- C. Biblical letters were viewed as substitutes for the authors themselves. When the authors were unable to address an issue in person, they wrote a letter to help solve the problem or deal with a situation.
- D. These letters are authoritative. They were not just general correspondence. They were written by the original Apostles under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. They speak with authority to both the original audience and the world today.
- E. The letters were not easy to write and deliver. They had to put on scrolls using secretaries or scribes who knew the special skill of writing such letters. Then they had to be delivered by a person since there was no public postal service. The process was expensive and time consuming.
- F. Once the letters reached their destination, they were read aloud to the congregation. This was their intended purpose. They were not meant for one person but for the whole community. They were read from start to finish in one sitting. Then they were preserved for that community and then shared with other Christian churches and communities.

II. The Nature of the New Testament Letters

- A. They are Situational
 - 1. The letters were written to address specific situations or problems related to the author and the readers.
 - 2. They are not simply casual correspondence. They were written for a specific occasion(s) and purpose(s).

3. Because the letters are written to address specific situations, the interpreter must attempt to reconstruct or discover. Knowing the original situation will help to identify the universal/theological principles within the letter.
4. Imagine hearing a phone conversation. In order to understand what the speaker is saying you must also know what the person on the other side of the phone is asking.

B. They Apply Theology in Practical Ways

1. They are not just books containing theological facts. They are real-life application of theological principles. The real-life application is tied to a certain time and culture and this must be taken into account. However, we should be aware that what we are reading in each letter is practical application of Christ-centered principles.
2. No one letter represents the author's entire theological knowledge or viewpoints. We must view each letter in relation to the author's other writings and the rest of the Bible.

C. The Form of New Testament Letters

1. The New Testament Letters generally (but not always) follow this pattern:
 - i. Introduction
 - ii. Body
 - iii. Conclusion
2. Introduction:
 - i. The introduction contains the following information:
 - a. The name of the writer
 - b. The name of the recipients
 - c. Greetings
 - d. Introductory prayers, blessings, and/or thanksgivings
 - ii. Body
 - a. This is the largest part of the letter.
 - b. The body contains the main message of the letter.
 - c. While there is not set pattern for the body, the body usually does contain the following items:
 - i. Instructions
 - ii. Rebukes
 - iii. Exhortations
 - iv. Teachings
 - v. Persuasions
 - iii. Conclusion

- a. Conclusions have no set form but often contains the following elements:
 - i. Commendations and Compliments
 - ii. Prayers
 - iii. Prayer Requests
 - iv. Personal Greetings
 - v. Final Instructions and Exhortations
 - vi. Personal Writing
 - vii. Benediction and/or Doxology
 - viii. Travel/Ministry Plans
- b. Usually each letter ends with a benediction.

New Testament Survey

East Africa Bible College

Letters of Paul

I. The Apostle Paul

A. The Life of Paul will be discussed in greater detail in the “Life and Letters of Paul” course. Here is a brief introduction:

1. Paul was a Jew born into a Jewish home in Tarsus. His family were Roman citizens as was Paul (Acts 21:39; 22:27-28).
2. Paul, like his father, was a devout Jew and a member of the Pharisee sect. Paul was sent to Jerusalem at a young age to learn from the best teachers there about Judaism (Acts 23:6; 26:5).
3. Paul most likely returned to Tarsus lead the synagogue there until news of Christianity reached him. He returned to Jerusalem after the crucifixion of Jesus in order to help stop the spread of Christianity. Paul viewed Christianity as a threat to his Jewish religion. Paul’s first publicized act of persecution against Christianity was at the stoning of Stephen where Paul assisted the Sanhedrin (Acts 6-7).
4. Paul decided to take the fight against Christianity out of Jerusalem and into the places where the Christians had scattered including Damascus. However, on the way to Damascus, Paul met Jesus in a dramatic way. Paul committed his life to Christ and returned to Jerusalem as a Christian (Acts 9).
5. Paul was sent back to Tarsus but was later called by Barnabas down to Antioch in Syria to assist with a new church there (Acts 11:25-26).
6. From Antioch, Paul and Barnabas launched their first missionary journey to take the Gospel to new places far from Syria (Acts 13).
7. Paul made three missionary journeys where he helped to establish many churches in Asia (modern day Turkey) and Europe (Greek regions). He would first preach to Jews in the synagogue and then to Greeks in the marketplace. Thus, his churches were mixed congregations.
8. Paul was planning a fourth missionary journey but was arrested in Jerusalem before he could begin. Paul was accused of causing riots and disturbances all over the world (Acts 13-28) but was never found guilty by the Roman governors. After being held by the Romans in Caesarea, he was sent to Rome to appeal his case which was his right as an official Roman citizen.
9. Paul lived under house arrest in Rome for some years but was eventually killed in Rome by Nero in 64 AD during a great persecution of the church.

B. Paul's Letters

1. Paul communicated to the churches he planted by visiting or writing letters, many of which are now in our New Testament.
2. These letters are organized in the New Testament based on size, not on date of writing. Thus, Romans was first simply because it is the longest letter.
3. The letters of Paul are always named for their recipients.

II. Romans

A. Authorship

1. Paul identifies himself as the author. (Romans 1:1)
2. Paul was assisted by a scribe named Tertius. (Romans 16:22)

B. Date of Writing

1. This letter was written before Paul's visit to Rome (Romans 1:11-13).
2. The letter was written near the end of Paul's third missionary journey before his last visit to Jerusalem (Romans 15:23-29).
3. Thus, the most possible date is near the end of Paul's third missionary journey around 55-57 AD.

C. Place of Writing: Corinth

D. Intended Recipients: The Church in Rome

E. Purpose (Reasons for Writing):

1. Although Paul recognized the Christian presence in Rome, he still desired to see the Gospel preached in Rome and even to preach there himself to help strengthen their apostolic/theological foundation.
2. Paul felt that the Gospel may be under attack in Rome and in need of defense or justification (1:16; 3:8; 9:1-2).
3. Paul seems to be writing to resolve and/or heal potential or real divisions among the church(es) in Rome (Romans 12:1-15:6). The lack of teaching or apostolic leadership may have led to misunderstandings, debates, and divisions.
4. Since Paul was unable to teach the truths of the Gospel and Christianity in person he felt it necessary to thoroughly develop this teaching into a letter that could be read and studied.
5. Paul, an educated Jew, was able to speak with authority to the Jews and, with a record of love for Gentiles, able to speak with credibility to the Gentiles

II. 1 Corinthians

A. Authorship:

1. Paul (1 Corinthians 1:1)
2. Paul possibly had help from a scribe. (1 Corinthians 16:21)

B. Date of Writing:

1. This letter was written after Paul's ministry in Corinth during the second missionary journey around 52 AD (1 Corinthians 15:1).
2. This letter was written during Paul's ministry in Ephesus which lasted between two and three years during the third missionary journey.
3. Thus, we can determine that the letter was written around 54 - 56 AD.

C. Place of Writing: Ephesus (1 Corinthians 16:19 and Acts 19)

D. Intended Recipients: The Church or Churches in Corinth (1 Corinthians 1:2)

E. Purpose (Reasons for Writing):

1. To respond to misunderstandings from Paul's previous letter over associating with immoral people. (1 Corinthians 5:9-11)
2. To respond to the oral reports coming from the household of Chloe about quarrels within the Corinthian church. (1 Corinthians 1:11)
3. Possibly to respond to oral reports from the household of Stephanas. (1 Corinthians 16:15-18)
4. To respond to a letter sent to Paul by the Corinthians regarding many issues (1 Corinthians 7:1)
5. To continue his apostolic ministry to the people of Corinth
 - i. Teaching
 - ii. Encouraging
 - iii. Instructing

F. Problems in the Corinthian Church Addressed by Paul in 1 Corinthians:

1. Leadership Struggles (1 Corinthians 1:12-17)
2. Church Divisions (1 Corinthians 3:1-9)
3. Immoral Sexual Relationships (1 Corinthians 6:16)
4. Lack of and Refusal to Discipline
5. Justification of Sinful Activity ("Freedom in Christ")
6. Christians Suing One Another in Secular Courts (1 Corinthians 6:1-8).
7. Some Promoting Celibacy for Christians (1 Corinthians 7:1-9).
8. Some Holding on to Pagan Beliefs and Practices (1 Corinthians 10:14-22)
9. Misunderstandings on the Role of Men and Women in the Church (1 Cor. 11:2-16)
10. Improper Use of Spiritual Gifts (1 Cor. 12)
11. Not Believing in the Bodily Resurrection of Jesus Christ (1 Corinthians 15)
12. Adopting Secular Social Practices in the Church (1 Corinthians 11:17-22)
 - a. Rich vs. Poor
 - b. Social Roles and Norms

III. 2 Corinthians

A. Authorship:

1. Paul (2 Corinthians 1:1)
2. Paul's authorship of 2 Corinthians has been accepted by both the early church leaders and church scholars throughout history.

B. Date of Writing:

1. It is believed that 2 Corinthians is written about one year after 1 Corinthians since we see that Paul has moved from Ephesus to Macedonia in 2 Corinthians
2. 2 Corinthians was probably written around 55-57 AD.

C. Place of Writing: Macedonia

1. 1 Corinthians 16:5 – Paul shares upcoming plans to visit Macedonia
2. 2 Corinthians 2:13 and 7:5 places Paul in Macedonia during the time of writing
3. Acts 20:1-3 – Paul had time to write during his three months in Macedonia
4. Possibly Written in the City of Philippi during the Third Missionary Journey

D. Intended Recipients:

1. The Church(es) of Corinth (2 Corinthians 1:1)
2. The Churches in the Region of Achaia (2 Corinthians 1:1)

E. Purpose (Reasons for Writing):

1. To Convey Paul's Travel Plans to Corinth
2. To Promote a Special Offering to Benefit the Jerusalem Christians in Poverty
3. To Defend (Paul, the Gospel, the Church) Against the Bad Teaching of Evil Leaders
4. To Promote Reconciliation between Paul and the Corinthian Church
5. To Help Resolve Ongoing Problems in the Corinthian Church
 - i. Pagan Temple Feasts (Idolatry)
 - ii. Godly Relationships

IV. Galatians

A. Authorship:

1. Paul identifies himself as the author of this letter in Galatians 1:1.
2. Paul's authorship of Galatians has been accepted by both the early church leaders and church scholars throughout history.

B. Date of Writing: 49 – 57 AD

C. Place of Writing: Possibly written in the city of Antioch (in Syria).

D. Intended Recipients:

1. The churches in Galatia (Galatians 1:2)

2. Galatia is mentioned outside of the Letter to the Galatians in the following passages:

- i. Acts 16:6 and 18:23
- ii. 1 Corinthians 16:1
- iii. 2 Timothy 4:10
- iv. 1 Peter 1:1

3. Most Biblical scholars believe the churches of Galatia were in the southern part of the Roman province of Galatia (including the cities of Lystra, Debe, and Iconium).

E. Purpose (Reasons for Writing)

1. To defend the Gospel in the face of preaching by Judaizers that distorted the true Gospel. They were teaching that Gentiles must convert to Judaism before they can be saved. Paul, however, taught that faith in Jesus was the only thing necessary to be saved.
2. To defend the churches of Galatia against the teaching of Judaizers which had the potential to discourage people and lead many astray.

V. Ephesians

A. Authorship: Paul identifies himself as the author in Ephesians 1:1.

B. Date of Writing:

1. It appears that Paul is writing from a Roman prison.
2. If this is true, the date of the writing of the letter would be around 60-62 AD.

C. Place of Writing:

1. Rome
2. Paul is writing while under house arrest (see Ephesians 4:1 and 6:19-20).

D. Intended Recipients:

1. The Church in Ephesus (Ephesians 1:1b)
2. Due to the brief introduction and personal greetings, many believe that this letter was intended to be read in many different churches in the area after arriving in Ephesus.

E. Reasons for Writing (Purpose):

1. To encourage the church to preserve unity.
2. To give instructions to the believers in Ephesus on living a Godly life in a pagan culture.
3. Paul does not want his absence and imprisonment to discourage the church or cause it to stumble so he writes to encourage and strengthen.

F. Problems Faced by the Ephesian Church

1. Fear or bondage to witchcraft and evil forces (spiritual warfare – see Acts 19:19-20 and Ephesians 6:13)
2. Temptation to live immorally. (Ephesians 2; 5:8)
3. The growing church was lacking in understanding and needing instructions. A growing church needs continuous teaching and faced the problems of divisions so Paul had to write concerning unity and further instructions.
4. New churches planted in the region from the work in Ephesus need help understanding the Gospel
5. Gentiles struggled with their place in the church and in Christ. Ephesians 2:11 – 3 focuses on a Gentile audience. A racial/cultural division may have been arising
6. The Ephesian letter lacks the urgency found in the Corinthians letters or Galatians. The problems had not reached a critical level as in other places.

VI. Philippians

A. Authorship:

1. Paul identifies himself as the author in Philippians 1:1.
2. Paul also mentions Timothy's name in the introduction, possibly because Timothy helped Paul to compose and/or deliver the letter.

B. Intended Recipients

1. Paul identifies the recipients as the believers in Philippi in Philippians 1:1.
2. You can read about Paul's relationship with Philippi in Acts 16.

C. Place of Writing: The letter seems to indicate that Paul is in prison in Rome (Philippians 1:7, 13-14, 17, 20, 30; 2:17).

D. Date of Writing

1. This letter had to be written after the start of the second missionary journey because Timothy is mentioned in the introduction.
3. If Paul wrote from Rome, the date of writing would be around 60-63 AD.

E. Reason for Writing (Purpose):

1. The Philippian church sent assistance and encouragement to Paul through their messenger Epaphroditus and now Paul is sending back with him a letter of thanks and encouragement.
2. Paul wanted to warn the church at Philippi about false doctrines.
3. To instruct the Philippians on how to live a Godly life in a pagan society.

VII. Colossians

A. Authorship:

1. Paul identifies himself as the author in Colossians 1:1.

2. Paul also mentions Timothy's name in the introduction, possibly because Timothy helped Paul to write the letter.

B. Recipients:

1. The recipients are named in Colossians 1:2 as the church at Colosse.

2. Where is Colosse

- i. The city of Colosse was located about 160 kilometers from the city of Ephesus.
- ii. It was in the region of Phrygia in the Roman province of Asia (modern Turkey)
- iii. Even though the area was majority Gentile, there was a large Jewish population in the area.

3. Who are the believers at Colosse?

- i. Colosse is never mentioned in the Bible outside Colossians.
- ii. While Luke records Paul passing through Phrygia (Acts 16:10 and Acts 18:23) he never mentions Paul having any major work in Colosse.
- iii. The letter even seems to indicate that Paul was not the founder of the church at Colosse and that he had not even met many of them (Colossians 1:4, 9; 2:1-1). Most likely, this church was planted by one of Paul's colleagues, possibly from Ephesus.

C. Relationship with the letter to Philemon

1. Many consider the letter to the Colossians and the letter to Philemon to be companion letters. This means that they were written and delivered together.

2. There are several verses that support this:

- i. Colossians 4:9 and Philemon 1:10-12
- ii. Colossians 4:10-14 and Philemon 1:23-24
- iii. Colossians 4:17 and Philemon 1:2

3. More about the letter to Philemon will be discussed later.

D. Place of Writing

1. Paul does not mention the city where this letter was written. This has caused some debate through the years concerning where Paul wrote this letter.

2. We are not able to say with certainty where Paul was based when he wrote this letter but the majority of the evidence points to either Ephesus or Rome.

E. Date of Writing

1. This letter had to be written after the start of the second missionary journey because Timothy and Luke are mentioned.

2. If Paul wrote this letter from Ephesus, the date of writing would be around 55 AD.

3.If Paul wrote this letter from Rome, the date of writing would be around 62-63 AD.

4.Thus, we can conclude that the letter was written sometime between 55 and 63 AD.

F. Purpose (Reason for Writing):

1.Epaphras returned to Paul with a good report from the church. Paul was now writing to commend the church and encourage the believers to remain faithful.

2.To warn the church against false teachers who were traveling in the area teaching wrong doctrines and harming the churches.

3.To give further teachings on the person of Jesus Christ and the message of the Gospel in order to combat any false or heretical teaching or thinking.

4.To instruct the believers to live Godly lives in the midst of a pagan society.

VIII. First Thessalonians

A. Authorship:

1.Paul identifies himself as the author in 1 Thessalonians 1:1.

2.Paul also mentions Timothy and Silas in the introduction

i. This is possibly because they assisted Paul in the writing of the letter.

ii. Silas is seen assisting Peter in writing his letter in 1 Peter 5:12 so he may also be an assistant for Paul.

B. Recipients

1.The recipients are named in 1 Thessalonians 1:1 as the church of the Thessalonians.

2.Thessalonica was the capital of the Roman province of Macedonia.

3.You can read about Paul's relationship with the city of Thessalonica in Acts 17.

C. Paul's Communication with the Thessalonians

1.It appears that Paul became concerned about the church after he left the city during his second missionary journey. Due to persecution he was only able to stay a short time. While he was in Athens, he sent Timothy back to Thessalonica to gather information and give instructions (1 Thessalonians 3:2).

3.Timothy most likely returns to Paul while Paul is ministering in Corinth. Timothy's report motivated Paul to write this letter (1 Thessalonians 3:6).

4.This account of Timothy's journey to Thessalonica is not recorded in Acts but indicated by the content of Paul's letter. The reason we do not see this in Acts is most likely because Timothy is not the focus of Acts. Rather, Luke focused on Paul and his journeys and rather than on Timothy's assignments.

5. Near the end of Paul's time in Ephesus during the third missionary journey, Luke wrote in Acts 19:22 that Paul sent Timothy and Erastus back to Macedonia (possibly to Thessalonica) to see about the work there.
6. Acts 20:1-3 describes Paul going through Macedonia twice while on the way to Jerusalem.
7. We also see men from Thessalonica joining Paul on his Journeys:
 - i. Aristarchus (Acts 19:29; 20:4; 27:2; Colossians 4:10; Philemon 1:24) who possibly went all the way to Rome with Paul.
 - ii. Secundus (Acts 20:4)

D. Place of Writing

1. Even though Paul mentioned Athens in the letter, it is more likely that Paul wrote from Corinth due to the short time he spent in Athens.
2. Paul did not stay in Athens long enough to see Timothy return and write a letter.
3. Paul's longer stay in Corinth makes this location the most likely site. Thus, we can say that Paul wrote 1 Thessalonians from Corinth during the second missionary journey.

E. Date of Writing

1. We can assume that Paul wrote while in Corinth during his second missionary journey.
2. This means Paul most likely wrote this letter around 50-51 AD.

F. Purpose (Reason for Writing)

1. To encourage, teach, and instruct the young church as their apostolic leader. Paul probably felt he needed to write further on account of his brief stay in the beginning.
2. To encourage the believers in the midst of persecution (1 Thessalonians 2:14-20).
3. To encourage Gentile converts to withstand the temptation to return to their pagan religion and practices.
4. To instruct the church to live a Godly lifestyle in the midst of a pagan culture.

IX. Second Thessalonians

A. Authorship:

1. Paul identifies himself as the author in 2 Thessalonians 1:1.
2. Paul also mentions Timothy and Silas in the introduction. This is possibly because they assisted Paul in the writing of the letter (2 Thessalonians 3:17).

B. Recipients: The recipients are named in 2 Thessalonians 1:1 as the church of the Thessalonians.

C. Date of Writing

1. Most scholars agree that this letter was written soon after the completion and sending of 1 Thessalonians given the similarities in the content and the names mentioned in the introduction (Paul, Silas, and Timothy).

2. Thus, we can say that this letter was written around 51 AD.

D. Place of Writing:

1. The introduction of this second letter lists the same senders as the first letter (Paul, Silas, and Timothy).

2. Thus, we can assume that this letter was written from the same location, Corinth.

3. These men were together long enough in Corinth to write and send this second letter.

E. Purpose (Reason for Writing)

1. To give encouragement, teaching, and instruction to this young church from their apostolic leader. Paul probably felt he needed to continue to interact with the church through his writings on account of his brief stay when the church was planted.

2. To encourage the believers to remain faithful.

3. To continue the teaching on Eschatology (the end times).

3. To instruct the church to live a Godly lifestyle in the midst of a pagan culture.

X. The Pastoral Epistles

A. 1 & 2 Timothy and Titus are called the “Pastoral Epistles” because they contain pastoral instructions from a senior pastor/leader (Paul) to newer pastors/leaders (Timothy & Titus).

B. These letters are helpful reading for all present and future pastors and church leaders.

XI. 1 Timothy

A. Authorship: Paul identifies himself as the author in 1 Timothy 1:1.

B. Recipients

1. Timothy is the primary recipient (1 Timothy 1:2).

2. Timothy traveled with Paul throughout Acts and is seen with Paul in many of Paul’s letters as a faithful worker in Paul’s ministry.

3. Eventually Timothy was sent to lead the church at Ephesus and this is the place where Timothy was serving when this letter from Paul was sent. (1 Timothy 1:3).

4. The church at Ephesus is also addressed as a secondary recipient of the letter.

C. Date of Writing: Between 62 – 65 AD.

D. Place of Writing

1. Some evidence seems to point to Macedonia.
2. Other evidence, however, points to Rome.
3. The Traditional view is Rome but Macedonia is also possible.

E. Reason for Writing

1. Paul has left Timothy in charge of a very difficult situation in the church in Ephesus, where false teachers are leading some groups of Christians astray. Thus, Paul is writing to the whole church through Timothy in order to strengthen Timothy's ability to stop these false teachers and bring proper leadership back to the church.
2. To give words of instruction and encouragement to Timothy, as a young leader of a large ministry (mentoring from a distance).

XII. Second Timothy

A. Authorship: Paul identifies himself as the author in 2 Timothy 1:1.

B. Recipients

1. Timothy is the primary recipient (2 Timothy 1:2).
2. The church at Ephesus may also be seen as a recipient of the letter.

C. Date of Writing

1. It seems that this letter was written near the end of Paul's life and ministry (2 Tim. 4:6-8).
2. Thus, we can say that this letter was written around 64-65 AD.

D. Place of Writing

1. It appears that Paul is writing from a Roman prison (2 Timothy 1:16-17; 2:9).
2. Thus, we can say that Paul wrote from Rome.

E. Reason for Writing

1. To instruct Timothy to remain loyal to Jesus, the Gospel, the teachings of Paul, true doctrine, Scripture, and the ministry of the church.
2. To give more instructions on church leadership and dealing with false teachers and doctrine.

XIII. Titus

A. Authorship: Paul identifies himself as the author in Titus 1:1.

B. Recipients

1. Titus is the primary recipient (Titus 1:4)
2. Little is known about the life of Titus
3. A worker, messenger, and travel companion in Paul's ministry (2 Corinthians 7:6; 8:17, 23; 2 Timothy 4:10).
4. A Gentile (Galatians 2:3)

5. Sent to Crete to lead the church (Titus 1:5)
6. The church at Crete may also be seen as a recipient
 - i. Titus 1:5 mentions Crete
 - ii. Paul's Ministry in Crete can be found in Acts 27 but little is known about the work in Crete after this. A church was probably planted as a result of Paul's ministry there and Paul possibly appointed Titus to lead the church.

C. Date of Writing: This letter was written between 62 – 64 AD.

D. Place of Writing: Possibly Macedonia or Rome.

F. Reason for Writing

1. Paul placed Titus in Crete to help set the new church in order. Paul is now writing with instructions for his leadership and work there.
2. To assist Titus in dealing with false teachers and doctrine.

XIV. Philemon

A. Authorship: Paul is mentioned as the author in verse 1.

B. Recipients

1. Philemon is the primary recipient (verse 1)
2. Little is known about the life of Philemon
3. Most likely he was a leader of a house church and a prominent believer in the church at Colossae (verse 2 and 23)
4. Possibly a supporter of Paul's ministry (verses 7, 21-22)
5. He is the overseer of Onesimus (Titus 1:5)
6. Other recipients are listed as Apphia and Archippus, possibly other leaders in the region. Archippus is mentioned by Paul in Colossians 4:17
7. The church that met at Philemon's home is also a recipient

C. Date of Writing: It seems that this letter was sent alongside Paul's letter to the Colossians and written between 55-63 AD.

D. Place of Writing: Paul is most likely in Rome (see verses 9, 22)

E. Reason for Writing

1. To intercede on behalf of Philemon's escaped slave, Onesimus. Onesimus is described by Paul as a faithful and dear brother in Colossians 4:9. However, Paul wants Onesimus to do what is right and reconcile with Philemon.
2. To teach forgiveness of one another as Christ forgives us.

The General Epistles

- I. What are the “General Epistles?”
 - A. The General Epistles are the letters found in the New Testament not written by Paul. These are the last nine books of the New Testament (Hebrews, James, 1 Peter, 2 Peter, 1 John, 2 John, 3 John, Jude, and Revelation).
 - B. Why do we call these letters “General Epistles?”
 1. The term “general epistles” is used to designate these letters because the letters seem to be directed to large groups or all believers.
 2. The letters seem to be intended for the purpose of being passed around and read to many churches rather than one specific person or church.
 3. Even though some of the letters do address certain people, the messages of each letter seem to be directed to general audiences in various locations.
 - C. Naming
 1. The books in this portion of the New Testament are named for their Authors (with the exception of Hebrews and Revelation).
 - i. Hebrews is named for its recipients.
 - ii. Revelation is so named because the book describes the revelation that was given to John.
 2. This is different from Pauline letters which are always named after the recipients.
 - D. Order – The books are generally arranged in order of size.
- II. Hebrews
 - A. Authorship:
 1. The writer of Hebrews does not identify himself.
 2. Scholars have suggested several people as the author including Paul, Barnabas, or Apollos.
 - B. Original Recipients: The location of the recipients are not mentioned but the content of the letter tells us that the letter was intended for a Jewish audience.
 - C. Date of Writing: 64-65 AD
 - D. Purpose (Reason for Writing):
 1. The Christian community was discouraged because of suffering and hardship. (Heb. 10:35-39).
 2. The Christian community was tempted to reject and return to Judaism because of persecution (Hebrews 10:35).
 3. The Christian community was beginning to doubt their beliefs.
 - i. This is why the author focused on faith in Hebrews 11-12.

- ii. The writer brings out Jewish examples of faith and believing even when no results of faith can be seen with physical eyes (Hebrews 11).
4. Summary Statement: To encourage a group of discouraged believers drifting from real Christianity by reinforcing their commitment to Jesus Christ and instructing them to draw near to God in order to endure persecution and overcome doubt.

III. James

A. Authorship

1. James as mentioned as the author in James 1:1. Who is this James?
2. This cannot be James, the brother of John because he was killed by Herod Agrippa I around 44 AD as seen in Acts 12:2.
3. There was a disciple named James, son of Alphaeus mentioned in Matthew 10:3; Mark 3:18; Luke 6:15; and Acts 1:13. This James, however, does not appear to be a very prominent member of the early church and is mostly likely not the author.
4. The majority view is that this is James, the half-brother of Jesus.
 - i. Mary and Joseph had children together after Jesus was born including James (Matthew 12:46; 13:55 and Mark 3:20-21; 6:3; John 7:3-5).
 - ii. James believed in Jesus after the resurrection and became the leader of the church in Jerusalem (Acts 11:17; 15:13; 21:18).

B. Date of Writing: Between 40 and 60 AD.

C. Place of Writing: Jerusalem

D. Recipients:

1. Jewish People – “The twelve tribes scattered among the nations”(James 1:1)
2. Probably written to Jews living outside of Jerusalem.

E. Reason (Purpose for Writing):

1. To encourage and instruct Christians to express their faith practically and morally.
2. To encourage and instruct Christians in the midst of hardship not to fall away or abandon certain aspects of faithful Christian living.
3. To instruct wealthy people on how to live in Christian morality.
4. To address divisions that were arising in the Church because members were not living out their Christian morals.
5. To call on Christians to be people who confront the culture rather than reflect the culture. Christians should identify themselves primarily as citizens of the world to come rather than the world at hand. We cannot separate faith and actions

6. To affirm that churches should not be seen as just another place to attain social advancement, find self improvement, or demonstrate status achievement. Those who lead or attend for those reasons are neglecting the true purpose of the church, to help transform people into the image of Jesus (who cared little for social standing, quick fixes, and material wealth).

IV. First Peter

A. Authorship:

1. 1 Peter 1:1 – The Apostle Peter is mentioned as the author.
2. Who was Peter?
 - i. His other names include Simon (a Hebrew name) and Cephas (an Aramaic name). See Luke 5:8, John 1:42, and Galatians 2:9).
 - ii. He was from Galilee and lived near the Sea of Galilee (Matthew 4:18). Galilee was a region of less prominence in the area that was known mainly for farming and fishing.
 - iii. Peter was the son of John (also called Jonah - John 1:42) and the brother of Andrew (Matthew 4:18).
 - iv. Peter was married (Matthew 8:14).
 - v. Peter was a fisherman in the family fishing business (Matthew 4:18; Mark 1:16; Luke 5:8-10).
 - vi. Peter most likely received little education (Acts 4:13).
 - vii. First called to follow Jesus as a disciple (Matthew 4:19-20; Luke 5:10b-11) and later designated to be an apostle (Mark 3:13-16; Luke 6:12-14).
 - viii. Although Peter denied Jesus during his trial before the crucifixion, he was forgiven and became an early church leader (Acts 1-12).
 - ix. Multiple early church historians testify that Peter was killed by crucifixion by order of Emperor around 64 or 65 AD.

B. Original Recipients

1. Christians living in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia (found in modern-day Turkey).
2. Mainly Gentiles and some Jews evangelized by Paul (Acts 16:6-7, Acts 18; Galatians).
3. These were people of low social or economic standing (2:11-18).

C. Date of Writing: Between 62 and 64 AD.

D. Place of Writing

1. In 1 Peter 5:13, Peter records that he is writing from Babylon.

- i. Babylon is a city in modern-day Iraq and was an Old Testament enemy to Israel and a place of both exile and a place of evil.
 - ii. The book of Revelation and many early Christians frequently used the term “Babylon” to refer to the city of Rome since it was also a place of exile (Christians were being sent there for trial) and evil (it was the center of moral corruption).
2. Most scholars agree that Peter is using the term “Babylon” to refer to the city of Rome. Thus, Peter is most likely writing from Rome where church history records that Peter ministered near the end of his life.

E. Purpose (Reason for Writing)

1. To encourage a group of small churches throughout Asia Minor by describing their Christian identity (members of the family of God), by exhorting them to love one another, and by explaining to them the tension that being a Christian will generate in a society that is largely pagan.
2. To encourage Christians living in the midst of persecution and suffering.
3. To explain how Christians should live in the midst of pagan culture.
4. To encourage believers to stand firm in their faith and operate in love, holiness, and faithfulness

V. Second Peter

A. Authorship: 2 Peter 1:1 – The Apostle Peter identifies himself as the author.

B. Original Recipients

1. No recipients are mentioned in the introduction of this letter (unlike 1 Peter).
2. An important clue to the original recipients is given in 2 Peter 3:1. This passage mentions a previous letter, most likely referring to 1 Peter.
3. Thus, we can assume that the recipients of 2 Peter are the same as 1 Peter (see 1 Peter 1:1 for these recipients).

C. Date of Writing: 64-65 AD.

D. Place of Writing:

1. The place of writing is not specifically mentioned but we can assume it is the same as 1 Peter which is Rome.
2. Also, in 2 Peter 1:13-15 Peter mentions his death is close. Peter died in Rome.

E. Purpose (Reason for Writing)

1. To oppose the false teachers who were misleading some in the churches of Asia Minor.
2. To clarify and offer sound doctrine in the midst of false teaching.
3. A farewell letter from the Apostle Peter as he awaits martyrdom.
4. To promote strong and sound faith with Godly living.

VI. 1 John

A. Authorship:

1. The author of this letter does not identify himself.
2. There are clues to authorship found both inside and outside the letter.
 - i. Clues to authorship inside the letter:
 - a. Similarities between this letter and the Gospel of John. For example see John 13:35 and 1 John 3:11, 23. Also see John 10:15, 17 and 1 John 3:16
 - b. These similarities point to these works being written by the same author: the Apostle John.
 - ii. Clues to authorship outside the letter
 - a. Church history and early Church Fathers have overwhelmingly affirmed that the Apostle John is the author of this letter.
 - b. The early church historian, Eusebius, names the Apostle John as author.

B. Original Recipients

1. Since no recipients are named, this letter was most likely intended to be read to many churches.
2. John worked among the churches in Asia, around Ephesus, after the events of Acts so he may be writing to those churches including the seven churches mentioned in Revelation.
3. The author and recipients have a special relationship. John refers to the recipients as “dear children” and “dear friends.” John may have seen as a senior pastor to these many recipients.

C. Date of Writing: Between 70 and 90 AD.

D. Place of Writing:

1. John's location is not recorded in the letter.
2. John does not mention being in exile on the Island of Patmos so this option is usually excluded.
3. One possibility is that John was writing from the capital city of Asia Minor, which was Ephesus.

E. Purpose (Reasons for Writing)

1. To confront false teachers and ungodly leaders who were leading certain members of the churches in Asia Minor astray.
2. To respond to the false teaching of these people that called into question the teaching of the Apostles and the traditions of the early church.

3. To encourage everyone to remain faithful to Jesus, the true church, and the teaching of the Apostles.

VII. 2 John

A. Authorship:

1. The author uses his title to introduce himself – “the elder”
2. The author is believed to be the Apostle John for the same reasons mentioned under “authorship” in 1 John.

B. Recipients

1. Recipients are described as a family: The Chosen Lady and Her Children (2 John 1:1).
2. There are three theories concerning the identity of these people:
 - i. Theory 1:
 - a. The “chosen lady” refers to a prominent woman in the church who is hosting the congregation in her home for worship and fellowship.
 - b. “Her children” are members of her family who are devoted to the church.
 - ii. Theory 2:
 - a. The “chosen lady” refers to a single church in Asia Minor, possibly Ephesus.
 - b. “Her children” are members of the church.
 - iii. Theory 3:
 - a. The “chosen lady” refers to a prominent, mother church in the region of Asia Minor, possibly in the city of Ephesus.
 - b. “Her children” are smaller house churches that are meeting throughout the region but under the authority of the main church.
3. There is no definitive answer but we can say that the general recipients are the same as that of 1 John - Churches and believers connected with the Apostle John in Asia Minor.

C. Date of Writing: Between 70 – 90 AD.

D. Place of Writing: Most likely the same as 1 John – Asia Minor, possibly Ephesus.

E. Purpose (Reasons for Writing)

1. Possibly an accompanying letter meant to be included with 1 John for the purpose of greetings and introductions however it can stand alone.
2. To confront false teachers and ungodly leaders who were addressed in 1 John who were leading certain members of the churches in Asia Minor astray.

- 3.To respond to the false teaching of certain leaders as mentioned in 1 John that called into question the teaching of the Apostles and the traditions of the early church.
- 4.To encourage and build up those loyal to Jesus, the true church, and the Apostles.

VIII. 3 John

A. Authorship:

- 1.The author uses his title to introduce himself – “the elder”
- 2.The author is believed to be the Apostle John for the same reasons mentioned in 1 John.

B. Recipients

1.Gaius

- i. Little is known of this Gaius.
- ii. He was a good friend to John (3 John 1).
- iii. He was supporting the church and Christian workers (3 John 6).
- iv. He was remaining faithful to the truth (3 John 3).

- 2.Other recipients are possibly the Christians who meet in the church of Gaius (Gaius may even be the host of a house church congregation - 3 John 14).

C. Date of Writing: Between 70 and 90 AD.

D. Place of Writing: Most likely the same as 1 John and 2 John – Asia Minor, possibly Ephesus.

E. Purpose (Reasons for Writing)

- 1.Possibly an accompanying letter meant to be included with 1 John for the purpose of greetings and introductions however it can stand alone even more so than 2 John.
- 2.To encourage Gaius and other believers who were remaining faithful to Jesus, the true church, and the Apostles in the midst of antagonism by false teachers.
- 3.To inform Gaius and other faithful believers that John is coming and has already written a letter to address false teachers spreading false teaching.
- 4.Possibly a letter of introduction and request for help for the person who carries John’s letters to the churches.

IX. Jude

A. Authorship:

- 1.The author identifies himself as “Jude, a servant of Jesus Christ and a brother of James.”
- 2.Jude in Jude 1:1 is taken from the Greek named Iouda

- i. This Greek name can also mean Judah and Judas.
- ii. There is no New Testament character named Judah
- iii. So we can assume that Jude is another version of Judas possibly changed slightly to disassociate himself with the betrayer of Jesus.

3. Judas in the New Testament – 5 men named Judas

- i. Judas Iscariot (cannot be the author; he took his own life before Acts)
- ii. Judas the Galilean (Acts 5:37 - cannot be the author as he was not a Christian and killed before the trials of Peter and John)
- iii. Judas, son of James, one of the 12 disciples (Luke 6:16; Acts 1:3)
- iv. Judas, also called Barsabbas, an early Christian leader (Acts 15:22-32)
- v. Judas, the brother of Jesus and James (Mark 6:3)

4. The only Judas (Jude) who is also a brother of James is Judas, the brother of Jesus.

5. Although there are other men named James mentioned in Bible, none of them are ever associated with a brother named Judas except James, the brother of Jesus.

6. Jude most likely did not identify himself as a brother of Jesus out of respect and humility. Rather, he aligned himself with his full brother, James, who was leading the church in Jerusalem (Acts 15) and author of the Epistle of James.

7. Who was Jude?

- i. A half-brother of Jesus and full brother of James (the author of James and leader of the Jerusalem Church). See Matthew 12:46; 13:55 and Mark 3:20-21; 6:3; John 7:3-5 for more information about the family of Jesus.
- ii. Most likely he believed in Jesus as Christ after the resurrection and ascension of Jesus as did his brother James. (1 Corinthians 15:3-8).
- iii. Little is known about his ministry or even where he ministered. He may have remained in Palestine, close to Jerusalem, to assist his brother James with the ministry in and around Jerusalem.
- iv. Death: Jude's death is not recorded in the Bible and there is also little traditional/historical information concerning Jude's life so we cannot make an assumption about his death.
- v. Hegesippus, a 2nd century Christian historian, wrote that Jude's grandchildren became great leaders in the church and suffered martyrdom at the hands of Emperor Trajan for their Christian faith in the early 2nd century.

B. Relationship Between Jude and 2 Peter

1. Almost one third of the letter has direct resemblance with 2 Peter. The similarities are:

- i. Jude 4 and 2 Peter 2:3
- ii. Jude 4 and 2 Peter 2:1
- iii. Jude 6 and 2 Peter 2:4
- iv. Jude 7 and 2 Peter 2:6
- v. Jude 8 and 2 Peter 2:10
- vi. Jude 9 and 2 Peter 2:11
- vii. Jude 12 and 2 Peter 2:13
- viii. Jude 12 and 2 Peter 2:17
- ix. Jude 18 and 2 Peter 3:3

2. This may show us that Jude and Peter were working closely together in the ministry.

C. Date of Writing: Between 55 - 90 AD

D. Original Recipients

1. Jude addresses his recipients as “those who have been called, who are loved by God the Father and kept by Jesus Christ.”

2. Although we do not know the location of these people, based on the content we know the recipients were mainly Jewish believers probably living in Palestine.

E. Place of Writing: Probably Jerusalem

F. Purpose (Reason for Writing)

1. To send a strong warning to the believers not to accept the teaching or presence of the false teachers in the church.

2. To encourage the believers to remain faithful to Jesus and the teaching of the Apostles and not to give up.

3. To convey a message of judgment and condemnation for false teachers.

X. Revelation

A. Authorship: The author identifies himself as John in Revelation 1:1, 4, 9; and 22:8.

B. Intended Recipients

1. The recipients are described in Revelation 1:4 as “the seven churches in the province of Asia.”

2. These churches are listed in Revelation 1:11 as well as chapters 2 and 3:

- i. Ephesus
- ii. Smyrna
- iii. Pergamum
- iv. Thyatira
- v. Sardis
- vi. Philadelphia
- vii. Laodicea

3. The cities are listed in the order by which someone would visit them on a journey.

C. Date of Writing: 95-96 AD

D. Place of Writing: The Island of Patmos

1. The Island of Patmos is part of modern-day Greece.
 - i. It is located among the Sporades group of islands in the Aegean Sea near the west coast of Turkey.
 - ii. The Sporades Islands are a relatively small group, measuring only about 10 by 16 kilometers, with a very rocky coastlines.
2. The Romans used Patmos as a prison island.
 - i. It was a place where the prisoners had no legal rights and were held indefinitely for political or religious reasons without charge or trial, subject solely to the authority of the Roman Emperor.
 - ii. According to Eusebius, an early church historian, John was sent to Patmos in the year 95 AD by the Roman emperor Domitian. He was released less than 2 years later in 97 AD.
 - iii. By that time John would have been well over 90 years old making him the only apostle known to survive to old age.

E. Type of Literature

1. Revelation contains three types of literature:

- i. Letter – Revelation 1-3 and the ending of Revelation are written very much like a normal New Testament letter.
- ii. Apocalyptic Literature – Other portions of Revelation are writing to include highly visual and symbolic language that deal with the end of time and heavenly images. This type of literature is called “apocalyptic” meaning some truth or information is being revealed through these images.
- iii. Prophetic Literature – Finally, Revelation also prophesies about future and present events.

2. Since the book of Revelation contains a mixture of three types of literature, we must pay attention to this as we read and interpret the letter.

F. Reasons for Writing (Purpose)

1. To share prophecy (the message from God) concerning the signs and days preceding and following Christ’s second coming.
2. To encourage churches and believers undergoing severe persecution and difficulty.
3. To encourage believers to remain faithful and not to doubt.
4. To declare that Jesus is not defeated, Jesus is the victor.
5. To declare the coming wrath and judgment of God.