

New Testament Introductions and Analytical Outlines

by

Charles C. Bing, Ph.D.
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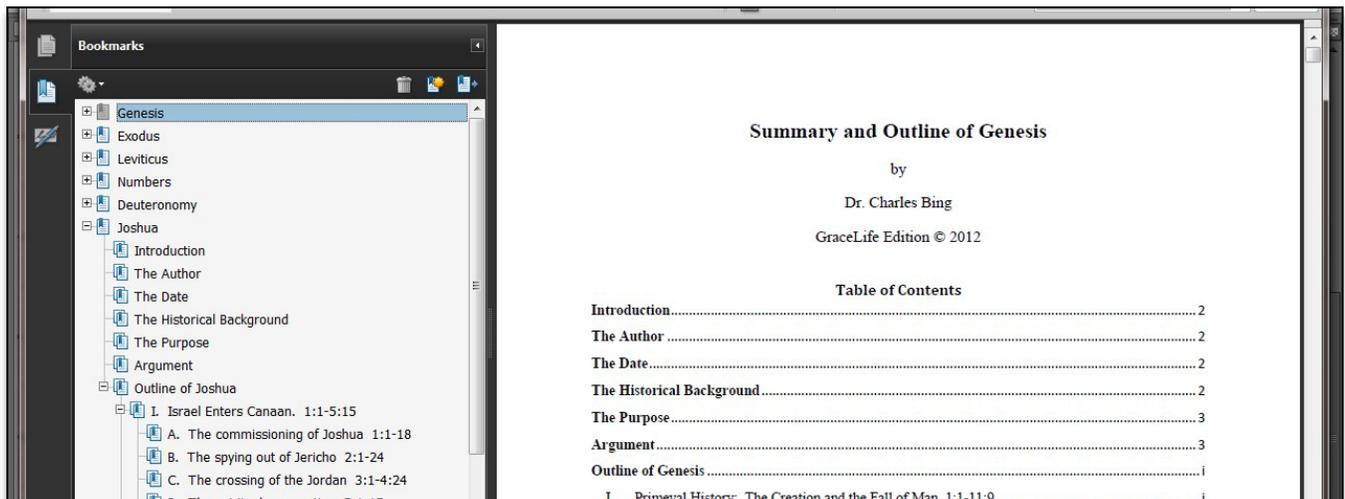
The introductions and outlines of the Old and New Testaments were written by Charles C. Bing who earned his Th.M. and Ph.D. from Dallas Theological Seminary. He founded Burleson Bible Church in Texas which he pastored for 19 years before transitioning to GraceLife Ministries full-time in 2005. He has served as Adjunct Professor of Biblical Studies for LeTourneau University and other theological schools. Dr. Bing helped found the Free Grace Alliance in 2004 and has served as its president. He is active as a speaker for churches and conferences in the United States and abroad and has published a number of books and articles on the gospel, salvation, evangelism, and discipleship.

This work represents a portion of the requirements for Dr. Bing's doctoral studies in the Bible Exposition department of Dallas Theological Seminary. We hope you find them useful for your studies as others already have. The Introductions give the basic background for each Bible book as a foundation for further study, teaching, or preaching. The Outlines convey the content of the book with great detail and full thoughts so that one sees clearly how the biblical text both flows and divides.

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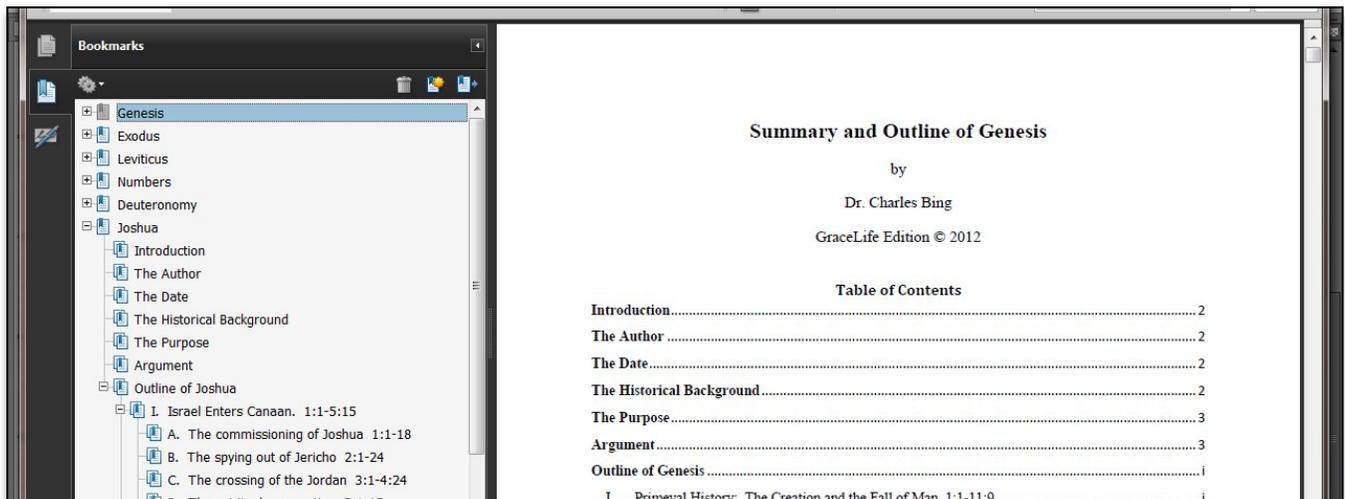
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Summary and Outline of Matthew

by

Dr. Charles Bing

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Introduction

The Author

The external evidence uniformly attributes this gospel to Matthew, the disciple of Jesus. Many early church fathers cite Matthew as the author. There are indications from some fathers that Matthew wrote the gospel in Hebrew, and Eusebius quotes Papias as stating that Matthew wrote the "logia" in Aramaic. This has caused some to suggest Matthew did not write the Greek version of the gospel, but there is no solid evidence to support this view. No Aramaic or Hebrew version has been found, and it is evident that Matthew did not translate his gospel from a Semitic version. The possibility exists that he wrote at least two versions of the gospel, one most certainly in Greek.

The internal evidence supports the authorship of Matthew. In harmony with his occupation as a tax collector, this gospel has more references to money than the other gospels. Similarly, more precise terms are used for money than in the other gospels. The methodical arrangement and attention to detail also evidence an author familiar with keeping careful records. It is significant that whereas Matthew refers repeatedly to himself as a "publican", a term of contempt, Mark and Luke do not use it of him. Furthermore, the acquaintance with the geography and environment of Palestine suggest the author was a Palestinian Jew. Finally, Matthew's gospel shows a definite preference for the name "Matthew" while both Mark and Luke prefer the name "Levi". This may indicate a personal touch from the apostle himself. The internal evidence along with the external evidence point to Matthew as the author. There is no conclusive evidence for thinking otherwise.

The Date and Place

The question of whether Matthew uses Mark as a source for his gospel will influence the dating of the gospel. Though this is a possibility, Matthew shows no slavish dependence on Mark. If Mark was the source of Matthew, then a later date closer to A.D. 70, but not after, is probable. Matthew seems to anticipate the future destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70 (chapters 24-25), so he would have written prior to that event. However, many modern scholars agree with church tradition in taking Matthew as the first gospel written. Even so, there seems to be a passing of time mentioned in 27:8 and 28:15. This could place the time of writing as early as the early A.D. 50's. Beyond this, the exact date of writing remains unknown.

The traditional view is that Matthew originated in Palestine as a book written by a Jewish Christian to a community of Jewish Christians. This would seem the most likely place of writing and agree with the tradition that Matthew did little traveling from Palestine. Some have also proposed Syrian Antioch as a place of origin because of the Greek language used, but this is doubtful given the way Matthew takes for granted the readers' familiarity with Jewish customs. In the end, the place of writing is unknown.

The Historical Background

Matthew was probably written to a Jewish readership familiar with Judea's customs and culture. The great number of quotes from the Old Testament, messianic interest,

unexplained Jewish customs, and attention to Jewish genealogy (1:1-17) argue strongly for a Palestinian audience of Jewish background.

The Purpose

Genesis is designed to show that God is the sovereign Creator of the universe who created man to rule the world, but because of man's sin this dominion was lost until the promises of restored rule could be realized through God's special chosen race. Therefore, Genesis introduces the beginning of creation, man, man's fall, judgment, and the beginning of redemption through a promise (3:15). Abraham and his family are chosen as those who will mediate this promise to the world (12:2-3). Genesis pursues the history of Abraham and his descendants to show the persistence of God's promise of redemption through the preservation of a special people.

The narrative and genealogies, especially as they are arranged around the eleven key structural headings "Now these are the generations of . . ." (Hebrew toledot; 2:4; 5:1; 6:9; 10:1; 11:10, 27; 25:12, 19; 36:1, 9; 37:2), present history redemptively. God's preservation of a godly line of blessing is traced and contrasted to other ungodly lines in a narrowing fashion so as to show His promised redemption enduring in the early history of man.

The Occasion

The testimony of Irenaeus and Origen indicates that Matthew was written to converts from Judaism, which, according to the early chapters of Acts, numbered in the thousands. Such a group would expectedly have questions about the significance of Jesus as the fulfillment of their Old Testament prophecies. This Matthew establishes with meticulous care through the quotation of more Old Testament passages than any other gospel. Such proof would also appeal to nonbelieving Jews. The infant church would also be in need of instruction and catechism for their new faith. Matthew seems to supply this need by including his careful proof about Jesus as King of the Jews along with five major discourses on Christian truth.

Understandably, the early Jewish converts would also have questions about God's kingdom program. The postponement of the Messiah's kingdom was a truth newly revealed. Matthew demonstrates how Israel's rejection of their King resulted in a postponed kingdom. This kingdom will be established at the second coming of Christ. In the meantime, Matthew shows that Jesus Christ is now in the process of building His church, the heirs of the kingdom. The universal character of the church is displayed in Matthew by an emphasis on Gentiles. There is the early mention of the Magi, the Gentile centurion's faith, the Canaanitish woman, the promise of the universal proclamation of the gospel (24:14), and the final commission to disciple all nations. Matthew is showing how the kingdom program will include the Gentiles.

The Purpose

Matthew's chief purpose in writing was to demonstrate that Jesus is the Messiah, the King of the Jews. This purpose is clearly seen in the first verse of the gospel where Jesus is identified as the Son of David and of Abraham. Jesus is presented as the fulfillment of promises to both Abraham and David. Many other prophecies are cited to show how Jesus is the Messiah in every regard, from birth to death. A second purpose is evidenced by the systematic arrangement and inclusion of the discourses by Matthew. The gospel served a catechetical

purpose for the early church. Finally, Matthew wrote to explain and clarify the kingdom program of God in its present postponement and future coming in Jesus Christ.

Argument

Matthew is designed to prove that Jesus is the Jewish Messiah. His kingship is demonstrated by recording the significant events of His life and ministry from birth to resurrection.

The first major section of Matthew (1:1-4:11) documents the introduction of the King in events preceding the time of Christ's actual ministry. This includes information about His incarnation and preparation. The section about His incarnation (1:1-2:23) begins significantly with the genealogy of the King (1:1-17). The introduction to this genealogy (1:1) identifies Jesus Christ as the Son of David and the Son of Abraham. This immediately places Him in the position of both the fulfillment of the promises to Abraham, and the fulfillment of the promises to David about the eternal King. Ordered according to three divisions which emphasize the place of King David in the messianic line, the genealogy of Jesus establishes His royal credentials.

The record of the birth of the King (1:18-25) indicates the divine and human means by which Jesus would come into the world. The King would be a Deliverer of His people, but the primary deliverance would be from sin (1:21). His birth by a virgin fulfilling the prophecy in Isaiah 7:14 of a divine Son, and the understanding of the Magi about the prophecy in Micah 5:2 of a Ruler born in Bethlehem both demonstrate His right to be King. The childhood of the King (2:1-2:23) also meets the criterion of the ancient prophecy by Jeremiah when Herod destroyed the male children. The irony of Matthew's account is that Gentile leaders understood and honored the kingship of Jesus (2:1-2) whereas King Herod did not. Finally, Jesus' childhood in Nazareth agreed with the general tenor of the prophetic tradition (2:23).

The second emphasis in the introduction of the King comes in the account of His preparation (3:1-4:11). The forerunner, John the Baptist (3:1-12), announced the coming of the Lord and prepared the people by preaching and baptizing for repentance. The baptism of Jesus by John (3:12-17) identifies the King with His people, fulfills the requirements of righteousness for the King, and brings the authenticating approval from the Father. The moral qualifications of the King are then tested in the wilderness by Satan as recorded in the temptation account (4:1-11). By not succumbing to temptation in the wilderness as Israel had in the past, Jesus proves Himself as the qualified and necessary King of Israel.

The next major section of Matthew's argument concerns the principles of the King (4:12-7:29) largely communicated through the famous Sermon on the Mount. Matthew designates the beginning of Jesus' ministry (4:12-25) by inaugurating it with the quotation from Isaiah 9:1-2. The universal kingship of the Messiah is denoted by this mention of His ministry to Gentiles. The King's initial gathering of disciples and His immediate notoriety demonstrate the first impact of His ministry as a pattern for that which will follow.

The difference of Jesus' ministry with that of the religious status quo is brought to the open in the Sermon on the Mount (5:1-7:29). Here Jesus juxtaposes His authority and doctrine with that of Israel's present leadership. The sermon is designed to answer the question about the kind of righteousness required for the kingdom Jesus has been preaching. He begins with a

description and promises for the proper subjects of the kingdom (5:3-16). A lengthy description of what composes true righteousness then follows (5:17-7:6). Jesus indicates that He is the measure of righteousness and the fulfillment of the Law (5:17-20). The traditional Pharisaic interpretations about murder, adultery, divorce, oaths, retaliation, and love are shown to be inadequate as Jesus explains the more scrupulous requirements of kingdom righteousness (5:21-48). After rejecting the Pharisaic interpretations of God's Law, He also rejects their practices (6:1-7:6). The Pharisees' ostentation in charitable deeds, prayer, and fasting, and their attitudes toward material wealth and toward others in judgment discredit their authority as leaders of God's people and allow Jesus opportunity to explain the proper demonstration of God's righteousness. The sermon ends with instruction about entering the kingdom (7:7-27). The importance of asking (7:7-12), the option of the two ways (7:13-14), and the deception of false teachers (7:15-23) indicate that the kingdom can be missed. Finally, Jesus ends with an example of the importance of being grounded in the truth (7:24-27). Significantly, Matthew's description of the peoples' response (7:28-29) help the reader understand the new authority revealed in the principles of the King.

The manifestation of the King's power and authority form a third main section in Matthew's argument (8:1-11:1). This section authenticates Jesus's authority as King. His power is first demonstrated by a series of miracles interspersed with teaching about discipleship. The miracles of cleansing the leper, healing the centurion's son, healing Peter's mother-in-law, and healing the multitudes (8:1-17) demonstrate the King's authority over defilement, demons, and disease. The miracles of calming the wind and sea, casting out demons from two men, and healing the paralytic (8:23-9:8) are all miracles emphasizing the magnitude of the King's power. His power extends from the physical realm (the wind and sea) to the spiritual (demons and forgiveness of sins). The third series of miracles emphasize the King's power to restore (9:18-34). The two occasions that divide this series of miracles involve teachings about those who follow the King. They must pay a price (8:18-22) and must depart from the old Pharisaic system (9:14-17).

The former teachings about discipleship anticipated the next emphasis on the delegation of the King's power to His disciples (9:35-11:1). Jesus declares the need for laborers to harvest for His kingdom (9:35-38), and so commissions the twelve apostles (10:1-4). The use of the designation "apostle" or "sent one" adds the significance of the One who sends, the King. Jesus then instructs them in their mission (10:5-42). It is exclusively to the Jews because Jesus has come to them first as their King. The anticipation of rejection is an indication of the response of the nation to Jesus in His later ministry and indicates the radical nature of His manifestation to Israel as their King.

The rejection of the King (11:2-16:12) is Matthew's next main theme in his gospel. The rejection anticipated above begins here indirectly and ends with direct confrontation with the Jewish leaders. John the Baptist's imprisonment by Herod foreshadows the rejection of the Coming One about whom John preached. Jesus indicates in His answer to John's question (11:2-19) that this rejection is consistent with His own rejection. The rejection is confirmed in His denunciation of various impenitent cities (11:20-24) and in His appeal for those who will accept Him (11:25-30).

The controversy over the Sabbath begins the open conflict between Jesus and the Pharisees (12:1-50). The centrality of the Sabbath to all of Judaism is overridden by the Son of

Man who is Lord of the Sabbath. The title "Son of Man" points to the messianic authority of Jesus, and anticipates the direct controversy over Jesus' authority. In the midst of his revelation about the Pharisees' plot to destroy Jesus, and Jesus' consequent withdrawal, Matthew interjects a scriptural confirmation of Jesus' authority by quoting Isaiah 42:1-4 (12:14-21) which declares the position of the Messiah as God's Servant, thus implying divine authority. The following healing of a demon-possessed man precipitates controversy over the source of Jesus' power (12:22-37). By attributing it to Satan, the Pharisees demonstrate the degree of their rejection. This constitutes a crucial climax of rejection, the nature of which is unpardonable. In light of this, Jesus refuses the Jews' request for a sign with disguised language about His resurrection as the only sign He will give them (12:38-45). In rejecting physical relationships as a basis for entrance into the divine family, Jesus is turning from His physical affiliation with Israel to those who will respond through faith (12:46-50).

The use of parables by Jesus (13:1-53) confirms His rejection of the nation which rejected Him and His more limited focus on those of faith. Jesus explains that the purpose of parables is to reveal truth to those who have the understanding of faith and to conceal it from unbelievers. Each parable teaches something relevant to God's kingdom program in the present age in view of the rejection of the King. The distillation of their truths reveals that the kingdom of God will be rejected by some, allow for coexistence of believers with unbelievers, have an insignificant beginning and a great expansion, be of great value, culminate in a separating judgment, and have both familiar and new characteristics. These new truths comprise the "mysteries of the kingdom of heaven" (13:11) in light of its postponement.

At this point in the narrative, Matthew continues with more accounts of the Jews' rejection of their King (13:54-16:12). His rejection is seen in the unbelief of His own people in Nazareth (13:54-58), and Herod's execution of John which causes Jesus to withdraw into seclusion (14:1-36). This withdrawal allows Jesus to confirm the faith of His disciples through a series of miracles (14:13-36). Matthew next

records a dispute with the scribes and Pharisees from Jerusalem over the keeping of tradition (15:1-39). Jesus delivers a strong rebuke for their neglect of the Word of God in favor of tradition. His withdrawal to Tyre and Sidon (15:21-39) constitutes a significant thrust into Gentile territory as a response to the increased conflict and also as a foreshadowing of the King's inclusion of Gentiles in His kingdom, as seen in the dialogue with the woman of Canaan. The rejection of the Jewish leadership by Christ is confirmed in His rebuke of their hypocrisy and the subsequent warning to His disciples about the corruption of these Jews (16:1-12).

The next major division in Matthew finds Jesus focusing on the instruction of His disciples in a more private ministry (16:13-20:34). An important climax in the sequence of His self-revelation takes place when Peter confesses the messianic identity of Jesus (16:13-17). Jesus uses the occasion to teach the disciples about the growth of the church, His death and resurrection, and the demands of discipleship (16:18-17:13). This instruction is prompted by the growing nearness of His death. A demonstration of His kingdom glory is then exhibited as He is transformed on the mount (17:1-13).

The disciples' training continues through a series of lessons about various subjects important to the Christian life (17:14-20:34). Such instruction anticipates the time when Jesus will no longer be with the disciples. The instruction in Galilee (17:14-18:35) includes lessons on

prayer, His death and resurrection again, taxes, humility, causing offense, and forgiveness. Jesus then travels to Judea (19:1-2) as the time of His death approaches. Here He instructs the disciples further (19:3-20:28) with lessons on marriage and divorce, childlikeness, wealth, rewards, a third prediction of His death and resurrection, and the position of subjects in the kingdom. A vital statement about giving His life as a ransom (20:28) and the three predictions of His death and resurrection direct the reader's attention to the approaching ministry of the King in His passion. This main section ends with a transitional account of two blind men given sight upon their recognition of Jesus as the King, the "Son of David" (20:29-34). This story prepares the reader for what follows in the recognition and rejection of Jesus' kingship.

In a most crucial division of the gospel, Matthew records the official presentation and rejection of the King in Jerusalem (21:1-25:46). In fulfillment of Zechariah's prophecy, Jesus presents Himself to the nation of Israel as their King in a triumphal entry (21:1-17). Multitudes from the nation recognized His royalty. His cleansing of the temple and the claim of "My house" demonstrated His legitimate authority over Israel and confirmed the validity of the people's worship of Him. In strong contrast to this triumph, Matthew presents the rejection of the King by the official leadership of Israel (21:18-22:46). What ensues is a series of intense conflicts between Christ and the Jewish leaders in which His fundamental authority is challenged. This also elicits three parables of Jesus characterizing the unbelief of His detractors and their consequent punishment by exclusion from His kingdom. The conflicts expose the extreme degree of contempt since Matthew names the changing detractors in each case to show the totality of rejection by every element of Jewish leadership.

The response of the King to the total rejection by the nation of Israel is expressed in an extended condemnation of the leaders (23:1-39). In a warning to His disciples, He exposes the hypocritical practices of Israel's leaders (23:1-12). This is followed by a condemnation of them in the strongest terms (23:13-36) demonstrating His total rejection of the nation. The finality of Jesus' rejection of the nation brings a lament over Jerusalem's fate and a prediction of His eventual recognition by them (23:37-39).

In light of Israel's rejection of her King, Matthew presents an extended discourse about the fate of Israel and the events of the end times (24:1-25:26). This section discloses the place of the rejected nation in God's program for the future. The discourse is a reply to the disciples' two questions posed after Jesus predicted the destruction of the temple (24:1-3). The disciples ask concerning the time of the destruction and the identity of a sign of the King's return. Jesus answers first with a general description of the end time (24:4-14). It will be characterized by deception, persecution, and great upheavals. But this will not be before the "gospel of the kingdom" has been preached to all nations (24:14). The major events of the end time (24:15-31) will include the appearance of the abomination of desolation, the appearance of false Christs, and the culminating coming of the Son of Man in glory to set up His kingdom.

Jesus continues teaching about the end time through a series of parables (24:32-25:30). All develop the theme of watchfulness and expectancy of the King's return. Two in particular, the parable of the two servants (24:45-51) and the parable of the talents (25:14-30) are also designed to teach faithfulness in conduct until the King returns. Finally, the judgment of the nations (25:31-46) brings this age to a close and inaugurates the rule of the King on earth. This passage emphasizes Jesus' royalty with the mention of His throne and the title "King" used twice.

Matthew's final division records the crucifixion and resurrection of the King (26:1-28:20). His crucifixion (26:1-27:66) comes in the narrative after some preparatory events (26:1-46). The opening verses of this section hint of finality in the ministry of Jesus (26:1) and of imminence in His passion (26:2). The narrative moves quickly to fulfill these expectations with a description of the plot to kill Him. The contrast of those who fully understand Jesus' role and those who remain confused is evident in the story about His anointing by a woman and the disciples' incredulity. This is further contrasted by Judas' agreement to betray Jesus. The occasion of His last supper with the disciples reinforces the nearness of the kingdom (26:29).

The following accounts of His arrest (26:47-56) and trials (26:57-27:26) move the story quickly to the cross. At His arrest, Jesus reminds that this is all in fulfillment of Scripture (26:54,56). During the trial before Caiaphas Jesus openly confesses His messiahship and announces His return as King. Matthew uses the story of Judas' suicide to also remind that the passion of the King is anticipated in the Old Testament (27:9-10). The moral qualifications of the King first emphasized in the temptation account at the beginning of Jesus' ministry are here confirmed by the repeated insistence of Pilate that Jesus is innocent. Matthew's account of the actual crucifixion of Jesus (27:27-56) shows clearly that He is crucified as the King of the Jews. Matthew demonstrates once more the motif of scriptural fulfillment by quoting Psalm 22:18. He records both the sign over Jesus which identifies Him as the "King of the Jews", and the peoples' mockery of His claims to be the King. The rending of the temple veil pictures the new approach to God by all peoples through Jesus. It is at the same time a confirmation of the rejection of Israel's worship, religious system, and privileged position before God.

The resurrection of the King (28:1-20) is Matthew's climactic authentication of His argument that Jesus is the King of the Jews. The gospel ends on a more universal note, however, with the commissioning of the disciples to "make disciples of all nations." The King of the Jews has become the King of the Gentiles as well, this to be fully realized at the "end of the age" when the King rules His earthly kingdom.

Outline of Matthew

- I. The Introduction of the King 1:1-4:11
 - A. The Incarnation of the King 1:1-2:23
 - 1. The genealogy of the King 1:1-17
 - a. From Abraham to David 1:1-6a
 - b. From David to the Captivity 1:6b-11
 - c. From the Captivity to Jesus 1:12-17
 - 2. The birth of the King 1:18-25
 - a. Mary is betrothed to Joseph. 1:18-19
 - b. An angel announces Jesus' birth. 1:20-21
 - c. The Scripture is fulfilled. 1:22-23
 - d. Jesus is born. 1:24-25
 - 3. The childhood of the King 2:1-2:23
 - a. In Bethlehem 2:1-12
 - 1) The wisemen inquire about the King. 2:1-2
 - 2) Herod inquires about the King. 2:3-8
 - 3) The wisemen visit the King. 2:9-12
 - b. In Egypt 2:13-18
 - 1) Jesus' family flees to Egypt. 2:13-15
 - 2) Herod murders the male children. 2:16-18
 - c. In Nazareth 2:19-23
 - 1) Jesus' family returns to Israel. 2:19-21
 - 2) Jesus' family settles in Nazareth. 2:22-23
 - B. The Preparation of the King 3:1-4:11
 - 1. The messenger of the King 3:1-12
 - a. The person of John the Baptist 3:1-6
 - b. The preaching of John the Baptist 3:7-12
 - 2. The baptism of the King 3:13-17
 - 3. The temptation of the King 4:1-11
 - a. The first temptation to make bread 4:1-4
 - b. The second temptation to tempt God 4:5-7
 - c. The third temptation to worship Satan 4:8-11
- II. The Principles of the King 4:12-7:29
 - A. Jesus begins His ministry. 4:12-25
 - 1. He begins preaching in Galilee. 4:12-17
 - 2. He calls the first four disciples. 4:18-22
 - 3. His ministry grows. 4:23-25
 - B. Jesus preaches the Sermon on the Mount. 5:1-7:29
 - 1. The setting 5:1-2

2. The subjects of the kingdom 5:3-16
 - a. Their character: The Beatitudes 5:3-12
 - b. Their position in the world 5:13-16
 3. The explanation of true righteousness 5:17-7:6
 - a. Jesus fulfills the Law. 5:17-20
 - b. He rejects the Pharisaic interpretation. 5:21-48
 - 1) Murder 5:21-26
 - 2) Adultery 5:27-30
 - 3) Divorce 5:31-32
 - 4) Oaths 5:33-37
 - 5) Retaliation 5:38-42
 - 6) Love 5:43-48
 - c. He rejects the Pharisaic practice. 6:1-7:6
 - 1) Charitable deeds 6:1-4
 - 2) Prayer 6:5-15
 - 3) Fasting 6:16-18
 - 4) Attitude toward wealth 6:19-24
 - 5) Worry about needs 6:25-34
 - 6) Judging 7:1-6
 - d. He instructs on entering the kingdom. 7:7-27
 - 1) Asking of God 7:7-12
 - 2) The way of entrance 7:13-14
 - 3) Warning about false teachers 7:15-23
 - 4) The two foundations 7:24-27
 4. The response of the people 7:28-29
- III. The Manifestation - Authentication of the King 8:1-11:1
- A. The demonstration of the King's power 8:1-9:34
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Summary and Outline of Mark

by

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Introduction

The Author

The testimony of the early church fathers is unanimous in support of Mark as the author of the gospel. The earliest statement is from Papias (ca. A.D. 110) who mentions Mark as the "interpreter of Peter, who wrote accurately what he remembered of the things said or done by Christ." The companionship between Mark and Peter is seen in 1 Peter 5:13 and demonstrates the apostolic influence and authority behind the gospel. Some have also noted that the similarity between the general outline of Mark and Peter's speech in Acts 10:34-43 might point toward Peter as the main source for Mark's material.

The internal evidence, though not explicit, certainly agrees with this tradition. There is more information in this gospel about Peter than in the other gospels and much attention is given to the ministry of Christ in Galilee and Capernaum, Peter's home. The author is obviously an eyewitness to Christ's ministry or influenced by an eyewitness: details of description are common in this gospel. The author was also familiar with Palestine, knew Aramaic (5:41; 7:11,34; 14:36), and understood Jewish customs and institutions (1:21; 2:14,16,18; 7:2-4).

The evidence points strongly to Mark, who is assumed to be the John Mark named in Acts, the cousin of Barnabas (Col. 4:10). He ministered with Barnabas and Paul (Acts 13:5,13; 15:36-41) and was a companion of Paul during his first, and probably second, imprisonment in Rome (Col. 4:10; 2 Tim. 4:11; Phile. 23-24). He apparently assisted Peter in Rome, also (1 Peter 5:13, "Babylon" probably refers to Rome).

The Date and Place

The external evidence makes the date of Mark's writing difficult. Clement of Alexandria and Origen state that the gospel was written during Peter's lifetime, but Irenaeus and the Anti-Marcionite Prologue to Mark indicate he wrote after the "departure" or death of Peter. Peter's death is usually placed between A.D. 64 and 68 which makes a late date in the second view. The date should be no later than the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70 since that event is apparently future in Mark (13:2,14). The later date makes it difficult, though not entirely impossible, to assume Mark's priority to Matthew and Luke. Though many scholars hold to the later date, it is possible to believe the opposing tradition and date Mark during Peter's lifetime, or somewhere between A.D. 55 and 65.

Tradition favors Rome as the place of origin for Mark's gospel. It is much clearer from the characteristics of the gospel that Rome was the destination of Mark, but it could very easily have been its origination as well, given Mark and Peter's association with that city.

The Destination

The evidence from the gospel indicates a Gentile, probably Roman, readership. Jewish customs are explained (7:3-4; 14:12; 15:42) and few Old Testament quotations are used. Also, Aramaic expressions are translated into Greek (3:17; 5:41; 7:11,34; 9:43; 10:46; 14:36; 15:22,34) and some Latin terms are used in preference to their Greek equivalents (5:9; 6:27; 12:15,42; 15:16,39). In addition, Mark uses the Roman method of reckoning time (6:48; 13:35). Some also believe that Mark is the only gospel to mention that Simon of Cyrene is the father of

Alexander and Rufus, because this was a family known to the Roman Christians (Cf. 15:21 to Rom. 16:13). That the readers included Christians is seen in the very first verse, which assumes a degree of understanding about the person of Christ. Finally, the overall emphasis of the book on power, authority, and action would appeal to a Roman's pragmatic mind. These evidences along with a strong external tradition make Rome the likely destination.

The Occasion

If the statement of Irenaeus and the Anti-Marcionite Prologue are believed, the most immediate occasion for the writing of Mark was the death of Peter and the subsequent desire of the church to have Peter's teachings written down. The gospel would then have a catechetical design for the Christians in Rome. Also, the same persecution that resulted in Peter's death would have placed all Roman Christians in a hostile environment. Mark's gospel, with its emphasis on discipleship and Christ's suffering would meet a need to encourage those suffering. But there are many indications in the gospel that Mark wrote to address Christological problems likely to arise as a result of Roman thought. For example, the gospel emphasizes Christ's suffering and death. The Romans could easily have been confused about the identity of Jesus since they were unfamiliar with the Jewish Scriptures and lived in a culture that perceived suffering and death as weakness. The Romans deified their emperors and glorified their power, thus they would be tempted to overemphasize the glorious ruling power of Jesus, the Messiah, at the expense of His equally important redemption purchased through suffering and death. This might also lead them to question the divinity of Christ since He seemingly failed and died. Mark's response to this is a focus on that death to show it was clearly anticipated by Christ and was the purpose for which He came. In doing this, Mark continually highlights the titles of "Christ", "Son of God", and "Son of Man" such that they are vested with significance from the flow and events of the narrative.

The Purpose

While it cannot be denied that Mark was written for catechetical and pastoral purposes, the design of the book indicates a more consuming purpose. Mark was written to show that Jesus, as the Christ and the Son of God, was also the Son of Man who came to serve, suffer, and die (10:45). This intention is apparent from the design of the gospel which begins with the identity of Christ (1:1) but offers no explicit explanation of His titles early in the gospel. The narrative progresses in a shroud of secrecy about Jesus' identity until Peter's open confession (8:29) which Jesus uses to begin His explicit explanations about what His titles mean.

Thus Mark was written to answer inaccurate views about Christ among the Romans. From this purpose would naturally flow a biography of Jesus and encouragement needed by suffering Christians. Also, an evangelistic purpose cannot be overlooked since the book is titled from the start a "gospel", and one of the most significant confessions about Christ's identity is uttered near the end by a Roman centurion (15:39).

Argument

The narrative of Mark is designed to bring meaningful accurate content to the understanding that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God. Mark demonstrates that the Christ, the Son of God is also the Son of Man who must give His life as a Servant for all men. Both titles

are stated outright in 1:1, the prologue, but the exact meaning of these titles is only made clearer in the progression of the narrative as Jesus takes the role of a Servant who serves even in His death. After the introductory section (1:2-13), the gospel divides into two main divisions: The Servant ministers to many (1:14-10:52) and the Servant gives His life for many (11:1-16:20).

No genealogy or birth account encumber the beginning of Jesus' ministry in Mark. The first main section (1:2-13) simply purposes to show how God's Servant is prepared to serve. John the Baptist announces the coming of the Lord (1:2-8) by emphasizing His greatness: John claims no worthiness to serve Him even in loosening His sandal strap (1:7). The irony of One who is so mighty, yet the Servant of all, is apparent. The following account of John's baptism of Jesus (1:9-11) clearly emphasizes sonship and its implication of obedience to the Father's will. The section then closes with the temptation account illustrating the first consequence of the Son's obedient submission to His Father's will. The record does not tell of Jesus' victory over Satan as in Matthew and Luke. This leaves the impression of an open-ended satanic opposition which the gospel reveals as the Son of Man persists in the face of rejection to fulfill His service on the cross.

The first main division after the introductory section is a record of the intense ministry of Jesus predominantly in Galilee (1:14-10:52). The early ministry in Galilee (1:14-3:6) authenticates God's Servant by a series of authoritative miracles. As the second division opens, no one in the narrative knows of Jesus' true identity except God, Satan, and Jesus Himself.

Jesus actually begins His ministry with a proclamation of the coming kingdom of God and a call to repentance and belief (1:14-15). In this way, as God's Servant and Israel's King, He offered the messianic kingdom. Authority possible for only the Messiah is demonstrated over men when the first disciples are called (1:16-20). His authority is further and conclusively authenticated by a series of miracles. The first comes in a conflict with demons in which Jesus casts out an unclean spirit from a man (1:21-28). This proves His authority over the satanic kingdom. His authority over illness becomes apparent as he heals Peter's mother-in-law and many others (1:29-34). The purposeful intent of the Servant to accomplish His task emerges from the account of His withdrawal to pray in a solitary place and His statement of purpose to His disciples (1:35-39). The next miracle of cleansing the leper proves Christ's authority over defilement (1:40-45) and the subsequent miracle of healing the paralytic is the occasion for His claim to be able to forgive sins (2:1-12). This account hints of the stirring opposition from the Jews as His claims are challenged.

The conflict between Jesus and the Jews begins in earnest after the conversion of Levi (2:13-17). As Christ defends His dining with sinners, he casts Himself in a servant's role by comparing Himself to a physician. Next follow two occasions in which Christ teaches His authority. In the controversy over fasting (2:18-22) He teaches that His system is new and altogether different from Pharisaism. This is further accentuated when the Pharisees accuse His disciples of breaking the Sabbath (2:23-28). Jesus teaches He is Lord over the Sabbath and conveniently demonstrates this by healing a man on the Sabbath (3:1-5). By such miraculous authentication, Jesus does not persuade the Jewish leadership, but activates their plot to kill Him. Thus 3:6 is both a conclusion to this section and an introduction to the next.

Jesus' intense ministry continues overshadowed by the Jew's rising hostility. His later ministry in Galilee (3:7-6:6a) brings further service by the Servant Son of Man, along with

authenticating miracles and open rejection. A transition is indicated by the summary statement on the progress of His ministry (3:7-12). The appointment of His apostolic band (3:13-19) testifies to an expanding program yet anticipates an increasingly private ministry in the face of opposition. This opposition becomes open rejection by the Jewish leaders as they accuse Jesus of being satanically empowered (3:20-30). The willful rejection of the Servant and His divine mission is a sin of unpardonable magnitude, and it both confirms their rejection of Christ and seals their condemnation (3:28-30).

The consequent action of Jesus affirms His recognition of their rejection. His response to His own family illustrates that in spite of the nation's rejection, the way into God's family remains open to those of faith (3:31-35). A turn in His ministry is thus indicated as His attention begins to focus more on instruction for those of faith, especially His disciples. This is the background of the following parables (4:1-34). The kingdom rejected by the Jews is now taught in its new form in parables that reveal truth to those of faith and conceal it from unbelievers. A survey of these teachings about the kingdom reveal that it will be accepted only by some, it is to be broadcast everywhere, it will expand by the sovereign initiative of God, and it will grow to immense proportions from an obscure beginning.

The parabolic instruction is followed by practical instruction as Jesus works more miracles (4:35-5:43). The disciples are first shown their need for more faith in the true person of Christ during the storm at sea (4:35-41). The text highlights the cruciality of Jesus' identity with the disciples' question, "Who can this be...?" Chapter 5 seems to answer this question with the presentation of two events which underscore the authority of Jesus as the Servant and present Him worthy of man's faith. First, His power and authority is demonstrated over a legion of demons (5:1-20). Then He raises a girl from the dead and heals a woman (5:21-43) proving His power over life and death in response to individual faith. Both events end by noting Jesus' desire for a limited revelation of His person. This characteristic of the narrative postpones full comprehension of His person and work as the Son of Man. The later ministry in Galilee ends with His rejection by His own in Nazareth (6:1-6a) which stands as a contrast to the faith of the individuals in chapter 5.

The next section records Jesus' ministry in and around Galilee (6:6b-8:30). Jesus is teaching in a circuit (6:6b) and the twelve apostles expand the ministry further (6:7-13). The continued rejection of Christ is reflected in the execution of John the Baptist (6:14-29) which also serves to raise the question of Jesus' true identity (6:14-16). The rest of the section builds toward the confession of Peter by showing the lack of understanding by some of the person and work of Jesus. The feeding of the five thousand, the walk on the sea, and continued healings reveal more about the Servant, but many remain in ignorance, like the Jewish leaders who receive a strong rebuke for their hypocritical handling of God's Word (7:1-23). In contrast to this blindness, a Gentile and a deaf mute are blessed according to their faith (7:24-37). Still, the feeding of the four thousand, the request for a sign by the Pharisees, and Christ's rebuke of the disciples (8:1-21) shows that unbelief and incomplete understanding remains for many. The healing of the blind man in two stages (8:22-26) is an illustrative example of the blinding effect of unbelief and the gradual awakening to a clear understanding. This climaxes in Peter's confession of Jesus as the Christ, but even Peter's understanding falls short of comprehending the suffering work of the Servant (8:27-30). Peter's confession marks a turning point as the text focuses more on Jesus' journey to Jerusalem and the cross (8:31-10:52). It is upon the basis of

Peter's confession of Jesus' person that Jesus begins to "fill out" the term "Christ" with an explanation of His necessary rejection, death, and resurrection; something He will do three times in this section (8:31-33; 9:30-32; 10:32-34). Further revelation about His person and work (8:34-9:29) demands more commitment, so Christ explains the demands of discipleship (8:34-9:1). The revelation of His kingdom glory in the transfiguration (9:2-13) confirms His divine person and work to the disciples, and their instruction continues with lessons about prayer (9:14-29) and other Christian truths (9:33-10:31): service and humility (9:33-37), sectarianism (9:38-41), offenses (9:42-50), marriage and divorce (10:1-12), and entering the kingdom (10:13-31). The first major division closes with an important lesson on serving (10:41-45) and the necessity of faith in His person (10:46-52). Here is found the explicit explanation of Jesus' mission as the Servant (10:45). This key verse forms an appropriate transition from His ministry in service to His ministry in death.

In the second major division of the gospel (11:1-16:20), Jesus is revealed as the Son of God who must, as the Son of Man, give His life. Now the mystery of His identity and destiny as the Son of Man is resolved. First, however, the Servant presents Himself officially to Israel as their King (11:1-13:37). His entrance into Jerusalem (11:1-11) fulfilled prophecy and prepares a contrast between those of faith and the unbelief of the nation's leaders. Jesus curses the fig tree and cleanses the temple to confirm the rejection of, and by, the nation Israel (11:12-26).

A series of disputes with the Jewish leaders (11:27-12:44) demonstrates the degree of rejection towards God's Servant. They dispute about Christ's authority, the payment of taxes, the resurrection, and the most important commandment. In the midst of this, Jesus speaks the parable of the wicked vinedressers (12:1-12) to illustrate the treacherous nature of the Jews' unbelief. The disputes end with a final denunciation of the scribes (12:35-44), who fail to recognize His authority as the Son of David.

The rejection being officially confirmed, Jesus delivers the Olivet Discourse (13:1-37) to explain the course of the kingdom program in light of His rejection. He predicts the destruction of the temple and the terrible events of the tribulation which culminate in the coming of the Son of Man in glory (13:1-27). His second coming affirms the delivering aspect of the Son of Man, but only at a point where the reader understands the Servant will first suffer and die. The parable of the fig tree and the exhortations (13:28-31) to watch for His coming establish the imminence of this event for that generation.

The ultimate occasion of the Servant's rejection is His crucifixion (14:1-15:47). There are several events preparatory to Christ's betrayal (14:1-42). The death plot of the Jews (14:1-2) sets the ominous tone for the section. Further, Jesus is anointed for burial in an occasion which contrasts the faith of the woman and the unbelief of His betrayer, Judas (14:3-11). The occasion of the Passover meal (14:12-31) allows Jesus to assure the disciples that His terrible fate as the Son of Man is in strict accord with the Father's will revealed in Scripture. Finally, the agony of His prayer in Gethsemane (14:32-42) shows His obedient submission to God's will.

The sequence of His arrest and trials gives Jesus opportunities to present His divine mission. During His arrest (14:43-52), Jesus again asserts that the Scriptures are being fulfilled. The trials (14:53-15:15) clearly focus on His messianic claims as the rightful King of Israel.

Before the Sanhedrin and before Pilate Jesus claims to be the Son of Man and the King of the Jews.

The crucifixion (15:16-41) and burial (15:42-47) also highlight Jesus' true identity. Mark's narrative presents the irony of the soldiers mocking Jesus as the King, the sign stating He is the King, and the mocking of the onlookers at His messianic claims. However, the climax of the crucifixion is obviously the exclamation of the Roman centurion who confesses Christ as the Son of God. The significance for the readers (especially Romans) is that now this title can be vested with the proper contents as Jesus hangs on the cross. Those who hold only a concept of a victorious Deliverer now behold Jesus in His ministry of service as the Son of Man.

The resurrection account (16:1-20) vindicates the fulfilled ministry of the Servant and presents the victorious outcome of His service. The authenticity of the chapter's end (16:9-20) remains in question, but would show the persistent unbelief of His disciples and the scope and nature of His ministry to all men as the disciples are commanded to preach in all the world. The Son of Man has completed His obedient service to the Father; a service which included suffering and death before victory and resurrection life.

Outline of Mark

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 - 1. John's ministry is predicted by the prophets. 1:2-3
 - 2. John's ministry is described. 1:4-8
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 - b. He was isolated from contemporary Judaism. 1:6
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 - B. The Servant is approved by God in baptism. 1:9-11
 - C. The Servant is qualified through temptation. 1:12-13
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 - 2. He calls His first disciples. 1:16-20
 - 3. He authenticates His authority with miracles. 1:21-2:12
 - a. He shows authority over demons. 1:21-28
 - 1) He teaches with authority. 1:21-22
 - 2) He casts out the evil spirit. 1:23-26
 - 3) He gains fame in Galilee. 1:27-28
 - b. He shows authority over illness. 1:29-34
 - 1) He heals Peter's mother-in-law. 1:29-31
 - 2) He heals many in Capernaum. 1:32-34
 - c. He shows authority in purpose. 1:35-39
 - d. He shows authority over defilement. 1:40-45
 - e. He shows authority to forgive sin. 2:1-12
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 - 2) The scribes question His authority. 2:6-7
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 - 3) He explains the parable. 4:13-20
 - b. The parable of the light under a basket. 4:21-25
 - c. The parable of the growing seed. 4:26-29
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 - 3) He permits them to enter swine. 5:11-13
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 - 5) He instructs the man. 5:18-20
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Summary and Outline of Luke

by

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Introduction

The Author

The author is not mentioned in this gospel, but tradition uniformly names Luke. In support of this it is important to consider the authorship of the companion account, Acts. Here tradition also names Luke, and there is internal substantiation. Both books are dedicated to Theophilus, Acts refers to the "former treatise" (Acts 1:1) which naturally points to the gospel, there is strong similarity of language and style, common emphases (eg. Holy Spirit, prayer, Gentiles, women), and an obvious historical sequence between the two books. Crucial to determining the authorship of Acts is the identity of the "we" passages (Acts 16:1-17; 20:5-21:18; 27:1-28:16). The author was a traveling companion and close associate of Paul. By eliminating those mentioned by name in these sections, the choice is naturally narrowed to Luke who alone remained with Paul in his second imprisonment in Rome (2 Tim. 4:11).

Other evidence corroborates Lukan authorship. Paul refers to him as "the beloved physician" (Col. 4:14) which shows a close companionship (Cf. also Phile. 24) and reveals his vocational background. There is evidence from the gospel that the author had a medical background. In Luke there seems to be more medical precision than in the other gospels when illnesses are described. Peter's mother-in-law suffers from a "great" fever (4:38) and a leper is described as "full of leprosy" (5:12). Luke also seems to guard his profession by adding the observation that the woman with the issue of blood "could not be healed" (8:43; Cf. Mark 5:26). Finally, the masterful command of the Greek language reflects the mind of a man with some training.

Little else is known about Luke, except that he was most surely a Gentile. This is evidenced by his command of the Greek language and Paul's exclusion of Luke from his list of those "who are of the circumcision" in Colossians 4:10-14. As a Gentile, Luke's authority for writing this book of Scripture comes from his close association with Paul the apostle.

The Date and Place

The best date for Luke appears to be somewhere between A.D. 58-61. This is derived from first dating Acts, which is assumed to cover the historical events of Paul's ministry to A.D. 63. Thus Luke would have been written at least a couple years before that. Some have argued for a date after A.D. 70 on the basis of Luke's difference in 21:20 with Mark's parallel treatment in Mark 13:14. They would argue that Luke changed Mark's account to more accurately describe what actually happened in A.D. 70. In the end, this argument rests on speculation.

There are no clues as to the original place of writing. Various places have been named, but Caesarea and/or Rome would be an intelligent conjecture. The evidence from Acts is that Luke was with Paul during both his Caesarean and Roman imprisonments. This would have provided Luke with a suitable occasion to research and write.

The Destination

The most immediate destination observed is the "most excellent Theophilus" (1:3), whose name and title indicate a Gentile of high standing. Since Theophilus means "lover of

God", some have supposed Luke was addressing an individual or a church group. This cannot be proved. Most likely Luke wrote to an important man named Theophilus.

However, the gospel was surely not intended for just an audience of one. There is much internal evidence that Luke wrote to a larger Gentile audience. He explains Jewish geography (4:31; 8:26; 21:37; 23:51; 24:13), and dates some events by Roman emperors (2:1; 3:1). Luke also prefers words more familiar to Gentiles than their Jewish counterparts used in Matthew (eg. didaskalos for rabbi). In addition, he prefers to quote the Old Testament from the Septuagint, and even then relatively little is made of the fulfillment of prophecy. Another significant clue is the tracing of Jesus' genealogy back to Adam (3:23-38), the father of all men, rather than stopping at Abraham, as in Matthew.

The Occasion

The most apparent occasion was the desire or need of Theophilus to have an accurate history of the life of Christ. This need may have arisen from the proliferation of inaccurate accounts and the growing numbers of Gentile converts. It is possible that Theophilus had a position conducive to the publication and dissemination of the gospel. Most certainly Luke had in mind a larger Gentile audience, as is evident from his presentation of Christ. Jesus is depicted as the perfect Son of Man and the Savior of all men. Luke focuses on the complete humanity of Jesus and the universal aspect of His ministry. More specifically, the audience may have been Greek, which would explain Luke's careful style and choice of words.

The Purpose

Luke's first purpose, then, is to confirm the faith of Theophilus and the larger Gentile audience. He does this by compiling an accurate account of Christ's life which would assure the readers that their faith rests on firm historical facts (1:3-4). A second purpose, Christological in nature, is to present Jesus as the perfect Son of Man who came to minister to and die for all men (2:14,32; 24:47). The title used often by Luke, "Son of Man", associates Jesus with all of humanity and implies His position as the Second Adam who came to restore God's rule lost by the first. By recording Israel's rejection of the Son of Man, Luke shows how God has extended the kingdom program to the Gentiles through Jesus. Thus for Theophilus and all Gentile believers (especially Greeks) this gospel had a catechetical purpose, yet would also serve an evangelistic purpose in convincing the unbelieving Greek world that Jesus is the Savior of all men (5:32; 19:10).

Argument

The five major divisions of Luke's gospel present Christ's life and ministry in a fairly chronological order. In each, Christ is presented as the perfect Son of Man who is the Savior of the world. His ministry of redemption for all is climactically declared in 19:10 just before He enters the last Jerusalem phase of ministry and the subsequent crucifixion.

After the historical prologue (1:1-4) the first division serves as an introduction to the Son of Man (1:5-4:13). The events of this section emphasize His humanity and divine approval. His birth, boyhood, John's ministry, and the temptation all bear the marks of a divine mission. By using interchange in the narrative, Luke presents the supernatural predictions, births, and boyhoods of John and Jesus (1:5-2:52). The very first prediction of John's birth reveals his

purpose of preparing the people for the coming Lord (1:16-17). Likewise, the first prediction of Christ's birth to Mary discloses the messianic purpose of His life (1:32-33). The universal significance of the Messiah's kingdom is seen in the angel's announcement to Mary (1:33) and is implied in Mary's song as she praises God for remembering His promises to Abraham (1:46-56). Zacharias also recognizes the fulfillment of messianic prophecies in John's birth and the coming Christ (1:67-79).

The birth of Jesus (2:1-40) also records the salvific and universal importance of the Messiah's ministry. The angel's announcement to the shepherds declares that the birth of the Savior is good news to "all people" (2:10-11) and the angelic host proclaim peace to all the earth (2:14). Even more explicit are the words of Simeon when Jesus is presented in the temple. He recognizes that the salvation present in the child will extend to the Gentiles as well as the Jews (2:29-32). Anna's testimony (2:36-38) also hints of this universal salvation as Luke records she "spoke of Him to all those who looked for redemption in Jerusalem." Luke's unique account of Christ's boyhood (2:41-52) both presents Him as One who is on a divine mission, and One who meets all the criteria of human perfection in order to fulfill that mission. Thus Luke has emphasized Jesus' humanity by his attention to His birth, family, growth, and the many characters involved in these accounts.

The ministry of John the Baptist (3:1-20) draws attention to the coming Savior and itself fulfills the universal aspects of the coming salvation. He was in the line of the fulfillment of Isaiah's prophecy of salvation to "all flesh" (3:6), and he preached preparatory repentance to the Gentile soldiers (3:14). John's imprisonment by Herod (3:19-20) is an early indication of the hardness of Israel toward the gospel.

The confirmation of Jesus' salvific mission (3:21-4:13) brings Christ to the central focus in the narrative. At His baptism (3:21-22) the Father publicly announces His approval of the Son. The positioning of the genealogy (3:23-38) immediately after the expression of the Father/Son relationship confirms the relationship of Christ to His Father by tracing His lineage backwards beyond Abraham to "Adam, the son of God." Jesus is thus depicted as the Second Adam, the perfect man from God. The appeal to a Gentile audience is obvious since Adam is the common representative of all humanity, unlike Abraham who would represent only Jews.

The final step in the introduction of the Savior is the proof of His moral qualifications to minister as the Son of God and Son of Man. This is demonstrated in the temptation account (4:1-13). By withstanding Satan's temptations in the wilderness, Jesus accomplishes what the first man could not do, and thus shows Himself the perfect man who is qualified to redeem all humanity.

After the introductory section, Luke shows the Son of Man ministering in Galilee (4:14-9:50). In this second division of the gospel, Jesus authenticates His authority as the Son of man and begins the more private instruction of his disciples. When Jesus announces His ministry in Galilee (4:14-30) there is initial acceptance, except in Nazareth where He experiences rejection and an attempted murder. This is a microcosm of what the rest of Christ's ministry would become.

The next section (4:31-6:11) is designed to show the authority of the Son of Man through a series of miracles and teachings. He demonstrates His authority over various realms:

the demonic (4:31-37), illness (4:38-41), men (5:11), defilement (5:12-16), sin (5:17-32), the old religious system (5:33-39), and the Sabbath (6:1-11). In this series, there is a recurrence of the word "authority" (4:32,36; 5:24) and an emphasis on Jesus' authoritative titles (4:41; 5:8; 6:5). Also apparent is the beginning of opposition to His claims of authority as the Pharisees challenge Him at almost every turn. This section shows that Jesus ministers by divine authority, yet as a true and perfect man. His humanity appears as He prays (5:16) and shows compassion to the crowds (4:40) as well as individual sinners (5:27).

In light of the growing opposition and the need to elucidate the principles of the kingdom, Jesus selects and teaches the disciples (6:12-49). The sermon on the "level place" also addresses people from every area, and significantly Tyre and Sidon, Gentile territories (6:17). The sermon itself explains the characteristics of the subjects of the kingdom (6:20-23), the woeful predicament of the complacent (6:24-26), the principles for interpersonal relationships (6:27-42), the discernment of false teachers (6:43-45), and the importance of being founded on obedience to the truth (6:46-49). Notably omitted are the many references to the interpretations of the Law found in Matthew's treatment. This once more indicates a Gentile destination for the gospel.

Through the expansion of Jesus' ministry in Capernaum (7:1-8:56) the disciples are further taught, though not as much by words as by miraculous works. Miracles such as the healing of the centurion's servant (7:1-10) and the raising of the widow's son (7:11-17) are designed to encourage faith in His disciples. His answer to John the Baptist's inquiry (7:18-35) teaches about His identity as the Messiah and presents a contrast in the receptive response of the people and the rejection of the Pharisees. In forgiving the sinful woman (7:36-50) Jesus demonstrates the authority to forgive sins and the importance of faith in this authority. As Jesus expands His ministry, He preaches the kingdom of God (8:1-3) and teaches about the kingdom in parables to conceal its truths from the unbelieving (8:4-18). His parable of the soils illustrates the acceptance and rejection of the kingdom message, and the parable of the lamp teaches the universal importance of the kingdom message. The other parables recorded by Matthew are not mentioned, probably because the postponement of the kingdom was not an issue with Luke's Gentile readers. Henceforth, the way into God's kingdom is open to all who approach Him in faith (8:19-21). This truth is affirmed through the subsequent four miracles (8:22-56) as faith and the identity of Jesus become the crucial issues.

Christ's instruction of His disciples intensifies at this point (9:1-50). They are sent out to spread the kingdom message with an endowment of the Lord's miraculous power (9:1-6). The question of Jesus' identity becomes crucial and is highlighted by Herod's perplexity over the same (9:7-9). The feeding of the five thousand (9:10-17) leads to the revelation of Peter's confession that Jesus is "the Christ of God" (9:18-20). This in turn leads to Christ's first explicit teaching about His death and resurrection (9:21-22) as He brings content to the meaning of Peter's confession. He also brings content to what it means to be a disciple of Christ by explaining the conditions for following Him (9:23-27). The story of the transfiguration (9:28-36) serves as a confirmation of the faith of the disciples and once more is an occasion for the expression of the Father's approval. That the disciples' faith was not perfect is evident from His rebuke of their unbelief in the account of the demonized boy (9:37-42). Another prediction of His suffering (9:43-45) follows as an anticipation of the true ministry of the Son of Man in light of the coming rejection.

The third major division emphasizes the rejection of the Son of man on the way to Jerusalem (9:51-19:27). The narrative indicates a crucial turn toward His destiny in Jerusalem where the Son of Man will give His life for all men (9:51). As Jesus continues his offer of salvation (9:51-11:13), He is rejected by a Samaritan village (9:51-56). The growing concern over His rejection is an appropriate time to further instruct the disciples on the cost of following Him (9:57-62). Anticipation of further rejection is evident in Christ's instruction to the seventy disciples upon sending them out (10:1-24). The foretaste of kingdom power is a cause of great rejoicing for the seventy. In the midst of the growing opposition Jesus continues His ministry of instruction through the parable of the good Samaritan (10:25-37), His visit with Mary and Martha (10:38-42), and His teaching on prayer (11:1-13).

A climactic episode of rejection (11:14-54) confirms the nation's opinion of Jesus, and Jesus' consequent rejection of the nation. The callousness of the peoples' hearts is manifested by their charge that Jesus is operating by satanic power and their demand for a sign from heaven (11:15-16). Jesus uses the occasion to refute their charge (11:17-26) and pronounce judgment (11:29-32). Later, when dining with a Pharisee, He pronounces a series of "woes" on the Pharisees and lawyers (11:37-52) demonstrating His rejection of the nation. The ferocity of the Jewish leaders' opposition confirms their attitude of absolute rejection (11:53-54). This section climaxes the rejection of Christ by His people, the Jews, and shows He has also rejected them.

As a result of His rejection, Jesus launches an extensive program of instruction for the disciples (12:1-19:27) as He prepares for His final ministry in Jerusalem. They, too, must be prepared for ministry in His absence. Much of the teaching focuses on the kingdom program and resultant obligations. First, He teaches warnings in view of His return (12:1-59). The warnings are about hypocrisy (12:1-12), covetousness (12:13-34), and preparedness for His coming (12:35-59). These warnings prepare the disciples for coming persecution, responsible lifestyles, and diligence and watchfulness in light of His coming.

The next two sections teach about those excluded from the kingdom (13:1-35) and those included in the kingdom (14:1-16:31). Those excluded, are so because of a lack of repentance (13:1-9). It is obvious from the following narrative that Israel is the subject of exclusion from the kingdom (13:18-33). The addition of two parables (13:18-21) at this point is timely, for both seem to teach that the kingdom of God will outgrow Israel and overflow to all peoples (Gentiles). Israel is missing the opportunity to enter the kingdom (13:22-30) which causes Christ to lament her terrible fate (13:31-35). But Jesus contrasts the prevalent unbelief that excludes Israel from the kingdom by noting those who will be included (14:1-16:31). Many social outcasts will be included (14:1-24) as is well illustrated by the parable of the great supper (14:15-24). Those who find citizenship in the kingdom must know that Jesus desires the fullest commitment from those who would claim to follow Him (14:25-35). The kingdom will also include any sinner who repents, which is the point of the triad of parables in chapter 15. The final teachings about those included in the kingdom teach that kingdom citizens must be good stewards of their new inheritance (16:31).

As the instruction about the kingdom continues, Jesus teaches on attitudes befitting kingdom citizenship (17:1-19:10). These attitudes include respect towards men (17:1-4), respect towards God (17:5-19), the discernment of the kingdom's coming (17:20-18:8), humility (18:9-30), and an understanding of the Son of Man's messianic ministry (18:31-19:10). The final

teaching on the parable of the minas (19:11-27) is occasioned by the disciples' expectation of the kingdom's appearance in the very near future (19:11). Jesus uses the occasion to teach the responsible biding of time until it does appear.

In this extensive section of instruction, several important themes can be synthesized. For example, Jesus continually invites individuals to come to Him by faith (13:1-5, 22-30; 14:15-24; 18:1-8, 9-14, 15-17, 18-30, 35-43; 19:1-9). Those who come are further challenged to discipleship (14:25-35) and responsible living in light of the kingdom's coming (12:35-59; 16:1-31; 19:11-27). Luke also emphasizes the ministry of the perfect Son of Man to sinners. Christ is presented as One who can help sinners, and who also has compassion on them (13:34-35; 14:1-6; 15:1-32; 18:9-14, 15-17). His particular concern for ministering to the weak, needy, or underprivileged (13:10-17; 17:11-19; 18:15-17, 35-43) amplifies His compassion and identity with humanity as the Son of Man. This compassion and identity is also seen in the two incidents of His dining with sinners (14:1-5; 19:1-10). Yet Christ's greatest ministry to sinners lay still ahead, as indicated by His predictions of death at the hands of the Jews (13:33; 18:31-33) and His resolve to face His fate in Jerusalem (13:33). As he tells Zacchaeus in a key verse "the Son of Man came to seek and to save what was lost" (19:10). These themes exhibit the universal appeal of His kingdom invitations and His approaching ministry in death. The Son of Man invites all, loves all, helps all, will die for all, and includes all who believe in His kingdom.

Luke's narrative has been building toward the Son of Man's ministry in Jerusalem, and His arrival there marks a major new division of the gospel. Before He gives His life in the ultimate ministry, Jesus enjoys a brief ministry in the city (19:28-21:38). In His triumphal entry (19:28-44), Jesus draws contrasting responses. The multitudes recognize their King (19:37-38), but the Pharisees persist in their rejection of Him (19:39). In light of the the King's official presentation, the nation's official rejection confirms Israel's fate of future desolation (19:41-44).

Jesus then moves to the temple and demonstrates His royal authority by cleansing it of merchants (19:45-46). His teaching ministry in the temple (19:47-21:38) further incites the Jewish leaders to oppose Him. Their challenges focus on the question of His authority (20:1-8, 20-26, 27-40), which Jesus shows they reject in the parable of the wicked vinedressers (20:9-19). His teaching then turns towards the events of the future (21:5-36). Against the geographical backdrop of the temple building and the theological backdrop of Jesus' rejection of Israel, there appears a fitting opportunity to explain God's kingdom program in view of its postponement. The future events are described so that the disciples might be able to discern the times in Christ's absence. After the terrible desolation of Jerusalem (21:20-24), Jesus brings assurance of His return in glory as the Son of Man (21:25-28). As a consequence of this information, the disciples will be held accountable before the Son of Man for their preparedness (21:34-36).

The final division of Luke relates the crucifixion and the resurrection of the Son of Man (22:1-24:53). The crucifixion account (22:1-23:56) begins with the plot of the Jews to kill Him (22:1-6). There follows a period of preparation for His death (22:7-46) in which Jesus uses the Passover as an occasion to explain the significance of His imminent sacrifice (22:7-38). Here He also indicates that His death is instrumental in bringing the kingdom of God to men (22:16,18).

Christ's final lesson for the disciples on serving (22:24-30) reminded them that His function was to serve, and thus would He be able to bestow the kingdom of God. His service

would not be easy, as shown by the account of His agony on the Mount of Olives (22:39-46) where Luke exposes once more the humanity of Christ: He grows weak, anguishes, prays, and sorrows. It is significant that in the shadow of the cross Jesus repeatedly identifies Himself as the Son of Man (22:22,48,69) during the accounts of His betrayal and trials. This shows that the Jews were rejecting their Messiah, and that at the same time Jesus was fulfilling His ministry as the Son of Man.

The crucifixion (23:26-49) also serves to highlight some significant themes of the gospel. Jesus shows His compassion for the "Daughters of Jerusalem" (23:28), those who crucify Him (23:34), and the crucified thief (23:43). His identity as the Son is apparent in His two addresses to the Father (23:34,46), and as King in the mockery by the people and the words of the inscription on the cross (23:37-38). The promise of Paradise to the thief (23:43), the rending of the temple veil (23:45), and the confession of the Roman centurion (23:47) all demonstrate the universality of Christ's salvation. Of course, Christ's humanity is obvious in His agony and death.

Luke's account of the resurrection (24:1-53), besides authenticating the claims of Christ, also forms a fit summary to His argument for Jesus as the perfect Son of Man who died for all men. The two angels recite Jesus' own words predicting the Son of Man must die and rise again (24:7). Christ also reminds the two on the Emmaus road that the Messiah is a fulfillment of the prophets' expectation (24:25-27). Further, He demonstrates His essential humanity to the disciples by showing His wounds and eating food (24:39-43). His final lesson with the disciples directed their attention to the anticipation of Christ in all of the Old Testament (24:44-47). This included His offer of salvation "to all nations" (24:47). The final note of victory and the hint of the return of the Son of Man is conveyed through the concluding story of His ascension (24:50-53). Luke has shown that the Son of Man has completed His ministry to all men by becoming the perfect man, dying for sins, and rising from the dead to await His final kingdom.

Outline of Luke

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1. The announcement of the births 1:5-56

a. John's birth is announced to Zacharias. 1:5-25

1) Zacharias ministers in the temple. 1:5-10

2) Gabriel announces John's birth. 1:11-17

3) Gabriel announces Zacharias' muteness. 1:18-20

4) Zacharias is unable to speak. 1:21-25

b. Jesus' birth is announced to Mary. 1:26-38

1) Gabriel announces Jesus' birth. 1:26-33

2) Gabriel announces Mary's conception. 1:34-38

2. Mary visits Elizabeth. 1:39-56

a. Elizabeth and her baby respond to Mary. 1:39-45

b. Mary sings praise to God. 1:46-56

3. The birth and boyhood of John 1:57-80

a. John's birth 1:57-79

1) His birth causes rejoicing. 1:57-58

2) He is named John. 1:59-64

3) The people wonder. 1:65-66

4) Zacharias prophesies salvation. 1:67-79

b. John's boyhood 1:80

4. The birth and boyhood of Jesus 2:1-52

a. Jesus' birth 2:1-21

1) He is born in Bethlehem. 2:1-7

2) The shepherds are told of His birth. 2:8-14

3) The shepherds visit Him. 2:15-20

4) He is named Jesus. 2:21

b. Jesus' presentation in the temple 2:22-40

1) He is brought to the temple. 2:22-24

2) Simeon sees God's salvation. 2:25-35

3) Anna witnesses to God's salvation. 2:36-38

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Summary and Outline of John

by

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Introduction

The Author

Though the author of this Gospel does not identify himself, strong testimony from church tradition favors John the Apostle. The earliest church father to state this was Irenaeus (ca. A.D. 130-200), but he had probably learned from Polycarp (ca. A.D. 69-155) who had direct contact with John.

Internal evidence would support John, also. The author was a Jew (1:21; 4:25; 7:15; 8:12; 10:35), more specifically a Palestinian Jew, because he names places in Judea unmentioned in the Synoptics (eg. Cana, 2:1; the pool of Siloam, 9:7; the brook Kidron, 18:1) and is acquainted with the geography of that region. He was not only an eyewitness (1:35; 2:6; 6:5,7,9; 21:24), but appears to have been one of the inner circle of Jesus' disciples (4:33; 9:2; 16:17). It is commonly known that Peter, James, and John composed that inner circle, and from this the choice of authorship can be narrowed to John; It is not Peter because of his mention in 13:22-24 and 21:20-24, and James was martyred too early. Thus the "disciple whom Jesus loved" (21:7) would best fit John the Apostle. There have been suggestions for other authors, but they have been without the strong external and internal evidence of this conclusion.

John was the son of Zebedee and Salome, and the brother of James (Mark 1:19,20; 15:40; Matt. 27:56). He was a fisherman by trade (Matt. 4:21) and became a follower of John the Baptist (1:35,40). Tradition says he ministered, died, and was buried in Ephesus, but not before he was exiled to Patmos and wrote three epistles and the Revelation.

The Date and Place

Though some believe John wrote his Gospel as early as A.D. 70, (citing, for example, no mention of the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70), most prefer a later date. There are a number of reasons for this: It was apparently written after the other Gospels, because John assumes a prior knowledge of them (2:1; 3:24; 6:70; 20:17). Also, in church tradition the Gospel is known as the "Fourth" one and is said to have been written when John was an old man (Cf. 21:18,23). Moreover, the Gospel reflects maturity in Christian thought and comprehension. Therefore, the date suggested is somewhat after the dates of the Synoptics and before John's traditional date of death (A.D. 98), or between A.D. 85-95.

Following the tradition that John moved to Ephesus, became the bishop of the church there, and remained until his death, this city is the most likely place of origin for the Gospel. There is no other more reputable tradition.

The Destination

The audience for which John wrote may well depend on the Gospel's relationship to the Synoptics, which is an area of debate. There are four possibilities usually given. Either he wrote the Gospel to supplement the Synoptics, to interpret them, to supersede them, or to be completely independent of them. The first option is the best because it is obvious John avoids unnecessary duplication of accounts, which assumes a familiarity with the Synoptics. A large amount of that which is absent from the Synoptics would be accounted for if John's material was filled in.

Assuming John's supplementary design and the destination of Matthew, Mark, and Luke (Jews, Romans, Greeks, respectively), a conjecture can be made about John's intended audience. John wrote his Gospel to the church as a whole and to the world at large. This can be supported from the discussion of the occasion and purposes for writing.

The Occasion

There have been many suggestions for the occasion that prompted John to write the Gospel. Some of the major theories propose he wrote against Gnosticism (assumes a date near the second century), against unbelieving Jews, or to correct followers of John the Baptist. Though there may be elements of truth in the last two, there is not enough evidence to make them the dominating force behind the Gospel. The best suggestion is that John wrote to supplement the Synoptic Gospels. This is the testimony of Clement of Alexandria, and agrees with the universal appeal, unique material, lengthy discourses, and interpretative nature of the Gospel. Therefore, the Gospel might well have been written to meet the request of the Asian churches who were familiar with John and wanted a summary of his oral teachings on the life of Christ.

The Purpose

Whatever the specific occasion, John's purpose in writing is explicitly mentioned in 20:31. This verse indicates a two-fold purpose. First, the written account is designed "that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God". The Gospel was intended to bring its readers to saving faith in Christ. A second purpose is then named: "and that believing, you may have life in His name". Here John's purpose is to foster faith from its birth through its growth to its completion. Taken together, faith is not only the prerequisite for a quantity of life, but also the basis for the continuing enjoyment, or the quality, of life. John clearly intends to bring people into the full benefits of divine life, and this includes not only salvation from hell (eg. 3:16; 5:24), but the continual enjoyment of that life in the believer's present existence (eg. 10:10; 17:3).

John 20:30-31 indicates that the Gospel is selective in its design so that it may accomplish its purpose. The signs are accumulated in the first half of the book (chs. 2-12) largely to initiate faith and encourage its development. The next section (chs. 13-17) focuses on the private instruction of the disciples that faith may be completed. The saving work of Christ then completes the Gospel and confirms the faith of those who believe. John's emphasis on the title "Son" or "Son of God" is appropriate for directing faith toward the One who represents the Father and His revelation of divine life to unbelievers and believers.

Argument

The manner in which John initiates, develops, and completes the faith of believers is by recording the revelation of the Son of God. First, there is the revelation of the Son of God to the world (1:19-12:50) which precipitates faith and encourages its development. Second, John records the revelation of the Son of God strictly to the disciples in order to bring their faith to completion (13:1-17:26). Then, in the account of the crucifixion and resurrection (18:1-20:31), faith in Christ is confirmed with a revelation of His saving work.

The prologue (1:1-18) serves as an important introduction to the Gospel and its theme of faith. It begins with language that reminds of the Genesis account in which God created life (1:1-5). The Word which was present at creation is characterized here as life and light. The testimony of John the Baptist (1:6-8) introduces faith in the Light as his purpose for ministering. He indicates that the life of God expressed in His Light becomes the possession of those who believe in Christ (1:7). The response to the Light (1:9-13) determines who will partake of the divine life as God's children, and the incarnation of the Word (1:14-18) indicates that faith is a response to the unfolding revelation of the Father through Jesus Christ, His Son. The reader is thus prepared by the prologue to expect the disclosure of God's revelation in the Word made flesh. The prologue also indicates the presence of opposition to God's revelation in the Word (1:5,11), a theme which continues emphatically through the Gospel.

The revelation of the Son of God to the world is the dominating theme of the first division of the Gospel (1:19-12:50). This division highlights first the reception of the Son of God (1:19-4:54), then His rejection (5:1-12:50).

The reception of the Son of God (1:19-4:54) shows the initiation of faith in Christ's first followers as He reveals Himself as the Messiah of Israel and the incarnation of God. John the Baptist's testimony about Jesus begins this section (1:19-34). John testifies that the ministry of God's Son was to take away "the sin of the world" (1:29), yet He must first "be revealed to Israel" (1:31). John witnessed the Father's approval of Jesus through the descending Holy Spirit (1:32-33) and his verdict is "this is the Son of God" (1:34).

Jesus is next received by the first of His disciples (1:35-2:12). Two of John's followers (one is Andrew), Peter, Philip, and Nathanael come to recognize Jesus as the Messiah. Nathanael's confession shows he recognized Jesus as the "Son of God" and the "King of Israel" (1:49). The first miracle at Cana (2:1-12) serves to foster this new faith in the early disciples by revealing the creative powers of the Son of God. It is recorded that "His disciples believed in Him," (2:11) indicating their initial faith had a progressive aspect to it.

John goes on to show how others are receptive to the Son of God and believe in Him (2:13-4:54). In His ministry in Judea (2:13-3:36) Jesus is able to reveal Himself as the Son of God when He cleanses His Father's house, the temple, and predicts His resurrection (2:13-22). Here the opposition of the Jews is noted in contrast to the growing faith of the disciples who see in this the fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy and Jesus' own words (2:17,22). Also, during the Passover, John notes that many believe in Jesus because they saw the signs He did (2:23-25). This faith, though possibly spurious, was at least receptive of Christ's ministry. In a similar way, the reader is left with an open verdict about the faith of Nicodemus (3:1-21). Nicodemus will illustrate the motif of the progression of faith as he reappears later in the Gospel. Here, the account of his curiosity serves to define the saving ministry of the Son of God in its universal aspects. Similarly, John the Baptist (3:22-26) exalts Jesus as the Son of God who extends the offer of eternal life to all who believe (3:36).

Many more are shown to believe in Jesus as He ministers in Samaria (4:1-42). In His encounter with the Samaritan woman (4:1-26) Jesus characterizes His salvation as a free gift of God (4:10). He also uses the occasion to teach the disciples of the opportunity to minister His salvation to all peoples (4:27-38). Later, many Samaritans believe in Jesus as "the Christ, the Savior of the world" (4:39-42). His reception in Galilee (4:43-45) is again positive, but the

subsequent healing of the nobleman's son (4:46-54) contrasts the stubbornness of the Jews with the openness of the Samaritans. The Samaritans had believed in Christ "because of the word of the woman" (4:39) and "because of His own word" (4:41), but in 4:48 the Jews are rebuked because they needed signs before they would believe. Accordingly, John notes that the healing of the nobleman's son was the second sign Jesus performed (4:54). In this section describing the reception of the Son of God the reader has also seen the seeds of His rejection (3:25; 4:44,48) which is ready to be presented as open opposition.

As the Son of God is revealed to the world, there emerges intense opposition to, and rejection of, His claims (5:1-12:50). The open opposition begins at the feast in Jerusalem (5:1-47). The healing of the man at the pool of Bethesda (5:1-15) is the third sign and brings objections from the Jews about Sabbath activity. John notes their consequent persecution and plot to kill Jesus (5:16,18). The Jews are enraged by Jesus' claims to be the Son of God which would make Him equal with the Father (5:16-30). Not only does Jesus claim to be equal with the Father, but His offer of salvation extends beyond the Jewish race to whomever believes (5:24). The unbelief of the Jews is emphasized even more in light of Jesus' fourfold witness to His sonship (5:31-47).

The opposition continues in spite of two more signs Jesus performs in Galilee near the Passover time (6:1-71). His fourth and fifth signs are the feeding of the five thousand (6:1-14) and the walk on the sea (6:15-21). John explains that signs were the reason many followed Jesus (6:2). In the subsequent discourse on the Bread of Life (6:22-59), Jesus will demonstrate that this kind of curiosity about Him does not qualify as saving faith. He observes that many followed because of their physical need for food (6:26), but their spiritual need is the essence of the Son of God's ministry (6:27,29,33,35,40). The Jews take offense at His claims, so Jesus addresses them (6:41-59) reiterating His spiritual provision as the Bread of Life. The conclusion to this long section of discourse shows the different reactions of Jesus' followers (6:60-71). Many followers turned away (6:60-66) because they had only curiosity, not saving faith. On the other hand, the twelve disciples reaffirm their faith in Jesus as "the Christ, the Son of the living God" (6:67-71). Their confession shows a progression in their infant faith and is a climactic point in the narrative focusing on Jesus' rejection.

The conflict continues and increases during John's account of two feasts in Jerusalem (7:1-10:39). In the period before the Feast of Tabernacles, Jesus' own brothers display their unbelief (7:1-13). At the feast itself, Jesus is the subject of much controversy (7:12). This controversy peaks at the middle of the feast as Jesus teaches in the temple (7:14-36) and results in many of the people believing (7:31) and the Jews attempt to seize Him (7:32). But the most intense dispute over His identity erupts on the last day of the feast after Jesus offers the Holy Spirit to anyone who believes in Him (7:37-53). Interestingly, Nicodemus is mentioned in such a way as to cast him on the side of Jesus. This suggests a progression in his faith, yet lacks an open identity with Christ that would confirm it.

The conflict continues in the period immediately after the Feast of Tabernacles (8:1-10:21). The account of the woman caught in adultery (8:1-11) reveals the hypocrisy of the Jews and the grace of the Son of God. Jesus then claims to be the Light of the world, which sparks a dispute about the veracity of His claims (8:12-59). This dispute allows the Son of God to continue the revelation of His person. The revelation includes the truths of His departure (8:21-24), His crucifixion (8:25-29), His power to free from sin (8:30-36), His different fatherhood

from the Jews (8:37-47), His power to give life (8:48-52), and most amazingly, His claim to the divine name, "I AM" (8:53-59).

John continues to show the magnitude of opposition through the story of the healing of the man born blind (9:1-41). The story is an illustration of the progression of faith in contrast to the unbelief (blindness) of the Jews. The man whose physical eyes have been opened progressively understands who Jesus is (9:11,17,33,36) until he makes a climactic confession of faith in Christ (9:38). Likewise, the account of the "Good Shepherd" (10:1-21) shows that the Jews had rejected Jesus to the point that they claimed He was demon possessed (10:20). This section also reveals Jesus in His shepherding role as the Savior of Israel and all mankind.

The conflict during the Feast of Dedication (10:22-39) is also intense as the reader can observe two attempts to kill Jesus in light of His direct claims to be God (10:30,33,38). The intensity of the opposition to Christ prepares the reader for the determinative rejection of the Son of God in the last phase of His ministry.

This last phase of Jesus' ministry (10:40-12:50) is a climax of rejection. The section begins with a record of many who believe in Christ as He ministers beyond the Jordan (10:41-42). Thus John regularly shows how the number of believers grows during this time of opposition. The seventh and last sign of Jesus' ministry, the raising of Lazarus (11:1-46), becomes a "last straw" in stirring the Jews to destroy Jesus. But the narrative is also designed to show how the developing faith of the disciples has reached the point of true loyalty as they decide to follow Christ in the face of danger (11:16). Progression of faith is also observed in Martha's confession (11:21-27). The contrast to progressing faith is the progressing hostility of the Jews as they plot the death of Christ with the approval of the high priest (11:47-57).

The last days of Jesus' ministry (12:1-50) confirms His rejection and anticipates His death at the hands of the Jews. Mary's anointing prepares Him symbolically for burial (12:1-8). In addition, the feelings about Jesus intensify on both sides during His official presentation of Himself as the King of Israel in the triumphal entry (12:12-19). Many worship Him (12:12-13), but the Jews remain indignant (12:19). Jesus subsequently notes that in light of His final rejection, His death is imminent (12:20-36). At this turning point in the Gospel narrative, John summarizes the rejection of Jesus (12:37-41) by noting it is a fulfillment of Isaiah's prophecy. Likewise, Jesus summarizes His rejection (12:42-50) by indicating the watershed nature of His revelation of the Father. The Son of God has been revealed to the world, and there is no place for neutrality.

That John's Gospel includes in its purpose the encouragement of faith in believers is most evident in the second division in which the reader observes the revelation of the Son of God to the disciples (13:1-17:26). These intimate revelations are designed to strengthen the disciples and teach them foundational Christian truths in light of Christ's return to the Father. Christ teaches service, humility, and cleansing from sin as He washes the disciples' feet during the last supper (13:1-30). Next, He delivers His final discourses (13:31-16:33). The first discourse concerns His departure from the disciples (13:31-38) and includes the giving of a "new commandment" (13:31-38), the explanation of the way to the Father (14:1-14), and the promise and explanation of the Holy Spirit's ministry (14:15-31). Another discourse seems to form around the theme of Jesus' relationship to the disciples (15:1-16:15). He teaches about the importance of the intimacy of abiding in Him (15:1-11), their relationship to one another (15:12-

17), their relationship to the world (15:18-25) and their rejection (15:26-16:4), and the work of the Holy Spirit (16:5-15). The final discourse appears to be centered upon His approaching death and resurrection (16:16-33). The instructional division ends with Christ's prayer for Himself, the disciples, and those yet to believe (17:1-26).

It is interesting in this division that the disciples are told to believe (13:19; 14:1). This demonstrates John's concept of faith as that which is not only necessary for salvation, but also for sanctification. In Christ's absence faith will become the means of contact with Him and of accomplishing His work in the world. This section thus represents a crucial time of instruction for the purpose of giving the disciples further revelation about the Son of God in order to increase their faith.

The third and final major division focuses on the crucifixion and the resurrection of the Son of God (18:1-20:31). The arrest (18:1-11), the trials (18:12-19:16), and the crucifixion (19:17-37) continue to present Jesus as deity (18:6,36-37; 19:19,37). These sections also represent the final rejection of Israel's King by the Jews. Moreover, the faith of the disciples is at low ebb as they scatter and Peter denies Christ. The only glimmers of faith come in the burial sequence (19:38-42) as Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus claim Jesus' body and bury Him. This final mention of Nicodemus illustrates how his faith has fed on the unfolding revelation of the Son of God throughout the Gospel until he makes this visible expression of allegiance.

The resurrection (20:1-31), however, brings to a climax the positive confession of faith in Jesus as the Son of God as Thomas is told "Do not be unbelieving, but believing" and subsequently states "My Lord and My God!" (20:27-28). Thomas' faith is confirmed as a result of the fullness of the revelation of the Son of God in His resurrection from the dead. This final confirmation of the disciples' faith in Christ is appropriately followed by the purpose statement for the Gospel (20:30-31).

The epilogue (21:1-25) concludes John's presentation of the progress of faith by focusing on faith's fruit. The fruit of faith is particularly seen in Peter's restoration (21:15-19). If faith can progress from initial belief to bold confession in Peter and the disciples, then Peter's love can grow from phileo- to the more mature expression of faith in agape'. Furthermore, since the word "believe" does not appear in this epilogue, the keynote, as seen in the controversy over the beloved disciple (21:20-23), is "follow Me." Faith will demonstrate itself henceforth by a life of discipleship.

John has shown that Jesus is the Son of God and the Savior of the World. Therefore, He is worthy of faith, and faith expressed secures eternal life and grows to fruition as the believer beholds the revelation of the Son.

Outline of John

Prologue 1:1-18

1. The Word in eternity and time 1:1-5
2. The testimony of John the Baptist 1:6-8
3. The response to the Light 1:9-13
4. The incarnation of the Word 1:14-18

I. The Revelation of the Son of God to the World 1:19-12:50

A. The reception of the Son of God 1:19-4:54

1. John the Baptist testifies about Jesus. 1:19-34
 - a. John witnesses to the priests and Levites. 1:19-28
 - 1) The question about John's identity 1:19-23
 - 2) The question about John's baptism 1:24-28
 - b. John witnesses at Jesus' baptism. 1:29-34
2. The disciples believe in Jesus. 1:35-2:12
 - a. John's two disciples follow Jesus. 1:35-39
 - b. Andrew brings Peter to Jesus. 1:40-42
 - c. Philip and Nathanael follow Jesus. 1:43-51
 - 1) Jesus finds Philip. 1:43-44
 - 2) Philip finds Nathanael. 1:45-46
 - 3) Nathanael finds Jesus. 1:47-51
 - d. The disciples believe at the wedding in Cana. 2:1-12
 - 1) Jesus changes water into wine. 2:1-10
 - 2) The disciples believe. 2:11-12
3. Others believe in Jesus. 2:13-4:54
 - a. Jesus ministers in Judea. 2:13-3:36
 - 1) Jesus cleanses the temple. 2:13-22
 - a) He drives out the moneychangers 2:13-17
 - b) The Jews ask for a sign. 2:18-21
 - c) The disciples believe the Scriptures. 2:22
 - 2) Many believe during Passover. 2:23-25
 - 3) Jesus witnesses to Nicodemus. 3:1-21
 - a) Nicodemus' initial address 3:1-3
 - b) Nicodemus' first question 3:4-8
 - c) Nicodemus' second question 3:9-15
 - d) Jesus explanation of His mission 3:16-21
 - 4) John the Baptist exalts Jesus. 3:22-36
 - a) The baptism of Jesus 3:22-24

- b) The dispute about purification 3:25-26
 - c) The exaltation of Jesus over John 3:27-31
 - d) The truthfulness of Jesus' testimony 3:32-36
 - b. Jesus ministers in Samaria. 4:1-42
 - 1) He witnesses to the woman at the well. 4:1-26
 - a) The journey through Samaria 4:1-5
 - b) The request for water 4:6-9
 - c) The offer of living water 4:10-14
 - d) The revelation of adultery 4:15-18
 - e) The discussion of true worship 4:19-24
 - f) The revelation of the true Messiah 4:25-26
 - 2) He witnesses to the disciples. 4:27-38
 - a) The disciples' astonishment 4:27
 - b) The woman's witness 4:28-30
 - c) Jesus' work 4:31-38
 - 3) He witnesses to the Samaritans. 4:39-42
 - c. Jesus ministers in Galilee. 4:43-54
 - 1) He is welcomed to Galilee. 4:43-45
 - 2) He heals the nobleman's son. 4:46-54
- B. The rejection of the Son of God 5:1-12:50
 - 1. The opposition at the feast in Jerusalem 5:1-47
 - a. The healing at the pool of Bethesda 5:1-15
 - 1) Jesus heals the man at the pool. 5:1-9
 - 2) The Jews question the healed man. 5:10-13
 - 3) Jesus warns the healed man. 5:14-15
 - b. The claim of equality with the Father 5:16-30
 - 1) The Jews plot to kill Jesus. 5:16-18
 - 2) Jesus deserves honor like the Father. 5:19-23
 - 3) Jesus gives life like the Father. 5:24-30
 - c. The fourfold witness to Jesus 5:31-47
 - 1) The witness of John the Baptist 5:31-35
 - 2) The witness of Jesus' works 5:36
 - 3) The witness of the Father 5:37-38
 - 4) The witness of the Scriptures 5:39-47
 - 2. The opposition during Passover in Galilee 6:1-71
 - a. The feeding of the five thousand 6:1-14
 - 1) The setting on the mountain 6:1-4
 - 2) The question of enough food 6:5-9
 - 3) The miraculous distribution of food 6:10-13
 - 4) The response of the people 6:14

- b. The walk on the sea 6:15-21
- c. The discourse on the Bread of Life 6:22-59
 - 1) Jesus is followed to Capernaum. 6:22-24
 - 2) Jesus speaks with the multitude. 6:25-40
 - a) He explains the true labor of God. 6:25-29
 - b) He explains the true bread of heaven. 6:30-33
 - c) He offers the Bread of Life 6:34-40
 - 3) Jesus speaks with the Jews. 6:41-59
 - a) The defense of his claims 6:41-51
 - b) The appropriation of His life 5:52-59
- d. The reaction of Jesus' followers 6:60-71
 - 1) Many disciples turn away. 6:60-66
 - 2) The twelve disciples remain. 6:67-69
 - 3) Jesus predicts a betrayer. 6:70-71
- 3. More opposition at the feasts in Jerusalem 7:1-10:39
 - a. The conflict before the Feast of Tabernacles 7:1-13
 - 1) Jesus' brothers do not believe in Him. 7:1-5
 - 2) Jesus explains about the proper time. 7:6-9
 - 3) Jesus goes secretly to the feast. 7:10-13
 - b. The conflict during the Feast of Tabernacles 7:14-53
 - 1) The middle of the feast 7:14-36
 - a) The dispute over Jesus' authority 7:14-18
 - b) The dispute over Jesus and the law 7:19-24
 - c) The dispute over Jesus' origin 7:25-31
 - d) The dispute over Jesus' departure 7:32-36
 - 2) The last day of the feast 7:37-53
 - a) Jesus promises the Holy Spirit. 7:37-39
 - b) The people divide over who Jesus is. 7:40-44
 - c) The leaders argue over who Jesus is. 7:45-53
 - c. The conflict after the Feast of Tabernacles 8:1-10:21
 - 1) The conflict over the adulterous woman 8:1-11
 - 2) The conflict over Jesus' claims 8:12-59
 - a) He defends His self-witness 8:12-20
 - b) He predicts His departure. 8:21-24
 - c) He claims the Father's sending. 8:25-29
 - d) He claims power to free from sin. 8:30-36
 - e) He disputes the Jews' fatherhood. 8:37-47
 - f) He claims power to give life. 8:48-52
 - g) He claims the divine name, "I AM". 8:53-59
 - 3) The conflict over the healed blind man 9:1-41

- a) Jesus heals the blind man. 9:1-7
 - b) The people question the man. 9:8-12
 - c) The Pharisees question him. 9:13-17
 - d) The Pharisees question his parents. 9:18-23
 - e) The Pharisees question him again. 9:24-34
 - f) Jesus teaches on sight and blindness. 9:35-41
- 4) The conflict over the Good Shepherd 10:1-21
- a) The illustration of the good shepherd 10:1-6
 - b) The Door of the sheep 10:7-10
 - c) The Good Shepherd 10:11-18
 - d) The division among the Jews 10:19-21
- d. The conflict during the Feast of Dedication 10:22-39
- 1) Jesus claims to be one with the Father. 10:22-30
 - 2) The Jews attempt to kill Jesus. 10:31-39
4. The opposition in the last phase of ministry 10:40-12:50
- a. Jesus with John beyond the Jordan 10:41-42
 - b. Jesus with Lazarus at Bethany 11:1-46
 - 1) Lazarus becomes ill. 11:1-6
 - 2) Jesus defends His trip to Judea. 11:7-16
 - 3) Lazarus' sisters meet Jesus in Bethany. 11:17-37
 - a) Martha meets and talks with Jesus. 11:17-27
 - b) Mary meets and talks with Jesus. 11:28-37
 - 4) Jesus raises Lazarus from the dead. 11:38-44
 - 5) The Jews respond. 11:45-46
 - c. The plot in Jerusalem 11:47-57
 - 1) The Jews question what to do about Jesus. 11:47-48
 - 2) Caiaphas prophesies about the nation. 11:49-53
 - 3) Jesus evades the Jews. 11:54-57
 - d. The last days of ministry 12:1-50
 - 1) Mary anoints Jesus in Bethany. 12:1-8
 - 2) The Jews plot to kill Lazarus. 12:9-11
 - 3) Jesus triumphantly enters Jerusalem. 12:12-19
 - 4) Jesus announces the hour has come. 12:20-36
 - a) The visit of the Greeks 12:20-22
 - b) The announcement of His death 12:23-26
 - c) The Father's approval of His death 12:27-33
 - d) The question about His death 12:34-36
 - 5) John summarizes Jesus' rejection. 12:37-41
 - 6) Jesus summarizes His rejection. 12:42-50
- II. The Revelation of the Son of God to His Disciples 13:1-17:26

- A. The last supper 13:1-30
 - 1. Jesus washes the disciples' feet. 13:1-20
 - a. The example of serving one another 13:1-11
 - 1) He begins to wash the disciples' feet. 13:1-5
 - 2) He corrects Peter. 13:6-11
 - b. The teaching about serving one another 13:12-20
 - 1) He admonishes them to serve one another. 13:12-17
 - 2) He predicts His betrayal. 13:18-20
 - 2. Jesus identifies Judas as the betrayer. 13:21-30
- B. The final discourses 13:31-16:33
 - 1. On Jesus' departure 13:31-14:31
 - a. He announces His departure. 13:31-38
 - 1) The nearness of His glorification 13:31-33
 - 2) The new commandment to love 13:34-35
 - 3) The prediction of Peter's denial 13:36-38
 - b. He explains the way to the Father. 14:1-14
 - 1) The way to the Father 14:1-6
 - 2) The revelation of the Father 14:7-11
 - 3) The answered prayer 14:12-14
 - c. He explains the ministry of the Spirit 14:15-31
 - 1) The promise of the Spirit 14:15-18
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Summary and Outline of Acts

by

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Introduction

The Author

The same arguments that identify Luke as the author of the Gospel will also name him as the author of Acts. First, church tradition is uniform that Luke was a close traveling companion of Paul's and that he was the author of both the Gospel and this book. The evidence of Acts confirms this by mentioning the author's "former treatise" (1:1). Acts and Luke's Gospel obviously form a continuous account of the history of Christ's life and the early church. Both are also addressed to Theophilus indicating that they form a two-part series. The "we" sections (16:10-17; 20:5-21:18; 27:1-28:16) show that the author was Paul's traveling companion, and with all evidence considered, Luke best fits this role.

The Date and Place

Acts was obviously written after the Gospel of Luke, but before certain other momentous historical events which are not mentioned in the book. There is no mention of the destruction of Jerusalem, so the date can be placed before A.D. 70. Similarly, Luke would not have omitted Paul's death (usually placed at A.D. 66-68) or the Neronian persecution (A.D. 64). The book ends with Paul in a Roman prison, and it is likely that Luke is recording that this was all that had happened up to the time of writing. Therefore, the date preferred is A.D. 60-62. The contents of the book would support this early date. The issues of Acts are those relating to early Christianity, such as the Jew-Gentile controversy and the reception of the Holy Spirit. In addition, Acts shows very little or no acquaintance with Paul's Epistles.

The place of writing would also be determined by the similar circumstances of the Gospel. Though there is no exact scenario, Luke was with Paul during his imprisonments in Caesarea (21:18; 27:1) and Rome (28:16). Acts may have been written in these locations which would have afforded Luke convenient access to eyewitnesses and other sources for his research.

The Destination

The immediate destination is the same as for the Gospel, "Theophilus" (1:1). The identity of this person is unknown, though he is evidently a Greek of high standing (Cf. Luke 1:3). Luke most certainly also wrote for a larger audience which would have access to the book through Theophilus.

The Occasion

There is some debate over whether Luke wrote Acts to satisfy a historical need or an apologetic need. If he wrote apologetically, his intended audience was either the Jews or the Roman government. Some believe Luke wrote to Jews to show the connection between Judaism and Christianity. There is a careful emphasis on the fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy, and the transition of the gospel ministry from Jew to Gentile. Others think Acts was written to Roman authorities to prove that Christianity was not a political threat to Rome. To support this they note that Roman officials are presented as unconcerned and impartial to Christian controversies. Also, the experience of Paul shows that a person can be a member of the kingdom of God and a citizen of Rome at the same time. In this vein, some suggest that Acts is a prepared

defense on Paul's behalf for use in his trial before Caesar. Acts depicts the Jews as the real instigators of trouble, and suggests it is they, not Paul, who should be on trial.

In view of the introduction (1:1) and the similarity to Luke's prologue (1:1-4), the historical intent of Acts is the clearest reason behind its writing. Yet it is recognized that Luke was selective in recording historical events. He focuses on Peter and Paul of all the apostles. He also emphasizes the reception of the Holy Spirit and the transition of the gospel from Jew to Gentile. Acts is thus a history of the spread of Christianity written so as to explain the transition of the gospel and the kingdom message from the Jews to the Gentiles. As such it may also fulfill apologetic designs both for the Jews and the Romans.

The Purpose

Luke's major purpose in Acts is to present Theophilus with a record of the spread of Christianity from the Jewish race and regions to the Gentile. The clearest indication of this is in the key verse, 1:8, which outlines in basic form the progress of the book. Luke also inserts regular "progress reports" in the narrative to document this spread (2:47; 6:7; 9:31; 12:24; 16:5; 19:20; 28:30-31). This is also seen in the ministry of the Holy Spirit as He comes upon Jew (2:1-4), Samaritan (8:14-17), and Gentile (10:44-48). Furthermore, the narrative's focus on Peter, the apostle to the Jews, transfers to Paul, the apostle to the Gentiles. As an accurate record, Acts may have subordinate apologetic purposes to explain to Jews how the kingdom message has been given over to the Gentiles, and to the Romans how the spiritual nature of Christianity poses no threat to their rule.

Argument

The main divisions of Acts mark the spread of the gospel witness after the manner of 1:8. After the prologue (ch. 1), the witness is observed in Jerusalem (chs. 2-7), then Judea and Samaria (chs. 8-12), and finally, to the end of the earth (chs. 13-28).

The prologue (1:1-26) shows the preparation for the witness. The explanation to Theophilus (1:1-3) connects this record to Luke's Gospel and indicates that the kingdom of God was the focus of Christ's teaching, and therefore suggests it will continue in this account. Jesus' promise of power for the task of spreading the gospel and the appointment of Matthias to complete the apostolic rank (1:4-26) set the stage for the witness to begin. Again, 1:8 is a notable key to the progression of the growth of this witness in the design of the book.

The first witness is in Jerusalem (2:1-7:60) and comes in direct fulfillment of the Lord's prophecy of the coming Spirit. The witness at Pentecost (2:1-47) is due to the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the Jewish disciples. Peter's explanation (2:14-36) makes use of Joel's prophecy to convince the onlookers that this is a manifestation of God's kingdom power. He also takes the occasion to indict the Jews for their guilt in crucifying their King in spite of the clear testimonies of God (2:22-24) and David (2:25-28) concerning Jesus. The effect of Peter's sermon and call to repentance (2:37-47) is that three thousand believe and the new church begins and adds new converts daily.

The next phase of witness in Jerusalem comes through the ministry of Peter and John (3:1-4:31). The healing of the lame man in the temple (3:1-11) is another opportunity for Peter to preach to the crowds about their rejection of Christ and their need for repentance (3:12-26). In

spite of Christ's rejection by the nation, individual Jews may come into the blessing of the Messiah through repentance and faith to await the final restoration of the kingdom (3:19-21). Here Peter indicates the postponement of the kingdom as a result of the rejection of Christ by the nation's rulers (3:17), yet individuals can still enjoy salvation in God's new program. The witness of Peter and John extends directly to the Jewish leaders when they are arrested for their activity (4:1-22). They affirm the leaders' rejection of Christ from the words of Psalm 118:22 and declare that salvation is only in the name of Jesus (4:11-12). The power behind the growing witness is revealed in the account of the prayer for boldness by the church (4:23-31) and the Lord's answer. Luke demonstrates in the clearest manner that the growth of the church is by the sovereign working of God.

Another section is devoted to the witness of the apostolic group (4:32-5:42). Their miraculous power resulted in the unity of the church (4:32-37) and the severe discipline of Ananias and Sapphira (5:1-11). Another progress report (5:12-16) demonstrates the continued growth of the church in spite of the temporary opposition from within. Once more the Jewish leaders represent the opposition from without as they persecute the apostles (5:17-42). This leads to another indictment of the leaders for the murder of the Messiah (5:30-31). In spite of this persecution, the church continues its witness with relentless vigor (5:42).

The final witness in Jerusalem is from Stephen (6:1-7:60). His selection as one of the seven to serve the growing needs of the church (6:1-7) demonstrates the need for organization as the church expands. As a result of his powerful ministry, he is arrested by the Jewish leaders (6:8-7:1) and is given an opportunity to address the ruling council (7:2-53). His speech is a reminder of Israel's history with references to Israel's propensity toward rebellion and rejection of God's authority. He sums up by declaring the nature of God's dwelling place with Israel (7:44-50) and applies this to Israel who rejected the dwelling place of God in Jesus Christ (7:51-53). The hard-heartedness of the Jews was demonstrated in their history, in their rejection of Christ, and now they execute Stephen (7:54-60). This event takes the opposition from the Jews to a new level of intensity and prepares the reader for the persecution to come.

The next major movement is the expansion of the witness into Judea and Samaria (8:1-12:25). In what appears as one quick event, the church is "scattered throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria" (8:1-4). Luke has conveyed this important step of the church's expansion in language that reflects the programmatic outline of 1:8. A specific result of this dispersion is Philip's witness in Samaria (8:5-25). The growth of the church there is recorded by the mention of multitudes who are receptive to Philip's ministry (8:5-8) and by the belief of Simon the Sorcerer (8:9-13). The most significant event in this account is the conferral of the Holy Spirit on the Samaritan believers (8:14-17). This demonstrates that the gospel of the kingdom and its promise of the Spirit has broken out of the exclusively Jewish context. The rebuke of Simon (8:18-24) shows that the gift of the Spirit comes only by inner receptivity to the gospel, which is what Simon, as the Jews, lacked. Philip further expands the reach of the gospel as he witnesses to an Ethiopian (8:26-40). This is the first occasion of the gospel going to a Gentile, though he was evidently a Jewish proselyte (8:27).

The introduction of the gospel to the Gentiles is the occasion for the introduction to the witness of Paul (9:1-31). From the first days of his conversion, God designated Paul to bear the gospel to the Gentiles (9:15). Paul immediately preaches in Damascus (9:20-22), is

persecuted by the Jews (9:23-25), and gets welcomed into the apostolic circle in Jerusalem as the church continues to prosper (9:26-31).

This introduction of Paul is the backdrop for the final focus on the witness of Peter (9:32-11:18). Luke records two miracles of Peter (9:32-43) before he details his witness to Cornelius in Caesarea (10:1-48). The narrative of this significant event shows how God directed the gospel to the Gentile Cornelius through a vision (10:9-16). After preaching the gospel to Cornelius and his household, they believe and the Holy Spirit is given to them with the physical evidence of tongues (10:44-48). The controversy that follows this event forces Peter to defend his ministry to the Gentiles in such a way that it becomes apparent to all that "God has also granted to the Gentiles repentance to life" (11:1-18). The gospel has broken decisively from the bounds of Judaism and now the scene is set for the apostle to the Gentiles to emerge as the central figure of Acts.

The transition from Peter to Paul as the key figure in the narrative is seen in the continuing witness of the church (11:19-12: 25). The witness of dispersed believers in Antioch (11:19-30) demonstrates this transition as the gospel goes first to Jews only (11:19), but then to the Hellenists (11:20). The result is that Paul comes to minister. Peter's last episode in Acts occurs during the persecution in Jerusalem (12:1-25). After Herod kills James, he imprisons Peter. Peter's miraculous release and the death of Herod are indications that the church continues to multiply even in the face of opposition. The section then closes with the observation that Paul had fulfilled his ministry with Barnabas in Jerusalem (12:25) which prepares the focus to shift entirely to Paul as the witness expands.

The final phase of the growth of the church is the witness to the end of the earth (13:1-28:31). This division is composed largely of the three major missionary journeys of Paul and his final trip to Rome. The divine ordination of Paul and Barnabas is recognized by the church (13:1-3) as they begin their first missionary journey (13:1-14:28). Luke records that they are under the direction of God (13:4) as they travel first to Cyprus (13:4-12). The immediate opposition from a Jew and his resulting blindness illustrates the blindness of the Jews to the ministry of the gospel and foreshadows their persistent opposition to Paul's message. Likewise, his ministry in Antioch (13:13-52) exposes the unbelief of the Jews. In spite of the favorable response to his message from Gentiles and some Jews (13:42-43), Paul makes a definitive statement of his mission in light of persistent rejection. He states that because the Jews are rejecting the gospel, "we turn to the Gentiles" (13:46), a move he supports from the Old Testament (13:47).

After his expulsion from Antioch (13:50-52), Paul and Barnabas move on to Iconium (14:1-6) where the pattern of reception and opposition is repeated. They then flee to Lystra (14:7-20) where Paul's appeal to general revelation shows his message is becoming adapted to the Gentiles. The ministry on their return to Antioch (14:21-28) indicates much progress in the growth and development of the church as converts are strengthened and elders are appointed in the local churches. The first missionary journey thus ends on a victorious note as the gospel has achieved great gains in its advancement.

The conflict over the influx of Gentile converts results in the Jerusalem council (15:1-35). The issue is whether a Gentile has to become a Jew first in order to be saved (15:1). Peter's testimony (15:7-11) is a powerful argument that God has turned to the Gentiles. This is

reinforced by the report of Paul and Barnabas (15:12), and conclusively argued for by James from the the Old Testament Scriptures (15:13-21). The final decision of the council allows Gentiles into the church apart from Judaism (15:22-29).

The second missionary journey (15:36-18:22) begins with some preparatory events (15:36-16:5). The division between Paul and Barnabas (15:36-41) is significant because it allows Paul to operate out of the shadow of any companion. Once more Luke records how the Holy Spirit directs the spread of the gospel as the vision calls Paul into ministry in Macedonia (16:6-17:15). The work of the Spirit is evident in the lives of Lydia and the Philippian jailer as the gospel gains its first foothold in Europe in Philippi (16:11-40). Trouble erupts again as the gospel is brought to Thessalonica (17:1-9) and Berea (17:10-15), yet not before many believe. Paul's final thrust on this journey is into Achaia (17:16-18:17) where he continues to preach the gospel to these Gentiles from general revelation.

The third missionary journey (18:23-21:16) brings the gospel witness back into Galatia and Phrygia (18:23), Ephesus (18:24-19:41), Macedonia and Greece (20:1-5), Troas (20:6-12), Miletus (20:13-38), Tyre (21:1-6), and Caesarea (21:7-14). The most significant aspect of this journey seems to be the strategic emergence of Ephesus as a center for Paul's ministry. It was here, also, that Paul conferred the Holy Spirit on some of John's disciples (19:1-7) illustrating the completion of the transition period from the old dispensation to the new in God's program. The final incident in Caesarea anticipates the last phase of Paul's witness. Agabus predicts the arrest of Paul in Jerusalem, but even this, Luke indicates, is the "will of the Lord" (21:14).

The last phase of Paul's witness is his trip to Rome (21:15-28:31). Luke's detailed record of the dealings with Roman authorities may be intended to prove the lack of any real threat emerging from the expanding church. Nevertheless, the ultimate purpose of this section is to show how the gospel witness reaches "the end of the earth" according to 1:8.

Paul's witness begins in Jerusalem (21:15-23:35) with an attempt to appease the Jewish leaders there (21:15-26). In spite of this, the Jews stir up trouble and Paul is seized (21:27-36). This allows Paul the opportunity to witness in defense of himself (21:37-23:10). His claim of a divine commission to the Gentiles (22:21) is clearly a stumbling block to the Jews and thus a highlight of the narrative of Acts. The hostility and hard-heartedness of the Jewish leaders is manifested during Paul's defense before them (22:30-23:10) and in their subsequent plot to kill him (23:11-23:35). Their efforts are frustrated by the sovereign will of God Who assures Paul that his witness will go all the way to Rome (23:11).

Paul's witness continues in Caesarea (24:1-26:32) in the hearings before Felix (24:1-27), Festus (25:1-12), and Agrippa (25:13-26:32). The defense before Felix emphasizes Paul's innocence in light of the Jews' accusations. Paul's firm denial of guilt causes him to appeal to Caesar in his hearing before Festus, but Festus has difficulty in determining what laws Paul has broken as he sends him to Agrippa (25:25-25-27). Paul continues his defense before Agrippa and emphasizes the true reasons for the Jews hatred toward him: He has preached the resurrection of Christ (26:6-8) and claimed the gospel was meant to be taken by him to the Gentiles (26:17-23). Paul's influence on Agrippa, as well as Agrippa's conclusion about Paul (26:31-32), show the harmless nature and truthfulness of Paul's witness.

The witness of Paul on the way to Rome (27:1-28:15) serves several purposes in Acts. First, God's protection in the shipwreck (27:1-44) shows that the gospel witness was spread by the sovereign working of God. Nothing could stop the gospel from going to the Gentiles in Rome which represent in Acts "the end of the earth." Second, Paul's friendly and helpful relationship to the Romans during the shipwreck shows that the gospel is not their enemy. Finally, his miraculous immunity to the venomous snake and his healing ministry on Malta (28:1-10) demonstrate the divine approval of Paul's mission to Rome. The snake incident may also illustrate the futility of Satan's efforts to thwart the spread of the gospel.

Paul's final witness in Rome (28:16-31) forms an appropriate conclusion to the book. He presents the gospel first to the Jews at Rome and some believe, but the unbelief of many causes him to rebuke them using the prediction of Isaiah 6:9-10 (28:25-27). The determinative statement by Paul that "the salvation of God has been sent to the Gentiles" (28:28) indicates the purpose for which Luke wrote. The gospel and the kingdom message (Cf. 28:31) has gone to the Gentiles throughout the world because of its rejection by the Jews.

Outline of Acts

- I. Prologue 1:1-26
 1. The introductory explanation to Theophilus 1:1-3
 2. The preparation for the witness 1:4-26
 - a. Jesus promises the Spirit's power 1:4-8
 - b. Jesus ascends into heaven. 1:9-11
 - c. The disciples gather for prayer. 1:12-14
 - d. The disciples appoint Matthias. 1:15-26
 - 1) Peter explains the need. 1:15-22
 - 2) Matthias is chosen. 1:23-26
- II. The Witness in Jerusalem 2:1-7:60
 - A. The witness at Pentecost 2:1-47
 1. The outpouring of the Spirit 2:1-4
 2. The response of the crowd 2:5-13
 3. The explanation of Peter 2:14-36
 - a. The testimony of Joel concerning the Spirit 2:14-21
 - b. The testimony of God concerning Jesus 2:22-24
 - c. The testimony of David concerning Jesus 2:25-36
 - 1) The quotation of David's prophecy 2:25-28
 - 2) The interpretation of David's prophecy 2:29-32
 - 3) The application of David's prophecy 2:33-36
 4. The effect of Peter's sermon 2:37-47
 - a. Three thousand are saved and baptized. 2:37-41
 - b. The new church grows and develops. 2:42-47
 - B. The witness of Peter and John 3:1-4:31
 1. They heal a lame man at the temple. 3:1-11
 - a. The request of the lame man 3:1-3
 - b. The miracle through Peter 3:4-8
 - c. The amazement of the people 3:9-11
 2. Peter preaches a sermon. 3:12-26
 - a. The rejection of Jesus by the Jews 3:12-18
 - b. The promise of blessing for repentance 3:19-21
 - c. The promise of destruction for rejection 3:22-23
 - d. The testimony of all the prophets 3:24-26
 3. They are arrested by the Jewish leaders. 4:1-22
 - a. They are taken into custody. 4:1-4
 - b. They are brought before the Sanhedrin. 4:5-20
 - 1) The questioning by the council 4:5-7
 - 2) The message of Peter 4:8-12

- 3) The quandry of the council 4:13-17
 - 4) The prohibition by the council 4:18-20
 - c. They are released. 4:21-22
 - 4. They pray with the other disciples. 4:23-31
 - a. The report to the other disciples 4:23
 - b. The request for boldness 4:24-30
 - c. The filling of the Spirit 4:31
- C. The witness of the apostles 4:32-5:42
- 1. Their power in unifying the church 4:32-37
 - 2. Their power in judging sin 5:1-11
 - a. Ananias and Sapphira sin. 5:1-2
 - b. Peter confronts and punishes Ananias. 5:3-6
 - c. Peter confronts and punishes Sapphira. 5:7-11
 - 3. Their power in performing miracles 5:12-16
 - 4. Their persecution by the Jewish leaders 5:17-42
 - a. The apprehension of the apostles 5:17-26
 - 1) The first arrest 5:17-18
 - 2) The angelic deliverance 5:19-23
 - 3) The second arrest 5:24-26
 - b. The appearance before the council 5:27-40
 - 1) The charge of the high priest 5:27-28
 - 2) The answer of the apostles 5:29-32
 - 3) The advice of Gamaliel 5:33-40
 - c. The resumption of ministry 5:41-42
- D. The witness of Stephen 6:1-7:60
- 1. He is chosen as one of seven to serve. 6:1-7
 - a. The need for men to serve 6:1-4
 - b. The choice of the seven men 6:5-6
 - c. The response to the spreading Word 6:7
 - 2. He is arrested by the Jewish leaders. 6:8-7:1
 - a. Stephen's ministry is disputed. 6:8-10
 - b. False charges are raised against him. 6:11-12
 - c. False witnesses testify against him. 6:13-7:1
 - 3. He addresses the council. 7:2-53
 - a. God's dealings with the patriarchs 7:2-16
 - 1) God's promises to Abraham 7:2-8
 - 2) God's preservation of Jacob and Joseph 7:9-16
 - b. God's dealings with Israel through Moses 7:17-43
 - 1) Israel's oppression in Egypt 7:17-19
 - 2) Moses' upbringing in Egypt 7:20-22

- 3) Moses' rejection in Egypt 7:23-29
 - 4) Moses' deliverance of Israel 7:30-36
 - 5) Israel's rebellion in the wilderness 7:37-43
 - c. God's dwelling with Israel 7:44-50
 - 1) Israel's construction of dwelling places 7:44-47
 - 2) God's true dwelling place 7:48-50
 - d. Israel's resistance of the Holy Spirit 7:51-53
 - 4. He is executed. 7:54-60
- III. The Witness in Judea and Samaria 8:1-12:25
 - A. The witness of Philip 8:1-40
 - 1. The church is scattered throughout Judea and Samaria. 8:1-4
 - 2. Philip witnesses in Samaria. 8:5-25
 - a. The response of a city in Samaria 8:5-8
 - b. The response of Simon the sorcerer 8:9-13
 - c. The ministry of Peter and John 8:14-25
 - 1) The conferral of the Holy Spirit 8:14-17
 - 2) The rebuke of Simon the sorcerer 8:18-24
 - 3) The return to Jerusalem 8:25
 - 3. Philip witnesses to the Ethiopian. 8:26-40
 - a. He is directed to the Ethiopian. 8:26-29
 - b. He witnesses to the Ethiopian. 8:30-35
 - c. He baptizes the Ethiopian. 8:36-39
 - d. He continues his preaching ministry. 8:40
 - B. The witness of Paul 9:1-31
 - 1. Paul is converted. 9:1-19
 - a. He meets Jesus on the way to Damascus. 9:1-9
 - b. He is filled with the Holy Spirit. 9:10-19
 - 2. Paul preaches in Damascus. 9:20-25
 - a. He preached to Jews in the synagogues. 9:20-22
 - b. He escapes a Jewish plot to kill him. 9:23-25
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Summary and Outline of Romans

by

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Introduction

The Author

Even the modern critics accept the authorship of Paul for this epistle. Paul identifies himself as the author in 1:1 and there are indications in the letter verifying this. He mentions he is from the tribe of Benjamin (11:1; Cf. Phil. 3:5) and the apostle to the Gentiles (11:13; 15:16-19). Other details that support Paul's authorship are his relation to Priscilla and Aquila (16:3; Cf. Acts 18:2-3,18-19), his mention of the gift from the churches of Macedonia and Achaia to Jerusalem (15:25-27; Cf. Acts 19:21; 20:1-5; 21:15-19), and his intention to visit Rome (1:10-13,15; 15:22-32; Cf. Acts 19:21).

Paul's life is outlined in Acts 9-28 and filled in somewhat by his epistles. His Jewish heritage was flawless (Phil. 3:5). He was also born a Roman citizen (Acts 22:25-29), trained to be a tentmaker as a secondary vocation (Acts 18:3), and trained as a Pharisee under Gamaliel (Acts 22:3). He persecuted the church (Acts 9:13; 22:4; 26:10-11) before his conversion on the road to Damascus (Acts 9:1-16). His commission to be the apostle to the Gentiles took him on three missionary journeys and a final trip to Rome where he is purported to have met his death around A.D. 67.

The Date and Place

Paul wrote Romans on his third missionary journey after his two epistles to the Corinthians and before his trip to deliver the offering to Jerusalem (15:26). At the time he wrote to the Corinthians, Paul had not yet collected the offering from Macedonia and Achaia, but was planning to come to them immediately (1 Cor. 16:1-9; 2 Cor. 9:1-5). Paul then visited Macedonia and Achaia and stayed in Corinth for three months (20:1-3) before traveling to Jerusalem (Acts 20:7,16). This places the date of writing in the winter of A.D. 56 or early spring A.D. 57 from Corinth.

The Destination

Paul wrote to "all who are in Rome" (1:7), which may indicate the whole Christian population of several churches rather than one church. The founding of the church in Rome is uncertain, but the two most reasonable theories attribute it to Roman visitors at the scene of Pentecost (Acts 2:10) who returned to Rome, or to the many visitors who traveled in and out of the city. Priscilla and Aquila would be such an example (16:3-5; Acts 18:2). The position of the Roman Catholic Church which claims Peter traveled and stayed in Rome, and thus founded the church there, should be rejected because Peter's activities were largely confined to the Jews in Palestine (Acts 1-12; Gal. 2:7-9), whereas the church in Rome was probably predominately Gentile. Also, Paul was resolved not to build on another man's foundation (15:20), but intended to establish the church by way of his personal presence (1:11). Furthermore, if Peter was there as claimed, Paul's failure to greet him in this letter or mention his presence in others in conspicuously absent.

The church at Rome included both Jews and Gentiles. The presence of Jews is suggested in a number of places (4:1; 7:1-6; 9:10; 16:7,11) as well as by the relationship of Aquila to the city (Acts 18:2). Since Rome was a Gentile city, the church was probably made up

mostly of Gentiles as also implied by the contents of the letter (1:5,13; 11:13,17-31; 15:14-16). Besides, Paul devotes much of his argument in Romans to the relationship of Gentiles to the promises made to Israel.

The city of Rome was founded in 753 B.C. on the Tiber river. At the time Paul wrote, the population is estimated to have been between one and four million people. A large Jewish population resided there as a result of Pompey's taking of Jerusalem in 63 B.C. and his relocation of many Jews to Rome. In the early period of Nero's reign (A.D. 54-68) peace and prosperity characterized the city. The major religion was polytheism, but decaying confidence in it gave the gospel a choice opportunity to bear fruit.

The Occasion

The immediate occasion that prompted Paul to write to the believers in Rome was his desire and plan to visit them (15:23-24). He had finished his labors in the eastern provinces (15:23) and was returning to Jerusalem to deliver the gift collected in Macedonia and Achaia (15:25-26). He anticipated a journey west as far as Spain after this business was taken care of (15:24; Acts 19:21). His letter would inform the Romans of his plans and prepare them for his visit.

The Purpose

There appears no urgent need that dictated the comprehensive argument which forms the bulk of the epistle. Yet it is clearly Paul's purpose to expound in detail the gospel he preached and would soon be preaching in Rome (1:15). Most likely he wanted them to understand the gospel he would be preaching, and thus be prepared for his visit.

It has been suggested, and is likely true, that Paul was also determined to establish the church at Rome as a center for the universal gospel for Jews and Greeks. This might be seen in his arguments which place all men under sin and all men as beneficiaries of Christ's provision. In addition, chapters 9-11 address the relationship of the Gentiles to the promises made to Israel.

Some also suggest a prophylactic purpose could be indicated in 16:17-20. Paul was constantly followed by false teachers and troublemakers who would surely attempt to interfere in Rome, given time. Paul's thorough exposition of the gospel could prevent doctrinal error from taking hold.

In short, the main purpose of the letter is to give a clear and comprehensive theological formulation of the gospel as a revelation of God's righteousness (1:16-17). Paul does this by showing man's need of righteousness, God's provision in Christ, the role of faith in obtaining this righteousness, and the provision for a life of righteousness. He also explains the relationship of Gentiles to the Jewish promises and gives practical exhortations for individuals and the church in view of God's revealed righteousness. This central purpose does not preempt the secondary purposes discussed above, nor his practical purpose of preparing the Romans for his visit.

Argument

In presenting the gospel as God's righteousness, Paul first explains the revelation of righteousness in the gospel (1:18-8:39), then its vindication in going to the Gentiles (chs. 9-11), and finally its application in the church (12:1-15:13). The introduction to the letter (1:1-17) establishes Paul's apostolic authority and separation to the task of preaching the gospel (1:1). This gospel was promised in the Old Testament and revealed in Jesus Christ (1:2-4). Paul then expresses his desire to visit the Romans for the purpose of preaching the gospel 4 to them (1:11,15). The church at Rome was evidently made up mostly of Gentiles (1:13,16), but the gospel "is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek" (1:16). Paul's fervent desire to preach the gospel and his characteristic boldness to do so was based on his understanding of what the gospel was. It was the revelation of God's righteousness from its initial appropriation to its progressive application (1:16-17). The theme thus stated, Paul goes on to explain the need and provision of righteousness as related to the gospel.

The first half of Romans explains the revelation of the righteousness of God in the gospel (1:18-8:39). God has revealed His righteousness because there is a universal need that condemns all men before God (1:18-3:30). Paul argues conclusively by first demonstrating the condemnation of the Gentile (1:18-32). God's wrath is revealed against all men because all men have the knowledge of God in creation, but they have corrupted and perverted that knowledge (1:18-23). As a result, God has turned mankind over to the wickedness they want and deserve (1:24-32).

Paul next argues that the Jews are likewise condemned (2:1-3:8), for though they stand in judgment over others, they practice the same things. The principles of God's judgment (2:1-16) are according to truth, according to works, and according to impartiality. Jews hold no favor over Gentiles before God when it comes to judgment, because "there is no partiality with God" (2:11). Since the Jews, who have the law, do the same things as the Gentiles, they lack the righteousness of God, also (2:17-29). Before God, what counts is not the physical mark of circumcision, but the inner affirmation of the spirit (2:28-29). The objection is then anticipated (3:1-8) about what advantage the Jew has if God judges Jew as He does Gentile. Paul answers that the Jews have the Scriptures with the divine promises entrusted to them (3:2), and their unbelief does not annul God's faithfulness to His promises (3:3-4).

The conclusion of this section is that all men are condemned before God (3:9-20). This charge is substantiated from the Old Testament Scriptures which point to man's sinful character, speech, and deeds (3:10-18). The Jews especially are guilty as those who had the revelation of the law (3:19-20), for the law could not bring justification as they might think, but only the knowledge of sin.

Having expressed the need for God's righteousness, Paul now explains how it is revealed apart from the law. He explains the imputation of righteousness through justification (3:21-5:21). First, he declares the nature of justification through faith (3:21-31). It is to all who believe in the work of Christ as a propitiation for sin (3:21-26) and not through keeping the law (3:27-31). God imputes His righteousness freely because this excludes boasting and allows Gentiles to be justified as well. Faith does not cancel the law, but recognizes its intended purpose of exposing the need for righteousness.

Abraham is used as a fitting illustration of justification through faith (4:1-25). He was justified apart from works (4:1-8) as proved by Genesis 15:6 (4:3). The nature of works and grace makes them mutually exclusive (4:4-5). David agrees with this conclusion, as is seen in the quote from Psalm 32:1-2. Furthermore, Abraham was justified apart from circumcision (4:9-12) since he had been declared righteous before his circumcision. This means that circumcision does not guarantee the blessings of all the Abrahamic promises, for Abraham is "the father of all those who believe" (4:11). Abraham is the example for all who believe because he so received God's promise (4:13-25). The promise came to Abraham obviously before the law and thus apart from the law. Therefore it is of faith according to God's grace, which allows Jews under the law, as well as men from all nations, to become the children of Abraham. The example of Abraham's faith in God's promise is given for the benefit of those in the church age so they might also believe in Christ and receive the righteousness of God.

Having explained how God's righteousness is imputed, Paul lists the benefits of justification through faith (5:1-11). All who are justified stand in grace and are no longer enemies of God, but enjoy peace and hope. This hope enables the Christian to rejoice in times of tribulation. Also, the Christian has a strong assurance of God's love by the testimony of the Holy Spirit and the historical fact that Christ died for people when they were sinners. Paul reasons that if Christ so justifies by His provision in death, then He will also deliver from the power of sin and its resulting wrath (5:9-10). This observation anticipates Paul's lengthy discussion of sanctification in chapters 6 through 8.

But first, Paul makes a final clarification of the universal provision of righteousness in Christ. To do this, he makes an analogy between the justification through faith and the imputation of sin in Adam (5:12-21). Sin was imputed through the one man, Adam, because he represented mankind. But Adam was a "type" of Christ, Who also represented mankind. Christ's gift to man is the provision of righteousness resulting in life. Grace, then, is the reigning principle for those who have eternal life, just as sin reigns over men who are in death. Paul has shown that God has provided all mankind with righteousness through faith in Jesus Christ. Adam is the common father of Jew and Gentile alike, and correspondingly, Christ has provided God's righteousness to both Jew and Gentile apart from the Jewish law.

At this point Paul makes a transition in the discussion from justification to sanctification; from the imputation of righteousness to the impartation of that same divine righteousness (6:1-8:39). In 5:21 he argued that grace must reign along with God's righteousness just as sin reigned in death. Now he explains how grace affects the believer's new relationship to sin, the law, and the indwelling Spirit.

First, he explains the believer's new relationship to sin (6:1-23). The believer is to realize his death to the principle of sin (6:1-14). Because sin brought the provision of grace, the Christian must not suppose that he can continue in it. Rather, the Christian has identified with Christ in His death through the Spirit's baptism into Christ, and is freed from sin through this death. In like manner, the Christian is identified with Christ in resurrection-life. He should then consider himself "dead indeed to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord" (6:11) and no longer under the dominion of sin. Therefore, the believer should also exhibit his death to the practice of sin (6:15-23) by voluntary submission to righteousness. In the domain of sin the deadness of Adam is manifested, but when the believer submits to God's righteousness, the life of Christ is manifested (6:23).

Next, Paul explains the believer's new relationship to the law (7:1-25). Just as he is dead to sin, he is also dead to the law (7:1-6). The illustration from marriage shows how death breaks a contract and its obligations. The believer has died to the law in Christ and is now "married" to Him in new life. The law is then useless in the Christian's new life in that it is not able to deliver from sin (7:7-25). This does not mean that the law is itself evil, for sin is exposed by use of the law (7:7-13). However, once sin is exposed, the law cannot deliver from it (7:14-25). To illustrate this, Paul uses himself as an example. He confesses his defeat under the principles of the law because of indwelling sin and recognizes the struggle between his body of sin and the law of God. He realizes there is no victory in and of himself, but only through Jesus Christ.

This note of victory leads Paul to explain the believer's new relationship to the Spirit (8:1-39). The indwelling Spirit is the means of overpowering the evil flesh (8:1-11). The Spirit of life in Christ frees the believer from condemnation, sin, and death. Since the law could never do this, God sent His Son to condemn sin and death and provided the power of the Spirit to fulfill the requirements of the law. There are two mindsets in life: the carnal, and that of the Spirit. Those who belong to Christ have the Spirit in them to give the power of life for righteousness.

The indwelling Spirit assures the believer of his sonship with God (8:12-17) which obligates him to live after the Spirit. Sonship also means believers are joint heirs with Christ, and as such they will suffer and be glorified with Christ. This future glory is also assured by the indwelling Spirit (8:18-30). It is the expectation of all creation, and is the believer's present hope according to the firstfruits of the indwelling Spirit Who also "makes intercession for the saints according to the will of God" (8:27). The will of God is for those He foreknew to be glorified. Paul summarizes the Spirit's assuring ministry by proclaiming the certainty of final victory (8:31-39). The believer is secure in the grace of God through the intercession of the Son at God's right hand. God's love in Christ toward the believer is a power that can not be severed by any physical or spiritual reality. Now that Paul has declared the righteousness of God that is freely bestowed on all who believe apart from the law, both Jew and Gentile, he anticipates some questions about the relationship of saved Gentiles to the covenant promises made to the Jews. It would be obvious to the Roman Christians that the gospel has been bearing abundant fruit among the Gentiles, as they themselves are proof. This would raise questions about whether God has then set aside the Jews, and what He intends to do with them in His future program. The charge is anticipated that God has reneged on His promises. Paul therefore sets out to vindicate the righteousness of God that has been revealed in the gospel (9:1-11:36).

He first argues that Israel's past rejection was in the sovereign will of God (9:1-29). He begins by expressing his grief at Israel's rejection and by reaffirming Israel's strategic place in God's program (9:1-5). Their rejection is consistent with God's promise, because the promise was made not to all the physical seed of Abraham, but to those of the promise. According to God's sovereign election, Isaac and Jacob were chosen to be heirs of the promise. Furthermore, Israel's rejection is consistent with God's justice (9:14-29), for the prerogative to show mercy belongs to God alone. It is therefore impertinent to question God's sovereign will. God has designed the rejection of Israel and the salvation of the Gentiles to reveal the riches of His glory, even as the Old Testament prophets predicted.

Paul then addresses Israel's contemporary situation and explains their present rejection of the gospel (9:30-10:31). They failed to achieve God's righteousness because they

tried to do it by the works of the law, not faith (9:30-33). Thus, they refused to accept God's righteousness in Christ (10:1-13) though it was near in the gospel. The assurance is that whoever believes in Christ will be saved, whether Jew or Gentile. In spite of the gospel being preached to them, Israel heard and rejected it in fulfillment of the prophets' expectations (10:14-21).

Since one may be tempted to conclude from Paul's argument that God is forever finished with the Jews, Paul now explains that there is a future restoration of Israel in the purpose of God (11:1-36). The partial extent of their rejection is illustrated by Paul's own salvation, the example from Elijah's day, and the present remnant chosen according to God's grace (11:1-10). Israel's rejection is not final, but temporary so as to allow salvation to come to the Gentiles (11:11-24). Gentiles can learn from Israel's rejection not to boast of their grafting into the promises to Abraham. Indeed, Israel may well be grafted in again if they believe. Therefore, Israel's rejection is temporary until God's purpose with the Gentiles is accomplished (11:25-32). The future restoration of Israel is certain because the Scriptures promise it, God can not recall His promises, and God intends to show mercy to all men. Paul's ejaculation of praise (11:33-36) is prompted by the perfect wisdom of God who has revealed His mercy to all men while keeping His Word to Israel.

Paul has thus vindicated the righteousness of God revealed in the universal gospel so that God is true to His promises. Now he turns to more practical instruction which applies the righteousness of God revealed in the gospel to the Christian's life (12:1-15:13). The response of the Christian to God's grace is to be manifested in all relationships. Toward God, the Christian's response should be a total consecration (12:1-2). Toward those around him (12:3-21) he must demonstrate humility in the church and conduct tempered by love to all. The important relationship the Romans have with the state is to be ruled by respect for authority and love for fellow citizens, as the nearness of Christ's return should so motivate (13:1-14).

Paul devotes a rather lengthy discourse to the believer's responsibilities to weaker brothers (14:1-15:13). Evidently, the Romans had a real problem or a potential problem involving areas of conscience such as eating and observing certain days (14:2-6). Paul exhorts them not to judge one another in respect to these things (14:1-13). Rather, love should keep them from violating the conscience of a weaker brother (14:14-23). They should all follow Christ's example in accepting and pleasing one another instead of pleasing themselves, for Christ accepted both Jews and Gentiles in order to manifest His salvation (15:1-13). This may indicate that the problem with the Roman Christians was due to Jew-Gentile differences, a situation inexcusable in light of God's righteousness revealed universally in the gospel.

Paul concludes his letter with some personal concerns (15:14-16:27). He explains that the purpose for his writing included a reminder of his divine mission of preaching the gospel to the Gentiles (15:14-21). He then informs the Romans of his plans to visit them on the way to Spain (15:22-33). His final greetings (16:1-24) contain a commendation of Phoebe, greetings to friends, a warning about divisive people, and greetings from his companions. He ends with a benediction which reflects the great theme of his letter (16:25-27): The gospel of Jesus Christ is the revelation of God to all nations. This reminds of the thematic introductory verses 1:16-17 which declare the gospel as the power and revelation of the righteousness of God.

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Summary and Outline of 1 Corinthians

by

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Introduction

The Author

The first verse of this epistle names Paul as its author and there is no good reason to believe otherwise. Acts records his visit to Corinth on his second missionary journey, which was probably in the spring of A.D. 51 (Acts 18:1-18). There he met Aquila and Priscilla and worked with them in the trade of tentmaking (Acts 18:2-3). His reference to surrendering his right to have financial support (9:1-27) may explain why Paul worked in tentmaking while at Corinth.

The Date and Place

The date of Paul's first letter to the Corinthians can be placed with some certainty by tracing his ministry through Acts and the relevant references in the epistle itself. Paul stayed in Corinth for about one and one-half years during his second missionary journey. In the fall of A.D. 52 he traveled to Ephesus en route to Jerusalem (Acts 18:18-23). After staying in Antioch, Paul returned to Ephesus on his third missionary journey in the fall of A.D. 53 and stayed there about two and one-half years (Acts 19:1-10). It was during this stay in Ephesus he apparently wrote to the Corinthians at least twice (5:9-11). 1 Corinthians was written after the "lost" letter mentioned in 5:9. Therefore, 1 Corinthians was probably written near the end of his stay in Ephesus (16:8), or about A.D. 56, because he had already made his plans to leave Asia (16:5-7).

The Destination

Paul wrote "To the church of God which is at Corinth" (1:2) which he founded on his second missionary journey (3:6,10; 4:15; Acts 18:1-18). The church was made up mostly of Gentiles (12:2), but since Crispus, the ruler of the synagogue, was converted (Acts 18:8), other Jews were surely present. Apollos, a Jew from Alexandria, helped strengthen the church in Corinth after Paul's first departure from there (3:6; Acts 18:18-19:1).

Corinth was refounded in 46 B.C. by Julius Caesar after having been completely destroyed a hundred years earlier by the Romans. In 27 B.C. it was made the capital of the province of Achaia. Its strategic position between the Peloponnesus and northern Greece, and between the Adriatic and Aegean seas, made it a busy commercial trade center. The city was populated by Roman colonists, many Greeks, and a Jewish colony with their own synagogue (Acts 18:4). Corinth had a reputation as a place of drunkenness, profligacy and immorality. Contributing to this reputation were the factors of abundant wealth, many sailors and travelers passing through, and the temple of the Greek goddess Aphrodite with its thousands of temple prostitutes.

The Occasion

During Paul's extended stay at Ephesus on his third missionary journey, he evidently wrote the Corinthian church a letter which was misunderstood and subsequently lost (5:9-11). Paul learned about the misunderstanding and other problems in Corinth from the household of Chloe (1:11). He then heard from an official delegation of men from Corinth (Stephanas, Fortunatus, and Achaicus, 16:17) who brought specific questions regarding issues that were

causing problems in the church. Paul wrote 1 Corinthians to correct any misunderstandings and answer these questions. He begins some of the sections of his letter by addressing each specific topic with the words "Now concerning" (7:1,25; 8:1; 12:1; 16:1,12).

The Purpose

The purpose of 1 Corinthians was to correct the problems in the church at Corinth and answer questions that were troublesome to the church. Chapters 1-4 appear devoted to the problems of divisions in the church as reported by Chloe. Chapters 5-6 then address the problem of immorality probably reported also by Chloe. Finally, chapters 7-16:4 answer the specific questions of the Corinthians. Chapter 15 stands out in its doctrinal emphasis on the resurrection which has led some to believe that Paul thought this was the Corinthians' foundational problem. This could be true, since a misunderstanding about the reality of a bodily resurrection could lead to license and "liberated" behavior (Cf. 4:8), which would in turn lead to problems in practical areas. But this can be subsumed under Paul's primary concern to correct the problems in the church so that unity would be restored.

Argument

Paul's introduction to 1 Corinthians (1:1-9) reminds the church of his apostolic authority and their standing before God as "saints" (1:1-2). In spite of the problems he will address, he expresses his thanksgiving for their salvation and gifts, and his confidence in their blameless condition at Christ's return (1:4-9). Though his treatment of them in the letter is very strong at times, he always appeals to them as Christians who should live up to their calling.

The first item on Paul's agenda is his answer to the report about divisions in the church (1:10-4:21). The problem, as reported by Chloe's household (1:10-17) was a lack of unity caused by sectarian attitudes among them. Paul argues that there is no basis for regarding one man over another, for the body of Christ is not segmented by its nature. His emphasis among them was preaching the gospel, and the very nature of this activity disallowed boasting in human wisdom and ability, which the Corinthians evidently did.

Thus Paul gets to the root of the problem by addressing the reasons for their divisions (1:18-4:5). The Corinthians' misunderstood the nature of the gospel message (1:18-3:4) and the gospel messenger (3:5-4:5). They had an incorrect attitude toward the gospel message because they treated it as a form of worldly wisdom. This attitude reflected the Greek emphasis on clever and novel philosophy delivered through eloquent oratory. But Paul argues that the gospel is not worldly wisdom (1:18-2:5). As the wisdom and power of God, the gospel is able to do what philosophy cannot--it saves (1:18-25). The proof of its saving power over philosophy is the Corinthian church itself (1:26-31), for it is composed of those of lower estate, unlikely candidates for the kind of salvation which might be wrought by worldly cleverness and prestigious philosophy. This allows boasting only in the Lord, not men. The final proof that the gospel is not worldly wisdom is from Paul's manner of preaching (2:1-5). He did not preach with impressive or persuasive eloquence, but his message and manner demonstrated simplicity and his own weakness.

After proving that the gospel is not worldly wisdom, Paul shows that it is instead heavenly wisdom (2:6-3:4). The very nature of God's wisdom is that it is not of this world, but

secret, and revealed and communicated through His Spirit (2:6-12). Thus it cannot be apprehended by anyone, but only those of a spiritual mind (2:14-3:4). The Corinthians are rebuked as carnal-minded, as displayed in their factitious attitudes, and thus are unable to receive the true understanding of God's wisdom (3:1-4). Their carnality has led them to misunderstand not only the nature of the gospel, but also the ministers of the gospel. This is what led them to elevate one minister over another.

Paul then explains the true nature of the gospel ministry to correct their attitudes toward the gospel messengers (3:5-4:5). First, he explains that ministers of the gospel are fellow-workers with God (3:5-17). God is behind any fruit; the most Paul can say he did in Corinth was to plant (3:6-7). In the work of building the church, each man's labors will be tested and rewarded at the judgment seat of Christ (3:8-17), thus gospel messengers do not answer ultimately to men. Paul then argues that God has given each of His ministers to the whole church for its mutual benefit (3:18-23). There is therefore no basis for dividing them according to the dictates of worldly wisdom and eloquence. Finally, he explains that each minister is accountable to God as a steward, and in light of this, man's opinion of him is of little consequence (4:1-5).

Having surfaced and corrected the misconceptions about the gospel and its ministers, Paul now makes an application to their problem of divisions (4:6-21). To do this, he first contrasts the Corinthians' prideful attitude to the apostles' lowly position as "fools for Christ's sake" (4:6-13). The Corinthians may have thought themselves already reigning with Christ and thus free from earthly authorities (4:8). Then Paul makes an affectionate appeal for them to follow his example (4:14-17). He finally warns against those who are puffed up with pride and threatens to come in power and discipline, though he would prefer to come in love (4:18-21). His reference to those "puffed up" (4:18) is general, but no doubt he has in mind the immoral man he is about to describe (5:1). In surfacing the root of the problem of divisions in the church, Paul has shown it is due to incorrect attitudes about the gospel and its ministers. And further, this attitude is caused by pride in worldly wisdom and standards.

He then turns to the matter of immorality reported in the church (5:1-6:20). The first matter concerns sexual immorality between a man and his mother-in-law (5:1-13). Paul is amazed that this sin is even tolerated, much less that it is a source of pride in the church (5:1-2). He gives directions for immediate discipline of the man (5:3-8). The Corinthians evidently misunderstood his earlier letter which warned them about associating with sexually immoral people in the church, so he clarifies his previous instruction (5:9-13).

The second matter he addresses is that of lawsuits between believers (6:1-11). Some in the Corinthian church were bringing their grievances against one another before unbelievers instead of the church (6:1). Paul argues that the church should settle such grievances because believers will judge in the future, there are able arbitrators in the church, and the church will be perceived as deficient if they don't (6:2-8). It is better to accept the wrong than to bring such disrepute to the church. Besides, this conduct before unbelievers is inconsistent with their status as kingdom citizens (6:9-11).

The third matter of immorality Paul addresses is the matter of the body's sanctity (6:12-20). Evidently, a libertarian philosophy was prevalent in the church which led to loose living. But Paul states that liberty is to be limited on the basis of the activity's helpfulness and its

enslaving capacity (6:12). In relation to sexual activity, the body is not to be joined to harlots because it is united to God (6:13-17). Therefore, he exhorts them to flee sexual immorality as a sin which harms the body that God now owns (6:18-20).

The indication in 7:1 is that Paul has finished addressing the problem's reported by Chloe's household and is now taking up the questions sent through the official delegation. These are "the things of which you wrote to me," and his answers to these things comprises the contents of 7:1-16:4.

The first question he answers concerns marriage and divorce (7:1-40). The Corinthians obviously thought it was commendable to avoid sexual relations and marriage altogether. The reason for this thinking is unknown, but might be attributed to a belief that they were already reigning with Christ in His kingdom (4:8), and therefore marriage and sex was of no consequence. Paul thus gives his approval to sexual relations between partners and to the act of marriage, unless one is enabled to remain celibate (7:1-9). To those who are already married, he advises they remain so, unless an unbelieving spouse insists on leaving (7:10-16). He supports this with the contention that all should remain in the state in which they were called as Christians (7:17-24). Paul's final instructions are for the unmarried (7:25-40). Considering the shortness of the time left in this age, he suggests that there is good reason for people to not alter their marital status (7:25-31). A significant consideration is the freedom one enjoys in the unmarried state (7:32-35). Furthermore, he states the conditions under which fathers may give or withhold their daughters in marriage (7:36-38). He concludes with advice to widows (7:39-40).

The second question concerns food offered to idols (8:1-11:1). Paul begins by stating the superiority of love over knowledge (8:1-3). The Corinthians were knowledgeable about idols, and this puffed them with pride, but they lacked love. Not everyone shared an accurate knowledge about idols, and this caused some to violate their consciences by eating meat that had been offered in idol worship (8:4-8). Therefore, it is better to voluntarily restrict one's freedom to eat, lest a weaker brother eat against his conscience (8:9-13).

To illustrate this, Paul uses his own restriction of liberty as an example (9:1-27). As an apostle, Paul had many rights, including the right to receive support from those to whom he ministered. His arguments for this right are laid out in 9:4-14. He has basic physical needs just like anyone else (9:4-6). Also, those in secular practice have their needs supplied from their work (9:7), just as the law teaches (9:8-10). Furthermore, Paul deserves at least a physical return for his spiritual ministry in Corinth (9:11-12). Finally, the Lord has commanded that those who serve him in ministry should be able to make a living from that ministry (9:13-14). Yet Paul gave up this right in Corinth (9:12), which may explain why he worked making tents there (Acts 18:3).

The reason he gave up his right to receive support, Paul explains, was that he might have the privilege of boasting that he preached the gospel at no charge (9:15-18). A corresponding reason was that he might win as many men as possible by not giving any possible cause for offense or accusation (9:19-23). Paul has not said it outright, but his liberty is controlled by his love for people and God. This is the point he made at the beginning of his discussion (8:1-3), which the Corinthians so needed to hear. His concern for others and the gospel of Christ compels him to use self-control in exercising his liberty (9:24-27), thus the Corinthians should, also.

His next argument for the proper use of liberty takes the form of a warning from Israel's abuse of liberty (10:1-13). His reminder of Israel's history shows that though they had a privileged position before God, they abused that position and were punished severely (10:1-5). This is an example for the Corinthians so that they might avoid those same sins and their consequences (10:6-10). Instead, they must not be overconfident in testing, but trust in God for deliverance from the temptation (10:12-13). The inference is that the Corinthians should not take their privileged position of liberty in Christ and abuse it to the extent of tempting God or causing another to sin.

It is best, therefore, to flee from idolatry (10:14-22). Paul argues that the cup of the Lord's Supper is an actual communion with the Lord, just as the Jewish priests eat the sacrifice as part of their service to God (10:15-18). Thus, when a believer participates in an idol-feast, he is communing with demons (10:19-22).

Paul summarizes the principles for conduct in areas of conscience, particularly the eating of meat offered to idols (10:23-11:1). The general principle is that one should limit his liberty if it will help another (10:23-24). Therefore, a believer should not eat meat offered to idols if it is an issue with his own conscience or with the one who offers it (10:25-30). In conclusion, Paul says all things should be done to the glory of God and for the benefit of others, just as is seen in his own example (10:31-11:1). The Corinthians must stop proudly flaunting their liberty, and start loving others.

The next questions Paul addresses concern disorders in the assembly during public worship (11:2-14:40). Three issues are mentioned. The first question is over the covering of women in worship (11:2-16). Paul explains the subordination of relationships (11:2-3) in creation and applies this to worship (11:4-6). A Woman is to be covered when praying or prophesying as a sign that she is under authority. She is not to let her hair loose as a demonstration of liberty or rebellion (11:5-6). This principle is evident from the created order (11:7-12) and natural instinct (11:13-16). Interestingly, Paul never mentions any covering until he affirms that long hair is given to the woman "for a covering" (11:15). Evidently the controversy in Corinth was caused by Gentile women who misunderstood Christian liberty and did not wear the customary Jewish veil, and further, even let down their hair like accused prostitutes.

The second issue in the assembly's worship concerned conduct at the Lord's Supper (11:17-34). At the Supper, factions were evident as people ate with inconsideration of others or became drunk (11:17-22). This causes Paul to remind them of the spiritual purpose of the Supper (11:23-26), warn them about the consequences of sharing in it in an unworthy manner (11:27-32), and exhort them to proper conduct (11:33-34). Once more the sinful pride of the Corinthians was exhibited and rebuked in favor of a concern for others.

The third and final issue in the public worship meetings was the use and misuse of spiritual gifts (12:1-14:40). As will be seen, the Corinthians elevated the minor gift of tongues to major importance, and then exercised it without consideration of others. Paul's first words explain the manifestation of the Spirit's gifts (12:1-31). Their manifestation must be under the control of the Spirit (12:1-3) Who gives different gifts as He wills (12:4-11). Believers are one in the body of Christ and must therefore use their gifts in harmony, all being important to the whole (12:12-31). More importantly, they must use them in love or they are worthless to others

(13:1-13). The characteristics of love and the permanence of love over the gifts are explained here. Again, Paul recognizes the need for love in the haughty Corinthian congregation.

Finally, Paul instructs them in the proper use of the gifts (14:1-40). Prophecy should be valued far above tongues in the body, because prophecy edifies the church, whereas tongues only edifies the speaker (14:1-5). Tongues profits no one because they are not understood by themselves. In fact, they were originally given as a sign of judgment for unbelief (14:6-25). Therefore, tongues and prophecy must be carefully regulated in public worship according to the principle of mutual edification (14:26-36). Women are also not to participate in the judgment of a prophecy (14:33b-36). To sum up, Paul states the Corinthians can demonstrate their spirituality by obeying his commands (not by showing off their gifts) and conducting their services "decently and in order" (14:37-40).

Another question that reached the apostle was prompted by some in Corinth who denied a resurrection from the dead (15:1-58; especially vs. 12). Paul shows that the resurrection is a crucial pillar of the gospel which saved them (15:1-11). Specifically, Christ's resurrection is crucial to three areas (15:12-34). First, it is essential to salvation, lest the Corinthians believed in vain (15:12-19). Second, it is essential to God's program for our future resurrection and His triumphant reign (15:20-28). Third, it is critical as a motivation for righteous living, else believers suffer in vain (15:29-34). Whatever other misconceptions the Corinthians had are addressed in Paul's explanation of the Christian's resurrection (15:35-58). He answers two questions in particular: "How are the dead raised, and what kind of body will they have?" (15:35). He first answers about the kind of body by showing that Christians must be raised with the same kind of body that Christ had in resurrection (15:36-49). Then he answers about how the body is raised by declaring its momentary transformation at the coming of the Lord. This transformation is to immortality and final victory over death (15:50-57). The Christian's certainty of resurrection is the basis of an exhortation to be steadfast in the work of the Lord (15:58).

Perhaps the denial of resurrection by some caused some of the disorders in the church at Corinth. If they thought the resurrection had already occurred in some spiritual way, they might assume they were now ruling with Christ and free from earthly moral restraints.

Paul's final answer concerns the preparation of the collection for his visit (16:1-4). He instructs them in how they should give, and in how the gift will be carried to Jerusalem.

Paul's conclusion to the letter (16:5-24) concerns his, Timothy's, and Apollos' intentions to visit Corinth (16:5-12). In addition, he gives some personal exhortations, most significantly, that they do everything in love (16:13-19). This is named repeatedly in the letter as a quality lacking in the church. Paul then closes with some final greetings and an assurance of his love (16:19-24).

Paul's first epistle to the Corinthians contains some strong words and corrective measures. Yet if the church there would humble themselves and learn to love, their problems would dissolve. Their response to Paul's advice will become the occasion for 2 Corinthians.

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Summary and Outline of 2 Corinthians

by

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Introduction

The Author

It is almost universally accepted that Paul wrote this epistle. The relationship to 1 Corinthians is obvious. It is apparently the "sorrowful" letter he refers to in 2:4 and 7:8,12. There are also similar references to adversaries and open doors of opportunity (1:8-10; 2:12-13; 1 Cor. 16:7-9). In addition, he refers to the issue of the immoral offender introduced in 1 Corinthians (2:5-11; 7:12; 1 Cor. 5:1-8) and the collection for the saints in Jerusalem (chs. 8-9; 1 Cor. 16:1-4). Moreover, part of 2 Corinthians is clearly the apostle's defense against the charge of fickleness due to his change of plans from that announced in 1 Corinthians (1:13-2:4; 1 Cor. 16:5-6). Most agree that the contents of the letter are so characteristically Pauline that his authorship cannot be denied, but there are critics who deny the unity of the letter, in spite of no manuscript evidence to support their theories. Tampering with the unity of the epistle has only proved to create more problems than it solves.

The Date and Place

Assuming that 1 Corinthians was written in the spring of A.D. 56 from Ephesus, and that there is a close connection to the second epistle, the date and place of 2 Corinthians can easily be established. Enough time elapsed between the writing of the two letters to allow Titus to deliver 1 Corinthians to Corinth (7:13-15) and meet Paul in Macedonia after a failed attempt to meet him in Troas (2:12-13; 7:5-7). It appears most likely that Paul wrote 2 Corinthians from Macedonia in response to Titus' encouraging report which Paul received from him there (2:13; 7:5-7). Most assume the exact location in Macedonia was Philippi, but Thessalonica has been suggested. The date would then be the late summer or fall of A.D. 56 since only a few months had elapsed from the time of Paul's departure from Ephesus immediately after Pentecost in the late spring (1 Cor. 16:8).

The Destination

The destination of the second epistle was the same as the first (1:1). The Corinthian church had been founded by Paul on his second missionary journey (Acts 18:1-18). Corinth was positioned in Achaia such that its harbors brought abundant trade and wealth to the area together with accompanying vice. The wickedness of the city had its corrupting effect on the church there, as seen in the problems addressed in 1 Corinthians.

The Occasion

The immediate occasion of the letter is tied to the sending and result of 1 Corinthians. Paul had sent the corrective "sorrowful" letter by Titus to Corinth (2:4; 7:13-15) with arrangements to meet him in Troas with news of the church's response to his instructions (2:12-13; 7:5-7). Paul proceeded to Troas where he found an open door to preach, but the failure of Titus to meet him there caused such concern that he moved on to Macedonia (2:12-13). In Macedonia Paul met new troubles to add to his inner distress (7:5), but was able to begin the collection for the Jerusalem saints (8:1-7). Finally, Titus arrived in Macedonia with his report from the Corinthian church (7:6). The report assured Paul of an overall favorable response (7:7-16) with some residue of opposition. The good news about the repentance of the Corinthians

(2:3-9; 7:6-12) prompted him to write and express his joy. The bad news about those who attacked him for changing his plans (1:15-2:2) and challenged his authority (10:2,10-12; 11:4,12-13) prompted him to write in defense of his reputation.

The Purpose

Paul's purpose in 2 Corinthians is three-fold as seen from the occasion for his writing. First, he desires to affirm his love for the Corinthians and renew his relations with them (chs 1-7). His affection for them is the reason behind his change of plans that brought the charge of fickleness (1:15-2:2). His relationship with them is also dictated by the nature of his New Covenant ministry (3:1-6:10). Second, Paul encourages and arranges for the collection he will carry back to Jerusalem (chs. 8-9). Third, he defends his apostolic authority and message against those who challenge him (chs. 10-13). This defense occupies most of the epistle and is woven into his personal expressions of affection in the early chapters.

Argument

Most observe that this epistle is the least systematically arranged of Paul's writings. Still the major divisions can be marked off according to his purposes in writing. After the introduction (1:1-2), the first main division is an explanation of Paul's ministry (1:3-7:16) in which Paul affirms his relationship with the Corinthians, explains the nature of the New Covenant ministry, and appeals for their affection.

Paul begins by explaining his relationship with the Corinthian church (1:3-2:17). He declares from the start how much he has suffered for the sake of the churches, especially for the church at Corinth (1:3-11). Certainly his reference to comfort in 1:3-7 is based on his recent meeting with Titus which greatly encouraged him and resulted in the writing of this letter. The deliverance of God from the "sentence of death" (1:8-11) raises a theme which will recur throughout the epistle, that is, the theme of the apostle's weakness and God's sufficiency.

In affirming his relationship with the church, Paul declares his sincerity toward them (1:12-2:16a). He affirms his sincerity with a boast of a clear conscience in his treatment of them (1:12-14). He then defends this declaration of sincerity in light of his recent treatment of them (1:15-2:16a). Evidently, some leaders or false teachers in Corinth had charged him with inconsistency and insincerity when he changed his plans about visiting them (1:15-2:2). Paul explains that he did not take his planned visit lightly, nor was he fickle, but his ministry is directed by the Spirit of God who is consistent with His promises (1:17-22). His reason for the change in plans was that he did not want to make them sorrowful by his visit (1:23-2:2). A visit in the midst of the many uncorrected problems would have been grievous to both parties.

His sincerity is also defended in connection with his previous correspondence (2:3-11). He wrote so that the source of his sorrow might become the source of his joy. Paul is referring to the incestuous man he instructed them about in his previous letter (1 Cor. 5:1-8). It was a "test case" to test their love for him by their willingness to obey and discipline the offender, which they did (2:6-9). Paul declares his forgiveness of the man, thus removing the main barrier that kept him from visiting them (2:10-11).

His sincerity is also exemplified by the account of Titus' report in Macedonia (2:12-16a). He describes his great anxiety before he heard of their response and the joyous relief he

experienced after Titus brought the good news of their love and obedience. His thanks to God for this victory in spite of his weakness demonstrates that his sufficiency in ministering to the church is from God (2:16b-17). This leads to the following section on the nature of his ministry.

The digression on the nature of the New Covenant ministry (3:1-6:10) is not irrelevant to Paul's defense of his relationship to the Corinthians. It is a spiritual ministry of sincerity and divine sufficiency such that the minister can not exalt himself, as Paul has probably been charged with doing and others are now trying to do in his absence. The very commendation of his ministry is spiritual in the hearts of the Corinthians (3:1-3), which should make his own defense and commendation unnecessary. His confidence in the ministry (3:4-18) is directly related to the nature of the New Covenant ministry. God is his sufficiency in this ministry; it is not self-confidence, because only the Spirit can give life (3:4-6). His boldness of speech is due to the exceeding glory of this spiritual ministry over the ministry of the law (3:7-11). The Spirit can remove the "veil" from unbelieving hearts, bring liberation from the death of the law, and transform the new believer into the likeness of Christ (3:12-18).

The nature of the New Covenant ministry therefore affects how Paul preaches (4:1-12). He does not use deceit and trickery, but handles the Word of God in truth (4:1-2). If men still do not respond, it is not the fault of his preaching, but the "god of this age" blinds men (4:3-4). Only God can bring light out of this satanic darkness, that is why Paul does not promote himself, but Christ (4:5-6). As a minister, Paul is but a weak and dying vessel, thus the life-giving power of his preaching is from God (4:7-12). The conclusion implied by his argument is that no one should be able to charge Paul with self-interest or self-aggrandizement.

This conclusion also applies to Paul's motivations in the New Covenant ministry (4:13-5:19). His first great motivation comes from the assurance of resurrection (4:13-5:11). He endures suffering in the ministry because his focus is on the future glory (4:16-18) with its guarantee of a new body (5:1-8). His resurrection will cause him to appear before the judgment seat of Christ to give an account for his work (5:9-11). Knowing this motivates Paul to "persuade men" in the gospel ministry. His second important motivation is the love of Christ for men (5:12-19). The sacrificial love of Christ compels Paul to minister and distinguishes him from those whose boasting is focused on external appearances (5:12-15). His selfless love gives him a new perspective toward men and Christ (5:16-17), and brings a new responsibility to help men be reconciled to God (5:18-19). Therefore, Paul's motivations are pure before God and in harmony with Christ's love for men.

The messengers of the New Covenant ministry consequently are obliged as Christ's ambassadors to urge men to be reconciled to God (5:20-6:10). Paul appeals to the Corinthians to appropriate the grace of God and to respond to it accordingly in their conduct, because as he has demonstrated, there is no reason to take offense at his ministry (6:3-10). In every way and in every aspect of his relationship to the Corinthians he has proved himself blameless. Paul wants his ministry record to speak for itself and silence any unfair charges against his sincerity and loyalty to the Corinthian church.

His appeal is more direct in 6:11-7:16 as he urges a mutually affectionate relationship. He pleads for an affirmation of their affection toward him comparable to his (6:11-13). His sudden mention of immoral associations suggests that these are the obstacles in their relationship hindering them from openness toward him (6:14-7:1). Separation from immoral

relationships will prove their love of God and their affection for the apostle. Paul's earnestness is seen in his repeated appeal to them for an open heart toward him (7:2-16). He declares emphatically his concern for the Corinthians (7:2-4) and uses his reaction to Titus' report as evidence (7:5-16). He explains his great anxiety due to uncertainty about their feelings toward him, until Titus reported their affection and repentance which elated him. Paul found additional encouragement in the joy of Titus resulting from their reaction.

In affirming his affection for the Corinthians, Paul has also defended his reputation against those who had accused him of insincerity and deception. His motives are pure and his love genuine in accordance with the nature of the New Covenant ministry of which he is a divinely ordained and empowered minister. Now that the relationship has been repaired, Paul is free to address the business of the collection for the saints in Judea.

The grace that has been demonstrated to the Corinthians in their repentance is the basis of Paul's explanation and instruction about the collection (8:1-9:15). In this division, Paul changes subjects in order to explain about the arrangements for the collection and urge the Corinthians to complete their giving. First, he discusses his arrangement for the prepared gift (8:1-24). His appeal to the Corinthians starts with a report on the generosity of the Macedonians (8:1-6). The grace of God was evident in them as they gave liberally and willingly from their poverty. Paul desires the Corinthians to give as they are motivated by the same grace of God (8:6), so he exhorts them on the basis of grace (8:7-15). He refuses to command them to give, but prefers to test their love in Christ by giving them opportunity to show their concern for others in finishing the gift they had begun a year earlier.

Paul's discussion of the arrangements for the collection assumes their willing cooperation (8:16-9:5). He endorses the messengers he is sending (8:16-23) and appeals for a loving reception of them (8:24). He explains the reason behind the early sending of the messengers was that the gift might be ready ahead of his arrival and not embarrass him or the Corinthians, since he had boasted confidently of their willingness a year ago to the Macedonians (9:1-5). Also, he argues, advance preparation will allow them to give out of generosity and not by compulsion to save face (9:5).

Paul expands this theme of generosity by setting forth some arguments for generous giving (9:6-15). Those who give generously experience an abundance of God's grace (9:6-11). Furthermore, the recipients of the gift will not only have their needs met, but will respond with thanksgiving to God (9:12-14), as Paul demonstrates in his closing exclamation of thanks (9:15). It is clear from this section Paul is confident of the Corinthians' positive response to his appeal for the collection.

In the final division of the epistle, Paul vehemently defends his apostolic authority which is being challenged in Corinth by some who have labeled themselves apostles (10:1-13:10). He begins his defense by explaining the nature and exercise of his apostolic authority (10:1-18). He was gentle among them in the past, but plans on being bold in the exercise of his authority if his detractors persist (10:1-6). They have mistakenly judged him by this outer appearance of meekness and ignored his spiritual weapons of warfare. But Paul reminds them that Christ gave him his authority, and he is more than willing to exercise it among them to refute the charge that he is bluffing in his letters (10:7-11). Moreover, Paul recognizes the limits

his apostolic authority has placed on him (10:12-18). He will not boast to commend himself, for he is limited to what God has done through him.

Having established the fact that only God's commendation is important, Paul then engages in his own boasting to show the folly of this standard of measure (11:1-12:13). His grounds for boasting (11:1-21) include his jealousy for the doctrinal purity of the Corinthians (11:1-4). He also boasts because there is such a great contrast between him and the false apostles (11:5-15). He is inferior to no apostle, but voluntarily abased himself for the sake of the gospel among them (11:5-9). This was a proof of his love for them and a distinguishing difference from the others who wanted to be regarded as apostles (11:10-12). But there is no comparison; they are false apostles and deceptive ministers of Satan (11:13-15). Paul's sarcastic tone is evident as he begs the Corinthians' indulgence in his boasting like the false apostles (11:16-21).

His boasting begins with a certification of his Jewish heritage (11:22). He continues with a catalog of his experiences of suffering in the ministry (11:23-29). If the false apostles want to compare their sacrificial labors, Paul will put them to shame. He then takes a different direction by insisting he will only boast in his weaknesses (11:30-12:10). He recalls his fearful flight from Damascus in a basket (11:30-33). Furthermore, he sarcastically demonstrates he has plenty to boast about in the vision of "a man" (obviously Paul) caught up to Paradise, but he is resolved to only boast about his weaknesses (12:1-10). Therefore, he boasts of his "thorn in the flesh", a probable physical disability, that keeps him from being exalted more than he should be (12:7-10). In this way, by taking pleasure in weakness and suffering, he is able to experience the power of God in his life and ministry.

This section's concluding remark by Paul explains the need for such uncharacteristic boasting (12:11-13). They should have recognized his authenticity by the presence of "the signs of an apostle" he performed among them and his concern in not being a financial burden to them. Paul has defended his apostolic authority by matching the tactics of the false apostles in boasting of themselves. But all this would have been unnecessary if the Corinthians' had recognized the miraculous power and self-sacrifice that he manifested when he was with them.

A final assertion of his authority is evident in Paul's remarks about his impending visit. He reaffirms his intention not to be a financial burden to them and his love for them (12:14-18). He also expresses his fear that his arrival will find them involved in remnants of immorality (12:19-21). Paul's statement about this being his third visit (13:1) shows he had made a visit to them sometime after the writing of 1 Corinthians. Whereas he did not fully exercise his authority at that time, he now threatens to demonstrate the power of God on his impending visit (13:1-4). Thus he appeals for them to examine their relationship to the Lord (13:5-6). He finishes with a prayer for their honorable response to his authority so that he will not be forced to manifest its disciplinary power (13:7-10). The epistle closes with some brief exhortations, a greeting, and a benediction (13:11-14).

Through this letter, Paul has communicated his fervent love for the Corinthians and his desire that they complete their repentance by recognizing his authority and forsaking any remaining immorality. He apparently assumes their positive response as he prepares to visit and finalize the collection of the offering. The defense of his apostolic authority was ingeniously argued, but in such a way that his great love for the Corinthian Christians was also impressed upon them.

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 - A. Paul's relationship with the Corinthians 1:3-2:17
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 - a. God's design in these sufferings 1:3-7
 - b. God's deliverance in these sufferings 1:8-11
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 - 2) In connection with his past correspondence 2:3-11
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 - a) His anxiety at Troas 2:12-13
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Summary and Outline of Galatians

by

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Introduction

The Author

That Paul was the author is generally accepted, even by the higher critics. The church fathers attested to this and there is a preponderance of internal verification. Paul names himself as the author in the first verse and in 5:2. Also, the autobiographical nature of chapters 1 and 2 harmonizes with the record of Paul's life and ministry in Acts. Moreover, the theology is definitely Pauline in emphasis and development.

The Date and Place

It is difficult to date precisely the writing of this epistle. The date is affected by the view taken of the location of the churches to which Paul wrote. Were these churches in northern Galatia (North-Galatian theory) or southern Galatia (South-Galatian theory)? As will be seen, proponents of the North-Galatian theory believe the letter was written during Paul's third missionary journey from either Ephesus or Macedonia. This would date it at A.D. 53-56. Contemporary scholars, who have embraced the South-Galatian theory, believe the letter was written after the first missionary journey but before the Jerusalem council. Shortly after Paul and Barnabas arrived back in Antioch, Peter visited there and committed his error of withdrawing his fellowship from the Gentiles in favor of the Jews (2:11-13). This, and the report of Judaizers invading the churches of Galatia, prompted Paul to write the letter before attending the Jerusalem council. Therefore, the date is established at A.D. 49 and the place of origin at Syrian Antioch. The subject matter of the epistle supports this earlier date, because the issues of justification by faith and sanctification by faith were controversies in the earliest years of the church, as seen in Acts.

The Destination

Paul addresses his letter to "the churches of Galatia" (1:2). The term "Galatia" had two possible meanings in Paul's day. It could be an ethnic reference to the Gauls who had migrated from western Europe and settled in the north-central regions of Asia Minor, or it could be a political reference to the Roman province named Galatia which included the southern regions of Asia Minor.

Older commentators generally favored the ethnic use of "Galatia", or the North-Galatian theory. They contend that Paul visited these northern cities on his second and third missionary journeys (Acts 16:6; 18:23). In support, they cite the tradition of the early church, the lack of any mention of illness (4:13) on his first missionary journey through south Galatia, Luke's alleged inclination to use territorial, not Roman provincial, titles to describe Paul's itinerary, and the similarity of the characteristics revealed in the epistle with the Gauls' reputed behavior (fickle, quarrelsome, boastful, immoral, lovable, exasperating).

Since the research and advocacy of Sir William Ramsay, most scholars are convinced that Paul was addressing the churches in the wider political province called Galatia. These would be the churches he planted on his first missionary journey (Acts 13:13-14:23) before the Jerusalem council (Acts 15). Thus the visit referred to in 2:1-10 must have been the famine relief visit of Acts 11:27-30. Support for this view comes in several ways. First, "Galatia" was

the only collective title that could have been used to describe the different cities and regions Paul visited in that part of Asia Minor (Cf. 1 Cor. 16:19, "churches of Asia"). Second, The major travel routes went through the cities of the south and Paul would have traveled these in keeping with his characteristic strategy to evangelize the major centers of population and commerce. Also, the Judaizers would have been more likely to pursue Paul in the south. Furthermore, if Galatians was written after the Jerusalem council, Paul would likely have referred to the important decree in his refutation of the Judaizers and Peter would not have acted the way he did with Gentiles (2:11-21). In addition, Barnabas, referred to three times in chapter 2, would have been familiar to the churches in the south, not the north, because he was with Paul on his first journey, but not the second. Finally, the delegates who accompanied Paul in delivering the collection to Jerusalem (1 Cor. 16:1-4) include Gaius and Timothy from the south (Acts 20:4), but no one from the north.

While the evidence for either view is not conclusive, the South-Galatian theory appears to be the more likely of the two. The arguments for the North-Galatian theory can be answered adequately. Still, the final verdict does not seriously affect the interpretation of the epistle.

The Gauls were barbarians who lived in western Europe, but migrated into Italy, and finally Asia Minor, where they were confined to the north-central and eastern regions. The name Galatia referred to this specific area until 25 B.C. when it was converted to a Roman province that soon included new areas to the south. Roman writers commented on the distinct racial characteristics of the Galatians, which included great impressionability and fickleness. The population of Galatia was also composed of minor segments of Phrygians, Greeks, Romans, and Jews.

The address of the epistle to the Galatians (1:2) shows that it is a circular letter meant to be passed from church to church in Galatia. Paul visited the southern regions of Galatia on his first missionary journey and planted churches there (13:13-14:23). In the epistle, he assumes the position of founder of these churches (1:8,11; 4:19-20). The Christians of Galatia were mostly Gentiles, as is seen from their past idolatry (4:8) and the attempt by Judaizers to circumcise them (5:2; 6:12). There may have been some Jews present, however, as apparently is assumed in 3:27-29 and the use of the Old Testament in Paul's argument (3:7-12; 4:21-31).

The Occasion

The immediate occasion for the epistle is stated clearly in 1:6-10. Paul had received a report that some false teachers were perverting the gospel he had preached. These false teachers were Judaizers who tried to turn the Galatians from the grace of God to the law as a means of sanctification (3:3). They were pressuring the Galatians to be circumcised (5:2) and observe Jewish "days and months and seasons and years" (4:10). They had also attacked Paul's apostleship, as seen from his defense in chapters 1-2. Furthermore, the conflicts among them evidently resulted in dissension and quarreling (5:15). The effect of the false teaching was taking its toll as some had already begun to turn from the grace of God in the gospel (1:6; 3:1-3). Paul wrote in response to the personal, doctrinal, and practical assaults reported in the Galatian churches.

The Purpose

The purpose of the letter has three related aspects. First, Paul wrote to defend the authenticity of his apostleship which the false teachers had questioned. By doing this, they were also questioning the credibility of Paul's gospel. In the first two chapters, Paul argues that his gospel is not of human origin, but from a revelation of Jesus Christ. Next, he defends the doctrinal position of justification and sanctification by faith. He argues for the grace of God and against the law as the means of sanctification (chapters 3-4). Third, in defending grace, Paul is careful to argue against its perversion in license. He argues for a life controlled by the Spirit (chapters 5-6).

Argument

Paul begins the defense of his apostleship and his gospel in the very first verse. He reminds the Galatians that his apostleship is not from men, but is from the risen Lord Jesus Christ. This would include his message also, the substance of which is given in 1:4. Paul opens with no commendation or thanksgiving as is other letters, but immediately addresses the business at hand. The fickle Galatians have already begun to turn away from the grace of God to "a different gospel" (1:6). His condemnation of those who are responsible for this perversion is in the strongest terms, showing the seriousness of the perversion (1:8-9). Paul does not fashion his message to please men, but as a servant of God he pleases God (1:10).

The first phase of his argument is a personal defense of his apostolic authority and the message entrusted to him (1:11-2:21). He argues that he received the gospel directly from God (1:11-24); not from any man, but through a divine revelation of Jesus Christ (1:11-12). To support this, he recounts the circumstances of his conversion (1:13-17) and his independence from the apostles at Jerusalem (1:18-24). His commission to preach to the Gentiles and his message were quite apart from human influence.

The apostles at Jerusalem did confirm Paul's gospel, however (2:1-10). Fourteen years after his first trip there, he returned again to explain his calling and message (1:1-2). The outcome of his presentation to the apostles was that his refusal to have Titus circumcised was upheld and nothing was added to his gospel when they welcomed him into the apostolic fellowship (2:1-9). He was only encouraged to remember the poor (2:10). Paul has shown that his gospel is authentic, and from the start he has not conceded to legalistic demands.

Another confirmation of his gospel of grace is illustrated by the account of his rebuke of Peter's inconsistent conduct (2:11-21). When Peter came to Antioch he ate with the Gentiles, but then withdrew from them for fear of the Jews who came later. Other Jews, including Barnabas, followed him. This drew a strong rebuke from Paul in a personal confrontation (2:11-14). As a saved Jew, Peter was living free from the law as a Gentile, but his actions implied he expected saved Gentiles to submit to the Jewish law. Paul's doctrinal justification for his confrontation points out the inconsistency of Peter's actions (2:15-21). As saved Jews, Paul argues, it is clear that justification is apart from the law through faith in Jesus Christ (2:15-16). A return to the law is inconsistent with the believer's death to the law and life in God (2:17-20). A return to the law nullifies God's grace which is the basis of our righteousness (2:21). Paul's personal argument shows the inconsistency of a dependence on the law from the circumstances of his calling, his divinely revealed gospel, and his consequent actions. Now he addresses the

Galatians with a strong doctrinal argument defending justification by faith to show that sanctification is by the same means (3:1-4:31).

His explanation of justification by faith (3:1-4:6) begins with a discussion of justification apart from the law (3:1-14). He first points out the inconsistency of the Galatians' experience (3:1-5). Their salvation, reception of the Spirit, suffering as believers, and their witness of God's miraculous works is all a result of faith, not law. Therefore, why are they turning to the law for sanctification (3:3)? Abraham is then used as an example of justification by faith (3:6-9). All those of like faith are "blessed with believing Abraham" (3:9). On the other hand, those who try to be justified by the law are under a curse (3:10-14). This is the testimony of the Old Testament, as well as the fact that the "just shall live by faith" (3:10-11). Christ delivered from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us so that Jew and Gentile might receive the promised blessing of Abraham through faith (3:13-14).

Paul's rejection of the law in justification and sanctification could lead to questions about the purpose of the law and its relation to justification by faith. Thus he explains the purpose of the law and its relationship to faith (3:15-4:7). His first point is that the Abrahamic covenant is not annulled by the law (3:15-18). God's promise was to Abraham and his "Seed", that is Christ, four hundred and thirty years before the law and thus cannot be broken. What is the purpose of the law then? Paul goes on to explain that the law was given to lead us to faith in Christ (3:19-24). It was only temporary until this "Seed", Who is Christ should come (3:19-20). The law never could give life, but condemns to sin (3:21-22) so that we are forced to Christ for justification through faith (3:23-24).

The law, having done its work, is no longer over the believer, but there is a new freedom in Christ which makes us God's sons (3:25-4:7). This new position in God's family is obtained by faith in Christ and makes all believers equal as Abraham's seed and heirs of the promise (3:25-29). Paul illustrates this new relationship and privilege (4:1-7) by referring to a child heir, who as a minor, is no different from a slave, but at the appropriate time designated by his father, realizes his inheritance (4:1-2). In like manner, Christians were once under the law as slaves until God sent His Son at the appropriate time to adopt us as children (4:3-7). He has shown conclusively that Christians are no longer under the law.

On the basis of this doctrinal argument, Paul makes a passionate appeal for the Galatians to live under grace and not law (4:8-31). He addresses their return to observance of the law, which is more consistent with their condition before salvation than after (4:8-11). He then appeals to them on the basis of his past relationship with them (4:12-20). He wants them to adopt his position (4:12a) with the same openness and affection they had for him when he was first among them (4:12b-15). The Judaizers are trying to steal that affection by making Paul look like an enemy (4:16-8). The emotional burden of their situation is causing pain to Paul (4:19-20). He labors "in birth again" 4:19), this time for sanctification not salvation.

His final appeal is from the illustration of two contrasting covenants in the Old Testament (4:21-31). Abraham had two sons, one born from a bondwoman (Ishmael and Hagar), and the other as a result of a promise to a freewoman (Isaac and Sarah). Paul is only speaking symbolically (4:24) when he uses the example of these two sons to illustrate the bondage of the law and the freedom of the promise (4:24-28). Just as the two boys fought, so the law and the promise are incompatible (4:29-30). His conclusion is that believers are the children of the

freewoman, and therefore free from the law (4:31). Thus the Galatians have no business returning to the law for sanctification. They are free from it, and sons of God in Christ according to the promise.

Paul must now tell the Galatians how God has provided for their sanctification through the Spirit. He does this in such a way as to defend Christian liberty against the charge that it leads to license (5:1-6:10). He urges them to stand fast in their Christian liberty (5:1) because returning to the law puts them under obligation to keep all of it and estranges them from Christ and his grace (5:2-4). Circumcision will not profit them at all; only "faith working through love" is profit (5:5-6). These dangerous consequences cause Paul to condemn the Judaizers in the strongest terms (5:7-12). He denies he preaches circumcision, as some are charging (5:11; Cf. 2:3).

His appeal is to practice their liberty without license, but under the restrictions of love and the control of the Spirit (5:13-26). Liberty is not an opportunity to serve self, but others. If one loves, he fulfills all the law (5:13-15). The proper way to exercise liberty is through the power of the Spirit (5:16-26). The Christian who walks in the Spirit will not fulfill the lusts of the flesh because the two are at odds with each other (5:16-18). This is evident in their respective results (5:19-23). Paul's appeal is based on common sense: Since the new life is given by the Spirit, it must also be sustained by the Spirit (5:24-25). If the Galatians walk in the Spirit, their conflicts with one another will be prevented (5:26).

Paul has said that a life lived in love and in the Spirit will result in service and benevolence toward one another (5:13-14,22-23). He therefore gives a final appeal to demonstrate the fruit of love and the Spirit by doing good to all people (6:1-10). He first urges them to bear one another's burdens, especially in restoring a sinning person (6:1-5). Then his exhortation is to help one another by providing for temporal needs (6:6-10). This pertains to all men, but first those in the church, especially teachers of the Word. Such spiritual sowing will reap spiritual rewards (6:8).

Paul's conclusion brings a final rebuke of the Judaizers and their desire to boast in the Galatians' fleshly submission to the law (6:12-13). In contrast, Paul is determined to boast only of what God has done in making him a new creation (6:14-15). His blessing is for those who follow this principle (6:16). He is particularly sensitive to the believing Jews among them, the "Israel of God", because of his strong castigation of the Judaizers. Before his closing benediction, Paul refers to the marks in his body as a result of his suffering for the gospel (6:17); a final argument that he is a servant of Christ.

By arguing for his authenticity as an apostle, Paul also establishes the authenticity of his message. He preaches the free grace of God which saves and sanctifies apart from the law. This is how the Galatians were saved, and must be how they continue in the Christian life.

Outline of Galatians

- I. The Introduction 1:1-10
 1. The greeting 1:1-5
 - a. The writer 1:1-2a
 - b. The readers 1:2b
 - c. The greeting in Christ 1:3-5
 2. The situation 1:6-10
 - a. Paul's astonishment at their fickleness 1:6-7
 - b. Paul's assertion of its seriousness 1:8-9
 - c. Paul's attitude of pleasing God 1:10
- II. Personal: A Defense of Paul's Authority 1:11-2:21
 - A. He received the gospel directly from God. 1:11-24
 1. The origin of the gospel through divine revelation 1:11-12
 2. The circumstances of Paul's conversion 1:13-17
 - a. His conduct before conversion 1:13-14
 - b. His commission at conversion 1:15-16a
 - c. His course after conversion 1:16b-17
 3. The independence from the apostles at Jerusalem 1:18-24
 - a. Paul's first visit to Jerusalem 1:18-20
 - b. Paul's later absence from Jerusalem 1:21-24
 - B. He had his gospel confirmed by the apostles at Jerusalem. 2:1-10
 1. The circumstances of his presentation to them 2:1-2
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Summary and Outline of Ephesians

by

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Introduction

The Author

The testimony of the church fathers is unanimous in favor of Pauline authorship. The letter itself refers twice to Paul as the author (1:1; 3:1). However, in recent years some have disputed this claiming that the epistle was written under a pseudonym. The argument for this opinion includes claims that vocabulary, style, and doctrine are quite different from Paul's. But these differences can be explained by the different subject matter, temperament, and circumstances behind the writing of the letter. Besides, Christians did not practice pseudonymous writing in the early church. Also, the epistle has a close affinity with Colossians which is considered Pauline. There is no strong reason to question the traditional view of Pauline authorship for Ephesians.

The Date and Place

Paul is clearly a prisoner as he writes (3:1; 4:1; 6:20). Some have postulated this was his Caesarean imprisonment (Acts 24:27) and place the date at A.D. 57-59. However, Paul's Roman imprisonment is most likely the background for the letter (Acts 28:30). Since he gives no hint of his release as in Philippians 1:19-26 and Philemon 22, it may have been in the early part of his interment, or about A.D. 60, while he was under house arrest in Rome. Ephesians is therefore one of the four prison epistles along with the others which mention his imprisonment: Philippians, Colossians, and Philemon (Phil. 1:7; Col. 4:10; Phile. 9).

The Destination

The designation "in Ephesus" in 1:1 would settle the discussion of the destination except that it is missing from several Alexandrian Greek manuscripts. This has led to the theory that the epistle was a circular letter intended for churches in Asia or elsewhere. Also, it is argued, Paul does not greet individual believers, which seems strange considering his three year ministry in Ephesus. But in reply, it should be noted that most manuscripts do say "in Ephesus", and all bear the title "To the Ephesians". Also, it is typical of all of Paul's letters to mention their designations. As for the lack of personal greetings, it seems reasonable that after a three year stay Paul would have known so many people that he couldn't single out a few without appearing to show favoritism. In writing to other churches where he knew the whole group, Paul did not add personal greetings (Cf. Corinthians, Galatians, Philippians, and Thessalonians). Still, the epistle could have had a circular design, which would explain the absence of personal greetings. Ephesus may have been the primary destination. It is possible that this letter had been circulated and was in Laodicea when Paul wrote to the Colossians (Col. 4:16).

Ephesus was a strategic commercial and religious center in Asia Minor. Its port at the mouth of the Cayster river, though problematically silted, allowed Ephesus to become one of the major trading cities in Paul's day. The temple of the Roman goddess Diana (Greek, Artemis), one of the seven wonders of the ancient world, was located there. Business and magic prospered under the worship of the goddess (Acts 19:13-27).

The origin of the church in Ephesus could possibly be attributed to Jews from Asia who returned there after being present at Pentecost (Acts 2:9), but it is most likely a result of

Paul's ministry. On the return trip of his second missionary journey Paul stopped there only briefly and left Aquila and Priscilla as he continued on to Antioch (Acts 18:18-22). By the time Apollos visited Ephesus and left for Achaia, there were Christians in Ephesus who wrote a letter of commendation for him (Acts 18:24-27). But the church surely had its organizational beginnings during Paul's three year stay there on his third missionary journey (Acts 20:31). Timothy later ministered to the church in Ephesus in Paul's place (1 Tim. 1:3). Also, tradition records that the apostle John became bishop and spent his remaining years there.

The church was most likely composed of a majority of Gentiles (2:11) with a number of Jews. Paul's argument about the two groups becoming one in Christ may indicate this (2:11-18).

The Occasion

There is no specific problem raised and addressed in the book that presents a clear occasion for Paul to write. He may have wanted to use the occasion of Tychicus' visit to them to send the letter (6:21-22). However, the themes of the epistle suggest a likely purpose. There is a great emphasis on the believer's heavenly calling and the place of the church in God's universal program. There is also an emphasis on love and unity in Christ. References to love in Ephesians comprise one-sixth of Paul's total references in all the letters. The theme of unity is seen throughout (2:11-22; 3:6; 4:3-6,13-16,25, etc.). Paul is writing with a preventative design that would encourage growth and maturity to ward off false doctrine and teachers (Cf. Acts 20:29-30).

The Purpose

After Paul explains the believer's heavenly position in Christ (chs. 1-3), he appeals for the Ephesians to walk worthy of their position in Christ (chs. 4-6; Cf. 4:1). His purpose is to provide the Ephesians with an understanding of God's program and the believer's position in Christ so that they will conduct themselves accordingly in the love and unity of Christ and thus be protected against false teachers and erroneous doctrines (4:14).

Argument

Paul's concern with the Ephesian Christians' position is evident in the introductory address. There he calls them "saints", a designation of consecrated position to God (1:1). The first half of the letter explains in tremendous depth the position of the church in the heavenlies (1:3-3:21), which is used later as a basis of appeal for the practice of the church on earth (4:1-6:20).

The position of the church is due to God's planned redemption, thus Paul begins with the praise of this redemption (1:3-14). The Father's part in redemption (1:3-6) brings Christians into every spiritual blessing in Christ (1:3). He does this through His sovereign election and predestination of those who will be His sons (1:4-6). Paul then moves to the Son's part in redemption (1:7-12). In Christ is the forgiveness of sins according to grace, the gathering of all things in heaven and earth, and the believer's inheritance. Finally, it is the Holy Spirit's part to seal the believer as a guarantee of the inheritance in Christ (1:13-14).

The lofty thought of God's blessings in Christ causes Paul to pray for the realization of these blessings in the Ephesians (1:15-23). He is already motivated to pray by the report of their faith and love (1:15-16). Therefore, he prays for them to have spiritual insight to realize their riches in Christ and the greatness of God's power (1:17-19). This power is demonstrated in Christ's resurrection, exaltation, and present authority over all powers (1:20-22). This exalted and powerful Christ is the head of the church, which is His body (1:23). Paul has thus far described the blessings in Christ and the authority of Christ for the church. Now he will explain in more detail the exact relationship of believers to the church.

Paul's discussion turns to those who make up the church, Christ's body (2:1-22). He describes the new position of individuals in Christ (2:1-10). Whereas both Jew and Gentile were dead in sins and trespasses (2:1-3), all were made alive in Christ (2:4-10). This new life is a result of God's love and mercy and places the believer with Christ positionally in the heavenly realm (2:4-6). This salvation has an eternal purpose in magnifying God's grace (2:7), thus it is accomplished by the grace of God through faith, not works (2:8-10).

The eternal purpose of God in salvation is designed that Gentiles would enjoy a new union with Jews in the body of Christ (2:11-22). The Gentiles, who were once separated from God's blessings (2:11-12), have become one body with the Jews through Jesus Christ, Who removed the partition of the law (2:14-15). They have also been given access to the Jewish promises through Christ's sacrifice which reconciled both groups to God (2:16-18). Gentiles are now in God's household, the church, and are growing into a holy temple of God (2:19-22). Paul has made a powerful argument for the church's unity based on the work of God in Christ.

Again Paul is prompted to pray (Cf. 3:1,14), but is diverted by his explanation of the mystery of the new body (3:1-13). His reference to himself as the "prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles" (3:1) reminds of the mystery that was revealed to him in relation to the Gentiles. He explains the reception of this mystery through a totally new revelation of God (3:3-5). The mystery is that the Gentiles would be fellow heirs of the promise with the Jews in one body (3:6). The ministry committed to his charge is to preach Christ to the Gentiles in accordance with this mystery in order to display God's infinite wisdom (3:8-12).

Having now explained the mystery, Paul resumes his prayer for the Ephesians. He prays for them to experience the inner strength and love available in Christ (3:14-21). The prayer moves from God's strength to God's love, both of which are found in the fullness of God available in Christ as he dwells in the heart by faith. His prayer and this half of the letter end with a doxology of praise for God's power and glory displayed in the church (3:19-20).

Paul has demonstrated the Christian's blessed and heavenly position in Christ, as well as his union with all believers in the one body of Christ. This will form the basis for his appeal for the Ephesians' conduct in the church.

The position of the church in heaven is the impetus for the practice of the church on earth (4:1-6:20). The recurring word Paul uses to depict the practice of the members of the church is "walk".

Believers in Christ must walk as those separated to God (4:1-5:21). The appeal of 4:1 appropriately ties this section to the previous three chapters by referring to the believer's calling as the basis for proper conduct.

The first distinction of the believer's walk should be unity (4:1-16). The appeal for unity (4:1-3) is exemplified by the unity in the Godhead which is the basis of the Christian's experience (4:4-6). The means of unity is found in the gifts Christ bestowed at His ascension (4:7-16). The four foundational gifts are listed in particular as those which equip and edify the church (4:11-12). The result is that the members of the church grow together in unity as they become one perfect man in Christ (4:13). This spiritual maturity brings discernment that protects against deceitful men and doctrine which could invade the church (4:14). Such a mention of the preventative nature of proper Christian understanding and maturity suggests Paul may have written the elevated doctrines of chapters 1-3 to fill out the Ephesians' knowledge and experience (chs. 4-6) in order to keep error from the church. The alternative to error in the church is the truth spoken in love which also builds the body of Christ as each member works to edify the church (4:15-16). The unity in the body presented here is the practical expression of the theological unity explained in 2:11-22 and 3:6. Unity is one of the major themes of Ephesians.

Believers should not only walk in unity, they should walk in newness of life (4:17-32). Paul sets forth the contrast between the old life and the new (4:17-24). The new believers have no reason to walk in ignorance as the Gentiles walk in alienation from God, for Paul has already demonstrated how the Gentiles have obtained access to God and His promises (4:17-19; Cf. 2:11-18). Instead, they are to reject the old life in favor of a new life that is consistent with their position in the new man God has created in Christ's body (4:20-24). This life should be characterized with behavior that reflects "righteousness and true holiness" (4:24), including truthful speech, no sinful anger, sharing instead of stealing, helpful speech, and kindness (4:25-32).

Love must also control the believer's walk (5:1-7). This love is expected of those who are God's children and is exemplified in Christ (5:1-2). The catalog of sins are those found in a loveless life, and these do not fit believers who are set apart to God as His children (4:3). Rather, these sins characterize those excluded from the kingdom of God and Christ (4:5). As is seen in these exhortations, Paul is consistent in appealing to the Christians' spiritual position and privilege in Christ as motivation.

Furthermore, believers should also walk in righteousness (5:8-14). This is the significance of the metaphorical expression "children of light" (5:8-10). The nature of light makes it mutually exclusive of darkness and exposing of darkness (5:11-13) as is seen when Christ's light disperses the darkness of sin's sleep from a person upon salvation (5:14).

The final exhortation concerning the believer's walk is to walk in wisdom (5:15-21). This involves some specific obligations. A believer walking in wisdom is able to make the most of opportunities with an awareness of the nature of the times (5:16). He is able to understand God's will (5:17) and be controlled by God's Spirit (5:18) so that his life becomes an expression of worship, thanksgiving, and submission to others out of reverence for God (5:19-21).

The obligation to be filled with the Spirit, and the results of such a life, are controlling factors in living the kind of life Paul has exhorted and is about to exhort. Paul has stated an important result, submission to one another (5:21), and now uses it as the determining concept behind his exhortations about the duties of believers in God's family (5:22-6:9).

He first discusses the duties of wives and husbands (5:22-33). His exhortations to both are rooted in the theology of the church as the body of Christ and the bride of Christ. Husband and wife are organically unified just as Christ and the church. And as Christ is the head of the church, so the man is the head of the marital union (5:23-24). Therefore, the husband must love and cherish his wife as his own body (5:28). Once more it is illustrated how positional truth affects practical behavior in Paul's thinking.

Paul continues with appeals to children and parents (6:1-3) and to servants and masters (6:5-9). One's relationship and accountability to God is the implied or stated motivation for following these commands.

Paul closes with instructions about the warfare of believers as God's soldiers (6:10-20). Not only is the believer's position in Christ a place of privilege and power, it is also a place of protection. Thus, a Christian can be strong only "in the Lord" (6:10-11). Paul issues a call to battle against the devil (6:10-11) and explains that the struggle is in the spiritual realm (6:12), the same realm in which the Christian is positioned with blessing (1:3ff.). The Christian's armor is a mature realization of the provision of Christ which forms an able defense and offense (6:13-17). Paul may be suggesting that the Ephesians can protect themselves by close attention to the position and practice of the Christian as found in his letter. A final exhortation to pray for themselves and him remind the Ephesians that the power is of God, not self (6:18-20). Paul closes with a word about the visit of Tychicus and his benediction (6:21-24).

In this letter, Paul has set forth the high calling of the Christian, and the equally high moral behavior which should reflect that position. Should the Ephesians to be diligent in appreciating their privileged position and equally diligent in living in light of this position, they will have a strong defense against error and the devil's schemes.

Outline of Ephesians

- I. The Introduction 1:1-2
 1. The author 1:1a
 2. The readers 1:1b
 3. The greeting 1:2
- II. The Position of the Church in the Heavens 1:3-3:21
 - A. The praise for God's sovereignly planned redemption 1:3-14
 1. The Father's part in our redemption 1:3-6
 - a. He is praised for blessing us in Christ. 1:3
 - b. He chose us to be holy and blameless. 1:4
 - c. He predestined us to adoption as sons. 1:5-6
 2. The Son's part in our redemption 1:7-12
 - a. Our redemption in Him is through grace. 1:7-8
 - b. The mystery in Him is made known. 1:9-10
 - 1) God purposed this according to His will. 1:9
 - 2) Everything is gathered under Christ. 1:10
 - c. Our inheritance is in Him. 1:11-12
 - 1) The basis is God's predestination. 1:11
 - 2) The purpose is God's glory. 1:12
 3. The Spirit's part in our redemption 1:13-14
 - a. He seals us upon believing. 1:13
 - b. He guarantees our inheritance. 1:14
 - B. The prayer for realization of blessings in Christ 1:15-23
 1. The good report that prompts the prayer 1:15-16
 - a. Paul heard of their faith and love. 1:15
 - b. This prompts him to pray for them. 1:16
 2. The request for spiritual insight 1:17-23
 - a. That God would give them spiritual insight 1:17
 - b. That they realize their riches as saints 1:18
 - c. That they realize the greatness of God's power 1:19-23
 - 1) The nature of God's power 1:19
 - 2) The manifestation of God's power in Christ 1:20-23
 - a) In His resurrection and exaltation 1:20
 - b) In His present authority 1:21-23
 - C. The people of the church 2:1-22
 1. The new position of individuals in Christ 2:1-10
 - a. All were dead in sin. 2:1-3
 - 1) Gentiles were dead in this world system. 2:1-2
 - 2) Jews lived according to their lusts. 2:3

- b. All were made alive in Christ. 2:4-10
 - 1) God made them alive in His love and mercy. 2:4-5
 - 2) God positioned them in the heavenlies. 2:6
 - 3) God purposed this to display His grace. 2:7
 - 4) God accomplished this by His grace. 2:8-10
 - a) The basis of salvation is grace. 2:8
 - b) The basis of salvation is not works. 2:9
 - c) The result of salvation is works. 2:10
 - 2. The new union of Gentiles to Jews in one body 2:11-22
 - a. Gentiles were separated from God's blessings. 2:11-12
 - b. Gentiles were given access to God's blessings. 2:13-18
 - 1) Christ brought them near to God. 2:13
 - 2) Christ made them one body with Jews. 2:14-15
 - 3) Christ reconciled them to God. 2:16
 - 4) Christ gave both groups access to God. 2:17-18
 - c. Gentiles are now in God's household. 2:19-22
 - 1) They are members of God's household. 2:19
 - 2) They are built into God's temple. 2:20-22
- D. The explanation of the mystery of the new body 3:1-13
 - 1. Paul declares himself a prisoner for the Gentiles. 3:1
 - 2. Paul explains the mystery revealed to him. 3:2-7
 - a. The Ephesians knew about his ministry. 3:2
 - b. He explains his reception of the mystery. 3:3-5
 - 1) He received it by revelation. 3:3a
 - 2) He wrote to them about it earlier. 3:3b-4
 - 3) He received a totally new revelation. 3:5
 - c. He states the content of the mystery. 3:6
 - d. He was made a minister of the mystery. 3:7
 - 3. Paul explains the ministry committed to him. 3:8-12
 - a. Its work is to preach to the Gentiles. 3:8-9
 - b. Its purpose is to show God's wisdom. 3:10-11
 - c. Its blessing is access to God. 3:12
 - 4. Paul asks the Ephesians to not be discouraged. 3:13
- E. The prayer for inner strength and love in Christ 3:14-21
 - 1. The object of Paul's prayer for the Ephesians 3:14-15
 - 2. The content of Paul's prayer for the Ephesians 3:16-19
 - a. He prays that God would strengthen them. 3:16-17a
 - b. He prays that they know Christ's love. 3:17b-19a
 - c. He prays that they be filled with God. 3:19b
 - 3. The concluding doxology of Paul's prayer 3:20-21

- III. The Practice of the Church on the Earth 4:1-6:20
 - A. The walk of believers as God's saints 4:1-5:21
 - 1. Believers should walk in unity. 4:1-16
 - a. The appeal to walk according to their calling 4:1-3
 - b. The basis for unity in the Godhead 4:4-6
 - 1) The oneness in the Spirit 4:4
 - 2) The oneness in Christ 4:5
 - 3) The oneness in the Father 4:6
 - c. The means for unity in the gifts 4:7-16
 - 1) The source of the gifts is Christ. 4:7-11
 - a) He distributed the gifts to believers. 4:7
 - b) He gave them at His ascension. 4:8-10
 - c) He gave the four foundational gifts. 4:11
 - 2) The purpose of the gifts is edification. 4:12
 - 3) The result of the gifts is mature unity. 4:13-16
 - a) Edification brings Christ-like maturity. 4:13
 - b) Maturity brings spiritual discernment. 4:14
 - c) Believers edify each other in love. 4:15-16
 - 2. Believers should walk in newness of life. 4:17-32
 - a. The old and the new man are contrasted. 4:17-24
 - 1) The old man is characterized. 4:17-19
 - a) The old life should be abandoned. 4:17
 - b) The old life is described. 4:18-19
 - 2) The new man is characterized. 4:20-24
 - a) As a new teaching in Christ 4:20-21
 - b) As a replacement for the old life 4:22
 - c) As a renewed mind unto holiness 4:23-24
 - b. The new man should conduct himself accordingly. 4:25-32
 - 1) By speak truthfully not deceptively 4:25
 - 2) By being angry without sin 4:26-27
 - 3) By sharing instead of steal 4:28
 - 4) By speaking helpfully not harmfully 4:29-30
 - 5) By being kind not malicious 4:31-32
 - 3. Believers should walk in love. 5:1-7
 - a. They should follow God by walking in love. 5:1-2
 - b. They should avoid sinful behavior. 5:3-7
 - 1) The enumeration of these sins. 5:3-4
 - 2) The judgment of those who commit these sins 5:5-6
 - 3) The prohibition of sharing in these sins 5:7
 - 4. Believers should walk in righteousness. 5:8-14

- a. They should walk as children of light. 5:8-10
 - b. They should expose the works of darkness. 5:11-14
 - 1) The command to expose them 5:11-12
 - 2) The effect of Christ's light 5:13
 - 5. Believers should walk in wisdom. 5:15-21
 - a. The general command to walk in wisdom 5:15
 - b. The specific commands for a wise walk 5:16-21
 - 1) Redeem the time. 5:16
 - 2) Understand the Lord's will. 5:17
 - 3) Be filled with the Spirit. 5:18-21
 - a) The command to be filled 5:18
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Summary and Outline of Philippians

by

Dr. Charles Bing

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Introduction

The Author

Paul is virtually undisputed as the author of this epistle. His name appears in 1:1 as the author and the autobiographical section (3:3-6) harmonizes perfectly with what is known of his life. Also, his close association with Timothy is mentioned (1:1; 3:19-24). Moreover, Timothy was with him when he evangelized Philippi (Acts 16:1ff.). Not only is the external evidence strong for Paul, but it has been rightly observed that this personal letter reflects both his mind and character. There is no motive for someone to forge such a letter.

The Date and Place

This is considered one of the prison epistles written from Rome as also Ephesians, Colossians, and Philemon. Though some have suggested it was written during his earlier Caesarean imprisonment (Acts 24:27) this is very doubtful. He refers to the Roman palace guard (1:13), converts from Caesar's household (4:22), and an impending verdict of possible death (1:20-26; 2:23-24). The date would be late in his prison term, as indicated by the imminent verdict and the lapse of time seen between the news of Paul's imprisonment reaching the Philippians, the arrival of their messenger, Epaphroditus, and the recovery of Epaphroditus from illness which occasioned his return to Philippi with the letter. The date is therefore placed at about A.D. 62 from Rome.

The Destination

The city of Philippi lay inland in Macedonia in a strategic location where east meets west. Rome made the city a colony in 42 B.C. (Acts 16:12) and the residents were allowed full Roman citizenship with special privileges. As more of a military center than commercial, it attracted so few Jews that there was not a synagogue there in Paul's time (Acts 16:13). Philippi was populated by the ruling class of Romans, the majority class of Macedonians, and a mixture of Orientals.

Paul's contact with the city came during his second missionary journey when the "Macedonian call" drew him over from Troas (Acts 16:8-10). There he met Lydia, a Proselyte to Judaism, who was converted with her household (16:14-15). Soon after, Paul and Silas were seized when Paul cast a demon out of a girl used by her masters for profit. They were thrown in jail, but an earthquake set them free and this led to the conversion of the jailer and his family (Acts 16:16-34). The church, formed around these first converts, was composed of mostly Gentiles with perhaps a few Jews. Epaphroditus, mentioned in the epistle, was evidently a leader and maybe the pastor. The church at Philippi grew into a close and affectionate relationship with the apostle and assisted him financially a number of times before this gift acknowledged in the letter (4:15-18).

The Occasion

When the Philippians heard of Paul's imprisonment in Rome, their concern for him resulted in sending Epaphroditus to help and to bear a financial gift (4:18). Epaphroditus became very ill while in Rome and upon recovering, was sent by Paul back to Philippi to soothe both the church's concern and Epaphroditus' distress for their concern (2:25-30). This was the immediate

occasion for the letter. Paul took the opportunity of Epaphroditus' return to inform the Philippians about his circumstances, thank them for the gift, and give them some relevant warnings and exhortations. No crisis caused Paul to write, just the affection that he had for them and his deep gratitude for their participation in his ministry.

The Purpose

Philippians could be called a "thank you" note to the church for the gift sent through Epaphroditus (1:3-7; 4:10-19). Indeed, this is one of the central purposes for the letter. But there are other purposes for the apostle's writing. He took the occasion to address some potential or budding problems in the church. One potential problem was that of Judaizers trying to influence the church (3:1-11). He also warns against an antinomian element (3:17-4:1). However, it does not appear that either heresy had influenced the church any. Paul's warnings are more a preventative than a corrective measure. Another problem was the beginning of some disunity among the believers. He urges harmony between Euodia and Syntyche (4:2-3) and encourages unity in general throughout the letter (1:27; 2:2-4; 4:4-9). The frequent occurrence of the idea of rejoicing and joy relate to the unity of the church in the Lord. This is obtained by a spiritual mindset (1:27; 2:3,5; 3:15-16; 4:7-9) exemplified in Christ (2:5-11). A final purpose is to inform the Philippians of his circumstances concerning his imprisonment (1:12-26), trial, possible release, and the visit of Timothy and maybe himself (2:19-24).

Argument

The epistle's structure follows its loose personal nature. Paul begins with information about his circumstances, then appeals for their unity, warns and exhorts, and finally expresses his joy and gratitude for the Philippians' concern for him.

After a brief introductory greeting (1:1-2), Paul reviews the fellowship the Philippians have had with him in his gospel ministry and informs them of his present circumstances (1:3-30). His fond thoughts of them issue in an expression of thanks for them in prayer (1:3-11). His reference to their "fellowship" or sharing in the gospel doubtless includes recognition of their past and recent financial gifts and the sharing of Epaphroditus with him (1:5). He prays for their continued growth in love, knowledge, discernment, and fruitfulness (1:9-11).

"But I want you to know" (1:12) begins an informative section in which Paul expresses his fellowship with the Philippians amid his present circumstances in prison (1:12-30). Though he is bound, he rejoices in the furtherance of the gospel because of his circumstances (1:12-18). The palace guard and more know of his testimony for Christ as others are emboldened to preach (1:12-14). Paul rejoices that the gospel is preached regardless of the preacher's motives (1:15-18).

Uncertain of the outcome of his trial, Paul turns to a consideration of the prospects of his life and death. He may anticipate an early release, or may simply express confidence in the vindication of his ministry through the advance of the gospel, but whatever his fate, he is determined that Christ be magnified in his life or death (1:19-20). Though death is gain for him, his life will profit the Philippians (1:21-24). His confidence of future ministry to the Philippians reveals a positive outlook on his pending trial (1:25-26). The possibility of his release and a visit

prompts him to exhort the church to steadfastness in unity and in the face of opposition (1:27-30).

The theme of unity is expanded as Paul now appeals for the Philippians' humility, which is the bedrock for the unity he desires among them (2:1-30). His direct appeal for unity through humility is based on the blessings they enjoy in Christ (2:1-4). The appeal is also based on and reinforced by the example of others (2:5-30). Foremost is the example of Christ (2:5-11). Paul exhorts them to have the same mind as Christ (2:5) and follows with an explanation of what that means. As deity, Christ humbled Himself to become a man and served men by obedience which stretched to the cross (2:6-8). God vindicated such humility by exalting Christ above everything (2:10-11). Paul consequently appeals for the same kind of obedience in the Philippians as they grow in their own salvation experience and continue to bear a witness to the world (2:12-16). Indirectly, Paul may intend to use his own sacrifice as another example of humble service (2:17).

Two more examples of humility and service are set forth as Paul informs the church of relevant circumstances pertaining to Timothy and Epaphroditus. He informs them of his plan to send Timothy and comments on his humble character (2:19-23). Paul expresses his own desire and hope to visit as well (2:24). His mention of sending Epaphroditus is another occasion to illustrate humility (2:25-30). This servant had concern for Paul and great longing for his home church. For Christ's sake in ministering to Paul, he almost lost his life to illness. The unity Paul desires for the church at Philippi depends on the kind of humility and sacrificial love demonstrated by Christ, Timothy and Epaphroditus.

In a more somber section, Paul warns the Philippians about heresy and exhorts them to proper conduct (3:1-4:9). The first warning is against confidence in the flesh (3:1-11), which was probably occasioned by the presence or influence of Judaizers. In warning them about succumbing to fleshly demands such as circumcision, he reminds them that the source of joy is the Lord (3:1-3). This is confirmed by Paul's own experience (3:4-11). Though he has many reasons to boast in the flesh (3:4-6), he considers all human achievement incomparable to what is gained in the righteousness and power of Christ (3:7-11). Therefore, he exhorts them to make Christ their only prize worth striving for (3:12-16).

A second warning is against those who live for the flesh (3:17-4:1). These antinomians are enemies of the cross because they serve self, not Christ (3:18-19). Using their Roman citizenship as a reference point, Paul urges the Philippians to live up to their position as citizens of heaven (3:20-21). His final appeal for steadfastness is rooted in his deep affection for the them (4:1).

His concluding exhortations for proper conduct are intended to build unity in the church (4:2-9). The first thing the church must do is secure peace between the divided Euodia and Syntyche (4:2-3). The Philippian believers must realize joy in the Lord, show gentleness, and obtain peace by turing their concerns over to God in prayer (4:4-7). By proper meditation and imitation, they will experience the special manifestation of God and His peace in their church (4:8-9).

The letter ends on a personal note of rejoicing over the Philippians' concern for Paul (4:10-20). Their care is demonstrated by meeting Paul's need through Epaphroditus and the

financial gift (4:10), even though Paul has learned to be content whatever his circumstances (4:11-13). He expresses gratitude for their gift as he also remembers their displays of concern in the past (4:14-16). He also recognizes the profit the Philippians receive from giving (4:17). As a pleasing sacrifice offered to God, their giving will be rewarded with an abundant supply for any need of theirs (4:19). His final words consist of greetings and a benediction (4:21-23).

The emphasis on the joy of the Lord and the attitude of humility will help the Philippians solve and prevent whatever problems threaten them. In a personal way, Paul encourages them to continue in doctrine and in conduct reflective of their position in Christ. The letter not only serves these concerns, but is a convenient way for the apostle to inform the Philippians of his present status and express his love and gratitude to these who have stood by him in his ministry.

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Introduction

The Author

The external attestation has been consistent for Pauline authorship. This is substantiated internally. Paul refers to himself in 1:1,23 and 4:18 and there are numerous references to the apostle's familiar associates (4:7,9-12,14,17). The close link with Philemon and the parallels with Ephesians, both accepted as Pauline, suggest the author is the same. Those who question this conclusion do so with the claims that vocabulary and thought are not Pauline, the Christology is too developed, and the heresy combatted is a much later form of Gnosticism. But vocabulary and expression can change with subject matter and the circumstances of the writer. Also, there is no reason why Paul could not have had a well developed Christology later in his ministry, as John did in his (Cf. John 1:1-18). Finally, there is much evidence that the heresy of Gnosticism, if indeed that is what is refuted, was present in incipient form at the time of Paul's writing. The evidence for authorship remains overwhelmingly in favor of Paul.

The Date and Place

As with the other prison epistles (Ephesians, Philippians, Philemon), the time of writing was during Paul's imprisonment in Rome referred to in Acts 28:30. Evidently, Colossians was penned before Philippians because there is no mention of his pending trial. It may have been written before or at the same general time as Philemon, since both were apparently sent by Tychicus with Onesimus (4:1-9; Phile. 10-12). Therefore, the date can be placed around A.D. 61.

The Destination

Colossae was a small and declining city of Phrygia in the Roman province of Asia. It lay one hundred miles east of Ephesus in the Lycus valley and was bordered by Laodicea and Hieropolis (Cf. 4:13). The city was populated by native Phrygians, Greeks, and a Jewish element.

The only information about the church there is gleaned from the letter itself. Paul indicates he had not visited Colossae (2:1), and there is no mention in Acts, yet his influence on the church was significant. The church was actually founded by Epaphras (1:4-8) who probably came to Christ during Paul's third missionary journey. At that time Paul spent three years in Ephesus, allowing his gospel ministry to spread to all the surrounding areas of Asia (Acts 19:10; Acts 20:31). This fact, plus the probability that the cities were frequented by travelers from both places, insure Paul's influence on the Colossian church.

Epaphras, the leader of the flock in Colossae, was counted as a close companion of Paul's in the ministry and in Paul's imprisonment (4:12-13; Phile. 23). The church itself was mostly Gentile as indicated in 1:21,27, and 2:13.

The Occasion

The epistle was written in response to a report of a heresy threatening the Colossian church. The report was delivered by Epaphras, who also told Paul the good news of the Colossians' faith and love (1:7-8; 2:1-5). The exact nature of the heresy can be deduced

somewhat from the information in Paul's letter. It was based in human argument, or philosophy (2:8-10), and had all the markings of Judaistic legalism (2:11-17). This was the common heretical threat that plagued Paul throughout his ministry. The Colossian threat also contained elements common to the later Gnostic religion such as mysticism, worship of angels, asceticism, and the devaluation of the body (2:18-23). Some incipient form of Gnosticism may have mixed itself with the Judaistic legalism. The heresy has not yet taken hold in the church (2:4), so Paul is prompted to write before it spreads. He takes the opportunity of Onesimus' return to Philemon in Colossae to send the letter.

The Purpose

The immediate purpose of the letter is to prevent the Colossians from straying into heresy by explaining the truth about the person and work of Christ. Christ is presented as preeminent in the universe and the church (1:15-18) and sufficient for the Christian's maturity, because all the fullness of the Father is in Him (1:19; 2:9). Therefore, the Christian is complete in Him (2:10). Christ's work was also sufficient for a full redemption (1:13-14; 2:13-15).

Two more purposes complement the immediate doctrinal concern. The second purpose is to strengthen and confirm the faith of the Colossian believers so that they continue to bear fruit in their Christian lives (1:10,23,28; 2:5-7). The third purpose is to instruct the believers in the practical implications of the preeminency and sufficiency of Christ (chs. 3-4).

Argument

The letter begins with a personal note, moves to a doctrinal presentation, then to a polemical section, and finally ends with practical instruction. The greeting indicates Paul's commendation of their faithfulness (1:1-2), but the fullest expression is in his personal thanksgiving and prayer for the Colossians (1:3-14). He is moved to such a response because of Epaphras' report of their faith and love inspired by hope, and the fruit of the gospel manifested in them (1:3-8). His prayer for them (1:9-14) is appropriate for those threatened by heresy. He prays for their spiritual insight and understanding, their Christian walk, and their spiritual strength (1:9-11). This would form an adequate prophylactic against error. His thanks to the Father (1:12-14) is for the completeness of their common salvation in Christ. This understanding defends against those who would suggest the Savior did less.

The doctrinal section of the epistle sets forth the supremacy of Christ's person in creation and in His body (1:15-29). He is preeminent in His position over all things (1:15-18). He is the the image of God and the One in the highest rank over the universal creation, which he sustains (1:15-17). His preeminence extends to the church, His body (1:18).

Christ also is presented as preeminent in His work of reconciliation (1:19-23). Having the fullness of the Father (1:19), He fully reconciled all things to Himself by His work on the cross (1:20). This applies to the Colossian Christians in their past, present, and future experience (1:21-23). Their future presentation in Christ will be blameless if they continue on their present course of faith and fidelity to the apostolic gospel (1:23). Paul is giving a powerful reason to avoid contamination from the heresy threatening them.

The preeminency of Christ is demonstrated in Paul's ministry (1:24-29) as he suffers in prison for the sake of Christ's church (1:24). He has preached the gospel as a steward (1:25)

charged with the duty of revealing the mystery of the inclusion of the Gentiles in Christ's body (1:26-27). He preaches Christ in order to make each believer complete (1:28), thus implying that nothing else can do this. Christ is all and everything to the believer in His person, work, and relationship to the church. The believer's sufficiency is to be found in Him and nowhere else.

Paul now begins to address the heretical threat in a polemical section that argues for Christ's sufficiency for His church (2:1-3:4). First, he argues for Christ's sufficiency over philosophy (2:1-10). The heretics had approached the Colossians with clever speculations and human ideas which were nothing more than worldly wisdom (2:8). But Paul wants the Colossians to be edified fully through an intimate understanding of the riches of wisdom and knowledge in Christ (2:2-3). This will protect them from persuasive and appealing reasoning (2:4). Paul rejoices in their present faithfulness to the truth in Christ, but encourages further growth and experience (2:5-7). He warns that their completeness as Christians is based on the fullness of the Godhead found in Christ, not in human speculation (2:8-10).

Next, he confronts another aspect of the heresy by showing the sufficiency of Christ over legalism (2:11-23). Christ's work sufficed in every aspect of their salvation (2:11-15). He spiritually circumcised them, united with them through baptism, gave them life by forgiving their sin, and destroyed their spiritual enemies. Since Christ so provided for them in His work, Paul warns against those who would emphasize human efforts for merit toward God or those who would direct devotion towards any other being except Christ (2:16-19). He follows with an exhortation based on the sufficiency of Christ for the believer (2:20-3:4). Since they died with Christ to all legalistic demands, they should not subject themselves to human regulations, which in the end, profit nothing (2:20-23). Instead, they should seek the kind of things which are consistent with their resurrected life hidden in Christ (3:1-4). Paul's appeal is for conduct based on the believer's position, which is "with Christ...at the right hand of God" and "with Christ in God" (3:1,3). This forms the basis for his more specific practical instructions that follow.

Paul's presentation of the preeminence of Christ over all things, especially the church, leads him to state practical implications for those who are related to Christ in His body. The practical segment of the letter concerns believers' submission to Christ in His body (3:5-4:6). This is first of all an individual surrender in relationship to their new position in Christ (3:5-17). In view of this position (3:1-4), they must put off the old life, which is inconsistent with the new (3:5-11). In its place Paul lists virtues of the new life (3:12-17). Love is singled out as the most important (3:14), and the lordship of Christ is to be the motivation (3:17).

The new life also affects relationships within social structures, so Paul discusses their submission in the social realm (3:18-4:6). Household duties are listed first (3:18-4:1). In his appeals to wives and husbands (3:18-19), children and parents (3:20-21), and servants and masters (3:22-4:1), Paul continually reminds them of their position in Christ and their relationship to Him. He is obviously writing from the perspective that Christ is supreme in His body, the church. Paul also discusses their duties to the unsaved world (4:2-6). In relation to prayer, this means personal diligence as well as prayer for Paul in his gospel ministry (4:2-4). Finally, their walk and speech should reflect their higher kind of life (4:5-6).

The letter closes with several personal remarks (4:7-18). First, there is a commendation of its carriers, Tychicus and Onesimus (4:7-9). The letter to Philemon gives the circumstances for the return of his slave, Onesimus. Paul uses this event to send the Colossians

his letter. Second, there is a number of greetings from Paul's companions (4:10-14). Finally, he gives his own greeting, instructions about reading the letter, advice to Archippus, and a benediction (4:15-18).

The epistle to the Colossians is designed to prevent heresy from seeping into the church. The emphasis on the supremacy of Christ is the basis for their salvation as well as their sanctification. Since Christ is sufficient for every need of the believer, and He is in them and they in He, nothing else can substitute. Therefore, Paul encourages the Colossians to continue and to grow in Christian maturity according to the sufficiency that is in Christ.

Outline of Colossians

- I. The Introduction 1:1-2
 1. The authors 1:1
 2. The readers 1:2a
 3. The greeting 1:2b
- II. Personal: The Thanksgiving and Prayer for the Colossians 1:3-14
 - A. Paul thanks God for the Colossians. 1:3-8
 1. The fact and frequency of his thanks 1:3
 2. The cause of his thanks 1:4-8
 - a. They have faith and love. 1:4
 - b. They are inspired by their hope of heaven. 1:5
 - c. They are bearing fruit in the gospel. 1:6
 - d. They have Epaphras ministering on their behalf. 1:7-8
 - 1) They heard the gospel from him. 1:7
 - 2) Paul heard of their love from him. 1:8
 - B. Paul prays for the Colossians. 1:9-14
 1. He prays for their knowledge and wisdom. 1:9
 2. He prays for their walk. 1:10
 3. He prays for their spiritual strength. 1:11
 4. He gives thanks to the Father. 1:12-14
 - a. Because He qualified us for the inheritance 1:12
 - b. Because He transferred our citizenship 1:13
 - c. Because He redeemed us from our sins 1:14
- III. Doctrinal: The Supremacy of Christ in His Body 1:15-29
 - A. Christ is preeminent in His position. 1:15-18
 1. His position over creation 1:15
 2. His relationship to creation 1:16-17
 3. His position over the Church 1:18
 - B. Christ is preeminent in His reconciling work. 1:19-23
 1. The divine character of the Savior 1:19
 2. The reconciliation of all things 1:20
 3. The reconciliation of the Colossians 1:21-23
 - a. Their past reconciliation 1:21-22a
 - b. Their future presentation 1:22b-23
 - C. Christ is preeminent in Paul's ministry. 1:24-29
 1. Paul's suffering for the Church 1:24
 2. Paul's message to the Church 1:25-27
 - a. As a stewardship from God 1:25
 - b. As the mystery revealed to the saints 1:26-27

3. Paul's purpose in ministry to the Church 1:28-29
- IV. Polemical: The Sufficiency of Christ in His Body 2:1-3:4
 - A. The sufficiency of Christ over philosophy 2:1-10
 1. Paul has concern for their pure knowledge of Christ. 2:1-5
 - a. The great intensity of his concern 2:1
 - b. The edifying purpose of his concern 2:2-3
 - c. The protective purpose of his concern 2:4
 - d. The joyful attitude in his concern 2:5
 2. Paul admonishes them to walk in Christ. 2:6-7
 3. Paul warns them against false philosophy. 2:8
 4. Paul explains their fullness in Christ. 2:9-10
 - B. The sufficiency of Christ over legalism 2:11-23
 1. Paul explains Christ's sufficiency 2:11-15
 - a. He made them spiritually circumcised. 2:11
 - b. He made them buried and raised in baptism. 2:12
 - c. He made them alive by forgiving their sin. 2:13-14
 - d. He triumphed over the powers of evil. 2:15
 2. Paul warns them in view of Christ's sufficiency. 2:16-19
 - a. The warning against being judged by legalists 2:16-17
 - b. The warning against false worship 2:18-19
 3. Paul exhorts them in view of Christ's sufficiency. 2:20-3:4
 - a. From the believer's death with Christ 2:20-23
 - 1) The rebuke of subjection to regulations 2:20-22
 - 2) The worthlessness of such regulations 2:23
 - b. From the believer's resurrection with Christ 3:1-4
 - 1) The exhortation to seek things above 3:1-2
 - 2) The basis of life with the risen Christ 3:3-4
- V. Practical: The Submission to Christ in His Body 3:5-4:6
 - A. Submission in the believer's individual life 3:5-17
 1. They must put off the old life. 3:5-11
 - a. The exhortation to put to death the old members 3:5-7
 - 1) The description of the old members 3:5
 - 2) The consequence of the old way of life 3:6-7
 - b. The exhortation to put off the old sins 3:8-11
 - 1) The list of old sins 3:8-9a
 - 2) The basis for the transaction 3:9b-11
 2. They must put on the new life. 3:12-17
 - a. The virtues to put on in the new life 3:12-14
 - b. The principles to follow in the new life 3:15-17
 - B. Submission in the believer's social life 3:18-4:6

1. Duties in relation to the household 3:18-4:1
 - a. The duties of wives and husbands 3:18-19
 - b. The duties of children and parents 3:20-21
 - c. The duties of servants and masters 3:22-4:1
 - 1) Servants are to obey. 3:22-25
 - 2) Masters are to be fair. 4:1
 2. Duties in relation to the unsaved 4:2-6
 - a. The duty in prayer 4:2-4
 - 1) The exhortation to be steadfast in prayer 4:2
 - 2) Paul's request for his gospel ministry 4:3-4
 - b. The duty in conduct toward the unsaved 4:5-6
- VI. The Conclusion 4:7-18
1. Paul's commendation of those bearing the letter 4:7-9
 2. The greetings from Paul's companions 4:10-14
 - a. From his Jewish companions 4:10-11
 - b. From his Gentile companions 4:12-14
 3. Paul's concluding remarks 4:15-18
 - a. His personal greeting 4:15
 - b. His instruction about the reading of epistles 4:16
 - c. His message to Archippus 4:17
 - d. His benediction 4:18

Summary and Outline of 1 Thessalonians

by

Dr. Charles Bing

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Introduction

The Author

Few have ever disputed the external and internal evidence which show Paul to be the author of the epistle. He identifies himself and his familiar companions in the opening verse. All the circumstances mentioned in the letter fit the account of Paul's experiences in Acts 17-18. The few critics who object to Pauline authorship on the basis of the doctrinal diversity reflected by the eschatological section forget that Paul was capable of addressing many theological topics. His eschatological discussion in 4:13-5:11 forms a crucial foundation for the Christian's understanding of future events.

The Date and Place

A comparison of the events described in 3:1-7 and the sequence of events in Acts 17 leading up to Acts 18:1-5 show that the letter to the Thessalonians was written from Corinth. Using Gallio's proconsulship of Achaia as a historical reference (Acts 18:12), the date can be fixed at about A.D. 51. The letter was written soon after Paul's arrival in Corinth, as indicated by the account in Acts.

The Destination

Thessalonica was situated on the Thermaic Gulf in the province of Macedonia. It was known as a chief shipping, military, and governmental center. The city prospered in its position on the Egnatian Way, the main road connecting Rome with the east, and was the capital of the Roman province of Macedonia. The Romans ruled the city loosely, designating it a "free city", which meant it could govern itself. In New Testament times, the population numbered about 200,000 which consisted of a majority of Greeks, along with Romans, Orientals, and Jews.

After his "Macedonian call" (Acts 16:9) on his second missionary journey, Paul went into Macedonia from Troas. He stopped first at Philippi, but a riot there led to a brief imprisonment and an early departure for Thessalonica (Cf. Acts 16-18). He found the synagogue there and taught in it for three weeks with the result that a number of Jews and Gentile proselytes were converted. Though Acts says he taught in the synagogue three weeks, it is probable his overall ministry in Thessalonica lasted several months since he had settled into work there (2:9) and had received a couple offerings from the Philippians while there (Phil. 4:16). The unbelieving Jews eventually stirred up trouble and seized Jason and some other believers in an attempt to reach Paul. This led the Christians to send Paul and Silas away secretly to Berea. The church in Thessalonica was made up of some Jews, but mostly Gentiles who had formerly worshipped idols (1:9; 2:14-16).

The Occasion

The troublemaking Jews followed Paul from Thessalonica to Berea, which forced Paul on to Athens while Timothy and Silas remained in Berea. Later, Timothy and Silas joined Paul in Athens, but Paul was so concerned for the church in Thessalonica that he sent Timothy there to check on their progress and welfare (3:1-2). Paul continued on to Corinth where Timothy and Silas (who had perhaps been sent to Philippi) joined him (Acts 18:5). Timothy's good report on the church was the immediate occasion for Paul's desire to write (3:6). His report

evidently exposed some areas Paul needed to address in a letter. Besides a hearty commendation for their progress, Paul refutes some charges brought against him by opponents there. He also exhorts them in several areas of Christian responsibility and instructs them on an issue related to the parousia.

The Purpose

Paul first wrote to commend and encourage the faith and love of the Thessalonians in the face of persecution (1:2-10; 3:4-10; 4:9-10). Second, he wrote to vindicate himself of false charges brought against him. The Jews had charged that Paul's interest in the Thessalonians was one of financial gain, probably because they observed the arrival of the gifts from Philippi (Phil. 4:16). Paul defends his motives by reminding the Thessalonians that while with them he was open, honest, and worked so as not to be a financial burden (2:1-12). He also refuted the charge that his failure to visit again revealed deceitful motives and cowardice. Paul explains that he wanted to visit, but was hindered by Satan at least twice, so he sent Timothy to check on them instead (2:17-3:10). The third purpose was apparently a response to some developing problems reported by Timothy. Paul wrote to admonish the believers in some practical areas, such as moral purity (4:1-8), industriousness (4:9-12) and respect for their leaders (5:12-14). Finally, Paul wrote to dispel ignorance about the coming of the Lord and its effect on those who had died in Christ (4:13-5:11).

Argument

The personal nature of the letter does not obscure Paul's purposes for writing. His intentions are clearly seen as he moves from one subject to another. The epistle is basically divided into two sections; one discusses personal matters (1:2-3:13) and the other, practical (4:1-5:22). The apostle's affection is evident throughout.

In addressing his personal relations to the church at Thessalonica (1:2-3:13), Paul begins with thanksgiving for their spiritual progress (1:2-10). He recalls their faith, love and hope and is assured of their election by God. Already, the faith of the church has become well known in many regions as the Word of God has been spread by them. Clearly, whatever problems Paul proceeds to address have not severely hampered the church at this point.

Paul next discusses the relations he had with the Thessalonians while he was present with them (2:1-16). His presentation makes it certain he was defending himself against unfair accusations about his motives. In explaining the nature of his ministry among them (2:1-12), he reminds that he preached to them in the face of conflict (2:1-2). As far as his manner of ministry (2:3-12), they should know that he was open, truthful and honest with them (2:3-5). Furthermore, he affectionately shared not only the gospel, but his own life with them (2:6-8). As far as finances, he reminds them that he labored "night and day" to provide for himself and to not be a burden (2:9). In sum, they could judge for themselves how his behavior was blameless and how as a father he had admonished them (2:10-12). Paul closes this section with thanksgiving for their reception of the gospel (2:13-16) and a reminder that the Jews have consistently been the enemies of the gospel from Judea to Thessalonica, implying their accusations are expected.

Paul next explains his relations to them in his absence (2:17-3:13). His failure to return to Thessalonica was used by the Jews to argue that Paul was not genuine in his dealings

with his converts there and thus was avoiding them. The opponents imply his concern for the Thessalonians was not as great as for his cowardly self. Paul's answer is to explain his desire to be with them and the satanic obstruction that prohibited him (2:17-20). This is the reason he sent Timothy to them (3:1-5). He wanted them to be established in the faith and remain steadfast in the face of their afflictions by the Jews. His genuine affection for them is also seen by his comfort and joy at Timothy's good report of their faith and love (3:6-10). Paul assures them that he continues to pray for the opportunity to visit them (3:10) and demonstrates this with a written prayer for the same and for their love and holiness (3:11-13). The sincere affection Paul has for the Thessalonian believers has poured convincingly from his pen in vindication of his motives towards them.

The prayer of 3:11-13 and the tone of his opening words in this second section show Paul has decidedly vindicated himself and is now turning to some practical instructions for the church (4:1-5:22). His first instructions exhort them to holy living (4:1-12). The immoral influence of the Gentile city had become of concern to Paul. He appeals from their past obedience to continue to please God by abstaining from sexual immorality (4:1-8). Also, he exhorts them to love and industry (4:9-12), as there were evidently unruly and slothful tendencies in some which might prompt further charges from the Jews.

Paul next addresses two questions related to the Lord's return. The first concerned the fate of those who had died in Christ (4:13-18). Due to ignorance, some were overly sorrowful at the death of Christian loved ones whom they thought would miss the resurrection at Christ's return, and consequently, the millennium. Paul explains that Christ will come with the souls of these departed ones and raise their bodies even before the living are "caught up" to be with the Lord in the air. This should be a comfort to those who feared a disadvantage for their loved ones at Christ's return. It is most arguable that Paul spoke of the rapture of the church before the tribulation, an event he had so emphasized as imminent that the Thessalonians were unprepared in their thinking about dead loved ones.

Having addressed their ignorance concerning the end time, Paul now reminds them of things they should know and exhorts them concerning the day of the Lord (5:1-11). Perhaps the Thessalonians thought their deceased loved ones would somehow endure the tribulation period, but Paul reminds them that believers are not like those who are overtaken in the judgment of the day of the Lord. He argues that Christians are not like those in darkness (5:5), but are destined for deliverance from God's wrath (5:9). This is the basis for his exhortation to diligence in the Christian life. Also, Christians can be comforted because, alive or deceased, they are not destined for God's tribulation wrath.

Paul's final exhortations concern various duties in the church's life (5:12-22). He urges them to honor their spiritual leaders and to "be at peace among yourselves" (5:12-13). This may suggest some contention existed toward the church leaders. His other exhortations concern faulty members, personal practice, and the practice of the church when assembled. His closing remarks (5:23-28) include a prayer for their sanctification, a request for prayer, exhortations about reception of his letter and its bearers, and his benediction.

This letter is a reassurance of Paul's love and truthfulness towards the Thessalonians. He gently but firmly vindicates his motives, and encourages, exhorts, and instructs them in their faith that they might grow in their relationship to God and Paul himself.

Outline of 1 Thessalonians

- I. The Introduction 1:1
- II. Paul's Personal Relations to the Thessalonians 1:2-3:13
 - A. His thanksgiving for them 1:2-10
 1. The fact and frequency of His thanksgiving 1:2
 2. The reasons for his thanksgiving 1:3-10
 - a. They have faith, love and hope. 1:3
 - b. They are chosen by God. 1:4-7
 - 1) The assurance of their election 1:4
 - 2) The preaching of the gospel to them 1:5
 - 3) The response to the gospel by them 1:6-7
 - c. They spread their faith. 1:8-10
 - 1) The spread of their faith to every place 1:8
 - 2) The reports received about their faith 1:9-10
 - B. His relations while he was with them 2:1-16
 1. The nature of his ministry when he was among them 2:1-12
 - a. The circumstances behind his ministry 2:1-2
 - b. The manner of his ministry 2:3-12
 - 1) He was honest. 2:3-5
 - a) He did not speak from deceit. 2:3
 - b) He spoke to please God, not men. 2:4
 - c) He did not flatter or covet. 2:5
 - 2) He was affectionate. 2:6-8
 - a) He did not flaunt his authority. 2:6
 - b) He affectionately shared his life. 2:7-8
 - 3) He was industrious. 2:9
 - 4) He was blameless. 2:10-12
 - a) He behaved blamelessly. 2:10
 - b) He admonished them as a father. 2:11-12
 2. The thanksgiving for their reception of the gospel 2:13-16
 - a. The manner of their reception of the gospel 2:13
 - b. The result of their reception of the gospel 2:14-16
 - 1) They suffered like the Judean churches. 2:14
 - 2) Paul also suffers persecution. 2:15-16
 - C. His relations while absent from them 2:17-3:13
 1. He desired to visit them. 2:17-20
 - a. His desire to visit 2:17
 - b. Satan's hindrance of his visit 2:18
 - c. His rejoicing in them 2:19-20

2. He sent Timothy to them. 3:1-5
 - a. The circumstances behind his sending Timothy 3:1
 - b. The purpose in sending Timothy 3:2-4
 - 1) To encourage their faith 3:2
 - 2) To keep them from being shaken by affliction 3:3-4
 - c. The motive for sending Timothy 3:5
 3. He was comforted by Timothy's report. 3:6-10
 - a. Timothy's encouraging report 3:6
 - b. Paul's response to the report 3:7-10
 - 1) He was comforted. 3:7-8
 - 2) He prayed for them with thanksgiving. 3:9-10
 4. He prays for them. 3:11-13
 - a. That God direct his way to them 3:11
 - b. That God make them abound in love 3:12
 - c. That God establish their hearts in holiness 3:13
- III. Paul's Practical Instructions to the Thessalonians 4:1-5:22
- A. The exhortations concerning holy living 4:1-12
 1. The exhortation to please God 4:1-2
 2. The exhortation to sexual purity 4:3-8
 - a. The basis in God's will for sanctification 4:3
 - b. The positive restraint to follow 4:4
 - c. The negative behavior to avoid 4:5-6
 - d. The reasons in God's desire for holiness 4:7-8
 3. The exhortation to love and industry 4:9-12
 - a. The appeal to increase in love 4:9-10
 - b. The appeal to lead a quiet and industrious life 4:11-12
 - B. The instruction concerning the dead in Christ 4:13-18
 1. The need for the instruction 4:13
 2. The content of the instruction 4:14-17
 - a. Jesus is coming with the dead. 4:14
 - b. The dead in Christ will rise first. 4:15-16
 - c. The living will be caught up in the air. 4:17
 3. The benefit of the instruction 4:18
 - C. The exhortation in view of the coming Day of the Lord 5:1-11
 1. The lack of need for instruction 5:1-2
 2. The consequence of unpreparedness 5:3
 3. The position and nature of believers 5:4-5
 4. The exhortations to preparedness 5:6-8
 - a. The exhortation to watchfulness 5:6-7
 - b. The exhortation to be soberly equipped 5:8

- c. The basis for the exhortations 5:9-10
 - 5. The exhortation to comfort and mutual edification 5:11
 - D. The exhortations concerning various duties 5:12-22
 - 1. The exhortations concerning spiritual leaders 5:12-13
 - 2. The exhortations concerning faulty members 5:14-15
 - 3. The exhortations concerning personal practice 5:16-18
 - 4. The exhortations concerning assembly practice 5:19-22
 - a. The negative commands 5:19-20
 - b. The positive commands 5:21-22
- IV. The Conclusion 5:23-28
- 1. Paul's prayer for their complete sanctification 5:23
 - 2. Paul's assurance of the answer to his prayer 5:24
 - 3. Paul's request for prayer 5:25
 - 4. Paul's greeting 5:26
 - 5. Paul's instruction to read the epistle 5:27
 - 6. Paul's benediction 5:28

Summary and Outline of 2 Thessalonians

by

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Introduction

The Author

Paul identifies himself as the author of this epistle in 1:1 and 3:17. The testimony of the early church fathers is earlier and stronger for Paul than in the case of 1 Thessalonians. The vocabulary, style, and theology of the epistle also bear Paul's imprint. When compared to the first epistle, it is evident both are from the same author. They contain similar prayers (2:16-17; 3:16 and 1 Thess. 3:11-13; 5:23), thanksgiving (1:3 and 1 Thess. 1:2-3) and transitions (3:1 and 1 Thess. 4:1). A few higher critics have objected that the eschatology of 2:1-12 could not be Paul's because it contradicts 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18. But not only was this theology accepted very early as Paul's, it can easily be shown to address a different phase of Christ's coming. In the former epistle, Christ comes in the air, in the latter, it is to earth; the former is reason for comfort in the church, the latter speaks of judgment on the world. Therefore, no good reason exists to reject Pauline authorship.

The Date and Place

Only a few months seem to pass since the writing of 1 Thessalonians. There is still persecution in Thessalonica (1:4), and the problem of idleness has developed far enough for stronger words (3:6-15; Cf. 1 Thess. 4:11-12). From 1:1 it is probable that Paul is still in Corinth with Timothy and Silas since there is no indication in Scripture that the three were together any time after Corinth (Cf. Acts 18:5). Thus the letter was written about A.D. 51 from Corinth.

The Destination

From the similarity in circumstances and the continuity of subject matter with 1 Thessalonians (see preceding and following discussions), it is clear the second letter had the same readers as the first, that is, the church at Thessalonica.

The Occasion

It is not known how Paul received the additional information about the situation in Thessalonica that caused him to pen another letter. Perhaps it came by the messenger who delivered the first letter. In any case, Paul was given good news and bad news. The good news concerned the growing faith of the church in the face of persecution. This brought Paul's commendation (1:3-4). The bad news reported that false teaching about the Lord's return was upsetting people. Some were saying the Lord's return had already happened (2:2). As a consequence, some people were refusing to work in belief the end had come (3:6-15; Cf. 1 Thess. 4:11-12). Paul wrote in response to the news of these problems and also took the occasion to commend the church.

The Purpose

The major purpose for Paul's letter was to correct two related problems in the Thessalonian church. The first was a misunderstanding about the day of the Lord, which some claimed had already come (2:1-2). Perhaps the claim was made because the church was undergoing persecution. Paul argues that two key events must precede the day of the Lord: the final apostasy and the revelation of the man of sin (2:3-12). The second related purpose was to

correct disorderliness in the church which was most likely caused by the conclusion that work was unnecessary if it really was the time of the Lord's coming. Paul gives instructions about dealing with idle Christians (3:6-16). The third purpose was simply to commend and encourage the Thessalonians in their steadfast faith amid the Jewish persecution (1:3-4).

Argument

The letter proceeds simply and deliberately to address one purpose after another. Chapter 1 is the encouragement for their faith; chapter 2 the explanation of the day of the Lord; and chapter 3 the exhortation concerning those who are idle.

Paul wants to encourage the Thessalonians in their afflictions at the hands of the Jews (1:3-12). They have endured this trouble from the time he was among them (Acts 17:1-10). He is exceedingly thankful for their faith and good testimony in spite of their persecutions (1:3-4). Paul then encourages them with the assurance that Christ will return in judgment on His enemies (1:5-10). The revelation of God's judgment at Christ's coming will render justice for the persecutors and those who are persecuted (1:6-8). Unbelievers will receive a severe penalty of fiery vengeance and destruction (1:8-9), while believers will share in Christ's glory (1:10). On this basis, Paul prays for God's power to sustain them so that their testimony may continue to glorify Christ (1:11-12).

Paul's shift in subjects is marked by the words "Now . . . concerning" (2:1). His next purpose is to explain the timing of the day of the Lord (2:1-17). He reminds them about the coming of Christ previously explained in 1 Thessalonians (4:13-5:11) and calms their fears that they have somehow missed their deliverance from God's wrath in the day of the Lord (2:1-2). Two preliminary events were necessary before God's day of wrath. First, there must come "the falling away", or the apostasy of the church. Second, the man of sin must be revealed (2:3). Paul goes into detail about the man of sin so as to make his identity unmistakable (2:4-12). He will exalt himself against God (2:4-5) and be revealed only after "He who now restrains" is taken out of the way (2:6-8). This must be a reference to the powerful Holy Spirit Who indwells the church and is removed at the rapture of the church (1 Thess. 4:13-18). The man of sin will be characterized further by satanic power and deception (2:9-12). The description of the man of sin is thorough enough that the Thessalonians will have no false conclusions about his appearing.

Based on this correct understanding of the timing of the day of the Lord, Paul is now able to comfort the church (2:13-17). He thanks God for them, because from the beginning God chose them to experience "salvation", or deliverance, and to obtain glory, not wrath (2:13-14). Therefore, they should stand fast in this truth as they have been taught (2:15). Paul closes this section with a prayer for their comfort and continuation in good works (2:16-17).

Paul's third purpose has to do with the Thessalonians' Christian duty (3:1-15). The section begins with a request for their prayers for the free spread of the gospel and deliverance from the wicked men who oppose him in Corinth (Cf. Acts 18:6,12). He then expresses his confidence in their obedience and progress in the Christian life (3:3-5). Perhaps the expression of confidence was meant to prepare them for the strong instructions regarding the disorderly (3:6-15). These may have been affected by the false teaching that the Lord's coming was upon them so that they refused to work. Their idleness was causing problems in the church. To correct the situation, Paul commands the church to withdraw from every disorderly brother (3:6).

He then reminds them of his own example; how he worked for his food while with them (3:7-9). His command is the same now as then: If anyone does not work, he shall not eat (3:10-12). To those who will obey, Paul concludes with an exhortation to persist in doing good and to lovingly discipline the disorderly offenders (3:13-15). His final prayer is a request for peace in their situation; appropriate in view of their problems (3:16).

This brief but pointed letter confirms the enthusiasm Paul had for the church in Thessalonica. His concern finds expression in encouraging words and correcting words concerning doctrine and behavior. Paul's tone appears confident that they will resolve both conflicts and continue with a good testimony of faith in Christ.

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Summary and Outline of 1 Timothy

by

Dr. Charles Bing

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Introduction

The Author

Pauline authorship has not been questioned until the early 19th century when liberals attacked the pastoral epistles (1 and 2 Timothy, Titus) on every front: historical, stylistic, ecclesiastical and theological. But all evidence for the pastorals as a group supports Paul as the author. The testimony of the church fathers is consistent. Also, in each, the author identifies himself as Paul (1:1; 2 Tim. 1:1; Titus 1:1). Many other doctrinal and autobiographical details fit Paul's theology and life (1:12-17; 2:7; 2 Tim 1:11). Furthermore, pseudonymous documents were unacceptable to the early church because of their deceptive nature. Had these pastoral epistles been written in the second century, it is hard to see what purpose they served considering their content. Finally, Their style and content differ greatly from other post-apostolic and apocryphal works. There is no solid evidence that Paul was not the author of the pastoral epistles.

The Date and Place

The letter was evidently written after Paul's release from his first Roman imprisonment about A.D. 62. Since he was imprisoned again in Rome about A.D. 67, the letter was written in the five year interval. Evidence points to the earlier part of the five year period. After his release, Paul sent Timothy to Philippi to report the news as planned (Phil. 2:19-23). He then went on to visit Ephesus and other churches, such as Colossae (Phile. 22). At some point, Timothy joined Paul in Ephesus where Paul tells him to remain as he travels on to Macedonia (1:3). When he saw that he might be delayed in returning to Ephesus, Paul wrote to Timothy (3:14-15). Thus Paul wrote from Macedonia, perhaps Philippi, around A.D. 62.

The Destination

The letter is addressed to Timothy (1:2) who remained in Ephesus (1:3) as Paul continued his travels. The city of Ephesus was a base for Paul's missionary activity during his three year stay there (Acts 20:31) and had become well established and organized with elders (20:17). Paul probably met Timothy, a resident of Lystra, when he visited that city on his way through the Roman province of Galatia on his first missionary journey (Acts 14:6). Timothy was a convert of Paul's (1:2; 1 Cor. 4:17; 2 Tim. 1:2) who became so well spoken of by the Christians in Lystra and Iconium that Paul took him along on his second missionary journey (Acts 16:1-3). He appears in the biblical record as a close associate throughout Paul's ministry.

The Occasion

The occasion of the letter unfolds in the letter itself. As Paul departed for Macedonia, he left Timothy behind in Ephesus to supervise the church (1:3). The false teaching Paul had predicted years before (Acts 20:29-30) was threatening the church. Paul had already dealt with at least two false teachers (1:19-20) but anticipated further trouble (6:3-5). Since Paul expected to be detained (3:14-15) he was delegating to Timothy the authority to deal with false teaching and establish proper conduct for the church. Timothy would also need encouragement in his role of representing the apostle. Paul writes this personal letter to Timothy to meet these needs.

The exact nature of the false teaching is not clear. It appears to have a remote kinship with later gnosticism. The warnings against asceticism (4:1-3) and the fact that Hymenaeus taught against a literal future resurrection (1:20; 2 Tim. 2:17-18) reflect the gnostic tendency to consider matter as evil. Yet there was also a Judaistic element, because these teachers used the law (1:7).

The Purpose

Paul has a negative and positive purpose for writing. Negatively, Paul writes to give Timothy authority and instruction in refuting false teaching (1:3-7; 6:3-5). Positively, Paul writes to encourage Timothy to instruct the church in godly conduct and order (2:1-12; 3:1-15; 5:1-6:2). The latter is the explicit statement of Paul in 3:15. In all this, Paul instructs Timothy to teach sound doctrine (4:11,13,16; 6:2). A personal purpose is seen in Paul's encouragement to Timothy to fight a good fight, be an example and use his gifts (1:18; 4:12-16; 6:12,20). The letter thus was written as a manual for Paul's representative. It gives Timothy the authority, documentation and instructions to conduct church business and to guard true doctrine from error in Paul's absence. Paul also writes to encourage young Timothy in performing these duties.

Argument

Paul begins the letter with a strong declaration of his apostolic authority (1:1) which lays the authoritative basis for the responsibilities delegated to Timothy. The argument then develops in three main sections. First is Paul's charge to Timothy concerning sound doctrine (1:3-20). Timothy must guard sound doctrine against the false teaching threatening the church (1:3-11). This teaching was causing dissension (1:3-5) due to the ignorance of the false teachers in their treatment of the law (1:6-7). Paul explains the legitimate use of the law which restrains evil (1:8-11).

The importance of the effects of sound doctrine is illustrated by Paul's own example as he gives thanks for his relationship to the gospel (1:12-17). Paul's ministry is a product of the grace of God revealed in the true gospel of salvation through Christ (1:12-15). He is an example of this grace (1:16). This personal digression reaffirms Paul's authority and implies that the false teachers offer nothing of the power to save as Christ does.

Paul commits the charge to guard sound doctrine to Timothy in 1:18-20. Timothy must stand for the truth and fight for it with faith and a good conscience (1:18-19a). The rejection of these two essentials and the subsequent effect of false doctrine is spiritual shipwreck (1:19b-20). Paul again asserts his authority and transfers it to Timothy in his struggle against false teaching at Ephesus.

The "Therefore" (2:1) which begins Paul's instructions to Timothy concerning church order (2:1-3:16) shows that proper church order will help guard the truth and refute the disorder of the false teachers. Paul begins his directives with instructions about public worship (2:1-15). He addresses the conduct of prayer in public worship (2:1-8) by urging its practice and noting its importance and approval before God (2:1-4). The basis for prayer is the mediatorial work of Christ (2:5-7). While men are to pray (2:8), women must present themselves in modesty (2:9-10) and show submission to male leadership in learning, teaching, and exercising authority (2:11-15).

Another important area to guard in the church is its leadership. Therefore, Paul explains the qualifications of church officers (3:1-13). First, he lists the qualifications for overseers (3:1-7) or elders (Acts 20:17), then the qualifications for deacons (3:8-13). Paul seems to be addressing qualifications which would combat the temptations which corrupted the false teachers: sex, money and pride. It is also important to hold the doctrines of the faith with a pure conscience (3:9), which is the area where the false teachers so quickly erred (1:19; 4:2). Even the women involved in church service must be carefully qualified (3:11). The high standards in church leaders will defend the faith by an adherence to sound doctrine and godly conduct.

Paul expresses his purpose for writing and the reasons behind his instructions in 3:14-16. In his absence, he wants Timothy to know how to conduct himself in the church. Paul then highlights the true function and importance of the church in order to provide a theological basis for his instructions about refuting false doctrine and establishing proper conduct in the church. The purpose statement also provides a bridge to more personal advice about Timothy's conduct.

Timothy's personal and official conduct is crucial to a defense of sound doctrine and an influential ministry in the church. Thus in the third section of the letter, Paul addresses this conduct (4:1-6:21a). In view of the coming apostasy, Paul first instructs him about his personal conduct (4:1-16). He warns about false teachers (4:1-3), refutes their doctrine (4:4-5) and gives instructions for the true teacher (4:6-16). The emphasis of Timothy's ministry should be sound doctrine (4:6,11,13,16) and godly conduct (4:7-8,12) which will serve as an example to all (4:15). These things will be a defense against false doctrine if they are manifested in both the ministry (4:6-11) and the personal conduct of Timothy (4:12-16).

Paul next instructs Timothy in his official conduct toward various groups in the church (5:1-6:2). A general exhortation urges a proper attitude toward all ages (5:1-2). Then come instructions concerning widows (5:3-16), including their support (5:3-8) and their enrollment as widows (5:9-16). By overseeing their needs and their moral conduct, Timothy will propagate godliness (5:4,7,10) and an atmosphere conducive to sound doctrine (5:8,12,14-15). A similar purpose lies behind the instructions concerning elders (5:17-25). If they are properly honored, disciplined and ordained, Timothy will insure godliness and defend against false teaching taking root in the church leaders. The last group Paul gives instructions for are servants (6:1-2). They must honor their masters so sound doctrine will not be blasphemed. Once more, it is seen how godly conduct in the church guards it from error.

The final instructions for Timothy concern his conduct towards riches and those who are rich (6:3-19). Paul explains how the desire for riches is behind the ungodliness of the false teachers (6:3-10). Along with their pride, the greed for financial gain is the chief motivation of the false teachers (6:5,9-10). Paul is contrasting ministerial motives, for godliness can be content with a minimum of material goods (6:6-8). Thus Timothy is exhorted to have pure motives in the "fight of faith" (6:11-16). His motivation should be the Lord's coming (6:14-16). Further, Timothy must command the rich to trust in God alone and do good works (6:17-19).

Paul's reiteration of the charge to Timothy aptly concludes Paul's purpose in writing (6:20-21). Timothy is to guard what was committed to him in the Christian message. As Paul has shown, this is done by refuting false doctrine and establishing proper conduct in the church and in Timothy's own life.

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 - 3. The greeting 1:2b
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 - a. The ignorance of false teachers 1:6-7
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 - 3) It is in harmony with the gospel. 1:11
 - B. The thanksgiving for Paul's relation to the gospel 1:12-17
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- III. Paul's Instructions to Timothy Concerning Church Order 2:1-3:16
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 - a. The duty of public prayer 2:1-4
 - 1) The scope of public prayer 2:1-2a
 - 2) The result of public prayer 2:2b
 - 3) God's approval of public prayer 2:3-4
 - b. The basis for public prayer 2:5-7
 - 1) The mediatorial role of Christ 2:5
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 - c. The manner of prayer 2:8
 - 2. The conduct of women in public worship 2:9-15
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 - 1) The qualifications of character 3:2-3
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 - 3) The qualification of spiritual maturity 3:6
 - 4) The qualification of a good testimony 3:7
 - 2. The qualifications of the deacons 3:8-13
 - a. The qualifications of character 3:8-9
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 - C. The reason for these instructions 3:14-16
 - 1. Because of Paul's absence 3:14
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 - 2) The exercise of godliness in ministry 4:7-9
 - 3) The motivation of the good minister 4:10
 - 4) The duty of the good minister 4:11
 - b. The defense through good personal conduct 4:12-16
 - 1) By a good example in youth 4:12
 - 2) By attention to public ministry 4:13
 - 3) By exercise of personal gift 4:14
 - 4) By diligence in fulfilling these duties 4:15-16
 - B. Timothy's official conduct toward various groups 5:1-6:2
 - 1. The instructions for a proper attitude towards all 5:1-2

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 - a. Instructions concerning support of widows 5:3-8
 - 1) The command to honor true widows 5:3
 - 2) The obligation of a widow's children 5:4
 - 3) The definition of a true widow 5:5-7
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 - 2) The advice about Timothy's use of wine 5:23
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 - a. In relation to any master 6:1
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- C. Timothy's conduct toward riches 6:3-19
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 - a. The description of the false teachers 6:3-5
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Introduction

The Author

The author's claim (1:1) and the circumstances inferred by the letter lead only to the conclusion that Paul wrote this epistle. No objection has stood against the external and internal evidence for Pauline authorship for this or the other pastoral epistles.

The Date and Place

Paul is in a Roman prison as he writes (1:8,16-17; 2:9). This is obviously not his earlier imprisonment recorded in Acts 28, because there he lived in a rented dwelling with many companions, but now appears alone and in seclusion (1:16-17; 4:11). Neither does he expect a quick release as before (Phil. 1:25-26; 2:24), but expects death (4:6-8). This second imprisonment came under the persecution initiated by Nero in A.D. 64 to divert suspicion about the burning of Rome from himself to the Christians. When Paul returned to Asia from Spain about A.D. 66 he was a prime target for accusations by his enemies. The letter appears to have been written shortly before his death in A.D. 68. Therefore, Paul wrote from Rome most likely in A.D. 67.

The Destination

The destination of the letter is not so clear as it is in the other pastorals, but there is good reason to think it was sent to Timothy (1:2) in Ephesus, just as 1 Timothy. Some reasons for this conclusion include the reference to Onesiphorus (4:19) who evidently resided in Ephesus (1:16-18), the reference to Hymenaeus (2:17) who was mentioned in connection to the false teaching in Ephesus (1 Tim. 1:19-20), and Paul's assumption that Timothy would pass through Troas on his way to Rome (4:13). Troas lay on the Egnatian Way directly en route from Ephesus to Rome.

The Occasion

As Paul faced the end of his life and ministry in a Roman prison cell, he desired to communicate to his close associate, Timothy, some final words of encouragement and instruction. The occasion for the writing of this letter thus grew out of Paul's circumstances and his fatherly concern for Timothy. Timothy was alone in a dangerous time for the church. Paul was also alone and desired Timothy's company in Rome. The letter encourages Timothy in the ministry and summons him to Rome to be with Paul.

The Purpose

The first purpose of the letter is to encourage Timothy in his ministry. Paul encourages him to endure hardship (1:8; 2:3; 4:5) and to be bold in his gospel witness (1:8-12; 4:1-5) as he faithfully discharges his ministerial duties in increasingly evil times. A second purpose born of his desire to see Timothy (1:4), is to summon the associate to his side (4:9,21). At the same time, Paul wants Timothy to bring Mark also (4:11), as well as some personal items (4:13).

Argument

Paul's introduction (1:1-5) expresses his genuine gratitude and affection for Timothy. He makes it clear from the beginning that he wants to see him again (1:4). The rest of the letter is composed largely of exhortations related to Timothy's ministry and some final personal remarks.

The first part of the letter exhorts Timothy to remain steadfast in the ministry (1:6-2:13). This section begins with the qualities of a steadfast minister (1:6-18). Paul tells Timothy to make the most of his spiritual gift (1:6-7) and to have the same courage in the face of adversity that Paul has demonstrated in himself (1:8-12). In contrast to those who deserted the apostle, except for Onesiphorus, Timothy must remain faithful to the truth entrusted to him (1:13-18). Timothy is also exhorted to remain steadfast in his duties as a gospel minister (2:1-13). He must be strong (2:1) and continue to teach others the truth he learned from Paul (2:2). He must also be prepared to endure suffering (2:3-13) after the example of endurance seen in the soldier, the athlete, and the farmer (2:4-7). The motivation for faithful enduring is the assurance from Christ's resurrection, the example of Paul's suffering, and the certainty of a future reward (2:8-13).

Paul not only encourages Timothy to remain faithful in ministry, he further exhorts him to be faithful to sound doctrine (2:14-4:8). This second part of the letter begins with the proper reactions a minister of the gospel should have toward doctrinal error (2:14-26).

When confronted with error, Timothy should shun it while being diligent in his personal handling of God's Word (2:14-16). The false teaching Timothy encountered was cancerous in its spread and damaging in its denial of the future resurrection (2:17-18). As a servant of God, Timothy must also be diligent in personal purity (2:20-22). When he must confront false teaching, Paul exhorts Timothy not to be quarrelsome, but to be humble in correcting its adherents (2:23-26).

Paul also wants to prepare Timothy for ministry in the dark times of increasing apostasy, so he exhorts him concerning his conduct in the midst of this coming situation (3:1-4:8). Paul warns him about the coming apostasy and describes the apostates (3:1-9). But Timothy is also apprised of his advantages in such a time (3:10-17). He has Paul's example of suffering for the gospel and subsequent deliverance (3:10-13), and his own personal experience with the Scriptures which will equip him "for every good work" (3:14-17). Paul's summary charge to Timothy is to faithfully and diligently perform his gospel ministry (4:1-8). This involves preaching the Word and doing the the work of an evangelist in the face of growing apostasy (4:1-5). Finally, Paul explains the basis for his urgent charge; he expects to die soon and his ministry is finished (4:6-8).

The personal remarks of Paul form a third part of the letter (4:9-18). He indicates his need for assistance and asks for Timothy to come to him promptly (4:9-13). His need is compounded by the companions who have deserted him (4:10-11). He also desires to see Mark and to have his cloak and books (4:11-13). Paul includes a warning to Timothy about the dangerous Alexander (4:14-15) and a brief account of his first trial (4:16-18). It appears that Paul was able to capably defend himself after all had forsook him. However, the deliverance he expects is not release from prison, but a vindication of his ministry.

Paul concludes the letter with final greetings, information about some brothers, and a final appeal for Timothy to come before the winter freeze prohibits travel (4:19-21). He closes with his final benediction (4:22).

Paul's last letter is an expression of love and concern for his friend, Timothy. His affection brings encouragement to Timothy to continue faithfully in the gospel ministry and brings a personal summons to join him a last time in Rome.

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 - b. The incentive to maintain the true doctrine 1:15-18
 - 1) The desertion of those in Asia 1:15
 - 2) The faithful example of Onesiphorus 1:16-18
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 - a. The appeal to endure hardship as a soldier 2:3
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 - 3) The example of the farmer 2:6
 - c. The appeal to consider and understand these things 2:7
 - d. The motivation for faithful endurance 2:8-13
 - 1) The remembrance of Christ's resurrection 2:8
 - 2) The suffering of Paul for the gospel 2:9-10
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 - a. The exhortations concerning doctrinal error 2:14-16
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 - 2) He must be proficient in handling the Word. 2:15
 - 3) He must shun profane babblings. 2:16
 - b. The results of doctrinal error 2:17-18
 - c. The recognition of those who are of the truth 2:19
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 - a. The comparison to different vessels in a house 2:20-21
 - b. The exhortation to pursue personal purity 2:22
 - 3. He exhorts Timothy to correct those who oppose. 2:23-26
 - a. The exhortation to avoid foolish disputes 2:23
 - b. The manner of correcting those who oppose 2:24-25a
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 - a. The announcement of grievous times to come 3:1
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 - a. Timothy's knowledge of Paul in his suffering 3:10-13
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 - 1) His past experience with the Scriptures 3:14-15
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- IV. Paul's Personal Message 4:9-18
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 - 1. He asks Timothy to come quickly. 4:9
 - 2. He explains about his companions. 4:10-11a
 - 3. He asks Timothy to bring Mark. 4:11b
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 - 5. He asks for Timothy to bring his cloak and his books. 4:13
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Summary and Outline of Titus

by

Dr. Charles Bing

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Introduction

The Author

The same arguments used for the other pastoral epistles apply here to prove Paul was the author. His identification (1:1), the content, the circumstances and the familiar companions (3:12-13) all point to Paul. Church tradition is consistent with this conclusion.

The Date and Place

The date and place of origin assigned to this letter depend on whatever course of travel is conjectured for Paul after his release from the first Roman imprisonment. It was probably written after his trip to Spain and shortly before 2 Timothy, thus about A.D. 66. Both Asia Minor and Corinth have been suggested as the place of writing.

The Destination

Paul writes to Titus (1:4), who is in Crete (1:5). Though unmentioned in Acts, Titus merits thirteen references in Paul's epistles which show he was a close and trusted companion. Titus was a Gentile (Gal. 2:3) converted by Paul (1:4). Nothing is said of him until he accompanies Paul on the third missionary journey. Then Paul used him as a messenger and letter-bearer to Corinth (2 Cor. 2:12-13; 7:5-7,13-15; 8:6,16-24). Again there is silence until Paul indicates that he left Titus in Crete (1:5) after his release from prison. Titus proved faithful to Paul to the end, having visited him during his second imprisonment in Rome (2 Tim. 4:10). Tradition says he lived out his life in Crete.

Crete was an island in the Mediterranean about one hundred and fifty-six miles long and thirty miles wide at the widest place. A reputation for immorality and untruthfulness characterized its inhabitants (1:12-13). The church may have started from the witness of the Cretans who were in Jerusalem at Pentecost (Acts 2:11). It appears Paul did not start the church, since his stay there was brief on his first journey to Rome (Acts 27:7-13). Paul had his most extensive ministry there with Titus after his release from prison (1:5).

The Occasion

Though Paul had ministered in Crete, the work was unfinished, so he left Titus there to give the church leadership by appointing elders and instructing in proper doctrine and conduct. In his absence, Paul felt the need to give Titus the authorization and instructions needed to lead the church. Also, the immoral atmosphere of the island evidently threatened to influence the church, so Paul is moved to write to them in order to prevent damage by encouraging proper conduct based on sound doctrine. Furthermore, a threat from false teachers, some Jewish (1:10), had to be stopped because it was leading people astray (1:11). Paul takes the opportunity of Zenas and Apollos' trip through Crete to pen his instructions and encouragement to his associate.

The Purpose

Paul's first purpose is to provide Titus with apostolic authorization to finish the work of the church. This would be needed to deal with the opposition there (1:11; 2:15) and to carry out the instructions about his work in the church. A second purpose is to instruct Titus

concerning his actual work in the church. He gives him instructions about choosing elders (1:6-9) and about teaching sound doctrine and proper Christian conduct (2:1-10; 3:1-3). There may be a coincidental purpose of informing Titus of his winter plans (3:12) and commending Zenas and Apollos (3:13).

Argument

Paul clarifies his authority as an apostle in the introduction of the letter (1:1-4). This adds apostolic weight to his instructions to Titus and gives him the authorization to carry out the directives. Paul's first instructions concern Titus' task of appointing elders (1:5-16). He reminds Titus of this duty (1:5) and proceeds to list the qualifications of the elders (1:6-9). The high qualifications will both prevent and refute unsound doctrine and improper conduct in their midst. The seriousness of this task and the need for elders is emphasized by the threat of false teachers in Crete (1:10-16). Paul describes these teachers (1:10-12) and the consequent duty of Titus and the elders to oppose them (1:13-14).

Paul also instructs Titus about his duty to various groups of people in the church (2:1-15). Titus is to instruct each different age group in sound doctrine and proper behavior while being an example himself (2:1-8). He must likewise instruct servants so that their good works will vindicate true doctrine (2:9-10). This doctrine is the basis for good behavior, so Paul explains the grace of God in salvation as a motivation for godly living (2:11-14). It teaches to deny sin and live righteously in view of the Lord's return. Paul closes this section with an appeal to Titus to be bold and authoritative in teaching, exhorting and rebuking (2:15).

The final section contains some instructions about the relationship of church members to the world (3:1-11). Their conduct toward government and fellow citizens should reflect good works and humility (3:1-2). Again, Paul appeals to the grace of God as a motivation for proper conduct (3:3-8). God saved us by the gracious appearing of Jesus Christ, the manifestation of His mercy through Him and the regenerating work of His Spirit (3:3-6). By God's grace believers are justified and made heirs of eternal life (3:7), thus they should live lives of good works consistent with this doctrine (3:8). By such an emphasis on good works, Paul is fortifying the defense of sound doctrine against the attacks of the false teachers. Nevertheless, when false teachers persist, their teachings should be avoided and those who are divisive should be rejected (3:9-11).

Paul concludes the letter with information about a visit from a companion and a request for Titus to join him in Nicopolis for the winter (3:12). There is a commendation of Zenas and Apollos (3:13) and a final exhortation about the importance of good works, which has proved to be a main theme of the letter (3:14). Paul closes with a greeting and benediction (3:15).

With Paul's written instructions in hand, Titus will be equipped to finish the work of organizing and instructing the church. He will also be able to authoritatively engage and refute the false teachers. But as Paul argues, much can be accomplished preventively by diligence in good works.

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- I. The Introduction 1:1-4
 1. The writer 1:1-3
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 - b. The basis of his office 1:2-3
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 3. The greeting 1:4b
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 - A. The appointment of elders in Cretan churches 1:5-9
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 - c. The doctrinal steadfastness of elders 1:9
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 - b. Their teaching must be ignored. 1:14
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 - b. Their behavior denies their profession. 1:16
- III. Paul's Instructions Concerning Various Groups in the Church 2:1-15
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 - b. The instructions concerning older women 2:3
 - c. The instructions concerning younger women 2:4-5
 - d. The instructions concerning younger men 2:6-8
 - 1) The instruction to be sober-minded 2:6
 - 2) The instruction for Titus to be an example 2:7-8
 3. The instruction for servants 2:9-10
 - B. The grace of God as motivation for godly behavior 2:11-14
 1. The appearance of the grace of God to all men 2:11
 2. The effect of the grace of God on us 2:12-14

- a. It teaches us to live godly lives. 2:12
 - b. It gives us a hope of the Lord's coming. 2:13
 - c. It redeemed us through the work of Christ. 2:14
 - C. The exhortation to Titus to carry out these instructions 2:15
- IV. Paul's Instructions Concerning Church Members in the World 3:1-11
 - A. The conduct of church members towards the world 3:1-2
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 - B. The grace of God as motivation for proper conduct 3:3-8
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 - 3. The motive of consistency in doctrine and conduct 3:8
 - C. The proper response to false teachers 3:9-11
 - 1. Their teaching should be avoided. 3:9
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- V. The Conclusion 3:12-15
 - 1. Paul's personal messages 3:12-14
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 - c. Concerning the importance of good works 3:14
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 - 3. Paul's benediction 3:15b

Summary and Outline of Philemon

by

Dr. Charles Bing

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Introduction

The Author

It is hardly necessary to defend Pauline authorship of this brief letter. Three references identify Paul as the author (vv. 1,9,19) and the close association with Colossians is seen by mention of Paul's companions (vv. 23-24; Col. 4:10,12,14,17).

The Date and Place

Philemon is considered one of Paul's prison epistles (with Ephesians, Philippians and Colossians) since it was written during his first imprisonment in Rome (Acts 28:30). Its date and place of origin is established by the fact that it was written and sent at the same time as Colossians (v. 12; Col. 4:7-9). Tychicus carried both letters to Colossae. This fixes the date at about A.D. 61 from Rome.

The Destination

The letter was a personal correspondence to Philemon and the church that met at his house (v. 1-2). Philemon was a resident of Colossae and a man of some wealth, as indicated by his ownership of slaves and a house big enough to accommodate the church. It is often postulated that Apphia was Philemon's wife and Archippus, a leader or the pastor of the church, his son (v. 2; Col. 4:17). Apparently, Philemon owed his conversion to Paul's ministry (v. 19).

The Occasion

The circumstances behind Paul's writing are evident in the contents of the letter itself. Onesimus, a slave of Philemon's, had run away from his master and stolen from him (vv. 15-16,18). Somehow, Onesimus met Paul during his Roman imprisonment, was converted, and became useful to Paul in Rome (vv. 10-11). Paul, in agreement with Onesimus, realized that this slave had a Christian duty to return to his master, fulfill his obligations and make restitution. Therefore, Paul sends Onesimus back to Philemon (v. 12) accompanied by Tychicus (Col. 4:7-9) and this letter through which Paul makes a plea on Onesimus' behalf.

The Purpose

Paul wrote to urge Philemon to receive Onesimus in a manner worthy of a Christian brother, not a runaway slave (vv. 15-16). Paul also writes to assure Philemon that anything owed by the slave will be paid by the apostle himself (v. 19).

Argument

The address in the introduction (vv. 1-3) assures Philemon of Paul's love and high regard for his friend. Even more, Paul expresses his thanksgiving to God because of Philemon's good testimony and ministry to the saints in Colossae (vv. 4-7).

Paul begins his appeal to Philemon (vv. 8-21) by explaining the circumstances leading up to the return of Onesimus (vv. 8-16). Paul makes his appeal in love instead of by command (vv. 8-9). He then explains his relationship to Onesimus, whom he met in prison, converted, and found useful (vv. 10-11). Though Paul would have liked Onesimus to stay and

minister to him, he is sending him back (v. 12). He wants Philemon to receive Onesimus as if he were Paul himself, and gives the slaveowner the opportunity to respond voluntarily with the subtle hint that Onesimus be released to minister to Paul on Philemon's behalf (vv. 13-14). Paul suggests that God's providential design in all of this is that Philemon might enjoy an eternal relationship with Onesimus as a brother in Christ (vv. 15-16).

Paul closes with a direct appeal to Philemon (vv. 17-21). He urges that Onesimus be received in a manner worthy of the apostle himself (v. 17). He also promises to pay Philemon whatever Onesimus might owe, but reminds Philemon that he himself is a debtor to the apostle (vv. 18-19). Paul encourages Philemon to fulfill his joy in this and expresses the confidence that he will do more than Paul has asked (vv. 20-21). Paul may be hinting here that Philemon give Onesimus his freedom from slavery.

Paul's final remarks express his intention to visit (v. 22), and send greetings from his associates (v. 23-24). He closes with a benediction (v. 25).

The loving and gentle tone of this letter present a strong appeal on behalf of the slave, Onesimus. It is hard to conceive of Philemon doing any less than Paul asks in this matter.

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Summary and Outline of Hebrews

by

Dr. Charles Bing

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Introduction

The Author

From the outset, it must be admitted that the endless debate about the authorship of Hebrews may never be resolved. Traditions arose along geographical lines. In Alexandria, Egypt, the epistle was associated with Paul. Barnabas was the traditional author according to Tertullian (A.D. 150-222) in North Africa. Italy and Western Europe in time favored Paul as the author. Other suggestions have since come to include Luke, Clement of Rome, Silas, Priscilla and Apollos.

The strongest arguments consider the internal evidence. Many claim this points to Paul since there is a reference to Timothy (13:23), an emphasis on the person and work of Christ, a characteristic form of closing benediction, and similarities in language and thought with Paul's epistles. However, others claim the evidence argues against Paul as the author. They point to the absence of Paul's usual reference to himself and customary salutation, the reliance upon the Septuagint instead of the Hebrew Scriptures, stylistic differences, an uncommon emphasis on Christ's heavenly ministry, an uncharacteristic use of singular instead of compound titles for Christ, and the description of how the author received his knowledge of the gospel, that is, not directly from the Lord, but through His disciples (2:3).

If the author was not Paul, a reasonable guess is Barnabas. He has the advantage of ancient tradition and close association with the apostolic circle (Acts 9:26-27; 12:25-13:2). He was even regarded as an apostle (Acts 14:4,14). Moreover, on his first missionary journey with Paul, he would have become acquainted with Timothy, who is mentioned in the epistle (13:24). Also, he was a Levite (Acts 4:36) which would make him familiar with temple worship, something obviously true of the author.

The Date and Place

The date of the epistle cannot be later than A.D. 70 because there is no mention of the destruction of Jerusalem which would have bolstered the author's argument about the cessation of the Old Testament sacrificial system. The sense from the epistle is that it is still operative (8:4,13; 9:6-9; 10:1-3). Also, the date can be placed in the lifetime of Timothy (13:23), yet a generation of church leaders had already passed away (13:7). The prospect of persecution and possible martyrdom (12:4) may suggest a date within the Neronian persecution. This would place it somewhere in A.D. 64-68. There is not the first clue as to its place of writing.

The Destination

The identity of the readers is likewise unknown, but some things can be learned from the epistle. They were part of a community at a definite place which the author intends to visit (13:19,23). Furthermore, they were from a Jewish background. This is evidenced somewhat by the ancient traditional title "To the Hebrews", but more so by the heavy use of the Old Testament and the stress on Jewish prototypes. The readers were obviously Christians (e.g. 3:1; 5:12; 6:9) as is consistent with the readers of any New Testament epistle.

Another question that brings debate is the location of this Christian community. The traditional view maintains the epistle was addressed to the Jewish Christians in Jerusalem or

Palestine, but there is reason to doubt this. The statement that they have "not yet resisted to bloodshed" (12:4) does not fit the location where the first martyrs gave their lives. Also, the statement that they "ministered to the saints" does not fit the Palestinian Christians who were recipients of the ministry of others (Acts 11:27-29; Gal. 2:10). Most modern scholars have therefore suggested the readers were a Jewish-Christian enclave in Rome. In support are the greeting from "Those from Italy" (13:24), the earliest mention of the epistle by Clement of Rome, the reference to "the plundering of your goods" (10:34) reminding of Nero's persecution, and the preferred use of the Septuagint. The objection that the Neronian persecution would have killed some, contra to 12:4, is answered by dating the epistle before A.D. 64 or suggesting the community was away from the city of Rome itself.

The destination depends on the authorship question. If Paul was the author, Rome would be a logical choice since he was there twice. If Barnabas was the author, the ancient city of Cyrene in North Africa would fit the requirements. There was a large Jewish community there and Christianity took root early (Acts 11:20). Furthermore, there is support for a connection between Cyprus, Barnabas' homeland, and Cyrene. Both missionaries who preached in Antioch were from Cyprus and Cyrene (Acts 11:20) and the companions of Barnabas were "Lucius of Cyrene" and "Simeon called Niger" (Acts 13:1). "Niger" means "black," which may indicate Simeon was from North Africa like Lucius. Still, the evidence is too slender for any dogmatic conclusions.

The Occasion

The circumstances that provoked the writing of Hebrews are apparent in the epistle. This Christian community was faced with increasing persecution for their faith (12:4-12) and were in danger of falling away or drifting from their Christian commitment (2:1-3; 6:4-6; 10:35). There is no hint that any had actually given in totally to this temptation (6:4-9; 10:39). The "falling away" probably refers to those who were tempted to cloak their Christian faith in Jewish ritual so as to escape persecution as Christians. Such a compromise displayed unbelief, neglect, and a drifting away from the sufficiency of Christ in their salvation experience. However, the Christians had already grown listless and stagnant in their growth as they held back from full commitment (5:12-6:2, 11-12; 12:1-2). The author of Hebrews writes out of concern for the readers' danger of stagnation and apostasy.

The Purpose

The author of Hebrews wrote to move the readers from a position of spiritual stagnation and potential apostasy to a diligent pursuit of the superior blessings in Christ. To do this, he uses instruction, warning, and encouragement. He instructs them throughout the epistle on the superiority of Christ over the old revelation (1:1-3), the angels (1:4-2:18), Moses (3:1-4:13), the Levitical priesthood (4:14-7:28), and the Levitical sacrifices (8:1-10:18). The aim of the writer is to show the full significance of Christ and His work so that the readers would realize and appropriate these blessings. Interspersed are five warnings (2:1-4; 3:7-4:13; 5:11-6:20; 10:26-39; 12:25-29) which serve as a negative motivation to the same positive end. They are designed to shake up the readers to go on to maturity by an explanation of the dangers of turning aside in unbelief. The author also uses encouragement to stimulate the readers to faith and maturity. He exhorts them to continue forward in the Christian life (3:14; 6:1; 12:1) stressing the need for steadfast endurance (3:14; 4:14; 10:23,36; 12:1). He further encourages them by

mentioning those who have faithfully endured in times past (ch. 11) and by exhorting them to endure in the faith and to fulfill their Christian duty (chs. 12-13).

Argument

The basic design of Hebrews is built around the argument of the superiority of Christ and Christianity over the old Judaic system. The author begins with the superiority of the person of Christ, then moves to the superiority of His work in the high priesthood, and finally to the superiority of the Christian's walk in Christ. This presentation, together with the periodic warnings and exhortations, is intended to motivate the readers to forward progress in their Christian growth and to prevent their turning away from Christianity.

The argument begins immediately with the presentation of the superiority of the person of Christ (1:1-4:6). The first area of superiority is that of the Son of God over previous prophetic revelation (1:1-3). The title "Son" expresses the unique and revelatory relationship of Christ to God that cannot be compared to any previous prophetic revelation in the Mosaic law. It also is His title as the "heir of all things" (1:2), a concept used convincingly in Hebrews to show that a decision to forsake Christ is a decision to forfeit an eternal inheritance.

The second comparison proves Christ is superior to God's angels (1:4-2:18). He alone possesses deity as a Son and a King and in His eternality and exaltation, as the Scriptures prove (1:4-13). He is thus entitled to God's inheritance (1:4), whereas angels are merely ministers to those who inherit the kingdom through Christ (1:14).

At this point, the author inserts his first warning about the danger of neglect or drifting away from Christ's sufficiency (2:1-4). Since speaking of angels, he reminds of the certainty of punishment for disobedience under the revelation they delivered in the law. Christ is superior to the angels, therefore how much greater is the accountability and certainty of judgment for those who neglect the superior revelation in Christ.

The writer also demonstrates that Christ is superior to the angels in His deity (2:5-18). As the Son of Man He is destined to rule (2:5-9), but also He must suffer as the representative Man (2:10-18). He secured salvation for man through His death and in His oneness with man is a sympathetic High Priest. If Christ so rules creation and represents mankind, then those who are Christ's are destined to rule with Him. This is a powerful argument against deserting the faith and for pressing on in growth in Christ.

The writer's third comparison shows Christ is superior to Moses, the mediator of the old revelation (3:1-4:13). Christ and Moses are similar in their positions of presiding over God's house (3:1-2), but Christ is superior as the Owner and Builder of the house (3:3-6). Moses presided over the tabernacle, but Christ over the obedient community of believers. Those who persist in faith and obedience are members of God's house under the ministry of the High Priest (3:6).

The second warning appears here in response to the statement of 3:6, because the opposite of enduring faithfulness is unbelief (3:7-4:13). This warning uses the example of Israel in the wilderness (Ps. 95:7-11) to show how the blessing of God can be lost through unbelief. The blessing of God denoted by the term "rest" refers to the benefits available at any time to the people of God who believe and obey. This is the rest that God entered into after creation (4:4), is

ultimately experienced in the millennial kingdom, yet can be enjoyed at present under the ministry of the High Priest, Jesus. The author is warning against unbelief based on Israel's failure (3:7-19). Just as Israel forfeited their rest in Canaan, so the readers can miss present rest through unbelief (3:16-19). He proceeds to demonstrate that the promised rest is a present possibility (4:1-10). It is available today (4:1-3) because it has been available since God entered rest at the time of creation and it was available in David and Joshua's day (4:4-8). The rest remains for the Christian who lives in obedience to God and thus has "ceased from his works," for to obey is to do the work of God in the fullest (4:9-10). The final exhortation to diligence in entering God's rest is made on the basis of the Word of God which will judge those who fall short (4:11-13).

This warning concludes the argument for the superiority of the person of Christ and introduces the argument for the superiority of the priesthood of Christ (4:14-10:18). The blessings of the Christian's rest are mediated and secured by Jesus, the High Priest, Who is over the household of obedient believers. The discussion of Christ's position as High Priest focuses on His person and His work.

First, the writer sets forth the superiority of Christ in His person as High Priest (4:14-7:28). His superior position and sympathetic regard is a strong motivation to "hold fast" to the faith and avail oneself of its mercy and grace (4:14-16). The author shows how this position is possible because of the Son's superior qualifications (5:1-10). The priesthood necessitates one who can mediate between God and man, can identify with men in weakness, and is called by God (5:1-4). Christ qualifies because He is begotten and called by God and perfected through obedience that caused Him to suffer as a man (5:5-10). At this point the author introduces the subject of the "order of Melchizedek," but hesitates to expand because of the readers' incapacity due to spiritual immaturity (5:11).

The recognition of the readers' immaturity causes the author to address it with a warning about the danger of falling away (5:11-6:20). The danger of falling away includes the failure to press on to maturity as well as the more severe neglect altogether of the faith. Just as in a foot race, there can be no standing still or turning back without irreparable loss. Thus he rebukes their immaturity which has kept them in spiritual infancy (5:11-14) and exhorts them to go on to maturity (6:1-3). The readers have never progressed beyond the most fundamental Christian doctrines. Should they further turn away from their Christian commitment there can be no compensation for what is lost (6:4-8). They will become as useless to God as thorn infested land to a farmer (6:7-8). But the author is encouraging through his expression of confidence that they will endure to inherit the promises (6:9-20). These promises, secured by God's integrity (6:13-18) and mediated through the high priesthood of Christ (6:19-20), are the Christian's confidence in steadfastness.

The mention of the high priesthood after the order of Melchizedek (6:20) resumes the discussion left in 5:10-11. Since the priesthood of Christ is essential to obtaining the promises of God, the author presents Christ's superiority in this order of priesthood (7:1-28). Melchizedek is described as a priest forever (7:1-3) whose priesthood was superior to the Levitical priesthood (7:4-10). The Melchizedekian priesthood is then compared to Christ's priesthood (7:11-25). The Levitical priesthood was inadequate because it was transitional and temporary, and thus it was finally replaced by an eternal priesthood after the order of Melchizedek (7:11-19). This priesthood belonging to Christ is superior (7:20-25) because it is guaranteed by a permanent oath

(7:20-22) and by a permanent life (7:23-25). Such a High Priest is totally sufficient for the Christian (7:26-28).

The author now moves from the superiority of the person of Christ as High Priest to the superiority of His work as High Priest (8:1-10:18). In this position, He mediates a new covenant (8:1-13) as he ministers in a new sanctuary, the heavenly eternal one (8:1-6). The new covenant, the writer argues, would not have been necessary if the old were flawless (8:7). Jeremiah 31 is quoted to show the origin and blessings of the new covenant (8:8-12).

Next, the superiority of the new covenant sacrifice is explained (9:1-10:18). Under the old covenant, the priest made atonement in the tabernacle for all the sins of the people once a year (9:1-10). But the new covenant atonement proves far superior (9:11-28). The sacrifice of Christ under the new covenant was "once for all having obtained eternal redemption" (9:11-14). By His death, Jesus ratified the new covenant through His shed blood, much superior to the blood of animals sprinkled by Moses to ratify the old covenant (9:27-28). Furthermore, the ministry of Christ's sacrifice has eternal significance as it was applied in the presence of God on man's behalf (9:23-28). Thus the efficacy of Christ's atonement is far superior to its old covenant prototype (10:1-18). Old covenant sacrifices had to be repeated yearly and served only to remind of sin (10:1-4). But Christ's sacrifice replaced the old according to the will of God so that believers can be sanctified before God once for all (10:5-10). The conclusion about the sufficiency of Christ's sacrifice is stated succinctly in 10:11-18. Whereas earthly sacrifices were insufficient to take away sin, Christ finished sacrifice for sin by His one act making further sacrifice needless.

The sufficiency of Christ's sacrifice is the basis for the author's next section which exhorts the Christian to a walk of faith. The superiority of Christ's ministry is sufficient for a superior Christian walk in faith (10:19-13:17). This section begins with a direct exhortation to the readers to have a full assurance of faith (10:19-39). The readers should avail themselves of Christ's superior priestly ministry and approach God boldly through the way prepared by Christ (10:19-25). This appeal urges them to hold fast the confession of their hope according to the faithful promise of God. There is clearly a choice here, for the readers can also hold back from the exercise of their privileges in Christ and forsake the assembling of themselves together, as indeed some have done already (10:25).

Lest the readers are tempted to shrink back, the author elicits his fourth warning about the danger of drawing back (10:26-39). It is a serious thing to willfully reject God's superior provision in Christ (10:26-31). Judgment is more certain and more severe than a deliberate rejection of the Mosaic law under the old dispensation. The author does not specify exactly what the judgment is, but his ambiguity may serve to intensify its dread. It is some kind of disciplinary measure against "His people" (10:30). The author's next appeal is abruptly positive as he encourages the readers to persevere in faith (10:32-39). He does this by reminding them of their past perseverance in tribulation (10:32-34) and of their future reward at Christ's coming (10:35-38). He is confident enough to identify himself with his readers and declare his assurance of their faithful perseverance (10:39). The next important section continues the positive appeal based on the argument of the future reward mentioned in 10:35-38).

In this section, the writer lists examples of faith from the antediluvian era to the later history of Israel (11:1-40). The readers can be encouraged that their many predecessors

persevered in the face of adverse circumstances, persecution, opposition, sin, and even death. He points out that they persevered by faith in God's promise though they did not receive their reward on earth (11:13,39).

The exhortation to endure in faith (12:1-29) is then made on the basis of the examples of faith who preceded the readers. The author begins by addressing the relationship of faith to suffering (12:1-11). The motivation to endure suffering comes not only from the early examples from biblical history, but also from the example of Christ's faithful endurance (12:1-4). In addition, it will help the readers if they view suffering in a positive way as a display of God's love for them as His children (12:5-11). Those who do not draw back but yield to God's purposes in suffering will enjoy the result of their faithful endurance which is "peaceable fruit of righteousness" (12:11). With such a view of suffering, the readers can be renewed personally and in their duties toward others (12:12-17).

Another motivation to faithful endurance is the affirmation of the believer's privileges in Christ (12:18-24). The fear and dread of the old approach to God (12:18-21) has been replaced by the mediatorial ministry of Jesus and the sufficiency of His atonement which gives confidence before God (12:22-24).

The final motivation to endure in the faith comes in the fifth warning which addresses the danger of refusing God (12:25-29). From such a sin there is no escape because God has promised to render judgment by shaking the earth and heaven. Therefore the believer should continue to serve God with the firm conviction that his inheritance in the kingdom is unshakeable.

The epistle closes with exhortations to practical obligations (13:1-17). The Christian who continues in faith must show his diligence by fulfilling certain obligations he might otherwise neglect. The author begins with social obligations such as love, hospitality, care of the persecuted, marital chastity and contentment (13:1-6). He then urges them to fulfill certain religious obligations (13:7-17). They should recall their former leaders in the faith, maintain true doctrine, be willing to bear reproach and sacrifice for Christ, and obey their present leaders. The obligations listed might be the first the readers would be tempted to neglect in the face of persecution.

The epistle concludes on a personal note (13:18-25). The author requests their prayers, prays for their completeness, urges them to accept exhortations he has written, informs them about Timothy's release, extends greetings and pronounces a benediction.

This epistle is a powerful and persuasive argument against neglect of or departure from the Christian faith. The author has conclusively demonstrated the superiority and sufficiency of Christ's person and work over the old Levitical religion so that a return to it would not only be hazardous but preposterous. By way of instruction, warning and encouragement he motivates them to continue faithfully in their commitment to Christ in spite of persecution.

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Summary and Outline of James

by

Dr. Charles Bing

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Introduction

The Author

In the New Testament there are four men named James who enter the discussion about the authorship of this epistle. First, there is James, the father of Judas (not Iscariot), mentioned twice (Luke 6:16; Acts 1:13). He is usually eliminated because he is unknown apart from these references. Second is James, the son of Alphaeus (Matt. 10:3; Mark 3:18; 15:40; Luke 6:15; Acts 1:13) who does not appear to be the authoritative figure behind the epistle since he is only named when the apostles are listed. Third is James, the son of Zebedee and the brother of John (Matt. 4:21; 10:2; 17:1; Mark 3:17; 10:35; 13:3; Luke 9:24; Acts 1:13). Though he was one of Jesus' inner circle of three, he was martyred too early (about A.D. 44) to be a likely candidate. The fourth choice is best. This is James, the Lord's brother (Matt. 13:55; Mark 6:3; Gal. 1:19), who was a leader in the church at Jerusalem (Acts 12:17; 15:13-21; 21:18; Gal. 2:9,12). Support for this view is abundant. Tradition favors the Lord's brother as does the evidence of Scripture. Many have noticed the similarities between the language of the epistle and James' speech in Acts 15:23-29. The author also shows familiarity with the sayings of Jesus which are not quoted but appear as part of the author's consciousness. Moreover, James had the unquestionable authority and reputation among the early church (Cf. Jude 1). Objectors claim the Greek of the epistle is too polished for a Galilean such as he, but there is no reason why James could not have learned and become proficient in this universal language. The external and internal evidence thus favors James decisively.

The Date and Place

James was martyred about A.D. 62, so the epistle was written before this event. Furthermore, it was probably written before the Jerusalem Council in A.D. 49 because there is no hint of the controversy over Gentiles and circumcision. This would set the date at about A.D. 44-48 making this the earliest epistle. Other support for the early date comes from the lack of distinctive Christian phraseology and theology, the mention of a "synagogue" as the assembly place for Christians (2:2), the slight line between Judaism and Christianity, the lack of mention of Gentiles, and the allusions to Christ's teachings instead of quotes which may indicate it was written before the Gospels. Jerusalem seems to be the fixed residence of James, the Lord's brother (Acts 15:2ff.; Gal. 2:1,9), and is thus the most likely place of writing.

The Destination

James addresses "the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad" (1:1). This is better understood as a reference to early Jewish Christians and not as a metaphor for the church in general. Jewish Christians were scattered early from Jerusalem because of persecution (Acts 8:1). The epistle is full of Jewish symbolism and flavor. There is the reference to their meeting place as a "synagogue" (2:2), the significant argument from monotheism (2:19), the reference to Abraham as "our father" (2:21), much mention of the law, the use of a Hebrew title "Lord of Sabaoth" (5:4), and the mention of Jewish oaths (5:12). The epistle was designed as an encyclical letter to the Hebrew Christians scattered outside of Jerusalem. It cannot be proved whether these lived in the eastern regions as some conjecture.

The Occasion

James was prompted to write upon his discovery of many unsatisfactory conditions in the Jewish-Christian congregations scattered around Palestine. They were undergoing various trials (1:2), many of which were social injustices due to their displacement (1:9-10; 2:6-7; 5:4). The readers were not bearing up under these trials, but demonstrated lack of faith. They were discriminating against poorer Christians (2:1-4), neglecting good works (2:14-16), misusing the tongue (3:1-18), fighting (4:1-3), given to worldliness (4:4) and boasting in materialism (4:13-5:6). As a leader of the church, James had a great pastoral concern for these Christians and wrote this letter to call them to a life of faith in trials.

The Purpose

The epistle has a very practical purpose. James wrote to encourage and exhort these Christians to a life of maturity through faith and endurance in trials. Their professed faith was not visibly operative in their lives. James shows how a life of faith should be manifested in many different areas of life. He begins with faith in trials (1:2-12), continues with faith in temptations (1:13-18), faith in response to the Word (1:21-27), faith in the midst of discrimination (2:1-13), faith displayed in works (2:14-26), faith in self-control and use of the tongue (3:1-18), faith in relation to the world (4:1-5:12) and faith in prayer (5:13-18). James show how faith in these various areas of life is true religion and the righteousness required by God.

Argument

The introduction (1:1-20) indicates that the author is well known to his readers who are scattered away from their homes and into strange lands (1:1). This dispersion would create obvious financial and social disadvantages and problems for the readers. James begins his instruction by presenting the theme for his letter which is the believer's response to these tests of faith (1:2-20). He first discusses their attitudes toward trials (1:2-12). The proper attitude (1:2-4) should be one of joy which produces patience and results in maturity for the Christian. The believer also has recourse to prayer for wisdom in trials, but this prayer must reflect faith (1:5-8). James realizes there are different perspectives in trials often determined by one's economic and social status (1:9-12). Riches are no reason to exult in trials. Only the one who perseveres in faith will be rewarded (1:12).

Trials occur when circumstances force a person to make a decision between serving self or obeying God. James has argued that God allows these trials to help believers mature. But when these circumstances include temptations to evil, a person could conclude that God has sent these, too. Thus James answers this misconception with a discussion of the believer's attitude toward temptations (1:13-18). He declares that God is not the source of temptation; they come from lusts within.

At the end of this introductory section James sets forth the theme of the epistle (1:19-20). The believer's response to trials should evidence the behavior of faith which is obedience, self-control and humility that does not easily anger (1:19). This response of faith produces the righteousness of God (1:20). The thematic verse 19 also serves as a key to the outline of the

epistle: Obedience to the Word (1:21-2:26), self-control evidenced through use of the tongue (3:1-18) and humility in response to conflicts with the world (4:1-5:6).

James begins addressing the specific areas of trials with a discussion of the believer's response in hearing the Word of God (1:21-2:26). The believer should respond with obedience (1:21-27). This means there must be an attitude of receptivity which goes beyond mere hearing to actual doing. James offers some tests to measure true obedience: the control of the tongue, the visitation of needy orphans and widows and moral separation from the world (1:26-27).

He further applies this teaching to an area of weakness with his readers. He uses the example of their practice of partiality to illustrate disobedience to God's law (2:1-13). He first rebukes them for showing favoritism in public meetings to those who are rich (2:1-4). The result of such partiality was that it displayed inconsistency with God's treatment of the poor and the wealthy's treatment of the readers (2:5-7). God has honored the poor by making them rich in faith, whereas the wealthy have dishonored the readers through oppression. Moreover, favoritism violates the law of love, the essence of God's law, and makes them guilty as lawbreakers (2:8-11). The author's appeal is for them to demonstrate their faith by living according to the law of love (2:12-13).

If one is living according to love instead of mere intellectual assent to the creeds of the faith, then faith and obedience will be demonstrated through works (2:14-26). James declares that this kind of creedal faith is useless and dead without works (2:14-17). The relationship of faith to works is then worked out in an imaginary dialogue with an objector (2:18-25). The objector asserts that faith and works have no inherent relationship (2:18-19). The demons have a faith which causes them to tremble, but do nothing more (2:19). To this James responds with a vigorous refutation (2:20-25). He argues that the essentiality of works to faith is illustrated in Abraham's obedience to God (2:21-24). Abraham's offer of Isaac "justified," or proved to be true, his faith proclaimed in Genesis 15:6. Rahab is offered as a similar example (2:25). James's conclusion is that faith without works is as useless as a body without the animating spirit (2:26). This argument concludes the section demonstrating faith and obedience as the proper response to the Word of God.

Another way that faith can be demonstrated in the believer's life is by self-control in the area of the tongue (3:1-18). James expounds the difficulty in controlling the use of the tongue (3:1-12). It is a problem, especially for those who are teachers (3:1-2). Thus potential teachers must take this into consideration since they face a stricter judgment (3:1). James then illustrates the importance of the tongue with comparisons to familiar things under the control of a small unit (3:3-6). His conclusion that the tongue is naturally uncontrollable (3:7-8) implies the necessity of divine help. The undesirability of an uncontrolled tongue is demonstrated by its inconsistency with a Christian's profession (3:9-12). The solution to control of the tongue hinted at in 3:7-8 is divulged in the paragraph about different kinds of wisdom available in use of the tongue (3:13-18). The wrong kind of wisdom comes from evil sources and produces envy, self-seeking, boasting, lying, and confusion (3:14-16). The desirable wisdom comes from above and results in fruits of righteousness (3:17-18).

The discussion of the believer's control of the tongue shows the necessity of divine assistance. James has already shown that this divine help comes in the form of wisdom (1:5; 3:17) obtained through the prayer of faith (1:6-8). Therefore, the way to handle trials of self-

control and the tongue is by faith. This will produce the righteousness which pleases God (3:17-18).

James now discusses a third major area of trials in the believer's response to conflicts with the world (4:1-5:6). He begins by identifying the cause of these conflicts as worldliness (4:1-5). The worldly attitude of the readers is seen in their quarrels with one another which are motivated by their selfish desires (4:1-3). James rebukes such an attitude as worldly and antagonistic toward God (4:4-5). The cure for this attitude of worldly contention is humility (4:6-5:6). Humility should be demonstrated first by submission to God (4:6-10). It can also be displayed by a non-judgmental stance when speaking of others (4:11-12). Another area for humility to be expressed is in making plans for the future (4:13-17). All plans should be submitted to God because man is limited by finite knowledge and brevity of life. Finally, humility needs to be displayed by the rich, because riches are uncertain and judgment for their indulgent and oppressive lifestyles is imminent (5:1-6).

James has shown that conflict with the world can be resolved by an attitude of humility. Humility is an expression of faith in that it submits to God and trusts Him to provide grace and exaltation for the believer (4:6,10).

James's conclusion (5:7-20) is as long as his introduction. The first half is an encouragement to be patient in trials in hope of the Lord's return (5:7-12). By way of exhortation he assures them their faith and patience will be rewarded (5:7-8). Moreover, they should not grow impatient and resort to disputing among themselves (5:9). As examples, James holds up the patient suffering of the prophets and Job (5:10-11). In view of the return of the Judge, all dealings should be in accord with sincerity and truthfulness (5:12). James has again appealed for a response of faith in trials expressed now by an exhortation to patience in hope of the Lord's return.

The ultimate and most practical expression of faith in trials is the believer's resource of prayer (5:13-18). James closes his letter with an appeal for prayer in various circumstances. It should be used in emotional extremes (5:13) and in helping the sick (5:14-16a). The example of Elijah shows that earnest prayer produces concrete results (5:16b-18). The implication of the final admonition is that prayer must be the resource used to restore those who wander from the truth into sin (5:19-20). As emphasized in the introduction, prayer should be the Christian's first resort when facing trials (1:5). It is by its very nature an exercise of faith.

The epistle of James is designed to encourage such faith in the midst of trying circumstances. The problems of the readers can be resolved only as they, in faith, obey the Word of God, demonstrate self-control by appropriating God's wisdom and humble themselves during conflicts with the world. This will cause them to grow in maturity and to live the kind of righteous lives that God desires.

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Summary and Outline of 1 Peter

by

Dr. Charles Bing

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Introduction

The Author

The author identifies himself as the apostle Peter (1:1) and an eyewitness to Christ's ministry (1:8; 2:23; 5:1). The early church accepted this testimony and it is validated by other evidence. First, there are strong parallels between expressions in the epistle and Petrine sermons in Acts (Cf. 1:20 and Acts 2:23; 2:7-8 and Acts 4:10-11; 4:5 and Acts 10:42). Also, Peter was fond of referring to the cross of Christ with the Greek word *xylon* or "tree" (2:24; Acts 5:30; 10:39). Furthermore, Peter is the only New Testament writer to refer to church elders as "shepherds" (5:2), terminology used only by Christ in His commissioning of Peter (John 21:16).

This evidence should overwhelm any objections to the authenticity of the letter. Still, some critics have questioned Petrine authorship on the claim that the Greek used is too polished for an unschooled fisherman from Galilee (Acts 4:13). But the reference in Acts 4 is to laymen or men untrained in rabbinic tradition, not to illiteracy. Peter's widespread travels show he must have been proficient in the common languages. Besides, others like Matthew, Mark and James wrote skillfully in Greek though they resided in Palestine. Finally, Peter's Greek went through a secretary, Silvanus (or Silas, 5:12), who was himself a Roman citizen (Acts 16:36-37) who traveled much with the apostles. Therefore, evidence remains on the side of Peter as author.

Peter is a prominent personality in the gospels and Acts. The Galilean fisherman was an early follower of Jesus Who changed his name from Simon to "Cephas", or "Peter", a Stone (John 1:40-42). Peter played a central role in the early spread of Christianity and was a leader of the early church. He was designated the apostle to the Jews (Gal. 2:9), but also ministered to Gentiles being the first to preach the gospel to them (Acts 10:34-48; Gal. 2:12). Peter fades off the record of Acts after the Jerusalem Council (Acts 15), though a reference in 1 Corinthians 9:5 mentions him as one who traveled with his wife. Tradition says he ministered in Rome for the last decade of his life and was martyred there by upside down crucifixion under Nero in A.D. 67. Jesus had alluded to his violent death in John 21:18-19.

The Date and Place

Peter had to write the epistle before the death of Nero in A.D. 68 if tradition is correct that he was martyred under him. The most likely date is at the outbreak of the Neronian persecution in A.D. 64 or shortly before. The suffering of the Christian readers has not been underway for long and more appears imminent (1:6, 4:12,17-19; 5:9). There is no indication in the epistle that any had actually suffered martyrdom. Rather, there is a growing and widespread hatred of Christians (3:15-16; 4:4; 5:9).

The place of origin is designated "in Babylon." Some who take this literally claim Peter wrote from the city of Babylon in Mesopotamia. This view was popularized during the Reformation as a probable Protestant polemic against Papal claims. But there were few Jews in the small city of Peter's time and no record of a church there. Most believe that "Babylon" is a cryptic reference to Rome as the central city of power, vice, and idolatry. Besides, the tone of 5:13 is highly figurative: Peter refers to Mark as "my son" and the Christian community as "she who is in Babylon". Furthermore, Peter's companion, Mark (5:13), was in Rome during part of

Paul's imprisonment (Col. 4:10). Tradition has always supported Rome as the place of writing in as much as it was Peter's last residence.

The Destination

Peter writes to "the pilgrims of the Dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia" (1:1) and generally, to "all who are in Christ Jesus" (5:14). The letter is intended for circulation among these Christians scattered throughout the Roman province of Asia Minor. That they are organized churches is indicated by the directions in 5:1-4 to elders. The readers are made up of Jews and Gentiles. Jewish readers would identify with the term in the address "Dispersion", or "diaspora", from their past dispersion. Peter's comment about appropriate conduct "among the Gentiles" (2:12) also speaks to Jews. It is not surprising that Peter, the apostle to the Jews, should write to Jews. But the majority of the readers appear to be Gentiles. They had a former ignorance of Christ (1:14) and once "were not a people" of God, but now are a "chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people" (2:9-10). Their behavior is now different from what characterized their past as Gentiles (4:3-4). The general thrust of the letter, however, does not distinguish between Jew and Gentile, but rather is to "all who are in Christ Jesus" (5:14).

The Occasion

Peter has learned of the growing opposition and some persecution of Christians in Asia Minor. His letter is a response to these Christians who need encouragement and pastoral guidance in how they should conduct themselves in hostile circumstances. Peter refers to their trials in a general way (1:6; 3:13-17; 4:12-11,16-19; 5:9-10), but also notes some specific areas of attack. It seems the readers were being accused of disloyalty to their government (2:13-17), were slandered because of refusal to join in wicked behavior (4:3-4) and were reproached for their identity as Christians (4:14-15). There is no hint of bloodshed or martyrdom, but their trials are described as "fiery" (4:12). This fits a time period at the eve or outbreak of the Neronian persecution.

The Purpose

The purpose of this epistle is to encourage the Christian readers to face persecution in the grace of God and respond in a manner consistent with the grace of God (5:12). Throughout, Peter uses the doctrine of their new birth and position in Christ to appeal for new conduct. His encouragement often takes the form of exhortation toward purity, faithfulness and acceptance of suffering. The epistle develops in three main sections. The readers are first exhorted to live a life worthy of their salvation (1:13-2:10). Then they are encouraged to an attitude of submission in view of their position as strangers in this world (2:11-3:12). Finally, they are exhorted in relation to their circumstances of suffering (3:13-5:11).

Argument

As early as the introduction, Peter reminds the readers of their salvation and privileged position in Christ (1:1-2). Then, in his first section, he will exhort them based on an exposition of the greatness of their salvation (1:3-2:10). Peter begins with an explanation of the nature of their salvation in Christ (1:3-12). The future benefit of their salvation is an inheritance guaranteed for them by God (1:3-5). This hope is to temper the readers in their present

circumstances of trials and give them joy (1:6-9). The greatness of this salvation by grace in Christ was anticipated by the prophets and is a source of curiosity for the angels (1:10-12).

Based on an understanding of the nature of their great salvation, Peter now exhorts his readers to a new life consistent with this salvation (1:13-2:10). The primary exhortation is to live a godly life (1:13-2:3), and the most essential element of a godly life is holiness before God (1:13-21). Peter appeals for holiness on the basis of their future hope (1:13), their calling as sons to be holy (1:14-16), the preciousness of their redemption (1:17-19) and their place in God's unfolding plan of redemption (1:20-21). After holiness before God, Peter urges love for the brethren based on their new birth through the Word of God (1:22-25). Since the Word gave them birth, it is also the means of growth, so Peter continues by exhorting them to grow in their new lives (2:1-3).

The first section closes with a colorful description of the new position of believers in Christ, a portrait Peter paints as a motivation to live the godly life he has been exhorting (2:4-10). He pictures Christians as living stones in God's spiritual house (2:4-5) of which Jesus Christ is the chief cornerstone (2:6-8). He further describes the readers in lofty terms as those now selected by God as a special people (2:9-10). The emphasis on the superlative nature of the Christian's salvation, the new life and the new position in relation to God, should encourage the readers in their present trying circumstances and motivate them to godliness. Such a life should silence charges against them by adversaries and thus prevent further persecution.

Peter has discussed the heavenly position of the readers and in view of this now exhorts them to submission in the world (2:11-3:12). He reminds them that they are "sojourners and pilgrims" in this world, and should conduct themselves honorably (2:11-12). His specific applications show that Peter has in mind an attitude of submission. First, he exhorts them to submission in civil relationships (2:13-17). If they submit to authorities, the readers will silence much of their opposition (2:15). This may imply the readers face accusations of sedition against the Roman government.

A similar exhortation is to servants to submit to their masters (2:19-21). Evidently, servants who became Christians were subject to abuse by unbelieving masters, much of which was unfair and harsh (2:18-19). Peter's exhortation is based on the commendation which comes from a good conscience and the example of Christ Who suffered under unjust persecution (2:19-25). It should comfort Christians to know that Christ submitted Himself to God's fair judgment and was vindicated.

Peter also exhorts submission in marital relations (3:1-7). Wives, by their submission, may win their husbands to Christ (3:1-2). Their submission can be demonstrated by modest dress and a gentle and quiet spirit after the manner of past holy women and Sarah (3:3-6). The husband reflects his submission by understanding his Christian wife's position before God and treating her accordingly (3:7).

Peter's summary for Christian behavior is expressed by his exhortation to loving behavior in all relations (3:8-12). He appeals for love instead of vengeance with the motivation that such behavior is rewarded by God. It would be easy for the readers to answer false charges against them with anger and vengeance. But foremost in their minds must be their future inheritance and the example of Christ Who preceded them in suffering and vindication.

In the last section of his letter, Peter exhorts his readers specifically about their response to suffering (3:13-5:11). If the readers are faithful in righteous living they will eventually suffer for the sake of righteousness (3:13-4:6). Since they must suffer, it is blessed and better to suffer for good than for evil (3:13-17). When suffering, they should be ready to give an answer for the hope that they have (3:15). The readers can draw encouragement from Christ's example of suffering, for though He suffered unjustly, He was vindicated by resurrection and exalted to a position of victory over His enemies (3:18-22). The application drawn from this is that the readers can have the same perspective on suffering as Christ had (4:1-6). Such an identity with Christ should also mean a break from the old way of life (4:3).

Peter continues his exhortations for proper conduct in suffering by appealing for the continuation of ministry to one another (4:7-11). The Christian's anticipation of the near end of all things, including suffering, should motivate him to watchful prayer (4:7). He should also be diligent to exercise love, hospitality and his spiritual gift for the benefit of others (4:8-11).

Another appeal is made to accept suffering as normal for the Christian life (4:12-19). Fiery trials are not the unusual, but the usual, and should be considered part of suffering for Christ (4:12-13). If anyone suffers for Christ's sake, Peter promises the blessing of the Spirit (4:14). When a person suffers as a Christian, not an evildoer, there is the assurance that God's judgment is being meted out fairly first to believers, but more severely, to unbelievers (4:15-18). This should foster trust in God so that those suffering can commit themselves to His divine justice and faithfulness (4:19).

Peter also appeals for proper conduct in the church in the midst of suffering (5:1-12). He first addresses the elders reminding them of their duties and their reward from the Chief Shepherd to Whom they are accountable (5:1-4). Then he addresses church members to exercise submission to the elders and submissive humility toward each other (5:5a). God rewards the attitude of humility with grace to endure the consequences of subjection (5:5b-6). The appeal is thus to cast cares and concerns about outcome on God and let Him exercise His care for the believer (5:7). Satan is the ultimate enemy in persecution and must be resisted through proper responses and steadfastness of faith (5:8-9). A final encouragement comes through a prayer for the readers' spiritual confirmation after their short experience of suffering (5:10-11).

Peter's closing remarks (5:12-14) first remind the readers about their position and resource in the grace of God (5:12). He then extends greetings from the church in Rome and from Mark (5:13-14a). Peter ends with a benediction (5:14b).

In Peter's view, the grace of God is sufficient for his readers' trials. It is evident in their salvation, and should be manifested not only in their general conduct, but also in their response to suffering. This is accomplished by a submissive attitude toward God and others and the acceptance of their sufferings as a participation in Christ's sufferings. Christ should serve as an example to the readers of how the grace of God can be appropriated in suffering and how the one who suffers will be rewarded by God.

Outline of 1 Peter

- I. The Introduction 1:1-2
 1. The writer 1:1a
 2. The readers 1:1b-2a
 3. The greeting 1:2b
- II. The Exhortations in View of Their Salvation 1:3-2:10
 - A. The nature of their salvation 1:3-12
 1. The future benefit of salvation 1:3-5
 - a. The description of the benefits of salvation 1:3-4
 - b. The assurance of the security of salvation 1:5
 2. The present trials in salvation 1:6-9
 - a. The contrasting attitudes in present trials 1:6-7
 - b. The source for an attitude of joy 1:8-9
 3. The past anticipation of salvation 1:10-12
 - a. The prophets inquired about this salvation. 1:10-11
 - b. The prophets were aware of their ministry. 1:12
 - B. The new life in view of their salvation 1:13-2:10
 1. The exhortations to live a godly life 1:13-2:3
 - a. The exhortation to be holy before God 1:13-21
 - 1) According to our hope of the future 1:13
 - 2) According to our calling as sons 1:14-16
 - 3) According to our precious redemption 1:17-19
 - 4) According to our place in God's plan 1:20-21
 - b. The exhortation to love the brethren 1:22-25
 - 1) The appeal to love the brethren 1:22
 - 2) The basis for love in the new birth 1:23a
 - 3) The means of birth by the Word of God 1:23b-25
 - c. The exhortation to grow in the new life 2:1-3
 - 1) The hindrances to growth 2:1
 - 2) The appeal to grow by desiring the Word 2:2
 - 3) The argument for growth 2:3
 2. The motivations to live a godly life 2:4-10
 - a. The building by God of a spiritual house 2:4-8
 - 1) Believers as the living stones 2:4-5
 - 2) Christ as the chief cornerstone 2:6-8
 - b. The selection by God of a special people 2:9-10
- III. The Exhortations in View of Their Submission 2:11-3:12
 - A. The general duty in view of their position 2:11-12
 - B. The duty of submission in civil relations 2:13-17

1. The appeal to submit to all authorities 2:13-14
2. The motivation of doing God's will 2:15
3. The stance of liberty as God's servants 2:16
4. The sphere of doing good to all 2:17
- C. The duty of submission in servant relations 2:18-25
 1. The appeal to submit to masters 2:18
 2. The reasons to submit when suffering 2:19-25
 - a. The commendation in suffering for good 2:19-20
 - b. The example of Christ in suffering 2:21
 - c. The elaboration of Christ's example 2:22-25
 - 1) His exemplary sufferings 2:22-23
 - 2) His vicarious death 2:24-25
- D. The duty of submission in marital relations 3:1-7
 1. The submission of the wives 3:1-6
 - a. The appeal for her submission 3:1a
 - b. The purpose of her submission 3:1b-2
 - c. The adornment in her submission 3:3-4
 - d. The examples of submission 3:5-6
 2. The duty of the husbands 3:7
- E. The duty of loving behavior in all relations 3:8-12
 1. The appeal for loving behavior 3:8-9
 2. The scriptural motivation for this behavior 3:10-12
- IV. The Exhortations in View of Their Suffering 3:13-5:11
 - A. The appeal concerning suffering for righteousness 3:13-4:6
 1. The experience of suffering for righteousness 3:13-17
 - a. The possibility of suffering for good 3:13-14a
 - b. The response to suffering for good 3:14b-16
 - c. The evaluation of suffering for good 3:17
 2. Christ's example in suffering for righteousness 3:18-22
 - a. The description of His suffering 3:18
 - b. The effects of His suffering 3:19-21
 - c. The outcome of His suffering 3:22
 3. The proper attitude in suffering for righteousness 4:1-6
 - a. The call for the mind of Christ in suffering 4:1-2
 - b. The motivation for this attitude 4:3-6
 - 1) The sinfulness of the past life 4:3
 - 2) The opposition in the present situation 4:4
 - 3) The certainty of future judgment 4:5-6
 - B. The appeal concerning mutual ministry in suffering 4:7-11
 1. The call to prayerful watching in view of the end 4:7

- 2. The duty of love for one another 4:8
- 3. The duty of hospitality to one another 4:9
- 4. The duty to minister gifts to one another 4:10-11
- C. The appeal concerning acceptance of suffering 4:12-19
 - 1. The proper attitude toward suffering 4:12-13
 - 2. The blessing of the Spirit in suffering 4:14
 - 3. The proper cause for suffering 4:15-16
 - 4. The judgment of God exercised in suffering 4:17-18
 - 5. The exhortation to trust God in suffering 4:19
- D. The appeal concerning church relations in suffering 5:1-12
 - 1. The exhortation to the church elders 5:1-4
 - a. The person who exhorts the elders 5:1
 - b. The duties of the elders 5:2-3
 - c. The reward of the elders 5:4
 - 2. The exhortation to the church members 5:5-9
 - a. The appeal for humility 5:5-6
 - b. The appeal for trust in God 5:7
 - c. The appeal for watchfulness against the devil 5:8-9
 - 3. The final encouragement to those in suffering 5:10-11
- V. The Conclusion 5:12-14
 - 1. The message concerning the letter 5:12
 - 2. The final greetings 5:13-14a
 - 3. The benediction 5:14b

Summary and Outline of 2 Peter

by

Dr. Charles Bing

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Introduction

The Author

No New Testament book's authenticity has been scrutinized more than 2 Peter. Those who dispute Peter as the author cite both external and internal problems. The external evidence is the weakest of all New Testament books. There are no quotations from the second century and only a few from the third century. Not until the fourth century is Petrine authorship strongly affirmed by Athanasius, Augustine, the Council of Laodicea and the Council of Carthage. Jerome placed 2 Peter in his Latin Vulgate about A.D. 404.

However, there are good reasons for the slow recognition of the authenticity of 2 Peter. Its slow circulation, perhaps due to the circumstances of persecution, kept it from being widely known. Also, its brevity and contents gave themselves to few quotable phrases, even as is noticed today. Furthermore, its stylistic differences with 1 Peter may have caused suspicion. These delays forced the epistle to compete with other works claiming Petrine authorship, further complicating the problem. Moreover, if the epistle was written before Peter's death, the apostle was unavailable to verify its genuineness.

Many objections have been raised from internal problems, but these too can be answered. The difference in style and vocabulary from 1 Peter are used against authenticity, but this can be explained by the use of Silvanus to write 1 Peter (1 Peter 5:12) and Peter's own hand for the second. It has been noted that the difference is not so much between the two epistles anyway, but between the epistles and the rest of the New Testament. Some also claim Peter's mention of the collection of Paul's letters (3:15-16) argues for a late date, but there is no indication Peter meant all of Paul's epistles. Another argument for a late date is the assertion that Peter wrote to combat second century Gnosticism. However, the heresy of 2 Peter is too indefinite to be labeled specifically. The final argument comes from the relation of 2 Peter to Jude claiming that if Jude was first, then a notable apostle like Peter would not have borrowed so extensively from it. Furthermore, it is claimed, Jude was written after Peter's death. In answer, if Peter borrowed from Jude, he simply had in mind a different audience with a similar need. But it is most probable that 2 Peter was written first anyway, as tradition has maintained.

The authenticity of 2 Peter has stood the test of time and arguments of critics. It is clearly far superior to any pseudonymous writings. No reason exists to doubt Peter's claims as author (1:1) and the verifying claim of his witness of the Transfiguration (1:16-18).

The Date and Place

Peter indicates in this letter that his death is near (1:13-15). The traditional date of his death is A.D. 67-68 during the reign of Nero which lasted until A.D. 68. If Peter was in Rome at the end of his life as tradition asserts and alive when Paul wrote 2 Timothy about A.D. 67, then Paul would certainly have acknowledged his presence. Thus Peter wrote before A.D. 67, but after his first epistle dated at A.D. 64. The date is thus set at late A.D. 64 to early 67 from Rome.

The Destination

Since 3:1 probably refers to 1 Peter, the destination is the same: the churches of Asia Minor (1 Peter 1:1). However, the general address in 1:1 shows a wider audience may be included. As seen from 1 Peter, the churches contained a mixture of Jews and Gentiles.

The Occasion

Peter is alerted to an outbreak of heresy in the churches of Asia Minor (2:1-3) and takes up his pen to help them in this immediate danger. Some urgency in writing may be attributed to Peter's anticipation of imminent death (1:13-15). But it is also clear he was prompted by the dangerous nature of the false teachers. They denied the Lord (2:1), were daring and irreverent (2:10-12), immoral (2:13), seductive (2:14,18), scoffers at Christ's return (3:3-4) and promised liberty though they themselves were slaves to sin (2:19). The false teachers were already at work (2:12,18; 3:5,16) and threatening to increase in influence (2:1-2; 3:3). The false teaching itself cannot be labeled, but certainly matches the description of false teaching elsewhere in the New Testament.

The Purpose

Peter writes to warn the readers about the false teachers and to encourage them to cultivate the Christian life so as to prevent them from being influenced. To do this he explains the grounds for the Christian life (1:3-21), exposes the wickedness of the false teachers (2:1-22) and renews the readers confidence in the Lord's coming (3:1-18a). In this way Peter intends to prevent apostasy (3:17).

The Argument

Peter's introduction sets forth the preciousness of the faith and the righteousness that is through Jesus Christ (1:1-2). The superiority of the Christian faith and the righteousness of Christ will be the basis of his following appeal. In the first section of his epistle, Peter appeals for the cultivation of the Christian life (1:3-21). He urges the readers to grow in the Christian experience (1:3-11) based on the provision for growth in God's power and promises (1:3-4). The process of growth is the appropriation of these provisions through the exercise of Christian virtues (1:5-7). The readers should be motivated by the prospect of a productive knowledge of Christ (1:8-9) and the prospect of reward in eternity (1:10-11).

Peter then appeals to the authoritative grounds for the Christian life (1:12-21). Peter has a personal concern to remind the readers of these truths about their faith (1:12-15). His testimony about the truth is based on objective proof (1:16-21). First, the apostolic faith is based on eyewitness testimony, Peter himself being present at the Transfiguration of Christ (1:16-18). But a more sure testimony to the truth is the prophetic revelation about Christ (1:19-21). If the readers realize what they have in Christ, cultivate their Christian experience and rest their faith on the authoritative grounds for the truth, they will be less likely to fall under the influence of false teachers who will offer something more but give less.

After setting forth the positive aspects of the Christian faith, Peter condemns the false teachers in very negative terms (2:1-22). He acknowledges their presence and predicts their influence and judgment (2:1-3). This judgment is assured by the examples of the wicked who

were judged in the past: the fallen angels, the ungodly of Noah's time and the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah (2:4-9). Peter then describes the false teachers (2:10-22). Their evil character is displayed through disrespect of authority, evil speech, immorality, covetousness, avarice and worthlessness (2:10-17). They are deceptively seductive (2:18-19) and have secured for themselves a tragic end (2:20-22). Peter's strong condemnation, vivid description and certainty of judgment for these false teachers will warn the readers away from following them.

Peter's last section on the confidence of Christ's return (3:1-18a) was meant to address the specific teaching of the heretics which denied Christ's return (3:1-7). Peter counters the denial by recounting the certainty of the past judgment of the world by water (3:5-6) and comparing it to the certainty of the future judgment by fire (3:7). If it seems the Lord has delayed, he argues, it is because His perception of time is not as man's and His patience is allowing more people to repent (3:8-9). Christ will indeed return unexpectedly and with fire which will burn up the earth (3:10).

This expectation of Christ's sudden return and the establishment of new heavens and a new earth should motivate the readers to live godly lives as they watch for His coming (3:11-13). Therefore, Peter exhorts them to personal purity, just as their understanding of Paul's letters should motivate them (3:14-16). He also states his purpose for writing in 3:17: the readers should be encouraged to remain steadfast in the faith because of what they have learned from the letter about their Christian experience, the false teachers and their future hope. His final appeal to grow in the Lord is also preventative (3:18a).

Peter's strategy to protect the readers from the deception of the false teachers is to encourage them to grow in Christ. This will prevent weaknesses that can be preyed upon by the apostates. But Peter also warns them directly so that the readers can recognize these teachers and their certain judgment. He seals his preventative letter with a reminder and assurance of their future hope in Christ's return.

Outline of 2 Peter

- I. The Introduction 1:1-2
 1. The writer 1:1a
 2. The readers 1:1b
 3. The greeting 1:2
- II. The Cultivation of the Christian Life 1:3-21
 - A. The appeal for growth in the Christian life 1:3-11
 1. The provision for growth 1:3-4
 2. The process for growth 1:5-7
 3. The incentive for growth 1:8-9
 4. The reward for growth 1:10-11
 - B. The authoritative grounds for the Christian life 1:12-21
 1. The personal concern of Peter 1:12-15
 - a. His determination to remind them 1:12-13
 - b. His motivation of approaching death 1:14
 - c. His provision for after his death 1:15
 2. The objective nature of Christian truth 1:16-21
 - a. The apostolic testimony 1:16-18
 - 1) The truthfulness of this testimony 1:16
 - 2) The content of this testimony 1:17-18
 - b. The prophetic revelation 1:19-21
 - 1) The importance of this revelation 1:19
 - 2) The origin of this revelation 1:20-21
- III. The Condemnation of the False Teachers 2:1-22
 - A. The prediction of false teachers 2:1-3
 1. Their wicked character 2:1
 2. Their certain progress 2:2
 3. Their certain judgment 2:3
 - B. The examples of divine judgment 2:4-9
 1. The examples of divine judgment in the past 2:4-8
 - a. The example of the fallen angels 2:4
 - b. The example of the antediluvian world 2:5
 - c. The example of Sodom and Gomorrah 2:6-8
 2. The certainty of divine judgment in the future 2:9
 - C. The description of false teachers 2:10-22
 1. Their evil character 2:10-17
 - a. They disrespect authority. 2:10-11
 - b. They speak evil. 2:12-13
 - c. They desire what is not theirs. 2:14

- d. They compromise truth for money. 2:15-16
 - e. They are worthless. 2:17
 - 2. Their seductive deception 2:18-19
 - 3. Their tragic position 2:20-22
- IV. The Confidence of Christ's Return 3:1-18a
 - A. The denial of Christ's return 3:1-7
 - 1. Peter's purpose in writing 3:1-2
 - 2. The denial by the scoffers 3:3-4
 - 3. The fallacy of the scoffers 3:5-7
 - a. The certainty of the past judgment by water 3:5-6
 - b. The certainty of the future judgment by fire 3:7
 - B. The defense of Christ's return 3:8-10
 - 1. The explanation of His delay 3:8-9
 - 2. The assurance of His return 3:10
 - C. The expectation of Christ's return 3:11-13
 - 1. The conduct conforming to this hope 3:11
 - 2. The expectancy in the hope of His coming 3:12-13
 - D. The diligence in view of Christ's coming 3:14-18a
 - 1. The appeal for personal purity 3:14-16
 - a. The exhortation to peace and purity 3:14
 - b. The basis supported by Paul's writings 3:15-16
 - 2. The appeal to remain steadfast 3:17
 - 3. The appeal to grow in the Lord 3:18a
- V. The Doxology 3:18b

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A. The basis of walking in the light: God is Light 1:5-7	7
B. The assurance of walking in the light 1:8-2:29	7
III. Our Walk as Children of God 3:1-5:13	7
A. The basis of walking as children of God: God is our Father 3:1-3	7
B. The assurance of walking as children of God 3:4-5:13	7
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Introduction

The Author

Tradition for the authenticity of John is very early and very strong. It is referred to by Polycarp (c. 69-155), an acquaintance of John's, and Papias (c. 80-155), an acquaintance of Polycarp's. Other early church fathers affirm John's authorship.

Internally, the epistle bears witness to John as its author although he is never named. It is clear from the overall tone that the writer had the knowledge and authority of an apostle and was so well known to the readers that mention of his name was unnecessary. He classifies himself within the apostolic circle by the "we" passages which are his claims to be an eyewitness to Christ's life (1:1-3; 4:14). In addition, the similarities with John's Gospel are obvious. There is similarity of style, vocabulary, phraseology and the use of contrasting opposites. Claims which exaggerate the differences between the two documents have little convincing substance. Also, some dispute John's authorship by naming "John the Elder" instead. This depends solely on an interpretation by Eusebius of a statement by Papias. But even granting the legitimacy of his interpretation, there is every possibility that the two characters are one and the same person.

The Date and Place

Strong tradition places John in Ephesus during the later and final years of his life. Most believe John wrote his epistle from here sometime after he wrote his Gospel. The absence of any mention of persecution may indicate a date before the persecution under Domitian which began in A.D. 95. There is also no hint that John was in Ephesus before Paul's death in A.D. 68. The lack of mention of the destruction of Jerusalem indicates John wrote quite a bit before A.D. 70, or quite a bit after. It is most likely he wrote after, somewhere between A.D. 85 and 95.

The most probable place of writing is Ephesus. This is John's traditional sphere of ministry and the indication from his letters to the Asian churches in Revelation 2-3.

The Destination

Until Revelation 1 the New Testament does not indicate the whereabouts of John after his position in Jerusalem spoken of in Acts 1-8 and Galatians 2:9. However, tradition places him in Ephesus during the later years of his life. Thus the letter was probably written to a group of churches in John's acquaintance in the province of Asia. This is supported by the destination of the letters in Revelation 2-3 written by John to the churches in Asia. The readers are clearly Christians (2:12-14,21; 5:13) who have known John for some time (2:7,24; 3:11).

The Occasion

John writes out of pastoral concern for his "children" who are threatened and confused because of false teachers (2:18-23). The nature of their heresy is disputed. However, it seems it focused on the person and work of Christ. John makes frequent reference to the certainty of the incarnation of Christ (1:1-3; 4:2-3; 5:6). He also is careful to explain the basis of eternal life through Christ's work (1:7; 2:2; 3:16; 4:10,14). Many believe the heresy was similar

to Docetism, which denied the reality of the incarnation of Christ. This teaching was propagated in the first century by Cerinthus. This could explain the arguments for Christ's incarnation and the emphasis on His physical death on behalf of sinners.

It is also apparent that John's concern for the readers' moral condition exceeds his concern for the doctrinal threat. However, the two were related with false doctrine undermining the readers' assurance in their Christian experience (5:13) and producing moral laxity. John gives numerous tests by which the readers can discern the Christian experience and spiritual orientation of themselves and others (eg. 2:10; 3:7,8,14,24; 4:15). He also encourages the readers to continue in love (3:14-15; 4:7-11), to obey the commandments (2:3-4; 3:22; 5:3), to behave righteously (3:10,17-18) and to have a healthy attitude toward sin (1:8-10; 3:4-9; 5:16-17).

The Purpose

John's purpose is gathered from the several purpose statements indicated by "These things I have written to you . . ." These statements show that he wrote to fulfill the readers' joy by giving them full assurance (1:4), to keep them from sin (2:1), to guard them from the false teachers (2:26) and to assure them of their eternal life (5:13). John's primary purpose is to keep the readers from moral failure. Therefore he must also write to assure them of their salvation. But to do this he must guard them from the false teaching undermining their assurance. Thus John offers tests whereby the spiritual orientation of the false teachers and others may be evaluated. He also offers a theological refutation of the Christological errors being taught. Finally, he encourages the readers to moral purity.

Argument

The epistle develops cyclically with John first discussing the Christian's walk in the light (1:5-2:29) and then the Christian's walk as a child of God (3:1-5:13). Under each section he mentions the basis for such a walk before proceeding with a series of assurances for the walk. The introduction (1:1-4) first sets forth the apostle's authority by virtue of his eyewitness testimony to Christ's incarnation and life (1:1-2). John then states his purpose for writing (1:3-4). He wants the readers to share in the apostolic fellowship of truth concerning Christ. This will also assure them of their relationship shared with God and Christ. Having this assurance, their joy will be full. Evidently, their assurance and their joy had suffered under the influence of the false teachers who denied the humanity of Christ.

John's first section concerning the Christian's walk in the light (1:5-2:29) begins with a statement of the basis for such a walk. The basis of walking in the light is the fact that God is light (1:5-7). The condition for fellowship with God is thus a walk in the light, or moral purity (1:6-7). John then discusses four tests or assurances from which his readers can discern the truthfulness of the experience for themselves and others (1:8-2:29). These may be tests of eternal salvation or tests of one's spiritual orientation.

The first assurance comes from the repudiation of sin (1:8-2:2). Those rightly related to God in truth will recognize and confess their sin (1:8-10). John's overriding concern is stated in 2:1-2: he does not want his readers to sin, but if they do, they should avail themselves of the provision of Christ's advocacy with the Father. Here John also defends the propitiatory work of Christ as effective for all.

The second assurance concerns the practice of obedience (2:3-11). Only those who obey God's commandments are from the truth (2:3-6). John's concern is that his readers keep the commandment they heard before from him (2:7-8), evidently, the commandment to love one another (2:9-11). The truthfulness of the spiritual experience of the false teachers or anyone else (third person pronouns) is manifested by their love or lack of love.

The third assurance comes from one's victory over the world (2:12-17). John reminds the readers directly (second person pronouns) that they are positioned for victory over the world and the devil by virtue of the fact that their sins are forgiven, they know God and the Word of God dwells in them (2:12-14). From this basis he appeals for separation from the world (2:15-17). Love of the world and love of God are mutually exclusive (2:15). Perhaps the false teachers were characterized by worldliness and were diverting the readers' affections away from God and toward worldly things.

The fourth assurance is largely doctrinal and concerns correct beliefs about Jesus Christ (2:18-29). John delivers a stern warning about the presence of antichrists who deny that Jesus is the Christ (2:18-23). The readers know the truth and should be able to recognize a lie (2:20-21). Those who deny the Son's incarnation have no part in the Father (2:22-23). John moves from a warning to an appeal intended to guard the readers against deception (2:24-27). He wants them to remain in the apostolic doctrine of Christ as they learned "from the beginning" and thus enjoy the promise of eternal life (2:24-25). John explains that he is trying to prevent their deception, yet expresses confidence that they will be kept in the truth by the Holy Spirit (2:26-27). As they remain in Christ and His truth, they will have confidence at His appearing (2:28-29). His mention of those "born of Him" serves as a transition to the discussion of the children of God.

John's second half of the epistle concerns the believer's relationship to God as a child and the resulting walk as God's child (3:1-5:13). He begins by declaring that the basis of the walk as children of God is the fact that God is the believer's Father (3:1-3). This relationship to God assures of future glorification which is a motivation for moral purity in this life. This explanation shows the relationship of assurance to moral diligence. John wants them to be assured in their Christian experience so they will be morally pure. He addresses five assurances for the believer which follow much the same pattern as those discussed in the first section.

The first assurance is gained from a repudiation of sin (3:4-9). The practice of sin is totally contrary to Christ's person and work (3:4-5). Therefore, those who are characterized by

sin demonstrate an ignorance of Christ and an allegiance with Satan. But those who practice righteousness demonstrate the divine nature obtained from their birth into God's family (3:6-9).

John's second assurance comes from the practice of obedience which he narrows to obedience to the premier command to love (3:10-24). He argues that love is necessary in distinguishing one's affiliation to God or Satan and in evidencing eternal life (3:10-15). The manifestation of true obedience in love lies not in words but in deeds (3:16-18). The presence of love in a person assures of being in the truth, brings confidence before God so that prayers are answered and assures of union with Christ (3:19-24). Obviously, the false teachers lack the love of which John speaks. A third assurance relating to their walk as children of God is from their victory over the world (4:1-6). The antichrist teachers are of the world because they do not believe that the Christ is embodied in Jesus (4:1-3). But the assurance to the readers is that they hold a correct view of Christ (4:2) and Christ in them overcomes worldly teachers and doctrine by enabling them to discern between truth and error (4:4-6).

The fourth assurance comes through the manifestation of God's love (4:7-21). John's appeal for mutual love is based on the nature of God's love as manifested in the gift of His Son to pay for sins (4:7-12). Faith in Christ confirms this love in believers (4:13-16). John thus inseparably links the reality of love to the necessity of faith in Christ as the Savior from sin. It is impossible to have one without the other. The presence of such Christian love gives confidence at the Judgment Seat of Christ (4:17-18). Furthermore, John shows that the love of God necessarily results in love for others (4:19-21). The false teachers lacked love for others which evidenced their separation from the true doctrine of Christ and its accompanying love for God.

The final assurance comes from correct beliefs about Christ (5:1-13). The results of faith in Jesus as the Christ are the manifestation of love for God and others, obedience to God's commandments and victory over the world (5:1-4). There are witnesses to the reality of one's faith in Christ (5:6-12). Externally, the Spirit witnesses to the incarnation of Christ as Jesus (5:6-9) while internally, the indwelling Spirit assures of eternal life according to the testimony of God about His Son (5:10-12). John explains that his purpose in writing is to give his readers the assurance that they have eternal life through their faith in Christ so that they will remain in Him (5:13).

The conclusion of the letter contains some final assurances and convictions relevant to his readers (5:14-21). First, John explains the confidence available from effective prayer (5:14-17). Prayer according to God's will receives answers (5:14-15). Specifically, the readers can pray for the deliverance of those deceived by the false teachers into erroneous doctrine and immorality, both of which produce spiritual deadness (5:16-17). John closes with a triumphant statement of some certainties in the Christian life (5:18-20). Those who belong to God have victory over sin, are positioned for victory over the world and are in the truth in Christ. The final warning against idolatry (5:21) appeals to the readers to keep separate from the false teachers influencing them because false teaching, like idolatry, compromises with evil and sets God up in its own image.

John's concern for his spiritual children is that they continue to walk in moral purity. But to accomplish this end, he must reestablish their confidence in their relationship to God by providing criteria by which they may discern genuine Christian experience. The criteria for assurance are both doctrinal and practical. By taking note of one's beliefs and behavior it will be evident to the readers who is of God and who is not. This will protect them from deception.

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- I. The Introduction 1:1-4
 1. The substance of the apostolic declaration 1:1-2
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 - b. The historic manifestation of the Word of life 1:2
 2. The purpose of the apostolic declaration 1:3-4
 - a. The readers' realization of fellowship 1:3
 - b. The readers' realization of joy 1:4
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 - A. The basis of walking in the light: God is Light 1:5-7
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 2. The condition for fellowship in the light 1:6-7
 - B. The assurance of walking in the light 1:8-2:29
 1. The assurance from our repudiation of sin 1:8-2:2
 - a. The confession of sin 1:8-10
 - b. The provision for sin 2:1-2
 2. The assurance from our practice of obedience 2:3-11
 - a. The test of obedience to God's commandments 2:3-6
 - b. The reminder of the old and new commandments 2:7-8
 - c. The test of love 2:9-11
 3. The assurance from our victory over the world 2:12-17
 - a. The position of victory over the world 2:12-14
 - b. The appeal for separation from the world 2:15-17
 4. The assurance from our beliefs about Christ 2:18-29
 - a. The deception of antichrist 2:18-23
 - 1) The warning about antichrists 2:18-19
 - 2) The assurance from knowledge of the truth 2:20-21
 - 3) The doctrinal test for antichrists 2:22-23
 - b. The defense against deception 2:24-27
 - 1) The appeal to abide in the truth 2:24-25
 - 2) The assurance from the anointing 2:26-27
 - c. The confidence from abiding in Christ 2:28-29
- III. Our Walk as Children of God 3:1-5:13
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 - 1) In distinguishing affiliation 3:10-12
 - 2) In evidencing eternal life 3:13-15
 - b. The manifestation of obedience through love 3:16-18
 - 1) The basis of the obligation to love 3:16
 - 2) The example of the lack of love 3:17
 - 3) The exhortation to practice true love 3:18
 - c. The assurance from the presence of love 3:19-24
 - 1) The assurance of being in the truth 3:19-20
 - 2) The assurance of answered prayer 3:21-22
 - 3) The assurance of union with Christ 3:23-24
- 3. The assurance from our victory over the world 4:1-6
 - a. The charge to test the spirits 4:1
 - b. The criterion for testing the spirits 4:2-3
 - c. The assurance of our victory 4:4-6
 - 1) From the divine indwelling 4:4
 - 2) From the discernment of truth and error 4:5-6
- 4. The assurance from our manifestation of God's love 4:7-21
 - a. The nature of God's love 4:7-16
 - 1) Its assuring value 4:7-8
 - 2) Its manifestation through Christ 4:9-10
 - 3) Its obligation to one another 4:11-12
 - 4) Its confirmation through faith in Christ 4:13-16
 - b. The confidence from God's love 4:17-18
 - c. The evidence of love for God 4:19-21
 - 1) The basis of love for God 4:19
 - 2) The profession of love for God 4:20
 - 3) The proof of love for God 4:21
- 5. The assurance from our beliefs about Christ 5:1-13
 - a. The results of faith in Christ 5:1-5
 - 1) Love revealed in saving faith 5:1
 - 2) Love revealed in obedience 5:2-3
 - 3) Victory over the world through faith 5:4-5
 - b. The witness to our faith in Christ 5:6-12
 - 1) The external witness of the Spirit 5:6-9

- 2) The internal witness of the Spirit 5:10-12
 - c. The assurance from our faith in Christ 5:13
- IV. The Conclusion 5:14-21
 - 1. The confidence of effective prayer 5:14-17
 - a. The assurance about prayer according to God's will 5:14-15
 - b. The assurance about prayer for a sinning brother 5:16-17
 - 2. The certainties of the Christian faith 5:18-20
 - a. The certainty of victory over sin 5:18
 - b. The certainty of our contrast with the world 5:19
 - c. The certainty of our relation to the truth in Christ 5:20
 - 3. The caution about idols 5:21

Summary and Outline of 2 John

by

Dr. Charles Bing

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Introduction

The Author

Many of the same arguments for John's authorship of 1 John apply with 2 John. The letter bears great resemblance to John's Gospel and the first epistle in terminology and style. Early church fathers did not doubt that the letter was John's. Doubt arose only later due to the limited circulation of this brief and seldom quoted letter. The author calls himself "the Elder" assuming such recognition and authority he need not mention his name. The term "elder" can be used to refer to an apostle (Cf. 1 Peter 5:1) or may simply be a term of affection for an older man (Cf. 1 Tim. 5:1-2; 1 Peter 5:5). It has been suggested that both 2 John and 3 John were cover letters for 1 John since both are brief and could be seen as addressed to individuals (v. 1; 3 John 1). If so, there is no doubt John wrote them.

The Date and Place

The similarity in contents and circumstances suggest 2 John was written at the same time or slightly later than 1 John. If so the place of writing would also be the same as 1 John. Thus it was probably written between A.D. 85 and 95 from Ephesus.

The Destination

The letter is to "the elect lady and her children" (v. 1). Some interpret this figuratively as a church. They cite the change from singular pronouns after verse 5 to plural, the general nature of the contents which are suitable for a church, and the same circumstances found in 1 John which was written to a church or churches.

However, many take the address literally believing John wrote to a lady (possibly named Electa or Kyria according to the Greek) known for her hospitality toward itinerant preachers. In support is the simplicity of the letter, the reference to children of the lady (vv. 1,4), the mention of her sister (v. 13), the mention of the lady's house (v. 10) and the analogy of 3 John which was written to an individual. If these two brief letters were cover letters for the longer epistle to a church, their personal nature and brevity would be understood. There is much which favors the personal address.

Whether to a church or a lady and her family, the recipients were well known to John and probably lived in the province of Asia as did the recipients of 1 John and the Revelation (Cf. Rev. 2-3).

The Occasion

According to 1 John 2:19 some false teachers had split from the church and were troubling the believers. Evidently some had become traveling teachers who depended on hospitality to meet their needs. John knew that his readers had the practice of helping itinerant preachers, thus he writes out of concern lest they assist the heretics and share in their sins (vv. 10-11). The false teachers were the same as in 1 John. They were antichrists who denied Christ had come in the flesh (v. 7) and neglected to obey God's commandments, especially love (vv. 5-6).

The Purpose

John's purpose is to encourage the readers to walk in love and obedience (vv. 4-6) and to warn them not to associate with or assist the false teachers (vv. 7-11).

Argument

John's introduction (vv. 1-3) shows that truth is the basis for his relationship to the readers. In Christ he is able to greet them in truth and love (v. 3). His message to them is two-fold; one concerns the practice of the truth and the other concerns the protection of the truth.

First is his message concerning their practice of the truth (vv. 4-6). He commends the readers for their walk in truth (v. 4) and appeals for them to love one another (v. 5). Their love will be demonstrated through obedience to God's commandments, which they already know (v. 6). Such a walk will protect them from the deception and deficiencies of the false teachers. The protective function of his appeal is indicated by the "For" which introduces his warning (v. 7).

John then delivers his message concerning their protection of the truth (vv. 7-11). He warns them against false teachers who deny Jesus is the Christ (v. 7) and explains the consequences of following this teaching (vv. 8-9). The readers could lose their reward and their relationship with God. He then prohibits the readers from associating with or assisting a false teacher who appeals to them for hospitality (v. 10). Whoever does this will share in the sin and guilt of their evil deeds (v. 11).

John closes by declaring his desire to visit and extending a greeting from "the children of your elect sister" (vv. 12-13). The letter, though brief, is a strong encouragement and a firm warning which will keep the readers from harm by the false teachers.

Outline of 2 John

- I. The Introduction 1-3
 1. The writer 1a
 2. The readers 1b-2
 3. The assurance of God's blessing 3
- II. The Message Concerning Their Practice of the Truth 4-6
 - A. The commendation for their walk in truth 4
 - B. The appeal for their loving obedience 5-6
 1. The appeal to love one another 5
 2. The explanation of love as obedience 6
- III. The Message Concerning Their Protection of the Truth 7-11
 - A. The warning against false teachers 7-9
 1. The presence of false teachers 7
 2. The consequence of following false teaching 8
 3. The contrasting consequences of truth and error 9
 - B. The prohibition against aiding false teachers 10-11
 1. The statement of the prohibition 10
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Summary and Outline of 3 John

by

Dr. Charles Bing

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A. The result of his evil character 9	4
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Introduction

The Author

The same arguments used for 1 John and 2 John demonstrate that John is also the author of 3 John. There is the similarity in style and use of the term "The Elder" (v. 1; Cf. 2 John 1). Also, apostolic authority is suggested in verse 10. The scant attestation of tradition is attributed to the brief and personal contents of the letter.

The Date and Place

The date and place of writing would be the same as for 1 John and 2 John: about A.D. 85-95 from Ephesus. If it is true that the latter two epistles were cover letters for the first, these facts would be easily ascertained.

The Destination

The letter is addressed to "the beloved Gaius" (v. 1). This man is well known to John and greatly loved by him ("beloved" is also used in verses 2, 5, and 11). Since it was a common name, there is probably no connection to others named Gaius in the New Testament. He evidently lived in the province of Asia near Ephesus and was a church leader.

The Occasion

Some traveling brethren had reported to John about the hospitality of Gaius (v. 5-6) and the hostility of Diotrephes (v. 9). Nothing is known of Diotrephes except that he belonged to the same church as Gaius (v. 9). Diotrephes had vaunted himself in the church, spoken against John, refused to receive the brethren and punished those who did (vv. 9-10). This report of good news and bad news prompted John to write a note of encouragement and instruction to Gaius.

The Purpose

The first purpose of the letter is to commend Gaius and encourage him in his practice of assisting the traveling brethren (vv. 5-8). Second, John announces his plans to confront Diotrephes in a near visit (vv. 9-11). Third, John wants to recommend Demetrius, a probable missionary and bearer of the letter (v. 12).

Argument

John begins by declaring his love for Gaius in the truth (1:1). He follows this with a commendation of Gaius, a condemnation of Diotrephes, and a contrasting recommendation of Demetrius.

The commendation of Gaius (vv. 2-8) begins with a prayerful expression of John's joy caused by the report of Gaius' walk in the truth (vv. 2-4). He then commends Gaius for helping the traveling brethren (vv. 5-8) and encourages him to continue this practice in view of their dependence upon Christians for assistance (vv. 6-8).

The condemnation of Diotrephes (vv. 9-11) is prompted by his evil character and behavior (v. 9). On his visit, John intends to confront him about his hostility, his rejection of the brethren and his punishment of those who helped the missionaries (v. 10). This also prompts John to urge Gaius to avoid such evil practice (v. 11).

Finally, John recommends Demetrius as a brother with a good testimony (v. 12). He is obviously meant to be contrasted with the evil Diotrephes. John closes with a mention of his coming visit, a benediction, and greetings (vv. 13-14). His letter should encourage Gaius to continue in good works and warn Diotrephes of further rebuke.

Outline of 3 John

- I. The Introduction 1
 1. The writer 1a
 2. The reader 1b
- II. The Commendation of Gaius 2-8
 - A. The prayerful commendation of his truthfulness 2-4
 1. The prayer for his prosperity 2
 2. The reason for the prayer 3-4
 - a. The testimony of the brethren about Gaius 3
 - b. The joy of the apostle for his children 4
 - B. The commendation of his conduct in helping missionaries 5-8
 1. The commendation for his helping them 5
 2. The suggestion to continue helping them 6
 3. The obligation to help them 7-8
 - a. The reason for helping them 7
 - b. The consequence of helping them 8
- III. The Condemnation of Diotrephes 9-11
 - A. The result of his evil character 9
 - B. The reminder of his evil conduct 10
 - C. The caution about his evil example 11
- IV. The Contrast of Demetrius 12
- V. The Conclusion 13-14
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Summary and Outline of Jude

by

Dr. Charles Bing

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B. The proper attitude toward spiritual disciplines 20-21	5
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V. The Doxology 24-25	5

Introduction

The Author

The author identifies himself as "Jude, a servant of Jesus Christ, and brother of James" (1:1). The designation "brother of James" limits the options to two different men. One is the apostle "Judas (not Iscariot)" (John 14:12), also called Lebbaeus or Thaddaeus (Cf. Matt. 10:3; Mark 3:18 and Luke 6:16; Acts 1:13). This is probably not the author of Jude because the designation "brother of James" suggests that James was a man of great repute in the church. The apostle James did not have such a reputation, if this is the one intended. Furthermore, Jude seems to indicate he was not one of the twelve apostles (v. 17).

Most agree that the second option is the author of Jude. This is Jude, the Lord's brother (Matt. 13:55; Mark 6:3), and brother of the James who was the leader of the church in Jerusalem and author of the epistle. Little is known about Jude except that he did not at first believe in Christ (John 7:5) and he may have traveled as an evangelist with his wife (1 Cor. 9:5). Some conjecture that he is the same as "Judas who was also named Barsabas" (Acts 15:22,32). Though possible, there is nothing to confirm this other than the common name.

Jude, the Lord's brother, was accepted as the author possibly as early as the beginning of the second century and certainly near the end. His authorship was accepted in later centuries, but some doubts did arise because of Jude's use of apocryphal literature (vv. 9,14-15). However, this use does not imply Jude approved of the whole book. Other arguments against his authorship assume a late date of writing, but these arguments do not stand up under close examination.

The Date and Place

The question of date depends somewhat on the relation of Jude to 2 Peter. The similarity of Jude 4-18 to 2 Peter 2:1-3:4 is no coincidence. Since there is no evidence of a third document used as a common source, one author must have been influenced by the other. The evidence favors the priority of 2 Peter. Jude, not Peter, shows a tendency to quote others. Also, Jude's urgent situation (v. 3) made him more likely to use available material. Furthermore, it is more likely that Jude would borrow from an apostle of Peter's stature than vice versa. In addition, Jude depicts the realization of Peter's predictions of the proliferation of false prophets (vv. 4,11-12,17-18; 2 Peter 2:1-2; 3:3). To affirm this he quotes 2 Peter 3:3 and attributes it to "the apostles" (vv. 17-18), obviously referring to Peter and Paul (Cf. 1 Tim. 4:1; 2 Tim. 3:1) who wrote previously.

Those who assume the priority of 2 Peter, placed at A.D. 64-67, think Jude was written about A.D. 67-69. This is also determined by the lack of any mention of Jerusalem's destruction in A.D. 70 which would have served Jude's purpose in depicting judgment of the ungodly.

There is no hint of the place of writing. Perhaps Jude resided in Jerusalem like his brother, James. However, the indication is that he traveled (1 Cor. 9:5) and could have written from numerous places.

The Destination

The Jewish tone of the letter has led some to conjecture that Jude wrote to a predominately Hebrew Christian audience. But this may only show the Jewish background of the author. Nothing is indicated in the letter except that they were Christians (1:1), and thus probably Jews and Gentiles. It appears from the overall content that Jude wrote to a specific group of churches, much like the epistles of Peter. It is possible he wrote to the same Asian churches Peter did since the heresy appears the same, only more advanced.

The Occasion

The circumstances which prompted Jude to write are given in verses 3-4. False teachers had infiltrated the churches necessitating an immediate response from Jude. These apostates perverted the grace of God into license and denied the Lord (v. 4). They also rebelled against authority (v. 8), sought after personal profit (v. 11), and were seductive, sensual and divisive (v. 16,19). The urgency of the situation is indicated by the presence of the false teachers in the readers' churches (v. 4) and love feasts (v. 12). The nature of the heresy can not be specified, but was apparently similar to that addressed in 2 Peter. Jude writes out of concern for these readers who are in danger of falling prey to the apostates.

The Purpose

Jude has a positive and a negative purpose. His positive purpose is to urge the readers to "contend earnestly for the faith" (v. 3). Along with this he wants them to strengthen themselves in the faith and help others influenced by the heretics (vv. 17-23). His negative purpose is to warn the readers (v. 4) and remind them about the condemnation of the ungodly apostates (vv. 5-16).

Argument

Jude reminds the readers of their blessed standing in Jesus Christ in his introduction (vv. 1-2). He then relates the circumstances of his writing (vv. 3-4). While he had planned to write about their salvation, he found it necessary instead to write to encourage them to contend for the faith, because of the ungodly teachers who were present among them. In the rest of his letter Jude describes the apostates and offers the readers a defense against them.

The description of the apostates (vv. 5-16) begins with examples of past apostates who were judged (vv. 5-7). This will remind the readers of their outcome lest any are tempted to join. Jude then compares the present heretics to those of the past (vv. 8-16). Like them, these ungodly men have rebellious conduct which does not accept authority (vv. 8-11). He also uses figures from nature to describe their worthless character (vv. 12-13). He then quotes a truth from the Book of Enoch to pronounce the certain judgment of these apostates (vv. 14-15). He finally describes them as essentially wicked (v. 16). His description will prepare his readers to avoid these corrupt men.

The readers can also take an active role against the heretics by defending themselves with awareness and proper attitudes (vv. 17-23). Jude calls to their remembrance the warning of

the apostles about false teachers so that they will be aware of their presence (vv. 17-19). He also encourages them to build themselves up in faith, prayer and love so they will be able to stand strong against the apostates (vv. 20-21). Finally, he encourages the attitudes of compassion and fear toward those affected by the false teachers (vv. 22-23).

He ends with a doxology emphasizing the Lord's sufficiency to preserve the readers (vv. 24-25). This prayerful praise expresses Jude's reason for writing and indicates his confidence in a positive outcome. By an informed awareness and a resolve to contend for the faith, the readers can withstand the onslaught of the false teachers.

Outline of Jude

- I. The Introduction 1-2
 1. The writer 1a
 2. The readers 1b
 3. The greeting 2
- II. The Occasion for the Letter 3-4
 - A. The purpose of exhorting them to defend the faith 3
 - B. The reason for this exhortation 4
- III. The Description of Apostates 5-16
 - A. The judgment of past apostates 5-7
 1. The example of unbelieving Israel 5
 2. The example of the fallen angels 6
 3. The example of Sodom and Gomorrah 7
 - B. The description of present apostates 8-16
 1. The indictment of their rebellious conduct 8-11
 - a. Their rejection of authority 8
 - b. Michael the archangel's respect of authority 9
 - c. Their corruption in all things 10
 - d. Their woe for leaving the truth 11
 2. The figurative description of their character 12-13
 3. The prophetic pronouncement of their doom 14-15
 4. The description of their nature 16
- IV. The Defense Against Apostates 17-23
 - A. The awareness of their presence 17-19
 1. The call to remember the apostles' warning 17
 2. The content of the apostles' warning 18-19
 - B. The proper attitude toward spiritual disciplines 20-21
 - C. The proper attitude toward the deceived 22-23
 1. The attitude of compassion toward some 22
 2. The attitude of fear toward some 23
- V. The Doxology 24-25

Summary and Outline of Revelation

by

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Introduction

The Author

John is identified as the author four times (1:1,4,9; 22:8) in a way that indicates he is well known by the readers. The address to the seven churches in Asia (1:4) also points to John since tradition maintains he was over these churches. Because of the unique nature of Revelation and the letters to the seven churches (chs. 2-3), it was quickly circulated and accepted and widely quoted in the early church. No one doubted that John, the author of the epistles, was also the author of Revelation until the middle of the third century when Dionysius questioned this. He argued that the style is too different from John's other works, but his objection is suspect because of his differences in theology with Revelation.

Differences do exist between Revelation and John's other works: the grammar is not as refined, expressions and vocabulary differ, theology is different in emphasis and presentation, and John always wrote anonymously. But one must also admit the many remarkable similarities in style, vocabulary and contrasting themes. Furthermore, the circumstances under which John penned Revelation are extraordinary. He was called upon to record without forethought a series of startling visions. This also excluded the use of a secretary whose help he may have had with the other works. There is no good reason to question John's authorship.

The Date and Place

The text reveals John is on the island of Patmos because of his testimony for Christ (1:9). This, along with 2:10 and 2:13 indicate it was a time of persecution. The persecution under Domitian (A.D. 95-96), not the one under Nero (begun in A.D. 64), is the most likely setting for these reasons: 1) This is the testimony from early tradition. 2) The complacency and decline of the churches indicates considerable history behind them (chs. 2-3). 3) John moved to Ephesus too late to have an ongoing ministry in Asia by A.D. 64. 4) Laodicea is called "wealthy", but was leveled by an earthquake in A.D. 60-61. 5) Emperor worship under Domitian may prefigure the Antichrist. 6) The persecution under Domitian was more universal than Nero's. Thus Revelation was written about A.D. 95-96 from the island of Patmos.

The Destination

The destination of the letter is the seven churches in the Roman province of Asia (1:4; chs. 2-3). From Patmos, they would have been delivered clockwise from Ephesus to Laodicea, the order found in chapters 2-3. The universality of the message of Revelation would also be relevant to the church as a whole (Cf. 2:7,29).

The Occasion

Revelation was written during a time of persecution (1:9; 2:10,13) under Domitian who was the first emperor to demand worship during his lifetime. This caused conflict with the church and great consternation among Christians. For this reason John had been exiled to the small remote island of Patmos (1:9). It was here Jesus Christ revealed Himself to John and

commanded him to record the vision (1:10-19). John writes in simple obedience to the command of Christ Who wanted to address some moral and doctrinal errors in the Asian churches and reveal the future of God's program.

The Purpose

The purpose is affected by how Revelation is interpreted. There are four major schools of interpretation: 1) The preterist school denies the prophetic significance and claims Revelation is a symbolic description of the events of the early centuries under Rome. 2) The historicist school considers the book an allegorical panorama of all of church history. 3) The idealist school divorces Revelation from history and makes it a symbolic depiction of the conflict of ideas and spiritual principles. 4) The futurist school considers chapters 4-22 to be future and attempts to discern the literal meanings behind the symbols. This view also recognizes the influence which the first century conflict with Rome had on the themes of the book.

Assuming the correctness of the futurist view, the dominating purpose of Revelation is to reveal the consummation of God's program for the world. These end-time events extend from the tribulation to the second advent of Christ and His establishment of a new world (chs. 4-22). As such it also completes all the prophetic themes in the Bible. A second obvious purpose is to correct moral and doctrinal problems in the churches of Asia (chs. 2-3). A final purpose can be inferred from the triumphant tone of the book. This purpose is to comfort the readers in the ultimate victory of Christ over all earthly and spiritual adversaries. The blessing for those who read and obey the words of Revelation is promised in 1:3.

Argument

The introduction to Revelation (1:1-8) first signifies the nature of the contents: it is Christ's revelation of Himself and the future (1:1-2). A blessing is then promised to those who read and obey the words (1:3). This may be a blessing of comfort concerning ultimate victory as well as a blessing for the churches which follow Christ's admonitions in chapters 2-3. The greeting to the churches (1:4-8) would bring comfort by the description of the position of Christ and those related to Him and the reminder of His coming.

From this point, the book unfolds in three distinct sections denoted by the key verse 1:19. John is commanded to write "the things which you have seen" (1:9-20), "the things which are" (2:1-3:22) and "the things which shall take place after these things" (4:1-22:5). The first section relates to his vision, the second to the churches and the third to future events.

The first section about "the things which you have seen" concerns the vision of Christ (1:9-20). Christ commands John to record the vision and deliver it to the seven churches (1:9-11). The description of Christ includes many features relevant to His role as Judge and King in the events of Revelation. These attributes are also the basis of His appeal to the churches (Cf. 2:1,8,12,18; 3:1,7,14). The readers can take comfort in the sufficiency of their Lord.

In the second section, "the things which are," Christ addresses the seven churches of Asia through a common format of commendation, complaint, counsel and promise (2:1-3:22). These were literal contemporary churches, but the issues addressed apply to churches in any age.

Each church's circumstances are addressed individually by the Lord. The church at Ephesus (2:1-7) was characterized by works, patience and spiritual discernment, but had left its first love. The church at Smyrna (2:8-11) was marked by tribulation, poverty and impending persecution. At Pergamos (2:12-17) the church was steadfast in the faith, but tolerated the false doctrines of Balaam and the Nicolaitans. The fourth church, Thyatira (2:18-29), was known for its works, love, faith, service and perseverance, but it tolerated the immorality of the false prophetess Jezebel. The church at Sardis (3:1-6) had a reputation for being alive, but except for a remnant they were dead. The Philadelphian church (3:7-13) was faithful and in a place of opportunity to witness for Christ. Finally, the Laodicean church (3:14-22) was self-sufficient, but sinfully complacent.

Christ applies commendation, criticism and counsel where needed. That most churches were told to repent shows His concern for their moral purity. The focus on the return of Christ and the promises related to the future are a motivation to repent and an encouragement to persevere in the present circumstances. The events of the rest of the book are an amplification of these themes related to the future.

The last section of Revelation makes up most of the material (4:1-22:5). Its concern is "the things which shall take place after these things" or events future to John's experience. Most of this section describes the tribulation with Jesus as Judge (4:1-18:24), but it ends with Him coming as King to triumph over evil (19:1-20:15) and usher in the eternal state (21:22:5).

Jesus Christ judging the world in tribulation marks the first part of the end-time events (4:1-18:24). After the prelude to judgment, there are basically three movements of seven seals, seven trumpets and seven bowls of judgment. Inserted at various places are parentheses of events or signs. There is also a notable increase in the intensity of these judgments as they are progressively unleashed upon the earth. The purpose of these judgments is not only to explain the future, but also to comfort the readers in Christ's sovereign control.

Two chapters form the prelude to the judgment of the tribulation (4:1-5:14). The first scene is of the Judge seated on His throne (4:1-11). The glory of the Judge on the throne and the worship of the heavenly beings emphasize the sovereignty and right of the Judge to exercise judgment on the earth. The second scene focuses on the scroll in the hand of the Judge and the worthiness of the Lamb to open the scroll (5:1-14). This depicts the commitment of the power and authority to judge the earth to Christ. His redemptive work and worthiness to judge is lauded by every creature (5:8-14). These chapters should comfort readers by demonstrating that Christ is in control of judgment. The readers may also be comforted by the suggestion that they will be present with Christ in heaven when the earth is judged, if indeed the twenty-four elders around the throne depicts the church (4:4,10).

The judgment of the tribulation actually begins with the opening of the seven seals (6:1-8:6). The judgments of the first four seals unleash the work of Antichrist and submerge the world in bloodshed, famine, and mass death. The fifth seal shows martyrs in heaven crying to God for vengeance which He answers with an assurance of His control over the coming events (6:11). When the sixth seal is opened, there are great cosmic disturbances and men recognize that "the great day of their wrath has come" (6:12-17).

After the sixth seal John is treated to a comforting interlude that focuses on the redeemed of the tribulation (7:1-17). God is saving many during the tribulation. First are the 144,000 of Israel which He seals and protects (7:1-8). Next is the great multitude from every nation who praise God for His salvation (7:9-17). These are the Gentiles saved during the tribulation (7:14). The passage offers much comfort to the readers. They can see that salvation belongs to God (7:10) and that even believers during the terrible tribulation period can enjoy the presence and protection of God (7:15-17).

The opening of the seventh seal (8:1-6) is a time of silence during which the prayers of the saints ascend to God. The ominous silence prepares the readers for the terrible contents of the seventh seal which are the seven trumpets.

The judgment of the seven trumpets (8:7-11:19) increases the intensity of God's wrath on the earth. The earth's vegetation, the sea, fresh water and the heavenly bodies are all destructively diminished by one-third in the first four trumpets. Demonic creatures and an army of 200 million continue to torment and kill the people of earth under the fifth and the sixth trumpet.

Another interlude separates the first six trumpets from the last. The interlude describes events focusing on a little book and two witnesses (10:1-11:14). The first part of the interlude describes a mighty angel and a little book (10:1-11). The angel swears that judgment will be delayed no longer (10:5-7) and gives the little book to John to eat (10:8-11). The book is probably the message of judgment which is bitter in its words of condemnation and sweet in its assurances of God's triumph over evil. The second part of the interlude describes the ministry, death and resurrection of the two witnesses in Jerusalem (11:1-14). They continue to proclaim God's judgment to the earth and are vindicated by God. They demonstrate the presence of God's grace during the tribulation and perhaps spark a revival (11:13).

The seventh trumpet (11:15-19) opens with praise to God because He has received the kingdoms of this world and is about to reward His servants. This anticipates the final victory, but the narrative is interrupted by an extended parenthesis.

The parenthesis is composed of explanatory prophecies which reveal other aspects of Satan's activity and God's program (12:1-14:20). A war with the dragon, Satan, is described first (12:1-17). In spite of his persistent persecution of Israel and Christ his efforts are frustrated and ultimate victory in the coming of Christ's kingdom is proclaimed. The readers can be comforted by the promise of victory through the blood of Christ and their testimony about Christ (12:11). The vision of the two beasts is next (13:1-18). The first beast is the Antichrist who, after rising to world prominence, blasphemes God and persecutes believers (13:1-10). The second beast is the satanic false prophet who promotes worship of the Antichrist, deceives those on earth and kills believers (13:11-18).

In contrast to those who worship the beast are the 144,000 of the Lamb whom are sealed and preserved by God (14:1-5). Another vision describes three angels who proclaim the gospel to the whole earth, the fall of Babylon and the eternal torment of the beast's followers (14:6-13). The blessing pronounced on those who "die in the Lord" would be a comfort to Christians of any period. The final vision of the parenthesis depicts a harvest of the earth in

judgment (14:14-20). Throughout the parenthesis, God's program proceeds under His control and with the anticipation of final triumph over evil.

The seven bowls of judgment (15:1-18:24) are the last movement in the tribulation period and elicit from the seventh trumpet (11:15-19) which was interrupted by the parenthesis. The prelude to the bowl judgments (15:1-8) is a solemn scene of worship and an awesome display of divine holiness which is the basis for God's judgment. The bowls are then poured out in rapid succession. From them come tormenting sores, damage to salt and fresh water, scorching heat, darkness, the convergence of armies on the Holy Land and terrible cosmic phenomena. Though these are the severest judgments yet, the reaction of man is not repentance, but blasphemy (16:9,11,21).

The destruction of Babylon (17:1-18:24) concludes the tribulation as a climax of judgment upon evil. The destruction of religious Babylon is first (17:1-18). Babylon, depicted as a harlot, is the epitome of immorality, blasphemy and antichrist sentiment (17:1-6). Though she at first wars with Christ in league with the beast (Antichrist), the beast turns and destroys her (17:7-18). Babylon as a commercial center is also destroyed (18:1-24). The city is described as a center of wickedness and her destruction is total (18:1-8). The mourning over the devastated city denotes a finality in judgment (18:9-20) and a note of triumph announces that God's long awaited vengeance has finally come (18:20).

This final phase of tribulation bowl judgments and the destruction of Babylon describes the final crushing blows to the earth and its systems of evil. The false religious, political and economic systems of this world are destroyed forever. God is triumphant throughout the tribulation and all believers can draw comfort from this. But the triumph of God climaxes in the next section.

The next major phase of God's future program is the triumph of Christ over evil in His coming as King (19:1-20:15). The triumph of Christ's second coming is described first (19:1-21). Heaven celebrates the final victory seen in the judgment of the harlot, the anticipation of Christ's reign and the union of Christ with the church in the marriage supper of the Lamb (19:1-10). Finally, Christ appears in heaven and soundly defeats the armies of the beast who is thrown into the lake of fire along with his false prophet (19:11-21).

Christ then establishes the millennial kingdom (20:1-15). Satan is bound for the thousand years (20:1-3) as church saints and raised tribulation martyrs reign with Christ (20:4-6). At the end of the thousand years there is a final rebellion of Satan and humanity which the Lord immediately crushes (20:7-10). Satan is finally cast into the lake of fire (20:10). After the millennium there is a second resurrection of all unbelievers who are judged and also cast into the lake of fire (20:11-15).

The triumph of this section about Christ's advent and kingdom is a tremendous assurance and comfort to the readers of Revelation. There is the assurance of final victory over evil and the promise of a restored kingdom lost to man in the fall. Yet even this is not the ultimate comfort; there is the eternal state.

The consummation of earthly history gives way to a greater glory as Christ ushers in the eternal state (21:1-22:5). John describes the vision of the new heaven and earth (21:1) and

the descent of the New Jerusalem (21:2-8). The New Jerusalem is the ultimate comfort for believers because God's personal presence will eliminate sorrow, death and pain. He reminds the readers that this is their inheritance (21:7). The description of the New Jerusalem (21:9-22:5) also should encourage the readers in their present circumstances. The eternal residence is splendidly glorious in its appearance, design and materials (21:9-21), but the essence of its glory is the presence of Christ Himself (21:22-27). The New Jerusalem will be a center of worship for all the people of the world. Furthermore, the river of life will insure an endless supply of God's grace and the abolishment of the curse forever (22:1-5). The people of God will be comforted eternally as they reign "forever and ever" (22:5).

The conclusion to Revelation (22:6-21) brings the readers back into the historical occasion of John's vision. The main message of the book is reiterated by the angel: Jesus is coming soon (22:6-11). Christ also extends a final message that assures the readers of His coming and invites them to take His free gift of life (22:12-17). John adds a warning about tampering with the words of this book (22:18-19) and closes with an invitation to Christ to come soon (22:20).

John has faithfully recorded the messages to the seven churches and the visions of future events. Christ's messages should motivate the churches to correct their problems. But a greater motivation for all readers is the future judgment, appearance of Christ, millennial kingdom and eternal state. The record of Christ's ultimate triumph should comfort, encourage and motivate the readers in their present Christian lives.

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