

New Testament Survey

Book Summaries

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2nd edition 1994.

POSSIBLE ORDER OF WRITING:

Galatians	AD 49
1 Thessalonians	AD 50/51
2 Thessalonians	AD 50/51
1 Corinthians	AD 54
2 Corinthians	AD 55
Romans	AD 55
James	40's or 50's
Mark's Gospel	late 50's or early 60's
Philemon	AD 60/61
Colossians	AD 60/61
Ephesians	AD 60/61
Philippians	AD 61/62
Luke/Acts	AD 60-62
1 Timothy	AD 62
Titus	AD 62
2 Timothy	AD 63/64
1 Peter	AD 63/64
2 Peter	AD 64/65
Matthew	60's
Hebrews	60's
Jude	60's or 70's
John	70's or 80's
1 John	80's
2 John	80's
3 John	80's
Revelation	late 80's or early 90's

Paul's Letter to the GALATIANS

1. SITUATION

- (a) Letter probably written after Paul's first missionary journey but before the Jerusalem Council - hence around AD 49. Written from Antioch to Churches established during first missionary journey. (Gal 1:1-2)
- (b) Cause was presence of 'false brethren' (2:4), trouble makers (1:6-9, 5:10,12), emphasizing circumcision and the law as essential for salvation. Serious situation.
- (c) It was a time of major crisis for the church the outcome of which would mean either the triumph of grace through faith or the imposition of the Law upon Gentiles and all believers. This would either confine the church to an essentially Jewish expression only or split the church with the Gentile church ending up rootless and tending towards pagan syncretism.
- (d) Probably written by secretary (6:11) - common practice.

2. PURPOSE

- (a) to defend gospel of justification by faith through grace against the circumcision party from Jer - who were influencing the Galatian Christians not only regarding circumcision but also other Jewish customs, eg holy days, Mosaic rituals, dietary taboos etc.
- (b) to defend his own authority because in challenging the gospel of free grace the Judaizer's were challenging Paul's authority to be an apostle and emphasizing authority of Jer over and above Paul.

3. MAJOR ISSUES

- (a) The above analysis is called the South Galatian theory. There is an alternative North Galatian theory because GALATIA (1:2) may refer to cities north of Pisidian Antioch etc (ethnic Galatian - GAULS) (as in 1 Peter 1:1) or Roman provincial Galatia may include the northern AND southern cities.

On this theory Paul established the northern churches after the Jer council on his way from Pisidian Antioch to Troas at start of second missionary journey (possible A 16:6, 18:23). He then wrote Galatians during second or at Ephesus before third journey (either AD 53 or 55. (Harrison)).

However,

- 1) inexplicable Paul not mention council decisions if written after
- 2) Gal 2:1-10 is not Jer Council A 15
- 3) Gal 2:11 ff fits situation before not after council
- 4) Barnabas not on second journey yet in Gal 2
- 5) Gal 1:6 implies trouble arose soon after church est.

So Bruce, Martin and see arguments GUNDRY 260 f + Martin (NTF-2), 148-152.

Carson, Moo & Morris conclude, while there is no final proof, the arguments are more compelling for the Southern theory.

- (b) Some suggest false brethren are gnostic - Jewish syncretists or two groups of agitators, Judaic legalists and spiritual enthusiasts (libertines) (4:3, 8-10, 5:13-26).
- (c) Martin argues for Judaizing Christians who, anxious to demonstrate to Jews that they are true and patriotic, invest circumcision with a powerfully symbolic meaning and see themselves as having arrived, a new race, free to do as please (Gal 6:12 ff) - see Martin (NTF-2), 152-6, Carson, Moo & Morris, 295-296.

4. MAIN TEACHING (+ themes)

- (a) Several key themes - law, grace, faith, sonship, unity and equality of all believers, Christian liberty, love.

- (b) Chapters 1-2

Paul begins with - an autobiography of events intended to reaffirm his authority in the gospel

- an exposure of the presence of a false gospel and false brethren
- an amazement that Galatian believers have been so affected by this teaching

Paul outlines the key lines of contention in circumcision and the law, a return to which means the end of grace and the irrelevance of Christ's death.

- (c) Chapters 3-4

Paul now elaborates on the primary issues of the gospel, faith and the Spirit, unity and sonship. He does this in the context of contrasting these things with the way of Law and clarifies by explaining the nature and true purpose of the Law.

The example of Abraham - saved by faith - and the allegory of Sarah and Hagar reinforce Paul's message.

- (d) Chapters 5-6

Paul now proclaims the true freedom we have as a result of the gospel and the Spirit. He elaborates on its true nature however, not as license but as love which fulfills the law of Christ. This love is to have individual and corporate expression.

Paul concludes (6:11-18) by returning to the main issues of contention with the false brethren - see Martin NTF-2, 157 f.

MSS - manuscript

Paul's FIRST letter to the THESSALONIANS

1. SITUATION

- (a) Both letters written by Paul (with Silas and Timothy). Both probably written from Corinth during the second missionary journey AD 50/51, not long after the church had been founded in Thessalonica.
- (b) 1 Thess written after Timothy returned from Thessalonica with news of the state of the church there (3:6f) (A 18:5).
- (c) A 17:2 ff indicates that the time spent in Thessalonica was short (less than a month) and tempestuous. The church had a difficult start and an inadequate foundation. Paul was fearful the church had floundered so that the good news from Timothy encouraged Paul immensely.
- (d) The church had grown, evangelized of its own initiative and had suffered. (1:1-10, 2:14, 3:3 - even premature deaths 4:13?). It also demonstrated considerable interest in eschatological issues.

2. PURPOSE

- (a) to encourage and exhort the church that having begun to grow it should continue on (note 4:1,10).
- (b) to explain his actions and defuse some criticism.
- (c) to teach more clearly regarding several matters, esp. the parousia.

3. MAJOR ISSUES

- (a) Was Paul's stay in Thessalonica longer than the 3-4 weeks implied in A 17:1-10? Note 1 Thess 1:8 ff, Phil 4:16 to imply the possibility but not the necessity. 1:5-2:12 suggests a recently founded church.
- (b) Some suggest Paul's enemies at Thessalonica are not Jews but gnostic Christians similar to Galatia and Corinth (Schmithals) - even a certain realized eschatology; we have arrived in this life so that the death of some church members presented a real problem to them.
- (c) Can argue 2 Thess written before 1 Thess because former is less detailed and has less depth but no MSS evidence and 2 Thess 2:15 prob refers to 1 Thess.

4. MAIN TEACHING (+ themes)

(a) Chapter 1

Paul writes to congratulate and affirm the church for its progress in faith, hope and love. They demonstrated their conversion to God by turning from idols. They are an example.

(b) Chapters 2-3

Paul elaborates on his own actions, the circumstances of his visit to Thessalonica, the occasion of his letter, his own afflictions and counters some criticism (of cowardice, and of receiving gifts from wealthy ladies).

(c) Chapters 4-5

Paul turns now to teach and exhort more clearly concerning

- 1) sexual purity, esp in marriage (4:1-8)
- 2) progress in love (4:9-10)
- 3) eschatological matters 4:11-5:11
 - the imminence of the parousia does not mean we stop normal activities and manual labour. Rather we are to continue on and be ready for the suddenness of Christ's return - as Paul himself was doing (4:11-12, 5:1 ff)
 - those who have already died (4:13-18)
- 4) practical exhortations for the last days.

Paul's SECOND Letter to the THESSALONIANS

1. SITUATION

- (a) Paul apparently received new information regarding the Thessalonian church and so he wrote again soon after the first letter.
- (b) Fanaticism was increasing, false teachers may have arisen within the congregation writing spurious letters in Paul's name and/or misinterpreting 1 Thess. (2 Thess 2:1-2, 3:17). Belief in the imminence, even arrival, of the parousia was causing/excusing some from work - just sit and wait - and causing others to want to escape persecution.

2. PURPOSE

- (a) to quieten a fanatical belief in the immediacy/arrival of the parousia.
- (b) to further clarify the eschatological teaching of 1 Thess.
- (c) to reiterate practical exhortations of 1 Thess.

3. MAIN TEACHING (+ themes)

(a) Chapter 1

Paul again thanks God for the progress of the church in the midst of persecution which is to be expected. Retribution and vindication will come however.

(b) Chapter 2:1-12

Paul moves quickly into eschatology. There will be certain signs before the parousia. The coming "man of lawlessness" (Antichrist in 1 John 2:18, 22, 4:3) is being restrained now (by the Roman Empire, the Holy Spirit, Mission?).

(c) Chapter 2:13 - 3

Practical exhortations to love, work and be an example in discipline and consistency are reiterated.

Paul's Letter to the CORINTHIANS

1 CORINTHIANS = Corinthians B

1. SITUATION

- (a) Paul wrote a PREVIOUS letter = Corinthians A calling them not to associate with immoral people. (1 Cor 5:9-13, 16:1). Message misunderstood it seems.
- (b) So near the end of his time in Ephesus (before the third missionary journey) Paul receives more news of Corinth :
- Chloe's household (or employees) (1:11).
 - Stephanas, Fortunatus, Achaicus (16:17f) with letter and/or requests (7:1,25; 8:1; 12:1; 16:1).
 - Apollos (16:12) returned to Ephesus (because embarrassed by party spirit in Corinth? Paul shows no hint of misgivings with Apollos (cf 3:6).
- (c) So Paul writes 1 Cor (= Cor B) around AD54 (note 4:18; 16:19) Gundry, Barrett (or early 55 Bruce) with Sosthenes possible amanuensis (1:1) (ex Corinth A 18:17?).
- (d) State of Church
1. observed the trads = basic articles of the Faith (11:2; 15:1).
 2. singularly gifted community (1:5-7).
 3. lack of leadership (16:15-18) and lack respect for leadership that existed.
 4. 4 parties in church (1:12; 3:4)
 - (a) Paul - emp him as founder.
 - (b) Apollos - enjoy his eloquence, imagination, allegorization (?)
 - (c) Cephas - from possible visit in Paul's absence (9:5) or visitors came from Jer emphasizing Jer and Peter's apostolic authority more than Paul's personal vision + emph Jer council food restrictions hence drive a wedge between Peter and Paul. Traditionalists.
 - (d) Christ party - partisan and exclusive because have received the Spirit of the exalted Christ and therefore "arrived", enlightened and therefore not need Christ's res. Hence elite in knowledge and wisdom, emancipated, downplay body, emphasize liberty.
 5. theological problems (possible)
 - incipient gnosticism - reject BODY and therefore Christ's res and claim elite knowledge (Christ Party).
 - enthusiasts - spiritualists, enlightened, overrealized eschat, and claim elite, spiritual - overemphasize tongues and prophecy as signs of spirituality (Christ Party).
 - ascetics - anti marriage (gnostic or Christ party).
 - weaker scruples re food (Cephas party).
- (e) Specific Church Problems, as a result of the above
1. party divisions hence Christ divided (1:10-13; 3:3-6).
 2. L.S. divisions causing offense (11:17-34).
 3. sexual sin condoned (5).
 4. lawsuits implying arrogance and self centredness (6).

LS = Lord's
supper

2. PURPOSE

- (a) to correct doctrine regarding the gospel and res (1-3,15).
- (b) to restore integrity and order in Ch regarding divisions, sexual sins and law suits (1, 5-6).
- (c) to reinforce his own position and call (1-2, 4, 9).
- (d) to answer questions raised by visitors/delegates (7-14).
- (e) to arrange relief funds for Jer (16:1-4).

3. MAJOR ISSUES

- (a) The "Christ" party may be meant to mean the true position for all believers - I am of Christ. It is more likely however that each of the 4 parties are "personality cults" resulting in factionalism.
- (b) The question of to what degree the divisions are theological divergences or only personality cults is variously argued. At least all the 4 factions were still meeting together.

4. MAIN TEACHING (+ themes)

- (a) Chapters 1 - 6 Paul's concerns

After an initial greeting (1:1-9) Paul launches into a series of concerns he has regarding the state of the church. These include disunity (1, 3), a specific case of immorality (incest) (5), lawsuits between Christians (6:1-8), immorality in general (6:9-20).

Paul also defends his gospel against worldly wisdom (2) and his apostolic authority (4).

- (b) Chapters 7 - 14 The Church's questions

Paul then replies to specific questions from the church; regarding marriage (7), food offered to idols (8-10), and several matters relating to church worship. These include the veiling of women (11:1-16), the Lord's Supper (11:17-34) and spiritual gifts (12-14) with particular reference to tongues and prophecy and the greatest gift of love.

- (c) Chapter 15

Paul raises the central doctrine of Christ's res and therefore our res and its nature - subject matter unfamiliar to the Greek mind.

- (d) Chapter 16

Personal matters - the collection for Jer (16:1-9) and concluding remarks, news and exhortations follow.

Paul's Letter to the CORINTHIANS

2 CORINTHIANS = Corinthians D

1. SITUATION

- (a) Paul has just met Titus (perhaps in Philippi) with news of the Corinthian situation - AD 55 (or 56).
- (b) In his joy at the news - he writes 2 Cor having heard of
 - the reversal of attitude to Paul.
 - the disciplinary action has been taken at last on the man who defied Paul during sorrowful/painful visit (2:12ff, 7:5ff).
- (c) The Corinthian Ch had responded positively (reconciliation with Paul). This is the most personal of Paul's letters.

2. PURPOSE

- (a) to express relief and joy at the favourable response of the church.
- (b) to elaborate further on the nature and extent of his apostolic authority and ministry.
- (c) to stress the importance of the collection for the Jerusalem church.

3. MAJOR ISSUES

- (a) In-between 1 and 2 Corinthians there was apparently:
 - a SORROWFUL/PAINFUL VISIT to Corinth (2 Cor 2:1-8; 12:14; 13:1f) where Paul was grossly humiliated and insulted by a man and withdrew back to Ephesus
 - a SEVERE letter (= Cor C) where Paul attacks the person. Sent by Titus (2 Cor 2:3f, 9-11, 7:8f)
- (b) 2 Cor is in 2 halves 1-9 and 10-13 both of which have a considerable change of TONE.

WHY?

- 1. 10-13 could be the bulk of the earlier severe letter (= Cor C).
- 2. 10-13 sounds like written after 1-9 (cf 2 Cor 12:18, 2 Cor 8:17ff) so may have been written after 3rd visit to Corinth when the anticipated restoration of 1-9 did not occur (Bruce implies 10-13 = Corinthian E).
- 3. 10-13 rep new and more disturbing reports, in middle of writing 2 Cor - but no evidence of this (Carson, Moo & Morris).
- 4. 1-9 conc on the majority in the church while 10-13 conc on recalcitrant minority (Gundry).

- (c) Identity of accusers unclear, (false apostles 11:4f, 13, 11:23, 12:11). Are they - Judaizers (Gundry) cf 11:21f.
- Gnostics overemphasizing spiritual knowledge (Martin) cf 11:13ff, 12:12.
- teachers from Jer who emphasized the superior/exclusive claims of Jer mother church and supremacy of Israel (Barrett)

4. MAIN TEACHING (+ themes)

(a) Chapters 1 - 9

In Chapters 1-7 Paul justifies his conduct, defending himself against the charge of vacillation. He advises that the disciplined man be restored to fellowship (2:5-11). He rejoices in reconciliation with the church (2:12-14, 7:5-16). He describes at length his apostleship in terms of weakness and suffering (4). He is God's ambassador and servant (5 - 6). In chapters 8-9 Paul commends the collection to the church.

(b) Chapters 10 - 13

Paul renews his defense against personal accusations of cowardice and illegitimacy. He again presents his credentials, his sincerity, his extensive sufferings, his extraordinary gift from God and, at the same time, his weaknesses. Finally he counters the charge of covetousness. He closes with an appeal and greetings.

Paul's Letter to the Romans

1. SITUATION

- (a) While in Corinth (16:23, 1 Cor 1:14) at the end of the third missionary journey and after 1 & 2 Cor., Paul writes to Rome (1:7) end AD 55 (Gundry) or beginning 57 - (Harrison and Bruce [after Illyricum]). This is confirmed because the collection of the relief fund for Jer is now completed - Rom 15 compare 1 Cor 16:1-3, 2 Cor 8-9 and Paul soon to leave for Jer.
- (b) Letter written by Tertius (Rom 16:22) to Ch in Rome: a Jewish (4:1) and Gentile (1:5, 6, 13, 11:13) mix.
- (c) State of church - house churches - at least 3 groups (16:5, 14, 15)
 - Paul heard of their faith (1:8) and obedience (16:19).
 - possible Gentile believers regarded themselves as superior hence Rom 9-11 (esp 11:18ff) and 15:19.
 - Claudius' earlier edict may have changed the Jew/Gentile proportions in the Ch (though Jews returned by now but perhaps not all) - hence Gentile majority.
 - some rival groups in the congregation (16:17-20) including "the strong" and "the weak" (14-15).
- (d) Letter taken by Phoebe (perhaps) 16:1-2 with Aquila and Priscilla already back in Rome (16:3-5).

2. PURPOSE - many suggestions (cf. 15:15)

- (a) to inform believers re Paul's ministry intentions to Rome and beyond; to elicit their wholehearted co-operation - to prep for his coming (1:8-13, 5:23). Having evangelized Asia Minor, Macedonia and Achaia, Paul intends to move to new areas - eye on Spain (Rom 15:24, 28). He wishes to visit the Roman ch on the way (1:11, 15), but first Judea with relief fund (Rom 15:25-27). (Thus - while Luke ceases his narrative in Rome, to Paul it is only a stepping stone to Spain - A 19:21, Rom 15:23f).
- (b) to ground them in the full gospel (his) since Paul never founded the ch - so he writes to verify their orthodoxy ("it stands written" - oft repeated).
- (c) Paul is obviously in a reflective mood (in Corinth - note) -
 - absence of contentious issues/polemics compared with 1 & 2 Thess, Gal, 1 & 2 Cor
 - summarizing theology more like a treatise
 - less personal for vast bulk of letter (2-15)
 - even a possible "last will and testament" should he not live beyond Jer (15:30-32).
- (d) nevertheless style includes debate (diatribe) either to enliven interest or due to habit from actual experience of up to 20 yrs of ministry.

3. MAJOR ISSUES

- (a) there are several major textual problems with Romans:
 - a shorter form of Romans, ending at 14:23 or at 15:33
 - the doxology of 16:25-27 is found in some MSS at the end of 14 or 15 or 16 or both 14 and 16.

1. It is possible a shorter edition of Romans (ie 1-15) existed in 2nd century as a circular letter to other churches outside Rome.
2. Shorter edition 1-14 may be due to Marcion who rejected authority of OT quoted 5 times in Ch 15 and who had no interest in Ch 16.
3. Some suggest Rom 16 actually fits Ephesus more than Rome since Paul never been to Rome but Paul is making contact with as many people as he can in that city.

(b) the identity of "the strong" and "the weak" brethren 14:1-15:13 has caused much debate:

1. Gentile believers who had entered into Christian freedom versus Jewish believers still obeying the law.
2. Weak as Gentile and Jewish believers who held to the full observance of the Mosaic law.
3. Weak as Gentile and Jewish believers who did not insist on circumcision but on certain Jewish purity laws.
4. Weak as any of above and strong as those rejecting the abiding significance of the temple.

4. MAIN TEACHING (+ themes)

(a) Romans is a complete exposition of Pauline theology except for teaching on the church and eschatology.

(b) "God" is the chief subject and justification by faith in Jesus Christ, through grace ALONE (1:16-17 = Hab 2:4b) is the main theme. Other major themes are, the gospel, the righteousness of God, the life of the believer and the destiny of Israel - all set in a cosmic and social framework.

(c) STRUCTURE (traditional).

Introduction and Greetings 1:1-15
 Theme 1:16-17
 Gospel According to Paul 1:18 - 8:39
 The Place of Israel 9 - 11
 Practical Exhortations 12:1 - 15:13
 Conclusion and Greetings 15:14 - 16:27.

(d) The Gospel according to Paul is really 1:18-15:13 as the theology and its response are inseparable. Paul begins by stating man's state - universal sinfulness - and his need of salvation (1:18-3:11). Then he proclaims the remedy or solution in Christ. The means is justification by faith leading to peace with God (3:12-5:21). Paul then seeks to elaborate how justification works out in the process of sanctification by the enabling of God's Spirit (6:1-8:39).

The problem of Israel's unbelief is the focus of Paul's next concern as it is a major stumbling block to Jew and Gentile alike (9-11). Paul then concludes with a number of practical exhortations for Christian living that arise from the gospel, including one's attitude to the civil authorities and the issue of freedom of conscience (12:1-15:13).

The Letter of James

1. SITUATION

- (a) James is "James the Just" (the Lord's brother) (Mk 6:3, Gal 1:19, James 1:1).
 - his early attitudes to Jesus were negative (Mk 3:21, Jn 7:5)
 - a believer after the res (A 1:14, 1 Cor 9:5, 15:7).
 - pillar of early church along with Peter and John (Gal 2:9, 12)
 - leader by time of Peter's imprisonment by Agrippa I in AD 43/44 (A 12:17).
 - leader of Jer ch since before Jer council of AD 49 (A 15:13ff, 21:18)
- (b) James' wider authority seen in Gal 2:1-10 and in this letter.
- (c) James executed by Jer HP (ANANUS) in AD 62 (Josephus). This was presumably because James, though a humble, pious, patriotic Jew; as the leader of the Jer church:
 - had received and accepted the ringleader of the sect of the Nazarenes (Paul) - who had escaped the HP's clutches (A 21-26)
 - had admitted Gentiles to the ch without circumcision and submission to the Law - treason against Judaism.
- (d) So letter written in 40's or 50's. Could be one of earliest of all NT books:
 - while some parallels with gospels, no verbal agreement and so prob written before them.
 - reference to rich and poor fits Palestine before AD 66.
 - simple ecclesiastical organization, elders only (5:14)
 - no reference to Judaizing controversy of Jer Council.

Harrison, J A T Robinson suggest even AD 47/48 (ie pre Council).

- (e) Written presumably from Jer or Palestine - to Jewish Christians of the diaspora (1:1).
Jewishness seen 2:2, 8-13, 19, 3:12, 4:4, 8, 11f, 5:3, 4, 12, 14, use of "12 tribes", OT illustrations and omission of any allusion to immorality, idolatry, slavery. Author also seems to have no personal relations with readers.
- (f) High quality Greek parallel to Hebrews and 1 Peter.
- (g) Some trouble being accepted into Canon because identity of James uncertain, not an apostle, addressed to Jewish Christians, limited circulation. Luther distrusted it.
- (h) Letter gives real insight into Jewish Christianity at its zenith.

2. PURPOSE

(There is no specific issue to address or ch to encourage/rebuke.)

- (a) to exercise pastoral oversight of Jewish believers (esp to encourage)
- (b) to provide sample of Jewish Christian teachings requested by diaspora believers (Mitton)
- (c) to exhort re prac Christian living - 1:22 key

- (d) to counter-attack a travesty of Pauline teaching that focussed on a misrepresentation of Paul's doctrine of justification by faith (message therefore parallels Rom 6:1ff - if written later).

3. MAJOR ISSUES

- (a) Authorship challenged on grounds of identity of James, quality of Greek, doctrine, but 1:1 implies this James is very well known.
- (b) Destination challenged by some - readers could be non-Christian Jews (but cf 1:1b, 18, 2:1, 7, 5:7) or Christians in general or Gentile Christians in a secondary sense.
- (c) Significant verbal parallels between James and A 15 (James' speech) reinforces James' authorship.
Note: James 1:1 - A 15:23
 1:27 - A 15:14
 James 2:5, 7 - A 15:13, 17
 5:19-20 - A 15:19.
- (d) Structure difficult to analyze - assortment of practical exhortations loosely strung together - no clear thread. Some structure parallels with Proverbs and Wisdom literature but tone is more like a fiery prophetic sermon.
- (e) Tension of faith/works in James is not perversion of Pauline doctrine. Rather James writes polemically to controvert and correct an understanding of faith in terms of intellectual acceptance and acknowledgment of doctrine (mere profession) (2:19). He agrees with Paul, faith is trust and obedience issuing in love (Gal 5:6).

4. MAIN TEACHING (+ themes)

- (a) Gundry describes James as a 'manual of Christian conduct'. It is thin on doctrine, having a strong practical orientation and emphasis. It is the most practical book in the NT.
- (b) One dominant theme - be a doer of the word (1:22).
- (c) Authoritative tone, Jewish, sharp, incisive, pungent and direct. There are 60 imperatives in a total of 108 verses.
- (d) Numerous allusions to sayings of Jesus esp the Sermon on the Mt.
Note: 1:22 - Mt 7:24-27, L 6:47-49
 4:10 - Mt 23:12
 4:11-12 - Mt 7:1
 5:12 - Mt 5:34-37
- (e) Chapters 1-2
- James begins by focussing on rejoicing in trials, asking for wisdom and trusting God. True religion, the dangers of partiality and the issue of faith and works follow.
- (f) Chapters 3-5
- The problem of the tongue, meekness and purity which avoids worldliness are the next issues raised. James goes on to the dangers of judging others, self will and wealth. Then he exhorts towards patience and the practice of confession and prayer for healing. He concludes with a call to restore an erring brother.

MARK'S GOSPEL

1. SITUATION

- (a) Written by John Mark - A 12:12, 25
 - John (Jewish name), Mark (Roman name).
 - his mother had church meetings in her home A 12:12.
 - may have met Jesus Mk 14:51f, Jn 19:35.
 - traveller with Paul A 13:5, 13, 15:37.
 - with Paul in Rome Col 4:10.
 - close to Peter 1 P 5:13.
- (b) Written in late 50's or early 60's (Gundry, Harrison, Carson, Moo and Morris) ie before or during Paul's 2 years in Rome. (Lane, Martin, Cranfield suggests after AD 64, Hunter, Guelich suggests AD 65-70).
- (c) Written from Rome (cf 12:42, 15:16) (and 15:21 - Rom 16:31).
- (d) Written to (predominantly Gentiles):
 - 1. non-Christians in Rome and beyond (5:41, 7:11, 34)
 - 2. Christians in Rome
 - 3. or both.
- (e) Lane (Bruce) suggests occasion soon after AD 64 fire in Rome. Christians are being made scapegoats, mass arrests and flaming torches so Mark writes - esp for Christians.

2. PURPOSE (not explicit)

- (a) Preserve authentic apostolic trad - esp as expounded by Peter.
- (b) Apologetic purpose - give clear account of purpose of Christ's suffering and how rejected by his own people - for Roman readers.
- (c) Evangelistic purpose - call Roman readers to faith response (Bruce, Gundry).
- (d) Catechetical purpose - there are clusters of sayings for memorization.
- (e) Crisis purpose - to encourage and strengthen the Roman ch and suffering Christians by showing the purpose of Christ's sufferings and Christ's victory (Lane and to a lesser extent Bruce).
- (f) Inferred purposes (Martin/Taylor)
 - 1. To counter gnostic tendencies developing in early church to divorce earthly Jesus from heavenly divine figure - so Mark emphasizes continuity between the two.
 - 2. To counter tendency to reject Jesus of history as unnecessary historical curiosity because believers have 'arrived' - so Mark emphasizes the centrality of Jesus to proclamation and to faith.

3. MAJOR ISSUES

- (a) Mark 1:1 could be a title to the whole book, introduction to first section (1:1-8 or 1:1-13) or statement of purpose/intention for the book.

If it is a title then Mark is introducing a new form of literature: a written gospel compared with the oral proclaimed gospel.

- (b) What is a written gospel?
- passion narrative with an extended introduction
 - witness document
 - written proclamation, giving the substance of the Gospel.

- (c) Was Mark written first?

Most say yes - because all but 31 verses of Mark have parallels in Mt or Lk or both - but answer not unanimous. If so, then Mark establishes a pattern for the rest (incl John).

- (d) Ending of Mark - earliest MSS finish at 16:8 so that 16:9-20 is a secondary but early addition.

4. CHARACTERISTICS

- (a) The gospel of JC the S of G (1:1, 11, 3:11, 5:7, 9:7, 13:32, 14:61, 15:39) (attested by the Father, demons, centurion, Jesus himself).
In fact a balanced presentation of Jesus
- S of M and S of G
 - humiliation and exaltation
 - human and divine
 - redeemer (10:45 - servant role).
- (b) Emphasis on the action/activity of Jesus more than his teaching
- εὐθὺς (immediately) 42 x
 - καὶ frequent
 - imperfect tense 151 x (historic present, living portrait).
- (c) Realism, factual, blunt, direct, vivid.
- (d) Poorer quality Greek (than Mt, Lk).
- (e) More latinisms and parentheses (explaining Jewish/Palestinian customs) implying a Gentile audience (eg. 7:3f, 11:17, 13:10, 14:9).
- (f) Aramaisms imply Palestinean context.
- (g) Arrangement of materials in groups of 2 or 3.
- (h) Some evidence of dependence on PETER (cf 1:36, 8:27ff, 9:5f, 10:28ff, 11:21, 14:29ff, 14:66-72, 16:7) and parallels with A 10:34ff.
- (i) Secrecy of Messiahship is given special focus in Mark (1:25, 34, 44, 3:12, 5:43, 7:36, 8:26, 30, 9:9, 30f and some parables). Jesus did this in order to avoid excessive crowds and to avert misconceptions of the purpose of his mission. Note Wrede.
- (j) Authority of Jesus, mission of Jesus, importance of faith and the cost of discipleship (repeated 3 x) are important themes in Mark.
- (k) Humanity of Jesus is emphasized, his compassion, anger, sorrow, tenderness and love (1:41, 3:5, 6:34, 7:34, 8:2, 12, 10:14, 14:33f).
- (l) Great prominence is given to the word "gospel" (7 x) (1:1, 1:14-15, 8:35, 10:29, 13:10, 14:9) (16:15) (compare Mt 4 x, Lk, none).

(m) Mark repeatedly emphasizes:

- great crowds flock to Jesus.
- corresponding dismay of Pharisees and scribes. (See 1:33,45, 2:2,13,15, 3:7,9,20, 4:1,36, 5:21,24,31, 6:34, 8:1, 9:15,25, 10:1,46.)

5. MATERIAL UNIQUE TO MARK

There is little unique material; most appears in the other synoptics.

- (a) The parable of the growing seed 4:26-29.
- (b) The deaf and dumb man healed 7:31-37.
- (c) The blind man at Bethsaida 8:22-26.
- (d) Forgiveness is conditional on our forgiving 11:25f.
- (e) A young man fled 14:51f.
- ((f) The great commission 16:14-18).

Paul's Letter to PHILEMON

1. SITUATION

- (a) Philemon is probably one of the PRISON letters of Paul, written from Rome between AD 60-62. Paul may have been expecting early release (Phlm 1, 9, 13, 22).
- (b) Philemon is a Colossian Christian, slave owner, with the church in his home (Phlm 1f, Col 4:9). He possibly became a Christian through Paul while in Ephesus (Phlm 19).
- (c) Onesimus (mng: "useful"), his slave, had absconded and stolen some possessions (Phlm 18). He had come to Rome, become a Christian via Paul (Phlm 10) and now needed to return to his owner (as appropriate restitution yet normal punishment was severe, even death).
- (d) It is possible Onesimus returned to Colossae with TYCHICUS who carried the 3 (or 4) letters - Philemon, Colossians, Ephesians (Laodiceans) - Col 4:8f.

2. PURPOSE

- (a) Paul writes to explain the changed circumstances and to encourage Christian grace to apply in Onesimus' reinstatement (Phlm 8ff) or even release (Phlm 16-19, 21) (there is a play on meaning of name - 'useful' - verse 11).
- (b) Paul also writes to elicit the support of the family and house church in the restoration of Onesimus (Phlm 1f).

3. MAJOR ISSUES

- (a) The letter is a simple and powerful example of the personal and practical effect the gospel is meant to have at the sociological level in our world. No value judgment is made on the practice of slavery yet the principles enunciated guarantee its ultimate destruction.
- (b) Some suggest Archippus may be the master of Onesimus rather than Philemon (Phlm 2) and/or that the letter is in fact the missing letter to the Laodiceans (Col 4:16). Both suggestions seem very unlikely.

Paul's Letter to the COLOSSIANS

1. SITUATION

- (a) Probably one of the PRISON letters of Paul, written from Rome between AD 60-62 (Col 4:3, 18).
- (b) Colossae, approximately 160 km inland from Ephesus - in Lycus Valley. A cosmopolitan city.
- (c) Church probably started from witness of Epaphras (possibly a native of the city) (Col 1:6f, 4:12f, A 19:10). Archippus now probably its leader (Col 4:17). Church mainly Gentiles (1:21, 27, 2:13). Paul therefore not founder of the church and had not visited there (1:4, 2:1). Yet Paul assumes they are interested in his affairs (4:7f).
- (d) Epaphras has arrived in Rome to see Paul, (sharing news (1:6, 2:5-7), and seeking advice re heresy infiltrating the church (2:8, 16, 20)). So Paul writes (4:12f).
- (e) It seems Epaphras detained in Rome (Phlm 23) so Tychicus is carrying letter and news along with Onesimus, one of their own members (Col 4:7-9).

2. PURPOSE

- (a) To exhort to remain true to the tradition (2:6-7).
- (b) To warn and admonish re a false doctrine in the church (2:4, 8, 16, 18).
- (c) To proclaim the pre-eminence of Christ and so draw out practical implications from the high christology for Christian living and for church life.

3. MAJOR ISSUES

- (a) The nature of the heresy - a combination of:
 - Jewish legalisms (2:8, 11, 16, 21, 23, 3:11).
 - Greek philosophical speculations (2:8).
 - some oriental/Greek mysticism related to the Mystery Religions (2:18, 20, 23). Cult of Cybele was in Phrygia.
 - exclusivism, elitism (1:20, 23, 28, 2:18, 3:11).
 - devalued, detracted from the person and work of Christ (1:15-19).

The conclusion - a syncretistic Jewish and early gnostic heresy.

- (b) Paul uses the same words and phrases as the false teachers - esp σοφία, γνῶσις, πληρωμα and μυστήριον as well as τα στοιχεῖα τοῦ κόσμου (2:8, 20) (the elementary principles of the world/elemental spirits of the universe) so as to effectively make contact and thoroughly refute while filling the words with orthodox content. In this way he exposes the weaknesses of the false teacher's arguments and expounds the finality of Christ at the same time.

- (c) Connection with Ephesians is strong - esp in Christology (75 of Eph 155 verses are found in Col). There are differences however:
- false teaching is local and specific.
 - Col is more polemical.
 - in Col, Christ is esp head of the universe whereas in Eph Christ is esp head of the church.
- (d) Authorship is challenged on the basis of some of the above - a significant number of hapax legomena, advanced theology, too close to Ephesians for one author to write both. No argument is compelling.

4. MAIN TEACHING (+ themes)

- (a) The PRE-EMINENCE of Christ is the fundamental theme. There is a high, cosmic christology - 1:13-20, 2:3, 9f, 15, 18f, 3:5-17. The real incarnation of Christ is emp however 1:20, 22, 24, 2:9, 11. The work of Christ is succinctly described 1:22f, 2:13-15.

- (b) Chapters 1-2

After greeting and commending the church for its love and fruitfulness (1:1-14) the pre-eminence and glory of Christ is proclaimed (1:15ff) in preparation for a polemic against the Colossian heresy in 2:8-23. Note Martin (NTF - 2) 214-216.

- (c) Chapters 3-4

Paul now concentrates on a range of practical exhortations based on the union of the believer with Christ in his death, resurrection, ascension. The old life and the new are contrasted and applied to specific domestic relationships.

Paul's Letter to the EPHESIANS

1. SITUATION

- (a) Prob one of the PRISON letters of Paul, written from Rome between AD 60-62 (Eph 3:1, 4:1, 6:20).
- (b) Probable Col written before Eph although both have a similar theme. Eph however shows further development in theology from Paul's other letters incl Col (eg., Col 2:10 to Eph 1:22). Nevertheless Eph 6:21f, Col 4:7f are so close as to imply Paul may have ended both letters together.
- (c) Tychicus is bearer and possible scribe of letter (Eph 6:21f) which links it with Philemon and Colossians (Col 4:7-9).
- (d) Eph 6:18-20 could imply appearance before Supreme Court is immanent.
- (e) Ephesians is only a letter at 1:1-2 and 6:21-24. It is variously described as a tract, sermon, commentary on the Pauline letters, a doxology or a prayer:
 - there is no real occasion, no issues, no controversy, no specific problems addressed.
 - the tone is quieter, more temperate with warm exhortation and positive affirmation of the truth.
 - a reflective mood with a comprehensive and balanced overview of all the main Pauline doctrines (coupled with a cosmic/panoramic perspective) demonstrating the full development of Paul's thought under God near the end of his life.

Ephesians is described as the QUINTESSENCE (crown) of PAULINISM (Dodd/Bruce).

- (f) While letter written "to Ephesus" - 1:1 - MSS [C] it seems the letter was intended for all the surrounding churches - ie. Gentile churches esp in Asia - hence references are neither specific nor personal (cf 1:15, 3:2).

Some suggest - encyclical letter (Gundry) to churches of Lycus Valley (Bruce) and beyond (Harrison). Letter more specifically orientated to Gentile Christians.

- (g) Extensive use of OT (9 quotes and up to 42 allusions) but not used in an apologetic (proof-texts as Hebrews) but epexegetic (explanatory/descriptive) way. The purpose seems to be to emphasize the unity of God's work in OT and NT times. A little allegory - Eph 5:32f parallels Gal 4:21-31.

2. PURPOSE

Many suggestions because occasion unclear:

- (a) To sum up Paul's leading themes.
- (b) To re-establish or re-emphasize Paul's integrity and motives in ministry (discredited by heretics).
- (c) To encourage esp Gentile Christians to not forget their Jewish heritage, to remind them of God's purposes in the history of salvation and to exhort them to a continuing correct response.

- (d) A polemic against increasing gnosticizing influences in the church.
- (e) To explain why the mystery of the gospel (ie Jew/Gentile union) appeared to come so late in world development (cf 1:4, 9-10, 3:10).
- (f) To promote Christian unity and strengthening of the missionary thrust.

3. MAJOR ISSUES

- (a) Authorship is disputed if Ephesus is accepted as the destination because how could Paul be so impersonal and general when writing to a church he knew so well (and note 1:15, 3:1f, 4, 4:21, not seem to know Paul). It is also challenged on linguistic, literary and theological grounds.
- (b) Destination is disputed because of textual uncertainty in 1:1, lack of specific references and readers seem to be only Gentile Christians (1:11-14, 2:1-3, 11-22, 3:1, 4:17-19, 5:8). Some who emp Pauline authorship therefore opt for a circular letter with a blank space in MSS to insert Ch name (Martin) or Tychicus carried letter for each church to make a copy.
- (c) Some see an incipient (early) gnosticism being refuted in letter (2:8f, 4:14, 5:6) parallel to Col heresy and no doubt spread throughout Asia. Paul's emp on defending marriage and holy obedience may also be to counter ascetic/liscentious early gnostic attitudes. Others add possibility Gentile Christians tending to reject their historic roots in Israel hence Eph 2 emp on unity - Jew/Gentile one 'new man' in purposes of God.

4. MAIN TEACHING (+ themes)

- (a) There are a number of key themes - many interrelated:
 - the purposes of God - salv by grace
 - the mystery of salv and of the church
 - the unity of the Spirit
 - in Christ (35 x) - (more than any other Pauline)
 - the cosmic Christ.
- (b) There is an absence of eschat teaching.
- (c) Structure can be divided between doctrine (1-3) and practice (4-6) but really both are fully interrelated and should not be falsely divided - the mystery of salv and of the church is intertwined with exhortation to respond and obey.
- (d) Chapter 1

Introduces the great plan/purpose of God before creation that all may be united under Christ (1:1-14). Then Paul prays that believers may comprehend the great work of God.
- (e) Chapter 2

Paul continues to elaborate on God's perfect work in Christ focussing on His Grace, faith alone and the outcome in good works, one new man (Jew/Gentile solidarity) and joint (equal) access to the Father through Christ, by His Spirit individually and corporately.

(f) Chapter 3

Paul focusses on the mystery of the gospel and his ministry in its proclamation concluding with a prayer for strengthening and enabling to know God's love.

(g) Chapter 4:1-16

Paul describes God's intended pattern for His Church.

(h) Chapters 4:17-6:9

Paul specifies a range of responses in key areas of life for those who are filled with His Spirit.

(i) Chapter 6:10-24

Paul concludes with a call to put on the armour of God and to pray in the Spirit.

Paul's Letter to the PHILIPPIANS

1. SITUATION

- (a) Prob one of the PRISON letters of Paul, written from Rome between AD 60-62 (Phil 1:7, 13f, 4:22).
- (b) This letter is separate from the other 3 (or 4) however, not having the same list of associates as Philemon, Colossians, Ephesians. Could therefore be at the beginning or end of his imprisonment.
- (c) Many suggest written near end of 2 years as only Timothy is with him now (2:19-21), the situation is critical (1:20ff) and Paul hopes for early release (1:25, 2:24).
Harrison AD 62 - as last of 4 letters.
Gundry AD 61 - near end of 2 years - in fact Gundry suggests from Phil 1:13 a transfer from the house arrest of A 28:16, 23, 30 to the barracks of the Praetorian Guard on the Palatine indicating his trial is finally in progress and near a conclusion.
- (d) Philippi is Paul's most loved church resulting in a very warm and personal letter (first person 52 x). He remembers the first day and early foundations of the church (1:3-6, 4:15). He recalls their regular assistance and writes a friendly thank you note (Gundry) Phil 4:1, 10, 14ff (and note 1 Thess 2:19, 2 Cor 8:1ff, 11:8ff).
- (e) Occasion is the visit of EPAPHRODITUS from Philippi with news of the state of the church and a gift (2:25). Paul writes in response. In fact, while in Rome, Epaphroditus had fallen seriously ill (2:27), but has now recovered and was to return home with the letter (2:28-30). Paul hopes to visit Macedonia again (2:23f) but will send Timothy first (2:19-23).
- (f) The mention of women (4:2f) fits their significant role in the church from its beginning (A 16:13-15, 40).

2. PURPOSE

- (a) To give thanks for personal assistance (esp financial) (1:3, 5, 4:10-18).
- (b) To share personally re his circumstances and to prepare for his and Timothy's visit (1:8, 12ff, 2:19-24).
- (c) To exhort the church esp re UNITY (1:15, 27, 2:1-11, 14, 4:2).
- (d) To warn against certain schismatic teachers (1:28, 2:15, chap 3 [esp 3:2, 18f]).
- (e) To encourage the church in Christian living in the face of suffering (1:27-30, 2:16, 3:13-17, 4:1, 4-8).

3. MAJOR ISSUES

- (a) Some argue for a possible Ephesian or Caesarean imprisonment where this letter was written more than with the other 3 prison letters. Issues like why Judaizers in AD 60 if prison is Rome, journeys presupposed take too long, look to return to Asia rather than Spain, praetorian guard also in Ephesus etc., are used to argue case. See Martin. (NTF-2) 202-205/Harrison 318-321. Carson, Moo and Morris slightly favour Ephesus, 319-321. Guthrie favours Rome.
- (b) Phil 2:5-11 regarded as HYMN either borrowed (Lohmeyer), adapted (Käsemann) or written by Paul (Carson, Moo & Morris etc.) (see parallels 1 Cor 13, 15:24f, 45ff, Rom 5:12ff, 6:1-11, Col 3:1-4).
- (c) Phil 3:1 "Finally" implies end yet 2 chapters more? Also harsher tone in Chap 3-4. But see 1 Thess 4:1 and perhaps new info arrives as writing.
- (d) Identity of evil workers (Phil 3:2)? (18 suggestions).

Phil 1:12-18, 28, 2:15 prob refers to enemies in pagan world.

Phil 3:2, 6-8 implies Judaizers emp circumcision and the law.

Phil 3:12-16 implies perfectionists, prob Jer Jews emp Jewish superiority.

Phil 3:18f implies sense of arrived, license, avoid suffering and loss (gnosticizing libertines - Bruce).

Conclusion:

evil workers of Chap 3 prob Judaizers parallel to 2 Cor 10-13.

Carson, Moo & Morris think it likely that Paul envisages opponents of more than one kind.

See Paul's refutation 1:12-18, 28-30, 3:12-15, 20f, 4:1ff.

4. MAIN TEACHING (+ themes)

- (a) Strong christological emp but not doctrinal; more practical and personal (2:1-11, 3:9-11, 20f).
- (b) Key words - gospel (9 x), think (φρονεω) (10 x), rejoice (9 x) and joy (5 x).
- (c) Chapters 1-2

Paul warmly outlines his circumstances and ministry. He exhorts the church in humility by using Christ's example and adds further personal references.

- (d) Chapters 3-4

Paul now warns against certain false Jewish teachers at the same time reminding them of his own impeccable Jewish background and his own personal goals in life based on God's grace in Christ in contrast to theirs. Paul concludes with exhortations to joy, patience, trust, prayer, thanksgiving and purity.

LUKE/ACTS

1. SITUATION

- (a) Written by one author
 - Lk 1:1-4, A 1:1
 - the 2 dovetail together with the ascension as a link and a common theme of witness (Lk 24:48, A 1:8).
- (b) Author Dr Luke
 - Paul's companion - from Antioch(?) - prob Gentile (note Col 4:10-14)
 - much research done while Paul in prison in Caesarea (prob)
 - hence eyewitness reports.
 - note 'we' passages in A 16:10-17, 20:5-16, 21:1-18, 27:1-28:16 highlight Luke's own presence in certain events.
- (c) Now in Rome together, possibly written during the 2 years of Paul's imprisonment (Phlm 24, Col 4:14, 2 Tim 4:11). However there were other materials written beforehand (Lk 1:1, 3) so prob written after Mark or at least after Mark had finished his outline.
- (d) Dates suggested:
 - Gundry AD 60/61 (if Mark finished late 50's)
 - Harrison AD 63.
 - Carson, Moo and Morris - early 60's
- (e) Written to non-Christian Gentiles in general (dedicated to Theophilus (Luke's patron) but he rep Gentile world).

2. PURPOSE

- (a) A careful historical account of Jesus and the Early Church - researched, accurate and in order (cf 2:1f, 3:1, A 1:1) (emp eyewitnesses and apostles as sources) (Lk 1:1-3). Luke is the only gospel to be linked to secular history (Lk 2:1, 3:1).
- (b) Apologetic of Christianity to Rome and for Roman readers - explain Jesus and relationship of sect of Nazarenes to Judaism.
- (c) Evangelistic that readers may know the truth (Marshall).
- (d) Pastoral concern for church of his time so emp continuity between past and present and the role of the HS in Jesus and the Ch (Martin). He also shows some catechetical interest.
- (e) Other intentions -
 - 1. polemic against the Jews - so as to explain the Jews rejection of their Messiah and also therefore of Paul (Ellis) (A 28:23-28).
 - 2. defense against gnosticizing Christians with docetic teachings opposing death, burial, res, ascension (Talbert).
 - 3. response to the delay in the parousia (Conzelmann).
 - 4. early Catholicism - a concern to establish the life of the church as an institution (Käsemann).

(f) **Special to Acts**

1. to give counsel for the defense in Paul's Roman trial hence emp on:
 - 1) Paul's testimony x 3 - A 9, 22, 26.
 - 2) Gallio's ruling A 18:12-17.
 - 3) hist demonstration that Roman authorities in no way hostile to Paul - in Jer A 24-27
 - in Rome A 28:16-31
 - elsewhere A 13:7, 12, 16:37ff, 19:31, 35ff, 23:29.
 - 4) false charges of Jesus (17:7, 18:13). This emphasis is also in the gospel (Lk 20:21-26) and note the repeated emp by Pilate on no guilt Lk 23:4, 14-15, 22.
2. to present apostle par excellence (paradigmatic apostle) always under divine protection - as example - hence to call the church to follow his devotion and mission (A 9:15, 22:21, 26:20, 23, 28:20).
3. to present the mission of the ch from 1:8 to the ends of the earth.
Note the priority given to Jerusalem - A 2
Samarita - A 8
Gentiles - Cornelius A 10 and Antioch
A 13:1-3.

Luke emp the irresistible advance of the gospel from Jer to Rome. (And his concern to clearly justify the Gentile mission and demonstrate its initiative and empowering in the sovereign will of God - hence focus on Paul's testimony 3x etc.).

Hence - to call the ch to keep on with mission and to guard the deposit of the gospel.

4. An apology for Paul against Jewish Christian charges against him.

3. **MAJOR ISSUES**

- (a) Lk 4:16-30 is regarded by many as displaced where it is (cf 4:23 and compare Mk 6:1-6) and done so deliberately by Luke to enable Jesus' statement of his MISSION to occur at the beginning of his ministry. To Luke, this statement is foundational to his gospel.
- (b) Luke's central section Lk 9:51 to 18:14 (or 19:48) has no real chronological connections and could not have all been said at once although it may well have occurred during Jesus' journeys towards Jer. There are many suggestions re structure of the section. Marshall's TOPICAL structure seems the most likely of Luke's intentions.
- (c) Because Lk - A claims to be an historical account of Jesus and the early church, the historical accuracy of Luke's record has been variously challenged. Problems:
 - Lk 2:1ff enrolment under Augustus, taken by Quirinius.
 - harmonization between Paul's letters and Acts has been made more difficult than necessary.
 - speeches claimed to be Lucan inventions yet there is evidence of similarity because of agreement on the Kerygma, and diversity because of the different contexts.

Note contribution of Sherwin-White in verifying many of the Roman historical details in Acts. *

4. CHARACTERISTICS (mainly the Gospel)

- (a) Luke demonstrated the interests of an historian/theologian/pastor.
- (b) Focus on Jesus' messiahship and mission (22:37, 24:27, 44, 46 and repeated use of $\delta\epsilon\iota$ 4:43, 13:33, 22:37, 24:44) but with a view to his universal redemption (2:1, 32, 3:1, 2, 6, 38, 4:25-27, 24:47). It is therefore the gospel for the Gentiles and the theme is the redemptive mission of Christ.

Luke depicts the God-Man balance in a manner that would appeal to the best of Greek idealism and philosophy - looking for the ideal, Perfect Person (Geldenhuys).
- (c) The theology of salvation is a strong theme (cf 2:11, 30, 4:16-32 etc) (note Marshall).
- (d) Luke demonstrates a strong interest in the flow of salvation history
 - Jesus is the Saviour (only in Luke - 2:11).
 - fulfillment of prophecy emphasized (4:16ff, 24:25, 44-47).
- (e) Considerable emp on the role of the Holy Spirit - (17 x) (compare 12 x Mt, 6 x Mk) and on Jesus and the Kingdom related to the Spirit's ministry (1:35, 80, 3:22, 4:1f, 14, 18, 43, 9:2, 10:21, 24:49).
- (f) Eschatology focusses more on the delay than the immanence of the parousia.
- (g) Best written of the 3, good literary Koiné. (1:1-4 is Attic).
- (h) Some Semitisms, more in Luke 1-2 than elsewhere, hence Palestinian sources.
- (i) Emphasis more on Jesus' teaching than his action and on a strict chronology.
- (j) Focus on people
 - women
 - children
 - Samaritans
 - social outcasts
 - gospel of the poor (1:52f, 4:18, 6:20f, 24f, 7:22, 14:12f).
- (k) Focus on Jesus' prayer (9 x Jesus prays).
- (l) Focus on joy and praise (and angels 20 x).
- (m) Clear logical structure
Gospel follows pattern parallel to other synoptics:
PREPARATION 1-2
GALILEAN MINISTRY 3:1-9:50
JOURNEY TO JERUSALEM 9:51-19:48
JERUSALEM AND THE PASSION/RES 20-24.
- (n) Special features of the Passion narrative include:
 - charges of Sanhedrin detailed (23:2)
 - Pilate emp Jesus' innocence 3x (23:4, 15, 22)
 - Jesus before Herod Antipas (23:8-12).

5. CHARACTERISTICS (mainly Acts)

- (a) A 1:8 sets a broad pattern for the structure of Acts (cf Lk 24:47 link).
JER/JUDEA A 1-7
SAMARIA A 8
REST OF WORLD A 9-28
- (b) Two leading centres Jer and Antioch dominate the story and parallel to these are the two leading apostles, Peter and Paul.
Alternative Structure - Acts of Peter A 1-12
- Acts of Paul A 13-28.
- (c) Luke is obviously and necessarily selective in his coverage of the events:
- no mention of most of the twelve.
- no mention of church in Galilee.
- after A 8 no further mention of church in Samaria.
- from A 13 onwards focus shifts from Jer mother church to Antioch church.
- passing reference to planting of church in Egypt.
(key summaries 6:7, 9:31, 12:24, 16:5, 19:20, 28:30f).
- (d) Luke's record of early Christian preaching is also selective, mainly summary samples of messages in key and different situations.
Bruce suggests 4 categories: evangelistic (most)
deliberative (eg A 15)
apologetic (eg A 7)
hortatory (eg A 20 - Ephesian elders).
- (e) Role of Holy Spirit highlighted so that Acts is really the Acts of the HS (cf 4:8, 5:3, 10:19, 13:2, 9-11, 15:28, 16:6-10).

6. MATERIAL UNIQUE TO LUKE'S GOSPEL

(a) EARLY LIFE OF JESUS (1-2)

1. The birth of John the Baptist
2. The annunciation to Mary
3. The adoration of the shepherds
4. The circumcision of Jesus
5. The presentation of Jesus at the Temple
6. The visit to Jerusalem at age twelve

(b) EMPHASIS UPON WOMEN

1. Mary and Elizabeth (1:39-45)
2. The widow of Nain (7:11-17)
3. A sinful woman forgiven (7:36-50)
4. The women who supported Jesus (8:1-3)
5. Mary and Martha (10:38-42)
6. The woman healed on the Sabbath (13:10-17)

(c) EMPHASIS UPON OUTCASTS

1. The parable of the good Samaritan (10:23-37)
2. Ten lepers cleansed (17:11-19)
3. The parable of the Pharisee and the tax collector (18:8-14)
4. Zaccheus (19:1-10)

(d) EMPHASIS ON EVANGELISM

1. The calling of Simon (5:5-11)
2. The sinful woman forgiven (7:36-50)
3. The seventy two missionaries (10:1-12, 17-20)
4. Parables: The rich fool
 The lost coin } (14:28-33)
 The lost son }
5. The cost of being a disciple (14:28-33)
6. The rich man and Lazarus (16:19-31).

Paul's FIRST Letter to TIMOTHY

1. SITUATION

- (a) One of the 3 so called "Pastoral Letters", this being the most pastoral of the 3. (All 3 are addressed to individuals and are church orientated).
- (b) Assuming a fourth missionary journey after Rome, Paul is writing from Macedonia - AD 62 - to Timothy who is in Ephesus as overseer of the work there. (1 Tim 1:1-3).
- (c) Paul's return to Ephesus has been delayed so Paul writes a brief letter to clarify Timothy's tasks (3:14f, 4:13). He is, in fact, putting in writing, earlier verbal instructions when they were together in Ephesus.
- (d) Paul has found heretical tendencies growing in Asia/Macedonia/Achaia (recall Paul's prophecy A 20:29f) and so emphasizes the need to:
 - remain with sound (orthodox - apostolic) doctrine (1:4f, 15).
 - regularize church organization for stability (ch 3).
- (e) Luke suggested as amanuensis of all 3 letters (2 Tim 4:11) (Martin, Harrison, Moule).

2. PURPOSE

- (a) To encourage and strengthen Timothy because of his increased/extended responsibilities (1:18f).
- (b) To give further warning re false teachers in the church (4:1-3).
- (c) To give instruction re church organization and leadership (3:15, 5:22).

3. MAJOR ISSUES

- (a) Pauline authorship of the Pastorals has been challenged more than any other NT book. It is claimed:
 - the author emp formalized orthodoxy, sound doctrine and ἡ πίστις = THE FAITH, ie fixed content.
 - the ecclesiastical structure/ch offices are regularized and advanced, Tim, Titus are bishops reflecting a hierarchical even episcopalian polity.
 - the heresy is gnosticism of the second century.
 - cannot fit chronology into Acts.
 - Greek is higher quality Koiné and vocab and style of all 3 similar yet different from other Paulines.

Some therefore suggest - author used Pauline notes soon after Paul's death (Barrett, PN Harrison).
or - pseudonymous (Cullmann).

However the variations are sufficiently explained by Paul's and recipient's changed circumstances of AD 62+, the presence of advancing heresies in the East, Paul having learned Latin during 2 years in Rome and being older, and probable use of an amanuensis.

See full discussion, Carson, Moo and Morris, 359-371.

- (b) Paul's chronology in the Pastorals is virtually impossible to fit into Acts. This implies/necessitates his release AD 62 and a fourth missionary journey outside of Acts. This is challenged but:
- Paul expected to be released (Phlm 22, Phil 1:25).
 - Paul desired to return to the East in spite of his earlier plans to go to Spain (Phlm 22, Phil 1:25f, 2:24).
 - we do not know, from Acts, many of Paul's movements and happenings (2 Cor 11:23-27).

Fourth journey favoured by Gundry, Bruce, Martin, Harrison, Carson, Moo and Morris etc.

- (c) Nature of heresy in the East reflected in the Pastorals:
- Jewish (1 Tim 1:4, 7-10, 6:3-5, 20, Titus 1:10f, 14, 3:9, 2 Tim 2:14).
 - Gnostic (1 Tim 4:3f, 6:20, Titus 1:15).
 - Resurrection error (over-realized eschatology) (1 Tim 1:20, 4:1-3, 2 Tim 2:17ff).

The heresy is therefore of a syncretistic Jewish and pre-Christian gnostic type similar to the Colossian heresy. Interestingly however, Paul does not vigorously refute it as dangerous but calls for it to be clearly avoided, ignored as irrelevant; not get involved with, not waste time with (1 Tim 1:3f, 6, 4:6f, 6:4, 11, 20, Titus 1:9-11, 14, 3:9, 2 Tim 2:14-16, 23-26, 3:9).

4. MAIN TEACHING (+ themes)

- (a) The structure is very much that of a letter - no clear plan and a moving from one issue to the next as Paul's thoughts flow.

- (b) Strong focus on SOUND (ὡτιαννω or ὡτις) doctrine (9 x).
(1 Tim 1:10, 6:3, Titus 1:9, 13, 2:1, 2, 8, 2 Tim 1:13, 4:3).

- (c) Chapter 1

Paul begins with a warning against false teachers who mishandle the law. He reminds Timothy of his (Paul's) ministry experiences and his own (Tim's) responsibilities.

- (d) Chapters 2-4

Paul raises several matters of church worship and order. First Paul instructs re public prayer (2:1-8) and then the role of Christian women (2:9-15). The qualifications of overseers and deacons (3) is followed by further warnings against false doctrine and how to counter it (4).

- (e) Chapters 5-6

Paul moves on to Timothy's proper relationship with different age groups in the church esp widows and elders (5). Paul concludes with misc instructions and a personal charge to Timothy (6:11-16, 20f).

Paul's Letter to TITUS

1. SITUATION

- (a) One of the 3 so called "Pastoral Letters".
- (b) Situation similar to 1 Timothy and probably written soon after 1 Tim (Titus 1:1, 4). Titus is first mentioned in Gal 2:3 and see 2 Cor 8, 12:17-18. Church on Crete may have originated after Pentecost (A 2:11).
- (c) Paul has completed a missionary campaign in Crete and has left Titus there as overseer to consolidate the work. Paul has gone to Achaia and writes from Nicopolis (west coast) - AD 62 - to Titus regarding his work on the island and Paul expects Titus to join him shortly as Paul intends to remain in Nicopolis for the winter (AD 62/63) (Titus 1:4f, 3:12).

2. PURPOSE

- (a) To encourage Titus and clarify his tasks in Crete (1:5).
- (b) To warn re false teachers (1:10, 14, 3:9).
- (c) To call Titus to come to him shortly at Nicopolis (3:12).

3. MAJOR ISSUES

Authorship and chronology issues are covered in the discussion of 1 Tim. The heresy encountered on Crete seems to be the same as or related to that in Asia and therefore in Ephesus and 1 Tim.

4. MAIN TEACHING

- (a) The content has considerable parallels with that of 1 Timothy. There is a strongly doctrinal section as the basis of Paul's instructions in Titus 2:11 - 3:7.
- (b) Paul elaborates on the appointment and qualifications of overseers (elders) (1:5-9) and warns re the false teachers (1:10-16). The outline of the duties of various age groups in the church (2) then brings Paul to concluding comments (3:8-15).

Paul's SECOND Letter to TIMOTHY

1. SITUATION

- (a) One of the 3 so called "Pastoral Letters".
- (b) This is a very personal letter from Paul to Timothy (2 Tim 1:1f) and also sounds like a "last will and testament". This is Paul's last letter.
- (c) Paul is (again) in prison, presumably in Rome (AD 63/64) and writing to Timothy who is (still) in Ephesus - 2 Tim 1:2, 15-17, 4:11-13, 19-21).
- (d) Assuming Paul had a fourth missionary journey (AD 62-63) and had:
 - stopped at Miletus, leaving Trophimus there (sick) (4:20).
 - visited Troas where he left a cloak and some parchments (4:13).Paul then travelled via Corinth (back) to Rome (2 Tim 4:13, 20).
- (e) Paul is now - end of AD 63 or early AD 64 - under tighter arrest than previously (1:8, 15-18, 2:9):
 - Luke is there (4:11).
 - some others are with Paul (4:21).
 - but Demas has deserted him (4:10).
 - Titus has gone to Dalmatia (4:10).
- (f) Paul has had his first defense where he was abandoned by his friends and the results were inconclusive (4:16 f).
- (g) Paul's second defense is imminent (4:6-8, 17f). He is convinced the results will be less favourable. He expects to die soon. He yearns for Timothy to join him ASAP (4:9, 11, 21).
- (h) Luke suggested as amanuensis (2 Tim 4:11). The Pastorals are the closest to Luke/Acts in NT and note 2 Tim 4:7 - A 20:24. (Martin, Harrison, Moule).
- (i) Did Timothy arrive, imprisoned and later released (Heb 13:23)?

2. PURPOSE

- (a) To encourage Timothy in his work (1:6-8, 13f).
- (b) To commission Timothy to carry on Paul's work (2:1ff, 3:14, 4:1ff).
- (c) To call Timothy and Mark to join him urgently (4:9, 11, 21).

3. MAJOR ISSUES

- (a) Authorship and heresy details are covered in the discussion of 1 Tim.
- (b) That Paul had a second imprisonment in Rome is contested by Martin and others. However others support its tenuous probability:
 - Gundry suggesting it for 63/64 and Paul's death before the fire of Rome.
 - Harrison suggesting before or after fire so death end AD 63 or AD 66/67.
 - Bruce includes Spanish mission and death soon after fire of Rome AD 65 or 68.
 - Carson, Moo and Morris suggest mid 60's, AD 64-66.

4. MAIN TEACHING

Paul's further and final directions to Timothy remind him of God's call, enabling and Paul's example. Paul draws comparisons with the hard work and discipline of soldiers, athletes and farmers. Paul continues to warn against heretical teaching and inevitable persecution. He concludes with a final charge and personal news and requests.

Peter's FIRST Letter

1. SITUATION

- (a) Peter is in Rome (again?). (1 Pet 1:1, 5:13 - Babylon prob = Rome, note Rev 14:8, 16:19, 17:5, 18:2). John Mark is with him (note John Mark with Paul in Phlm 24, Col 4:10 and again later in 2 Tim 4:11). Silvanus (shortened form = Silas) also with Peter (1 Pet 5:12) (note Silas with Paul 1 Thess 1:1, 2 Thess 1:1, 2 Cor 1:19 and Acts).
- (b) If Peter is writing AD 63/64, Paul may still be away on his fourth missionary journey and John Mark has remained in Rome writing/having written his GOSPEL and is now with Peter. Alternatively Paul has now been martyred in Rome. Mark and Silvanus therefore turn to assist Peter.
- (c) Written to the churches of Asia Minor in 4 Roman Provinces all north of TAURUS mountains (1:1).
- These churches are a Jewish/Gentile mix (1:1, 14, 18, 2:10, 12, 4:3). Who founded them is unknown. No evidence Paul ministered there (except North Galatian theory) and Peter does not seem to know them personally (1:12).
- (d) With the expectation of rising persecution Peter writes:
- James was executed in Jerusalem AD 62.
 - Paul may already have been martyred.
 - Nero's imminent persecutions in Rome will begin in late AD 64/early AD 65.
 - actual local persecution is already occurring in a general (not official) manner in the Eastern provinces (2:11f, 3:9-17, 4:1, 12-19, 5:10).
- (e) Silvanus is Peter's amanuensis (5:12). (*δια Σιλουανου*) (but note 2 Pet 3:1).
- Jew, Roman citizen, prophet (A 15:22, 27, 32, 34, 16:19, 25, 29, 17:4, 10, 14-15, 18:5).
 - Companion of Paul may explain Paulinisms in letter.
 - Highest quality Greek in NT (62 *ἀλ*).

2. PURPOSE

- (a) To counsel, encourage, strengthen believers (who are suffering persecution) (1:6-7, 3:13-17, 5:12). He gives practical advice on how to live both within the ch and outside in the world.
- (b) To prepare for imminent greater persecution (4:12-19, 5:9f). He does this by enunciating principles and by seeking to engender attitudes of patience and hope.
- (c) The conversion of non-believers is a main concern of Peter also, hence his exhortation on Christian obedience, submission and godly living (2:12, 15-17, 3:8-13, 15f).

3. MAJOR ISSUES

- (a) Authorship by Peter is strongly challenged on the following grounds:
- linguistic, the Greek is of too high a standard.
 - historical situation, Christianity is now a crime against the State and that did not occur until the end of the first century.
 - literary and theological affinities with Paul.

However most problems are explained by Peter's use of Silvanus and the lack of official persecution terms used in the letter meaning the persecution is not formal from Rome throughout the Empire but local at this stage (from neighbours, local populace). (Martin, Harrison, Gundry, Kelly, Carson, Moo and Morris) (note 2:13-17, 3:13 gov still seen as protector).

Bruce is not so happy with such a large role for Silvanus and Guthrie does not discount him but has strong reservations about his role as a sufficient explanation for the difficulties.

- (b) Some argue Peter used a variety of sources - catechetical, liturgical and homiletical - even fragments of early Christian hymns (1:3-12, 2:4-8, 21-25, 3:18-22).
- (c) Others find 2 letters because of a doxology at 4:11 and a purported change of emphasis, style and urgency between the 2 halves. However while there may have been 2 stages in writing or new info after 4:11 was written, Peter may simply be repeating because of the urgency of the situation.
- (d) Others find 1 Pet to be a baptismal liturgy in spite of the fact that baptism is only mentioned 3:21 and then in parenthesis.

4. MAIN TEACHING + themes

- (a) The letter is very much more a sermon than a letter and may well reflect Peter's preaching style. There are few personal references. Peter seems to deliberately balance letter and sermon aspects, teaching and practical content, doctrine and exhortation to respond.
- (b) Peter's method is hortatory throughout but with fundamental doctrine at the foundation and as the motivation for response and action. Peter powerfully demonstrates:
- the indissoluble link between doctrine and practice.
 - the need to base all obedience on a thorough understanding of what Christ has done and why.
- (c) OT quotations (approx 18) and allusions (some 31) abound - mainly LXX.
- (d) There are several significant themes - suffering ($\pi\alpha\sigma\chi\omega$ 11 x), submission ($\��ποτασσω$ 6 x), hope (of glory) and judgment. Christology is very comprehensive.
- (e) Chapters 1:1 - 2:3

Peter outlines the character of salvation (1:1-12) and then the response, the new life that issues from it.

(f) Chapter 2:4 - 3:12

Peter outlines our corporate identity as living stones and the people of God (2:4-10). Then he calls for our response of submission in all areas of life following the supreme example of Christ's submission (2:11 - 3:12).

(g) Chapters 3:13 - 4:19

Christ's suffering and its consequences call us to face suffering with patience and hope.

(h) Chapter 5

Peter gives concluding exhortations mainly of a corporate nature.

Peter's SECOND Letter

1. SITUATION

- (a) Peter is writing from the same place (Rome) to the same people - Christians in Asia Minor (2 Pet 1:1, 3:1), Jew/Gentile (cf 1:4, 3:2). He writes soon after 1 Pet (2 Pet 3:1). He writes after most/all Paulines written (2 Pet 3:16).
- (b) This is Peter's "last will and testament" more than a letter. It is a serious, hastily written personal document written just before his death (2 Pet 1:13-15). If Peter was martyred by Nero, with Paul or soon after, then he is writing late AD 64 or early AD 65.
- (c) The Greek of 2 Pet is very different to 1 Pet. Silvanus has presumably left to deliver 1 Pet to the churches (1 Pet 5:12) so Peter is either writing with his own hand or using a different amanuensis..
- (d) There seems to be a dramatic change of circumstances between 1 Pet and 2 Pet producing a heightened urgency in the tone of the letter, in Peter's exhortations and warnings:
 - Peter may have received news of heretical teachers now in Asia Minor affecting the believers and endangering their witness (2 Pet 2:1ff).
 - The situation in Rome may have intensified and worsened (the fire of Rome - Nero's persecutions).
- (e) 2 Pet, it seems, was the last to be included in the canon. It was regarded as second class by Luther, rejected by Erasmus and hesitantly included by Calvin. Today Käsemann says it is the most problematical book in the NT.

2. PURPOSE

- (a) To remind the readers of certain essentials that they may retain after he has gone (1:12-15, 3:1-2) (1:14 may recall Jn 21:19 and 1:15 may refer to a copy of Mark's Gospel being sent to Asia Minor for them).
- (b) To earnestly exhort them to faith and obedience in the context of persecution and in the light of the end of all things (1:5-11, 19-21, 3:11, 14).
- (c) To give strong and urgent warnings and polemic against false teaching and false teachers who are affecting the believers, now and in the future (1:9f, Ch 2 [esp 2:10f], 3:17).

3. MAJOR ISSUES

- (a) Authorship and date are seriously challenged because 2 Pet is so different to 1 Pet, in language and thought. (2 Pet has proportionally more ἁλ than any other NT book (57), 32 of which are not even in LXX.) 2 Pet is also very similar to Jude. 1 Pet has polished, cultured, high quality Greek. 2 Pet is more verbose, cumbersome and lower quality. The problem is reduced or cancelled if Peter used different amanuenses or even wrote 2 Pet himself. So Gundry, Carson, Moo and Morris.

- Harrison is non-committal.
- Martin suggests it is a Petrine scribe, based on apostolic teaching he has inherited.
- Bauckham accepts the letter is pseudonymous and that the original readers must have expected it to be fictional.

- (b) The heresy influencing the churches seems to be an early form of gnosticism similar to that existing in other parts of Asia Minor and attacked by Paul in Colossae and earlier in Corinth.

The teachers seem to be superior (2:1f, 10, 18), deny the lordship of Christ (2:1), reject the law and are immoral (2:10, 12ff, 18ff) and ridicule or reject the parousia (3:3ff). They have "arrived" already.

Note similar problems refuted later in the Johannine literature.

- (c) If 2 Pet 3:1 does not refer to 1 Pet (ie lost letter) then 2 Pet does not have to be addressed to the same churches as 1 Pet. 2 Pet 1:1 implies a general audience. Indeed 1:16, 3:15f implies readers know Peter. Asia Minor still seems the best general destination.
- (d) The close connection between 2 Pet and Jude (no less than 15 (and poss 19) of Jude's 25 verses appear in whole or part in 2 Pet) may mean Jude used 2 Pet as a base for his writing. (Jude prob written after 2 Pet because the situation is worse there.) (So Gundry [Harrison].)

Green argues for a common source for both.

Carson, Moo and Morris consider there is insufficient information to decide which came first, only that there is a connection.

- (e) Käsemann finds an 'early catholicism' in 2 Pet, an institutionalizing of eschatology in the hands of the church. Childs (who accepts the letter is pseudonymous) suggests 2 Pet shows how the apostolic tradition was rendered into scripture.

4. MAIN TEACHING (+ themes)

- (a) The main emphasis is "true knowledge" ($\epsilon\pi\iota\gamma\gamma\omega\sigma\iota\varsigma$ - [4 x] 1:2, 3, 8, 2:20 and note 1:5, 3:18), ie that of Christian belief in opposition to false teaching.
- (b) While 1 Pet focusses on the hope of glory to be revealed, 2 Pet focusses on the hope of Christ's return ($\pi\alpha\rho\omicron\upsilon\sigma\iota\alpha$ - [3 x] 1:16, 3:4, 12) ie expectation compared with denial of parousia by the false teachers.
- (c) Chapter 1

Peter exhorts his readers to cultivate the true knowledge of God in Christ (1:1-11). This knowledge is validated by eyewitnesses and by the OT prophetic revelation (1:12-21).

(d) Chapter 2

Peter now warns against a false revelation, false prophets, false knowledge. As in OT times, God will suddenly judge the false and deliver the faithful (2:1-9). The practices of the false prophets are described (2:10-22).

(e) Chapter 3

Peter continues to warn the false teachers (3:1-13) and concludes with an exhortation for diligence in godliness and in knowledge of Christ (3:14-18).

MATTHEW'S GOSPEL

1. SITUATION

- (a) Written by Matthew (Levi) the Tax Collector (presumably).
Hints seen in - organizational skill - eg 3, 5, 7.
 - only gospel to record Jesus paying Temple tax (17:24-27).
 - call of Levi uses 'Matthew' compared with Levi in the other gospels.
- (b) Written (perhaps) from Antioch (Syrian) or Palestine (Syrian region).
- (c) Written esp to Jews in Syria.
- (d) Written in 60's - prob written after Mark which it uses as a source.
 - prob written before AD 70 (Gundry, Carson, Moo and Morris) but Harrison suggests 70-80 and after Mk and Lk.

2. PURPOSE

- (a) To evangelize Jews by presenting gospel (and confirming Jewish believers in their faith in Jesus as the Messiah).
- (b) Apologetic to Jews - esp seen in Nativity and other inclusions (Guthrie). Mt appears to want to counter Jewish charges re Jesus' illegitimate birth - that he learned magical arts in Egypt - that he came from Nazareth compared with Bethlehem. He is also the only one to mention the source of the story and charge that the disciples stole the body (28:11-15) - all these help remove barriers to seeing Jesus as Messiah.
- (c) Catechetical manual for new converts or teaching manual for ch leaders.
- (d) Liturgical and homiletical readings in early church services.

Both (c) and (d) are seen from Mt's structure (see below).

- (e) Pastoral concern for Hellenistic Jewish believers and Gentile believers in the church on 2 levels:
 - moral laxity, ethical indifference esp of Gentile believers - hence call to ethical righteousness.
 - call to remember and not reject Jewish heritage and origins (Martin).
- (f) Emphasize the continuity of salvation history from OT to NT and beyond.

3. MAJOR ISSUES

- (a) Matthew's Gospel has been seen as a:
 - community project (Kilpatrick, Stendahl, Schille).
 - editorial theologian's work (Bornkamm).
 - midrashic composition (Gundry).
 - eyewitness deposit (Matthew).

- (b) Apostolic authorship is challenged from a range of perspectives relating to the development of the gospel tradition, shape of church history in first century and the purported lateness and theological development of Mt. None of the arguments are final or necessarily persuasive.

4. CHARACTERISTICS

- (a) Focus on Jesus "the Messiah" and "Son of David" (8 x). (The Kingship of Christ is set forth.)

The gospel is esp for a Jewish audience:

1. Jew "first" is clear message - 10:5f, 23, 15:21-28.
2. Genealogy starts with Abraham.
3. God is "F in heaven" 15 x (compare 1 x Mk, none Lk).
4. K of G is 'Kingdom of heaven' in Mt.
5. More restricted outlook reflecting Jewish Christianity (note 10:5f, 15:24, wise and foolish, piety, proselytizing).
6. Concept of righteousness attributed to Jesus 6x (Mk and Lk not mention).

This particularism balanced by universal outlook in several places also (cf 2:1-12, 4:15, 8:5-13, 12:18, 21, 13:38, 21:43, 28:19-20).

- (b) Son of God title is also significant. Key verses 1:1, 4:17, 16:21 and note 11:25-27. There is also an inclusive link between 1:23 and 28:20 - Emmanuel - God with us.

- (c) Christianity as the consummation/fulfillment of the old covenant is a major interest.

The OT is quoted 41 x, 37 of which are intro by "that it might be fulfilled". Mt uses LXX (mainly) and Heb. A great interest therefore in the connection between Jesus and the OT (heritage and fulfillment).

12 x fulfilled prophecies 1:23, 2:6, 15, 18, 23, 3:3, 4:15-16, 8:17, 12:18-20, 13:35, 21:5, 26:56.

- (d) The continuity between old and new is further emphasized when the church is presented as the new people of God (ἐκκλησία 16:18, 18:17). This is unique to Mt.

- (e) Mt also shows considerable interest in the authority of the LAW:
- Jesus is the new greater Moses who delivers the Law on the mountain (Mt 5-7), and in 5 discourses like the Pentateuch and emp the rest of Joshua (11:28). Note "But I say to you ..." (5:21, 27, 31, 33, 38, 43) and note 5:17-20.
 - many exhortations to do/obey the will of God.

- (f) Mt shows more interest in Jesus' teaching than his actions - and esp emp Jesus' teaching on the Kingdom (all parables are K parables). In fact Mt's STRUCTURE is very clear, basically parallel to the other synoptics but with a regular alternation between narrative and discourse.

STRUCTURE:

PREPARATION 1:1 - 4:11

GALILEAN MINISTRY 4:12 - 18:35

JOURNEY TO JERUSALEM 19:1 - 20:34

JERUSALEM AND THE PASSION/RES 21:1 - 28:20.

Note Mt's 5 lengthy DISCOURSES 5-7, 10, 13, 18, 23-25.

- (g) Concise style, more simplified life settings than Mark.
- (h) Tendency to group similar events/sayings in groups of 3, 5 or 7.
- (i) Strong eschatological interest - esp Mt 24-25 + certain parables.
- (j) Jewish rejection of Jesus (and therefore a special focus on blame) is highlighted in Matthew. Not just 'crucify him' but unique ref to blood-guilt 27:25.

5. MATERIAL UNIQUE TO MATTHEW (ie new insights in common material as well as totally unique material).

Annunciation of Jesus' birth to Joseph (1:18-25).

The Wise Men (2:1-12).

The flight to Egypt and return (2:13-23).

Matters relating to Jewish Law and Custom. (Sermon on the Mount):

The law, murder, oaths, almsgiving, fasting, trusting the Father, prayer, entrance by the narrow gate (chs 5-7).

Jesus spoke with authority (7:28-29).

The healing of the blind and dumb (9:27-34).

The great harvest (9:35-38).

The way of a disciple (10:16-42).

The call to discipleship (11:25-30).

Parables:

Tares, hidden treasure, pearl of great price, dragnet, treasures old and new (Ch 13).

Peter's great confession (16:13-20).

Forgiveness (18:15-22).

Parables:

The unforgiving servant, the vineyard workers, the two sons (18:23ff, 20:1-16, 21:28-32).

Denunciation of external spirituality (23:8-12).

Condemnation of scribes and Pharisees (23:13-39).

Parables:

The wise and wicked servants, the ten virgins, the sheep and goats (ch 25).

The death of Judas (27:3-10).

The guard at the tomb (27:11-15).

The great commission (28:16-20).

The Letter to the HEBREWS

1. SITUATION

- (a) Authorship is unknown - various suggestions. Unlikely to have been Paul (on grounds of sources, vocab, style, theology and anonymous and compare 2:3 with Gal 1:11-12). Possibly Barnabas, Luke, Priscilla (and Aquilla), Silas. Several commentators favour APOLLOS (Luther, Harrison, Bruce, [Gundry]).

Origen, "Who wrote it, God only knows with certainty." (Guthrie agrees and Carson, Moo and Morris suggest a Hellenistic Jewish Christian of good education.)

- (b) Date is unknown.
- had to be before AD 96 since Clement of Rome quotes it.
 - also probably before AD 70 because sacrifices mentioned (though not those of Temple but rather Tabernacle) and 10:25 could imply destruction is near. Also mention of end of Temple would have added to his argument.
 - 10:32-34 could refer to AD 49 expulsion of Jews from Rome by Claudius (A 18:2).
 - 12:3f implies imminent suffering (before, during, after Nero's persecution AD 64?)
 - 2:3, 13:7 implies not young church - the second generation of Christians?
 - 13:23 may refer to Paul's companion, Timothy, and therefore in his lifetime.

Date in 60's seems best (Guthrie, Carson, Moo and Morris: before AD 70, Bruce: before AD 64).

- (c) Where written from is also unknown.
- If Paul - then Rome (13:24).
If Apollos - then Alexandria (Bruce). Alexandrian affinities in outlook, vocab, style and thought - some parallels with Philo (Platonic), Alexandrian book of Wisdom, 4 Macc, Alex Judaism (note 8:2, 9:11, 23f) and Stephen's speech Acts 7.

- (d) Written to Jewish Christians, but where? Destination could be Jer, Alex, Antioch, Caesarea, Corinth, Lycus Valley. Most argue for Jewish Christians in ROME (13:23f). (See Carson, Moo and Morris, 400-404.)

- (e) So, Hebrews reminds us of Job and Melchizedek - no historical connections and lineage.

- (f) High, literary quality Greek, saturated in OT quotations (LXX) and allusions (29 quotes, around 70 allusions). Not really a letter but a sermon or homily (except ch 13 cf 13:22).

- (g) Difficulty being accepted into the canon until 4th century when Jerome/Augustine affirm Pauline authorship.

2. PURPOSE

- (a) Exhortation (13:22) to Christian community which had started well but was not going on. Call to persevere, call to maturity (5:11-14, 6:1-3, 10, 10:32-34).
- (b) Clear warning against - sluggishness, degeneration (2:1, 3, 5:11-14, 6:12).
 - isolation (10:25).
 - distraction from truth (3:12, 13:9).
- (c) Specific rebuke against danger of "apostasy" - in particular holding on to or going back to Judaism (13:13f).
- (d) Preparation for greater suffering (12:4).

3. MAJOR ISSUES

- (a) OCCASION for writing letter is difficult to decide and this, linked with destination, considerably affects the interpretation of chapters 6 and 10.
 - 1. Old view (Westcott) - Jewish Christian community (poss in Palestine but see 2:3) disillusioned with their new faith, missed Temple, confused by majority of Jews rejecting Jesus as Messiah and delay of parousia, facing persecution from Rome because no longer under the umbrella of Judaism - or - heard patriotic call to help in crisis in Jer - so in danger of real apostasy (6:4-8, 10:26-31, 35-39, 12:14-19) back to Judaism (13:13).
 - 2. Newer view (Manson [1951], Gundry, Bruce, Harrison, etc) - small specific community of Jewish Christians (Hellenistic), house ch in Rome (10:32-34), withdrawing from rest of Christian community and wanting to maintain Christianity as a sect of Judaism, resistant to Gentile mission, tempted to return to the synagogue - not direct apostasy but wanting to hold on to Judaism (10:25, 13:9, 13, 17, 23f) - author therefore argues finality of Christ and urges break with Judaism. Carson, Moo and Morris suggest the readers are turning to a form of 'Jewish Christianity' more conservative than the author approves and what in fact ends up being no Christianity at all.
- (b) STRUCTURE

The book has a strong doctrinal component with the central theme the superiority of Christ. (ἰε κρείσσον - 'better' - key word - 1:4, 6:9, 7:7, 19, 22, 8:6, 9:23, 10:34, 11:16, 35, 40). The carefully argued discourse is interlaced with 5 hortatory sections: 2:1-4; 3:7-4:16; 5:11-6:20; 10:19-39; 12:1-29 all of which contain injunctions and warnings and exhortations. (παρακλήσις - 'exhortation' - key word 13:22).

4. MAIN TEACHING (+ themes)

- (a) The high priestly work of Christ is the fundamental theme - his superiority, supremacy, sufficiency; and the finality of the new over the old order. (20 titles and names of Jesus esp Son [12 x] and Priest-King). Note the humanity of Jesus (10 x) and 2:14, 17f, 3:2, 4:15, 5:7-9, 13:12.

Other key themes are perfection, Sabbath-rest (Heb 4) and faith (Heb 11).

- (b) Author demonstrates necessity to integrate theology and response - with real warnings re dangers of being content, settled.

- (c) Chapters 1 - 2

The Son is introduced as superior to the OT prophets and to angels. His superiority is not cancelled by his incarnation nor marred by his redemptive work.

- (d) Chapters 3:1 - 4:13

The Son is superior to Moses, a servant in God's household, and to Joshua who brought temporary rest.

- (e) Chapters 4:14 - 10:18

The Son is superior to the OT Aaronic priesthood. As a priest he is superior, being patterned after Melchizedek. The new covenant replaces the old obsolete covenant. The heavenly sanctuary supersedes the earthly copy. His sacrifice is once for all of himself compared with the repeated sacrifice of animals.

- (f) Chapters 10:19 - 13:25

Concludes with exhortations and admonitions all centered around the superior way of faith, the heroes of faith, the value of discipline and practical expression.

The Letter of JUDE

1. SITUATION

(a) Author is Jude (Judas)

- brother of James (Jude 1) presumably James the Just (Leader of Jer ch) (that the author is not an apostle is clear from Jude 1, 17, 18).
- therefore brother of Jesus cf Matt 13:55, Mk 6:3 (which implies a younger brother than James).
- poss mentioned by Paul 1 Cor 9:5 as an itinerant missionary.

(b) Written in 60's or 70's (Gundry, Carson, Moo and Morris; Harrison favours before AD 70).

- late enough for heretics to have made further (serious) inroads into church.
- Jude 3 parallels the Pastorals in emp on "the Faith".
- close association with 2 Pet but not literary dependence (cf Jude 12f - 2 Pet 2:17 etc) (perhaps 2 Pet written first then Jude because false teachers appear to be in greater number now).

(c) Written from unknown location to Christians everywhere (Jude 1), Gentile and Jew (however some suggest - written to Jewish Christians around ANTIOCH (Jude 3), after James' death when Jude assumed the leadership of the dispersed Christian Jews).

(d) Some trouble with acceptance in the canon because non-apostolic and quotes an extra-biblical source (1 Enoch).

2. PURPOSE

(a) Warning (Jude 3f) against false teachers in the church who:

- threaten well being of ch.
- face divine judgment.

Heresy is of a gnostic type incorporating a rejection of authority and antinomianism (Jude 4, 8, 19). So some parallels with problems in Corinth and Rev 2:14-15, 20, 24.

(b) Exhortation to fight for the truth of the gospel (Jude 20-23).

3. MAJOR ISSUES

Jude 9 seems to be referring to the book - the Assumption of Moses. Jude 14f quotes from the Apocalypse of Enoch (1 Enoch).

Both these books are part of the OT PSEUDEPIGRAPHA.

While some may be surprised by this note A 17:28, 1 Cor 10:4, 15:33, Tit 1:12, 2 Tim 3:8 for other non-canonical quotes.

4. MAIN TEACHING

Jude vividly describes both the wickedness of the false teachers and their impending doom. He reinforces his argument with examples of divine judgment from the past - Israel, fallen angels, Sodom and Gomorrah. The readers are exhorted to resist these false teachers.

JOHN'S GOSPEL

1. SITUATION

- (a) Jn 21:24 implies Beloved Disciple (BD) is author. By a process of elimination this is the apostle John as he is not mentioned at all throughout the gospel (cf BD in 13:23-25, 19:25-27, 20:2-10, 21:20-24).

However - most modern scholarship rejects the identification of author with BD (Cullmann says BD is author but outside the 12 and unnamed).

- (b) That John is writing from Ephesus some time after AD 70 is also problematic - but best fits with the traditions, with no mention of Jer, with the church now separate from Judaism and the phrase "the Jews" (71x) used frequently by John and best fits the heresies that developed later in Asia Minor and are refuted in John's writings. Carson, Moo and Morris tentatively suggest AD 80-85.
- (c) Written to Christians and non-Christians in Asia Minor. This Gospel is esp relevant to the Hellenistic mind-set (Jew and Gentile) - note Prologue 1:1-18 and characteristic dualism in phraseology (light-darkness, life-death etc).
- (d) Slow reception into canon because used (misused) initially by gnostics and other heretics.

2. PURPOSES

- (a) Clear evangelistic purpose (20:30f) to call readers to believe in Jesus as the Christ and S of G leading to E.L. The structure, with 7 signs as pointers, is intended to authenticate and attest Jesus as the Messiah and so evoke a faith-response.
- (b) To confirm and strengthen the believing community against various pressures esp Jewish and theological (20:31 MSS variation).
- (c) To proclaim the private and Judean teaching of Jesus (and to expose the secret of his person).
- (d) To present a Hellenized version of the Christ appropriate for intellectual pagans (Dodd), diaspora Jews and Jewish proselytes (Carson, Moo and Morris).
- (e) To provide a polemic:
1. against unbelieving Jews (Palestinian) and so appeal to diaspora Jews not to refuse Jesus (note 'the Jews' 71 x and 9:22, 34, 12:42, 16:2) (Schnackenburg, Robinson, Martin). Even calling Jewish Christians to break with Judaism and openly confess Jesus (Painter). So the occasion is the expulsion of Jewish believers from the synagogue near the end of the first century (Beasley-Murray, Dunn, Pryor).
 2. against a Baptist cult like A 19:1-7 (Stauffer) (note 1:7-9, 30, 35-42, 3:30). So John emp the superiority of Jesus to JB.
 3. against ecclesiastical problems in the church esp sacramentalism (note 3:5, ch 6) (Cullmann).
 4. against church eschatology esp the delay of the parousia (Barrett).
 5. against early gnostic teaching with docetic elements (1:14, 6:51, 53-56, 19:34 f) (Lindars, Kümmel).

- (f) To complement/supplement the contribution of the synoptics (see below).

3. MAJOR ISSUES

- (a) Authorship of the Johannine literature is problematic as two are anonymous, 2 and 3 Jn refer to the elder and Rev 1:1 refers to John (the seer of Patmos).

Some seriously suggest a Johannine circle or school of associates who continue the apostle John's emphases for decades after his death (Bruce, Cullmann, Painter, Beasley-Murray, Pryor etc).

- (b) Comparison with the Synoptics

While there is broad agreement in outline with the synoptics there is only 10% overlap in content.

The differences can be put into 5 categories:

1. selection of material - John omits so many basic events and adds so many new stories.
2. theological differences - JB is not Elijah (1:21), Jesus is Messiah in chap 1, arrival of HS (20:22).
3. apparent chronological differences - 3 passovers, date LS, hour of crucifixion.
4. apparent historical discrepancies 7:52, 9:22, 11:45-53.
5. differences of style.

- (c) Relationship with the Synoptics

Opinions vary as to whether John knew of Mark's gospel and probably Luke (cf 1:40, 3:24 - so Barrett), completely independent of synoptics (Robinson, Martin) or some common shared source with the synoptics (Morris - interlocking traditions).

Then some argue John's intention was to correct and replace the synoptics or to reformulate and reinterpret the synoptics. Better, John wrote to supplement them (Morris, Gundry etc) (eg 6:15, 11:47ff, 12:17, 14:13f, 15:7).

- (d) The historical reliability of John's Gospel has been seriously questioned for 200 years because it is so different. Its integrity has been re-established with recent archaeology in Palestine, with further research into JB, and with the discovery of the DSS in 1945. These writings have a similar ethos to John's. Some still doubt John 6, 9:22 and 14-16.

- (e) Textual problems:

1. 7:53-8:11 represents a genuine tradition but is not original.
2. 21 is variously regarded as a later addition (Martin), authentic but later redaction or part of the original work.

4. CHARACTERISTICS

- (a) John's Gospel is "the spiritual gospel" (Clement of Alex). It presents the earthly Jesus in the perspective of eternity (Hunter).

- (b) Christology is central - Jesus is pre-existent Son (of God), S of M, logos, messiah. Also 7 x "I am" sayings and 8:58. His true humanity is also emp (see 4:6f, 11:35, 19:28).
- (c) Jesus is greater than:
 - the Torah (1:17)
 - the Temple (2:19-21)
 - the shekinah glory (1:14)
 - the Feasts (7:37-39)
 Jesus accepts worship (9:38, 20:28).
- (d) Salvation is a key theme, glory and glorification are related emphases, eschatology is balanced (realized and futuristic) and the Holy Spirit is the Paraclete.
- (e) Written with a Hellenistic mind-set in view (Jew and Gentile).
- (f) Many abstract themes - light, love, life, truth, know, believe, a characteristic dualism and double meanings.
- (g) Characteristic style - simple, limited vocab, repetitive, frequent use of οὐν, ἵνα, καί, great detail, profound.
- (h) Style of author matches style of Jesus.
- (i) Slight variations in words or order almost everytime John repeats a statement.
- (j) A focus on Jesus' teaching (esp private with disciples and formal disputes with the scribes) more than in synoptics (with the multitudes).
- (k) A focus on Jesus in Judea and Jerusalem (compared with Galilee). Note Jesus' attendance at Jewish Feast days 2:23, 5:1, 6:4, 7:2, 10:22, 13:1.
- (l) Concentration on extended discourses, signs (7) compared with miracles, extended metaphors (vine) compared with parables, and the Father more than the K of G. (F:100 x Jn, 31 x Mt, 4 x Lk, 3 x Mk) (K:2 x Jn).
- (m) Emphasis on Jesus' unique relationship with the F and his self consciousness.
- (n) Unhurried atmosphere, lack of movement compared with Mark.
- (o) Extended interest in individuals with Jesus - disciples (1), Nicodemus (3), Samaritan woman (4), man born blind (9), Mary and Martha (11), Mary Magdalene (20).
- (p) ἀμην x 2 in John.
- (q) Simple overall structure (C H Dodd):
 - PROLOGUE 1:1-18
 - BOOK OF WITNESS 1:19-51
 - BOOK OF SIGNS (7) 2-12
 - BOOK OF THE PASSION 13 - 21
 (The 7 signs - 2:1-11, 4:46-54, 5:2-9, 6:1-14, 6:16-21, 9:1-7, 11:1-44).

JOHN'S LETTERS

1. Written from Ephesus (?) by the aged apostle John (note 1 Jn 1:1-4, 4:14 and his use of "little children"), who is also the elder (2 Jn 1, 3 Jn 1).
2. Written somewhere between AD 60-90 (Marshall), 80's or early 90's (Gundry, Carson, Moo and Morris), 70's or early 80's (Albright).

1 JOHN

1. SITUATION

- (a) Written to churches near Ephesus.
- (b) The times are different; no mention of Jew/Gentile tension, no external persecution of the ch.
- (c) A crisis has occurred and a heretical group has arisen within the ch and has left the ch. Now they are harassing the ch (2:19). There is much debate, undermining of confidence of the believers and uncertainty re true doctrine and life. Situation serious.
- (d) Pastoral letter with profound finality.

2. PURPOSE

- (a) First pastoral - to deepen faith of believers (1:3f, 2:1, 5:13) - hence emp on EVIDENCES (not tests) to confirm faith:
 - going on believing (5:1)
 - love (4:7)
 - righteousness (obedience) (2:28).
- (b) Polemic (2:26, 3:7) - against false teachers (and also to warn and refute them). John also exhorts readers to remain with orthodox faith (2:24).
- (c) Some suggest also polemic against wrong interp of John's Gospel - hence to insist his Gospel must be hebraically and not gnostically understood.

3. MAJOR ISSUES

- (a) Difficult to find a clear structure in the letter. Many suggestions. Better to see a series of paragraphs, connected via various themes/ideas which develop from one paragraph to the next (Marshall).

Schnackenburg, Carson, Moo and Morris suggest three sections (excluding introduction and conclusion):

1:5-2:17 Fellowship with God as walking in the Light

2:18-3:24 The present situation of the church

4:1-5:12 Those who belong to God. •

- (b) The nature of the heresy besetting the church (note 1:6-10, 2:4, 9, 18-22, 4:1-4). Many suggestions. It is an early pre-gnostic heresy with some docetic elements. It could be the brand of Cerinthus who argued against the real incarnation of the S of G in Jesus (therefore docetic), viewed the Christ or S of G as temporarily indwelling Jesus, and emp an elite, superior, exclusivism and so lacked love.
- (c) Note John's method - not a negative denouncing of wrongs, but he refutes error by an exposition of the truth - using the same phrases as the heretics but put into their true context and meaning.

4. MAIN TEACHING (+ themes)

- (a) The tone of the letter is one of profound simplicity, majesty of thought, finality of message and authority of author.
- (b) God is proclaimed as Father (1:2f) Light (1:5) Love (4:8, 16).
- (c) Characteristic dualism of light and darkness, truth and falsehood, love and hate, life and death. Man is in one of two camps, children of the devil or children of God (3:8-10).
- (d) Strong themes - bone of God, truth, E.L., faith, righteousness.
- (e) Central theme is Christian Certainty. Because we know Him, we know we have EL (2:5, 20, 5:13, 18-20) (Stott).
- (f) Tests of orthodoxy elaborated and centred in the historical man Jesus, the Christ and Son of God (2:22f, 4:2f, 15).
- (g) John's message is a strong note of encouragement and affirmation to believers, confirming who they are because of who they know (2:5). He emp that because they have believed the apostolic witness, they are born of God (1:1-5, 5:1, 13). Now being born of God issues in continuing to believe (5:1), love (for God and one another) (4:7, 16, 20f, 5:2), righteousness (2:29), obedience (3:9, 5:18) and victory (5:4). These things are not tests but evidences, confirming the fact that they know God (5:18-20). This is confirmed further by the HS (3:24, 4:13, 5:6f) and so they know and live and grow, and are exhorted to continue in it (5:21).

2 JOHN

- (a) John writes to the chosen (elect) lady (2 Jn 1), probably a church; presumably one of those also included in 1 Jn and so near Ephesus.
- (b) The situation is very similar to 1 Jn.
- (c) The purpose is also similar to 1 Jn:
 1. to exhort believers to love and grow (2 Jn 4-6).
 2. to warn against deceivers and to not even assist them via hospitality (2 Jn 8, 10f). The heretics appear to be the same as in 1 Jn (2 Jn 7, 9).
- (d) The themes of love, truth, obedience dominate.

3 JOHN

- (a) John now writes to a contemporary and friend GAIUS (3 Jn 1, 4) in a church presumably near Ephesus.
- (b) The situation is different - an ecclesiastical dispute, one of church order, involving DIOTREPHES.
- (c) John's purpose is to:
 - 1. commend Gaius for his hospitality to the brethren (prob itinerant teachers and associates of John) and his own growth in the Lord (3 Jn 4-6).
 - 2. inform Gaius of recent events in (his?) church and to call for his help.
- (d) John has already sent a letter to the church but Diotrophes has rejected it (3 Jn 9). Now John writes prob via Demetrius (3 Jn 12).
- (e) Diotrophes has been behaving in a dictatorial manner, denying hospitality to the brethren and opposing the authority of John (3 Jn 9-11).
- (f) There is no hint of heresy as such or of a monarchical Bishop but certainly of the need for church discipline.

THE BOOK OF REVELATION

1. SITUATION

- (a) John is now exiled on the island of PATMOS - off the coast of Ephesus (1:9) (Island is 48km round). He is exiled because of Christian testimony (1:9).
- (b) During his time on Patmos - on the Lord's day (1:10) he received a VISION (1:1, 4, 9, 22:8):
 - 1. a message to 7 churches of Western Asia Minor in a circular route near Ephesus (1:11).
 - 2. further details of the imminent events of the eschatological triumph of Christ over all anti-Christian forces in the world (1:1).
- (c) Date for writing - relating to contemporaneous events in the Roman Empire - most probably when DOMITIAN was Emperor (ie AD 90-95) (Caird, Carson, Moo and Morris).
- (d) They are PROPHECIES - John is 'the prophet' (1:1-3, 10:11).

2. STRUCTURE/PURPOSE/CONTENT

- (a) Rev 1:4ff, 11ff, ch 2, ch 3, presents the prophecies for the 7 churches. John is well informed with details of the state of the churches - in most cases there has been - deterioration
 - spiritual decline
 - stronger attack of heresy
 - increasing opposition/tension between church and State.
- (b) Rev 4-22 presents:
 - 1. a message of encouragement to believers strengthening hope and confidence in the ultimate triumph of Christ - God is in control.
 - 2. a call to not be indifferent.

3. MAJOR ISSUES

- (a) The interpretation of the Book - 4 main schools (Guthrie):
 - 1. HISTORICIST - Rev is a prophetic forecast of future history - progressively.
 - 2. CONTEMP. HISTORY - Rev applies to the immediate circumstances of the author's day (only).
 - 3. FUTURIST - Rev applies to the time just before the parousia (and chaps 1-3 refer to successive epoch's of church history).
 - 4. SYMBOLIC - Rev is an apocalypse (unveiling) which is full of imagery and symbol (only) from which principles can be drawn regarding God's triumph and coming victory.

Some combination of these 4 views is probably the real answer (Morris).

(b) The structure of the Book.

Do the cycles of visions in Rev 4-22 represent a progression, (an advance) or do they repeat and recapitulate from differing perspectives? Opinions vary.

"This book does not set forth a continuous series of future events but repeats the same sequences of events under various forms". (Morris).

(c) Authorship by the apostle John has been challenged as far back as Dionysius (a third century bishop of Alexandria). This is on the grounds of lack of apostolic claims, theological and stylistic differences. While the latter is the most telling, none of the arguments are compelling.

(d) Revelation allows for three different genre identifications: 'apocalypse' (1:1), 'prophecy' (1:3), 'epistle' (1:4). While Revelation possesses many of the features of an apocalypse, it is probably best to see it as a prophecy cast in an apocalyptic mold and written down in a letter form (Carson, Moo and Morris).