

NEW TESTAMENT INTRODUCTION

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This course on the New Testament seeks to introduce the student to the fascinating world of New Testament studies. The student will learn about how the New Testament actually came into existence (which is completely different from the fiction spun by Dan Brown in his blasphemous and deceptive bestseller—*The Da Vinci Code*).

In the study of the literature of the New Testament, we shall be looking into the biblical and fundamental doctrines of the Verbal Plenary Inspiration (VPI) and Verbal Plenary Preservation (VPP) of the Holy Scriptures. How can we be sure that God is the Author of the Christian Bible? How can we be certain that the New Testament comprises just 27 books? Can we with firm conviction dogmatically declare that we have the perfect Word of God today? These are some of the important questions we will attempt to answer in class.

Besides learning about the origins of New Testament literature, the student will also learn about the history and the culture of New Testament times. We do not find the Pharisees and Sadducees in the Old Testament, but they appear ever so often in the New Testament, especially in the Gospels. Who really were they? Where did they come from, and what did they believe in? Why did God send His Son “in the fullness of time” in the days of the Roman Empire. What was the Roman Empire like, and in what way did it provide a conducive environment for the earthly ministry of Christ?

Besides studying into the nature of New Testament literature and of New Testament times, this course will also offer a survey of the New Testament books. We will study into the contents of the New Testament from a bird’s eye view. This bird’s eye view of the New Testament will assist the student when he starts studying the individual New Testament books from a worm’s eye view, focusing on the very words verse by verse. It will interest the student to know that the arrangement of the New Testament has a pattern and a purpose, no doubt by God’s special providence to teach His people a spiritual truth about Himself that He is a God of order who is sovereign over all.

A preliminary study of New Testament Theology will be woven into the course especially when we come to the New Testament Epistles. We shall discuss the great fundamentals of the Christian Faith from the Reformed perspective, and shall interact (or inter-react) with the postmodern and ecumenical worldview. A Biblical defence of the forever-settled Christian Faith, and the forever infallible and inerrant Christian Bible is vital today if the Church is to survive the end-time onslaughts of open theism and neo-deism.

THE NEW TESTAMENT: AN INTRODUCTION TO ITS LITERATURE, BACKGROUND, CONTENTS, AND THEOLOGY

PART I: NEW TESTAMENT LITERATURE

1a. Inspiration of the New Testament

1b. The inspiration of the Bible is taught in 2 Tim 3:16. The word “inspired” comes from the Greek word *theopneustos* which literally means “God-breathed.” Inspiration should be understood as “Godspiration.” It is not human but divine inspiration.

2b. God used human writers to pen His inspired words in the original languages. These men were specially chosen by God, and perfectly guided by the Spirit to put the very words of God on paper so that the Bible will be absolutely free from error (2 Pet 1:21).

3b. Since the Bible is inspired, it must be:

1c. *Infallible*. The Bible is incapable of error and hence perfect

2c. *Inerrant*. The Bible is absolutely without mistakes in all that it records.

3c. *Authoritative*. The Bible demands our absolute belief or obedience in all of its contents.

4b. The doctrine of biblical inspiration is further defined by these 2 terms:

1c. *Verbal inspiration*—every word of the Bible is inspired (Matt 5:18).

2c. *Plenary inspiration*—all of the Bible is inspired (2 Tim 3:16).

5b. The following are heretical views on inspiration:

1c. Liberals/Modernists: The Bible is not the Word of God.

2c. Neoorthodoxy teaches that the Bible *becomes* the Word of God only when it convicts or inspires us. This is taught by Karl Barth.

3c. Neo-evangelicals: The Bible contains the Word of God. This is the view of limited inerrancy which teaches that the Bible is only inerrant when it touches on matters of faith or salvation, but when the Bible deals with science, history, or geography, it is capable of making mistakes.

6b. The orthodox view teaches that:

1c. The Bible is the Word of God absolutely, and objectively. In it, God reveals His singular purpose—the redemption of His people through His beloved Son, Jesus Christ—to the glory of His name.

2c. The Bible is complete. None is to add to it or subtract from it (Rev 22:18-19).

3c. John W Burgon—Dean of Chichester—said, “The Bible is none other than the voice of Him that sitteth upon the throne. Every book of it, every chapter of it, every verse of it, every word of it, every syllable of it, every letter of it, is direct utterance of the Most High. The Bible is none other than

the Word of God, not some part of it more, some part of it less, but all alike the utterance of Him that sitteth upon the throne, faultless, unerring, supreme.”

2a. Canoncity of the New Testament

1b. Meaning of Canoncity

1c. The word “canoncity” comes from the Greek *kanon* which means “a straight rod,” or “a ruler.”

2c. When applied to the Scriptures, it means the list of divinely inspired books—the Word of God—which serves as the only basis for faith and practice in the life of the Church.

2b. Why the Need for a NT Canon?

1c. At Pentecost, God did not present the Bible to the Church as a complete whole. The canon of the OT was already confirmed (cf Luke 24:44, Luke 11:49-51), but not so for the NT. The books of the NT were written one at a time during the course of the first century.

1c. Shortly after that time, pseudo-books claiming inspiration were written (eg, Acts of Paul, Revelation of Peter, Epistle of Barnabas, Gospel of Peter, Gospel of Thomas, Acts of Andrew etc). A volume of such spurious books called—*The Lost Books of the Bible Being All the Gospels, Epistles and Other Pieces Now Extant Attributed in the First Four Centuries to Jesus Christ, His Apostles and their Companions*—is currently published by World Bible Publishers. It is quite obvious that the contents of these false books do not fit the nature of divinely inspired writ. They are filled with fairy-tale-like and even blasphemous stories of Christ. A Spirit-indwelt believer can tell straightaway that these books are not of God (1 John 2:27).

3b. How Was the NT Canon Arrived At?

1d. The canon was arrived at by the ecclesiastical consensus of God’s people who were indwelt and led by the Holy Spirit (John 16:13). The Council of Carthage (397), chaired by the pre-eminent early church father and theologian—Augustine—identified the sacred books by name. There were exactly 27 of them. The list presented was no innovation, but an official statement of what the Church had already accepted as canonical Scripture.

2d. It was by ecclesiastical consensus. The Westminster Confession states: “We may be moved and induced by the testimony of the Church to an high and reverent esteem of the Holy Scripture. And the heavenliness of the matter, the efficacy of the doctrine, the majesty of the style, the consent of all the parts, the scope of the whole (which is, to give all glory to God), the full discovery it makes of the only way of man’s salvation, the many other incomparable excellencies, and the entire perfection thereof, are arguments whereby it doth abundantly evidence itself to be the Word of God: yet notwithstanding, our full persuasion and assurance of the infallible truth and divine authority thereof, is from the inward work of the Holy Spirit bearing witness by and with the Word in our hearts” (I.V).

- 3d. The 27 books must be written in the period of the Apostles of Christ.
- 1e. The Four Gospels were written by the Apostles or by Apostolic men. Ireneus (AD 120-200) said: “Matthew published a written gospel for the Hebrews ... Mark also, the disciple and interpreter of Peter, transmitted to us in writing the things preached by Peter. Luke, the follower of Paul, set down in a book the gospel preached by him. Lastly, John, the disciple of the Lord, who had leant back on His breast, once more set forth the gospel, while residing at Ephesus in Asia.”
 - 2e. Acts was written by Luke the beloved physician and Paul’s close companion in his missionary journeys.
 - 3e. 14 Epistles were written by Paul (Rom-Heb), 2 by Peter (1-2 Pet), 4 by John (1-3 John, Rev). James by James, son of Zebedee (Matt 4:21, 17:1, Acts 12:2). Jude by Jude aka Thaddeus, brother of James the less, son of Alphaeus (Matt 10:2, Mark 15:40, John 14:22).
- 4d. The NT canon was finalised at the Council of Carthage (AD 397). Altogether 27 books, no more no less.
- 5d. The NT canon is today being questioned.
- 1e. The current attack on the NT canon comes from a best-selling novel called *The Da Vinci Code* by Dan Brown. What does this book teach?
 - 1f. Jesus was viewed by His followers as a mortal prophet, a great and powerful man, but a *man* nonetheless, and definitely not the Son of God.
 - 2f. The teaching that Jesus was “the Son of God” only came much later, officially proposed and voted on by the Council of Nicea (AD 325).
 - 3f. This new teaching concerning Jesus’ deity was invented by the Church and did not come from thousands of documents that already existed speaking of Jesus merely as a mortal man. It was really the Emperor Constantine who upgraded the status of Jesus 4 centuries after Jesus died.
 - 4f. In order to rewrite the history books, Constantine commissioned and financed a new Bible which omitted those gospels that spoke of Christ’s human traits and embellished those gospels that made Him godlike. The earlier gospels were outlawed, gathered up, and burned.
 - 5f. These earlier gospels and historical books are the Acts of Paul, Revelation of Peter, Epistle of Barnabas, Gospel of Peter, Gospel of Thomas, Acts of Andrew etc. These are the true and factual accounts of Christ and not the Four Gospels that we have today in our Bible for these were later inventions ordered by Constantine to create a Christ that was like God.

2e. What is the issue and the danger?

1f. If what Dan Brown says is true and valid, then the NT Canon as we have it today is questionable. We do not have a perfect nor a closed Canon. If this be the case, then how can we be sure that there are just 27 inspired and authoritative NT books?

2f. “The issue of canon—what books constitute the final authority for Christians—is no small matter. If the critics are correct, then Christianity must indeed be radically reinterpreted, just as they suggest. If they are wrong, traditional Christians have their work cut out for them, because many seekers remain skeptical of claims to biblical authority” (Ben Witherington III, “Why the ‘Lost Gospels’ Lost Out,” *Christianity Today*, June 2004, 28-32).

3e. What is the correct response to such an attack?

1f. We ought to recognise that this is a Satanic attack against the Christian faith, and so put on the armour of God (Eph 6:11-18).

2f. We ought to realise that truth is ascertained by spiritual knowledge, and so pray that the Holy Spirit may guide us into all truth (John 16:13, 1 Cor 2:12-14, 1 John 2:27).

3f. We ought to apply the logic of faith (Heb 11:6). The Bible says it, that settles it, I believe it (2 Pet 1:15-21).

3a. Transmission of the New Testament

1b. Definition of Terms

1c. Alexandrian: Manuscripts that come from Alexandria in Egypt that reveal a corrupt hand, the most notorious being Codex Sinaiticus and Codex Vaticanus.

2c. Autograph: The very first script written by the author himself.

3c. Byzantine Text: Manuscripts that come from the region of Byzantium or Constantinople, the capital of the Eastern or Greek Empire (AD 295-1453).

4c. Apograph: A copy of the Autograph. The Autographs no longer exist. All the manuscripts we have today are actually Apographs.

5c. Codex: An ancient manuscript with its many pages sewn together on one side to make it into a book. “Codices” is its plural form.

6c. Extant: It simply means existing.

7c. Manuscript: Any document that is written by hand. Abbreviated ms (singular), and mss (plural).

8c. Minuscules: Manuscripts written in small, lower case, or cursive letters.

9c. Papyrus: Writing material that is made from an Egyptian plant. Plural: papyri.

10c. Parchment: Writing material that is made out of animal skin.

11c. Textus Receptus: Literally it means “The Received Text.” It is the printed text of the traditional, historic and preserved Byzantine or Majority manuscripts. Also known as the Reformation Text (Hills) or the Ecclesiastical Text (Letis).

12c. Uncials: Manuscripts written in capital or upper-case letters. Also known as Majuscules.

2b. Periods of NT Transmission

The period of transmission covers 1400 years from the time of composition (1st century) to the invention of the printing machine (15th century). The history is divided into 4 periods: (1) Papyrus period (1st-4th century), (2) Uncial period (4th-9th century), (3) Minuscule period (9th-15th century), and (4) Text period (15th century onwards).

1c. Papyrus Period

1d. Papyrus manuscripts are continuing to come to light. A very important one just discovered is the papyrus—Magdalen GR 17—see Carsten Peter Thiede and Matthew D’Ancona, *The Jesus Papyrus* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1996), which debunks the source critical theory of Markan priority and the textual critical theory of Westcott and Hort that the Alexandrian text is superior to the Byzantine text underlying the KJV. See also my *KJV Questions and Answers* (Singapore: Bible Witness Literature Ministry), 30.

2d. There are about a hundred extant papyri. Papyrus is found in Egypt, and is still being produced today, though more for tourists than for copyists. It comes from a large water plant by that name. The soft tissue-strips within the stem are used to make papyrus sheets. A papyrus sheet has 2 layers consisting of the horizontal and vertical strips. Writing is done on the smoother side where the grain is horizontal.

3d. What is the length of a papyrus scroll? 2 and 3 John (13 and 14 verses respectively) would cover one column of one page of a papyrus (usually one page has two columns). Jude and Philemon would have taken two columns on a sheet. Revelation would have taken a scroll 15 feet long, Mark 19 feet, John 23 feet, Matthew 30 feet, Acts and Luke 32 feet.

4d. It is impossible on papyrus to have a complete scroll of the NT. It would take a 200 feet scroll to contain the whole NT. The papyrus scrolls were therefore circulated separately. This tells us three things: (1) the ignorance of a particular book does not mean it does not exist, (2) the scroll form makes it difficult to look up references, and (3) the scarcity of copies and difficulty in referring to specific passages, encouraged people to memorise the Scriptures.

5d. Besides scroll-type papyrus manuscripts, there are also the codices. These are book-type papyrus manuscripts. The sheets are stacked together and sewn at the edge. This form existed from the third century onwards. Some suggest that Christians were the ones who invented the codex form. Obviously, this form allows for frequent reading and easier referring of the Scriptures.

2c. Uncial Period

1d. Uncial (or majuscule) manuscripts are Greek manuscripts written in capital letters on vellum or parchment (i.e. leather usually calf-skin). There are about 300 extant uncial manuscripts, most of which are of the Byzantine or Majority Text type. Of all the extant uncials, the better known ones are unfortunately the corrupt Alexandrian Text type:

1e. Codex Sinaiticus (*aleph*) which was discovered by Tischendorf in St Catherine's monastery in 1844. There are four columns per page. Contains the complete NT and has much of the OT in Greek. Dated to about 350 AD (determined by the style of writing). It departs from the Textus Receptus in 3392 places.

2e. Codex Alexandrinus (A) which is stored in the British Museum. Dated to about 400-450 AD. It is the longest and best known uncial manuscript. It contains the whole NT except for most of Matthew and some parts of John and 2 Corinthians. There are two columns per page. The gospels have the Byzantine text-type reading, while the others correspond to the Alexandrian text-type. It departs from the Textus Receptus in 842 places.

3e. Codex Vaticanus (B) which is kept in the Vatican library. It was found in 1481. It is dated to about 350 AD and contains both OT and NT, and Apocrypha. There are three columns per page. Almost the whole of Genesis, and the Pastoral Epistles, and Revelation are missing. It departs from the Textus Receptus in 2370 places.

4e. Codex Ephraemi Rescriptus (C). "Rescriptus" means "to write again." Parchments were expensive, so people in those days recycled used parchments and wrote on top of the erased face. C was a biblical manuscript which had been erased, and Ephraem—a fourth century Church Father—wrote a sermon on the recycled parchment (or *palimpsest*). Dated to about 450 AD, it contains parts of the NT except 2 Thessalonians and 2 John which are missing. It departs from the Textus Receptus in 1798 places.

5e. Codex Bezae (D) is kept in the Cambridge University Library. It is dated to the sixth century and contains the Gospels and Acts in Greek and Latin. It departs from the Textus Receptus in 4697 places.

2d. Evaluation of the Abovementioned Uncials

1e. With these uncials differing from the Traditional and Preserved Textus Receptus in so many places, Dean J W Burgon could not but state, “We submit that these facts—which resulted from merely referring five manuscripts to one and the same common standard—are by no means calculated to inspire confidence in codices B *aleph* C D” (*Revision Revised*, 14).

2e. Burgon went on to say, “*Aleph*, B D are three of the most scandalously corrupt copies extant: exhibit the most shamefully mutilated texts which are anywhere to be met with: have become, by whatever process (for their history is wholly unknown), the depositories of the largest amount of fabricated readings, ancient blunders, and intentional perversions of Truth, which are discoverable in any known copies of the Word of God” (*Revision Revised*, 16).

3e. When Burgon compared these 5 uncials as regards the Lord’s Prayer in Luke 11:2-4, he discovered that “these five ‘first class authorities’ are found to throw themselves into six different combinations in their departures from S. Luke’s way of exhibiting the Lord’s Prayer—which among them, they contrive to falsify in respect of no less than 45 words; and yet they are never able to agree among themselves as to any single various reading. ... And in this way it comes to pass that the mutilated condition to which the scalpel of Marcion the heretic reduced the Lord’s Prayer some 1730 years ago, (for mischief can all be traced back to him!)” (*Revision Revised*, 34-36; see Jeffrey Khoo, *Kept Pure in All Ages*, 51-53, especially the chart on page 52 that shows how the corrupt text of Westcott and Hort has affected the Lord’s Prayer in the modern versions like the NIV).

4e. The trustworthiness of the Alexandrian or Westcott-Hort uncials that underlie the modern versions of the English Bible is being questioned today. Kurt Aland and Barbara Aland wrote, “In the twentieth century the papyri have eroded the dominance of the uncials, and a group of minuscules presently under study promises to diminish it further” (*The Text of the New Testament*, 102).

5e. One such papyrus is the Magdalen GR17 or “Jesus Papyrus” which consists of 3 fragments containing Matthew 26:7-8, 26:10, 14-15, 22-23, 31-33. It is a first century (c AD 60) manuscript. The last 4 words of Matt 26:22 (*legein auto hekastos auton*) in the GR17 agree with the Textus Receptus over against the Westcott-Hort and modern Critical texts (*legein auto heis hekastos*). This confirms Dean Burgon’s observation all along—the Westcott-Hort Text that is based on the Alexandrian manuscripts is a corrupt text, the 4th century age of its primary manuscripts notwithstanding. See Carsten

Peter Thiede and Matthew D’Ancona, *The Jesus Papyrus* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1996).

6e. The Chester Beatty Papyri are early 3rd century fragments and they agree with the Traditional or Byzantine Text. For example, p75 contains the ascension of Christ (Luke 24:51, see Aland and Aland, *The Text of the New Testament*, 91) not found in the Alexandrian and Westcott-Hort Text. Now, the 27th edition of the Critical Nestle-Aland Text has put the ascension verse back into the original text bringing it to conformity with the inspired and preserved Greek text underlying the KJV.

7e. It is significant to note that great number of uncials are of the traditional and Byzantine or Majority Text-type (Aland and Aland, *The Text of the New Testament*, 102, 105).

3c. Minuscule Period

1d. The minuscules appeared a little later than the uncials. A demand for books saw a change in writing styles. Minuscule or cursive writing was a lot faster than uncial writing. The letters are smaller, and in formal running hand.

2d. There are about 3000 minuscules, almost all belong to the Byzantine text-type which underlies the KJV.

3d. For a scholarly defence of the Byzantine or Majority Text, see

1e. Jakob Van Bruggen, *The Ancient Text of the New Testament* (Winnipeg: Premier, 1976). Dr Van Bruggen is Professor of NT at the Theological College of the Reformed Churches in The Netherlands (Broederweg, Kampen).

2e. Harry Sturz, *The Byzantine Text-Type and New Testament Textual Criticism* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1984). Dr Sturz was Professor of Greek at BIOLA (Bible Institute of Los Angeles). This book was his ThD dissertation at Grace Theological Seminary.

4c. Text Period

1d. Printing Press

Gutenberg invented the movable-type printing press in the 15th century. No longer need Scriptures be handcopied. No longer need Scriptures be limited to a few copies and owned only by the church. With the printing press, the Scriptures can now be quickly and extensively produced with greater accuracy and precision, and be owned by everyone. In God’s perfect timing, manuscripts must now give way to the text. With such a powerful machine, Gutenberg printed the most powerful book—the Holy Bible in the Latin tongue (i.e. the Vulgate). The printing press greatly accelerated the distribution of the Bible and the spread of its saving truth. This eventually brought about the 16th Protestant Reformation.

2d. Renaissance

The Renaissance (14th-16th century) revived the study of the biblical languages of Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek. There was a desire in Christian scholarship to return to the primary sources. “Back to the sources” was the Renaissance slogan. Biblical scholars were no longer satisfied with a translation or version of the Bible. They wanted to study the Bible in the original languages. They were no longer satisfied with the commentaries or interpretations of the Scriptures. They wanted to study the original language Scriptures to ascertain for themselves what the Scriptures actually and truly teach.

3d. Reformation

1e. “The just shall live by faith!” The Gospel of salvation of grace through faith in Christ alone was being spread far and wide by Martin Luther and the other Reformers. People are getting converted and want to read God’s Word for themselves in their own language. The Bible must be translated from the original language Scriptures.

2e. Where were the standard Hebrew OT and Greek NT that can be relied upon for the translation work? The standard Hebrew text was the Masoretic Text but there was no standard Greek text as yet. The Lord saw to it that a standard Greek text would be restored from the many Greek manuscripts that He has preserved down through the ages. Providentially, God raised up Erasmus, Stephanus, Beza, and finally the King James translators to produce a standard Greek NT text which became known as the Textus Receptus. For a comprehensive treatment of how this work was done, read E F Hills, *The King James Version Defended*, 191-225, and D A Waite, *Defending the King James Bible*, 38-57 (see especially Waite’s 37 historical evidences that link the Textus Receptus to the very 1st century itself). Short cut: read my paper, “A Plea for a Perfect Bible,” *The Burning Bush* 9 (2003): 1-15 for a synopsis of Hills and Waite.

3e. The time-tested and time-honoured Textus Receptus was attacked in the late 19th century by Westcott and Hort who sought to revise and replace it with their new text that was based on minority and corrupt Alexandrian manuscripts long rejected by the Church. For an excellent refutation of Westcott and Hort and their corrupt text, read *Revision Revised* by J W Burgon. The corrupt Westcott and Hort Text became the basis for more than a hundred Christ-denying and confusion-causing modern versions of the Bible. The KJV has withstood the massive onslaught, and remains the Bible for Bible-loving and Bible-defending Christians. “For we can do nothing against the truth, but for the truth” (2 Cor 13:8). And the truth is the special providential preservation of the Holy Scriptures.

4a. Preservation of the New Testament

1b. Did God Promise to Preserve His Word Perfectly?

1c. As Taught in the Law

In Exodus 32:15-19, and 34:1-4, we read: “¹⁵And Moses turned, and went down from the mount, and the two tables of the testimony *were* in his hand: the tables *were* written on both their sides; on the one side and on the other *were* they written. ¹⁶And the tables *were* the work of God, and the writing *was* the writing of God, graven upon the tables. ¹⁷And when Joshua heard the noise of the people as they shouted, he said unto Moses, *There is* a noise of war in the camp. ¹⁸And he said, *It is* not the voice of *them that* shout for mastery, neither *is it* the voice of *them that* cry for being overcome: *but* the noise of *them that* sing do I hear. ¹⁹And it came to pass, as soon as he came nigh unto the camp, that he saw the calf, and the dancing: and Moses’ anger waxed hot, and he cast the tables out of his hands, and brake them beneath the mount. ...

“¹And the LORD said unto Moses, Hew thee two tables of stone like unto the first: and I will write upon *these* tables the words that were in the first tables, which thou brakest. ²And be ready in the morning, and come up in the morning unto mount Sinai, and present thyself there to me in the top of the mount. ³And no man shall come up with thee, neither let any man be seen throughout all the mount; neither let the flocks nor herds feed before that mount. ⁴And he hewed two tables of stone like unto the first; and Moses rose up early in the morning, and went up unto mount Sinai, as the LORD had commanded him, and took in his hand the two tables of stone.”

2c. As Taught in the Prophets

In Jeremiah 36 we are told, “¹And it came to pass in the fourth year of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah king of Judah, *that* this word came unto Jeremiah from the LORD, saying, ²Take thee a roll of a book, and write therein all the words that I have spoken unto thee against Israel, and against Judah, and against all the nations, from the day I spake unto thee, from the days of Josiah, even unto this day. ³It may be that the house of Judah will hear all the evil which I purpose to do unto them; that they may return every man from his evil way; that I may forgive their iniquity and their sin. ⁴Then Jeremiah called Baruch the son of Neriah: and Baruch wrote from the mouth of Jeremiah all the words of the LORD, which he had spoken unto him, upon a roll of a book. ⁵And Jeremiah commanded Baruch, saying, *I am* shut up; I cannot go into the house of the LORD: ⁶Therefore go thou, and read in the roll, which thou hast written from my mouth, the words of the LORD in the ears of the people in the LORD’S house upon the fasting day: and also thou shalt read them in the ears of all Judah that come out of their cities. ⁷It may be they will present their supplication before the LORD, and will return every one from his evil way: for great *is* the anger and the fury that the LORD hath pronounced against this people. ⁸And Baruch the son of Neriah did according to all that Jeremiah the prophet commanded him, reading in the book the words of the LORD in the LORD’S house. ...

“²⁰And they went in to the king into the court, but they laid up the roll in the chamber of Elishama the scribe, and told all the words in the ears of the

king. ²¹So the king sent Jehudi to fetch the roll: and he took it out of Elishama the scribe's chamber. And Jehudi read it in the ears of the king, and in the ears of all the princes which stood beside the king. ²²Now the king sat in the winterhouse in the ninth month: and *there was a fire* on the hearth burning before him. ²³And it came to pass, *that* when Jehudi had read three or four leaves, he cut it with the penknife, and cast *it* into the fire that *was* on the hearth, until all the roll was consumed in the fire that *was* on the hearth. ... ²⁷Then the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah, after that the king had burned the roll, and the words which Baruch wrote at the mouth of Jeremiah, saying, ²⁸Take thee again another roll, and write in it all the former words that were in the first roll, which Jehoiakim the king of Judah hath burned. ... ³²Then took Jeremiah another roll, and gave it to Baruch the scribe, the son of Neriah; who wrote therein from the mouth of Jeremiah all the words of the book which Jehoiakim king of Judah had burned in the fire: and there were added besides unto them many like words."

3c. As Taught in the Writings

1d. Psalm 12:6-7, "The words of the LORD *are* pure words: *as* silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times. ⁷Thou shalt keep them, O LORD, thou shalt preserve them from this generation for ever."

2d. Psalm 105:8, "⁸He hath remembered his covenant for ever, the word *which* he commanded to a thousand generations."

3d. Psalm 119:89-90, "For ever, O LORD, thy word is settled in heaven. ⁹⁰Thy faithfulness *is* unto all generations: thou hast established the earth, and it abideth."

4d. Psalm 119:152, "Concerning thy testimonies, I have known of old that thou hast founded them for ever."

5d. Psalm 119:160, "Thy word *is* true *from* the beginning: and every one of thy righteous judgments *endureth* for ever."

4c. As Taught by the Lord Jesus Christ

1d. Matthew 5:18, "For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled."

2d. Matthew 24:35, "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away" (Mark 13:31, Luke 21:33).

3d. John 10:35b, "the scripture cannot be broken."

5c. As Taught by the Apostle Peter

In 1 Peter 1:23-25, it is written, "Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, *see that ye* love one another with a pure heart fervently: ²³Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever."

2b. Where is the Perfect Word of God?

1c. Not in the Corrupt Westcott-Hort Greek Text Underlying the Modern Versions

The corrupt Westcott and Hort Text which underlies the Revised Version (the father of all modern versions, now out of print) has removed 9,970 words from the inspired and preserved Scriptures. Today, the Critical Text underlying the modern versions remains a mutilated text with 2,886 missing words. Besides casting doubt on the authenticity of certain important passages of Scriptures like the last 12 verses of Mark (Mark 16:9-20), and the *pericope de adultera* (John 7:53-8:11), here is a list of the words scissored out:

1d. Entire Verses Omitted

The NIV omits the following 17 verses in their entirety: Matt 17:21, 18:11, 23:14; Mark 7:16, 9:44, 46, 11:26; 15:28; Luke 17:36, 23:17; John 5:4; Acts 8:37, 15:34, 24:7, 28:29; Rom 16:24; 1 John 5:7.

2d. Portions of Verses Omitted or Modified

The following verses contain partial omissions or modifications:

1e. In Matthew

“without a cause” (5:22), “by them of old time” (5:27), “For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen” (6:13), “to repentance” (9:13), “among the people” (9:35), “Lebbaeus, whose surname was” (10:3), “raise the dead” (10:8), “of the heart” (12:35), “Jesus saith unto them” (13:51), “draweth nigh unto me with their mouth” (15:8), “at his feet” (18:29), “from my youth” (19:20), “and whatsoever is right, that shall ye receive” (20:7), “For many be called, but few chosen” (20:16), “and to be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with” (2x in 20:22, 23), “take him away, and” (22:13), “observe” (23:3), “wherein the Son of Man cometh” (25:13), “false witnesses” (26:60b), “that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet: They parted my garments among them, and upon my vesture did they cast lots” (27:35).

2e. In Mark

“Isaiah the prophet” (1:2), “of the kingdom” (1:14), “to repentance” (2:17), “whole as the other” (3:5), “to heal sicknesses and” (3:15), “of the air” (4:4), “Verily, I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrha in the day of judgment than for that city” (6:11), “bread, for they have nothing to eat” (6:36), “they found fault” (7:2), “and fasting” (9:29), “into the fire that never shall be quenched” (9:45), “and every sacrifice shall be salted with salt” (9:49), “for them that trust in riches” (10:24), “in the name of the Lord” (11:10), “and at him they cast stones” (12:4), “This is the first commandment” (12:30), “with all the soul” (12:33), “spoken of by Daniel the prophet” (13:14), “And another said, Is it I?”

(14:19), “because of me this night” (14:27), “and thy speech agreeth thereto” (14:70).

3e. In Luke

“blessed art thou among women” (1:28), “when she saw him” (1:29), “hath visited” (1:78), “but by every word of God” (4:4), “Get thee behind me, Satan” (4:8), “to heal the brokenhearted” (4:18), “Christ” (4:41), “and both are preserved” (5:38), “whole as the other” (6:10), “treasure of his heart” (6:45), “that had been sick” (7:10), “And the Lord said” (7:31), “and they that were with him” (8:45), “and sayest thou, Who touched me?” (8:45), “and he put them all out” (8:54), “even as Elias did” (9:54), “and said, Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of” (9:55), “For the Son of man is not come to destroy men’s lives, but to save them” (9:56). “when he departed” (10:35), “Thy will be done, as in heaven, so in earth” (11:2), “but deliver us from evil” (11:4), “bread of any of you that is a father, will he give him a stone? or if he ask” (11:11), “the prophet” (11:29), “scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites” (11:44), “that they might accuse him” (11:54), “against thee” (17:3), “him? I trow not” (17:9), “and saw him” (19:5), “Why tempt ye me?” (20:23), “took her to wife, and he died childless” (20:30), “in my kingdom” (22:30), “And the Lord said” (22:31), “struck him on the face and” (22:64), “me, nor let me go” (22:68), “and of the chief priests” (23:23), written over him in letters of Greek, and Latin, and Hebrew” (23:38), “and certain others with them” (24:1), “and of an honeycomb” (24:42).

4e. In John

“which is in heaven” (3:13), “not perish, but” (3:15), “the Christ” (4:42), “waiting for the moving of the water” (5:3), “and sought to slay him” (5:16), “to the disciples, and the disciples” (6:11), “whereinto his disciples were entered” (6:22), “on me” (6:47), “being convicted by their own conscience” (8:9), “and saw none but the woman” (8:10), “through the midst of them, and so passed by” (8:59), “the pool of” (9:11), “as I said unto you” (10:26), “from the place where the dead was laid” (11:41), “which had been dead” (12:1), “in the world” (17:12), “and led him away” (19:16).

5e. In Acts

“ye have taken” (2:23), “of the Lord” (7:30), “him shall ye hear” (7:37), “it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks” (9:5), “he shall tell thee what thou oughtest to do” (10:6), “which were sent unto him from Cornelius” (10:21), “who, when he cometh, shall speak unto thee” (10:32), “Ye must be circumcised, and keep the law” (15:24), “which believed not” (17:5), “I must by all means keep this feast that cometh in Jerusalem” (18:21), “that were of Paul’s company” (21:8), “that they observe no such thing, save only” (21:25), “and were

afraid” (22:9), “unto his death” (22:20), “and would have judged according to our law” (24:6), “commanding his accusers to come unto thee” (24:8), “of the dead” (24:15), “that he might loose him” (24:26).

6e. In Romans

“of Christ” (1:16), “and upon all” (3:22), “who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit” (8:1), “for us” (8:26), “of righteousness” (9:31), “of the law” (9:32), “preach the gospel of peace” (10:15), “But if it be of works, then is it no more grace: otherwise work is no more work” (11:6), “and he that regardeth not the day, to the Lord he doth not regard it. He that eateth, eateth to the Lord, for he giveth God thanks; and he that eateth not, to the Lord he eateth not, and giveth God thanks” (14:6), “or is offended, or is made weak” (14:21), “I will come to you” (15:24), “of the gospel” (15:29).

7e. In 1 Corinthians

“for us” (5:7), “and in your spirit, which are God’s” (6:20), “of Christ” (9:18), “for me” (10:23), “for the earth is the Lord’s, and the fulness thereof” (10:28), “Take, eat” (11:24), “unworthily” (11:29), “the Lord” (15:47).

8e. In 2 Corinthians

“that we would receive” (8:4), “in glorying” (12:11), “I write” (13:2).

9e. In Galatians

“that ye should not obey the truth” (3:1), “in Christ” (3:17), “through Christ” (4:7).

10e. In Ephesians

“by Jesus Christ” (3:9), “of our Lord Jesus Christ” (3:14), “other” (4:17), “of his flesh, and of his bones” (5:30).

11e. In Philippians

“rule, let us mind the same things” (3:16).

12e. In Colossians

“and the Lord Jesus Christ” (1:2), “through his blood” (1:14), “and of the Father and” (2:2), “of the sins” (2:11).

13e. In 1 Thessalonians

“from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ” (1:1).

14e. In 2 Thessalonians

“as God” (2:4).

15e. In 1 Timothy

“in Christ” (2:7), “not greedy of filthy lucre” (3:3), “who” instead of “God” (3:16), “in spirit” (4:12), “good and” (5:4),

“man or” (5:16), “from such withdraw thyself” (6:5), “and it is certain” (6:7).

16e. In 2 Timothy

“of the Gentiles” (1:11).

17e. In Hebrews

“by himself” (1:3), “and didst set him over the works of thy hands” (2:7), “firm unto the end” (3:6), “and their sins” (8:12), “O God” (10:9), “saith the Lord” (10:30), “was delivered of a child” (11:11), “were persuaded of them” (11:13), “or thrust through with a dart” (12:20).

18e. In James

“adulterers and” (4:4).

19e. In 1 Peter

“through the Spirit” (1:22), “for us” (4:1), “on their part he is evil spoken of, but on your part he is glorified” (4:14).

20e. In 1 John

“from the beginning” (2:7), “Christ is come in the flesh” (4:3), “in heaven: the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit; and these three are one” (5:7), “and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God” (5:13).

21e. In Revelation

“the beginning and the ending” (1:8), “I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last: and” (1:11), “which are in Asia” (1:11), “him that liveth for ever and ever” (5:14), “and the angel stood” (11:1), “and art to come” (11:17), “here are they” (14:12), “over his mark” (15:2), “O Lord” (16:5), “another out of” (16:7), “of the earth and” (16:14), “the Lord” (19:1), “of them which are saved” (21:24).

2c. But in the Preserved Textus Receptus Underlying the Authorised Version

1d. Read my paper, “A Plea for a Perfect Bible,” *The Burning Bush* 9 (2003):1-15. My paper received the following reviews from the United States.

1e. Here is a comment from Dr Robert Barnett, Vice President of the Dean Burgon Society, “I read your paper, ‘A Plea For A Perfect Bible’ and it was just wonderful. I commend you for your wisdom and understanding of the Bible Preservation issue. You quoted from many of my mentors like Francis Turretin, Dr D A Waite, Dr E F Hills, and Dean Burgon. It took me many years to reach an understanding of the truth stated in your paper. I usually disagree with at least some things in any article written by men, but you have put together everything we believe in a very concise and brilliant manner. Your chart was excellent. I can only say, Praise God! Keep up

the great work. God has promised and will continue to preserve His own words forever.”

2e. Here is another review. This one comes from Dr David Sorenson, a pastor in Duluth, Minnesota, an adjunct professor of Pensacola Christian College and Theological Seminary, and author of *Touch Not the Unclean Thing: The Text Issue and Separation*: “Let me say that your paper has summarized my thoughts exactly. You have put on paper what I have thought of doing, but have not gotten around to doing. Amen and amen!! You hit the nail on the head! You are absolutely right! And, your paper is a masterpiece in summarizing our position.”

2d. For Further Reading

1e. *Kept Pure in All Ages: Recapturing the Authorised Version and the Doctrine of Providential Preservation* (Singapore: FEBC Press, 2001).

2e. “Bob Jones University and the KJV: A Critique of From the Mind of God to the Mind of Man,” *The Burning Bush* (2001): 1-24.

3e. “The Emergence of Neo-Fundamentalism: *One Bible Only?* or ‘Yea Hath God Said?’,” *The Burning Bush* 10 (2004): 2-47.

4e. “John Owen on the Perfect Bible,” *The Burning Bush* 10 (2004): 74-85.

5e. “Sola Autographa or Sola Apographa?: A Case for the Present Perfection and Authority of the Holy Scriptures,” *The Burning Bush* 11 (2005).

PART II: NEW TESTAMENT BACKGROUND

1a. Intertestamental Period

The period of the NT was different from that of the OT. For example, there were no synagogues mentioned in the OT. Neither were there Pharisees, Sadducees, Herodians, Sanhedrin, Diaspora (Jas 1:1, 1 Pet 1:1) or the Jewish feast of dedication (aka the feast of lights or Hanuka). How did these people and institutions come into existence. The answer lies in the period of about 400 years between the OT and NT. These were called the “silent years” because there was a marked absence of prophetic activity. This span of silent years may be discussed under the following periods:

1b. Persian Period (539-331 BC)

When the OT closed, Israel was under the domination of Persia. The Babylonian captivity ended with the Persian conquest. It is important to note that during this period of captivity, the synagogue system was invented. During the years of exile, there was no temple and no sacrifices. The synagogue institution kept the Jewish religious and national identity intact. When Cyrus became world ruler, he allowed the Jews to return to their homeland. It saw the end of the Davidic dynasty as the ruling monarchy. The leaders then were Zerubbabel, Ezra and Nehemiah. A schismatic religious system started in Gerizim by the Samaritans who were despised by the Jews because they were a group of half-breed Israelites. The highest Jewish official was the high priest. He was the head of religion and became a political figure as well. The situation existed till about 331 BC when Alexander the Great came into the picture.

2b. Greek Period (331-301 BC)

The Greeks spread their culture everywhere they went. The NT was thus written in Greek. Eventually, when Alexander the Great died, there was a struggle among his generals. One of them Seleucus took over Syria while Ptolemy took over Egypt.

3b. Egyptian Period (301-198 BC)

The Greeks under Ptolemy controlled Egypt at this time. Under Ptolemy’s beneficent reign, the Jews prospered. Many Jews thus migrated to Alexandria. It was in Alexandria that the Septuagint (ie, the Greek translation of the Hebrew OT) was produced. However, the origin of the Septuagint (aka LXX) remains obscure. Historians are reasonably sure that the Torah or the Pentateuch was translated during this period, but not the rest of the OT. According to John Owen, the Septuagint is “woefully corrupt. Its rise is uncertain. Some call the whole story of that translation into question ... The circumstances that are reported about them and their works are certainly fabulous. That they should be sent for upon the advice of Demetrius Phalereus, who was dead before, that they should be put into seventy-two cells or private chambers, that there should be twelve of each tribe fit for that work, are all of them incredible. Some of the Jews say that they made the translation out of the Chaldee paraphrase; and to me this seems not unlikely. Josephus, Austin, Philo, Jerome, Zonaras, affirm that they translated the Law or Pentateuch only.” For more insight, read Rev Das Koshy’s article “Did Jesus and the Apostles Rely on the Corrupt Septuagint?” in *The Burning Bush* 10 (2004): 93-95.

4b. Syrian Period (198-168 BC)

Antiochus I defeated the Egyptians and took over Palestine. Antiochus IV (Epiphany, meaning, “the glorious”) crushed all Jewish opposition (the Jews called him Epimanes, meaning, “the madman”). Unrest and opposition began to develop. There arose a pro-hellenistic party during this time. These Hellenistic Jews were opposed by the Hasidims—the pious ones. The Hasidims were probably the forerunners of the Pharisees. Today, they are the orthodox Jews. Finally, Antiochus enforced entire hellenisation. In 168 BC, the Jewish temple was desecrated when he sacrificed a pig on the altar, and dedicated it to Jupiter. This resulted in a revolt led by an old priest named Mattathias and his 5 loyal sons; one of them being Judas Maccabeus.

5b. Maccabean Period (167-63 BC)

Judas Maccabeus succeeded his father and waged a guerilla warfare against Antiochus IV. Eventually, he seized Jerusalem and the temple. Judaism then instituted a new feast called the “Feast of Dedication.” When the Jews recovered Jerusalem, the Hasidims wanted the war to end but Judas wanted total independence. He thus drove the Syrians back and was quite successful. Judas started the Hasmonean dynasty which ruled for over a century. When Judas died, his brother Jonathan succeeded him. He was the one who combined the political and religious offices, thus becoming the first Hasmonean king to be the high priest of Jerusalem. It is possible that the Sadducees came from the Hasmonean line.

6b. Roman Period (63 BC-)

This was the NT period. In 63 BC, there was a squabble between 2 Hasmonean kings. Pompey took advantage of the situation and marched into Jerusalem and entered the temple, even into the Holy of holies allowed only to the high priest once a year on the day of atonement (Yom Kippur). In so doing, he angered the Jews for all time. Pompey’s conquest of Jerusalem ended all Jewish independence in the land. Judea became the official province of the Roman empire. The high priest was removed from his royal status, and the governing power was granted by Caesar to Antipater, who became the procurator of Judea. Antipater then appointed Herod, his son, as governor of Galilee, who later became king of Judea in 43 BC. He became known as Herod the Great, the one who rebuilt the temple. He was a cruel man. He not only killed his 10 wives and their children, but also sanctioned the murder of the babies during the time of Christ’s birth. These tensions led to a revolt in AD 66. The Romans finally sacked Jerusalem in AD 70, and Israel ceased to be a national entity. Most of the NT books by then had been written.

2a. Religious Institutions

1b. Synagogue

The synagogue was part and parcel of Jewish life in the NT. It probably originated during the Babylonian captivity. Factors for it were there: no temple, no sacrifices for 70 years etc. Babylonian captivity wiped out idolatry. The synagogue institution kept their religious and national identity. Even after Cyrus allowed Jews to return to build their temple, they did not do away with the synagogues. They were places of instruction, mutual encouragement, and assembly. They needed at least 10 family heads before they could start a synagogue. The synagogue system kept

Judaism alive. One of the elements of the system was the scribes. They were copyists and students of Scripture. As the synagogue grew in strength, the scribes became interpreters of Scripture. Elders served as synagogue rulers. Synagogue service programme was in this order: recitation of the *Shema*, prayers, reading of sections from the Law and Prophets, the scribes, elders or rabbis would give the sermon. In James 2:2, Christian assemblies were called synagogues (*sunagoge*) too. The synagogues became a field for evangelism. Paul went to the synagogues to preach the gospel. The synagogues in Asia Minor became the beachhead for evangelism (Acts 18:19-21, 19:1-10).

2b. Temple

This was the second temple which was renovated extensively by Herod. Jerusalem had several hundred synagogues in the first century but there was only one temple. This temple was rebuilt by Herod on the site of Solomon's temple. It had a wide courtyard surrounded by a wall (Court of the Gentiles). There was a "soreg" interspersed with 9 gates with the inscription that any Gentiles trespassing into the area would be killed. There was a wall of partition between Jew and Greek that is broken down by Christ as mentioned by Paul (Eph 2:14). The temple was headed by the high priest; Annas and Caiaphas were the high priests in the NT. There were roughly 20,000 priests in Israel during the time of Jesus. There were 24 courses and they served by rotation. For example, Zechariah belonged to the course of Abijah (Luke 1:5). They would serve for 2 weeks in a year and then return to their home village. The priestly hierarchy comprised of powerful men called the Sadducees. The temple system ended in AD 70.

3b. Sanhedrin

This was the highest ruling body of the Jewish community in the NT. The chairman was the high priest. The Sanhedrin was formed during the time of Pompey. In the NT, the Romans did not interfere with the affairs of the Sanhedrin. There were 70 members comprising priests, elders and scribes. They governed the provinces of Judea and Samaria. Jerusalem was the headquarters.

3a. Religious and Political Parties

1b. Pharisees

They were the *Hasidims* or "pious ones." The term "Pharisee" comes from the Hebrew *Parushim* which means "separated ones." There were about 6,000 of them in the NT. As religious policemen, they enforced the strict interpretation and observance of the Torah, and produced 613 extra-biblical laws (Mishnah and Talmud) to bind the Jewish people to an even stricter observance of the Torah. They were key figures in the Jewish community and were highly respected by the common people.

2b. Sadducees

They were fewer in number and entrenched in the temple. They were the aristocrats, wealthy and high ranking. Most of them were in the Sanhedrin, and served as high priests of the temple. They only accepted the Pentateuch, ie, the first 5 books of the OT as authoritative. They did not believe in the resurrection or the afterlife, and were not popular with the people.

For further study on the Pharisees and Sadducees, read Emil Schurer, *The History of the Jewish People in the Age of Jesus Christ (175 BC-AD 135)*, 384-414.

3b. Scribes

They were part of the synagogue system. They were keepers and copyists of the OT Scripture. They were the doctors of the Law of Moses, and were the ones who added to it by their fine points of interpretation. The Pharisees functioned more like pastors, while the scribes like professors or academicians.

4b. Zealots

They were a group of fanatical nationalists bent on rebelling against Rome. Their motto is “God is the Lord. Thus no tribute is to be paid to the Roman emperor.” One of Jesus’ disciples was Simon who belonged to this group (Luke 6:15, Acts 1:13).

5b. Herodians

They were a group of Jewish political aristocrats who supported the Herodian dynasty. They held to the same doctrines as the Sadducees, and were enemies of Jesus (Matt 22:16 and Mark 3:6, 12:13).

4a. The Herods

1b. Herod the Great (37-4 BC)

He was a Gentile who was made “King of the Jews” by the Romans, and ruled over Judea. He was a cruel and ruthless man, killing anyone, even his family members, who dared challenge his authority. To gain the support of the Jews, he beautified the temple which took 46 years to complete (John 2:20). He died mysteriously in 4 BC, soon after he tried to kill the baby Jesus.

2b. Herod Antipas (4 BC-AD39)

He ruled over Galilee and Perea during the period of Jesus’ public ministry (Matt 14:1, 3, 6; Mark 6:14-22; 8:15; Luke 3:1, 19; 8:3; 9:7-9; 13:31; 23:7-15). Jesus nicknamed “that fox” (Luke 13:32). He had an adulterous affair with his step-brother’s (Herod Philip’s) wife—Herodias. In order to please Herodias and her daughter Salome, he beheaded John the Baptist. The first time when Herod Antipas met Jesus was when Pilate sent Jesus to him for trial. Soon after that, he lost the favour of the Romans and was sent into exile in Gaul. He finally committed suicide.

3b. Herod Agrippa I (37-44 AD)

He took over the rulership of Galilee and Perea after Herod Antipas was deposed. He was also given the territories of Judea and Samaria which once belonged to Herod the Great, his grandfather. He became a Jewish proselyte and opposed all attempts to impose pagan idolatry upon the Jews. His strong support for the Jewish religion saw him persecuting the Christian Church (Acts 12:1-25). He was the one who killed the Apostle James. God judged him for his blasphemous pride—“he was eaten of worms” (Acts 12:23).

4b. Herod Agrippa II (AD 48-70)

It was before him that Paul made his defence for his Christian beliefs in Acts 25:26-26:32. It was this Herod that said to Paul, “Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian” (Acts 26:28). He found to be without guilt whatsoever, would have released Paul if Paul had not appealed to Caesar (Acts 26:31-32).

PART III: NEW TESTAMENT CONTENTS

1a. Historical Books

1b. Gospels: The New Covenant Instituted

1c. The Gospel Diamond

There are Four Gospels—Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. These Four Gospels are in fact One Gospel. Like a diamond with four facets, the Four Gospels offer four angles of view of the one person and work of Jesus Christ. The church father—Irenaeus—pointed out that the faces of the cherubim in Ezekiel 1:10 (Rev 4:7)—the lion, the ox, the man, and the eagle—serve as a good illustration of the distinctive perspectives and purposes of the Four Gospels. The lion points to Christ’s Kingship, the ox His Servanthood, the man His Humanity, and the eagle His Deity.

1d. Matthew (Lion)

The First Gospel presents Christ as a King. The sign “THIS IS JESUS THE KING OF THE JEWS” put on the cross captures the royal theme of Matthew (Matt 27:37). Royal terminology abounds in the book. For example, the title “the son of David” occurs 9 times in the book as compared to 3 times in Mark and 3 times in Luke. The royalty of Christ is seen right from the first chapter where His genealogy traces His ancestry right back to the royal line of Judah (Matt 1:2). Herod the Great felt threatened by Jesus because the wise men from the east referred to Him as “King of the Jews” (Matt 2:2). Jesus rode into Jerusalem in His triumphal entry as a King (Matt 21:5). In His Olivet discourse, Jesus spoke of His enthronement—He will one day “sit in the throne of his glory ... judging the twelve tribes of Israel”—an expression unique to Matthew (Matt 19:28, 25:31). Just as David was king in Jerusalem, so is Jerusalem described by Matthew as the Lord’s “holy city,” and “the city of the great king” (Matt 5:35). The theme of Matthew’s Gospel is clearly stated in Jeremiah 23:5, “Behold the days come, saith the LORD, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a *King* shall prosper, and shall execute judgement in the earth.”

2d. Mark (Ox)

Mark presents Jesus as a Servant. Mark 10:44-45 highlights this perspective of Jesus’ person and ministry, “And whosoever of you will be the chiefest, shall be servant of all. For even the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister.” The words, *eutheos* and *euthus*, meaning “immediately” occur over 40 times in Mark. “Immediately” is a servant-word. When a servant is told to do something by his master, he is expected to do it straightaway. The theme of Mark’s Gospel is clearly stated in Zechariah 3:8, “Behold I will bring forth My *Servant*, the Branch.”

3d. Luke (Man)

Luke presents Jesus as the perfect man. The phrase “Son of man” is used frequently in Luke. The key verse must be, “For the Son

of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost” (Luke 19:10). The Lord’s genealogy is traced back to Adam, the first man (Luke 3:38). The infancy and boyhood of Jesus is given with unprecedented detail (Luke 1-2). Jesus is seen as a person who feels for and with the common people (Luke 4:18). The theme of Luke’s Gospel is clearly stated in Zechariah 6:12, “the *Man*, whose name is the Branch.”

4d. John (Eagle)

John presents Jesus as God Himself. The key verse has to be John 20:31, “But these are written that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name.” John’s very first words are of Christ’s deity, “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God and the Word was God.” He was the Creator (John 1:3 cf Gen 1:1), the invisible God who became man (John 1:14). Jesus identified Himself as Jehovah with His seven “I am” statements found only in John, (1) “I am the bread of life” (6:35), (2) “I am the light of the world” (8:12), (3) “I am the door of the sheep” (10:7), (4) “I am the good shepherd” (10:10), (5) “I am the resurrection and the life” (11:25), (6) “I am the way, the truth, and the life” (14:6), (7) “I am the true vine” (15:1). The theme of John’s Gospel is clearly stated in Isaiah 9:6, “For unto us a child is born, unto us a Son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty *God*, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace.”

2c. “The Synoptic Problem”

See my paper, “Wrongly Dividing the Synoptic Gospels: A Critique of the Historical-Critical Methodology,” in *The Gospels in Unison* (Singapore: FEBC Press, 1996), 211-9.

3c. For a chronological harmony of the life of Christ, read my book *The Four Gospels in Unison: A Synthetic Harmony of the Four Gospels in the KJV* (Singapore: FEBC Press, 1996).

2b Acts of the Apostles

1c. A Historical Bridge: The Book of Acts is actually volume 2 of Luke’s work. There would be a real gap if we had only the Gospels and Epistles but no Acts. The Book of Acts provides the historical context for the doctrinal contents of the Epistles.

2c. Key Verse: “But ye shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth” (Acts 1:8).

3c. Travelogue: The Gospel begins in Jerusalem (Acts 1-7), extends into Judea and Samaria (Acts 8), and finally spreads to the uttermost part—Syria, Phoenicia, Asia Minor, Greece, and Italy (Acts 9-28).

4c. Missionary Acts of Peter and Paul (cf Gal 2:7)

1d. The Apostle Peter was the Apostle to the Jews and concentrated his missions work in Jerusalem itself (Acts 1-9).

2d. The Apostle Paul was the Apostle to the Gentiles and embarked on three missionary journeys: 1st Missionary Journey (Acts 13-14), 2nd Missionary Journey (Acts 15-18), 3rd Missionary Journey (Acts 18-21); and Prison Ministry (Acts 21-28) culminating in a prison ministry (Acts 13-28). See maps in John F Stirling, *An Atlas Illustrating the Acts of the Apostles and the Epistles* (London: George Philip & Son, 1919), and Simon Jenkins, *Bible Mapbook* (Herts: Lion Publishing, 1985), 109-124.

5c. Four Pivotal Events in Acts

1d. Ascension (Acts 1:1-12)

Besides Luke 24:51 (note that the ascension clause is omitted in the unreliable NASB), Acts 1:9 is the only other passage that speaks of the Lord's ascension into heaven. Since His resurrection, He has been appearing to them intermittently throughout a period of 40 days (Acts 1:3). This time He was returning to heaven for good, and no longer make any appearances until the time of His second coming (Acts 1:11). In the same *physical and visible* manner that He was taken up, He would come again with clouds of glory (Dan 7:13, Matt 24:30, Rev 1:7) and stand upon the Mount of Olives (Zech 14:4).

2d. Pentecost (Acts 2:1-47)

The first instance of tongue-speaking was at Pentecost when the Holy Spirit filled the disciples of Christ, and they began to speak "with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance" (Acts 2:4). The Greek word *glossai* (tongues) means "languages." The Apostles at Pentecost were supernaturally empowered to speak in foreign languages they had not previously learned. This is proven by the fact that when they spoke in tongues, the people were amazed because "every man heard them speak in his own language (literally, "dialect")," and questioned among themselves, "Behold, are not all these which speak Galileans? And how hear we every man in our own tongue (dialect), wherein we were born?" (Acts 2:6,8). Who were these people who heard the Apostles speak? They were "Parthians, and Medes, and Elamites, and the dwellers in Mesopotamia, and in Judea, and Cappadocia, in Pontus, and Asia, Phrygia, and Pamphylia, in Egypt, and in the parts of Libya about Cyrene, and strangers of Rome, Jews and proselytes, Cretes and Arabians, we do hear them speak in our tongues (languages) the wonderful works of God" (Acts 2:9-11). Luke the inspired historian would have us know that when the Apostles spoke in tongues, they spoke in foreign languages or ethnic dialects. Tongue-speaking is not ecstatic speech or gibberish. The gift of tongues is the gift of languages.

3d. Gentile Evangelism (Acts 10-11)

1e. Thus far, the church was predominantly Jewish. The Apostles and the Jewish believers had not been evangelizing the Gentiles as willed by the Lord (Acts 1:8). They probably still thought that only Jews could be saved, and not Gentiles. This was a misconception. The gift of tongues was meant to

correct this erroneous idea. Consider The Lord had to use the Apostle Peter to prove to the disbelieving Jews that Gentiles could also be saved and enter the kingdom of God (1 Cor 14:22).

2e. In Acts 10, Peter was told to preach the gospel to Cornelius, a Gentile. As a full-blooded Jew, Peter would have nothing to do with a Gentile. But the Lord spoke to Peter in a vision commanding him three times to eat the foods the Jews classified as unclean (Acts 10:11-16). This was to prepare Peter to minister to Cornelius, an unclean person in the eyes of the Jew. When Cornelius sent for Peter, Peter in obedience to the Lord went to see him, and the Scripture says, “While Peter yet spake these words the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word. And they of the circumcision which believed (i.e. Christian Jews) were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost. For they heard them speak with tongues, and magnify God” (Acts 10:44-46).

3e. When Peter returned to Jerusalem, he was summoned by the Council to account for his visit to a Gentile home. His fellow Apostles and Elders were angry with him because he preached the gospel to Cornelius. How did Peter vindicate himself? Peter told them the whole story, how God spoke to him, and how the Spirit led him to Cornelius’ house. Peter testified, “And as I began to speak, the Holy Ghost fell on them, as on us at the beginning” (Acts 11:15). Peter saw Cornelius and his household gloriously saved as evinced by their speaking in tongues just as he did at Pentecost. Peter went on to say, “Forasmuch then as God gave them the like gift (i.e. the Holy Spirit) as He did unto us, who believed on the Lord Jesus Christ; what was I, that I could withstand God?” (Acts 11:17). What was the response of the Jerusalem Council who took Peter to task? “When they heard these things, they held their peace, and glorified God, saying, Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life” (Acts 11:18). Herein is the purpose of the gift of tongues—a sign to unbelieving Jews. To Peter and the Jerusalem saints, it was a sign of confirmation, but to those who refuse to believe, it is a sign of judgment.

4e. Is there still a need for God to convince Jews that the gospel is also given to Gentiles? There is no need. No longer are Jews preaching the gospel to Gentiles, but Gentiles to Jews! Since the gift of tongues-speaking has accomplished its God-given purpose, it has since been withdrawn (1 Cor 13:8).

5e. For further study on the gift of tongues or on the signs and wonders movement, read either my tract on “Charismatic Tongues Examined” or my book *Charismatism Q&A* (Singapore: FEBC Press, 1999).

4d. Jerusalem Council (Acts 15)

1e. The issue was the heresy that was propounded by a certain sect of the Pharisees, “Except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses, ye cannot be saved” (Acts 15:1, 5, cf Rom 4:1-12, Gal 1:6-9, 2:3-16).

2e. Doctrinal issues must be settled by the Presbyters (Apostles or Pastors, and Elders), and not by deacons or laity who have not the spiritual maturity (Acts 15:2, 6). Rev Dr Timothy Tow says, “The Council of Jerusalem sets the pattern for all controversies, particularly of doctrine ... When the Bible-Presbyterian Church of Singapore began to drift from its separatist position, the compromise of certain leaders and the matter of tongues was also involved, the Synod met on Cameron Highlands. Through the debates where elders played not a little part, much light emanated from the hammering processes, and heat, but all for the interests of the whole Church. The apostolic council generated heat too as such words are used by Luke: ‘dissension, disputation, disputing’” (*Pattern for Church Growth and Missions* [Singapore: Life Book Centre, 1996], 83-4).

3e. Supreme authority was the Holy Scriptures and the Holy Spirit (Acts 15:7-18).

4e. The Board of Elders led by the moderator decided by consensus, and made a public statement which was binding to all churches and believers (Acts 15:22-23).

5e. Decision and declaration: “Wherefore my sentence is, that we trouble not them, which from among the Gentiles are turned to God: But that we write unto them, that they abstain from pollutions of idols [i.e. food offered to idols, v29], and from fornication, and from things strangled [that still contained blood], and from blood” (Acts 15:19-20). This remains applicable till this day (cf Rev 2:14, 20).

2a. Doctrinal Books

Out of the 27 NT books, 21 are epistles. These epistles are written to individuals, churches or groups of churches. An epistle is necessary because of distance involved in communication. For this reason, a few persons are involved: the *author/writer*, the *secretary/amanuensis* (if any, eg, Tertius in Rom 16:22), the *courier/deliverer*, and the *audience/recipient*.

The fundamental doctrines of the Christian Faith find expression in the NT epistles (sometimes called “letters”). For instance, the many aspects of the doctrine of salvation are found in the epistles of Paul—it is thus no wonder that Dr Timothy Tow who abridged Calvin’s Institutes, called Calvinism “Paulinism systematised.”

Question: If certain epistles were not written by the Apostle personally, but by an amanuensis, would this not affect Biblical inspiration? When we speak of Biblical inspiration, are we referring to the inspired person or the inspired product? (cf 2 Pet 1:21, 2

Tim 3:16). Answer: Note that 2 Timothy 3:16 speaks of inspired, infallible and inerrant *words*, and not inspired, infallible and inerrant men. In the light of 1 Thessalonians 2:13, the God-breathed words were not just the written words, but also the *spoken* words of God through the Spirit-moved/guided Apostles and only them as God's special servants for that special period of time. We categorically reject the errant notion of total apostolic infallibility for there is *no sinless perfection* amongst men after the Fall (save our Lord who is every whit sinless and perfect), and we categorically reject the heretical doctrine of apostolic succession and papal infallibility.

1b. Pauline Epistles

The Pauline epistles can be divided into 5 groups (Soteriological, Ecclesiological, Eschatological, Pastoral, and Prison Epistles):

1c. Soteriological Epistles

These are epistles dealing primarily with the doctrine of salvation:

1d. Romans

The doctrine of salvation hinges on the fact that man is totally sinful and unable to save himself from his sins. As such, man is in desperate need of a Saviour—and he is none other than Jesus Christ, “the Son of God who became the Son of Man, so that the sons of man might become the sons of God” (Calvin). The first three chapters of Romans thus establish the fact that man is totally depraved and absolutely sinful. Paul in no uncertain terms argued powerfully that gentiles are sinners (chap 1), Jews are sinners (chap 2), and finally all are sinners (chap 3).

It must be noted that Paul designed this section (chaps 1-3) to be first in his epistle to the Romans for theological reasons. Before man can fully appreciate the gospel and the salvation of God, he must first understand that he is a sinner, and that in and of himself, there is no hope of salvation. Paul's theological design of his treatise is no different from Peter's first sermon to the Jewish crowd at Pentecost (Acts 2:14-38). Peter gave a powerful sermon on sin and the atrocities of the Jews against their Messiah, which finally drew the response of a convicted heart, “Men and brethren, what shall we do?” (Acts 2:37). To this Peter replied, “Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost” (Acts 2:38). Likewise, Paul's initial indictment against sin and sinners is intended to draw the response from his readers, “What must I do to be saved?” It is then that Paul speaks of salvation by grace through faith in Christ alone (chaps 4-5)—“Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ” (Rom 5:1).

2d. Galatians

The Apostle Paul wrote this epistle because the converts at Galatia were troubled by Judaizers who taught them that it was not enough to believe in Jesus Christ for their salvation, and that they must also keep the Mosaic law of circumcision if they wish to be saved.

Paul addressed the problem in the very first chapter, “I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ” (Gal 1:6-7).

The Galatian Christians’ rejection of the gospel surprised Paul in no small way. They have been set free from the bondage of sin, Satan, and the world when they received the gospel of Christ preached by him. Yet they are now so ready to reject it to return to their former state of enslavement! A freed slave now wanting to go back to his chains?!

This departure “so quickly” (*houtos tacheos*) made, makes the whole affair even more incredulous. The “so quickly” here could either refer to (1) the recentness of their Christian conversion, or (2) the recentness of the heretical intrusion.

The believers are said to be in the process of departing from the gospel of Christ. The verb *metatithes* (“you are transferring yourselves”) is descriptive of the state the Galatians were in: (1) Present tense: They are being persuaded by the false teachers, and are in the process of renouncing the gospel of liberty, but the defection is not total yet. (2) Middle voice: They themselves were to be blamed for this defection from the faith. Although there was an external element of heretical teachers, they were chiefly at fault because they were allowing themselves to be deceived by such. They ought to be like the noble Bereans who wasted no time in searching the Scriptures to ascertain the truth of the things taught (Acts 17:11).

The Galatians were about to accept “another gospel” (*heteron euaggelion*) which was not “another” (*allo*). In the Greek, “two different words are used here for ‘another.’ The word which is used in the former place is *heteros*; the word which is used in the latter place is *allos*. The former word, *heteros*, often, though not always, has in it the notion of difference in kind between one thing and another. The other word, *allos*, on the other hand, designates merely numerical distinctness of one thing from another. If I gave a man an apple, and he asks me whether I have ‘another,’ the word that he will naturally use is not *heteros* but *allos*.

Paul says that the Galatians are turning unto a completely different gospel and is quite unlike the gospel he had preached to them originally. There is only one gospel, not two. And the one that is preached to them by the Judaizers is really a perversion of the one true gospel. These false preachers deserved to be cursed by God, “But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. ⁹As we said before, so say I now again, If any *man* preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed” (Gal 1:8-9).

The word *anathema* literally means “a placed up object” (*ana* = “up,” and *thema* = “to place”). It came to refer to something handed over to God for judgement. *Anathema* has the OT idea of a *cherem*, “a

ban” (Num 21:3, Josh 6:17, 7:12, Judg 1:17, Zech 14:11), the heathen nations of Canaan, for example, were specially set aside by God for destruction or annihilation. In the NT it refers to an object of God’s hatred—a thing cursed—that must not be allowed to remain and must be utterly destroyed. He who preaches a false gospel is delivered to destruction by God. By pronouncing anathema, Paul was not executing church discipline but calling upon God’s judicial wrath upon the culprits.

3d. Hebrews

1e. Eusebius, “the father of Church History,” described Jesus as “the holy High Priest of all men, the only King of all creation, and the Father’s only supreme Prophet of prophets.” It has been customary in the Christian world to refer to the office of Jesus as prophet, priest, and king. Christ is the author of the new covenant. In his *Institutes*, Calvin said, “that faith may find in Christ a solid ground of salvation, and so may rely on him, it is proper for us to establish this principle, that the office which was assigned to him by the Father consists of three parts. For he was given as a Prophet, a King, and a Priest.” The three-fold office of Jesus is attested by the very title given to him, namely, Christ. The Westminster Larger Catechism asks, “Why was our Mediator called Christ?” The answer is, “Our Mediator was called Christ, because he was anointed with the Holy Ghost above measure; and so set apart, and fully furnished with all authority and ability, to execute the offices of prophet, priest, and king of his Church, in the estate both of his humiliation and exaltation” (Q.42). The Greek *Christos* means “the Anointed one.” It is interesting to note that in the OT, there were only 3 groups of people that were anointed: (1) the prophet (Ps 105:15, 1 Kgs 19:16), (2) the priest (Exod 40:13, Lev 4:3,5,16, 6:22, Zech 4:14), and (3) the king (1 Sam 10:1, 15:1, 16:13). Jesus, as Messiah, fulfilled all three roles.

2e. Hebrews 1:3 is the summary verse that proves the Jesus’ threefold Messianic office as:

1f. Prophet: “upholding all things by the *word of His power.*”

2f. Priest: “had by Himself *purged our sins.*”

3f. King: “sat down on the right hand of the *majesty on high.*”

3e. Insofar as the authorship of the epistle goes, it is likely that the Apostle Paul wrote it for the following reasons:

1f. More people in history have regarded this letter to be from Paul than any other epistle. There is nothing in the epistle that is contradictory to Paul. If the actual writing was not Paul’s, at least the thoughts were. For example, the analogy between milk and meat in Heb

5:12-13 is quite similar to that found in 1 Cor 3:2 (cf 1 Pet 2:2 which uses “milk” in a different way).

2f. There is early Christian testimony to Paul’s authorship of Hebrews. Clement of Alexandria (c.150-210) “says that the Epistle to the Hebrews is Paul’s but that it was written for Hebrews in the Hebrew language, and that Luke, after carefully translating it, published it for the Greeks.”

3f. The mention of Timothy in the concluding section of the Epistle favours Paul as the author of it (13:23).

4d. The soteriological epistles of Paul ought to be revisited today in light of evangelical departures of the biblical, fundamental and reformed understanding of faith and salvation.

1e. Evangelicals and Catholics Together (ECT 94)

For documentation, please see:

1f. “Ecumenism” in *Biblical Separation* by Jeffrey Khoo (Singapore: Bible Witness Literature Ministry, 2004), 87-91.

2f. Glenn Myers, “Meeting the Catholics,” *Impact Magazine* (Feb-Mar 95), and responses by Tan Eng Boo (Grace BPC), and Jeffrey Khoo (FEBC).

3f. John C Whitcomb, “Evangelicals and Roman Catholics Together,” *Conservative Grace Brethren Publications* (Winter 1996): 10-15.

4f. Lorna Khoo, “Christian Unity,” *Methodist Message* (Jan 93): 2-3. This article expresses the general sympathy of the Methodist Church for ecumenical unity at the expense of purity of the gospel and the historic Christian faith.

5f. Prof Arthur Noble, “Treachery, Travesty, Tragedy: The Unholy Trinity of the Lutheran World Federation,” in www.ianpaisley.org, accessed on October 27, 2004.

2e. The Case of Norman Shepherd and the Orthodox Presbyterian Church and Westminster Seminary, and the Incipient Compromise of the Bible Presbyterian Church (USA). See Mark W Evans, “Saving the Bible Presbyterian Church,” *The Trinity Review* (November 2004): 1-4.

2c. Ecclesiological Epistles

1d. These epistles primarily deal with issues in the church. The church that was most problematic for the Apostle Paul was the Corinthian Church. There were multiple issues and problems: divisions and strifes within the church (1 Cor 1-2), the carnality of the members (1 Cor 3-4), lack of church discipline on errant members (1 Cor 5),

lawsuits between Christians before unbelieving judges (1 Cor 6), the question of singlehood, marriage and divorce (1 Cor 7), the eating of food offered to idols (1 Cor 8-10), the women's usurpation of the headship/leadership of the men (1 Cor 11), the abuse of spiritual gifts especially the gift of tongues (1 Cor 12-14), the denial of the resurrection of Christ (1 Cor 15). Many of the problems of the Corinthian Church were due to a false leadership that had gained control of the church. In 2 Corinthians we see Paul defending his apostleship and warning the church against false apostles who had not only taught heresies, but undermined his God-given ministry and authority.

2d. The ecclesiological epistles would be the two epistles Paul wrote to the Corinthians, but did Paul write only two epistles to the Corinthian Church or were there more than two (cf 1 Cor 5:9)? And how many times did Paul visit the Corinthian Church (cf 2 Cor 12:14,21)?

1e. First Visit: Founding of the church at Corinth (A.D. 50-52) during the second journey (Acts 18). He was 18 months in Corinth and met a certain Jew by the name of Aquila. Worked as a tent-maker. Preached in the synagogue on weekends. When Silas and Timothy came from Macedonia, Timothy brought a gift from Philippi which enabled him to spend full-time in the work of the gospel. Set up his headquarters in the house of Justus. After he left Corinth, he went to Ephesus before returning to Jerusalem (Acts 18:23).

2e. First Letter: Lost Letter (1 Cor 5:9). After this letter word came to Paul from the household of Chloe (1 Cor 1:11) and Apollos (1 Cor 16:12) that "there are contentions among you." He also received a letter, probably through Stephanas, Fortunatus, and Achaicus (1 Cor 16:17 in context of v15-18; cf 1 Cor 7:1, 1 Cor 8:1). He sent Timothy and Erastus to Macedonia (Acts 19:22). Timothy also went to Corinth (1 Cor 4:17). Timothy may not have arrived at Corinth prior to the letter of 1 Corinthians.

3e. Second Letter: 1 Corinthians (A.D. 55). Written from Ephesus (1 Cor 16:8) on his third missionary journey (Acts 19). But the party spirit continued.

4e. Second Visit: The painful visit. This visit is not mentioned at all in Acts but reflected in 2 Corinthians. (1) 2 Cor 2:1: "But I determined this with myself, that I would not come again to you in heaviness." (2) 2 Cor 12:14,21: "Behold, the third time I am ready to come to you;... And lest when I come again,..." (3) 2 Cor 13:1-2: "This is the third time I am coming to you... I told you before, and I foretell you, as if I were present, the second time;..." The "comings" seem to be actual visits. They, apparently, have been unsuccessful.

5e. Third Letter: The severe letter. Mentioned in 2 Cor 2:4,9, “For out of much affliction and anguish of heart I wrote unto you with many tears... For this end also did I write...” This letter was carried by Titus (2 Cor 12:18). Paul later regretted sending it but was glad that it brought forth fruit from the Corinthians. This good news was received by Paul when he was in Troas, off Macedonia, where he was met by Titus (2 Cor 2:12-13 cf 7:5-16).

6e. Fourth letter: 2 Corinthians. It was written a few months later from Macedonia (late A.D. 55-6). See 2 Cor 8:1, and 9:2-4.

7e. Third Visit: Third missionary journey. Acts 20:1-4, 2 Cor 12:14, and 13:1 which says, “This is the third time I am coming to you.”

3d. Paul’s ecclesiastical epistles to the Corinthians remain relevant to the church today. 1 Corinthians 13 is particularly important not just in telling us what love is all about as defined by the Holy Word as opposed to Hollywood, it also argues for the temporariness of the apostolic sign gifts and the eventual cessation of those sign gifts by the end of the 1st century when the Perfect Word of God was finally completed and given in full. See the discussion in my book—*Charismatism Q&A* (Singapore: FEBC Press, 1999)—33-39.

3c. Eschatological Epistles

1d. The eschatological epistles of Paul are 1-2 Thessalonians.

2d. In the first epistle, Paul tells the Thessalonians that they should not be discouraged by those who have already died before the coming of Christ, for they will be resurrected together with those who are still alive when Christ comes (1 Thess 4:14-18).

3d. The second epistle was written in response to misunderstanding and misapplication of the doctrine of the 2nd coming of Christ. The people stopped working because they expected Christ to come at any moment. Paul had to correct this erroneous behaviour. 1 Thessalonians expounded the doctrine of the second coming of Christ, and 2 Thessalonians dealt with the practice of it.

4d. Prof Robert L Thomas of The Master’s Seminary provides an excellent synopsis of the eschatology of 1-2 Thessalonians: “Far and away the largest theological contribution of the Epistles lies in what they say about eschatology. Perhaps the best way to summarize this is to survey Paul’s use in the Epistles of various terms and themes relating to the end of time. ‘Coming’ or ‘presence’ (*parousia*) is the most frequent term, sometimes referring to an examination of Christians before the Father and Christ (1, 2:19; 3:13; 5:23), sometimes to the moment of the Lord’s meeting Christians in the air (1, 4:15; 2, 2:1), and sometimes to Christ’s triumphant conquest of “the lawless one” (2, 2:8). From all this the dead in Christ will not be excluded (1, 4:13-18). ‘Revelation’ (*apokalupsis*) occurs only once (2, 1:7) and spans the entire period beginning with the Lord’s coming from heaven

for the saints till his appearance on earth to put down those who do not know God and those who do not obey the gospel of Christ. Between these two points is a time of God's 'wrath' (*orge*) on earth (1, 1:10; 2:16; 5:9). This outworking of God's 'vengeance' (*ekdikesis*) against earth's rebels (2, 1:8) is the initial phase of the day of the Lord and may come at any moment (1, 5:2, 3). It will mean 'tribulation' (*thlipsis*) to the unrepentant (2, 1:6)—a 'sudden destruction,' comparable to a pregnant woman's labor pains, that will culminate in 'eternal destruction' or separation from the returning Lord and his glory (1, 5:3; 2, 1:9). While suffering through the period of wrath, the rebels will unite in a great apostate movement (*apostasia*) and support the rise of a great figure who advocates opposition to God's laws (2, 2:3, 4). They will be captivated by his deluding words and activities (2, 2:9-11). His high point in opposing God will be the abomination 'that makes desolate' (Dan 12:11) in the rebuilt Jerusalem temple (2, 2:4). The 'righteous judgment' (*dikaia krisis*) of God assures a devastating penalty against the ungodly, but also guarantees that believers will be counted worthy of God's kingdom (*basileia*) (1, 5:24; 2, 1:5), find rest from hardships (2, 1:7) and experience salvation and glory in lieu of the terrible fate awaiting their persecutors (1, 1:10; 5:9; 2, 1:7, 10, 12; 2:13, 14). Hence, they have every reason to persevere because they anticipate a deliverer who at any moment may summon them to meet him in the air (1, 1:10; 5:15-17; 5:4, 9; 2, 1:4-10). Anticipating that the Lord will return soon does not, however, release Christians from their usual everyday responsibilities. On the contrary, they must continue working and providing for their own support (1, 4:11, 12; 5:14; 2, 3:6-15)."

5d. The eschatological epistles of Paul are extremely relevant in the 21st century considering the signs of the times as predicted by the Lord Himself in Matthew 24. The unbelieving world which is becoming increasingly wicked will one day face the judgement of God when He pours out His wrath in the time of the Great Tribulation which will last for 7 years (Matt 24:21, cf Dan 9:27, 2 Thess 2:3-4). The Christian Church can however find great comfort in the fact that she will not face the wrath of God, but will be raptured—caught up suddenly—to meet the Lord in the air, and to be with Him for eternity (1 Thess 4:13-5:11). Besides 1-2 Thessalonians, the following courses—Systematic Theology IV (Eschatology), the prophetic books of Daniel and Revelation, and Contemporary Theology I-IV—would provide the necessary detailed study of the 2nd Coming of Christ, and the apostasy of the end times.

4c. Pastoral Epistles

1d. The Apostle Paul was a pastor of pastors. Timothy was a young pastor and needed counsel as regards the proper administration of the church which he was overseeing (1 Timothy, especially chapter 3 on the appointment of a "bishop," *episkopes*, literally an "overseer," a function which applies to the "elders," *presbuteroi*, cf 1 Tim 5:17, Tit 1:5, 1 Pet 5:1; and "deacons" or "servants," *diakonoï*), and how he needed to be very watchful over the flock of God that has been placed

under his care in light of the ethical declension (2 Tim 1-2) and doctrinal dangers (2 Tim 3-4) that will take place in the last days.

2d. Here is a biographical synopsis of Timothy:

1e. Timothy was a native of the Lycaonian city of Lystra in Asia Minor (Acts 16:1-2).

2e. He was brought up in the Jewish faith by his mother Eunice and grandmother Lois who were Jewish (Acts 16:1, 2 Tim 1:5). His father was a Greek (Acts 16:1, 6). Whether his father was a proselyte or not, we do not know, but probably not since Timothy was not circumcised at birth.

3e. He probably became a Christian on Paul's first missionary journey since he became Paul's traveling companion only during the second missionary trip (Acts 16:1-3). Paul preached at Lystra during his first missionary journey (Acts 14:6-7). It is quite likely that Timothy met Paul there and was converted. This began a special relationship between Paul and Timothy; Paul calling him "my child" (1 Cor 4:17, 2 Tim 2:1). It was a father-son relationship at the spiritual level.

4e. He was circumcised by Paul to give no cause for Jewish opponents to hinder the gospel of Christ (Acts 16:3).

5e. He was set apart for the full-time gospel ministry by the laying on of hands by Paul and the presbytery (1 Tim 4:14, 2 Tim 1:6). He accompanied Paul as an intern during his second missionary journey (Acts 16:2-4, 17:14-15, 18:5, 1 Thess 1:1, 3:2,6, 2 Thess 1:1), and proved himself so faithful and reliable in the work of the gospel that Paul assigned him to pastor the church of Thessalonica.

6e. He was also a companion of Paul on his third missionary journey (Acts 19:22, 20:4, 2 Cor 1:1, 19). This time he was sent to pastor the problematic church at Corinth (1 Cor 4:17, 16:10).

7e. He was with Paul during his imprisonment in Rome (Phil 1:1, Col 1:1, Philem 1).

8e. After Paul was released from prison, he sent Timothy to pastor the church at Ephesus. Timothy was still pasturing the Ephesian church when the first epistle was written to him, and was likely to be there too when the second epistle was sent (1 Tim 1:3, 2 Tim 1:16-18, 4:19).

3d. Paul's pastoral epistles include his epistle to Titus as well. Titus was a pastor of the church in the island of Crete. The contents of the epistle to Titus are similar to those of 1-2 Timothy. Both Timothy and Titus shared the same needs as young pastors, and the senior pastor—Paul—had to instruct them concerning (1) the need to appoint elders to play a part in the spiritual leadership of the church (1:5-9), (2) the need to warn against false teachers—charlatans who masquerade themselves as servants of God but are out to take advantage of the congregation

for money (1:10-16), and (3) the need to give further practical instructions on vital matters involved in taking care of the church (2:1-3:15).

4d. The administration of the church must be done in the biblical way if the church is to function effectively as a spiritual institution and organisation. It is unfortunate that in many modern-day churches the administration is patterned after secular models that are high on marketing strategies where the consumer is king, and image is key. The Church today is high on politics but low on ethics. It is no wonder that we find many well-organised churches with many activities, but the spiritual sensitivity and liveliness is so lacking in them. Such a secular and business mentality in church administration and organisation is not only seen in neo-evangelical churches which are known for their compromises, but also in so-called fundamental churches nowadays. Dr H T Spence of Foundations Bible College has rightly observed, “If Fundamentalism is to see a genuine, biblical revival—and it desperately needs one—many incidents of neutrality and compromise will have to be dealt with; presently Fundamentalism is marked with a lot of spiritual and carnal debris. We have gone so long without a true move of God that polished programs and professionalism have taken the place of the Holy Spirit. We are fast learning into the winds of the Neo, and we do not see it. There are changes in music, terms, and versions, and leaders want meetings to ‘chart the course for the future.’ *Our chart has already been laid out; our responsibility is to follow it without compromise.* We don’t need a new chart or a new compass” (emphasis in the original).

5c. Prison Epistles

The Apostle Paul wrote 4 epistles—Ephesians (3:1, 4:1, 6:20), Philippians (1:7,12-14), Colossians (4:18), and Philemon (1,9)—during his imprisonment in Rome (Acts 28:30-31). He was there for 2 years. The epistles were written at about the same time and delivered by the same courier, namely, Tychichus (Eph 6:21).

1d. Colossians

1e. Colossians and Philemon have several things in common; for example, both were carried to Colosse and both mentioned Onesimus, the runaway slave.

2e. The city of Colosse was a very small town located about a hundred miles East inland in the Lycus valley. There is no clear indication that it was Paul who founded the church. Paul said that he heard about their faith through Epaphras (Col 1:4, 7). It appears that Epaphras (who is also mentioned in Phlm 23) might be the one who had initially evangelised Colosse. Paul himself said that the Colossians have yet to personally see his face (Col 2:1).

3e. Nevertheless, based on Paul’s principle that he would not build upon another man’s foundation (Rom 15:20), it is likely that the church was founded indirectly through Paul

during his 3rd missionary journey. Paul had a very successful ministry at Ephesus (Acts 19:10). While he was in Ephesus, all who were in Asia was evangelised. We do not have to assume that Paul did all the evangelism, but under his apostolic tutelage, there must have been some kind of weekend evangelistic bands that went everywhere preaching the gospel. It is significant to note that Epaphras did not report to any of the other apostles but Paul. He probably was Paul's convert, and was sent out by Paul as an evangelist.

2d. Philemon

1e. The background of Philemon can be obtained by reading the letter and taking it at face value. Onesimus—a runaway slave—became a believer when he met Paul. Paul was now sending him back to Philemon his master. Paul's letter was addressed not only to Philemon but also Apphia (wife), Archippus (son), and to the church in his house. Although it was a personal letter, it was also ecclesiastically addressed.

2e. The epistle reveals Paul's skill and sensitivity in penning such a personal letter. Notice he did not mention Onesimus in the beginning but only later. Verse 13 records a bona fide return. This does not mean that Paul wanted Onesimus to return to him. Neither did he ask for Onesimus to be set free, but that Philemon was to regard him as a Christian brother, rather than just a slave (vv15-16).

3d. Ephesians

1e. The book of Ephesians has much to teach us concerning the Foundation of the Church and the congregation of the Church. It speaks of the unity of the Church in Christ her Lord and Saviour (Eph 1-3), and the separation of the Church from all unbelief and apostasy (Eph 4-6).

2e. The word "church" is used 9 times in Ephesians 1:22; 3:10, 21; 5:23, 24, 25, 27, 29, 32. It ought to be noted that in speaking about the grand themes of the church, Paul did not just speak about the fellowship but also the fight of the church against the enemies of Jesus Christ and the historic Christian Faith (see Eph 4:14, 5:11, 6:10-18).

3e. For a commentary on Ephesians, read Morris MacDonald, *The Ephesian Church: The Only New Testament Church Examined by Three New Testament Writers* (Singapore: FEBC Press, 1999).

4d. Philippians

The epistle to the Philippians was written for several reasons:

1e. Paul wanted to inform the Philippian church as regards the condition of Epaphroditus whom they had sent to Paul with a love gift. When Epaphroditus reached Paul, he became very sick. Epaphroditus was concerned that the church should be

aware that his return to Philippi was delayed not because he wanted to do some sightseeing or shopping in Rome, but because he truly was critically ill (Phil 2:25-30).

2e. Paul also reported to the Philippian church that his imprisonment had resulted in the furtherance of the gospel contrary to popular opinion (Phil 1:12-14).

3e. Paul also wanted to tell the Philippian church that he hoped to see them soon. It is likely that the epistle was written near the end of Paul's 2-year imprisonment. Paul spoke in such a manner probably because he sensed that his release from prison would be quite soon (Phil 2:24).

4e. Philippians 2:5-11 is often known as the kenosis passage. The term "kenosis" comes from the Greek word *kenoo* which means "to empty." This word is found in Philippians 2:7, "made himself of *no reputation*," or "*emptied himself*." There is a false theory by the liberals which stresses that Christ when He was on earth gave up all His divine prerogatives and attributes, and was thus not deity. Conservatives interpret the kenosis passage to mean that Christ *only gave up the independent exercise of His divine attributes, but never the possession of them* (cf Col 2:9, 1 Tim 3:16).

2b. Jacobian Epistle

1c. Who was the author of the Epistle of James? Chapter 1:1 is apparently clear enough when the author introduced himself as "*James (Iakobos)*, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ" (italics mine). Although the name of the author is mentioned, yet his identity is still a problem because there are several men by the name of James in the Bible. Which one of them wrote this Epistle? There are 3 legitimate candidates, (1) James, the son of Zebedee, (2) James, the Lord's brother, and (3) James, the son of Alphaeus.

1d. James, the Son of Zebedee

1e. James, the son of Zebedee, is the brother of John, and one of the Apostles. He is mentioned quite frequently in the Gospels in Matt 4:21, 10:2, 17:1, Mark 1:19,29, 3:17, 5:37, 9:2, 10:35,41, 13:3, 14:33J Luke 5:10, 6:14, 8:51, 9:28,54, Acts 1:13, 12:2. He belonged to the inner group of Jesus' disciples which consisted of only two others, namely, Peter and John (cf Mark 1:29-31, Luke 8:51, Matt 17:1, 26:37). The Lord chose these three to be closest to Him for a purpose. They saw and heard things from the Lord's mouth which the rest did not. It is possible that the Lord chose them specially for a two-fold ministry of not only preaching but also writing His Word. Peter has his 2 epistles to his credit. John wrote the fourth gospel, his three epistles, and Revelation. What about James? It is unlikely that he was left out. We should consider James the son of Zebedee as a prime candidate for the authorship of this epistle.

Most scholars, though considering James the son of Zebedee to be the major candidate, doubt that he was the author of the

book because he died early. James was killed in A.D. 44 by Herod Agrippa the First (Acts 12:1-2). The question however remains: Is it possible that the letter could have been written by him prior to his martyrdom?

2e. The date of the Epistle needs to be ascertained. Was the letter written prior to A.D. 44 or after it? The date of the Epistle is a subject of much debate too. Some scholars place it in the early or middle 40s, while others say that it was written just before A.D. 62. The reason why it is A.D. 62 is because Josephus has it that James the Lord's brother was martyred during that time. Those who reject that it was James the son of Zebedee who wrote the Epistle hold to the late date. However, there are those who regard James the Lord's brother to be the author and yet hold to the early date, even before the Jerusalem Council which was held sometime between A.D. 45-48 (Acts 15). Thus, the late date is by no means certain. Tasker says that the Epistle could be dated anytime between A.D. 40-60 (*James*, 31).

3e. In any case, those who argue for the late date suggests that the Epistle portrays "too settled a condition of things. It is too concerned with laying foundations. The distinctive doctrines of Christianity are presupposed. For this reason, the Epistle should be put as late as it can be put in the life-time of James" (ibid). The above reasons are purely conjectural. Perhaps a stronger argument for the late date would be the word *diaspora* mentioned in Jas 1:1. Lange and Van Oosterzee insisted on the late date because the mention of the dispersion required "the spread of Christianity through the entire Jewish diaspora" (quoted by D Edmond Hiebert, *The Epistle of James: Tests of a Living Faith* [Chicago: Moody Press, 1979], 41). However, this argument is by no means fool-proof for the letter could have been written during the early part of the dispersion, and addressed to scattered Jews in the immediate vicinity of Jerusalem and Judea. The clause, "the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad," taken at face value, could refer to the dispersion of the Jews which followed the persecution that came about after Stephen's death. These Jewish believers were said to have gone out of Judea and Samaria (Acts 8:1), Phoenicia, Cyprus, and Syrian Antioch (Acts 11:19). It is thus not necessary to conclude that the *diaspora* required a scattering throughout the whole Roman Empire. James could well be addressing dispersed Jews who were then residing in the neighbourhood of ancient Palestine.

4e. There is evidence supporting the early date of the Epistle. Burdick delineates:

1f. The Jewish orientation of the epistle fits the earlier period much more naturally than the later. That the author does not refer to Gentiles or related subjects

may well point to the time in history of the early church when Gentiles were only beginning to be reached with the gospel.

2f. The absence of any reference to the controversy concerning the Judaizers and their insistence on Gentile circumcision is best explained by the earlier date.

3f. The close affinity of the teaching of James to that of the OT and Christ is significant. If the epistle were later, one might expect to find a greater similarity to the writings of Paul, such as is apparent in 1 Peter, for example.

4f. Furthermore, the evidence of a simple church order favors the early date. The leaders are ‘teachers’ (3:1) and ‘elders’ (5:14).

5f. Finally the use of the Greek term *synagoge* (synagogue; KJV ‘assembly’) to describe the church assembly or meeting place (2:2 *cf Acts 9:1-2* (italics mineJ) points to the early period when Christianity was largely confined to Jewish circles (Donald W Burdick, *James*, EBC [Grand Rapids: Regency Reference Library, 1981], 12:162.

5e. Since a date prior to the Jerusalem Council is not impossible, the likelihood that James the son of Zebedee could be the writer of the Epistle should not be easily dismissed. The fact that the Epistle reflects a close dependence on the words of Jesus suggests that the author was a close disciple of the Lord during His earthly ministry. Compare the following sayings found in James and in the Gospels:

James		Gospels	
1:5	If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all <i>men</i> liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him.	Luke 11:9	And I say unto you, Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you.
2:5	Hearken, my beloved brethren, Hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he hath promised to them that love him?	Matt 5:3	Blessed <i>are</i> the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
3:18	And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace.	Matt 5:9	Blessed <i>are</i> the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God.

4:4	Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God.	Mark 8:38	Whosoever therefore shall be ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation; of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he cometh in the glory of his Father with the holy angels.
5:1-4	Go to now, ye rich men, weep and howl for your miseries that shall come upon you. ² Your riches are corrupted, and your garments are moth-eaten. ³ Your gold and silver is cankered; and the rust of them shall be a witness against you, and shall eat your flesh as it were fire. Ye have heaped treasure together for the last days. ⁴ Behold, the hire of the labourers who have reaped down your fields, which is of you kept back by fraud, crieth: and the cries of them which have reaped are entered into the ears of the Lord of sabaoth.	Luke 6:24	But woe unto you that are rich! for ye have received your consolation.
5:12	But above all things, my brethren, swear not, neither by heaven, neither by the earth, neither by any other oath: but let your yea be yea; and your nay, nay; lest ye fall into condemnation.	Matt 5:34-37	But I say unto you, Swear not at all; neither by heaven; for it is God's throne: ³⁵ Nor by the earth; for it is his footstool: neither by Jerusalem; for it is the city of the great King. ³⁶ Neither shalt thou swear by thy head, because thou canst not make one hair white or black. ³⁷ But let your communication be, Yea, yea; Nay, nay: for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil.

6e. It is thus possible that James the son of Zebedee was the writer of the Epistle just before he was martyred in AD 44, and before the Jerusalem Council of AD 45. The content of the Epistle does not militate against the view that the above author wrote it, and the early date of the Letter. If we accept this view, then James would have been the first epistle to be written. Also, there would be no question that it should be part of the NT canon.

2d. James, the Son of Alphaeus

1e. Among the 12 disciples of the Lord Jesus, there were two Jameses, one was James the son of Zebedee and the other was James, the son of Alphaeus (Matt 10:3). He was also called

James the younger, or James the less in order to distinguish him from the first James (Mark 15:10). Could this James be the author of the Epistle? It is important to take into account that one of the important principles for the early church's acceptance of a book as canonical was to ascertain whether it was written by an Apostle. If James the son of Zebedee did not write it, the baton must be passed to James the younger who was no less an Apostle.

2e. It is entirely possible that James the son of Alphaeus could have written this Epistle. Calvin suggested that the author of the Epistle of James was the son of Alphaeus (*Catholic Epistles*, 227). There is an extreme view which argues that James the Lord's brother whom majority of scholars consider to be the author of the Epistle was really James the son of Alphaeus (See Thomas Manton, *A Commentary on James*, Geneva Series [Edinburgh: Banner of Truth Trust, 1693], 12). R Laird Harris however prefers identifying James of Alphaeus not as the brother, but *cousin* of the Lord. He explains how this was possible: "There are at least two James and two Judes in the New Testament—possibly three of each. James the brother of John and son of Zebedee, and James the son of Alphaeus, are both repeatedly mentioned as apostles. Judas Iscariot also was one of the Twelve, and another Jude, called the brother of James,' is mentioned in Luke 16:16 and Acts 1:13. Thus it appears that among the Twelve there were brothers named James and Jude. Also in Matthew 13:55 and Mark 6:3 a James and a Jude are mentioned among the "brethren of Jesus." For dogmatic reasons the Roman Catholic Church identified these two with the James and Jude who were among the Twelve. In any case, the father of the apostolic pair, Alphaeus, was married to Mary, the sister of Mary the mother of Jesus. At least comparison of John 19:25 with Mark 15:40 indicates that the two Marys, sisters, were at the Cross, and one is variously called the mother of James and the wife of Cleophas. It appears that Cleophas is to be identified with Alphaeus the father of James and Jude. So if there were half brothers of Jesus called James and Jude, they would have been cousins of the apostolic brothers James and Jude. This is the usual though not exclusive Protestant position. ... the Epistles of James and Jude, if genuine, are clearly apostolic. We should remember that according to the usual Protestant view, these Epistles, if genuine, may very well still be apostolic, written by the sons of Alphaeus" (*The Inspiration and Canonicity of the Bible*, 261-2).

3d. James, the Lord's Brother

1e. James the Lord's brother is listed first among the brothers of Jesus. He is therefore the eldest of the sons of Joseph and Mary (Matt 13:55, Mark 6:3). The Apostle Paul mentioned him in Gal 1:19 as one of the two leaders he met in

Jerusalem three years after his conversion. On the basis of the testimony of Clement of Alexandria who said that James the Lord's brother was the first bishop of Jerusalem, most scholars have concluded that he is the most likely candidate for the authorship of the Epistle since he held such a powerful position in the Church and among the Jewish Christians. This view has support from the fact that there are some striking similarities between the Epistle of James and the book of Acts. For example, the word *chairein* (the usual epistolary greeting in Christian letters is *charis*) is used in both Jas 1:1 and in the letter James addressed to the churches in Acts 15:23. Other parallels are found in such rare words as *episkeptesthe* (Jas 1:27, Acts 15:14), *epistrephein* (Jas 5:19-20, Acts 15:19), *terein heauton* (Jas 1:27, Acts 15:29), and *agapetos* (Jas 1:16,19; 2:5, Acts 15:25). According to Donald Guthrie, "These parallels are remarkable in that they all occur within so short a passage attributed to James in Acts and because they are of such a character that they cannot be explained by the common accidents of speech" (*New Testament Introduction*, rev. ed., 728). Although Guthrie highlighted the similarities, he did cautioned in a footnote that one should not placed too much weight on resemblances between Acts 15 and the Epistle of James.

2e. Scholars who hold to this view of authorship assume that the James mentioned in Acts 12:17 and 15:13 is James the Lord's brother (See *Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible*, s v "James, Epistle of," by W T Dayton). The problem is this: the two records above do not explicitly identify which James it is. The James of Acts could be James the son of Alphaeus. Furthermore, we cannot be absolutely certain that James the Lord's brother was the first bishop of Jerusalem as testified by Clement of Alexandria since his writings are sometimes more legendary than factual in nature.

3e. Nevertheless, that James the Lord's brother was the author of the Epistle is the popular view, and held by the majority of Bible scholars today. According to Carson, Moo, and Morris: "James the brother of the Lord is the author of the letter. This is the natural implication of the letter's own claims, it is corroborated by New Testament and early Christian evidence, and it has no decisive argument against it" (*An Introduction to the New Testament*, 413).

3c. Conclusion

All three of the above Jameses are valid candidates for the authorship of the Epistle of James. This writer hesitates in dogmatically asserting who the author was or should be. But if he is to make a choice, he would assign the authorship of the epistle to the Apostle James, the son of Zebedee.

2b. Is salvation by faith or by works?

1c. Chapter 2:14-26 is the key passage of the book of James. The relationship between faith and works is clearly explained in this passage. The thesis of the whole epistle is stated in verse 20, “faith without works is dead.” As a matter of fact, the words *pistis*, “faith,” and *ergon*, “work,” occur no less than 10 times in these 13 verses.

2c. How do faith and works relate? “James insists that a living faith will authenticate itself in the production of works. There is no antagonism between faith and works. They are not two totally distinct concepts, but rather two inseparable elements in salvation” (Hiebert, *James*, 173-4).

3c. Although this relationship between faith and works—faith is the root of salvation, and works is the fruit of salvation—is clear enough, not everyone agrees that it should be seen in that light. On the one hand, we have those who advocate that the root of salvation involves faith and works (faith + works → salvation). On the other hand, there are the Antinomians who say that it is only faith that counts, and thus quite alright for one to live as one pleases after salvation (faith = salvation → no works). In between the above heretical views is the orthodox view that genuine faith which brings about salvation will result in a changed life (faith = salvation → good works).

4c. In the time of the Apostles, there were (1) the Judaizers who taught a faith-plus-works salvation, and (2) the Gnostics who taught a salvation that requires faith, but not a changed life. The former was ably refuted by Paul who called it “another gospel” (Gal 1:8), and the latter by James who contended that “faith without works is dead” (Jas 2:20,26).

5c. In the time of the Reformers, there were (1) the Roman Catholic Priests who insisted that works are required for salvation and (2) the Libertines who offered the gospel as a free ticket for sinful living. Martin Luther fought the Roman Catholic Church proclaiming, “the just shall live by faith” (Rom 1:17). John Calvin not only fought the Papacy but also the Libertines when he preached against licentious living, and refused to administer the Holy Communion to those who abandoned a sanctified life.

6c. Today, the same issues on grace versus law, and faith versus works are being debated. Although the lines between orthodoxy and heresy, Roman Catholicism and Protestantism, have been clearly drawn, the debate still continues within evangelical circles along finer points of controversy. The battle is now fought between (1) dispensationalists who say that the ten commandments have been abrogated since the time of Christ and need not be observed by the NT Church today, and (2) covenant theologians who insist that the demands of the moral law, being a reflection of God’s holy character, applies for all time. FEBC takes the view that the decalogue or ten commandments continues to be effective today. All Christians are obliged to keep them. For a critique of the dispensational view of the moral law, read Timothy Tow, *The Law of Moses and of Jesus* (Singapore: Christian Life Publishers, 1986). The following are important works that the student might want to refer to if he wants to probe further into the intricacies of the dispensational and covenantal systems of theology: (1) For a general overview, see Charles C Ryrie, *Dispensationalism Today* (Chicago: Moody

Press, 1965), and Vern S Poythress, *Understanding Dispensationalists* (Grand Rapids: Academie Books, 1987). (2) For detailed treatment on each area of the debate, read John S Feinberg, ed *Continuity and Discontinuity* (Westchester: Crossway Books, 1988) especially chapter IV, "Salvation and the Testaments," and chapter V, "The Law and the Testaments"; and Craig A Blaising, and Darrel L Bock, eds, *Dispensationalism, Israel and the Church* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1992), in particular, "Christ, the End of the Law in Romans 10:4," by David K Lowery (chapter 7), and "Christ the Fulfillment of the Law in the Sermon on the Mount," by John A Martin (chapter 8).

7c. To make the controversy of law and grace even more complicated, there arose in the last two decades a movement called "Christian Reconstruction" or "Theonomy" (literally meaning "the law of God") within the reformed camp. What is theonomy? Theonomy advocates the necessity of implementing OT law in NT life. It stresses "the continued normativity not only of the moral law but also the judicial law of Old Testament Israel, including its penal sanctions; and belief that the Old Testament judicial law applies not only to Israel, but also to Gentile nations,...so that it is the duty of the civil government to enforce that law and execute its penalties" (William S. Barker, and W. Robert Godfrey, eds, *Theonomy: A Reformed Critique* [Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing Gouse, 1990], 9-10). Gentry defines theonomy as "the application of God's Law to modern society and government, while holding at the same time to the postmillennial hope that promises that Christianity will win the world to Christ through the gospel, which is 'the power of God unto salvation'" (Kenneth L Gentry, *God's Law in the Modern World* [Phillipsburg: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co., 1993], 11). However, to what extent the OT law is to be applied in modern society is not agreed by all theonomists. Is the Mosaic Law, involving its judicial, ceremonial, and moral parts, applicable only to the theocratic nation of Israel, or does it apply to the Gentile nations as well? If it does, how much of it, and to what degree? Rousas J Rushdoony, the father of Christian Reconstructionism, says that it is not the purpose of the Christian Reconstruction movement to impose forcibly Old Testament laws onto today's society. He says that it would be a disaster and very wrong to do so. He clarifies, "the only way God's law is going to be enforceable in this world is as converted men, regenerate men, women and children, say 'God's word is binding upon me, and as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.' As they do so they will bring their lives under the dominion of Christ and little by little extend it" ("An Interview with R J Rushdoony," by Stephen C Perks, *Calvinism Today* 2 [1992]: 13). This lecturer sees the continuing validity of the law for godly living in this present age, but does not agree to a postmillennial eschatology. A man's perfect obedience to the law, and Christ's complete dominion over the earth will be realised only after Christ's personal return to destroy this present evil world system, and set up His perfect kingdom on earth.

8c. The battle between law and grace is fought among dispensationalists concerning the Lordship of Christ in salvation. John MacArthur in his book, *The Gospel According to Jesus* (Panorama City: Word of Grace, 1988), strongly propounded that salvation involves receiving Jesus not only as

Saviour, but also as Lord. In his book, MacArthur attacked the views of Zane Hodges, and Charles Ryrie who were professors of Dallas Theological Seminary. A year later, Hodges published *Absolutely Free* (Grand Rapids: Academie Books, 1989) in reply to MacArthur's Gospel. Ryrie also had something to say. In the same year, he published *So Great Salvation* (Wheaton: Victor Books, 1989). These 3 books are representative of the debate. MacArthur represents the Pro-Lordship view, Hodges the Radical Non-Lordship view, and Ryrie the Non-Lordship view. Edward N Gross has written an excellent defense of Lordship Salvation in *Christianity Without a King* (Columbus: Brentwood Christian Press, 1992). See also Kenneth L Gentry, Jr., *Lord of the Saved: Getting to the Heart of the Lordship Debate* (Phillipsburg: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co., 1992). Hodges' radical non-lordship view ought to be rejected. However, Ryrie's presentation of the non-lordship position should be taken into consideration. As it is in the case of the Epistles of Romans and James, James was not opposing, but complementing Paul. *Paul was focusing on the cause of salvation, while James the effect of salvation. It was Paul's intention to present the gospel to lost sinners so that they may obtain salvation in Christ, while it was James' intention to rebuke professing believers who claim to be Christian but showed no signs of regeneration whatsoever in their lives.*

3b. Petrine Epistles

1c. 1 Peter was written to the dispersed Jewish believers in the 5 provinces of Asia Minor. Although written to the Jews, the epistle expected a Gentile readership as well (1 Pet 2:10). The churches in Asia Minor were probably under constant persecution perhaps under the mad emperor—Nero. So, 1 Peter presents all the fundamentals of the Christian faith with special emphasis on the substitutionary atonement of Christ. The Apostle Paul no doubt intends to encourage the saints with the supreme example of their Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ who had to endure the cross of suffering before receiving the crown of victory. The theme of suffering is unmistakable since the Greek word for suffering—*pascho*—is used no less than 15 times in the epistle, and is certainly the key word.

2c. 2 Peter is quite similar to Jude in a number of places.

2 Peter		Jude	
2:1	But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction.	4	For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ.
2:4	For if God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment;	6	And the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day.

2:6	nd turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrha into ashes condemned them with an overthrow, making them an ensample unto those that after should live ungodly;	7	Even as Sodom and Gomorrha, and the cities about them in like manner, giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh, are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire.
2:10	But chiefly them that walk after the flesh in the lust of uncleanness, and despise government. Presumptuous are they, selfwilled, they are not afraid to speak evil of dignities.	8	Likewise also these filthy dreamers defile the flesh, despise dominion, and speak evil of dignities.
2:11	Whereas angels, which are greater in power and might, bring not railing accusation against them before the Lord.	9	Yet Michael the archangel, when contending with the devil he disputed about the body of Moses, durst not bring against him a railing accusation, but said, The Lord rebuke thee.
2:12	But these, as natural brute beasts, made to be taken and destroyed, speak evil of the things that they understand not; and shall utterly perish in their own corruption;	10	But these speak evil of those things which they know not: but what they know naturally, as brute beasts, in those things they corrupt themselves.
2:13	And shall receive the reward of unrighteousness, as they that count it pleasure to riot in the day time. Spots they are and blemishes, sporting themselves with their own deceivings while they feast with you;	12a	These are spots in your feasts of charity, when they feast with you, feeding themselves without fear:
2:15	Which have forsaken the right way, and are gone astray, following the way of Balaam the son of Bosor, who loved the wages of unrighteousness;	11	Woe unto them! for they have gone in the way of Cain, and ran greedily after the error of Balaam for reward, and perished in the gainsaying of Core.
2:17	These are wells without water, clouds that are carried with a tempest; to whom the mist of darkness is reserved for ever.	12b-13	clouds they are without water, carried about of winds; trees whose fruit withereth, without fruit, twice dead, plucked up by the roots; Raging waves of the sea, foaming out their own shame; wandering stars, to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness for ever.
2:18	For when they speak great swelling words of vanity, they allure through the lusts of the flesh, through much wantonness, those that were clean escaped from them who live in error.	16	These are murmurers, complainers, walking after their own lusts; and their mouth speaketh great swelling words, having men's persons in admiration because of advantage.

3:2	That ye may be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and of the commandment of us the apostles of the Lord and Saviour:	17	But, beloved, remember ye the words which were spoken before of the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ;
3:3	Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts,	18	How that they told you there should be mockers in the last time, who should walk after their own ungodly lusts.

3c. Question: Who copied from whom? Did Jude copy from Peter, or did Peter copy from Jude? Answer comes from Peter himself in 2 Pet 1:20-21. Besides the Holy Spirit, who else could have served as a common Source?

4b. Judean Epistle

1c. Jude is one of the shortest epistles of the New Testament—only 25 verses (2 John = 13, 3 John = 14, Phlm = 25). Although a brief epistle, it packs a lot of teaching. Like chilli padi, it is small but powerful. It is polemic in tone. Verse 3 is the key verse: “ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints.” Maxwell Coder aptly calls it “The Acts of the Apostates.” The Acts of the Apostles presents the GROWTH of the TRUE Church; the Acts of the Apostates predicts the DEATH of the FALSE Church in the end-times. The order of books in the NT interestingly charts the history of church: Gospels—APOSTLES—Epistles—APOSTATES—Revelation = The SEED of the Church—The GROWTH of the (True) Church—The INDOCTRINATION of the (True) Church—The DECLENSION of the (False) Church—The DEATH of the (False) Church. The evil nature of the end-time apostates are given in verses 4,8,10,11,12,13,16,19. The world is not getting better and better towards a utopia but getting worse and worse towards Armageddon.

2c. The name “Jude” comes from the Hebrew *Yehudah* (Judah), and the Greek *Ioudas* (Judas). The prominent Judes in the NT are: (1) Judas Iscariot; (2) Judas not Iscariot, aka Lebbeus, or Thaddeus who was the brother of James, the son of Alphaeus (Luke 6:16, Acts 1:13); and (3) Jude, the half-brother of Jesus Christ (Matt 13:55) who also had a brother James. Which of the above Judes wrote this epistle? The popular view is #3. There is a general reluctance to attach the epistle to the Apostle. The main arguments are:

1d. Nowhere in the epistle did Jude called himself an apostle. This is an argument from silence. Although such arguments are sometimes valid, they are by no means conclusive. The phrase *doulos of Jesus Christ*” may have apostolic implications (e.g. Rom 1:1, Jas 1:1, 2 Pet 1:1), It is possible that Jude did not bring up his apostleship because it was already a well-known fact to those whom he was writing to. His apostleship was not being challenged, and therefore there was no necessity for him to defend it unlike Paul whose apostleship was constantly being questioned by false teachers. The Apostles did not flaunt their unique office. John, for example, chose to use the title “elder,” or “presbyter” rather than “apostle” (2 John 1, 3 John 1).

2d. Verse 17 seems to exclude Jude from the Apostolic band. 2 Pet 3:2 has a similar statement, The personal pronoun “us” indicates clearly that Peter included himself in the Apostolic team. No such pronoun was used by Jude. Yet, this is not altogether fool-proof for John also mentioned the Apostles as a distinct group even though he himself was part of it (Rev 18:20, 21:14).

3d. There is nothing decisive against taking Jude the Apostle as the author of this Epistle. Origen, and Tertullian, early Church fathers, ascribed the letter to the Apostle Jude.

3c. Jude shared with his readers what he felt when he began to write this epistle, He said that he “gave all diligence.” This word *spoudeen* has the sense of making haste (Mark 6:25, Acts 20:16). Jude felt an urgent need, and an intense burden to write about the “common salvation.” Why did he feel this way? Evidently, the church was beginning to be infiltrated by false teachers who are attempting to destroy the Christian faith. So, Jude thought it necessary to remind the believers of the salvation that all born again believers possessed. The word used to describe the salvation is *koinees*. Here, it refers to something that is shared by all. Qualitatively and quantitatively speaking, every Christian receives the same salvation in the Lord Jesus Christ. There is no such thing as different degrees of salvation; one is “more saved,” and another is “less saved.” Jude wanted to write on the doctrine of salvation (soteriology) in all its various aspects: justification, sanctification, glorification etc. This was probably so because he wanted the believers to know for sure what they have believed and whom they have believed in, and in so knowing will not doubt their salvation when false teachers try to tempt them away from God.

At first, he wanted to teach the fundamentals of the Christian Faith, but later felt constrained as he was moved by the Holy Spirit, in view of the potentially dangerous situation the Church was then facing, to apply the doctrine of salvation instead. The Christians have already been well-grounded in the Christian Faith. The great salvation epistles of Paul, namely Romans, Galatians, and Hebrews, were already written, What is really needful now was to defend that body of truth. The subject he originally chose to speak on was retained. What Jude changed was his theme, from the Principles of the Faith (i.e. know it), to the Protection of the Faith (i.e. defend it).

Jude says that he was duty bound—*anagken*—to write the Epistle in view of end-time dangers that surrounded the Church. He strongly urged (*parakaloon*) the believers to “earnestly contend” for the faith. The word “earnestly contend” is significant. It is the Greek *epagoonizesthai* which is a strong word for “struggle.” It is a call for one “to exert intense effort on behalf of something.” Although it is only found here in the NT, its root *agoonizomai* occurs seven times in Luke 13:24, John 18:36, 1 Cor 9:25, Col 1:29, 4:12, 1 Tim 6:12, 2 Tim 4:7. It is a military word and is usually translated as “fight.” For example, Paul tells Timothy, “Fight the good fight of faith” (1 Tim 6:12). In the Christian context, it has to do with spiritual warfare. It has nothing to do with rifles and grenades (cf John 18:36). We are called rather to defend the faith against false teachers, heresies, worldliness etc. by means of the Word of God which is the Sword of the Spirit (Eph 6:17). We earnestly contend for the faith by way of preaching, writing, and conduct.

This contention for the faith is going to be a long drawn affair. We need to earnestly contend for the faith day by day. Jude tells us to keep on contending for the faith. There should be no letting down, but a constant, consistent, and continual struggle for the purity of the Church and her message. It will be agonizing work. You should not expect to find overwhelming support from the general populace. When a person believes in the Holy Bible and obeys it, he goes against the philosophy and praxis of a God-denying and Gospel-hating world. Persecution in the form of verbal abuse, discrimination, incarceration, etc can be expected. The Christian contender is called to endure it all and remain faithful to His Lord.

And what are we to earnestly contend for? It is for THE once for all delivered unto the saints FAITH. Faith may be understood in two ways: in the subjective sense of personal faith (i.e. belief, trust, submission, surrender etc), or in the objective sense of the Christian faith (i.e. the Christian religion, the body of truth that Christianity is based on). Jude here is referring to the latter. This Faith that Jude refers to is contrasted with other faiths in that it is THE ONLY TRUE FAITH or THE ONLY TRUE RELIGION. True forgiveness of sin with its promise of eternal life is found ONLY IN THE LORD JESUS CHRIST (John 14:6, 1 Tim 2:5). This fact of salvation, and content of faith may not be altered. It is THE TRUTH, and TRUTH IS UNCHANGEABLE. Christian Theology is settled and inscripturated in the 66 books of the Bible. None is to add to or subtract from it (Rev 22:18-19). There is no such thing as “new” theology, C H Spurgeon was absolutely correct when he said, “There is nothing new in theology except that which is false.”

5b. Johannine Epistles

1c. 1 John

1d. The Apostle John wrote this epistle in his old age (about 90 years old), and was pastoring the church in Ephesus in his final years. (Ephesus had earlier been pastored by Paul and Timothy.) He wrote primarily to combat a certain false teaching that was threatening the churches (1 John 4:2). Docetism or incipient Gnosticism denied that Jesus was truly and fully man—that Jesus did not come in the flesh. This heresy was taught by Cerinthus who lived in Ephesus. Polycarp who was a disciple of John tells us that the apostle once went to the public bath in Ephesus and found Cerinthus inside. Upon noticing Cerinthus, he ran out crying, “Let us fly, lest even the bath-house fall down, because Cerinthus, the enemy of the truth, is within.”

2d. Most of the modern Bible versions and commentaries undermine the classic biblical proof-text for the doctrine of the Trinity as found 1 John 5:7. Often used as an argument against the authenticity of 1 John 5:7 is Metzger’s myth that Erasmus promised to include 1 John 5:7 if a Greek manuscript could be presented to him that contained the text. H J De Jonge of the faculty of theology, Leiden University, an authority on Erasmus, has convincingly argued, giving evidence that Metzger’s view on Erasmus’s promise “has no foundation in Erasmus’s work. Consequently it is highly improbable that he included the difficult passage because he considered himself bound by any such promise” (cited in Michael Maynard, *A History of*

the Debate Over 1 John 5:7-8, 265; full bibliography of primary source: Henk J De Jonge. "Erasmus and the Comma Johanneum." *Ephemerides Theologicae Lovanienses* 56 [1980]: 381–89). Metzger eventually admitted his error in the 3rd edition of his book—*The Text of the New Testament*—but hid it under a footnote on a distant page (how convenient!). For further study, read my paper, "'Does a Clear, Biblical Proof Text Exist for the Doctrine of the Trinity?: A Preliminary Examination of the Antiquity and Authenticity of the Johannine Comma (1 Jn 5:7f)," *Foundation*, May-June 2000, 34-5.

2c. 2-3 John

1d. The Apostle John (cf 1 John 1:1-4, a personal eyewitness of the Living Word) in 2-3 John referred to himself as an "elder" (*presbuteros*). This is not unusual for Peter also referred to himself as an "elder" (1 Pet 5:1). This speaks of the humility of the Apostles who did not see it fit to "pull rank" on God's flock (1 Pet 5:3). Both Peter and John's office as Apostles was not being questioned by the churches. (Paul on the other hand had to defend his apostleship for he was constantly being attacked by false teachers who questioned his apostolic office.)

2d. The Apostle John must have been very well-known by the audience for them to recognise him just by his title.

1e. 2 John

2 John was addressed to the elect lady (in v13, there is also a mention of an elect sister). Who was this elect lady? There are several interpretations:

1f. Symbolically of the church. This view has some weaknesses for if the "elect lady" refers to the church, then who were the children? Would they be the church members? And who was the sister? A sister church?

2f. Literally, an individual Christian lady. This view has fewer problems. "When the plain sense makes common sense, seek no other sense." *Kuria* (lady) could be a title for a prominent lady of some influence. *Electa* could be her proper name—Lady Electa.

3f. Simply an unknown lady to us but well known to them.

2e. 3 John

1f. 3 John was addressed to Gaius. Who was Gaius? Nobody really knows for sure. There were other Gaiuses in the Bible (Acts 19:29, Acts 20:4—Gaius of Derbe, Rom 16:15—Gaius of Corinth).

2f. 3 John was written to deal with the problem caused by Diotrephes who had slammed the door on some who should be admitted to the church. Diotrephes was possibly trying to set himself up as pope.

6b. Revelation

1c. The word “Revelation” is a translation of the Greek Apocalypsis (Apocalypse)—which speaks of an uncovering or an unveiling.

2c. The book of Revelation has a simple outline based on chapter 1:19, “Write the things which thou hast seen, and the things which are, and the things which shall be hereafter.”

1d. Chapter 1: Vision—“the things which thou hast seen.”

2d. Chapter 2-3: 7 letters to the 7 churches—“the things which are.”

3d. Chapter 4-22: Prophecies—“the things which shall be hereafter.”

3c. Interpretation of Revelation

1d. There are 4 schools of thought on how to read and interpret the book of Revelation:

1e. Preterist (means “past”)

Revelation (chaps 1-22) is a description of the historical period in which it was written, and the events stated in the book have all been fulfilled by AD 70.

2e. Historicist

Revelation is a pre-written account of the different stages of church history. The fulfilment of its contents is still ongoing and has been going on for 2000 years already.

3e. Futurist

Except for the first 3 chapters, the rest of the chapters point to end time events, and will be fulfilled when the Great Tribulation period sets in.

4e. Idealist or Spiritual

A non-literal approach that considers Revelation to be a highly dramatic literary piece of work depicting various episodes of the ageless struggle between good and evil, between the kingdom of God and the kingdom of the devil. According to this school of interpretation, the book of Revelation is not a book of prophecies but a book of ethics.

2d. FEBC and the Bible-Presbyterian Church belong to the futurist school of interpretation. This is the view taken by many church fathers like Justin Martyr, Ireneus, and Tertullian. It agrees with the biblical doctrine of the premillennial return of Jesus Christ.

3d. For an excellent commentary on the book of Revelation taking the futurist (biblical) approach, see the Dr Timothy Tow’s *Coming World Events Unveiled* (Singapore: Christian Life, 1995). See also my paper, “Dispensational Premillennialism in Reformed Theology,” in the *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* (December 2001): 697-717.