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**INTRODUCTION
TO
THE BIBLE**

THE NEW TESTAMENT

2012

Fr. Tadros Y. Malaty

Translated by: Julie Mossad
Edited by: Translation Committee of
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I. Introduction to the Holy Gospels

The Four Gospels

The word “Gospel” means “Good News,” as it represents the message of our Christian faith. In fact, it is the **joyful delight in our Lord Jesus Christ, and the acceptance of His kingdom within us. Through the Gospel, we enter into the Father’s embrace, and become partakers in His heavenly eternal glory.**

- ❖ Our faith is “The Gospel of Jesus Christ” (Mk 1:1), as it is the path leading us into the everlasting joy.
- ❖ “The Apostles’ Gospel” (2 Cor 4:3), as it is the mission of their preaching.
- ❖ “The People’s Gospel” (Mk 3:10), as it is the preaching offered to all of mankind, including the Jews and the Gentiles.
- ❖ St. Paul called it, “My Gospel,” so that every believer would feel it is his or her own personal Gospel!
- ❖ The Divine Inspiration offered us one Gospel, which is The Gospel of Jesus Christ, through the four evangelists. Each of them revealed a unique aspect of the “One Gospel,” providing us with a different perspective that is complimentary with the others.

	Matthew	Mark	Luke	John
To whom it was written:	To the Jews	To the Romans	To the Greeks	To the Christians
Subject:	The Messiah the King	The Messiah the Conqueror of Satan	Christ the Lover of mankind	Christ the Incarnate Word
The Message of Christ:	Fulfills the Law	Performs wonders	Saves mankind	Dwells among us
The Gospel’s content:	Focused on prophecies	Focused on deeds	Focused on history	Focused on theology
Symbol:	The Human Face	The Lion	The Ox	The Eagle



1. The Gospel of St. Matthew

Christ the King Who is St. Matthew?

- ❖ He was one of the twelve disciples, who was a tax collector formerly named Levi son of Alphaeus. Jesus called him to the apostolic work, so he left his post (Mt 9:9, Mk 2:14, Lk 5:29), and had a feast at his own home for Jesus, inviting many other tax collectors and sinners (Lk 5:29). This act provoked the Pharisees and Teachers of the Law against him.
- ❖ The word “Matthew” means “Gift of God;” also known as “Nathaniel” in Hebrew, “Theodorus” in Greek, and “Tadros” in Arabic.

Characteristics:

- ❖ Matthew wrote the Gospel in Hebrew while in Palestine. He wrote it a few years after the Gospel of St. Mark was written, prior to the destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem.
- ❖ It was written for the Jews, to declare Jesus as the Messiah, the Savior and Son of David, through whom the prophecies of the Old Testament were fulfilled. He quoted many excerpts from the Old Testament, while continuously repeating the phrase “the Son of David.” Since the Jews were waiting for the Messiah the King, this Gospel was called the “Gospel of the Kingdom.”
- ❖ The evangelist made it clear in his writings that the kingdom of Christ is not an earthly one, as the Jews may have believed, but rather a heavenly one.
- ❖ It is the Gospel of the Church, which in essence is the Kingdom of God (Mt 16:18, 18:17, 18). The Gospel of Matthew concluded with the declaration of the eternal presence of Christ among His people (Mt 28:20), and the proclamation of the existence of the eternal Church.



- ❖ As he writes to the Jews, he defends Christ against the Jewish claims. For example, announcing His birth from a Virgin, and the appearance of the Archangel to Joseph, her fiancé, revealing her pregnancy. He recounted the events of the Resurrection, and the bribes paid by the Jews to the soldiers guarding the tomb of Christ to silence them. These are the reasons the Gospel of St. Matthew is called “the early Christian defense.” Some of the theologians believe that its main purpose is liturgical, and that it was written by the evangelist to be read and recited during the Christian prayers.
- ❖ As he writes to the Jews, he points out their errors (8:10, 11, 6:2, 5, 16, 12:1-13, 15:3-9, 23). He also focused on the Gentiles (8:10, 11), documenting their lineage and connection to the genealogy of Christ, showing that Egypt, the Gentile nation, became His refuge of choice during His childhood (2:13). He then concluded it with the words of Christ to His disciples to “go make disciples of all nations.” (28:19)
- ❖ He showed his attentiveness for the Gentile reader, by describing in detail terms used exclusively by the Jews (1:23, 27:23), detailing the Jewish geographical locations (4:3), the beliefs of the Jews (22:23), as well as their traditions (27:15).
- ❖ In the Eschatological side, it is the Book of the Kingdom of Heaven, which begins with the first coming of Christ to prepare the Church to meet Him in His second coming (24, 25).
- ❖ As he writes to the Jews, he repeatedly highlights their favorite numbers: three, five, and seven. Number three appears several times: the stages of genealogy of Christ 1:17, His three temptations by Satan 4:1-11, the cornerstones of worship (6:1-16), prayers (8:7-17), Jesus and the three disciples during His transfiguration with Moses and Elijah (17:1). Also in Gethsemane, Jesus prayed three times (26:39-44), and Peter the apostle denied Him three times (26:75), etc.



The Birth of the King Chapters 1 & 2	The Declaration of His Kingdom Chapter 4:12-25	The Ministry of the King Chapters 8 to 11:14	The Rejection of the King Chapters 11:15-30 to 12:1-14	Entering Jerusalem Chapters 21 to 25
<p>He supports the genealogy of Christ, as the Son of David, the True Messiah. Mentioning the coming of the Magi confirms that the Gentiles knew Him more than the Jews. 1. The genealogy of the King and birth. 2. The bowing of the Magi to Him. 3. His escape to Egypt (2:13-15).</p> <hr/> <p>The Coronation Celebration Chapter 3</p> <p>St. John The Baptist came before the King, and the Father announced His crowning during the baptism: 1. Forerunner to the King (v.1-6). 2. Preparing the way (v.7-12). 3. The baptism of Jesus (v.13-17).</p> <hr/> <p>Choosing the King Chapter 4:1-11</p> <p>1. As the King was crowned, it was necessary that He looked after His people, so He entered into a battle with Satan on their behalf and defeated him. 2. In His triumph after the temptations, He destroyed the kingdom of darkness, which dominated the world.</p>	<p>Having conquered Satan, He started His mission, and chose disciples to serve in His name. 1. His departure to Galilee (v.12-17). 2. Calling the disciples (v.18-22). 3. Preaching (v.23-25).</p> <hr/> <p>The Sermon on the Mount Chapters 5 to 7</p> <p>He offered us the spiritual doctrine through His teachings: 1. The Beatitudes (Ch. 5). 2. The Similitude (5:13-16). 3. The fulfillment of the Law (5:17-48). 4. The cornerstones of worship (Ch. 6). 5. A heavenly prayer (6:19-21). 6. The insight (6:22-23). 7. Worship and money (6:24-34). 8. The judgment (Ch. 7). 9. Protecting the Holies (7:1-6). 10. The ongoing petition (7:7-12). 11. The narrow door (7:13-14). 12. The false prophets (7:15-23). 13. The sealing of the Law (7:24-27). 14. The crowd's astonishment (7:28-29).</p>	<p>1. The purification of the land (Ch. 8). 2. Healing the servant of the centurion (8:5-13). 3. Healing Peter's mother-in-law (8:14-17). 4. The calling of the Church (8:18-22). 5. Calming the storm and demon possessed men (8:23-34). 6. Healing the paralyzed man (Ch. 9). 7. Calling Matthew (9:9-13). 8. Fasting (9:14-17). 9. The acts of love, raising the dead daughter of the official, and healing the two blind men. 10. Sending the apostles as ambassadors (Ch. 10). 11. Meeting the disciples of John the Baptist (Ch. 11:1-14).</p> <hr/> <p>“Repent, for the Kingdom of heaven is at hand!” (Ch. 3:2)</p>	<p>1. His love was met with hatred 2. Their rejection of Him as a spiritual King did not hamper His love or acceptance of the Cross. 3. His rejection by the Jews (Ch. 11) 4. His acceptance by the poor (11:25-30). 5. The Sabbath (Ch. 12:1-14).</p> <hr/> <p>Establishing His Kingdom Chapters 12:15 to 20</p> <p>Their plotting against Him did neither stop His love-filled deeds, nor deter Him from teaching us how to achieve salvation. 1. Healing the blind and dumb man (Ch. 12). 2. The parables about the Kingdom (Ch. 13). 3. Feeding the multitudes (Ch. 14-15). 4. The transfiguration of Christ (Ch. 17).</p> <hr/> <p>“Assuredly, I say to you, unless you are converted and become as little children, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven.” (Ch. 18:3)</p>	<p>1. Christ entered Jerusalem to be glorified while carrying His own cross, destroying the authority of Satan, and granting His children victory. 2. Jerusalem rejected Him, so He continued His teaching. 3. He entered Jerusalem like a Sacrificial Lamb, which was previously prophesied in the Old Testament.</p> <hr/> <p>The Death and Resurrection of the King Chapters 26 to 28</p> <p>1. He accepted the cross so the prophecies can be fulfilled (26:54). 2. In the midst of His suffering, Christ confirmed His kingdom, responding to the Roman governor “It is as you say.” (27:11), when accused of being “King of the Jews.” 3. The more effort Satan exerted to prevent and distort the Resurrection, the more proof and confirmations we have.</p> <hr/> <p>“All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth.” (Ch. 28:18)</p>



2. The Gospel of St. Mark

Christ the Servant

Who is St. Mark?


- ❖ He was born in Cyrene, one of the five cities in western Libya, to Jewish parents of the tribe of Levi. He was the nephew of St. Barnabas (Col. 4:10), and his father was the cousin of St. Peter's wife. When the barbarian tribes raided their land, they returned to Palestine, where he along with his mother Miriam, enjoyed the presence of Jesus Christ.
- ❖ His mother was a righteous woman respected by the first Christians in Jerusalem. At her home, Jesus Christ ate the Passover with His disciples, and constituted the mystery of the Eucharist. Inside his home, the disciples gathered for prayer, witnessed the appearance of Christ after His Resurrection, and the descent of the Holy Spirit on Pentecost.
- ❖ His Jewish name is "John," which means "God is compassionate." In Roman, his name is "Mark," which means "hammer." He was chosen to be among the seventy apostles. He was with Christ at the wedding of Cana of Galilee, and was also the young man whom the two disciples met to prepare for the Passover (Mk. 14:13, 14). When Christ was arrested, he left his cloak and ran away naked (Mk. 14:52).

The Lion of Mark:

- ❖ It is said that he attracted his own father Aristopulos to the faith, when he struck two hungry lions dead by the sign of the cross. He started writing his Gospel by describing John the Baptist as a lion roaring in the wilderness. He then portrays Christ as the Divine Master serving with the power of a Lion (Rev 5:5).

The Message of the Gospel:

- ❖ He began his preaching with St. Peter in Jerusalem and Judea; he then joined St. Paul and St. Barnabas the apostles on his first missionary journey, but when he became ill in Pamphylia, he returned to Jerusalem. Later, he travelled with St. Barnabas to Cyprus, from which he proceeded to Libya, his homeland on his own. In 61 A.D., he established the Church of Alexandria and the Christian School of Alexandria while preaching in the oasis and Upper Egypt.

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- ❖ He ordained a bishop, priests and deacons before departing from Libya to Rome, where he stayed until St. Peter and St. Paul's martyrdom. His journeys included stops in Genoa and Lebanon. Finally, he returned to Alexandria where he was martyred.

Characteristics:

- ❖ The oldest of the four Gospels, St. Matthew and St. Luke used it as a source for their Gospels. He probably wrote it while preaching in Egypt between the years 65-70 A.D.
- ❖ It was not originally written as a journal of St. Peter as many believe (read "St. Mark," by Pope Shenouda III, and "The Gospel According to St. Mark," by Fr. Tadros Y. Malaty)
- ❖ He wrote the Gospel to the Romans, which explains why he did not include many excerpts from the Old Testament. Rather, he described the meaning of the Mesopotamian words, detailing the Jewish traditions, and used many Latin expressions. The Romans believed in authority and influence through war and violence, so he offered to them Jesus Christ, as the true Authoritarian Ruler over devils (1:27), disease (1:42), nature (4:39-41), plants (11:12-20), and the temple (11:33). Angels minister to Him (1:13), Lord of the Sabbath (2:28), knows what is in the hearts and minds of people (2:8), speaks with authority (1:12), feeds the multitudes (6:33-44), the Destroyer of death (5:35-43), warns us from the letter of the Law (6:1-23), from hypocrisy (8:13-31), and from blindness (10:46-52). His authority is evident through love, service, humility, and through pain.

"If anyone desires to be first, he shall be last of all and servant of all." (Mark 9:35)

"Yet it shall not be so among you; but whoever desires to become great among you shall be your servant." (Mark 10:43)



Getting to Know Christ Chapter 1:1-11	The Deeds of Christ the Servant Chapters 1:12 – 10			The Obedient Servant Chapters 11 to 15	A Servant through His Resurrection Chapter 16
	His Ministry in Galilee Chapters 1:12 to 6:30	His Retreat from Galilee Chapters 6:31 to 9:50	His Service in Judea Chapter 10		
<p>1. St. Mark begins by describing Christ as a Servant to mankind, sacrificing Himself, aiming to deliver us. He does not detail the genealogy of Christ or His birth; rather His ministry.</p> <p>2. He presents to us Christ the Servant, while maintaining His Heavenly character as the Son of God. One who baptizes with the Holy Spirit.</p> <p>3. John the Baptist prepares the road for Christ the Servant (v.1-8).</p> <p>4. The characteristics of the Heavenly Servant. (His baptism) (v.9-11).</p>	<p>1. He writes about Christ serving in Galilee, and praying for us in the desert (1:35-6:30). He healed on the Sabbath in the synagogue (3:1), in the house (2:1), by the sea (2:13), in the grain fields (2:23), on the mountain (3:13), and wherever He went!</p> <p>2. Jesus called others to preach with Him, and for Him (1:16-20; 2:13; 3:14-19; 4:7-13; 6:7-13).</p> <p>3. Preaching along with deeds (Ch. 1).</p> <p>4. Resistance of His service, His authority, His behavior, His prayers, and His breaking of the Sabbath (Ch. 2).</p> <p>5. Jesus continued His preaching (Ch. 3).</p> <p>6. His parables were marveled by the people despite the resistance by the scribes (Ch. 4).</p> <p>7. He commanded the evil spirits, death, and disease (Ch. 5).</p> <p>8. Strange behavior towards this Servant, who is unique in His love and work. (By His relatives and Herod) (Ch. 6).</p>	<p>1. He retreated from Galilee, not to avoid the troubled path, but to prepare the minds to accept the cross:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> He continued His acts of love. Fed the multitudes. Bestowed Peace (between the waves of the world). Healed whoever touched Him. Cleansed the inner man (Ch. 7). Comforted even the Gentiles (healing the son of the Phoenician woman). <p>2. St. Mark recorded many conversations (Ch. 8-10), and questions that revealed His person, His mission, His pains, and our pains.</p> <p>3. Through His transfiguration, He acknowledged His kingdom.</p> <p>4. His sermons on modesty, humility and generosity.</p>	<p>In this chapter he provides us with live examples for the narrow path (path of the cross).</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> The difficult commandment (no divorce). Accepting children with love. Wealth and following Christ. Leaving it all to take up the cross. Discarding the love of higher positions. The need of insight. 	<p>He recounts the events in Jerusalem leading to Passion week.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> His entry to Jerusalem to rule over a piece of wood, and His zeal over His temple (Ch. 11). Resisting Him in Jerusalem (Ch. 12). The cross and the signs of the end (Ch. 13) The preparation of the Cross. (Ch. 14) The events of the crucifixion (Ch. 15). 	<p>1. During His life on earth, He served, carrying the cross joyfully, even on behalf of those who resisted Him. By entering Jerusalem, He offered His blood as a price for our redemption. Even after the resurrection, He remained a Servant to glorify us!</p> <p>2. His resurrection declared the glory of this unique Servant, who is capable of rising (and raising) from the dead.</p> <p>3. The One who rose from the dead is still serving us, as He sent His disciples to preach, and here He is still serving His church.</p> <p>4. He ascended to heaven so that our hearts may ascend with Him also.</p>

3. The Gospel of St. Luke



Christ, a Friend to All of Mankind

Who is St. Luke?

- ❖ The word “Luke” is a Latin name, which is believed to be the abbreviation for “Lukanos,” or “Lukios.”
- ❖ St. Luke was a doctor, a painter, and a Gentile from Antioch. He accepted Christianity at the hands of St. Paul the apostle, and became his companion on his numerous journeys.
- ❖ He met St. Paul on his second missionary journey in Troas, and accompanied him to Philippi. Then, he joined him again on his third journey heading to Jerusalem. It appears that he may have stayed in Palestine during the two years of St. Paul’s imprisonment in Caesarea. They also travelled to preach in Rome together (Acts 28:30). He was not one of the disciples, nor one of the apostles. Some historians point to the fact that St. Paul did not mention St. Luke by name, like he did with the other apostles, as evidence that he was a Gentile (Col 4:14). The evangelist showed a special interest to his homeland Antioch in the Book of Acts (6:5; 11:19-27; 13:1- 3; 14:26-28; 15:1-40; 18:22).
- ❖ It came by oral tradition that he had painted the first picture of the Virgin Mary.
- ❖ He departed in Bithynia at an old age. Some say that he was martyred during the reign of Nero.

Characteristics:

- ❖ He wrote this Gospel and the Book of Acts to an Alexandrian nobleman named Theophilus (Luke 1:3), calling him “most excellent,” which is a special title for one who holds an important position within the Roman Empire. Some say that Theophilus is one of these three:
 - He might have been someone whose name the apostles did not want to mention. Instead, they called him Theophilus, which means “he who loves God,” in order to not reveal his identity and cause him harm.
 - He might have been someone who truly bore this name. The apostle wrote him the Gospel of truth (the Gospel of St. Luke) to understand the Church and its mission (the Acts), in order to attract him to the faith rather than resist the Church.



- Luke was a doctor and a servant; he may have treated his own master before his master set him free. In order to show his gratitude and give the most precious thing he could offer, he wrote him the gospel of our Lord Jesus and the history of the first Church.

- ❖ This Gospel was recorded for the Greeks, who are known for their own philosophy and literature, which is why it was written in a refined and poetic style. It described the Divine life and history of Jesus Christ in a theological manner. He offered Him to the Greeks as a Friend to all of mankind, who cares for the educated and uneducated, the philosopher and the unwise, the rich and the poor, the Jew and the Gentile, the man, the woman and the child. St. Luke presented Christ to the Gentile world as the path through which we find inner happiness and joy. He began the Gospel with joy, and concluded it with joy; something the Greek legends and philosophies lacked.
- ❖ Jesus Christ came as a Friend to support us; praying in many places: (3:21; 6:12; 9:18, 29; 22:39-46), and teaching us about prayer (Our salvation is not through philosophy).
- ❖ Some say the Gospel of St. Luke encompasses the first six books of the Old Testament, in a new perspective: **The New Genesis** (the birth and childhood of Christ to grant us the New creation in Him); **The New Exodus** (His temptation in the wilderness for forty days); **the New Leviticus** (choosing the disciples, and His sermon on their ordination); **the New Numbers** (the mission of the disciples); **the New Deuteronomy** (gathering the commandments of Christ and His teachings); and **the New Joshua** (His crossing over with us through His pains, Crucifixion, and Resurrection); and the salvation of Zaccheus symbolizing Rahab the adulteress (Ch. 19).

“Go your way, behold, I send you out as lambs among wolves.”

(Luke 10:3)

“Do not fear, little flock, for it is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the kingdom.”

(Luke 12:32) .



He Became Like Us Chapters 1- 3	He Was Tempted Like Us Chapter 4:1-14	Our Friend Feels Our Pain Chapters 4:14 to 19:28	The Loyal Friend Chapters 19:29 to 23	The Friend Who Has Risen From the Dead Chapter 24
<p>To present the Son of God as a Friend, One that we can befriend not fear, St. Luke described Him as our Creator, Who became like us in every way (Heb 2:17). Introduction (Ch. 1). The promise of John the Baptist to Zachariah and Elizabeth (1:5-25). Meeting Elizabeth (1:26-38). The birth of John (1:57-80). The birth of Christ (Ch. 2) The shepherds meet Him (2:8-20). The circumcision of Jesus (2:21). His entrance to the temple (2:22-40). Jesus challenges the Jewish elders (2:41-52). 10. His baptism (Ch. 3), and the genealogy of Christ (3:23-37).</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. He was tempted Himself in order to save us, the tempted. 2. When Adam fell as a prey to the temptation, he was cast out and so were we. Then, the new Adam was born, when our Lord Jesus Christ, our Friend, who “returned with the power of the Spirit to Galilee” (v. 14). By this, we became triumphant through Him and His grace. 3. The devil tempted Jesus our Lord three times in three different settings, but failed (v.13). As a result, regardless of how powerful the temptations are, we should not be afraid! 	<p>Christ came to us as a Friend, aware of our weaknesses and feeling our pain:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. He is the Friend and the Lover of all mankind, and not just the Jews. “I bring you good tidings of great joy, which will be to all people” (2:10). “Your salvation which You have prepared in the face of all peoples” (2:30-31). Healing the ten Samaritan lepers (17:11). Healing the Roman officer’s servant (7:1-10). The parable of the good Samaritan, who was more compassionate than the priest (10:25-37). 2. Friend to both genders: He highlighted the role and significance of women in our Church (St. Mary, Elizabeth, the sinful woman) 3. His friendship is filled with kindness and compassion for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The sick (4:38-40; 5:12-14; 6:6-10, 19; 7:1-10 etc.). • Those bound by the devil (4:33-37; 6:18; 8:26-36). • The sorrowful (raising the son of the widow of Nain) (7:11-16). • The sinners (calling the tax collectors (Ch. 5), and receiving the sinful woman (Ch. 7). 4. He corrects fallacies such as: not doing good on the Sabbath (Ch. 6), answering those who criticized the Baptist (Ch. 7), the meaning of brotherhood (Ch. 10), the importance of meditation (Ch. 10), escaping hypocrisy (Ch. 11), escaping the literalism of the Law (Ch. 11), escaping attachments to all that is material (Ch. 14); and loving the sinner, but not sin (Ch. 15). 5. He ascends with His friends to the top of Mount Tabor to reveal to His disciples His glory, and grant them unity with those who died in God (Ch. 9), and show them the inner glory and grace of the heart (17:21). 6. The Heavenly rejoice in the return of His friends to His embrace: there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine just persons who need no repentance.” (Luke 15:7) 	<p>As a Friend of humanity, it was impossible to observe Jerusalem and not cry for it (19:41). His ascension to Jerusalem (Ch. 19), and talking about its false shepherds (Ch. 20). The widow’s mites (Ch. 21). (He resisted the evil shepherds, but accepted the offering of the widow giving the two small coins. Speaking of the Temple (Ch. 21). The new Passover (Ch. 22) “I have desired to eat this Passover with you”. The Cross.</p> <p>A loving, compassionate, and self-sacrificing friendship.</p>	<p>Christ our Friend and Companion, who rose from the dead, is capable of giving us life. He remained a Friend even after His resurrection (meeting the disciples from Emmaus, conversing with them and opening their eyes). He did not deprive the rest of His disciples from seeing Him, when He appeared prior to the Ascension. He sacrificed Himself, then blessed them with His hands as He ascended, granting them joy, comforting them as a Friend.</p>



4. The Book of St. John

Faith in the Incarnate Word of God

Who is St. John?

- ❖ The word “John” means “God is compassionate.” He is the son of Zebedee of Bethsaida, Galilee. Jesus Christ called him and his brother James, who was killed by Herod Agrippa the First.
- ❖ It is believed that he may have been wealthy, as his father had hired servants on his boats (Mk 1:20). John was also well known to the High Priest (Jn 18:16).
- ❖ His mother Salome was a virtuous and pious woman, who followed Jesus Christ (Lk 8:3). She participated with the women who bought expensive spices for the burial of our Lord Jesus Christ, and she is likely the sister of Mary, the mother of Jesus (Jn 19:25).
- ❖ He was a fisherman by trade, and a partner with both his brother James, and Simon Peter (Lk 5:10). Christ chose Simon, Andrew, James and John to be His first disciples. Christ called John and his brother, “Boanerges,” which means “sons of thunder,” since they were ill-tempered (Mk 3:17). John was later called the apostle of love. His Gospel, Letters, and Writings revolved around love. He preached about love until his last breath, uttering the words “Love one another” as he was carried onto the edifice. He was also called “the disciple whom Jesus loved,” and “John the beloved” (21:20), and is considered, along with Peter and James, to be one of the three special disciples, having been with Christ during many events such as: the Transfiguration (Mt 17:1), the raising of Jairus’ daughter from the dead (Mk 5:37), in the garden of Gethsemane (Mt 26:37). He was told to care for the Virgin Mary by the Lord while hung on the Cross.
- ❖ He ministered with St. Peter in Jerusalem (Acts 3:1- 4:23), visited the Church in Samaria (Acts 8:14- 17), and was considered one of the pillars of the church by St. Paul the apostle (Gal 2:9).

- ❖ He preached in Asia Minor, especially in Ephesus, tortured during the reign of Domitianus, and exiled to the island of Patmos, where he enjoyed the Revelation of the day of the Lord (the Book of Revelation). He remained in exile until his demise in the year 98 AD, during the reign of Tragan (98-117 AD).

The Message of the Gospel:

- ❖ He completes the picture of the Lord Christ, just as the three previous evangelists recorded. St. John wrote about the Divine nature of the Son of God, while also confirming His humanity (in response to the heresies that emerged at the end of the first and beginning of the second centuries). Some people doubted the Divinity of the Lord, while the Gnostics doubted His humanity, supposing that He had an imaginary body, so St. John chose to detail eight miracles confirming the Divine nature of Christ.
- ❖ In this Gospel, St. John portrays the humanity of Christ, in order for us to believe in Him as the Incarnate Son of God; in his three Letters in order for us to enjoy His love; and in the Book of Revelation to await His second coming.

Characteristics:

- ❖ The first three Gospels list an abundance of miracles, which Christ had performed revealing His love and compassion for us.
- ❖ Many of those who have studied the Bible see that the previous Gospels were presented to the world to guide its acceptance of Christ, the Spiritual King, the True Servant, and the Lover of mankind. St. John the apostle, on the other hand, writes his Gospel at the end for the Church, which is why it was called the “Gospel of the Church.” He identifies the primary Divine goal of the Church, which is to connect the Jesus of history to the Christ of the church who works in it. Examples:
 - The wedding of Cana (2:1-12), the feeding of the multitudes (6:1-13) (resembles Christ feeding His believers through the mystery of the Eucharist in His Church), healing the paralytic man in Bethsaida (5:1-14), and the man born blind (9:1-7) (symbolizes the cleansing of sin through baptism), and the blood and water that poured from the side of crucified Jesus (19:34) (declaring the unity of both the mysteries and their completion of one another).





- The evangelist openly details the conversation the Lord Christ had with Nicodemus about baptism (3:1-12), and about the Eucharist (6:22-59). He also reveals the promise the Lord Christ made about the Holy Spirit for His Church, being the Paraclete (the Comforter and Intercessor) in His last sermon (14:17).
- In the previous Gospels, humanity was divided into two categories: righteous and evil; however, St. John writes about “the Christ of the Church,” distinguishing between the believers and the non-believers. “He who believes in Him is not condemned” (3:18), but instead, “He who believes in the Son has everlasting life” (3:36). We cross over from death to life, through faith and love (13: 34-35), by keeping the commandments of the Lord (14:21).

“But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name.”
(John 20:31)



The Eternal Word Chapter 1:1-14	His Deeds Reveal His Divinity Chapters 1:15 to 12	He Reveals Himself to His People Chapters 13 to 17	The Sacrificial Son of God Chapters 18 & 19
<p>This introduction uncovers the apostle’s deep understanding of divinity.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. He describes the Eternal Word, distinguished from God, but not separated from Him. 2. The Creator (v.3). 3. The Incarnate Word granting us grace and truth, something that the Law does not provide. 4. Reveals the mysteries of the Father, Whom no one has ever seen (v.18). 5. The entire Gospel is an account and explanation to this divine introduction. 	<p>The main purpose of the letter is the testimony of St. John the Baptist, the prophets, the LORD’s deeds and His words about His Divinity, to make us believe in Him and enjoy life:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. St. John the Baptist: “And I have seen and testified that This is the Son of God.” (1:34) He knew Him with the Spirit that dwelt in Him (1:33). 2. The wedding of Cana of Galilee: He turns our cold water to joyful wine. He “manifested His glory; and His disciples believed in Him” (2:11). 3. As Jesus Christ revealed to Nathaniel that He saw him under the fig tree: “Rabbi, You are the Son of God” (1:49). 4. His conversation with Nicodemus: Not only do we believe in Him as the only Son of God, but through Him we also receive the adoption so that we do not perish (3:13-16). 5. The people of Samaria: “for we ourselves have heard Him and we know that This is indeed the Christ, the Savior of the world” (4:42). 6. St. John the Baptist reveals to his disciples that Jesus is the Christ, and that He is from above, the Son Who has all authority, the Giver of life (3:27-36). 7. The nobleman believed in the authority of the Lord; as when He speaks a word, it becomes as if He were present (4:46-54). 8. The Jews were plotting to kill Him because He said “God was His Father, making Himself equal with God” (5:18). 9. The Lord often revealed Himself by saying “I am He,” which means “Yahweh.” He does the work of His Father, He gives life to whomever He wishes, He judges people (5:19-29), He is Heavenly (6:38), and He offers His flesh to give eternal life (6:54). 10. Simon Peter testifies that He is “the Christ, the Son of the living God,” (6:69), as Martha also said, “and all who saw Lazarus brought to life believed in Him” (11:27). 11. The Lord Christ Himself asked the man, whose eyes He opened: “Do you believe in the Son of God?” (9:35) 	<p>As the Jews completely rejected Him and made plans to kill Him (11:47-53), He revealed Himself to His disciples so they may accept Him and live with Him: “He who has My commandments and keeps them, it is he who loves Me. And he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and manifest Myself to him” (14:21).</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The washing of the feet of the disciples (Ch. 13). 2. His clear farewell message: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. He consoled them saying He will prepare many rooms in His Father’s house for them, and will send them His Holy Spirit (Ch. 14). b. Abiding in Him (Ch. 15). c. The world will trouble them (Ch. 16). d. The final prayer (Ch. 17). <p>“And for their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they also may be sanctified by the truth.” (17:19)</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The divinity of Christ was apparent even in the midst of His pain (18:6). 2. They accused Him of claiming to be the Son of God (19:7). 3. His joy in receiving St. Mary. <p>His Resurrection Confirms His Divinity Chapters 20 & 21</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. He revealed His Divinity (20:8). 2. He granted them the Holy Spirit (20:22). 3. Thomas: “My Lord and my God!” (20:28). 4. John: “It is the Lord!” (21:7). 5. The disciples: “it was the Lord” (21:12). 6. The intention of recording the Gospel (20:31).



II. THE HISTORICAL BOOK

5. Acts of the Apostles

They Traveled Preaching the Word

The Author:

- ❖ St. Luke the evangelist wrote it in continuation to his Gospel. The two books are written to Theophilus the Alexandrian (Lk 1:3; Acts 1: 1). He wrote it in Rome while accompanying St. Paul the apostle during his last imprisonment (2 Tim 4:11), between the years 62 and 64 AD, before the destruction of Jerusalem (70 AD). It is noted that he did not mention the martyrdom of St. Paul the apostle (68 AD).

Characteristics:

- ❖ It is called the Gospel of the Holy Spirit; as it powerfully demonstrates our Lord Jesus Christ the Person, the Resurrected and Glorified, and the Head of the Church working through the leadership of the Holy Spirit.

The Message of the Book:

- ❖ To reveal that the apostolic Church is a living and growing Church, emergent with the Holy Spirit in the whole world: In Jerusalem (6:7), in Judea and Samaria (9:31), in Antioch (13:1), in Asia Minor (16:6), in Europe (19:20), and in Rome the capital of the Gentile world (28:31).
- ❖ The word “Holy Spirit” was repeated 54 times; while the word “God” was repeated 40 times, the name “Jesus” 37 times, and “pray”, as well as “prayer” were repeated 35 times.



In Jerusalem Chapters 1 to 7	In Judea and Samaria Chapters 8 & 9	To the Gentiles Chapters 10 to 28
<p>The first seven chapters reveal how the Early Church was established in Jerusalem:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Her Head is Heavenly, and so is she- the Ascension (Ch.1). 2. Her Leader is the Flaming Holy Spirit (Ch. 2): Reprimand the hearts (Peter’s sermon). Bestow the fellowship in worship, and practical love. 3. Her Treasure is the Name of Christ, which healed the lame man (Ch. 3). 4. Her characteristics: External trials and tribulations (Ch. 4) Unity of practical love Discarding the bad seeds (Ananias and Sapphira) (Ch. 5). 5. Serving the Altar are deacons filled with the Holy Spirit (Ch. 6). 6. The martyrdom of the archdeacon Stephen. <p>“And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved.” (Acts 2:47)</p>	<p>Preaching in Judea and Samaria:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Severe tribulations lead to more believers longing for and achieving martyrdom (Ch. 8). 2. Philip preached in Samaria during this challenging time. 3. The Church and simony: If tribulations strengthened the Early Church, the love of money corrupts the soul. Preaching to the Ethiopian eunuch official during the tribulations in Jerusalem. Converting Saul the persecutor into St. Paul the preacher. 6. The service of St. Peter in Lydda and Jaffa, where he healed Enias and raised Tabitha from the dead. Simon believed and was baptized, but he later returned to his old beliefs and perished (8:13). Philip baptizes the Ethiopian eunuch by immersion (8:38- 39). The Lord appears to Saul of Tarsus, and anoints him as one of His Apostles. <p>“But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.” (Acts 1:8)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The fulfillment of the redemption plan the Lord had planned for the Gentiles, including the capital of the Roman empire: • Opening the heart of the Gentiles: preaching to Cornelius the Roman Centurion (Ch. 10). • The relation between the Church of Jerusalem and the Church of Antioch (Ch. 11). • The devil’s rage over the victory and triumph of the preachers Peter survived, and the death of Herod (Ch. 12). • Paul’s service to the Gentiles: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> The first missionary journey (13:13-35). (The Council of Jerusalem studying the believers of Gentile origin). The second missionary journey (15:36-18:22) Paul and Barnabas separate. The conversion of Lydia in Philippi. Imprisonment of Paul and Silas (Ch. 16), and preaching in Greece (Ch. 17-18). The third missionary journey (18:23-21:16). St. Paul is imprisoned in Rome (21:17-28). His testimony before the governors and kings (Ch.24-25).



III. The Letters of Wisdom

The Letters of St. Paul

Structure of the Letter		Letter to:	Subject of the Letter	Key of the Letter
Name of the sender	1	Romans	Righteousness through practical, and live faith	"For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ..." (1:16-17)
Name of the receiver	2	1 Corinthians	Our Lord Jesus Christ	"... with all who in every place call on the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours." (1:2)
The apostolic blessing	3	2 Corinthians	The lawful service	"Who also made us sufficient as ministers of the new covenant, not of the letter but of the Spirit..." (3:6)
An encouraging introduction	4	Galatians	Responsible freedom	"For you brethren, have been called to liberty; only do not use liberty as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love, serve one another." (5:13)
The aspects of faith, and the problems to address	5	Ephesians	The Church is the Body of Christ	"... and gave Him to be head over all things." (1:22)
Practical advice	6	Philippians	Unity of spirit, and life of joy	"... if any fellowship of the Spirit..." (2:1)
Closing	7	Colossians	Christ is the Head of the Church	"He is the head of the body, the church..." (1:18-19)
	8	1 Thessalonians	Second coming of Christ	"And to wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead..." (1:10)
	9	2 Thessalonians	Triumph of man over sin	"When He comes, in that Day to be glorified in His saints and to be admired among all those who believe..." (1:10)
	10	1 Timothy	The conduct of the servant	"O Timothy! Guard what was committed to your trust..." (6:20)
	11	2 Timothy	Not being ashamed to testify for God	"Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, or of me His prisoner..." (1:8)
	12	Titus	The principles of the Church, and its servants	"But as for you, speak the things which are proper for sound doctrine." (2:1)
	13	Philemon	Christian conduct	"Yes, brother, let me have joy from you in the Lord; refresh my heart in the Lord." (1:20)
	14	Hebrews	Christ is the greatest	"has in these last days spoken to us by His Son..." (1:2)



6. The Epistle of St. Paul to the Romans

Righteousness through practical, and live faith

Rome:

- ❖ Romulus established it in 753 B.C.; its population was estimated to be about one million people at that time. There was also a large Jewish Community, which had existed from the time they were brought to Rome by Pompey as slaves, and were later liberated.
- ❖ Christianity was accepted by the Jewish citizens and proselytes who were present on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:10), or maybe by the Christian traders, or by some of St. Paul's disciples whose names he mentioned in the last chapter of his epistle. St. Paul announced, as an apostle to the Gentiles, his desire to serve the Roman Capital, where no apostle had ever preached before (Romans 5:2).

The date the Letter was written:

- ❖ St. Paul wrote his Epistle to the Romans near the end of his third missionary journey (approximately 57 A.D), in Corinth, while he was staying with Gaius.

The message of the Letter:

- ❖ There was a conflict between the Jews and the proselytes (those who were originally Gentiles and converted to Judaism). The epistle was sent to them to announce the **salvation of the world as a whole, without any partiality.**
- ❖ Preparing his visit to Rome.



Introduction Chapter 1	The Educational Aspect Chapters 2-11		The Practical Aspect Chapters 12 to 15	Conclusion Chapter 16
	The reply to those who demand to adopt the Jewish religion Chapters 2 to 10	Warning the Gentiles Chapter 11		
<p>He replies to those who want to implement the letter of the Law. He explains the concept of holiness, the work of the Law, and the gift of salvation that was given as a blessing for all nations.</p> <p>He does not deny the importance of The Law or the prophets, and does not ignore the Gentiles' evil deeds.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The apostolic grace (v.1-7) Encouraging the believers (v.8-17) The Gentiles' evil deeds (v.18-32) 	<p>He refuted the arguments used by the Jews:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> God is not partial: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> The Jews' responsibility for their rejection of the Savior (Ch. 2) The submission of Jews and Gentiles under the decree (Ch. 3) They are the children of Abraham: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Abraham was made righteous while he was uncircumcised (Ch. 4) Jews and Gentiles are all the children of one Father (Ch. 5) All were liberated (through baptism) (Ch. 6) Receiving the Law: <p>Law of Moses - We die for it in order to unite with the spiritual law.</p> <p>Law of Christ - We delight in it, when we are liberated from the letter of the Law.</p> <p>Law of Sin – Imprisons the soul, so that it needs a Divine Liberator.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> The Law reveals the sin but does not sanctify! (Ch. 7) The Law declares our need for Grace (Ch. 8) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Holy Spirit: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Liberates from the Law of Sin. Grants us to be concerned with Godly matters. Grants us the power of the Resurrection. Grants us son-ship. Intercedes for us. The people of God: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Just as He chose them, He also chose the Gentiles (Ch. 9) God's choosing us does not abolish our free will (Ch. 10) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> While he refuted the excuses of those who wished to adopt the Jewish religion, he also warns the Gentiles not to be proud, declaring that the Jews would accept the faith in the last days. God did not have mercy on the natural branches because of their pride; likewise He would not have mercy on the wild olive-tree. The Jews' disobedience opened the door for the Gentiles. <p>He reveals God's plan for the salvation of the whole world</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Commandments specifically for the life of the believer (Ch. 12): <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Sanctifying the life (v.1-2). Utilizing the talents (v.3-13). Loving others (v.14-21). The believer's relationship with his homeland (v.13). The Christian's relationship with others (13:8-14). His relationship with those who are weak in the faith (14, 15:1-13). The apostle's relationship with them (15:14-33). <p>"But put on the LORD Jesus Christ" (13:14)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> He reveals the feelings of a compassionate father, and the apostle's care for every person, giving each one a specific trait. He does not forget to offer thanks to everyone. He calls one "my beloved," another "my relative," and another "my mother." The apostle believes in the sanctification of the feelings of love in the LORD.



7. The First Epistle of St. Paul to the Corinthians

Our Lord Jesus Christ

❖ Corinth is the capital of Achaia, a province of Greece, about 40 miles west of Athens. On the top of its 1,800-foot promontory was the temple of Aphrodite, the "goddess of love." It was an example of immorality; alongside its commercial position.

- Paul the apostle preached in Corinth (Acts 18) around the year 53 A.D. He spent 18 months there, and visited it twice again afterwards.

The date the Letter was written:

❖ The letter was written around the year 57 A.D., near the end of the three years he spent in Ephesus.

The message of the Letter:

❖ He addresses their conflicts and their partiality. Some associated themselves with Paul, being the apostle who first preached to them; others to Apollos for his articulacy; others to Peter for his Jewish inclinations; and, another party associated themselves with the Lord Christ. Therefore, the subject of the Letter is "Our Lord Jesus Christ," to address the presence of people who care for theoretical philosophies and human wisdom, without caring for the living faith.



Introduction	Remedy to the problems				
	The divisions of the church Chapters 1 to 4	Moral Decline Chapters 5 & 6	Social problems Chapters 7 to 10	Worship problems Chapters 11 to 14	Afterlife problems Chapter 15
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The apostolic blessing (1:1-3) Thanking God on their behalf (1:4-9) A divided church (1:10-17) 	<p>He offers positive answers to partiality:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Wisdom of God (the cross) rather than human wisdom <ol style="list-style-type: none"> The cross is God's power for salvation. (1:18) The ignorance of the cross is conquering (1:26) The cross and the spirit of strength (Ch. 2) The spiritual behavior rather than the carnal <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Being attached to Christ, not His servants (3:5) Not to judge the servants (4:1-5) Following the example of the humble servants (4:6-13) Accepting his warning to them as a father (4:14-21) 	<p>Just as the apostle cares for the unity of the church through the cross and the spiritual behavior, especially humility, he also cares for the holiness of each member:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Isolating the bad yeast (5:1-8) Judging the brethren (5:9-13) Keeping the Law of the church (6:1-11) Keeping the body holy (6:12) 	<p>In its holiness, the church cares for the unity of the congregation, and the sanctification of each member, as the sanctification of the family, house and congregation:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Purification of the marital relationship (7:1-7) Marriage and celibacy (7:8-40) Offerings to idols (Ch. 8) Giving up his rights as an apostle (Ch. 9) A lesson from Israel (Ch. 10) 	<p>Just as he solved the church, behavioral, family, and social problems, Paul the apostle, also cared about worship; for there is no acceptance of worship that is without holiness.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> A woman's role in the church (11:1-16) Preparation for the Eucharist (11:17-34) Utilizing the Gifts of the Spirit (Ch. 12) Love (Ch. 13) Worshiping with one's spirit (Ch. 14) Preaching with understanding (Ch. 14) 	<p>The sanctification of the Church as a whole, and as members in all aspects of life, is also related to the thought of the afterlife, as we wait for the resurrection of the dead, and the meeting with the Lord.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Christ's resurrection (v.1-11) Christ the firstfruit (v.12-28) Struggle without resurrection (v. 29-34) Levels of glory (v. 35-50) The last meeting (v. 51-58)
					<p>Conclusion Chapter 16</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collecting for the poor in Jerusalem (16:1- 10) Accepting Timothy (16:11) Concluding news and the apostolic blessing (16:13-24)



8. The Second Epistle of St. Paul to the Corinthians

The Lawful Service

The date the Letter was written:

- ❖ He wrote it in Macedonia (7:5, 8:1, 9:2), a few months after his previous letter.

The message of the Letter:

- ❖ The apostle learned from Titus that his first letter was fruitful and yielded honest repentance (7:16). So he sent to them telling them his joy at their repentance, and the fullness of his heart with love for them.

- With as many that accepted his message of repentance, some doubted his apostleship because of the provocation of the Jews coming to Corinth from Jerusalem. Feeling compelled to defend his apostleship, he reassured his love for his people, and his willingness to be a slave that they may enjoy the glory of the children of God, offering to us the apostolic understanding of the extreme love of a shepherd.

- The letter contains a warning for heretics, those who cause splits, as it also flowed with Godly consolation, which God gives to his believers and servants in the midst of tribulations.



Introduction Chapter 1	Meaning of Service Chapters 2 to 5	His apostolic work Chapters 6 & 7	Defending his humiliation Chapters 10 to 12
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The apostolic blessing (v.1-4) Enduring pains for their sake (v.5-10) Their prayers for him during his pain (v.11) He was proud of them, and they were proud of him (v.12-14) His anxiousness to visit them (v.15-24) 	<p>Request for repentance, rather than sorrow</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> He postponed his visit in order not to see them sorrowful (2:1-4) He shows love to those whom he had punished before (2:5-11) Revealing the fragrance of Christ to all (2:12-17) <p>Service in the New Testament</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Service of the spirit, not the letter (3:1-3) A glorious service (3:4-11) An unveiled service (3:12-17) <p>The power of Service</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> We do not fail despite our weakness (4:1-6) Serving while hard-pressed, without despair (4:7-18) <p>The nature of Service</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> A heavenly service (5:1-10) Serving Christ who brings renewal (5:11-22) <p>He defended his apostleship, so he can reveal to us the meaning of the service.</p>	<p>He speaks to us about the servant and his conduct:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> The true servant: not a stumbling block to others, having an immense heart, and sincere (Ch. 6) His persistence in being firm; (lovingly firm, without blame) (Ch. 7) <p>Serving the saints Chapters 8 & 9</p> <p>The servant should not ignore serving the saints, as a spiritual duty.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> They offered their souls before their money (8:1-8) It is the fruit of Christ's work (8:9-11) He does not ask them to give what they do not have (8:12-16) Titus' concern with it (8:17-24) The readiness to give (9:1-7) He asks for a reward for them (9:8-15) 	<p>He writes the defense so that no one stumbles:</p> <p>His power lies in the spirit, not the body (10:1-6)</p> <p>He does not use his authority to destroy (10:7-18)</p> <p>He warns from the deceivers (11:1-4)</p> <p>He does not use his authority to gain personal rights (11:5-15)</p> <p>His persistence in boasting, even as a fool (11:16-33)</p> <p>God's revelations to him (12:1-10)</p> <p>Performing mighty deeds (12:11-12)</p> <p>He did not burden anyone. (12:13-18)</p> <p>Conclusion Chapter 13</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> He offered us a summary for each of his letters: He is weak for Christ, and strong through Him (v.1-10) Last advice and farewell (v.11-13) The apostolic blessing. (v.14)

“Now thanks be to God who always leads us through triumph in Christ.”(II Corinthians 2:14)



9. The Epistle of St. Paul to the

Galatians

The Law and the New Life

Galatia:

- ❖ It is located in the central part of Asia Minor; it surrendered to the Roman Empire. In the year 7 B.C., several provinces were added to it under the name, “The City of Antioch.”
- ❖ The apostle visited it during his first missionary journey: “Antioch in Pisidia, Lystra, and Derbe” (Acts 13:14), then with Silas and Timothy (Acts 16:6), and also during his third journey (Acts 18:23), where he collected donations to help the saints in Jerusalem (1 Cor. 16:1).

The date the Letter was written:

- ❖ Either following his second missionary journey (approximately 55 A.D.), or during his third journey (approximately 75 A.D.).

The message of the Letter:

- ❖ Some calling for the adoption of Judaism came, causing others to doubt St. Paul's apostleship. That is why he wrote to them about faith in the Cross, and entering into the new life. He also defended his apostleship to eliminate all doubts.



Introduction Chapter 1	The problem of adopting Judaism Chapter 2	Spiritual Childhood and Maturity Chapter 4	Practical Advice Chapter 6
<p>To remove all doubts about his apostleship, he confirmed that it was established according to Jesus Christ's revelation, and the LORD's invitation to him:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The apostolic grace (v.1-5) 2. Their turning away from the Gospel (v. 6-10) 3. Christ's revelation to him (v.11-17) 4. His partnership with the apostles (v.18-24) 	<p>As he speaks about the problem of adopting Judaism, he confirms his true partnership with the Church, his submission to it, his conversation with the apostles, and his commitment to the truth of the Bible. He writes the Church's opinion:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. His partnership with the Church (v.1-2) 2. His loyalty to the Bible (v.3-10) 3. His resistance of St. Peter (v.11-15) 4. Righteousness through faith, rather than the works of the Law (v.16-21) <p>The disability of the works of the Law Chapter 3</p> <p>To respond to those who call for the adoption of Judaism, he concentrated on the faith in the Cross and set Abraham as an example:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Cross, not the works of the Law (v.1-5) 2. Abraham was made righteous through faith (v.6-9) 3. The Law puts us under the curse (v.10-14) 4. The Law cannot annul God's promise to Abraham (v.15-18) 5. Faith offers what is greater (v.19-29) 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Returning to the letter is returning to childhood. 2. Now we became mature sons and heirs 3. Through Christ, we are mature sons (v.1-8) 4. St. Paul's fatherhood to them (v.9-20) 5. Between freedom and slavery (v.21-31) <p>The Christian Freedom Chapter 5</p> <p>Freedom is not to disregard the Law, but to rise above the decree of the Law. Faith does not despise the Law, but does what the Law could not do. The freedom of the spirit, rather than the bondage of the Law (v.1-12) Freedom completes the Law (v.13-15) The freedom is precious and not indecent (v.16-26)</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Restoring others through the spirit of gentleness (v.1-5) 2. Perseverance in the struggle (v.6-10) 3. Boasting in the Cross as a practical experience. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Circumcision from the love of the world (v.11-14) b. As the secret of renewal (v.15-16) c. Bearing the scars of the LORD Jesus (v.17) 4. The apostolic blessing (v.18) <p>“For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision avails anything, but a new creation” (Galatians 6:15)</p>

10. The Epistle of St. Paul to the Ephesians

The Church is the United Body of Christ Ephesus:

- ❖ It came under the Roman rule in the year 133 B.C.; it was a capital of a province of Asia. It encompassed the main seaport and the trade center of Asia. It was a religious-center because of the temple of Artemis.
- ❖ Paul, the apostle, founded a church there, when he visited in the year 54 A.D. during his second missionary journey, for a short time on his way from Corinth to Jerusalem, to fulfill his vow (Acts 18:18). He returned to it in his third journey where he stayed for more than two years (56-58 A.D.). The service was successful, and the sorcerers burnt their books (Acts 19:19), leading the silversmiths to riot against him (Acts 19:33).
- ❖ John, the apostle, spent his last years there. He wrote the book of Revelations on the island of Patmos near Ephesus (Rev 1: 11), and in it he directed a special letter to the Church of Ephesus (Rev 2:1).

The date the Letter was written:

- ❖ During his first imprisonment in Rome where he wrote what are called the letters of captivity (Ephesians, Philippians, Corinthians, and Philemon). Some people see it as a letter directed to many churches, especially the church in Ephesus.

“Put on the whole armor of God that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places.”

(Ephesians 6:11, 12)

“But God forbid that I should boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world.” (Galatians 6:14)

“Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us (for it is written, ‘Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree’).” (Galatians 3:13)



The Church is the Body of Christ				
The mystery of becoming acquainted with God Chapter 1	The mystery of resurrection in Christ Chapter 2	The mystery of Christ dwelling within us Chapter 3	The mystery of our unity in Christ Chapter 4	The mystery of the practical life in Christ Chapters 5 & 6
<p>The church gets to know the Father through the union with the Only Son. Through Him we see the mysteries of the Father, His love, and His will.</p> <p>In Christ we are considered believers (v.1), in Him we became chosen (v.4), in Him, He adopted us (v.5), and in Him we received salvation. With this, we acquire through Him a sensible acquaintance for our life with God.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> The apostolic blessing (v.1-2) "In Christ" (v.3-14) His prayers for them to delight in knowing the Father through His Son. (v.5-23) 	<p>Membership in the church is the joy in the experience of the resurrection in Him.</p> <p>The church is a state of continuous resurrection in Christ (the Resurrected), the head.</p> <p>If we all enjoy the resurrection after death, there is no difference between Jew and Gentile; we all are mortal.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> The resurrection and our reconciliation with God (v.1-10) The resurrection and the reconciliation of mankind with one another (v.11-22) 	<p>The church as the body of Christ is the secret of reconciliation with God, and the mystery of our reconciliation with one another in Him. The Cross unites us with God, and with one another.</p> <p>This understanding allows us to rise above pain (the Cross is reconciliation).</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> He reveals the mystery of Christ to the Gentiles (v.1-8) Christ's dwelling by faith (v.9-10) His abundant love to all (v.11-21) <p>"That Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith." (Eph. 3:17)</p>	<p>If God in His love had offered us Himself, dwelling in us without distinction between Jew and Gentile, He grants us through Him the spirit of unity.</p> <p>Unity is not based on the appearance of a relationship, but on spiritual love.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Unity of faith (v.1-6) Unity of work (v.7-12) Unity of goal (v.13-16) Evil is the reason of separation (v.27-29) Separation grieves the Holy Spirit (v.30-32) <p>"And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption." (Eph. 4:30)</p>	<p>The Church is in unity with God through His Son, which enflames the heart for the desire for Heaven, so it can fight against Satan.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> God is an example (5:1-2) Living in the light (5:3-14) Precision (5:15-21) Marital relationships (5:22-33) Parental relationships (6:1-4) Work relations (6:5-9) The spiritual struggle (v.10-20) Conclusion (v.21-24) <p>"Redeeming the time, because the days are evil." (Eph. 5:16)</p>



11. The Epistle of St. Paul to the Philippians

Philippi:

- ❖ A city in Macedonia, once named "Krenides." In 356 B.C., King Phillip, the Macedonian, joined it to his empire. He enlarged it, fortified it, and called it after his own name.
- ❖ It fell under the hands of the Romans in 168 B.C., and became afterwards a colony (Acts 16:12). It became more famous than Macedonia, and had Roman privileges.
- ❖ St. Paul visited it approximately in the year 52 A.D., where he established the first church in Europe. Many believed in the Lord through him, including Lydia, and the slave-girl who had an evil spirit that enabled her to be a fortune-teller (Acts 16). There also, the two apostles Paul and Silas were imprisoned, from where the Lord freed them, so they preached to the jailer and his family. The apostle visited it once again (Acts 20:3-6).

The date the Letter was written:

- ❖ Approximately 63 A.D., near the end of his first captivity, where he was expecting a quick release (1:25, 2:23, 24).

The message of the Letter:

- ❖ He sent the letter to thank them for their love, as they have sent him a gift (4:10) through Epaphroditus (2:25; 4:18). As Epaphroditus became ill and neared death, they heard the news and were filled with sorrow, and in turn, he was filled with sorrow at their grief. What wonderful sentiments of Love!
- ❖ It seems that some preached the Lord Christ with evil motives during the time of the apostle's imprisonment that he may be faced with more afflictions, so the subject of the letter became "The Unity of the Spirit and Joy".
- ❖ There was a role for women in the church, and it seems that there was a disagreement between them (4:2). For this reason, the apostle repeated the words "you all" to emphasize unity.



Introduction Chapter 1:1-11	The Spirit's Unity			Practical advice Chapter 4
	Unity and work Chapter 1:12-30	Unity and humility Chapter 2	Unity and heresies Chapter 3	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The apostolic blessing (v.1-2) • Thanking the LORD and praying for them (v.3-11) • He confirms the unity, and addresses all the saints. • He prioritizes the people as a whole rather than the priests, for the priests are the people's servants. 	<p>Unity is not just slogans or tactics, but a lifestyle flowing from the Spiritual deeds, and trust in God's working hand in the midst of sufferings, and also with happiness in order to accomplish the evangelical goal.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Suffering bears joyful fruit (v.12-17) 2. Joy of accomplishing the evangelical goal (v.18-26) 3. Struggling together in the midst of suffering (v.27-30) <p>"For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain." (Phil. 1:21)</p>	<p>The true humility is the foundation of unity. May we ask for it from God who offers it, and may we imitate the LORD Christ and His servants.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The spirit of fellowship (v.1-4) 2. Christ is the example of humility (v.5-11) 3. God is the bestower of humility (v.12-18) 4. Examples of humble servants (v.19-30) <p>"And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross." (Phil. 2:8)</p>	<p>Unity does not mean neglecting the faith. May we have unity in the orthodox faith.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Rejecting the heresy of adopting Judaism (v.1-2) 2. Spirituality of strength, not disability (v.3-11) 3. Spirituality of growth without stopping (v.12-16) 4. The apostle is an example of heavenly life (v.17-21) <p>"That I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death." (Phil. 3:10)</p>	<p>He translated unity to work by:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Standing firm in the LORD (v.1) 2. Unity of thought (v.2-3) 3. Joyful worship (v.4-7) 4. Christian conduct (v.8-9) 5. End of the letter (v.10-23) (Thanking them for their love, offering peace, and the apostolic blessing). <p>"I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me." (Phil. 4:13)</p>

"Rejoice in the Lord always. Again I will say, rejoice!"

(Phil. 4:4)



12. St. Paul's Letter to the Colossians

Colosse:

- ❖ A town in Phrygia of Asia Minor, on the river Lycos, about twelve miles from Laodicea. It was the commercial trade route, which extended from the east to the west. As the route was moved, it decreased in importance to Laodicea and Hierapolis (2:1, 4:13).
- ❖ The church was likely founded at the hands of Epaphras, a disciple of the apostle Paul. Also, many of the apostle's friends and spiritual children served in the church. The apostle most likely visited Colosse during his third missionary journey (Acts 18:23).

The date the Letter was written:

- ❖ During his first imprisonment (Col. 4:3) in Rome. He did not talk about prison, since he was not concerned with it, but was more focused on Heaven, whose pledge he is joyfully experiencing.

The message of the Letter:

- ❖ Epaphras came to consult him in some matters concerning the faith, as some heretics had come demanding the return to Judaism (Works of the Law). They also carried Eastern and Gnostic ideas, like relying on human wisdom without faith, and the worshipping of angels. That is why the subject touched upon, "Christ is the Head of the Church, and Giver of the New Life." He continues this message in his epistle to the Ephesians.



Introduction Chapter 1: 1- 11	The Educational Aspect		Practical Advice Chapter 3 & 4:1-6	Final Greetings Chapter 4:7-18
	Christ is the head of the church Chapter 1:12-29	Warning against heretics Chapter 2		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The apostolic blessing (v.1-2) Thanksgiving and prayers for them (v.3-11) 1. As he writes to the church, which is being attacked by opposing ideas, he encourages it to be firm in the true faith, and the holy new life. 2. He calls them believers and saints 3. He asks them to enjoy the divine knowledge, cemented with practical conduct. <p>“He has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed us into the kingdom of the Son of His love.” (Col. 1:13)</p>	<p>As Gnosticism is concerned with the logical knowledge rather than faith as a path to salvation, the apostle emphasized faith in Christ.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Faith in Christ: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> His kingdom is a light eliminating darkness (v.12-13) The Savior of the Church (v.14) The Creator (v.15-16) The Head of Church (v.17-18) Bestower of reconciliation (v.19-23) Live practical faith is revealed in bearing pain, and in suffering (v.24-29) 	<p>The goal of heresies is to destroy the practical faith.</p> <p>The apostle confirmed that true Gnosticism (knowledge or wisdom) is in Christ Jesus, just as he addressed the idea of returning to Judaism.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Christ the secret of the eternal wisdom (v.1-5) Translating the faith in a practical way (v.6-7) Deceiving philosophies (v.8-9) Baptism and life in Christ (v. 10-15) Through Christ, we are liberated from the letter (v.16-19) Through Him, we are liberated from the obligations (v.20-22) <p>“Buried with Him in baptism, in which you also were raised with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead.” (Col. 2:12)</p>	<p>After talking about cementing the true knowledge, which is in Jesus Christ, with day-to-day life, he offers practical advice.</p> <p>Chapter 3</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Our viable resurrection (v.1- 4) Put off the old man (v.5-11) The perfect life (v.12-15) The Word (of God) as a helper (v.16-17) Family and social relations (v.18-25) <p>Chapter 4</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Advice to the masters (v.1) Worship and conduct (v.2-6) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As in most of his letters, before he gives them the final apostolic blessing, he offers his greetings to many people, each by his/her name, giving each of them a title or a trait. “Remember my chains” (v.18): the sign of his love to God and the church, on which if we meditate, grants us the zeal for God. “Grace be with you” (v.18): without Grace, we do not enjoy the true live faith working in love. <p>“This salutation by my own hand—Paul. Remember my chains. Grace be with you. AMEN.” (Col. 4:18)</p>

“If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God.” (Colossians 3:1)



13. The First Epistle of St. Paul to the Thessalonians

The Second Coming of Christ

Thessalonica:

- ❖ Now called Salonika, it was the capital city of the province of Macedonia in Greece, and one of the important trade centers. The most well known Jewish traders were attracted to it, and they had a quarter there. It was ruled by 5 or 6 politarchs or governors (Acts 17:6). The apostle established a church there during his second missionary journey (Acts 17:1-3) in the year 52 A.D., after his service in Philippi.
- ❖ He preached in Thessalonica three Sabbaths in the Jewish quarter, and the church was strong since it first started. It faced many afflictions, and became a living example to the other churches.

The date the Letter was written:

- ❖ Near the end of 52 A.D. or the beginning of 53 A.D. St. Paul wrote it in Corinth, and it is considered the first of his writings.

The message of the Letter:

- ❖ He sent it to console them concerning their excessive afflictions (Acts 17:7). That is why he was interested in writing about **Christ’s Second Coming and the Life of Vigilance.**
- ❖ He sent Timothy to them, and those with bad intentions spread a rumor that he did not come himself, but sent young Timothy in his place as a disregard to them. That is why he abundantly wrote about his fatherhood to them.



Introduction Chapter 1	The Educational Aspect			Practical Advice Chapter 5
<p>Since the afflicted are in need of words of encouragement and love, he began his letter by speaking of their success.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Introduction (v.1) 2. The church's success: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Thanking the LORD, and his prayers for them (v.2) b. Their work of faith, labor of love, and patience of their hope (v.3-6) c. They became a model to all (v.7-10) <p>“For our gospel did not come to you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Spirit and in much assurance” (I Thess. 1:5)</p>	His fatherhood to them Chapter 2	Sending Timothy to them Chapter 3	Confirming the believers Chapter 4	<p>Since they are in affliction, he spoke to them about vigilance, and since they misunderstood him, he spoke to them about the love of the shepherds:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The life of vigilance (v.1-11) 2. Our love for the shepherds (v.12-13) 3. Other commandments (v.14-22) 4. The conclusion of the letter (v.23-28) <p>“Now we exhort you, brethren, warn those who are unruly, comfort the fainthearted, uphold the weak, be patient with all.” (I Thess. 5:14)</p>
	<p>He abundantly filled them with sentiments of his fatherhood to them, feeling their sufferings:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The apostle's fatherhood (v.1-12) 2. The suffering of the church (v.13-16) 3. His longing for them (v.17-20) <p>“But we were made gentle among you, just as a nursing mother cherishes her own children. So, affectionately longing for you, we were well pleased to impart to you not only the gospel of God, but also our own lives, because you had become dear to us.” (I Thess. 2:7-8)</p>	<p>He did not blame them for accusing him of disregarding them, but he positively speaks to them about Timothy, and how he sent him to them despite his need for him.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Sending Timothy to them (v.1-5) 2. Timothy's report about them (v.6-13) <p>He declares that their steadfastness in the LORD not only cheers his heart, but it also makes him alive as he says:</p> <p>“For now we live, if you stand fast in the LORD.” (I Thess. 3:8)</p>	<p>If the affliction has given them privilege, then it is appropriate for them to grow in the virtuous life.</p> <p>He concentrated on “holiness,” since Thessalonica was known for sexual immorality.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Concept of the virtuous life (v.1-3) 2. Abandoning adultery (v.4-8) 3. Growing in love (v.9-12) 4. LORD's second coming (v.13-18) <p>“For God did not call us to uncleanness, but in holiness.” (I Thess. 4:7)</p>	



14. The Second Epistle of St. Paul to the Thessalonians

Victory over the Son of Perdition

The date the Letter was written:

- ❖ It seems it was written a few months after the previous letter, perhaps in the middle of the year 53 A.D.

The message of the Letter:

- ❖ To correct the misunderstanding of the first letter, thinking that Christ's coming is near, which lead to severe complications in their daily life. That is why he hurried to write to them that the Lord would not come until the falling away comes first. And since the affliction was still present, he encouraged them to delight in Christ's patience.



The Eucharistic aspect Chapter 1	The visionary aspect: “the Son of Perdition” Chapter 2	The practical aspect Chapter 3
<p>He begins by thanking God (the Eucharistic side), while revealing their good traits to encourage them.</p> <p>He spoke to them about God’s fair judgment so that they may endure suffering with thanksgiving.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> The opening of the letter (v. 1-2) Thanking God and boasting about them (v. 3-4) God’s fair judgment (v.5-10) Prayers for them (v.11-12) <p>“That the name of our LORD Jesus Christ may be glorified in you, and you in Him” (II Thess. 1:12)</p>	<p>“The Son of Perdition” represents one of the main prophecies in the New Testament. The apostle wrote about it to encourage their struggle and vigilance.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> The falling away first (They were expecting Christ’s coming in their days) (v.1-12) Their standing fast in the LORD (v.13-17) <p>“...for that day will not come unless the falling away comes first, and the man of sin is revealed, the son of perdition, who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God or that is worshiped, so that he sits as God in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God.” (II Thess. 2:3-4)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Satan’s war is continuous, but it manifests itself in the Man of Sin (the Son of Perdition); his characteristics are: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> The falling away - His goal is to draw the believers away from their King! The Son of Perdition (leads others to perdition and perishes with them) Opposes God and His church. Exalts himself: presents himself as God, in the temple of God. Deceives through great miracles and wonders (if possible, even God’s chosen) God restrains his manifestation until the suitable time (before Christ’s coming), when He will lift the barrier, which is the Divine command confining his appearance. This delay will happen when the church is established, giving Satan a last chance to fill his cup of evil. God destroys him with his breath, i.e. with His Holy Spirit that grants us victory over Satan and his deceptions. Christ’s appearance revokes the bitterness of what the Man of Sin has done. 	<p>The writings of our teacher St. Paul the apostle about the Man of Sin does not destroy his morale, but rather it enflames his desire for the apostolic work in great confidence. Although Satan utilizes all his energy for evil, God is glorified through the victory of His saints.</p> <p>The apostle works more, asking for the prayers of God’s people for him, and their support for him through their upright conduct.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Asking for their prayers for him (v.1-5) Avoiding disorderly behavior (v.6-16) The conclusion of the letter (v.17-18) <p>“But as for you, brethren, do not grow weary in doing good.” (II Thess. 3:13)</p>



15. The First Epistle of St. Paul to

Timothy

The Conduct of the Servant

Pastoral letters:

- ❖ The two letters sent to Timothy and the one to Titus, are rich sources of pastoral divinity. He wrote it in his last years, which is why Timothy I and Titus are similar.
- ❖ It is different from the previous letters in its purpose, as it was written to the shepherds and not to the entire congregation. It contains some of the church regulations in his era, for bishops, deacons and widows.

Who is Timothy?

- ❖ His father was Greek, his mother and grandmother were Jews, who obeyed the Holy Books. He believed at the hands of Paul, the apostle, during his first missionary journey, in Lystra of Laconia.
- ❖ The apostle saw in Timothy his piety (Acts 16:2), and his zeal (1Tim 1:18), so he took him as a companion in his travels. He entrusted him with the service of Ephesus. He was with the apostle in his first imprisonment (Cor 1:1, Phil 1:1, Phlm 1).

The date the Letter was written:

- ❖ Approximately 64 or 65 A.D., after his release from his first imprisonment (Spring of 63 A.D.)

The message of the Letter:

- ❖ To show Timothy his obligations as a bishop, delineating some of the church’s regulations, such as: the characteristics of shepherds and servants, and their duties, their position against heretics, and their relationship with the people.



Introduction Chapter 1	General worship Chapter 2	Characteristics of the shepherds Chapter 3	Struggle of the shepherds Chapter 4	Church relations Chapter 5	Social relations Chapter 6
<p>As he writes about pastoral care, he declares, "Implementing the commandment is the goal of being a shepherd."</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> The apostolic blessing (v.1-2) The purpose of the commandment (v.3-11) Commitment to service (v.12-17) Struggle in the service (v.18-20) <p>"Now the purpose of the commandment is love from a pure heart, from a good conscience, and from sincere faith." (I Tim. 1:5)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If the goal of leadership is following the commandment, this order cannot be separated from worship. We accept the Divine commandment in order to enter into a loving relationship through worshipping, and with worship we understand the commandment. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Types of prayer (v.1) Purpose of worship (v.2-7) Directions in prayer: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> For men (v.8) For women (v.9-15) 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Characteristics of the bishop (v.1-7) Characteristics of the deacon (v.8-13) The shepherd's view of the church (v.14-16) <p>He offered us a deep understanding of the church, which is served by the spiritual shepherds (v.16)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Pious life Unity with the Incarnate Justification of the spirit. Seeing God at an angelic level. Testimony before the world. Enjoying the glory with Christ. 	<p>Struggle of the shepherds in order to achieve the spiritual purpose of the church:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Departure from the faith (v.1-11) Advice for the shepherds (v.12-16) <p>"Let no one despise your youth, but be an example to the believers in word, in conduct, in love, in spirit, in faith, in purity." (I Tim. 4:12)</p>	<p>After he declared the special orders for the life of the shepherd as a role model, he offered the guidelines of communicating with the flock:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Taking care of people of all ranks (v.1-2) Honoring the widows (v.3-16) Caring for the priests (v.17-18) The manner of reprimand (v.19-21) Not being hasty to dedicate someone to the Lord's service (v.22) A special instruction for his health (v.23) Hidden and manifest sins (v.24-25) 	<p>One cannot separate church life from day-to-day behavior, which is why he talks about social relations through God, especially between servants and masters.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Commandments to the servants (v.1-2) Concern with the practical side (v.2-5) Advice for the rich (v.6-19) Final commandment (v.20-22) <p>"For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows." (I Tim. 6:10)</p>



16. The Second Epistle of St. Paul to Timothy

Do not hesitate to testify to the Lord

The date the Letter was written:

❖ He wrote it while he was imprisoned in Rome (II Tim. 1:8, 16, 14:6) around 67 or 68 A.D.

The message of the Letter:

❖ The apostle asks his disciple to come to him quickly along with St. Mark to see them for the last time in prison before his execution. Since he was afraid that they would not arrive before his departure, he sent his final guidance as a shepherd. St. Paul wrote this epistle not only to his beloved disciple, but also to the entire struggling church, so that they may endure patiently with the spirit of strength, and not failure. Since this epistle was written while the apostle was in prison, it is considered to be his last.



Introduction Chapter 1:1-7	Life of the shepherd			Final Practical Advice Chapter 4
<p>If the apostle Paul was known for his strictness and seriousness in his strife, and his depth in divine matters, this letter reveals his beautiful fatherly sentiments even in the last moments. He sanctifies all the human emotions and does not destroy them.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> The apostolic blessing (v.1-2) His attachment to his children (v.3-7) <p>“For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind.” (II Tim. 1:7)</p>	The spirit of power Chapter 1:8-18	Struggling in service Chapter 2	Resisting misguidance Chapter 3	<p>He offers us final practical advice, the last words he offered before his martyrdom.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Persistence in preaching (v.1-5) His expectance of his departure (v.6-8) His final news (v.9-21) The final blessing (v.22) <p>“I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness...” (II Tim. 4:7-8)</p> <p>“And that from childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.” (II Tim. 3:15)</p> <p>“And also if anyone competes in athletics, he is not crowned unless he competes according to the rules.” (II Tim. 2:5)</p>
	<p>While in prison, the apostle was expecting the erosion of his body; however, his spirit was increasing in power.</p> <p>He sent to his disciple to work with the spirit of strength, and not to fear the service due to his young age, the imprisonment of the apostle, the apostle’s martyrdom, or the presence of resisting heretics.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Preaching by the spirit of strength (v.8-12) Holding onto truthful teachings (v.13-14) His children’s support for him (v.15-18) <p>The secret of spiritual strength:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> God’s invitation to us The appearance of Christ, the conqueror of death Enjoying the holy life with Christ The Holy Spirit dwelling within us <p>“And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord who has enabled me” (I Tim. 1:12)</p>	<p>As he expects the erosion of his body, he believed that, “the word of God is not chained.”(v.9) That is why he does not stop encouraging his children to continue in the living struggle:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> The struggle and grace (v.1) Making new disciples (v.2) Spiritual soldiers (v.3-13) Avoiding idle babblings (v.14-20) Struggle, and internal disputes (v.21-22) Disputes that generate strife (v.23-26) 	<p>The work of the shepherd does not stop at searching for every soul’s salvation, but it is appropriate for him to strive for the preservation of the entrusted of faith without deviation.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Heresies and evil (v.1-5) The corrupt teachers (v.6-9) Enduring their wrong doings (v.10-13) Depending on the word of God (v.14-17) 	



17. The Epistle of St. Paul to

Titus

The Ecclesiastical Work

Who is Titus?

- ❖ It is said that he is from Antioch, one of the Syrian tetrapolis; others see that he is nephew of the governor of Crete. He was originally a Gentile (Gal 2:3); he believed at the hands of the apostle Paul (Titus 1:4).
- ❖ He accompanied the apostles St. Paul and St. Barnabas to Jerusalem in the end of St. Paul’s first missionary journey (Gal 2:1), and he attended the council of the apostles (Acts 15) as a living example of the faith of the Gentiles.
- ❖ He was with the apostle in Crete, where he left him to finalize impending matters, and ordain priests there (probably after the apostle’s first imprisonment).

The date the Letter was written:

- ❖ Around 63 or 64 A.D. after his first captivity. He wrote it because Crete was known for its corruption, and because some of the false teachers appeared calling for the adoption of Judaism.



The ecclesiastical order Chapter 1	Upright instruction Chapter 2	Practical behavior Chapter 3
<p>The apostle was concerned in his pastoral letters with speaking about the ecclesiastical order, and the ordination of bishops, priests and deacons – the establishment of shepherds and servants for the service.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> The apostolic grace (v.1-4) Ordination of Priests (v. 5) Qualifications for bishops (v. 6-16) <p>“To the pure all things are pure, but to those who are defiled and unbelieving nothing is pure; but even their mind and conscience are defiled.” (Titus 1:15)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As he announced the basis for choosing priests in Crete, in light of their apparent errors, he offered practical examples for the special instructions for people of all ranks. The shepherd is a physician who offers the appropriate treatment. He asks the servants to submit to their masters, not in humiliation and weakness, but in true testimony to their Savior, so that their life may become a spiritual adornment (v.10). Thus, he lifted the level of the servants, where they were able to accomplish their freedom. He asks for firmness accompanied by love: “Speak these things, exhort, and rebuke with all authority.” (v.15) <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Instructions for the elders (v.1-2) Instructions for the older women (v.3-5) Instructions for the youth (v.6-8) Instructions for the servants (v.9-10) The teachings, and works of grace (v.11-15) <p>“In all things showing yourself to be a pattern of good works; in doctrine showing integrity, reverence, incorruptibility” (Titus 2:7)</p>	<p>The church witnesses to her Groom through the social structure that depends on the spiritual arrangement (v.1), and through the correct teachings that are suitable for all ranks of people. This testimony must be carried out genuinely through social relationships. Through a Christian’s love for all, and his submission to rulers in obedience and love, and not with a hypocritical spirit, he declares his living faith.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Submission to authorities (v.1) Love for everyone (v.2) How do we love? (v.3-8) Avoiding those who resist (v.9-11) Special final advice (v.12-15) <p>“Remind them to be subject to rulers and authorities, to obey, to be ready for every good work.” (Titus 3:1)</p>

“Looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself His own special people zealous for good works.”

(Titus 2:13, 14)



18. The Epistle of St. Paul to

Philemon

Christian Conduct

Who is Philemon?

- ❖ Born in Colossi, and may have been raised there. It was said that his slave Onesimus was one of its residents (Col 1:9). He met the apostle and believed at his hands; although, some think that he believed at the hands of Epaphras, and was ordained a bishop for Colossi.

Who is Onesimus?

- ❖ Philemon’s slave, who robbed him and fled to Rome, where he met the apostle and believed at his hands. He became useful in the service, but Paul returned him to his master with this letter, in order for Philemon to forgive Onesimus voluntarily, stating that the apostle will pay for the stolen items. This deed revealed Christian spiritual behavior, wisdom and fatherhood.

The date the Letter was written:

- ❖ Around 62 or 63 A.D., during the apostle’s first imprisonment.



Apostolic blessing Verses 1-3	The apostle's love to his friend Verses 4-7	The apostle's plea for Onesimus Verses 8-21	Conclusion Verses 22-25
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The apostle calls himself “a prisoner,” so that he does not ask from his friend Philemon to forgive Onesimus in authority, but through the binds of love. 2. Onesimus deserved to be imprisoned, however, it is as if Paul was imprisoned for him. 3. He calls Philemon the ‘beloved’ and ‘the fellow-worker,’ reminding him of the evangelical love. He calls his wife or sister ‘beloved,’ as he holds holy feelings for all. 4. He asks for grace – the bestower of love. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. His imprisonment does not make him forget Philemon, rather, he prays for him unceasingly. For this reason, it is appropriate for Philemon not to forget Onesimus, but to pray for his salvation and forgive him. 2. He encourages him declaring to him that he knows his live faith working in love for God and people. He does not need to be instructed with love, since he is already doing it. <p style="text-align: center;">“That the sharing of your faith may become effective by the acknowledgement of every good thing...” (Phlm. 6)</p>	<p>The apostle's great wisdom appears in his request:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. He is capable of commanding but does not. 2. He asks him as a “presbyter,” or an old spiritual father. 3. He asks for his son who was born in chains - not a slave anymore. 4. He tells him that Onesimus was not useful for him before (confession of the prior evils). But now he is useful to Philemon, as to Paul himself. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. He shows God's wisdom that turned Onesimus's evil to good, that he became a beloved brother and trustworthy in the service. a. The apostle promises to pay for the stolen items. a. He asks him to rejoice in the Lord by obeying the apostle (he left obedience to the end). <p style="text-align: center;">“You therefore receive him, that is, my own heart.” (Phlm. 12)</p>	<p>He did not wait for the reply from Philemon as he is confident that he will obey, but he asks him to prepare a room for the apostle that through the prayers of Philemon, God grants his release from prison.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. He conveys to him the final greetings of the servants working with him, that they may intercede for Onesimus. 2. Finally, he offers him the apostolic blessing. <p style="text-align: center;">“The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit, AMEN.” (Phlm. 25)</p>



19. The Epistle of St. Paul to the Hebrews

Christ is the Greatest

The author:

- ❖ The apostle did not mention his name so that Jewish fanatics would not be driven away, as they considered him a rebel against the testaments of Moses (Acts 21:12)

The message of the Letter:

- ❖ He wrote it to comfort the Christians who are from Jewish origin, who were kicked out of the synagogue and forbidden from the Jewish priesthood. He reveals to them the glory of the new service.
- ❖ Some view this letter as a fifth gospel. The four gospels speak of the work of the Lord on earth, but this book speaks of Christ's work as a priest in heaven!



The Person of the Lord Christ and His deeds compared to the Jewish glories					Practical Applications Chapters 11 to 13
The Prophets Chapter 1:1-3	Moses Chapter 3	Aaron Chapters 5 & 6	Melchizedek Chapter 7	The High priesthood Chapters 8 to 10	
<p>Christ is unique when compared to the prophets:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> The Son, the heir, and creator (v.1, 2) Reflecting the brightness of God's glory (v.3) His ability to purify (v.3) The Son sits at the right hand of the Father (v.3) 	<p>He did not demean Moses but:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Moses is the house of God, Christ is the builder of the house (v.1-4) Moses is the honest servant, Christ is the Son (v.5-6) They did not profit much from Moses (v.7-19) 	<p>Chapter 5 Between Christ and Aaron: High priest (taken from the people, for the people, chosen by God) (v.1-5) High priest for our sake (bearing pain) (v.7-10) The need for the initiation of the oracles of God (v.11-14)</p> <p>Chapter 6 Inter-faith discussions: Enlightenment and repentance (v.1-8) The living struggle (v.9-12) The oath to Abraham (v.13-20)</p> <p>“For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened (baptized) ... if they fall away, to renew them again to repentance (their baptism cannot be repeated)” (Heb. 6:4-6)</p>	<p>The heart of this letter is the priesthood of Christ; His symbol is Melchizedek: The name: King of Righteousness. Work: King of Peace With no human father, or divine mother His sacrifice: bread and wine. Both King and Priest</p> <p>Promise of a new priesthood (v.11-17)</p> <p>Between the old and new priesthood:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> A new command With an oath Eternal Without weakness 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Heavenly high-priest: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Heavenly priesthood (8:1-6) Heavenly covenant (8:7-13) Heavenly service: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Comparison between the two covenants (9:1-14) Confirming the Heavenly Covenant (9:15-22) Unique sacrifice (9:23-28) Entering into the holies: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Insufficiency of animal sacrifices (10:1-11) Strength of the unique Sacrifice (10:12-18) Entering the holies (10:19-23) Continuous struggle (10:24-39) 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> A practical implementation of the men of faith <ol style="list-style-type: none"> What is faith? (11:1-3) Men of faith (11:4-12) Faith and Heaven (11:13-15) Men of faith (11:16-39) The spiritual struggle <ol style="list-style-type: none"> The struggle and the cloud of witnesses (12:1) Strife and meditation on the pains of Christ (12:2-3) Struggling till the very end (12:4) Accepting the divine chastening (12:5-11) Helping others in their struggle (12:12-17) The Law and the new kingdom (12:18-29) Final advice (Ch. 13) <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Love b. Pain c. Praise d. Obedience
<p>The Angels Chapters 1 & 2</p> <p>Christ is unique when compared to the angels whom accepted the Law with their hands:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> He alone is great in prophecies (1:4-5) The angels are subject to him (1:6-8) He alone was anointed (chosen) for salvation (1:9) They offered the word, He is the word (2:1-4) He humbled Himself for our salvation (2:5-18) 	<p>Joshua Chapter 4</p> <p>They entered the Promised Land (rest) through Joshua, but they could not gain comfort except through Christ:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Warning against not believing (v.1-3) The seventh day (rest) (v.4-5) The Promised Land (rest) (v.6-13) Christ our true rest (v.14-16) 				

IV. The Catholic Epistles

- ❖ The following seven epistles (the epistle of St. James, the two epistles of St. Peter, the three epistles of St. John, and the epistle of St. Jude) are called the Catholic Epistles, i.e. the universal epistles, because they were not written to a specific person or group or church, as the epistles of St. Paul, but they were written for the entire Church.
- ❖ There are similarities between the letters, especially between the following:
 - I Peter and the Epistle of James.
 - II Peter and the Epistle of Jude.
 - I, II, and III John.
- ❖ The Church gives importance to these letters, and it reads specific parts of them in most of the liturgies.
- ❖ St. Irenaeus says that these letters are characterized by brevity and detail: brief expressions, however, detailed in explanations for understanding; which makes them difficult to understand at times.

20. The Epistle of St. James

The Holiness of the Christian Life

Who is James?

- ❖ He is the Lord's brother (Gal 1:19), (in actuality, his cousin). St. Jerome says that St. James was ordained a bishop for Jerusalem; and he instituted a mass, which the Armenian Church currently uses to pray. He was called "the righteous" because of his love for worship. The Jews feared him and rushed to touch his clothes for blessing. However, due to his eyewitness accounts of the Lord Jesus Christ, they threw him from the side of the temple and stoned him, a dyer and hit him with a hammer on his head.
- ❖ He directed the first Council in Jerusalem in the year 52 A.D. concerning the faith of the Gentiles (Acts 15). St. Paul, the apostle, called him a pillar of the Church, and mentioned him before Peter & John.

The date the Letter was written:

- ❖ It was written around 60 or 61 A.D. as the church suffered afflictions at the hands of the Jews (Acts 4:1, 5:17); before the persecution of Domitian and Tragan, and before the fall of Jerusalem, and the scattering of the Jews (68 A.D.).

The message of the Letter:

- ❖ To encourage the faithful to endure through the pain, while discovering the meaning of tribulations in the light of the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.
 - He linked faith with practical life, so the letter concentrated on "the holiness of the Christian Life," while revealing the seriousness of some sins that some believe are insignificant, such as the sins of the tongue.

Practical Faith					
Faith and Trials Chapter 1	Faith and Works Chapter 2	Faith and the Tongue Chapter 3	Faith and being Oc- cupied with Riches Chapter 4	Faith and Earthly Desires Chapter 5	Faith in all Circum- stances
1. Introduction (greeting) (v.1) 2. External trials (v.2-4) 3. How to endure trials (v.5-12) 4. God, our Father, grants us goodness (v.13-15) 5. Our position as children of God (v.18-27) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be quick to listen • Be slow to speak • Be slow to anger • Remove all evil • Plant the Word • Bind the tongue • Have mercy on others • Take precautions from the world's defilement 	As children of God, we translate our faith into works: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Faith and partiality against the poor (v.1-3) <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Partiality is disrespect to God (v.4-5) b. The rich are troublemakers (v.6-7) c. Partiality towards the laws (v.8-11) d. Despising the poor is against mercifulness (v.12-13) 2. Faith without works (v.14) <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Two examples of dead faith (v.15-18) b. Two examples of living faith (v.20-24) c. The association of faith with works (v.25) 	The apostle warns us from the tongue, where the love of teaching and the abundance of talk without wisdom can co-exist. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The love of teaching (v.1-2) 2. The danger of the tongue (v.3-6) 3. How to control the tongue (v.7-12) 4. The tongue and wisdom (v.13-18) <p>"For we all stumble in many things." (James 3:2)</p>	Not only does the apostle warn us from the tongue, but he also asks us to be filled with the heavenly wisdom, which can be spoiled by earthly desires. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Lust makes us lose our peace (v.1-3) 2. Lust makes us lose our peace with God (v.4-10) 3. Lust makes us lose our peace with others (v.11-13) 4. Lust grants us nothing (v.14-17) <p style="text-align: center;">"Resist the Devil, and he will flee from you." (James 4:7)</p>	Being concerned with temporal richness draws us away from being concerned with the heavenly treasures. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Being concerned with riches (v.1-6) <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. It is temporal b. Removes justice and mercy c. Leads to luxury d. Resists righteousness and the righteous 2. Endure the oppressor, be patient, and await the coming of The God of Glory (v.7-11) 3. Do not swear (v.12) <p style="text-align: center;">"But let your 'Yes' be 'Yes,' and your 'No,' 'No'" (James 5:12)</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. In sorrow and joy (v.13) 2. In illness (v.14-18) 3. In the deviation of a brother (v.19-20)

"...he who turns a sinner from the error of his way will save a soul from death and cover a multitude of sins."

(James 5:20)



21. The First Epistle of St. Peter

Tribulations and the Holy Life

The message of the Letter:

- ❖ The apostle St. Peter wrote this epistle for the believers who left their countries due to the oppression they had faced while living in Asia Minor (1:1). He wrote it between 63 and 67 AD during the persecution of Nero, in Babylon (5:13), which is most likely Old Egypt. He wrote it to encourage them to endure pains, which is why the letter touched on many practical issues.

Characteristics:

- ❖ It resembles some of the epistles of our teacher St. Paul, because of the friendship between the two apostles. He quoted much from the Old Testament, being the circumcising apostle.
- ❖ He mentioned several sermons of our Lord Christ, being a witness for what he saw and heard from the Lord Himself.



Salvation and Pain Chapter 1	Our Practical Relation with Christ Chapters 2 & 3				Pain and Holiness Chapter 4	Church Behavior Chapter 5
	Unity with Christ Chapter 2:1-12	Behavior among Groups Chapter 2:13-25	Behavior in the Family Chapter 3:1-8	Behavior with those who are troubled Chapter 3:9-22		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • He writes to those who are suffering, he lifts them above their pain, speaking about salvation, and the core of our belief which is related to pain (i.e. the cross) • In the midst of pain, we should meditate on the work of the Holy Trinity that we may discover His sacrificial love. • The help of the suffering person: faith, hope, love. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Opening greetings (v.1) 2. God's work for salvation: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. The Trinity's love for us (v.2) b. God's new gifts (v.3-5) 3. Our position towards salvation <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Faith, hope and love (v.6-12) b. Struggle and work 	<p>We should declare our faith, our practical unity with Christ by cutting off evil, refusing darkness, and accepting the food of the Church of Christ for our growth.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The passive position: abandoning evil (v.1) 2. The assertive position: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Connecting with pain (v.2) b. Connecting with the Lord (v.2-10) c. Connecting with the Lord through holiness (v.11, 12) 	<p>We testify to our unity with Christ not only through worship, but also through our behavior. For example, submitting to the rulers, and honesty.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Submitting to ranks of the government (v.13-17) 2. Honesty in the service (v.18-25) <p style="text-align: center;">“Christ as a model and example”</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Marital advice (v.1) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The wife's submission is not in weakness, but in strength to pull the man to the faith! 2. Focusing on inner adornment (v.2-6) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As the woman cares for her outer adornment, the spirit guides her to the inner adornment. 3. The man honors his wife (v.7-8) 	<p>The normal man cannot love the one who troubles him, but through Christ Jesus, who suffered for us, we can love.</p> <p>The grace of loving those who trouble us:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. We gain blessing (v.9) 2. With it we taste peace (v.10) 3. With it we please God (v.11) 4. No one can hurt us (v.12-13) 5. With it we preach (v.14-17) 6. We take Christ as a model (v.17-22) 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. He correlates pain with the holy life in the Lord 2. Pain helps us against worldly lusts, and it enflames our hearts towards Christ's coming to gain the reward, and lets us focus on eternal glory. 3. Pain and lusts (v.1-4) 4. Pain and judgment (v.5-11) 5. Pain and glory (v.17-19) 	<p>The relationship between the shepherd and the people.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The shepherd serves and does not rule; he seeks eternal glory, not worldly respect. • Submitting to the shepherd in the Lord; being the true shepherd. • Advice for shepherds (v.1-4) • Advice for the flock (v.5-7) • Final advice (v.8-14) <p>He guides them to the life of vigilance in the midst of pain.</p>



22. The Second Epistle of

St. Peter

The Inner Kingdom and the Second Coming

The author:

Some doubt its relation to St. Peter the apostle because:

1. One sixth (1/6) of the Greek words are common between the first epistle and the second. This significant ratio, (especially because the apostle did not write in Greek), suggests that the translator of the first letter is not the same as the translator of the second. In addition, the difference in the message of the two epistles gives each one its special style and language.
2. His mention of St. Paul's letters (3:15, 16) makes some people think the epistle was written after the collection of St. Paul's letters. This can be answered by saying that the apostle already knew about the letters of his friend.
3. The second chapter of the epistle is similar to the epistle of Jude; this can be addressed by saying that St. Peter predicted in the future tense (2:1). But Jude the apostle declares what **has already happened**.

Characteristics:

- ❖ As the Lord declares to him his upcoming departure, St. Peter sent to his children his farewell advice. He wrote to them about the desires of his heart: "The kingdom of Heaven and the Second Coming of Christ"
- ❖ In his first epistle, he comforted the believers in their tribulations, but here he encourages them to refute heresies; in the first epistle, he lifts us up to the Lord's pains, and here to the light of truth (1:19).



The Kingdom of Heaven Chapter 1	False Teachers Chapter 2	Christ's Final Coming Chapter 3
<p>His final advice: "Enjoy the kingdom of Heaven as an inner life, despite the appearing of heretics"</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. God's work for heaven (v.1-4) <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. God offers a general invitation for everyone. b. The invitation for inner glory, and virtuous life. c. He grants us the abilities to fulfill His kingdom within us. 2. Our struggle along with God's abundant work (v.5-11) 3. An Eternal Kingdom: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. We do not need to be reminded of it (v.12-15) b. The transfiguration testifies to it (v.16-18) c. The prophets testify to it (v.19-21) 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. God offers His ability to fulfill His kingdom, and Satan exerts every effort to destroy God's kingdom within us, especially through the appearance of heresies. 2. If heresies destroy, faith is greater (1:16). The judgment of the heretics and their supporters' (the angels of evil) is certain. 3. Corrupt teachings give rise to corrupt behavior. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. The appearance of heretics and their danger (v.1-2) b. Their judgment: the judgment of the fallen angels (v.3-9) (the destruction of the old world, and of Sodom and Gomorrah) c. Their characteristics: those who walk according to the flesh, deceivers, those who despise authority (v.10-22) 	<p>If our lives here are to enjoy the inner kingdom of God, then the purpose of our existence is to meet with the Lord Jesus Christ in His final coming that we may be glorified with Him eternally.</p> <p>Waiting for His arrival ignites our spiritual struggle, therefore the enemy of good works on destroying the idea of His arrival, to make man live with no goal, and no hope, so he follows his earthly desires.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Book focuses on His coming (the prophets, the Lord Himself, and His disciples) (v.1-2) 2. The heretics deny His coming (they abuse God's patience) (v.3-10) 3. Our duty towards His coming (v.11-14) 4. Conclusion (v.15-18) <p>The apostle sees in St. Paul's writings what is difficult to understand.</p>

"Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells."

(2 Peter 3:13)



23. The First Epistle of St. John

God is Love

The author:

- ❖ St. John the beloved (who also wrote the Gospel of John, and the Book of Revelation), to the universal church, from the town of Ephesus.

The date the Letter was written:

- ❖ Towards the end of the first century, approximately after the destruction of Jerusalem. That is why he did not mention the Jews' persecution of the church; instead, he mentions the opposition of the Gnostics.

The message of the Letter:

- ❖ To warn against heretics since they:
 - Despise the body and materialistic things, so they denied Christ's humanity saying that His body was imaginary. This is why the apostle confirms His Incarnation (1:1, 2; 4:2, 3).
 - Call themselves Gnostics (the knowledgeable), and ignore the faith. This is why he confirms **our knowledge** through the Lord's declarations and faith (1:5; 2:20-27). He repeats the word "**know**," or its equivalent, 22 times.
 - Are characterized by the theoretical knowledge, lacking in the practice of a daily holy life. So the epistle announced the translation of faith through practical love and brotherhood.



Divine Incarnation and Love Chapter 1	Light and Love Chapter 2	Sonship to God and Love Chapter 3	Distinction and Love Chapter 4	Faith and Love Chapter 5
<p>The apostle confirms the truth of the Divine incarnation. He saw the Lord with his own eyes, heard Him with his own ears and touched him. This meeting also occurred in the spirit!</p> <p>The purpose of the incarnation is to let us enjoy the joyful life through our enjoyment of the divine light and forgiveness.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The incarnation of the life-giving Word (v.1) 2. The purpose of the incarnation: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Enjoying the fellowship of life and light (v.2-4) b. Following God and living in the light (v.5-7) c. Confessing our sins (v.8-10) d. Accepting Christ as a unique advocate (2:1-2) 	<p>Through incarnation, we enjoy divine enlightenment.</p> <p>This enlightenment is translated through practical love for the Lord (keeping the commandments), and people.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The incarnate Son's love for us (v.1-2) 2. Our love for the Lord: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. By obeying His commandments (v.3-11) b. Our abilities as loving children (v.12-14) c. Refusing the love of the world (v.15-17) d. Refusing dissensions (v.18-23) e. Steadfastness in the Lord (v.24-27) f. Waiting for His coming (v.28) g. Practicing righteousness (v.29) 	<p>If true love is the divine light by which we witness to the Lord, we practice it not only as humanitarian work, but as a divine gift offered to us through our sonship to God. Love is the characteristic of the Children of God, the true love.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. God in His love adopted us (v.1-2) 2. Our responsibility as children of God: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Imitating Him in holiness (v.3) b. Imitating Him in abstaining from sin (v.4-5) c. Imitating Him in doing righteousness and love (v.6-21) d. Trusting Him as our Father (v.22-24) <p style="text-align: center;">“By this we know love, because He laid down His life for us. And we also ought to lay down our lives for the brethren” (1 John 3:16)</p>	<p>If love gives simplicity to the soul, it is not without wisdom or distinction.</p> <p>Many deceiving teachers mislead simple people under the name “Christ” or “love”. True love is not deceived by evil.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Love and wisdom (accepting what is God's) (v.1-6) 2. The cross is the source of love (v.7-11) <p>How do we taste love?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. By practicing brotherly love (v.12-16) 2. By waiting for the Lord's coming with joy (v.17-21) 	<p>Love is like a divine gift linked to faith. Through faith, Christ dwells in us, so we carry love. With Him we triumph, and receive spiritual insight.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Faith and love (v.1-3) 2. Faith and victory (v.4-5) 3. Faith and witness. (v.6-10) 4. Faith and eternal life. (v.11-13) 5. Faith and granting prayers (v.14-15) 6. Believers and praying for others (v.16-18) 7. Believers and insight (v.19, 20) 8. The final warning (v.21)



24. The Second Epistle of St. John

Truth and Love

The author:

- ❖ St. John wrote it while he was in Ephesus. He addressed it to a lady. St. Jerome sees that the word “Kereya” means “lady,” and not a specific name.
- ❖ Some see that it is a symbolic sign for a specific church, being a chosen bride.

Characteristics:

- ❖ It bears the same characteristics as the apostle’s other writings, especially the link between truth and love, since they are the Lord Christ Himself. It is more of an article about the truth revealed through love.



Introduction Verses 1 to 3	Love and Truth Verses 4 to 6	Warning from deceptive people Verses 7 to 11	Conclusion Verses 12 & 13
<p>St. Jerome says that the word “presbyter” means priest, whether in the rank of a bishop or a priest.</p> <p>As he links truth with love, he reveals:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Truth is the source of love (v. 1) (Vanity is the source of lust). 2. The truth remains in us and accompanies us (v. 2). 3. Truth is eternal, and what is not eternal is not true. 4. The need for the Father and the Son’s grace, mercy, and peace, to gain truth and love (v. 3). 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Practicing truth: Truth is not an abstract matter, but a practical life revealed through behavior (v. 4). 2. This behavior is revealed through the brotherly love, i.e. practicing the commandment of love that the crucified Christ offered us through His cross, and gave us His Holy Spirit to practice it. With this the commandment of love became new (v. 5). 3. Love is linked with the Divine commandment, the law (commandment) is fulfilled through love, and the commandment ignites love inside us (v. 6). 	<p>It suits us to love all, believers and non-believers. Through this, the law is fulfilled. However, our love for all should not be at the expense of our salvation, or our brothers’. That’s why love is linked to wisdom with firmness. So he says:</p> <p>“If anyone comes to you and does not bring this doctrine, do not receive him into your house nor greet him; for he who greets him shares in his evil deeds.” (2 John 10, 11)</p> <p>That is how we love with no deviation!</p>	<p>Faith is received not through books, but through life; i.e. through discipleship, and through traditions:</p> <p>“Having many things to write to you, I did not wish to do so with paper and ink; but I hope to come to you and speak face to face, that our joy may be full.” (2 John 12)</p> <p>We receive it through the Holy Bible, liturgies (worships), conduct, the Fathers’ writings, etc...</p> <p>“The children of your elect sister greet you...” (2 John 13)</p> <p>This probably refers to the believers of the church of Ephesus.</p>
<p>“This is love, that we walk according to His commandments” (6) “Whoever transgresses and does not abide in the doctrine of Christ does not have God. He who abides in the doctrine of Christ has both the Father and the Son” (9,10)</p>			



25. The Third Epistle of St. John

Hospitality to Strangers

To whom it was written:

- ❖ He wrote it to the beloved Gaius whose name was mentioned many times in the New Testament (Gaius from Derbe (Acts 20:4), Gaius the Macedonian (Acts 19:29), Gaius who was baptized by St. Paul (1Col 1:14), Gaius the Corinthian the host of St. Paul (*16:23*)). Perhaps the latter is the one to whom St. John wrote this to. Gaius believed at his hands, and was baptized by St. Paul; he is a wealthy person who was known for his great love for hospitality, especially for the servants of the Word.

Characteristics:

- ❖ He often mentions truth being the source of the apostle's love (v.1); it dwells in the believer (v.3), and is translated into deeds (v. 3,4), the weapon of preaching (v.8).

The message of the Letter:

- ❖ He praises Gaius for his hospitality and encourages him for this work.



Gaius who practices the truth Verses 1 to 8	Diotrephes the Arrogant Verses 9 to 11	Demetrius the honest Verse 12	Conclusion Verses 13 & 14
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The apostle declares his love to Gaius, who opens his heart and house with love, hosting strangers. He loves him in truth, and for truth. • It seems that Gaius was sick. That is why the apostle prays for him. • The apostle expresses his joy in seeing his children walk in the truth. • By 'strangers,' he probably means the Christians who were of Gentile origin. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • While publicly praising Gaius (member of the congregation), he bitterly criticizes Diotrephes for: his pride, his despising of St. John's letter, his misery, commanding against generosity, driving away generous people. • He did not write that to condemn the servant, but to confirm Gaius. • The fall of a cleric is an illness that is hard to treat. That is why the church places severe laws to punish them. And for this, St. John Chrysostom feared for his own salvation. 	<p>He diverted our attention from the evil Diotrephes to Demetrius, the good example:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. All testify for him [(even the non-believers (1 Tim 3:7))] 2. He is testified for by the Truth itself (Christ). 3. He is testified for by the shepherds (we testify). 4. He is testified for by the church. <p>This is how the living example is testified for by all: God and men.</p>	<p>He assures the need of the church for the apostolic tradition (the living tradition):</p> <p style="text-align: center;">“But I hope to see you shortly, and we shall speak face to face” (14)</p>

“Beloved, do not imitate what is evil, but what is good. He who does good is of God, but he who does evil has not seen God.”

(3 John 11)



26. The Epistle of St. Jude

Keeping the Faith that has been passed on from the Saints

Who is Jude?

- ❖ Jude is James' brother (Lord Christ's cousin). According to the Jewish expression he is considered His brother (Mt 13:55; Mk 6:3).

The date the Letter was written:

- ❖ It was written generally to all Christians, around 68 AD pointing towards the prophecy mentioned in the second epistle of Peter. It was written before the destruction of Jerusalem, otherwise he would have mentioned it.

The message of the Letter:

- ❖ He warns against false teachers who were characterized by the following: corruption of the faith handed down to the saints, their denial of the Father and the Lord Jesus, saying things that are untrue about the angels, possessing arrogance without the spirit of submission to the church. They were selfish and seeking their own pleasures. Therefore, the message of the epistle is, "Keeping the Faith."



The apostolic blessing Verses 1&2	Keeping the faith Verses 3 & 4	Examples for those who did not keep the faith Verses 5 to 7	Those with false faith Verses 8 to 19	Building the soul up on the faith Verses 20 to 23	Conclusion Verses 24 & 25
<p>The introduction is suitable for the purpose of the letter: "Keeping the faith delivered to the saints"</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. He called them "those who are called sanctified" by God the Father; the purpose of the true faith is sanctification (unity with the Father through His Son). 2. He called them "Preserved in Jesus Christ." The Father offers us as a bride for His Son. The goal of our faith is to keep ourselves as holy brides for the Heavenly Bridegroom. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Father keeps us holy for His Son. From our side, we should struggle to enjoy this gift. 2. "Contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints" (v.3) 3. Faith, from all aspects: from aspect of belief, worship, conduct with the brethren and with all mankind, fellowship with the saints - that is the delivered faith! 	<p>He offered us examples of those who had fallen for not keeping the faith.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Destruction of the Jews in the wilderness because of their complaints (v.5) 2. Destruction of the angels despite their knowledge of God even though they were in heaven (v.6) 3. Destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah because of sexual immorality and excess (v.7) <p>In the previous examples, the faith was not kept because of complaints, arrogance and excess.</p>	<p>The fruits of faithlessness:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Dreams and delusions (v.8) 2. Defiling of the flesh (v.8) 3. Undermining the church (v.8) 4. Speaking evil of the shepherds (v.8) 5. Pride (v.9) 6. Becoming lower than beasts (v.10) 7. Violence and brutality (v.10) 8. Seeking material profit (v.10) 9. Resisting the Lord and His servants (v.10) 10. Hypocrisy (i.e., appearances) (v.11-13) 	<p>"Building yourselves up on your most holy faith" (v.20)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Building = continuous work 2. Praying with the Holy Spirit 3. Keeping the soul in the love of God 4. Hoping in God's mercy 5. Having mercy on others 6. Being concerned with the salvation of others. 7. Caution while serving, that we do not fall while trying to help others. <p>"But you, beloved, building yourselves up on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit, keeping yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life" (v.20, 21)</p>	<p>He offers a prayer so that God Himself would protect us!</p> <p>Without Him we cannot be saved:</p> <p>"Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling, and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy, to God our savior, who alone is wise, be glory" (v.24, 25)</p>



V. The Book of Prophecy

27. The Revelation of

St. John

The Revelation of Jesus Christ

The author:

- ❖ Saint John the beloved. The emperor Domitian exiled him to the island of Patmos (currently called Patinos), where he saw this vision. He wrote it around 95 AD, after the destruction of Jerusalem.

Characteristics:

- ❖ It is prophetic. He declares the spiritual heavenly facts through symbolic language (shapes, colors, names, and numbers)

The message of the Letter:

- ❖ To inflame the heart's zeal for Heaven during tribulations.



The Seven Churches Chapters 1 to 3	Prophetic Visions Chapters 4 to 19			The Heavenly Jerusalem Chapters 20 to 22
	The Seven Seals Chapters 4 to 7	The Seven Trumpets Chapters 8 to 14	The Seven Bowls Chapters 15 to 19	
<p>The Holy Spirit accompanies the human soul on the road to the eternal wedding.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The announced One (Ch. 1) • Letters to 4 churches (Ch. 2) • Letters to 3 churches (Ch. 3) <p>The churches, their weaknesses, and the remedies.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ephesus - weakness of love. Remedy: meditation on the afterlife (tree of life) 2. Smyrna - weakness of pain. Remedy: waiting for the crown of life. 3. Pergamos - weakness of obstacles. Remedy: participation in the sacraments 4. Thyatira - weakness of lusts. Remedy: severing evil. 5. Sardis - weakness of hypocrisy. Remedy: being concerned with the eternal glory. 6. Philadelphia - weakness of laziness. Remedy: acknowledging the reality of the reward. 7. Laodicea - weakness of being lukewarm. Remedy: perseverance with hope. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The appearance of the sealed book (Ch. 4, 5). (The heavenly spectacle, appearance of the book, its opener) 2. The suffering church (Ch. 6) - under the protection of her groom, the knight. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Seal #1: the white horse ridden by Christ b. Seal #2: the red horse: wars c. Seal #3: the black horse: famines d. Seal #4: the green horse: death (or the Antichrist) e. Seal #5: The church under the altar (Ch. 6) f. Seal #6: the coming of the bridegroom to judge the evildoers (Ch. 6) 3. His concern with the church in her struggle (Ch 7) 4. His concern with the church in her relief (Ch 7) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A living vision of the heavenly church coming out of its tribulation to enjoy the glory with her Groom. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As the seventh seal is opened, seven trumpets appear. • Silence in heaven (8:1, 2) • Intercession of the sacrificial lamb (8: 3-5) <p>Trumpet #1: fire + cold + blood (Ch. 8)</p> <p>Trumpet #2: throwing of the great flaming mountain.</p> <p>Trumpet #3: falling of a large star.</p> <p>Trumpet #4: striking 1/3 of the sun, moon and stars. <i>(The previous trumpets were just warnings)</i></p> <p>Trumpet #5: preparing for the Antichrist (Ch 9)</p> <p>Trumpet #6: appearance of the Antichrist.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • God's reaction towards him (Ch. 10, 11) (appearance of the sealed scroll and the dragon) <p>Trumpet #7: The final coming of the Lord (Ch. 11)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The woman clothed with the sun (the church, the Virgin) • The dragon's resistance of her (Ch. 12) • The Antichrist's resistance of her (Ch. 13) • The woman delighting in joy (Ch. 14). 	<p>Two preparatory visions: the glorified church, and the source of the bowls (Ch. 15)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Bowl #1: loathsome sores à 6th plague of Moses (16:2). 2. Bowl #2: turning the seawater into blood à 1st plague of Moses. 3. Bowl #3: turning the waters of the river into blood à 5th plague of Moses. 4. Bowl #4: the sun scorches men with fire à 9th plague of Moses. 5. Bowl #5: Darkness: à 2nd plague of Moses. 6. Bowl #6: Euphrates River dries up à 7th plague of Moses 7. Bowl #7: events before the resurrection, such as thunder. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fall of Babylon <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. The Harlot and the beast (Ch. 17) b. Babylon, the bride of the beast (Ch. 18) c. The victory of Heaven (Ch. 19) 	<p>A Taste of eternal life (Kingdom of the thousand years).</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Kingdom of the thousand years (Ch. 20) <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. The Devil, bound by the Cross. b. We enjoy the resurrection of the soul (the first resurrection). c. In the final days, the Devil would be set loose. d. The judgment 2. The Heavenly church (Ch. 21) 3. Her Glories (Ch. 22) The tree of life and the river of life. Everlasting testimony and everlasting light. <p>Conclusion: longing for the coming of the Lord.</p> <p>"And the Spirit and the bride say, 'Come!'" (22:17)</p>



The Holy Book and the History of our salvation

	The Era	Characteristics	The Books and their message
1	The first parents	Raised me as a king	Genesis: the world was created for me.
2	Noah and the flood	He renews my nature through baptism	Genesis: only the Creator can renew His creation.
3	The Patriarchal fathers: Abraham, Isaac, Jacob	He cares for me personally.	Genesis: God makes a covenant for the sake of one righteous person. Appearance of Job: God forgets no one.
4	Raising the people and liberating them (Israel in Egypt)	He makes me part of His Body (the Church)	Exodus: God sets me free. Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy
5	The theocratic rule (God rules through religious men)	God fulfills His promises to me.	Joshua: God is my portion and my heritage. Judges: God disciplines and saves. Ruth: The God of the forgotten.
6	Royal rule: Saul, David, Solomon	Desire for temporal glory (Saul) Desire for divine kingdom (David).	1 Samuel: Royal reign and life of prayer (Samuel) 2 Samuel: Royal reign and standing before God (David)
7	Kingdom divided (the days of Rehoboam, son of Solomon) year 931 BC • Judah (Jerusalem) • Israel (Samaria)	Kingship and bad advice.	1 Kings: The zeal of the men of God (Elijah) 2 Kings: The division ➡ the capture 1 Chronicles: The division ➡ The fall. 2 Chronicles: Corruption and reformation.
8	The Capture	Sin and slavery	Persia captures Israel 722 BC Babylon captures Judah in three phases 586 BC
9	The Return from Captivity	God is my liberator	Ezra: Rebuilding God's temple. Nehemiah: God is a wall of fire Esther: God saves by all means.
10	Years of silence: 410 years	Awaiting the Savior, the desire of nations	1 Maccabees God works even in the darkness. 2 Maccabees
11	Coming of Christ	Free salvation	The Gospels: Matthew, Mark, Luke, John
12	Church of the New Testament	Glorious pains	Acts and the Epistles
13	Anti-Christ	A decisive battle.	Evil's temporary victory
14	Christ's final coming.	The open heaven	Revelation: Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus!