

The Catholic Epistles

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The Catholic Epistles

Introduction

1. The Seven Catholic Epistles

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| a. James | e. 2 John |
| b. 1 Peter | f. 3 John |
| c. 2 Peter | g. Jude |
| d. 1 John | |

2. Referred to as “Catholic Epistles” Since Ancient Times (Nienhuis and Wall 2013, 27):

And in his *Catholic Epistle* John says that He is a Paraclete for our souls with the Father, as thus: “And if any one sin, we have a Paraclete with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous... (1 John 2:1)” (Origen, *Commentary on John*, 1.23;).

But in *the Catholic Epistle* of this same John we read that God is light. (Origen, *Commentary on John*, 2.18; see 1 John 1:5)

As to the descent into Hades, we read in the sixteenth Psalm, “Thou wilt not leave my soul in Hades” and as for the journey in prison with the Spirit we read in *Peter in his Catholic Epistle*, “Put to death,” he says, “in the flesh, but quickened in the Spirit; in which also He went and preached unto the spirits in prison...” (1 Peter 3:18-20) (Origen, *Commentary on John*, 6.18)

Such is the story of James, whose is said to be the first of the Epistles called Catholic (καθολικῶν ἐπιστολῶν). (Eusebius, *Church History*, 2.23.5; trans. LCL)

Receive also the Acts of the Twelve Apostles; and in addition to these *the seven Catholic Epistles of James, Peter, John, and Jude*; and as a seal upon them all, and the last work of the disciples, the fourteen Epistles of Paul. (Cyril of Jerusalem, *Catechetical Lectures* 4.36; trans. NPNF 2, 7.27-28)

The Disputed Authorship of Some Catholic Epistles

1. Unlike the Four Gospels and the explicitly Pauline Letters (Hebrews is anonymous)
2. Authorship of some Catholic Epistles was disputed in ancient times:
3. On the one hand, apostolic authorship of 1 Peter and 1 John undisputed:

Following them the Epistle of John called the first, and in the same way should be recognized the Epistle of Peter. In addition to these should be put, if it seem desirable, the Revelation of John, the arguments concerning which we will expound at the proper time. These belong to the Recognized Books (ὁμολογουμένοις). (Eusebius, *Church History*, 3.25.2-3)

4. On the other hand, apostolic authorship of five Catholic Epistles were disputed:
 - a. James
 - b. Jude
 - c. 2 Peter
 - d. 2-3 John

Of the Disputed Books (τῶν δ' ἀντιλεγομένων) which are nevertheless known to most (γνωρίμων δ' οὖν ὅμως τοῖς πολλοῖς) are the Epistle called of James, that of Jude, the second Epistle of Peter, and the so-called second and third Epistles of John which may be the work of the evangelist or of some other with the same name. (Eusebius, *Church History*, 3.25.3)

The Debate over “Acceptable” Pseudepigraphy in the Early Church

1. 20th Century Scholarship: Pseudepigrapha an “acceptable practice” in Early Church:

The use of a pseudonym need not trouble us in the slightest; the feeling that it is somehow fraudulent is a purely modern prejudice. (Francis Beare, 1970, 48, cited in J. H. Elliott, 2001, 125)

2. Bart D. Ehrman, *Forgery and Counterforgery* (2013): shows this to be false
3. Pseudepigraphy *rejected* by Early Church Fathers as Forgery/Deception:

[Regarding the *Acts of Paul and Thecla*:] But if *the writings which wrongly go under Paul's name*, claim Thecla's example as a license for women's teaching and baptizing, let them know that, in Asia, the presbyter who composed that writing, as if he were augmenting Paul's fame from his own store, after being convicted, and confessing that he had done it from love of Paul, was removed from his office. For how credible would it seem, that he who has not permitted a *woman* even to *learn* with overboldness, should give a *female* the power of *teaching* and of *baptizing*! “Let them be silent,” he says, “and at home consult their own husbands” (1 Cor 14:34, 35) (Tertullian, *On Baptism*, 17; trans. ANF 3.677)

[Quoting bishop Serapion regarding the *Gospel of Peter*] “For our part, brethren, we receive both Peter and the other apostles as Christ, but the writings which falsely bear their names (τὰ δὲ ὀνόματι αὐτῶν ψευδεπίγραφα) we reject (παραιτούμεθα), as men of experience, knowing that such were not handed down to us.” (Eusebius, *Church History*, 6.12.3; trans. LCL)

Then of the New Testament there are the four Gospels only, for the rest have false titles (ψευδεπίγραφα) and are mischievous. The Manichæans also wrote a Gospel according to Thomas, which being tinctured with the fragrance of the evangelic title corrupts the souls of the simple sort (Cyril of Jerusalem, *Catechetical Lectures*, 4.36; trans. NPNF 1, 7.27).

4. The Problem of Early Second Century Eyewitnesses to Jesus:
 - a. According to Church Fathers, apostles and eyewitnesses lived well into the early second-century A.D.
 - b. John the apostle stayed alive in Asian Minor “until the time of Trajan” (Eusebius, *Church History*, 3.23.1-4, citing Irenaeus and Clement)
 - c. Simeon the cousin of Jesus stayed alive until the time “when Trajan was emperor and Atticus was Consular” (Eusebius, *Church History* 3.32.1-6)
 - d. These apostles and eyewitnesses could easily corroborate or falsify pseudepigraphal writings supposedly emerging in the late first-early second century A.D.
 - e. And yet we have no evidence of such falsifications

The Catholic Epistles and the Jewish and Gentile Missions

1. Two Collections of Apostolic Letters:
 - a. Pauline Letters (Rom, 1-2 Cor, Gal, Eph, Col, 1-2 Thess, Philem, 1-2 Tim, Titus, Hebrews?)
 - b. Catholic Epistles (James, 1-2 Pet, 1-3 John, Jude)
2. The Twofold Mission to Jews and Gentiles
 - a. Peter, James, and John → “the Circumcision” (Gal 2:19)
 - b. Paul → the Gentiles

Rightly, then, did Peter and James and John give their right hand of fellowship to Paul, and agree on such a division of their work, as that Paul should go to the heathen, and themselves to the circumcision. (Tertullian, *Against Marcion*, 5.3.6)

Thus, Tertullian was the first to provide the full *logic* behind the ultimate form of the apostolic letter collection: it is a two-sided collection of writings rooted in the ancient apostolic missions to Jews and Gentiles. (D. Nienhuis and R. W. Wall 2013, 23)

“Not By Paul Alone”: Faith, Works, and the Catholic Epistles

1. The Gospel of Paul:
 - a. Widely misinterpreted from the very beginning
 - b. Charge of antinomianism
 - c. Things in Paul’s letters “hard to understand” (2 Pet 3:16)
2. Augustine of Hippo: Catholic Epistles *correct* “Faith Alone” Interpretations of Paul

Therefore, *let us now see what must be torn away from the hearts of the God-fearing to prevent the loss of salvation through a treacherously false security if, under the illusion that faith alone is sufficient for salvation, they neglect to live a good life and fail by good works to persevere in the way that leads to God.* Even in the days of the Apostles certain somewhat obscure statements of the Apostle Paul were misunderstood, and some thought he was saying this: “Let us now do evil that good may come from it” (Rom 3:8) because he said “Now the law intervened that the offense might abound. But where the offense has abounded, grace has abounded

yet more (Rom 5:20)... Since this problem is by no means new and had already arisen at the time of the apostles, other apostolic letters of John, James and Jude are *deliberately aimed against the argument I have been refuting and firmly uphold the doctrine that faith does not avail without good works* (Augustine, *On Faith and Works*, 21; cited in D. Nienhuis and R. Wall 2013, 34-35)

Living Tradition: The Theological Legacy of the Catholic Epistles

1. Letter of James
 - a. The Immutability of God (James 1:17)
 - b. Doctrine of Justification (James 2:14-26)
 - c. Sins that Cry out to Heaven: injustice to the wage-earner (James 5:4)
 - d. Anointing of the Sick and Confession of Sins (James 5:13-18)
2. 1 Peter
 - a. Common Priesthood of All Believers (1 Pet 2:4-10)
 - b. Ecclesiology: Church as the “People of God” (1 Pet 2:9-10)
 - c. Jesus’ Descent into Hades (1 Pet 3:18-22; 4:6)
3. 2 Peter
 - a. Divinization/Deification (2 Pet 1:4)
 - b. Inspiration and Interpretation of Scripture (2 Pet 1:18-21)
 - c. The Final Judgment and *Parousia* (2 Pet 3:1-10)
 - d. The New Heavens and New Earth (2 Pet 3:11-13)
4. 1 John
 - a. The Triple Concupiscence (1 John 2:15-17)
 - b. The Antichrist (1 John 1:18-25; 4:1-5)
 - c. The Beatific Vision (1 John 2:2)
 - d. God is love (1 John 4:8)
 - e. [The Trinity and the “Johannine Comma” (1 John 5:8; missing in most mss)]
 - f. Mortal vs. Venial Sin (1 John 5:16-17)
 - g. Original Sin (1 John 5:19)
5. Jude
 - a. The Deposit of Faith (Jude 2)
 - b. Reality and Eternity of Hell (Jude 7)

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The Letter of James

Introduction

Introducing the Letter of James

1. The Letter of “James”: derives from “Jacob”
 - a. Hebrew: *ya‘aqob* (Gen 26:26)
 - b. Greek:
 - c. Latin: *Jacobus*
 - d. Old French: *Jaimés*
2. Letter of James: “enigma of the New Testament” (D. Allison, 2013)
 - a. Some: earliest NT book, written by brother of Jesus (Gal 1:19)
 - b. Others: unknown author, second-century pseudepigraphon
 - c. Some: rambling collection of sayings without plan or structure
 - d. Others: rhetorically sophisticated “wisdom literature”
 - e. Some: the “least Christian” book in the NT
 - f. Others: key witness to apostolic teaching on faith, works, charity
3. A Controversial book that has been often criticized since the Protestant Reformation:
 - a. Martin Luther: a “right strawy” epistle (1522 “Preface to the New Testament”)

The epistle of James gives us much trouble, for the papists [Catholics] embrace it alone and leave out all the rest... If they will not admit my interpretations, then I shall make rubble also of it. *I almost feel like throwing Jimmy into the stove.* (Martin Luther, “Licentiate Examination” 19, cited in D. C. Allison 2013, 428)

b. Adolf Jülicher: called James “the least Christian book in the New Testament” (cited in L. T. Johnson 1995, 150)

4. Extremely Significant book for Christian moral teaching

The Origin of James

Multiple “Jameses” in the Early Church

1. James the Father of Judas:
 - a. Only mentioned twice in the New Testament
 - b. Father of the apostle named Judas (*not* Iscariot) (Luke 6:16; Acts 1:13).
2. James the Son of Zebedee:
 - a. Son of Zebedee the Galilean fisherman
 - b. One of the Twelve chosen apostles (Matt 10:2; Mark 3:17; Acts 1:13)
 - c. His mother’s name appears to be Salome (cf. Matt 27:56; Mark 15:40; 16:1).
 - d. Present at Transfiguration and Agony in the Garden (Matt 17:1; Mark 9:2; 14:33; Luke 9:28).
 - e. Beheaded in 44 A.D. by the Jewish king Herod Agrippa (Acts 12:2).

3. James the Son of Alphaeus:
 - a. Also one of the Twelve apostles (Matt 10:3; Mark 3:18; Acts 1:13).
4. James “The Less”: the Son of Mary and brother of Joseph:
 - a. “The Less” or “the Little” (Greek *ho mikros*) (Mark 15:40; 16:1).
 - b. Apparently either referring to his age or his stature
 - c. Also son of “Mary the mother of James and Joseph” (Matt 27:56).
5. James “the Brother of Jesus,” and leader of the Jerusalem Church:
 - a. Called “brother” (Greek *adelphos*) of Jesus in the Gospels (Matt 13:55; Mark 6:3)
 - b. Called “brother” (Greek *adelphos*) of Jesus in the writings of Paul (Gal 1:19; cf. 1 Cor 9:5; Acts 1:14).
 - c. One of the “pillars” of the early Jerusalem Church (Gal 2:9)
 - d. The risen Jesus appeared to him (1 Cor 15:7)
 - e. His representatives critical of Peter’s eating with Gentiles (Gal 2:12).
 - f. Leader of the church in Jerusalem (Acts 12:17; 15:12-29; 21:18, 25).
 - g. Martyred by stoning at the prompting of the Jewish high priest Ananias:

Festus was now dead, and Albinus was but upon the road; so he assembled the sanhedrin of judges, and brought before them *the brother of Jesus, who was called Christ, whose name was James*, and some others, [or, some of his companions]; and when he had formed an accusation against them as breakers of the law, *he delivered them to be stoned.* (Josephus, *Antiquities*, 20.200)

6. James the Brother of Jude:
 - a. Identified as the “brother” of the author of the epistle of Jude (see Jude 1).

Who Was James the “Brother” of Jesus?

1. The existence of more than one “James” in the Early Church:

Peter and James and John after the Ascension of the Savior did not struggle for glory... but chose James the Just as bishop of Jerusalem... Now *there were two Jameses, one James the Just, who was thrown down from the pinnacle of the temple and beaten to death with a fuller’s club, and the other he who was beheaded.*” Paul also mentions the same *James the Just* when he writes, “And I saw none other of the Apostles save *James the brother of the Lord.*” (Clement of Alexandria, *Hypotyposes* 6 and 7; cited in Eusebius, *Church History*, 2.1.5)

2. Early Church Fathers agree: James is *not* the son of the Virgin Mary:
 - a. Either the step-brother of Jesus (i.e., son of Joseph)
 - b. Or the “cousin” of Jesus

He says that he [Christ] was then seen by James, who was *one of the so-called brothers of the Savior* (τῶν φερομένων τοῦ σωτῆρος ἀδελφῶν)... (Eusebius, *Church History*, 1.12.5; author’s trans.)

James, who is called *the brother of the Lord, surnamed the Just*, the son of Joseph by another wife, as some think, but, *as appears to me, the son of Mary sister of the mother of our Lord of whom John makes mention in his book* [cf. John 19:25], after our Lord's passion at once ordained by the apostles bishop of Jerusalem, wrote a single epistle, which is reckoned among the seven Catholic Epistles... Ananias the high priest... assembled a council and publicly tried to force James to deny that Christ is the son of God. When he refused Ananias ordered him to be stoned. Cast down from a pinnacle of the temple, his legs broken, but still half alive, raising his hands to heaven he said, "Lord forgive them for they know not what they do." Then struck on the head by the club of a fuller such a club as fullers are accustomed to wring out garments with—he died... He it is of whom the apostle Paul writes to the Galatians that "No one else of the apostles did I see except James the brother of the Lord." (Gal 1:19)... And so *he ruled the church of Jerusalem thirty years*, that is until the seventh year of Nero, and was buried near the temple from which he had been cast down... (Jerome, *Lives of Illustrious Men* 2)

3. The Holiness of James of Jerusalem:

The charge of the Church passed to *James the brother of the Lord*, together with the Apostles. *He was called the 'Just' by all men* from the Lord's time to ours, *since many are called James, but he was holy* from his mother's womb. He drank no wine or strong drink, nor did he eat flesh; no razor went upon his head; he did not anoint himself with oil, and he did not go to the baths... Now, since many even of the rulers believed, there was a tumult of the Jews and the Scribes and Pharisees saying that the whole people was in danger of looking for Jesus as the Christ... So the Scribes and Pharisees mentioned before made James stand on the battlement of the temple, and they cried out to him and said, 'Oh, just one, to whom we all owe obedience, since the people are straying after Jesus who was crucified, tell us what is the gate of Jesus?' And he answered with a loud voice, 'Why do you ask me concerning the Son of Man? He is sitting in heaven on the right hand of the great power, and he will come on the clouds of heaven.' And many were convinced and confessed at the testimony of James... Then again the same Scribes and Pharisees... cried out saying, 'Oh, oh, even the just one erred.'... So they went up and threw down the Just, and they said to one another, 'Let us stone James the Just,' and they began to stone him since the fall had not killed him, but he turned and knelt saying, 'I beseech thee, O Lord, God and Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.' And while they were thus stoning him... a certain man among them, one of the laundrymen, took the club with which he used to beat out the clothes, and hit the Just on the head, and so he suffered martyrdom. (Hegesippus, *Memoirs* 5; quoted in Eusebius, *Church History*, 3.23.3-5, 10, 12-14, 16-17)

The Early Church Fathers and the Origin of the Letter of James

1. Evidence from the Early Church Fathers (Egypt, Holy Land, Rome)

Not only Paul writes such things in his letters. Listen also to *James, the brother of the Lord*, testifying in a similar fashion when he says, “Whoever wants to be a friend of this world makes himself an enemy of God.” [James 4:4]... [I]n this manner *the apostle James* says, “Resist the devil and he will flee from you...” [James 4:7]. (Origen, *Commentary on Romans*, 4.8.2, 4; trans. T. Scheck, 2001, 280-81).

Josephus did not shrink from giving written testimony to this, as follows... “[Ananias] the priest summoned a council of judges, brought before it *the brother of Jesus*, the so-called Christ, *whose name was James*, and some others, on the accusation of breaking the law and delivered them to be stoned...” Such is the story of *James, whose is said to be the first of the Epistles called Catholic*. It is to be observed that *its authenticity is denied, since few of the ancients quote it*, as is also the case with the Epistle called Jude’s, which is itself one of the seven called Catholic; *nevertheless we know that these letters have been used publicly with the rest in most churches*. (Eusebius, *Church History*, 3.20, 22, 24-25, quoting Josephus, *Antiquities* 20.200)

James, who is called the brother of the Lord, surnamed the Just... after our Lord’s passion at once ordained by the apostles bishop of Jerusalem, *wrote a single epistle, which is reckoned among the seven Catholic Epistles* and even this is claimed by some to have been published by some one else under his name, and gradually, as time went on, to have gained authority. (Jerome, *Lives of Illustrious Men* 2)

James death has been shown... that he was thrown from the battlement and beaten to death with a club... Such is the story of James, whose is said to be the first of the Epistles called Catholic. (Eusebius, *Church History*, 3.23.3, 25)

5. Bede on the Audience and Date of the letter of James:

James, Peter, John, Jude wrote seven Letters which church tradition calls catholic, that is, universal. Although in the list of the apostles Peter and John are accustomed to be ranked as more important, the Letter of James is placed first among these for the reason that he received the government of the church of Jerusalem, from where the source and beginning of the preaching of the Gospel took place and spread throughout the entire world... Or at least because he sent his Letter to the twelve tribes of Israel who were the first to become believers, this one rightly ought to have been placed first. (Bede, *On the Seven Catholic Epistles*, Preface; trans. D. Hurst, 1985, 3)

Arguments against Authorship by James the Brother of Jesus

1. Many contemporary scholars consider James late and pseudepigraphical:
 - a. Dale C. Allison 2013
 - b. Bart D. Ehrman 2013
 - c. David Nienhuis 2007
2. No explicit references to letter of James in the first two centuries
 - a. “No clear knowledge of [the letter of James] in early times” (Allison 2013, 13)
 - b. First indisputable knowledge is in Origen (ca. 200 A.D.)
 - c. Eusebius: “Not many of the ancients mention James” (*Church History*, 2.23.25)
 - d. James “struggled to enter the canon” (Allison 2013, 18); absent Muratorian canon
 - e. Easy to explain if James was pseudonymous and composed after death of James
3. Authenticity/Canonicity of the letter of James disputed since ancient times
 - a. Eusebius: “some see it as forged” (*Church History* 2.23.25)
 - b. Jerome: some think composed by “some one else under his name” (*Lives* 2)
 - c. Origen: “so-called letter of James” (on John 19:23)
4. James the (uterine) brother of Jesus could not have written Greek (Allison 2013 19)
 - a. Letter of James: uses “elevated” Greek
 - b. Brother of Jesus: from a poor Galilean family;
 - c. Joseph a “carpenter” (Matt 13:55); offered turtledoves (Luke 2:22-24; Lev 12:1-8)
 - c. Aramaic speaking: “Aramaic speaking peasant from Galilee”
 - d. Illiterate: “who almost certainly never learned to read” (Ehrman, *Forged*, 198)
 - e. Even Josephus needed help writing Greek!

Then, in the leisure which Rome afforded me, with all my materials in readiness, and with the aid of some assistants (Greek *synergois*) for the sake of the Greek (Greek *tēn Hellēnida phōnēn*), at last I committed to writing my narrative of the events. (Josephus, *Against Apion*, 1.50; trans. LCL)

- f. Letter of James: written originally in Greek: complex wordplays (Johnson 1995, 8)
- g. Alliteration of letter *p* (see James 1:2-3, 11, 17, 22; 3:2)
- h. Alliteration of letter *d* (see James 1:1, 6, 21; 2:16; 3:8)
- j. Paranomasia (pun—play on sounds) (e.g., *chairein/charan*) (James 1:1-2)
- k. Not plausible for James son of Joseph the carpenter to have written in Greek:

Is it really credible that the son of Mary and Joseph of Nazareth wrote a letter which... at points approximates Classical Greek, more so than Paul managed to do? (Dale C. Allison 2013, 26)

There are solid reasons for thinking that whoever wrote this letter, it was not James, the brother of Jesus. The first... is that James of Nazareth could almost certainly not write. (Bart Ehrman 2013, 285)

5. Signs of Late First-Century Dating:
 - a. No interest in Circumcision, Food Laws, Sabbath (cf. Gal 2:12; Acts 15:1)
 - b. Dependent on Romans and Ephesians (latter as pseudonymous, post 70 AD) (B. Ehrman, *Forged*, 197)

- c. Literary relationship with 1 Peter (ca. 80-100 AD) (D. Allison 2013, 17)
- d. Existence of other 2nd century pseudepigrapha (*Protoevangelium of James*)
- 6. Suggested Dates if Pseudepigraphical:
 - a. 80-100 (W. G. Kümmel)
 - b. After 100 (D. C. Allison 2013)
 - c. ca. 150 (D. Nienhuis, 2007)

Arguments for Authorship by James the Brother of Jesus

1. Many Scholars do consider James early and authentic:
 - a. Scot McKnight 2011
 - b. Patrick Hartin 2003
 - c. Luke Timothy Johnson 1995
2. James and Greek-Speaking “Hellenists” of Urban Jerusalem
 - a. Greek was extremely widespread in the Holy Land since Alexander the Great
 - b. Judea is “thoroughly Hellenized” by 1st century A.D. (Johnson, *James*, 117)

It is too easily forgotten that in the time of Jesus Greek had already been established as a language for more than three hundred years... Judaea, Samaria, and Galilee were bilingual (or better, trilingual) areas. While Aramaic was the vernacular of ordinary people, and Hebrew the sacred language of religious worship and of scribal discussion, Greek had largely become established as the linguistic medium for trade, commerce, and administration. (M. Hengel, 1989, 7-8)

- c. First-century papyri and Funerary inscriptions: bi- and tri-lingual (Gk, Ar, Heb) (see. P. van der Hoerst, 2010)
- d. Example: Josephus on common knowledge of Greek:

I have also labored strenuously to partake of the realm of Greek prose/letters (Greek *tōn Hellēnikōn grammatōn*) and poetry, and after having gained a knowledge of Greek grammar, although the habitual use of my native tongue has prevented my attaining precision in the pronunciation. For our people do not favor those persons who have mastered the speech of many nations, or who adorn their style with smoothness of diction, because they consider that *not only is such skill common to ordinary freemen but that even slaves who so choose may acquire it.* (Josephus, *Antiquities*, 20.263-64; trans. LCL)
- e. Example: Greek letters of Bar Kochba rebels (Johnson, *James*, 117)

“Soumaios to Jonathaes (son) of Beianos... Greetings. Since I have sent to you Agrippa, hurry and send to me wands and citrons.. *It was written in Greek* (Greek *hellēnisti*) because of [our] inability to write in Hebrew (Greek *hebraesti*) (see L. Doering, 2012, 68).
- f. Jerusalem Church: Greek-speaking “Hellenists” (*Hellēnistōn*) (Acts 6:1)
- g. Semitisms in Letter of James: suggest “bilingual” author (Allison 2013, 87)
- h. “No linguistic reason” why James “could not have written this letter” (1995, 117)

3. Jewish Author and Jewish Audience
 - a. Intimate knowledge of Jewish Scripture and Jewish tradition
 - b. James quotes from the Pentateuch, the Prophets, and the Writings
 - c. Assumes his audience familiar with Abraham, Rahab, Job, and Elijah (e.g., James 2:22-23, 25; 5:11, 17-18)
 - d. Assumes audience familiar with extra-biblical Jewish tradition (e.g., “patience” of Job; cf. *Testament of Job* 1:3)
 - e. Full of semitisms like “Gehenna” and “Lord of hosts” (James 3:6; 5:4)
 - f. No mention of Gentiles; no signs of Gentile audience (D. Allison 2013, 33)
 - g. Explicitly addressed to “twelve tribes in the Diaspora” (James 1:1)
 - h. Audience still gathering in “synagogue” (Greek *synagogē*) (James 2:2)
 - i. Less likely that such a thoroughly Jewish Christian audience in 2nd century A.D.
 - j. Coheres perfectly with James the Just, mission to “the circumcised” (Gal 2:9)
4. Other Signs of early first-century dating:
 - a. No highly organized church leadership: “teacher” and “elder” (James 3:1; 5:14)
 - b. No highly developed Christology
 - c. James is dependent on Romans, written in the 50s (D. Allison, 2013, 66)

<i>Subject Matter</i>	<i>Romans</i>	<i>James</i>
Justification, Faith, and Works	Rom 3:27-28	James 2:14-18
Claiming “God is One”	Rom 3:29-30	James 2:19
Appeal to “Father” Abraham	Rom 4:1-2	James 2:20-22
Citation of Genesis 15:6	Rom 4:3	James 2:20-22
Interpretation of Gen 15:6	Rom 4:4-21	James 2:23
Conclusion of argument	Rom 4:22	James 2:24

- d. Parallels b/w James’ speeches in Acts and the letter? (cf. D. Allison 2013, 6-7).
5. James the brother of Jesus *not the son of Joseph the Carpenter*; he is a *cousin*
 - a. Son of “the other Mary” (Mark 15:40; 16:1; Matt 27:61)
 - b. Mary, the wife of Clopas and “sister” of Jesus’ Mother (John 19:25-27)
 - c. Son of Clopas, the “Lord’s Uncle”:

The same writer [Hegesippus] also describes the beginning of the heresies of his time as follows: “After James the Just (Ἰάκωβον τὸν δίκαιον) had suffered martyrdom for the same reason as the Lord, *Simeon, his cousin, the son of Clopas* was appointed bishop, whom they all proposed *because he was another cousin of the Lord* (ἀνεψιὸν τοῦ κυρίου δεύτερον). (Eusebius, *Church History*, 4.22.4; trans. LCL, 1.375).

After the martyrdom of James and the capture of Jerusalem which immediately followed, the story goes that those of the Apostles and of the disciples of the Lord who were still alive came together from every place with *those who were, humanly speaking, of the family of the Lord* (πρὸς γένους κατὰ σάρκα τοῦ κυρίου), for many of them were then still alive, and they all took counsel together as to whom they ought to adjudge worthy to succeed James, and all unanimously decided that Simeon the

son of Clopas, whom the scripture of the Gospel also mentions, was worthy of the throne of the diocese there. He was, so it is said, *a cousin* (ἀνεψιόν) *of the Saviour*, for Hegesippus relates that *Clopas was the brother* (ἀδελφόν) *of Joseph*, and in addition that Vespasian, after the capture of Jerusalem, ordered a search to be made for all who were of the family of David, that there might be left among the Jews no one of the royal family and, for this reason, a very great persecution was again inflicted on the Jews (Eusebius, *Church History* 3.11-12; trans. LCL 1.231-33)

After Nero and Domitian tradition says that under the Emperor whose times we are now describing persecution was raised against us sporadically, in some cities, from popular risings. We have learnt that in it *Simeon, the son of Clopas*, whom we showed to have been *the second bishop of the church at Jerusalem*, ended his life in martyrdom. The witness for this is that same Hegesippus, of whom we have already quoted several passages. After speaking of certain heretics he goes on to explain how Simeon was at this time accused by them and for many days was tortured in various manners for being a Christian, to the great astonishment of the judge and those with him, until he suffered an end like that of the Lord. But there is nothing better than to listen to the historian who tells these facts as follows. “Some of these (that is to say the heretics) accused Simon the son of Clopas of being descended from David and a Christian and thus he suffered martyrdom, being a hundred and twenty years old, when Trajan was emperor and Atticus was Consular.” The same writer says that his accusers also suffered arrest for being of the royal house of the Jews when search was made at that time for those of that family. And one would reasonably say that Simeon was one of the eyewitnesses and actual hearers of the Lord on the evidence of the length of his life and the reference in the Gospels to Mary the wife of Clopas whose son the narrative has already shown him to be [cf. John 19:25]. The same writer says that other grandsons of one of *the so-called brethren of the Savior* (τῶν φερομένων ἀδελφῶν τοῦ σωτῆρος) named Judas survived to the same reign after they had given in the time of Domitian the testimony already recorded of them in behalf of the faith in Christ. He writes thus: “*They came therefore and presided over every church as witnesses belonging to the Lord’s family* (ὡς μάρτυρες καὶ ἀπὸ γένους τοῦ κυρίου), and when there was complete peace in every church *they survived until the reign of the Emperor Trajan* [ca. 98-117 AD], until the time when the son of the Lord’s uncle, the aforesaid Simon the son of Clopas, was similarly accused by the sects on the same charge before Atticus the Consular. He was tortured for many days and gave his witness, so that all, even the consular, were extremely surprised how, at the age of one hundred and twenty, he endured, and he was commanded to be crucified.” (Eusebius, *Church History*, 3.32.1-6; trans. LCL, 1.273-275).

- d. James is the brother of Simeon, the Lord's "cousin":
 - e. James and Joses = "cousins rather than brothers" (J. Painter 2004, 18)
 - f. Brothers of Jesus with him at Cana (John 2:12; cf. John 7:3-5)
 - g. They were "followers" of Jesus (J. Painter 2004, 16)
 - h. "Brothers" are also followers after the Resurrection (Acts 1:14)
6. Suggested Dates if the Letter of James is Authentic:
 - a. 47-48 A.D. (J. A. T. Robinson, 1976)
 - b. 50s A.D. (Scot McKnight, 2011)
 - c. before 62 A.D. (L. T. Johnson 1995)
 7. Lack of references to James in Church Fathers; irrelevant to date and authenticity
 - a. Josephus *Antiquities* (not referenced until Eusebius)
 - b. Philo's writings (not referenced until Eusebius)
 - c. Josephus and Philo *never* mentioned in early rabbinic writings

Literary Outline of James

I. Greeting and Epitome of Letter (James 1:1-27)

1. Greeting (1:1)
2. Overview of Key Themes (1:1-27)

II. Body of the Letter (James 2:1-5:20)

1. The Rich and the Poor (2:1-13)
2. Faith and Works (2:14-26)
3. Sins of the Tongue (3:1-12)
4. True Wisdom and False Wisdom (3:13-18)
5. Causes of Strife and In-Fighting (4:1-12)
6. Warnings to the Proud and the Rich (4:11-5:6)
7. Patience in Time of Trial (5:7-12)
8. The Power of Prayer (5:13-18)
9. The Power of Evangelism (5:19-20)

Overview of James

Greeting and Overview of Themes (James 1:1-27)

1. James “servant of God” (1:1)
 - a. Greek:
 - b. Note: not explicitly identified as the “brother of Jesus” (cf. Gal 1:19)
2. Audience: “The Twelve Tribes in the Dispersion” (1:1)
 - a. Scattered Israelites among the Gentiles?
 - b. Metaphorical description of Gentile Christians?
 - c. Christians scattered in the wake of Jerusalem persecution (cf. Acts 7-9)?
 - d. Israelite Christians in the Diaspora: confusion over Pauline teaching?
3. Epitome of Themes in the Body of the Letter (1:2-27; Johnson 1995, 14-15)

James 1 as an Epitome of the Rest of the Letter

<i>Theme</i>	<i>Epitome</i>	<i>Body of Letter</i>
1. Prayer of Faith	James 1:5-7	James 5:13-18
2. Rich and Poor	James 1:9-10	James 2:1-7, 4:13-5:6
3. Trial/Testing	James 1:2-4, 12	James 5:7-11
4. Desire and Sin	James 1:12-18	James 3:13-4:10
5. Sins of the Tongue	James 1:19-20	James 3:1-12
6. Faith and Works	James 1:22-27	James 2:14-26

4. Importance of Trials (1:2-4)
5. Faith vs. Doubting (1:6-9)
 - a. Against “Doubt” (Greek *diakrinomenos*)
 - b. Against being “Double-minded” or “two-souled” (Greek *dipsychos*)
6. Trials and Temptations (1:12-15)
 - a. Ambiguity: “Trial/temptation” (Greek *peirasmos*)
 - b. No one is tempted *to sin* by God
 - c. Each one tempted by his own “desire” (Greek *epithymia*) (1:15)
7. The Fatherhood of God (1:16-18)
 - a. Every good thing comes from “the Father of Lights”
 - b. Immutability of God: he does not “change”
 - c. We are “first fruits” of his creatures
8. Sins of the Tongue (1:19-21)
 - a. Slow to speak
 - b. Slow to anger
9. Faith versus Works (1:22-25)
 - a. Doers of the Word
 - b. *Not* “hearers only (Greek *monon*)”
 - c. Example: the Man in the Mirror
 - d. “Perfect Law (Greek *nomos*) of Liberty/Freedom”

10. True Religion and More Sins of the Tongue (1:26-27)
 - a. Must “bridle” the tongue
 - b. True “Religion” (Greek): devotion expressed through *worship*
 - c. 1st characteristic: Visit orphans and Widows
 - d. 2nd characteristic: keep oneself unstained by “the world” (Greek *kosmos*)
 - e. Critique: those who engage in *liturgical acts of worship* but neglect *acts of charity*

Excursus: Spiritual, But Not “Religious”?

The word “religion” (Greek ; Latin *religio*) occurs only four times in the entire New Testament. Once it is used to refer to the religion of Israel (Acts 26:5), once to refer to the (illicit) worship of angels (Col 2:18), and twice to the practice of the Christian faith (James 1:26-27). What did the term word “religion” mean in the first century A.D.? And to what does it refer here in James?

If we look carefully at ancient parallels, we will discover that the Greek word for “religion” (Greek) was used to refer to expressions of devotion to God (or the gods) primarily through acts of worship expressed in various cultic rites. The word could be used to describe worship in Judaism (Philo, *Special Laws* 1.315; Josephus, *Antiquities* 1.222; 12., 253, 271), paganism (*Dionysius of Halicarnassus* 2.23), and early Christianity (*1 Clement* 62:1; *Letter to Diognetus* 3:2). In light of these parallels, James seems to be criticizing Christians who engage in the *liturgical acts of worship* directed toward God but who neglect *acts of charity* directed toward love of neighbor, such as care for widows, orphans, and the poor (James 1:26-27).

In the late 20th century, it became popular to refer to “religion” as something negative—as an purely outward expression of obedience to a set of rules and regulations. Defined in this way, “faith” is often pitted against “religion,” with the former being defined as sincere, spiritual, and inward while the latter defined as insincere, earthly, and outward. In addition, it has become popular for some to refer to themselves as “spiritual” but not “religious.” To the extent that this self-description is meant to signify that one believes in the Christian God but does not engage in either cultic acts of worship (or acts of charity), it may well be accurate. However—at least from the perspective of James—it is by no means a positive thing to be spiritual but not “religious.” Indeed, James *assumes* that “religion” includes *both* the worship of God and love of neighbor, otherwise, it is “worthless religion” (James 1:26).

The Rich and the Poor (James 2:1-13)

1. Show no partiality to the “rich” versus the “poor” (2:1-13)
 - a. Context: “assembly” or “synagogue” (Greek)
 - b. The Rich: oppressing Jewish Christians in the Diaspora
 - c. The Rich: drag them “into court” (2:6); “blaspheme” the name [of Jesus?] (2:7)
 - d. Christians: still largely from lower social strata (cf. Origen, *Contra Celsus*)
 - e. Conflict: ‘mixed’ *synagogues* (Jewish Christians and non-Christian Jews)
2. Love of Neighbor (2:8-13)
 - a. “Royal Law”: Loving one’s neighbor (Lev 19:18)
 - b. Failure in one law → Guilty of all of it (2:10)
 - c. “Law of Liberty”
 - d. “Mercy triumphs over judgment” (cf. Johnson, 1995, 234)

Faith and Works (James 2:14-26)

1. James's Teaching on Faith and Works: Three Key Points (2:14-26)
 - a. "Works" (Greek *erga*) = *Good works* (2:14-17)
 - b. "Faith" (Greek *pistis*) = *True Belief*, but is not Sufficient for Salvation (2:18-19)
 - c. "Justification" (Greek) is *not* by "*Faith Alone*" (2:24)
2. 1st Example: Demons believe in Monotheism (the *Shema*; Deut 6:4-6)
3. 2nd Example: Abraham's Faith and Works (2:20-23)
 - a. Justified by Works → Sacrifice of Isaac (cf. Gen 22)
 - b. Faith "active along with (Greek *synergei*)" works
 - c. Faith "perfected/completed (Greek) by works (2:22)
 - d. Abraham fulfilled the promise (cf. Gen 16:5; Romans 4)
4. Conclusion: How Justification Works
 - a. Justified "by works"
 - b. "Not by faith alone" (Greek) (2:14)
5. 3rd Example: Rahab the Prostitute (2:25)
 - a. Justified by works
 - b. Received and aided Israelite spies (cf. Josh 2:1-21)
6. 4th Example: Human Anthropology (2:26)
 - a. Body without a "Spirit" (Greek *pneumatos*) = Dead
 - b. So Faith without Works = Dead

Excursus: Does James Contradict Paul on Faith and Works?

One of the most controversial issues in the history of New Testament interpretation revolves around whether the teaching of James regarding the relationship between faith and works (James 2:14-26) contradicts the teaching of Paul regarding the relationship between faith and works as found in several of his letters (e.g., Romans 3-4; Galatians 3-4). Consider, for example the following statements:

Paul: "For we hold that a man is *justified* by *faith* apart from *works* of the law."
(Romans 3:28)

James: "You see that a man is *justified* by *works* and not by *faith* alone."
(James 2:24)

What are we to make of this apparent contradiction? Over the centuries, interpreters have taken a variety of approaches to the question (see D. C. Allison 2013, 426-41).

1. *James and Paul are writing independently of one another*. According to this view, James and Paul just happen to use the same language to address very different situations (e.g., L. T. Johnson 1995, 249-50). As a result, the contradiction between the two is only apparent, not real.

2. *Paul is written in response to James*: According to this view, Romans and Galatians are written in direct response to Judaizing Christians who are making salvation contingent upon "works" (J. A. T. Robinson, 1976, 249-50). Paul and James do contradict one another.

3. *James is written in response to Paul*: This view can take a variety of forms, in which some interpreters see James as a polemical letter written against Paul (e.g., M. Hengel) while others view it as rather an attempt to clarify the teaching of Paul against possible misinterpretations, such as by early anti-nomians (e.g., S. McKnight 2011, 261-63; cf. D. Nienhuis 2007, 215-24).

What are we to make of these various theories?

First, given the convergence of language of “faith,” “works,” and “justification” is combined with the specific appeal to the exact same passage from the Old Testament describing the faith of Abraham (Gen 15:6), it seems implausible to suggest that the writings of Paul and James are *completely* independent of one another. Some kind of relationship, whether literary or oral, seems to be involved. If this is correct, then it seems more plausible to believe that James, in which the relationship between faith and works is more clearly stated, is responding the teaching of Paul, in which the relationship between faith and works is more obscure (cf. Bede, *Commentary on the Seven Catholic Epistles*, on James 2:20-21).

Second, with that said, the context of Paul’s teaching and James’ teaching are significantly *different*. Paul is writing to predominantly Gentile Christian communities which are in danger of being convinced that circumcision is necessary for salvation (Rom 3:27-4:25; Gal 2:11-3:29), whereas James is writing to a predominantly Jewish Christian community which is in danger of being misled to believe that “faith alone” is necessary for salvation (James 2:1-26). This makes it very difficult to conclude that there is a real (much less intentional) contradiction between James and Paul. Indeed, James never mentions Paul by name (contrast 2 Pet 3:15-16), and, contrary to what many assume, Paul *never* states that a person is justified by “faith alone.” The expression “faith alone” (Latin *sola fide*) only occurs in James when he says that a person is “justified by works” and “*not* by faith alone” (James 2:24).

Third and finally, with these first two points in mind, the apparent contradiction can be resolved fairly easily by recognizing that Paul and James are using the same words to address *different stages* of the process of salvation (cf. Augustine, *On Faith and Works*, 14.21-23). On the one hand, Paul is talking about *initial justification*, in which a person receives salvation by “faith” (Rom 3:27-31; Gal 2:16-21). This initial grace cannot be earned by any “work of the law,” such as circumcision, or by any good “works” a person may have performed (Rom 4:1-4; cf. Eph 2:8-10 cf. CCC 2010). In other words, Paul is talking therefore about the faith of the new convert. On the other hand, James is talking about *ongoing justification*, by which a person who already has “the faith” (James 2:1) grows in righteousness through “works” and a “faith” that is “active along with his works” (James 2:18-22). In other words, James is simply *not* talking about earning salvation by performing works of the Mosaic law or good works. He is talking about the active faith of a professed believer *cooperating* with God’s grace, apart from which he can do nothing (cf. CCC 1993)

When these points are taken into account, the teaching of Paul and James not only do not contradict one another. Even more, they provide the necessary insights into the importance of both faith *and* works in the process of salvation from conversion until death.

Sins of the Tongue (James 3:1-12)

1. Warning to aspiring “teachers” (Greek *didaskaloi*) (3:1)
 - a. Stricter “Judgment”
 - b. All make “mistakes”—unless perfect (3:2)
2. 1st Example: Bits in horses’ mouths (3:3)
3. 2nd Example: Ship’s rudder (3:4)
4. 3rd Example: Spark → Forest Fire (3:5)
 - a. The Tongue is a “Fire” (Greek *pyr*) (3:6)
 - b. A “world” (Greek *kosmos*) or “unrighteousness” (Greek *adikia*) (3:6)
 - c. Staining the whole body
 - d. Setting on fire “the cycle of nature”
 - e. Set on fire by Gehenna (3:6)
5. 4th Example: Wild Animals (3:7-8)
 - a. Animals (can be tamed) vs. the Tongue (can’t be tamed)
 - b. A “restless evil”
 - c. Full of “deadly poison” (like a wild animal, spider, serpent, etc.)
6. The Tongue’s (Irrational) Mixing of Good and Evil (3:9-10)
 - a. Blessing (the Father) and Cursing (human beings) (cf. Gen 1:27)
 - b. 1st Example: Spring → salt and fresh water?
 - c. 2nd Example: Fig Trees → olives?
 - d. 3rd Example: Grapevine → figs?
 - e. 4th Example: Saltwater → freshwater?

Excursus: The Catechism on Sins of the Tongue

1. False witness and perjury (CCC 2476)
2. Rash Judgment (CCC 2477; cf. Ignatius of Loyola, *Spiritual Exercises* 22)
3. Detraction (CCC 2477)
4. Calumny (CCC 2477)
5. Flattery, Adulation, or Complaisance (CCC 2480)
6. Boasting or bragging (CCC 2481)
7. Lying (CCC 2482-85)
8. Reparation for Sins of the Tongue (CCC 2487)

True Wisdom and False Wisdom (James 3:13-18)

1. The “Wise” (Greek *sophros*) and Understanding (3:13)
2. Heavenly Wisdom vs. Jealousy and Strife (3:14-18)

Causes of Strife and In-Fighting (James 4:1-12)

1. Causes of “Wars” and “Fighting” (Greek *machai*) (4:1)
2. The “Passions” (Greek): at war in your members (4:1)
 - a. Lust → Murder
 - b. Coveting → Fighting
3. Failure to Ask Rightly → Unanswered Prayers (4:2-3; cf. CCC 2734-37)

4. Friendship with the World = Enmity with God (4:4)
 - a. “Friend” (*philos*) of the “world” (*kosmos*) = “Enemy” (*echthros*) of God
 - b. Scripture: God is jealous for our spirits/souls (Unclear source?)
 - c. Scripture: God opposes the proud; gives grace to humble (cf. Prov 3:34)
5. What Does “Enmity with the World” Look Like? (4:7-10)
 - a. Submit yourselves to God
 - b. Separation *from* Evil: Resist the Devil → he will flee from you
 - c. Separation *for* Good: Draw near to God → he will draw near to you
 - d. External: Cleanse your hands (e.g., deeds): sinners
 - e. Internal: Purify your hearts: you of “double mind” (Greek *dipsychoi*)
 - f. Penance: be wretched and mourn and weep
 - g. Sorrow for Sin: Laughter → Mourning, Joy → Dejection
 - h. Humility: humble yourselves → he will exalt you
7. Do Not “Speak Against” (Greek *katalaleite*) One Another (4:11-12)
 - a. Accusation: Judging one’s brother
 - b. One Lawgiver, One Judge: God (cf. Matt 7:1)

Warnings to the Proud and the Rich (James 4:11-5:6)

1. Warnings to the Proud/Boastful (4:13-17)
 - a. You don’t know about tomorrow; “If the Lord wills, we shall live”
 - b. All “boasting” (Greek) is Evil (4:6; cf. CCC 2481)
 - c. Sin of Omission: failing to do what is right (4:7)
2. Warnings to the Rich (5:1-6)
 - a. Transience of Wealth:
 1. Riches → rotted;
 2. Garments → moth-eaten;
 3. Gold and Silver → rusted
 - b. “Laying up treasure” for the “last days” (cf. Matt 6:20)
 - c. Sins against Wage-Earners: mowers and harvesters (5:4; cf. CCC 1867)
 - d. Life of Luxury: feasting → fattened “hearts” (5:5)
 - g. Murder: of the “Righteous man” (5:6; cf. Theophylact, *ACCS*, 57)

Patience in Time of Trial (James 5:7-12)

1. Be “Patient” (Greek) until the “Coming” (Greek *parousia*) (5:7)
2. Example: the Farmer and his Fruit: Early and Late Rain (5:7)
3. The *Parousia* is “at hand” (Greek *engiken*) (5:8; cf. Mark 1:14)
4. Do not Grumble against one another (5:9)
5. Reason: The Judge is “standing at the doors” (cf. Matt 24:33)
6. Examples of Suffering and Patience (5:10)
 - a. 1st Example: the Prophets (see Bede, *ACCS*, 57)
 - b. 2nd Example: “Patience” (Greek) of Job (cf. Job 1-2, 42:10-17)
7. Warning against Oath-Swearing (5:12)
 - a. Do not swear at all (cf. Matt 5:34-37)
 - b. Let your “yes” be “yes” and your “no” be “no” (cf. CCC 2154)

Prayer for and Anointing of the Sick (James 5:13-18)

1. Three Situations (5:13-15)
 - a. Suffering → Pray
 - b. Cheerful → Sing praise
 - c. Sick → Prayer and Anointing
2. Prayer for and Anointing of the Sick (5:14-15)
 - a. Call the “Elders” (Greek *presbyterous*) (cf. Exod 12:21; 19:7; Hebrew *ziquney*)
 - b. “Assembly/church” (Greek ; Hebrew *qahal*; cf. 2 Chron 10:3-6 LXX)
 - c. Anoint him with oil “in the name of the Lord”
 - d. Prayer → save the sick man; Sins → will be forgiven
3. “Therefore” Confess your Sins to One Another (5:16)
4. Efficacious Prayer of Elijah: (5:16; cf. 1 Kings 18:42-45)
5. Ancient Jewish Tradition: Tree of Life = Olive Tree (D. C. Allison, 2013, 760)

Seth and his mother walked toward the regions of Paradise for the oil of mercy, to anoint the sick Adam. And they arrived at the gates of Paradise, took dust from the earth, prostrated themselves to the ground on their faces and began to mourn with loud sighs, begging the LORD God to pity Adam in his pains and to send his angel to give them *the oil from the tree of mercy*. But when they had prayed and entreated for many hours, behold, the angel Michael appeared to them, saying, “...I say to you, Seth, man of God, do not weep, praying and begging for *the oil of the tree of mercy to anoint your father Adam for the pains of his body*. Truly I say to you that you are by no means able to take from it, *except in the last days*.” (*Life of Adam and Eve* 40-42, trans. in J. H. Charlesworth, *OTP* 2.274)

The Power of Evangelism (James 5:19-20)

1. Anyone brings back a Sinner from the Error of His Ways (5:19)
2. Will “save his soul from death” (5:20)
3. Will “cover a multitude of sins” (5:20; cf. Prov 10:12; 1 Pet 4:8)

James in the Living Tradition

Augustine on the “Illusion” of Salvation *Sola Fide*

Therefore, *let us now see what must be torn away from the hearts of the God-fearing to prevent the loss of salvation through a treacherously false security if, under the illusion that faith alone is sufficient for salvation, they neglect to live a good life and fail by good works to persevere in the way that leads to God*. Even in the days of the Apostles certain somewhat obscure statements of the Apostle Paul were misunderstood, and some thought he was saying this: “Let us now do evil that good may come from it” (Rom 3:8) because he said “Now the law intervened that the offense might abound. But where the offense has abounded, grace has abounded yet more (Rom 5:20)... Since this problem is by no means new and had already arisen at the time of the apostles, other apostolic letters of John, James and Jude are *deliberately aimed against the argument I have been refuting and firmly uphold the doctrine that faith does not avail without good works* (Augustine, *On Faith and Works*, 21; cited in D. Nienhuis and R. Wall 2013, 34-35)

Venerable Bede on whether James Contradicts Paul on Faith and Works

*Since the apostle Paul, preaching that “man is made righteous by faith without works” (Roma 3:28), was not well understood by those who took this saying to mean that when they had once believed in Christ, even though they might commit evils and live wickedly and basely, they could be saved by faith, [James] explains how the passage of the apostle Paul ought to be understood to have the same meaning as this letter. And all the more he uses the example of Abraham about faith being useless if it does not issue in good works, because the apostle Paul also used the example of Abraham [cf. Rom 4:1-25] to demonstrate that man is made righteous without deeds. For when he recalls Abraham’s good deeds which accompanied his faith, he shows well enough that the apostle Paul does not teach by Abraham that man is made righteous without works to the extent that anyone who believes it has no responsibility to perform good works, but for this reason instead, that no one should think he has come to the gift of righteousness which is in faith by the merits of his former good deeds. In this matter the Jews wished to set themselves above the Gentiles who believed in Christ, because, they said, they had come to the grace of the Gospel by the merits of the good works which are in the law, and therefore many who believed were scandalized that the grace of Christ was being given to uncircumcised Gentiles. Hence the apostle Paul says that a man can be made righteous by faith without works, but [he means] previous works. (Bede, *Commentary on the Seven Catholic Epistles*, on James 2:20-21; trans. D. Hurst, 1985, 30-31)*

The Catechism on Justification by Grace through Faith and Works

Since the initiative belongs to God in the order of grace, *no one can merit the initial grace* of forgiveness and justification, at the beginning of conversion. Moved by the Holy Spirit and by charity, *we can then merit* for ourselves and for others the graces needed for our *sanctification*, for the increase of grace and charity, and for the attainment of eternal life. (CCC 2010)

Justification establishes *cooperation between God’s grace and man’s freedom*. On man’s part it is expressed by the assent of faith to the Word of God, which invites him to conversion, and in the cooperation of charity with the prompting of the Holy Spirit who precedes and preserves his assent: “When God touches man’s heart through the illumination of the Holy Spirit, *man himself is not inactive while receiving that inspiration, since he could reject it; and yet, without God’s grace, he cannot by his own free will move himself toward justice in God’s sight*” (CCC 1993; cf. Council of Trent)

The Catechism on Just Wages and the “Sins that Cry Out to Heaven”

The catechetical tradition also recalls that there are “*sins that cry to heaven*”:
the blood of Abel (Gen 4:10),
the sin of the Sodomites (Gen 18:20; 19:13),
the cry of the people oppressed in Egypt (Exod 3:7-10),
the cry of the foreigner, the widow, and the orphan (Exod 20:20-22),
injustice to the wage earner (Deut 24:14-15; James 5:4). (CCC 1867)

The Catechism on Unanswered Prayer

“You ask and do not receive, because you ask wrongly, to spend it on your passions.” If we ask with a divided heart, we are “adulterers”;²⁷ God cannot answer us, for he desires our well-being, our life. “Or do you suppose that it is in vain that the scripture says, ‘He yearns jealously over the spirit which he has made to dwell in us?’ ” That our God is “jealous” for us is the sign of how true his love is. If we enter into the desire of his Spirit, we shall be heard.

Do not be troubled if you do not immediately receive from God what you ask him; for he desires to do something even greater for you, while you cling to him in prayer (Evagrius Ponticus, *On Prayer*, 34)

God wills that our desire should be exercised in prayer, that we may be able to receive what he is prepared to give. (Augustine, *Epistle* 130, 8) (CCC 2737)

The Council of Trent, the Letter of James, and the Sacrament of “Extreme Unction”

The sacred anointing of the sick was instituted by Christ our Lord as a true and proper sacrament of the New Testament. It is alluded to by Mark [cf. Mark 6:13] but *it is recommended to the faithful and promulgated by James the apostle and brother of the Lord*: “Is any among you sick?” he says, “let him call for the elders (Latin *presbyteros*) of the Church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord; and the prayer for faith will save the sick man, and the Lord will raise him up; and if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven” (James 5:14-15). *By these words, as the Church has learned from the apostolic tradition handed down and received by her, he teaches the matter, the form, the proper minister, and the effect of this salutary sacrament...* Further, the reality and effect of this sacrament are explained in the words: “and the prayer of faith will save the sick man, and the Lord will raise him up; and if he be in sins, they will be forgiven him” (James 5:15). For the reality is the grace of the Holy Spirit, whose anointing *takes away the sins, if there be any still to be expiated, and also the remains of sin*; it comforts and strengthens the soul of the sick person by awakening in him great confidence in the divine mercy; supported by this, the sick bears more lightly the inconveniences and trials of his illness and resists more easily the temptations of the devil, who lies in wait for his heel (cf. Gen 3:15); *at times it also restores bodily health when it is expedient for the salvation of the soul.* (Council of Trent, Doctrine on the Sacrament of Extreme Unction, Session 14, Nov 25, 1551; trans. in Denzinger-Hünemann 2012, no. 1695-96)

Paul VI, the Letter of James, and the Reform of the Sacrament of Anointing

The Second Vatican Council adds the following: “‘Extreme Unction’, which may also and more fittingly be called ‘Anointing of the Sick, is not a sacrament for those only who are at the point of death. Hence, as soon as any one of the faithful begins to be in danger of death from sickness or old age, the appropriate time for him to receive this sacrament has certainly already arrived.” The fact that the use of this sacrament concerns the whole Church is shown by these words: “By the sacred anointing of the sick and the prayer of her priests, the whole Church commends those who are ill to the suffering and glorified

Lord, asking that he may lighten their suffering and save them (cf. James 5:14-16). She exhorts them, moreover, to contribute to the welfare of the whole People of God by associating themselves freely with the passion and death of Christ (cf. Rom. 8:17; Col. 1:24; 2 Tim. 2:11-12; 1 Pt. 4:13).” All these elements had to be taken into consideration in revising the rite of Sacred Anointing, in order better to adapt to present-day conditions those elements which were subject to change. We thought fit to modify the sacramental formula in such a way that, *in view of the words of Saint James*, the effects of the sacrament might be better expressed.... (Pope Paul VI, Apostolic Constitution *Sacrae Unctione Infirmorum* [On the Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick], nos. 10-12)

The Letter of James in the Contemporary Roman Lectionary

The Letter of James		
Year B: Second Readings for the Sundays in Ordinary Time		
Sunday	Second Reading	Topic
Sunday 22	James 1:17-18, 21b-22, 27	Be Doers of the Word, not just Hearers of the Word
Sunday 23	James 2:1-5	Show No Partiality to the Rich versus the Poor
Sunday 24	James 2:14-18	Faith without Works is Dead
Sunday 25	James 3:16-4:3	Heavenly Wisdom vs. Jealousy and Strife
Sunday 26	James 5:1-6	Warning to the Rich and Justice to the Wage Earner

Further Reading on the Letter of James

Commentaries and Studies on James

Allison, Dale C. Jr. *James: A Critical and Exegetical Commentary*. International Critical Commentary on Scripture. London: Bloomsbury T. & T. Clark, 2013.

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McKnight, Scot. *The Letter of James*. The New International Commentary on the New Testament. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2011.

Painter, John. *Just James: The Brother of Jesus in History and Tradition*. Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2004.

Robinson, John A. T. *Redating the New Testament*. London: SCM, 1976.

James in the Living Tradition

Augustine. *On Faith and Works*. Translated by G. J. Lombardo, C. S. C. Ancient Christian Writers 48. Mahwah: Paulist, 1988.

Bede the Venerable. *Commentary on the Seven Catholic Epistles*. Kalamazoo: Cistercian Publications, 1985.

Bray, Gerald. *James, 1-2 Peter, 1-3 John, Jude*. Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture. New Testament XI. Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2000.

Origen. *Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*. 2 vols. Translated by Thomas P. Scheck. Fathers of the Church 103-104. Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 2001, 2002.

1 Peter

Introduction

Introductory Points

1. The first “Papal Encyclical”!
 - a. Audience consists of several provinces covering vast space (1 Pet 1:1)
 - b. “Qualify it as an *encyclical* or *circular letter* as well” (J. H. Elliott 2001, 12)
 - c. Addressed to “a larger area than any other [NT] letter” (J. H. Elliott 2001, 84)
2. Theologically Rich: the “little Romans” of the apostle Peter:
 - a. Romans → Theology of Paul
 - b. 1 Peter → Theology of Peter
3. Christology:
 - a. Suffering Servant (1 Pet 2:18-25)
 - b. Descent into Hell (1 Pet 3:18:22) (Disputed)
4. Innocent Suffering and Redemptive Suffering:

“One of the most sustained reflections on innocent suffering in the entire NT.”
(J. H. Elliott, 2001, 151).
4. Ecclesiology:
 - a. Common Priesthood of All Believers (1 Pet 2:4-10)
 - b. Church = The “People of God” (1 Pet 2:9-10; cf. *Lumen Gentium* no. 9-17)
5. The Church and Non-Christian Society:
 - a. “Good conduct among the Gentiles” (1 Pet 2:12)
 - b. “Fear God. Honor the emperor” (1 Pet 2:17)
 - c. Christian Family Conduct (1 Pet 3:1-7; often forgotten)

“One of the most extensive discourses in the NT on the engagement of the Christian community with non-Christian society, involving both respect for social order and witness of holy nonconformity.” (J. H. Elliott 2001, 151).

The Origin of 1 Peter

The Early Church Fathers and the Origins of 1 Peter

1. 1 Peter was written by the apostle Peter; authorship undisputed:

This is now *the second letter that I have written to you, beloved ...* (2 Peter 3:1)

This is related by *Papias* about Mark...” *The same writer used quotations from the first Epistle of John, and likewise also from that of Peter...* (Eusebius, *Church History*, 3.39.16-17; trans. LCL, 1.299)

Peter says in his Epistle: “Whom, not seeing, ye love ...” (1 Pet 1:8). (Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* 4.9.2)

Addressing the Christians of Pontus, Peter, at all events, says, “How great indeed is the glory, if ye suffer patiently... (1 Pet 2:2). (Tertullian, *Scorpiace*, 12; trans. ANF, 3.645)

And Peter, on whom the Church of Christ is built, against which the gates of hell shall not prevail, *left only one epistle of acknowledged genuineness*. Suppose we allow that he left a second; for this is doubtful. (Origen, *Commentary on the Gospel of John*, 5.3; trans. ANF 9.346)

2. Contrast the patristic rejection of the *Acts of Peter* and *Gospel of Peter*:

Of Peter, one epistle, that which is called his first, is admitted, and the ancient presbyters used this in their own writings as unquestioned, but the so-called second Epistle we have not received as canonical, but nevertheless it has appeared useful to many, and has been studied with other Scriptures On the other hand, of the Acts bearing his name, and the Gospel named according to him and Preaching called his and the so-called Revelation, we have no knowledge at all in Catholic tradition (Greek katholikois... paradedomena), for no orthodox writer (Greek) of the ancient time or of our own has used their testimonies... (Eusebius, Church History, 3.3.1; trans. LCL 1.191-93)

3. 1 Peter was written from Rome; sometime during or after the reign of Claudius:

Of such evil was Simon the father and fabricator, and the Evil Power, which hates that which is good and plots against the salvation of men, raised him up at that time as a great antagonist for the great and inspired Apostles of our Saviour... *The aforesaid sorcerer [Simon Magus], as though the eyes of his mind had been smitten by the marvellous effulgence of God when he had formerly been detected in his crimes in Judaea by the Apostle Peter, at once undertook a great journey across the sea, and went off in flight from east to west, thinking that only in this way could he live as he wished*. He came to the city of the Romans, where the power which obsessed him wrought with him greatly, so that in a short time he achieved such success that he was honoured as a god by the erection of a statue by those who were there. But he did not prosper long. Close after him *in the same reign of Claudius the Providence of the universe in its great goodness and love towards men guided to Rome, as against a gigantic pest on life, the great and mighty Peter, who for his virtues was the leader of all the other Apostles...* Thus when the divine word made its home among them the power of Simon was extinguished and perished immediately, together with the fellow himself. But a great light of religion shone on the minds of the hearers of Peter, so that they were not satisfied with a single hearing or with the unwritten teaching of the divine proclamation, but with every kind of exhortation besought Mark, whose Gospel is extant, seeing

that he was Peter's follower, to leave them a written statement of the teaching given them verbally, nor did they cease until they had persuaded him, and so became the cause of the Scripture called the Gospel according to Mark. And they say that the Apostle, knowing by the revelation of the spirit to him what had been done, was pleased at their zeal, and ratified the scripture for study in the churches. Clement quotes the story in the sixth book of the Hypotyposes, and the bishop of Hierapolis, named Papias, confirms him. *He also says that Peter mentions Mark in his first Epistle, and that he composed this in Rome itself, which they say that he himself indicates, referring to the city metaphorically as Babylon, in the words, "the elect one in Babylon greets you, and Marcus my son" (1 Pet 5:13).* (Eusebius, *Church History*, 14.1-15.2; trans. LCL)

4. 1 Peter was written for (recently converted) Jewish Christians in the Diaspora:

This Epistle is written by Peter *to Jews of the Dispersion who had become Christians*, and it is a teaching Epistle; for after they had come to the faith from Judaism, this endeavor was to strengthen them still further. (Oecumenius; quoted in E. G. Selwyn 1964, 64; cf. Eusebius, *Church History*, 3.1-3)

5. Jerome, *Lives of Illustrious Men*, begins with a biography of Peter:

Simon Peter the son of John, from the village of Bethsaida in the province of Galilee, brother of Andrew the apostle, and himself chief of the apostles, after having been bishop of the church of Antioch and *having preached to the Dispersion—the believers in circumcision*, in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia and Bithynia—pushed on to Rome in the second year of Claudius to over-throw Simon Magus, and *held the sacerdotal chair there for twenty-five years until the last, that is the fourteenth, year of Nero*. At his hands he received the crown of martyrdom being nailed to the cross with his head towards the ground and his feet raised on high, asserting that he was unworthy to be crucified in the same manner as his Lord. *He wrote two epistles which are called Catholic*, the second of which, on account of its difference from the first in style, is considered by many not to be by him. Then too the Gospel according to Mark, who was his disciple and interpreter, is ascribed to him. *On the other hand, the books, of which one is entitled his Acts, another his Gospel, a third his Preaching, a fourth his Revelation, a fifth his "Judgment" are rejected as apocryphal*. Buried at Rome in the Vatican near the triumphal way he is venerated by the whole world. (Jerome, *Lives of Illustrious Men*, 1; trans. NPNF1, 3.361)

Arguments for 1 Peter as a Pseudepigraphon

1. Majority of Contemporary Scholars
 - a. Bart D. Ehrman (2013)
 - b. John H. Elliott (2000)
 - c. Paul J. Achtemeier (1996)
2. Simon Peter did not speak (much less write) Greek, esp. very fine Greek
 - a. Ancient literacy rates: 3% of people in Palestine (C. Hezser, 2001)
 - b. Capernaum: small Jewish village in rural Galilee (J. Reed, 2002)
 - c. Peter spoke Aramaic, not Greek (cf. Matt 26:73; Mark 14:70; Luke 22:59)
 - d. Even Josephus needed help composing Greek (*Against Apion*, 1:9)
 - e. Peter and John: “Illiterate and common” () (Acts 4:13)
 - f. Why does Peter need Mark as an “interpreter” ()?

(Irenaeus, *Against Heresies*, 3.1.2; Eusebius, *Church History*, 3.39.15)
 - g. 1 Peter: contains some of the best Greek in the NT (after Hebrews, Luke-Acts)
3. Multiple citations of the Greek Septuagint (LXX), not the Hebrew
 - a. Citations of the LXX (see 1 Pet 1:24-25; 2:3, 6-9, 22, 24-25; 3:10-12)
 - b. Peter: unschooled, Aramaic-speaking fisherman
 - c. Peter’s Scriptures would have been in Hebrew and his worship in Aramaic
 - d. Author of 1 Peter completely at home in the Greek Septuagint
4. Signs of Post-AD 70 Dating (Ehrman 2013, 240-42)
 - a. Persecuted under the “name” of “Christian” (1 Peter 4:16)
 - b. Reflects persecution under Domitian (ca. 81-96 AD) or Trajan (ca. 98-117 AD)

(see Pliny, *Letters* 10.96-97, pointing back to 20 years previous)
 - c. Christians in Asia Minor not persecuted before 80s AD
 - d. “Babylon”=Rome, only *after* Temple destroyed (1 Pet 5:13; cf. Rev 14:8; 17:5)

(Considered “decisive” argument for late date; see J. H. Elliott, 2001, 137)
 - e. Peter is martyred ca. AD 65-67; thus, post-70 letter must be inauthentic

(cf. Tertullian, *Scorpiace* 15; Origen in Eusebius, *Church History*, 3.1.3)
 - f. Language of “overseeing” (*episkopountes*): developed episcopacy (1 Pet 5:2)
5. Silvanus is Letter-Carrier, not a Secretary (Ehrman 2013, 249)
 - a. Silvanus: Aramaic-speaking Jew from Palestine (Acts 15:22)
 - b. “Through (*dia*) Silvanus” = letter *carrier*, not secretary (1 Pet 5:12)

I write these things to you from Smyrna through (*di*) the Ephesians...
(Ignatius, *Romans* 10:1; cf. *Philadelphians* 11:2; *Smyrnaens* 12:1)

I am writing these things to you through (*dia*) Crescens, whom I recently
commended to you and now commend again... (Polycarp, *Phlippians*,
15:1)

6. No analogy: secretary composing a letter under someone’s name (B. D. Ehrman)
7. Literary Dependence on Pauline writings
 - a. Romans (ca. 54 AD)
 - b. Ephesians (ca. 80-95 AD, assuming pseudonymity; F. W. Beare)
 - c. “Paulinisms” in 1 Peter → Pseudonymity (B. D. Ehrman)

Arguments for 1 Peter as an Authentic Letter

1. Significant Minority of Scholars
 - a. Karen H. Jobes (2005)
 - b. Scot McKnight (1996)
 - c. William J. Dalton, S.J. (1990), following J. A. Fitzmyer (1968)
 - d. J. A. T. Robinson (1976)
 - d. E. G. Selwyn (1958)
2. Peter's Ability to Speak Greek
 - a. "Galilee of the Gentiles" (Matt 4:15-18; cf. Capernaum Centurion Luke 7:1-10)
 - b. Peter's brother has a *Greek name*: "Andrew" (*Andreas*)
(see the "Greeks" in John 12:20-21; ignored by M. A. Chancey 2005)
 - c. Peter's Galilean "accent" (Greek *lalia*): Is he bilingual?
(cf. Matt 26:73; Mark 14:70; Luke 22:59)
 - d. Traveling Evangelist in the Greek-speaking Diaspora (1 Cor 9:5)
 - e. Church leader in Greek-speaking *Antioch* and *Corinth* (Gal 2:7; 1 Cor 1:12)
 - f. Over *two decades* of evangelism in Diaspora (ca. AD 42-66; L. Helyer 2012, 110)
3. Peter's Access to Persons we know were able to Write in Greek (Mark and Silvanus)
 - a. If Josephus could use "co-workers" to help him compose in Greek, then why couldn't Peter?

[I]n the leisure which Rome afforded me, with all my materials in readiness, and with the aid of some assistants (*synergois*) for the sake of the Greek (), at least I committed to writing my narrative of the events [of the Jewish war]. (Josephus, *Against Apion*, 1.50; trans. LCL)

- b. Explicitly mentions "Silvanus" and Mark (1 Pet 5:12-13)
- c. Silvanus *co-authored* two letters of Paul! (1 Thess 1:1; 2 Thess 2:1; cf. 2 Cor 1:19; Acts 15:22-40 [Silas]; 16:19-20; 17:4-15; 18:5; E. G. Selwyn, 1964, 9-16)
- d. Silvanus *carried* and *read* letter of Apostles! (Acts 15:22-23)
- d. Inconceivable Peter wouldn't utilize writing skills of Silvanus the letter-bearer!
- e. Peter explicitly *says* he has *written* (Greek *gra*) through Silvanus:

[T]his relegation of Silvanus to the office of postman is improbable, if only because the employment of an amanuensis was the normal custom in the first century A.D., and St. Peter *egrapsa* ["I have written"] not *epempsa* ["I have dispatched"] or *epesteila* ["I have sent"] (E. G. Selwyn, 1964, 10)

- f. "Through (*dia*) Silvanus" *can* identify a writer:

In this same letter he also quotes the letter of Clement to the Corinthians... "To-day we... read out your letter... as we do with that which was formerly sent to us through (*dia*) Clement. (Eusebius, *Church History*, 4.23.11; cf. Ignatius, *Philadelphians* 11:2).

- [g. Jerome: considered 1 Peter a translation from Aramaic (*Ep. ad Hebdib.* 150)]

4. Jewish Audience and Character of 1 Peter

- a. Addressed to the “exiles of the Diaspora” (1 Pet 1:1)
 - b. Assumes knowledge of Jewish Scripture and Jewish Tradition
(46 OT citations and allusions; J. H. Elliott 2001, 16)
 - c. Assumption that the audience knows the Jewish Septuagint (LXX)
 - d. Recent converts from Judaism to Christianity (1 Pet 1:3)
 - e. Live good lives “among the Gentiles” (*en tois ethnesin*) (1 Pet 2:12)
 - f. Primary contrast: b/w audience and “Gentiles” (Elliott 2001, 39)
(cf. 1 Pet 4:3: “doing what the Gentiles like to do”; cf. Rom 2:1-9, 21-23)
 - g. Peter is apostle primarily to the Jews (Gal 2:8-9)
 - h. Audience: Jews who became Christians (Oecumenius, “Preface to 1 Peter”)
5. Signs of a Pre-70 AD Date for 1 Peter
- a. *No Signs of Imperial Persecution* (such as under Domitian and Trajan)
 - b. Primarily verbal abuse: slander, malign, reproach (1 Pet 2:12; 3:16; 4:4, 14)
(cf. words used for Jesus, “harm” 1 Pet 3:9, 13; J. H. Elliott, 2000, 101)
(cf. no use of “persecute” ; as in Matt 10:17-23; Mark 10:30, etc.)
 - c. Common prejudices against Jews in Roman empire (J. H. Elliott 2000, 102)
(cf. Josephus, *Against Apion*, 2.95; Tacitus, *Histories*, 5.5.1; Diodorus Siculus, *Hist.* 34.1-2)
 - d. Suggests date *before* bloody persecution of Nero (ca. 64-66 AD) or Domitian
 - e. Claudius expelled Jews/Jewish Christians from Rome (ca. 49 AD)
(see Acts 18:2; Suetonius, *Claudius* 4; cf. Gallio, Acts 18:12-17)
 - f. Claudius prohibition of Jewish assembly (Cassius Dio, *Roman History*, 60.6.6)
 - g. “Christian” already used as an epithet at Antioch pre-70 AD! (Acts 11:25)
 - h. 1 Peter quoted by *1 Clement*, written pre-70 AD? (cf. T. J. Herron 2008)
(see *1 Clem.* 49:5; [1 Pet 4:8]; cf. *1 Clem.* 30:2 [1 Pet 5:5])
 - i. Revelation uses “Babylon” as code word; pre-70 AD? (Rev 14:8; 17:5)
6. Authenticity of 1 Peter unquestioned by early Church Fathers: Why not?
- a. Rome: 2 Peter 3:1
 - b. Asia Minor: Papias and Polycarp (Eusebius, *Church History*, 3.39.17; 4.14.8-9)
 - c. France: Irenaeus (*Against Heresies* 4.9.2; 4.16.5; 5.7.2)
 - d. Africa: Tertullian (*Scorpiace*, 12)
 - e. Egypt: Origen (*Commentary on the Gospel of John*, 5.3)
 - f. Israel: Eusebius (*Church History*, 3.25.2; 3.3)
7. Date of 1 Peter?: Relationship with Romans (ca. 54-57 AD; Elliott 2001, 38)

Romans

Citation of Hos 2:23
(Rom 9:19-26)

Citation of Isa 8:14 and 28:16
(Rom 9:30-32)

1 Peter

Citation of Hos 2:23
(1 Pet 2:10)

Citation of Isa 8:14 and 28:16
(1 Pet 2:4-8)

The Literary Structure of 1 Peter

1. The Literary genre of 1 Peter: “an integral, genuine letter” (J. H. Elliott 2001, 11)
2. Sequence of provinces coheres with circular route of letter bearer (J. Elliott 2001, 12)!

I. Greeting (1:1-2)

II. Call to Holiness (1:3-2:10)

1. New Birth in Christ (1:3-9)
2. Testimony of the Prophets (1:10-12)
3. Call to Holiness (1:13-2:3)
4. Christ the Living Stone (2:4-10)

III. Good Conduct among the Gentiles (2:11-3:12)

1. Civil Conduct among the Gentiles (2:11-12)
2. Conduct of Free Men (2:13-17)
3. Conduct of Servants (2:18-25)
4. Conduct of Wives (3:1-6)
5. Conduct of Husbands (3:7)
6. Conduct of All: Suffer for Righteousness Sake (3:8-16)

IV. Christian Suffering (3:17-5:11)

1. Christ the Example of Suffering (3:17-22)
2. Abuse for Not Living like the Gentiles (4:1-6)
3. Life in the Face of “the End of All Things” (4:7-11)
4. Sharing in Christ’s Sufferings (4:12-19)

V. Closing Exhortations and Blessing (5:1-14)

1. Exhortation to Elders (5:1-4)
2. Exhortation to Younger Believers (5:5)
3. Suffering: For “A While” (5:6-11)
4. Epilogue and Final Blessing (5:12-14)

Overview of 1 Peter

I. Greeting (1 Peter 1:1-2)

1. Peter: “an apostle of Jesus Christ” (1:1)
2. Audience: “the exiles of the Dispersion” (Greek) (1:1)
 - a. Pontus, Cappadocia, Asia (cf. Pentecost, Acts 2:9)
 - b. Galatia (cf. Pauline mission, Acts 14:1-20; Gal 1:2)
 - c. Bithynia (cf. prevention of Paul, Acts 16:7)
3. Trinitarian Greeting (1:2)
 - a. “Chosen” by God the *Father*
 - b. “Sanctified” by the *Spirit*
 - c. “Sprinkled” with the blood of *Jesus* (cf. Exod 24:1-8)
4. Hellenistic Jewish Greeting: “Grace” (*charis*) and “Peace” () (1:2)

II. Call to Holiness (1 Peter 1:3-2:10)

1. New Birth in Christ (1:3-9)
 - a. Jewish Benediction: “Blessed be God the Father...” (1:3)
 - b. “Born Anew” (Greek) for “Inheritance” in “heaven” (1:3-4)

- c. Faith revealed in “the last time” (Greek *eschatos*) (1:5)
- d. Rejoicing in “trials” (Greek *peirasmois*); like “gold tested in fire” (1:7)
- e. Audience has “never seen Jesus”; contrast Peter himself (1:8)
- 2. Sacred Scripture: Testimony of the Prophets (1:10-12)
 - a. “Searched” the Scriptures for “person” and “time” of Christ (cf. Jewish *derash*)
 - b. Prophets served not themselves but “you”!
 - c. Different evangelists: preached “good news” to the Diaspora
 - d. “*Through the Holy Spirit sent from heaven*” (ref. to Pentecost? Acts 2:9)?
 - e. “Things into which angels long to look?” (1:12; cf. oikonomia; J. Danileou)
- 3. Vocation to Holiness (1:13-2:3)
 - a. “Gird up the loins of your mind” (1:13; cf. Exod 12:11)
 - b. “Be holy”: not like “former ignorance” (1:14; Gentiles? or Sinful Israelites?)
 - c. “Be holy yourselves in *all your conduct*” (Greek) (1:15)
(Importance of “conduct”: cf. 1 Pet 1:18; 2:12; 3:1, 2, 16)
 - d. As it is written: “You shall be holy, as I am holy” (Lev 11:44-45)
 - e. Holiness while “in exile” (Greek *parokias*) (1:17; cf. “parish” D. Keating 2011, 45)
 - f. “Ransomed” by the blood of Christ “unblemished” lamb (1:19; cf. Exod 12:5)
 - g. “*Destined* (Greek) before the foundation of the world” (1:20)
 - h. Purify your “souls”; love one another “from the heart” (1:22; cf. Matt 18:35)
 - i. The imperishable “word of God” (quotes Isa 40:6-9)
 - j. Put away: malice, guile, insincerity, envy, slander (why *these* sins?)
 - k. *Recent* converts: “newborn babes” longing for “spiritual milk” (2:2-3)

Living Tradition: Vatican II and the Universal Call to Holiness

“All Christians in any state or walk of life are called to the fullness of Christian life and to the perfection of charity.” (Vatican II, *Lumen Gentium* 40.2). All are called to holiness: “Be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.” (Matt 5:48)... Spiritual progress tends toward ever more intimate union with Christ. This union is called “mystical” because it participates in the mystery of Christ through the sacraments—“the holy mysteries”—and, in him, in the mystery of the Holy Trinity. *God calls us all to this intimate union with him*, even if the special graces or extraordinary signs of this mystical life are granted only to some for the sake of manifesting the gratuitous gift given to all. (CCC 2013-2014)

A Parish of Exiles?

In 1 Pet 1:17, the apostle refers to Christians as “sojourners” or “aliens” because they are “in exile” (Greek *parokias*). As Daniel Keating points out (2011, 45), the word “alien” literally means “one who dwells beside” (*par-oikos*), meaning “one who is not dwelling in one’s own house, but who lives among others in a foreign land,” and is the root word for the English word “parish” (cf. also “parochial”). As such, the Christian parish is supposed to be “the gathering of Christian ‘sojourners’ or ‘alien’s who are far from their true home, which is where God dwells (D. Keating, 2011, 46).

- 4. Christology: the Living Stone and the New Temple (2:4-10)

- a. Christ: “living stone”
 - b. People: “living stones”
 - c. Temple: “spiritual house” (Greek *oikos pneumatikos*) (2:5)
 - d. Priesthood: “holy priesthood” (Greek *hierateuma hagion*) (2:5)
 - e. Sacrifices: “spiritual sacrifices” (Greek *pneumatikas thysias*) (2:5)
 - f. Christ the Messianic Stone (Isa 28:16; cf. Dan 2)
 - g. Rejected Cornerstone (Psalms 118:22)
 - h. Stumbling Stone (Isa 8:14-15): unbelievers “destined” (Greek) (2:8)
5. Ecclesiology: People of God (2:9-10)
- a. “Chosen Race” (Greek *genos eklekton*)
 - b. “Royal Priesthood” (Greek *basileon hierateuma*)
 - c. “Holy Nation” (Greek *ethnos hagion*)
 - d. “People of God” (Greek *laos theou*) (2:10)
 - e. “Once you were no people,” but now you are “God’s people” (Hos 2:23)

Vatican II and the Catechism: the Priesthood of the Laity

On entering the People of God through faith and Baptism, one receives a share in this people’s unique, *priestly vocation*: “Christ the Lord, high priest taken from among men, has made this new people ‘a kingdom of priests to God, his Father.’ The baptized, by regeneration and the anointing of the Holy Spirit, are *consecrated* to be a spiritual house and a *holy priesthood*.” (CCC 785, citing *Lumen Gentium* 10; cf. Heb 5:1-5; Rev 1:6)

“Hence the laity, dedicated as they are to Christ and anointed by the Holy Spirit, are marvellously called and prepared so that even richer fruits of the Spirit may be produced in them. For all their works, prayers, and apostolic undertakings, family and married life, daily work, relaxation of mind and body, if they are accomplished in the Spirit—indeed even the hardships of life if patiently born—all *these become spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ*. In the celebration of the Eucharist these may most fittingly be offered to the Father along with the body of the Lord. And so, worshipping everywhere by their holy actions, the laity consecrate the world itself to God, everywhere offering worship by the holiness of their lives.” (CCC 901, quoting *Lumen Gentium* 34, 10, and 1 Pet 2:5)

The laity derive the right and duty of the apostolate from their union with Christ the head... They are consecrated for the *royal priesthood* and the holy people (1 Pet 2:4-10), not only that they may offer spiritual sacrifices in everything that they do but also that they may witness to Christ throughout the world” (Vatican II, Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity, *Apostolicam Actuositatem* 1.3)

III. Good Conduct among the Gentiles (1 Peter 2:11-3:12)

1. Living in a Pagan World (2:11-12; cf. Household Codes, Eph 5:21-6:9; Col 3:18-4:1)
 - a. “Aliens” (Greek *paroikias*)
 - b. “Exiles/sojourners” (Greek)
 - c. Abstain from “passions” (Greek *epithymia*) of the “flesh”; war a/g “soul”

- c. Conduct “among the Gentiles” (Greek *en tois ethnesin*) (2:12)
 - d. “Subject” (Greek) to “human institution”
 - e. Subject to the “emperor” (Greek *basileus*)
 - f. Subject to “governors” (Greek)
 - g. God’s will: Do right → Silence the ignorant and foolish
2. Christian Free Men (2:13-17)
- a. You are “Free men” (Greek *eleutereroi*)
 - b. “Do not use freedom as *a pretext for evil*” (cf. ‘Pauline’ Antinomianism?)
 - c. However, live as “Servants of God”
 - d. “Honor” (Greek) all men
 - e. “Love” (Greek) the brotherhood
 - f. “Fear” (Greek *phobe*) God
 - g. “Honor” (Greek) the Emperor (not fear! not worship!)

The Catechism on Slavery

The seventh commandment forbids acts or enterprises that for any reason—selfish or ideological, commercial, or totalitarian—lead to the *enslavement of human beings*, to their being bought, sold and exchanged like merchandise, in disregard for their personal dignity. It is a sin against the dignity of persons and their fundamental rights to reduce them by violence to their productive value or to a source of profit. (CCC 2414)

How Should We Translate the Greek Word Doulos?

Third, a particular difficulty is presented when words in biblical Hebrew and Greek refer to ancient practices and institutions that do not correspond directly to those in the modern world. Such is the case in the translation of ‘*ebed* (Hebrew) and *doulos* (Greek), terms which are often rendered “slave.” These terms, however, actually cover a range of relationships that require a range of renderings — either “slave,” “bondservant,” or “servant” — depending on the context. Further, the word “slave” currently carries associations with the often brutal and dehumanizing institution of slavery in nineteenth-century America. For this reason, the ESV translation of the words ‘*ebed* and *doulos* has been undertaken with particular attention to their meaning in each specific context. Thus in Old Testament times, one might enter slavery either voluntarily (e.g., to escape poverty or to pay off a debt) or involuntarily (e.g., by birth, by being captured in battle, or by judicial sentence). Protection for all in servitude in ancient Israel was provided by the Mosaic Law. In New Testament times, a *doulos* is often best described as a “bondservant” — that is, as someone bound to serve his master for a specific (usually lengthy) period of time, but also as someone who might nevertheless own property, achieve social advancement, and even be released or purchase his freedom. The ESV usage thus seeks to express the nuance of meaning in each context. Where absolute ownership by a master is in view (as in Romans 6), “slave” is used; where a more limited form of servitude is in view, “bondservant” is used (as in 1 Corinthians 7:21–24); where the context indicates a wide range of freedom (as in John 4:51), “servant” is preferred. (Preface to the ESV; available at <http://about.esvbible.org/about/preface/>)

- 3. Christian Servants/Slaves (2:18-25; cf. ESV “Servants”)

- a. Slavery in the First Century (see D. Keating, 2011, 65-67)
 - b. “Submissive” (Greek) to “masters” (Greek)
 - c. With “respect” (Greek *phobos*)
 - d. Patience in unjust suffering: even to overbearing masters
 - e. Vocation to *Innocent Suffering*: “you have been called” (Greek)
 - f. Innocent Suffering: a “grace” (Greek *charis*)? (cf. D. Keating 2011, 66)
 - g. Christ suffered as an “example” or “model” (Greek *hypogrammos*)
 - g. Atonement/Soteriology: OT Suffering Servant (Isa 53:9)
 - h. Substitution: “He bore our sins in his body on the tree” (2:24)
 - i. Participation: We “die” to sin and “live” to “righteousness” (2:24)
 - j. Redemption: By his “wounds” you are “healed”
 - k. Christology: “Shepherd” and “Bishop” (Greek *episkopos*) of Souls! (2:25)
 - l. *Special solidarity of Christ with those enslaved* (cf. Human Trafficking)
4. Christian Wives (3:1-6)
- a. “Submissive” (Greek) to your husbands
 - b. Evangelical Witness: win over husbands who do not “obey the word”!
 - c. “Reverent” (Greek *phobos*) and “Chaste/pure” (Greek *hagnos*) behavior
 - d. Not Outward “Adornment” (Greek *kosmos*): braided hair, jewels, fine clothes
 - e. But Inward Jewel: “Gentle and quiet spirit”
 - f. Sarah (cf. Gen 18:12); Christian wives are “children” of Sarah

The Catechism on Modesty

Purity requires *modesty*, an integral part of temperance. *Modesty protects the intimate center of the person. It means refusing to unveil what should remain hidden.* It is ordered to chastity to whose sensitivity it bears witness. It guides how one looks at others and behaves toward them in conformity with the dignity of persons and their solidarity. (CCC 2521)

Modesty protects the mystery of persons and their love. It encourages patience and moderation in loving relationships; it requires that the conditions for the definitive giving and commitment of man and woman to one another be fulfilled. *Modesty is decency. It inspires one’s choice of clothing. It keeps silence or reserve where there is evident risk of unhealthy curiosity. It is discreet.* (CCC 2521)

5. Christian Husbands (3:7)
- a. Live “considerately” or “according to knowledge” (Greek *kata gnsin*)
 - b. “with understanding” (NAB)? “show consideration for” (NRSV)?
 - c. Bestowing “Honor” (Greek) on your wife
 - c. Since she is the “weaker vessel” (Greek *asthenester skeuei*)
 - d. “Joint heirs” to the grace of life (cf. Numbers 36)
 - e. Prayer: lest husband’s prayers be “hindered”
 - f. John Paul II: Husbands follow Christ’s “style” of relating to women
(cf. D. Keating 2011, 76; citing *Mulieris Dignitatem* no. 24)
6. All Brethren: Suffer for Righteousness Sake (3:8-16)

- a. “Love of the Brethren” (Greek *philadelphoi*): technical term for Christians
 - b. No evil for evil; no reviling for reviling; instead, “bless” enemies
 - c. Against Sins of the Tongue; for Peacemaking (Quotes Psalm 34:12-16)
 - d. “Suffer for righteousness (Greek) sake” (3:13)
 - e. Apologetics: gentle and reverent “defense” (Greek *apologia*) (3:15)
 - f. Witness: when abused, keep your conscience clear
 - g. Good behavior “in Christ” (Greek) (3:16)
 - h. Innocent Suffering: can be “the will of God” () (3:17)
7. Excursus: Being “In Christ” (1 Pet 3:16; see J. H. Elliott 2001, 38)
- a. Only Paul and Peter use the expression “in Christ” (Greek)
 - b. Some argue it is the “center” of Pauline theology (cf. Albert Schweitzer)
 - c. Moral Participation: Good behavior “in Christ” (1 Pet 3:16)
 - d. Eschatological Participation: called to eternal glory “in Christ” (1 Pet 5:10)
 - e. Ecclesial Participation: greeting to all “in Christ” (1 Pet 5:14)

IV. Christian Suffering (1 Peter 3:17-5:11)

- 1. Christ the Example of Suffering (3:17-22)
 - a. Suffering for “doing right,” if it is God’s “will”
 - b. Christ the model of our suffering: he was “put to death in the flesh”

Does 1 Peter Describe Christ’s “Descent into Hell”?

In the midst of 1 Peter’s appeal to Christ as the model of innocent suffering for others (1 Pet 3:17, 4:1), there is a lengthy and obscure aside which describes Christ not only dying but also being “made alive in the spirit” and having gone and “preached to the spirits who were in prison” who “formerly did not obey” in the days of Noah (1 Pet 3:18-20). Since ancient times, there has been debate about exactly what actions of Christ are being described here. Over the centuries, three major interpretations deserve consideration.

1. *Christ’s Descent into Hades/Sheol after His Death*: According to this interpretation, the description of Christ preaching “in the spirit” (1 Pet 3:18-19) to “the spirits in prison” refers to the journey of Christ’s soul (“spirit”) to the realm of the dead (Hades, Sheol) after his death (Latin *descensus ad inferos*; cf. Heb 12:2 for “spirits” referring to the souls of the dead). One strength of this view is that it is the most ancient interpretation that we possess, going back to Clement and Origen of Alexandria (see Clement of Alexandria, *Commentary on John* 16:16; *Stromata* 6, 6, 44-46). Another strength is that it makes sense of a later verse, in which 1 Peter speaks of the “gospel” being “preached even to the dead” (1 Pet 4:6). One weakness of this view is that “made alive in the spirit” (1 Pet 3:18) would seem to refer to the bodily resurrection of Jesus rather than the fact that his soul lived on after death. Another weakness is that it could be taken to mean that those who died at the time of Noah received a “second chance” for repentance after death—something which stands at odds with other New Testament texts and Church teaching. In the 16th century, Robert Bellarmine revived this interpretation by suggesting that those who died during the time of the flood repented before death (*Disputations on Christ*, 2, 4, 13). This interpretation is supported by a minority of contemporary scholars (e.g., L. T. Johnson, 1999, 485-86; J. B. Green 2007, 122) and the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (see CCC 632).

2. *Christ's Pre-Incarnate Preaching in the "Spirit" through Noah:* According to this interpretation, the description of Christ preaching "in the spirit" (1 Pet 3:18) to the generations in "the days of Noah" (1 Pet 3:20) refers to the pre-incarnate activity of Christ, who spoke *through* the prophet Noah. One strength of this interpretation is that it too has ancient and medieval support in the towering figures of Augustine of Hippo (*Letter 164* to Evodius) and Thomas Aquinas (*Summa Theologica* IIIa, Q. 52, A. 2). Another strength is that earlier in the letter, Peter explicitly speaks about "the Spirit of Christ" being active "within" the Old Testament prophets when they predicted "the sufferings of Christ and his subsequent glory" (1 Pet 1:11). One weakness of this interpretation is that is very difficult to square a sudden back-reference to the pre-incarnate activity of Christ with the immediate context of the surrounding verses, which seem quite clearly to refer to the paschal mystery of Christ's death (1 Pet 3:18), resurrection (1 Pet 3:22), and ascension into heaven (1 Pet 3:22). This interpretation is supported by a minority of modern scholars.

3. *Christ's Proclamation of Victory to the Fallen Angels after His Death:* According to this interpretation, the expression "made alive in the spirit" (1 Pet 3:18) refers to the bodily resurrection of Jesus—not his descent into hell (cf. John 5:21; Rom 8:11; 1 Cor 15:22). Moreover, the "spirits in prison" (1 Pet 3:19) refers to fallen angels which were believed in some early Jewish traditions to have sinned by lusting after human women. According to these traditions, these wicked angels were imprisoned until the final judgment (see, e.g., *1 Enoch* 6-21, *Jubilees* 5:1-11; cf. Gen 6:1-4). In this view, Jesus "journeys" to the spiritual "prison" of the wicked angels in order to proclaim his victory over them by means of his death and resurrection (cf. *1 Enoch* 14:5; 18:14; *2 Enoch* 7:1-3). One strength of this view is that it makes sense of the otherwise strange focus on "the days of Noah" (1 Pet 3:19). It is also quite true that the fallen angel interpretation of the "Nephilim" in Genesis 6 was the dominant ancient Jewish interpretation. One weakness of this view is that it has no ancient support. If this was the meaning of the text, why didn't any ancient Christians read it this way? Another weakness is that this view has a very difficult time explaining the meaning of the expression "the gospel was preached even to the dead" (1 Pet 3:6), since the language of "the dead" clearly points to humans (not angels) and since the immediate context refers to Christ coming "to judge the living and the dead" (1 Pet 3:5)—which clearly refers to the actual dead and not Jesus preaching to the spiritually "dead" during his earthly ministry. This interpretation is supported by the majority of contemporary scholars (e.g., J. H. Elliott, 2000; K. H. Jobes 2005; D. Keating, 2011).

2. Abuse for Not Living like "the Gentiles" () (4:1-6)
 - a. Suffering "in the flesh" → Ceasing "from sin" (cf. [Col 1:24](#); [1 John 3:6](#))
 - b. Life in "the flesh" → Following God's will
 - c. All will be judged
3. Life in the Face of "the End of All Things" (4:7-11)
 - a. Unfailing love: "love covers a multitude of sins" ([1 Pet 4:7](#); cf. [Prov 10:12](#))
 - b. "Practice Hospitality ungrudgingly" (4:9)
4. Sharing in Christ's Sufferings (4:12-19)
 - a. What is the "fiery ordeal" (cf. eschatological tribulation; [Luke 12:49](#))?
 - b. Rejoice insofar as you "share in () Christ's sufferings"

- c. Participation in Suffering → Participation in Glory
- d. Suffering “as a Christian (*Christianos*)” (1 Pet 4:16)
- e. Judgment *begins* with the “household of God” (4:17)
- f. Suffering and “God’s will” (4:19)

V. Closing Exhortations and Blessing (5:1-14)

1. Peter’s Exhortation to Elders (5:1-4)
 - a. “Fellow elder (*presbyteros*)” (5:1)
 - b. “Witness to the sufferings of Christ” (ref. to Passion of Christ?)
 - c. “Partaker” () of the “glory to be revealed” (Transfiguration? cf. 2 Pet 1:4)
 - d. Pastors of “the flock of God” (5:2)
 - e. Jesus Christ: “the chief Shepherd” (model of Pastoral leadership)
2. Exhortation to Younger Believers (5:5)
 - a. Younger: “be subject () to the elders” (5:5)
 - b. Humility: “God opposes the proud...” (5:5)
3. Humility and Suffering: For “A Little While” (5:6-11)
 - a. Humble yourselves → you will be exalted
 - b. Cast your anxieties on God
 - c. Be sober, be watchful
 - d. The Devil: “a roaring lion” (cf. Psa 7:1-2; 10:8-9); resist him!
 - e. Suffering is “required” of Christians “throughout the world”
4. Epilogue and Final Blessing (5:12-14)
 - a. Peter writes “through Silvanus”
 - b. “She Who is at Babylon” = Church at Rome (cf. 2 Kings 15-17)

“Babylon” symbolizes Rome, in accord with tradition, as the seat of world power and the capital of a nation, which like the Mesopotamian Empire of old, subdued the land of Judea, displaced its inhabitants, and ushered in a new era, for better or worse, in the history of God’s people.” (J. H. Elliott, 2000, 132).

- c. “My son Mark” = John Mark, Peter’s spiritual son
- d. The “Kiss of Love”=Jewish/Christian greeting (Luke 7:45; 15:20; Rom 16:16; 1 Cor 16:20)

1 Peter in the Contemporary Lectionary

1 Peter Sundays in Easter, Year A		
Sunday	Second Reading	Topic
2 nd Week of Easter	1 Peter 1:3-9	New Birth in Christ; tested by Suffering.
3 rd Week of Easter	1 Peter 1:17-21	Holy Conduct during Time of “Sojourning” (<i>paroikias</i>)
4 th Week of Easter	1 Peter 2:20b-25	Christ, the Example of Innocent Suffering
5 th Week of Easter	1 Peter 2:4-9	Christ the Living Stone; Priesthood of the Laity
6 th Week of Easter	1 Peter 3:15-18	Be Ready to Give an Explanation (<i>apologia</i>) for the Faith

1 Peter Weekdays in Ordinary Time, First Reading, Year II			
Week	Day	First Reading	Description
8	M	1 Pet 1:3-9	New Birth in Christ; Suffering leads to Glory
8	T	1 Pet 1:10-16	Prophecies of Christ; Universal Call to Holiness
8	W	1 Pet 1:18-25	Ransomed by the Blood of Christ; Purified in Soul
8	Th	1 Pet 2:2-5, 9-12	Chosen Race, Royal Priesthood, People of God
8	F	1 Pet 4:7-13	Sharing in the Suffering and Glory of Christ

Further Reading on 1 Peter

Commentaries and Studies on 1 Peter

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- Keating, Daniel. *First and Second Peter, Jude*. Catholic Commentary on Sacred Scripture. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2011.
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1 Peter in the Living Tradition

- Bede the Venerable. *Commentary on the Seven Catholic Epistles*. Kalamazoo: Cistercian Publications, 1985.
- Bray, Gerald. *James, 1-2 Peter, 1-3 John, Jude*. Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture. New Testament XI. Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2000.

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Ehrman, Bart D. *Forgery and Counterforgery: The Use of Literary Deceit in Early Christian Polemics*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013. Pp. 239-259.

Hezser, Catherine. *Jewish Literacy in Roman Palestine*. Texts and Studies in Ancient Judaism. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2001.

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2 Peter

Introduction

Introductory Points

1. Most widely doubted document in the New Testament.
 - a. Patristic doubts about authenticity
 - b. Modern doubts about authenticity: almost complete unanimity among scholars
2. Some Modern Scholars: accuse it of “Early Catholicism” (German *Frühkatholizismus*):

In view of the difficulty in understanding “scripture,” and its ambiguity, II Pet offers the thesis that “no prophetic scripture allows an individual interpretation” because men have spoken under the power of the Holy Spirit (1:20f.) Since not every Christian has the Spirit, the explanation of Scripture is reserved for the ecclesiastical teaching office. Accordingly we find ourselves without doubt far beyond the time of Peter and into the epoch of “early Catholicism.” It is certain, therefore, that II Pet does not originate with Peter... (Werner Georg Kümmel 1975, 432-33; cf. Ernst Käsemann, *Essays on New Testament Themes* [SBT 41; London: SCM, 1964, 169-95])

3. Theological significance:
 - a. Soteriology/Moral Theology: divinization (2 Pet 1:4)
 - b. Hermeneutics: interpretation of Scripture and magisterium (2 Pet 1:16-21)
 - c. Eschatology: “delay of the Parousia,” new creation (2 Pet 3:1-13)
 - d. Pauline Interpretation: early debate over Paul’s letters (2 Pet 3:14-16)

The Origin of 2 Peter

Arguments against Apostolic Authorship

1. Overwhelming Majority of Modern Scholars:
 - a. B. D. Ehrman (2013)
 - b. E. Richard (2013)
 - c. D. Senior and D. Harrington (2003)
 - d. J. Neyrey (1993)
 - e. R. Bauckham (1988)
 - f. W. G. Kümmel: “[T]his letter cannot have been written by Peter.” (1975, 430)
2. High Quality of the Greek Language and Hellenistic Concepts:
 - a. Elaborate style and Rich vocabulary; very different from 1 Peter
 - b. Obscure words (58 *hapax legomena*)
 - c. Examples: “Divine power,” “virtue,” “divine nature” (2 Pet 1:3-4)
 - d. “Nothing Jewish” about 2 Peter (B. D. Ehrman 2013, 225)!
3. Literary Dependence on the letter of Jude and 1 Peter:
 - a. Compare 2 Pet 2:1-18; 3:1-3 and Jude 4-13, 16-18
 - b. Allusion to 1 Peter (cf. 2 Pet 3:1)

- c. If Jude and 1 Peter are late forgery, then *a fortiori* 2 Peter must be a late forgery
- 4. Internal Signs of a Late 1st-Century (or early 2nd Century) Date:
 - a. First Generation of “apostles” and “fathers” have died (2 Pet 3:1-3)
 - b. Opponents: Seem to be “Gnostics” (cf. in 2 Pet 1:5-6, 3:18)
 - c. Author knows “a collection of Paul’s letters” (B. Ehrman 2013, 224)
 - d. Paul’s letters are already considered “Scripture” (2 Pet 3:15-16)
 - e. “Hard to imagine” Paul’s letters as Scripture before end of 1st century
 - f. Problem of the Delay of the Parousia:

[T]here are clear indications that the book was written in a later period, after the death of the apostles. Most obviously, it was written in order to deal with the massive delay of the parousia: there had been a long passage of time since Christians widely held to the expectation of an imminent end of all things, a problem dealt with in a variety of way by other postapostolic writings, such as Luke-Acts and the Fourth Gospel. In particular, we are told that “the fathers” have “fallen asleep” (i.e., died) since the original promises of the coming end (3:4). (Bart D. Ehrman 2013, 224)

5. Literary Genre: “Testamentary Fiction”:

Moreover, when the author is speaking in character, he feigns a knowledge of his own approaching death, based in part on a prediction of Jesus himself (1:12-14...), giving this book, as widely recognized, the character of *a testamentary fiction*. He “knows” of his impending death and wants to give his readers his final instructions. As with all Testaments, this is a fiction put on the pen of someone already residing comfortably in his tomb. (Bart D. Ehrman 2013, 224 [emphasis added])

6. External Evidence: Early Patristic Doubts about Authenticity

Origen of Alexandria: And Peter, on whom the Church of Christ is built, against which the gates of hell shall not prevail, left only one epistle of acknowledged genuineness. *Suppose we allow that he left a second; for this is doubtful.* (Origen, *Commentary on the Gospel of John*, 5.3; trans. ANF 9.346; cf. Eusebius, *Church History*, 6.25.8)

Eusebius of Caesarea: Of Peter, one epistle, known as his first, is accepted and this the early fathers quoted freely, as undoubtedly genuine... But the second Petrine epistle we have been taught to regard as uncanonical. (Eusebius, *Church History*, 3.3.1)

Jerome: [Peter] wrote two epistles which are called Catholic, the second of which, on account of its difference from the first in style, is considered by many not to be his. (Jerome, *Lives of Illustrious Men* 1)

Didymus the Blind: We must not therefore be ignorant of the fact that the epistle at hand is forged, which, even though published, is nevertheless not in the canon. (*Ennar. In Epistl. Catholi.*; trans. in B. D. Erhman 2013, 223).

7. Existence of other Petrine Pseudepigraphy:
 - a. *Gospel of Peter*
 - b. *The Apocalypse of Peter*
 - c. Letter of Peter to Philip (Nag Hammadi)
 - d. *Epistula Petri* of the Pseudo-Clementines

Arguments for Apostolic Authorship

1. Tiny Minority of Modern Scholars:
 - a. D. Keating (2011, seems to favor authenticity)
 - b. Gene L. Green (2008)
 - c. John A. T. Robinson (1976)
 - d. Charles Bigg (1901)
2. Peter's Use of Secretary: Can Explain Stylistic and Vocabulary Differences
 - a. Three Kinds of Secretarial Activity (E. Richards, 1991, 23-67, 64-80)
 - b. Dictation: taken down usually by shorthand (cf. Suetonius, *Divus Titus* 3.2)
 - c. Editorial Revision: of Verbal or Written Draft (cf. Cicero, *Fam.* 16.10.2)
 - d. Composition: in the name of the Author (cf. Cicero, *Att.* 11.5); with the custom being to check the secretary's work (cf. Cicero, *Epistulae ad familiares* 5.20)

"I should like you to write in my name to Basilius and to anyone else you like, even to Servilius, and *say whatever you think fit*. (Cicero, *Epistulae ad Atticum* 11.5; 3:15; 11.2; cited in G. L. Green 2008, 146)

"Brutus or *the person Brutus employed to write his letters*." (Philostratus, cited in A. Malherbe 1988, 42-32).

[S]ome of the differences between 1 and 2 Peter can be accounted for by the varied situations they address... But this explanation cannot account for the sum of the stylistic problems and, as Jerome noted, Peter likely used a different secretary for both letters (1 Pet 5:12)... The stylistic issue is not strong enough to preclude apostolic authorship. (G. L. Green 2008, 145-46)

3. Explicit Claims to Authorship by Peter Himself:
 - a. Claims to be "Simeon Peter, slave and apostle of Jesus Christ" (2 Pet 1:1)
 - b. Claims to be eyewitness to the Transfiguration (2 Pet 1:17-18)
(cf. Matt 17:1-5; Mark 9:2-7; Luke 9:28-35)
 - c. Claims knowledge of his imminent death (2 Pet 1:14; cf. John 21:18-19)
 - d. Claims that this is "second letter" (2 Pet 3:1; cf. 1 Peter)
4. Signs of Mid-First Century Date and Setting: Controversy over Paul!
 - a. Opponents: not Gnostics, but *Misinterpreters of Paul* (2 Pet 3:15-16; cf. 1:20)

- b. Opponents = “Pauline Christians” (B. D. Ehrman 2013, 260-61)
- c. Misinterpreters of Paul’s Eschatology (cf. 2 Thess 2:1-2; 2 Tim 2:18)
- d. False Teachers: “Mockers” of the Final Judgment (2 Pet 3:3)
- e. Misinterpreters of Paul’s Moral Teaching (cf. Rom 3:8; 6:1; cf. James 2:14-24)
- f. False teachers: “promise freedom,” but are “lawless” (2 Pet 2:19)

And why not do evil that good may come? —as some people slanderously charge us with saying. Their condemnation is just. (Romans 3:8)

Paul himself was a lightning rod for all of these positions. Moreover, just as he was said to have advocated a “lawless” lifestyle, *possibly in his own lifetime* (Rom 3.8), so too his authority was invoked by advocates of strict morality. (Bart D. Ehrman 2013, 263 [emphasis added])

- g. Delay of Parousia: 1st century problem! (Mark 13; 2 Thess 2; John 21)
- h. Peter equates “prophetic word” with “Scripture” (2 Pet 1:19-21)
- i. Clement: Paul wrote “in the Spirit” () (*1 Clem.* 47:1)

5. Jewish Character of 2 Peter: “Nothing Jewish” about 2 Peter?! (Contra Ehrman)

- a. “Simeon Peter” (Semitic spelling) (2 Pet 1:1)
- b. Sharing in “Divinity” (*theias*) (2 Pet 1:4)
(cf. Philo, *On Abraham* 144; Josephus, *Against Apion*, 1.232)
- c. “Virtue” () in Jewish writings (2 Pet 1:5)
(cf. Hab 3:3; Wis 4:1; LXX; 1 Pet 2:9[!]; Phil 4:8)
- d. “Tent” as image for body (2 Pet 1:13)
(cf. Isa 38:12; Wis 9:15)
- e. Inspiration of “Scriptures” (2 Pet 1:20; cf. Josephus, *Against Apion*, 37-38)
- f. Jewish tradition of Noah as “herald” (2 Pet 2:5)
(cf. Josephus, *Antiquities*, 1.74; *Jubilees* 7:20-39)
- g. Righteousness of Lot (2 Pet 2:8; cf. Wis 10:6 on the righteousness of Lot)
- h. Allusion to OT Prophet Balaam (2 Pet 2:15; cf. Num 22-24)
- i. Quotation of OT Proverb (2 Pet 2:22; cf. Prov 26:11)
- j. “The Fathers” = Jewish expression for “ancestors” (2 Pet 3:4)
(cf. John 7:22; Heb 1:1)
- k. “Fell asleep” = Jewish euphemism for death (2 Pet 3:4)
(cf. Isa 26:19; Dan 12:2)
- l. Creation of Earth “from Water” (2 Pet 3:5)
(cf. Gen 1:6-7, 20; Psa 33:7)
- m. “One Day”= 1000 years; allusion to Psalm 90:4 (2 Pet 3:8)
- n. “Day of the Lord” = Jewish expression for Day of Judgment (2 Pet 3:10)
(cf. Amos 5:18-24; Joel 2:1-11; Zeph 1:7-13, etc.)
- o. “New Heavens and New Earth” (2 Pet 3:13; cf. Isaiah 64-66)

6. Literary Relationship with Other 1st Century Letters: 1 Peter, Jude, and *1 Clement*

- a. Literary dependence of 2 Peter on Jude is strong but not proven
- b. Literary dependence on Jude simply *does not preclude* apostolic authorship
- c. Reversible: If 2 Peter prior to Jude, then Jude is 1st century witness to 2 Peter

- d. If Jude is authentic, then 2 Peter is written during Peter's lifetime
- e. *1 Clement* paraphrases 2 Pet 3:4; describes as "Scripture" (G. Green 2008, 141)

Saying, "Where is the promise of his coming? For ever since the fathers fell asleep, all things have continued as they were from the beginning of creation." (2 Pet 3:4)

Let this Scripture be far from us in which he says, "Wretched are the double-minded, who doubt in their soul and say, 'We have heard these things even in the days of our fathers, and behold, we have grown old, and none of these things has happened to us'" (*1 Clement* 23:3; trans. in G. Green 2008, 141 n. 1).

7. Literary Genre:

- a. That of a *letter*, not a fictional "testament" (Cf. G. L. Green 2008, 149)
- b. *No Mss or Patristic evidence referring to it as the "Testament of Peter"*
- c. Compare:

8. Patristic Support for Authenticity: not as bleak as commonly described

- a. Irenaeus uses 2 Pet 3:8 ("Day of the Lord = 1000 years)
- b. *Epistle of Barnabas* 15:4 uses 2 Pet 3:8 ("Day of the Lord = 1000 years)
- c. Early Manuscripts: 2 Pet present in P72 (ca. 300 AD), with 1 Pet and Jude
- d. Origen: elsewhere refers to *two* epistles of Peter as Scripture

Origen of Alexandria: Even Peter cries out with trumpets in two of his epistles... (Origen, *Homilies on Numbers* 6.676; goes on to call the letter "Scripture" [*scriptura*])

- d. Eusebius admits that it is studied with "other Scriptures"

Methodius of Olympus: explicitly quotes 2 Pet 3:8 and attributes the words to the apostle Peter (*De resurrectione* ???; G. Green 2008, 143).

Eusebius of Caesarea: But we have learned that his extant second Epistle does not belong to the canon; *yet, as it has appeared profitable to many, it has been used with the other Scriptures*. The so-called Acts of Peter, however, and the Gospel which bears his name, and the Preaching and the Apocalypse, as they are called, we know have not been universally accepted, because *no ecclesiastical writer, ancient or modern, has made use of testimonies drawn from them*. (Eusebius, *Church History*, 3.3.1-2; trans. NPNF)

Among the *disputed writings, which are nevertheless recognized by many*, are extant the so-called epistle of James and that of Jude, *also the second epistle of Peter*... (Eusebius, *Church History*, 3.25.3; trans. NPNF)

Athanasius: Afterwards, the Acts of the Apostles and Epistles (called Catholic), seven, viz. of James, one; of Peter, two; of John, three; after these, one of Jude... (Athanasius, *Festal Letter* 39 [AD 367]; trans. NPNF)

e. Jerome elsewhere accepts apostolic authorship of 2 Peter:

f. Stylistic differences; “only explanation offered by any ancient author” for doubts about apostolic authorship of 2 Peter (G. L. Green 2008, 143)

Jerome: [Paul] therefore, had Titus as an interpreter just as the blessed Peter also had Mark, whose Gospel was composed with Peter narrating and him writing. Further, two epistles also, which are extant as of Peter, are discrepant among themselves in style and character and structure of the words, from which we understand that he used different interpreters (Latin *interpretibus*) as necessary. (Jerome, *Letter to Hebidia*, 120.11; trans. G. L. Green 2008, 143)

The apostles James, Peter, John, and Jude, have published seven epistles. (Jerome, Epistle 53.9; trans. G. Green 2008, 143)

9. Universal Support in Official Canonical Lists (G. Green 2008, 143)
 - a. Laodicea, Canon 60 (AD 363)
 - b. Alexandria: Athanasius’ Festal Letter (AD 367)
 - c. Rome (AD 382)
 - d. Hippo (AD 393)
 - e. Carthage, Canon 39 (AD 397)
10. Majority Support in Major Codexes (L. M. McDonald 2007, 447-51)
 - a. Codex Vaticanus: contains 2 Peter
 - b. Codex Sinaiticus: contains 2 Peter
 - c. Codex Alexandrinus: contains 2 Peter
 - d. Syriac Peshitta: 2 Peter missing

Literary Structure of 2 Peter

I. Greeting (1:1-2)

II. Exhortations to Christian Virtue (1:3-21)

1. The Vocation to Divinization (1:3-4)

2. Confirming the Call with Virtues (1:5-11)
3. Purpose of the Letter (1:6-15)
4. The Prophetic Word of the Apostles (1:16-21)

III. Condemnation of False Teachers (2:1-22)

1. False Teachers will Come (2:1-3)
2. Scriptural Examples of Wickedness (2:4-10)
3. Further Descriptions of the False Teachers (2:11-22)

IV. The Second Coming and the Delay of the Parousia (3:1-17)

1. Coming of Scoffers regarding the Parousia (3:1-7)
2. Explanation of the “Delay” (3:8-10)
3. Eschatological Ethics (3:11-14)
4. Warning against Misinterpreters of Paul (3:15-17)

V. Closing Doxology (3:18)

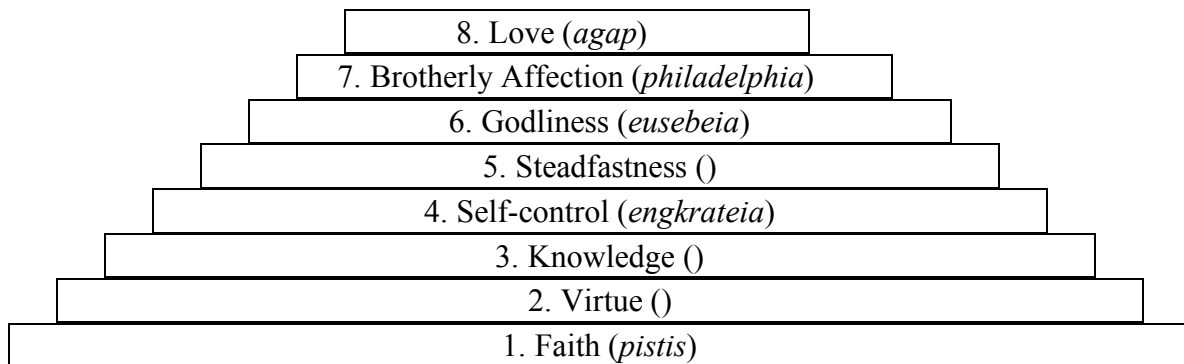
Overview of 2 Peter

I. Greeting (2 Peter 1:1-2)

1. “Simon Peter” (): Aramaic form (1:1)
2. Audience: “those who have obtained a faith of equal standing” (1:1)
 - a. Suggests they were *not* evangelized by Peter himself (cf. 1 Pet 1:12)
3. “Grace” and “Peace”: Same Petrine greeting (cf. 1 Pet 1:2)

II. Opening Exhortations (2 Pet 1:3-21)

1. The Vocation to Divinization (1:3-4)
 - a. Vocation to “glory” (*doxa*) and “excellence/virtue” () (cf. RSVCE?)
 - b. “Partakers of the divine nature ()”
2. Confirming the Call with Virtues (1:5-11)
 - a. Ascending Growth in Virtue
 - b. “Sorites”: ancient virtue lists (Greek, “heap up”) (D. Keating 2011, 143)



- b. Anyone who lacks these: “blind” and “shortsighted”
- c. Zeal for virtue: confirms the vocation and election

The Catechism: Why Did the Word Become Flesh?

With the Nicene Creed, we answer by confessing: “For us men and for our salvation he came down from heaven; by the power of the Holy Spirit, he became incarnate of the Virgin Mary, and was made man.”

[1] The Word became flesh for us *in order to save us by reconciling us with God*, who “loved us and sent his Son to be the expiation for our sins”: “the Father has sent his Son as the Savior of the world,” and “he was revealed to take away sins...”

[2] The Word became flesh *so that thus we might know God’s love*: “In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent his only Son into the world, so that we might live through him.” “For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.”⁷³

[3] The Word became flesh *to be our model of holiness*: “Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me.” “I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father, but by me.” On the mountain of the Transfiguration, the Father commands: “Listen to him!”⁷⁵ Jesus is the model for the Beatitudes and the norm of the new law: “Love one another as I have loved you.” This love implies an effective offering of oneself, after his example.

[4] The Word became flesh to make us “*partakers of the divine nature*”: “For this is why the Word became man, and the Son of God became the Son of man: so that man, by entering into communion with the Word and thus receiving divine sonship, might become a son of God.” [St. Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* 3:19] “For the Son of God became man so that we might become God.” [St. Athanasius, *On the Incarnation*, 54.3] “The only-begotten Son of God, wanting to make us sharers in his divinity, assumed our nature, so that he, made man, might make men gods.” [St. Thomas Aquinas, *Opusc.* 57:1-4] (CCC 456-460)

Other passages in the *Catechism* on Divinization:

1. God’s Plan: to make us “partakers of the divine nature” (CCC 51)
2. Baptism: makes us “partakers of divine nature” (CCC 1265, cf. 1129, 1692)
3. Christian Morality: “now that you share in God’s nature” (CCC 1691)
4. Beatitude: entry into Trinitarian Life/Paradise is sharing “divine nature” (CCC 1721)
5. Grace of Justification: makes us “partakers of the divine nature” (CCC 1996)
6. Indwelling Spirit: “divinizes” us (CCC 1988, quoting St. Athanasius)

3. Purpose of the Letter (1:6-15)

- a. To “remind” them of “these things” = vocation to virtue/divinization
- b. Imminent Death of Peter
- c. “This Body” = literally, “this tent” (Wis 9:15; Isa 38:12; 2 Cor 5:1)
- d. “Departure” =literally, “exodus/death” (*exodos*) (cf. Luke 9:31)
- d. Allusion to Jesus’ Prophecy of Peter’s Martyrdom? (cf. John 21:18-19)
- e. Suggested Date: ca. 65-67 AD (Shortly before Peter’s martyrdom)

Having preached to the Dispersion—the believers in circumcision, in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia and Bithynia—[Peter] pushed on to Rome in the second year of Claudius to over-throw Simon Magus [=ca. AD 42], and *held the sacerdotal chair there for twenty-five years until the last, that is the fourteenth, year of Nero* [ca. AD 67]. At his hands he received the crown of martyrdom being nailed to the cross with his head towards the ground and his feet raised on high, asserting that he was unworthy to be crucified in the same manner as his Lord. (Jerome, *Lives of Illustrious Men*, 1; trans. NPNF1, 3.361)

Does 2 Peter 1:15 Allude to the Gospel of Mark?

And I will see to it that after my departure you may be able at any time to recall (*ēn*) these things... (2 Pet 1:15)

It may, of course, be said that St. Peter does not allude to St. Mark's Gospel in i.15. *But it may also be thought that he does*; and certainly his words may have been so understood. It is a fair conclusion that the statement given by Irenaeus [about Mark publishing his Gospel after the *exodos* of Peter] was built by earlier writers on the Petrine passage. (Charles Bigg, 1901, 213 [emphasis added])

4. The Prophetic Word of the Apostles (1:16-21)

- a. "Coming" (*parousia*) and "Power" (*dynamis*) of Jesus (cf. 1 Pet 4:7-19)
- b. Not cleverly devised "myths" (*mythos*) (= falsehood; cf. 2 Tim 3:4)
- c. "Eyewitnesses" (*epoptai*) of His Majesty (cf. The Transfiguration; Mark 9:2-7)
- d. *Explicit* Claim to Exclusive Eyewitness Testimony (Peter, James, John)
- e. Apostolic Authority: "We have the prophetic word ()"
- f. Apostolic Teaching = "Lamp" in a "dark place" (cf. Psalm 119:105)
- g. Scripture: "not a matter of one's own interpretation ()"
- h. Because "Prophecy" comes from men "moved by the Holy Spirit"
- i. "Moved" = literally "carried/borne" () by the Holy Spirit

Scripture: Not a Matter of "One's Own Interpretation"? (2 Pet 1:20)

What does it mean when the letter says that "no prophecy of Scripture" is a "matter of one's own interpretation" (2 Peter 1:20)? Does it mean (1) Not a matter of the *prophets'* interpretation of the divine will or (2) not a matter of the *individual reader's* interpretation of Scripture? (see G. L. Green 2008, 231-32) Or is it both?

Venerable Bede: The prophets heard God speaking to them in the secret recesses of their own hearts. They simply conveyed that message by their preaching and writing to God's people. They were not like pagan oracles, which distorted the divine message in their own interest, for they did not write their own words but the words of God. *For this reason the reader cannot interpret them by himself, because he is liable to depart from the true meaning*, but rather he must wait to hear how the One who wrote the words wants them to be understood. (Venerable Bede, *On 2 Peter*, cited in G. Bray 200, 141).

III. Condemnation of False Teachers (2:1-22)

1. False Teachers will Come (2:1-3)

- a. OT Times: “False prophets” () arose
- b. Present: “False teachers” (*pseudodidaskaloi*) among you
- c. Bring in “Destructive heresies (*haireseis*)”

What is the Meaning of “Heresy”?

1. Greek word: *haireseis* (See G. L. Green 2008, 239)
2. To make a choice (1 Macc 8:30)
3. Group, school, or sect: e.g., Pharisees, Sadducees, “Nazarenes” (cf. Acts 5:17; 15:5; 24:5; 26:5; 28:22)
4. Intra-Ecclesial Faction (1 Cor 11:19; Gal 5:20)
5. Doctrine of a factional group (Philo, *Planting* 34.151)
6. Heterodox Teaching (cf. Ignatius, *Eph.* 6:2; *Trall.* 6:1)

Catechism: “Heresy is the obstinate post-baptismal denial of some truth which must be believed with divine and catholic faith, or it is likewise an obstinate doubt concerning the same.” (CCC 2089)

- d. What heresy? “Denying the Master who bought them”
- e. Christianity: “the Way” (*h*) of truth; a reference to the Church? (cf. Acts 9:2; 18:26; 19:9, 23; 22:4; 24:14, 22)
- f. Immorality: “licentiousness” → “the Way” being “reviled”
2. Scriptural Examples of Punishment and Rescue (2:4-10; cf. Mishnah, *Sanhedrin* 10:1)
 - a. Fallen Angels: committed them to “hell” (Greek *Tartarus*) (cf. Isa 24:21-22)
 - b. Ancient World: not spared in the flood
 - c. Sodom and Gomorrah: turned to ashes; an example to the “ungodly”
 - d. Noah and his Family: “preserved”; he was a “herald of righteousness” (cf. Josephus, *Antiquities* 1.74; *Jubilees* 7:20-39)
 - e. Lot: “rescued” from the Sodomites; a “righteous man”? (cf. Wis 10:6)
 - f. Heretics: engage in “lust” and “despise authority” (2:10)
3. Further Descriptions of the False Teachers (2:11-22)
 - a. Heretics: “revile/blaspheme” () the “glorious ones”
 - b. Angels: don’t pronounce “blasphemous () judgment” on them
 - c. Within Community: “feasting with you” (2:13)
 - d. Way of Balaam: doing evil for pay (cf. Numbers 22-24)
 - e. Sexual Immorality: “entice with licentious passions” new believers (2:18)
 - f. False “Freedom”: freedom from morality (cf. 1 Cor 6:12-13; Rom 3:8)
 - g. No “Once Saved, Always Saved” (2 Pet 2:20-22; cf. Matt 12:45)
 - h. The Proverb: dog → vomit, washed sow → mire (Prov 26:11)

Are the Simon Magus and His Followers the “Heretics” of 2 Peter?

Simon Magus: the First Heretical “Sect” (cf. 2 Pet 2:2)

Simon Magus's makes the first sect () to arise in the time between Christ and ourselves. It is made up of people who do not rightly or lawfully believe in Christ's name, but perform their dreadful activities in keeping with the false corruption that is in them. (Epiphanius, *Panarion* 2.21, 1:1)

Simon Magus claimed to be a Divine Person (cf. 2 Pet 1:4)

He deluded the Samaritan people by deceiving and catching them with his feats of magic, and said that he was the supreme power of God and had come down from on high. (Epiphanius, *Panarion* 2.21, 1:3)

Simon Magus Denies the Inspiration of the Prophets (cf. 2 Pet 1:19-21)

He claimed that the Law is not God's but the law of the left-hand power, and that prophets are not from a good God either, but from one power or another. And he specifies a power for each as he chooses—the Law belongs to one, David to another, Isaiah to another, Ezekiel to still another, and he attributes each particular prophet to one principality. But all of these are from the power on the left and outside of the Pleroma; and whoever believes the Old Testament is subject to death. (Epiphanius, *Panarion* 2.22, 4:5)

Simon Magus Exploits People for “Greed” (cf. 2 Pet 2:1)

Now since Simon's heart was not right or his reason either, but *he was addicted to a sordid covetousness and avarice* and was certainly not ready to abandon his evil practice, he offered money to Peter the apostle, to give him the faculty of conveying the Holy Spirit through the laying on of hands. For he had counted on spending a little money, and amassing a huge fortune and more in return for a small investment, by giving the Holy Spirit to others. (Epiphanius, *Panarion* 2.21, 1:5)

Simon Magus Told “Myths” and “Blasphemed” the Angels (cf. 2 Pet 1:16, 2:10)

Since the tramp [Simon] was naturally lecherous... He had gotten hold of a female vagabond from Tyre named Helen, and he took her without letting his relationship with her be known. And while privately having an unnatural relationship with his paramour, the charlatan was teaching his disciples stories for their amusement and calling himself the supreme power of God, if you please! And he had the nerve to call the whore who was his partner the Holy Spirit, and said that he had come down on her account. He said, 'I was transformed in each heaven in accordance with the appearance of the inhabitants of each, so as to pass my angelic powers by unnoticed and descend to Ennoia—to this woman, likewise called Prunicus and Holy Spirit, through whom I created the angels. But the angels created the world and men. *Simon told a fairy tale about this*, and said that the power kept transforming her appearance on her way down from on high, and that the poets had spoken of this in allegories. For these angels went to war over the power from on high... because she displayed her beauty and drove them wild, and was sent for this purpose, to despoil the archons who had made this world. She has suffered no harm, but she brought them to the point of slaughtering each other from the lust for her that she aroused in them (Epiphanius, *Panarion* 2.21, 2:2-5)

Simon Magus Misinterpreted the Letters of Paul (cf. 2 Pet 3:16)

In turn, what is more, the impostor would say that this same woman whom he called Ennoia was Athena, *using the words of the holy apostle Paul if you please, and turning the truth into his falsehood*—the words, 'Put on the breastplate of faith and the helmet of salvation, the greaves, the sword and the shield.' [Eph 6:14-17] In the style of Philistion's mimes the cheat now turned all these things, which the apostle had said with reference to firm reason, the faithfulness of chaste behaviour, and the power of divine, heavenly discourse, into a mere joke. 'What else?' he said. 'Paul was describing all these things symbolically, as types of Athena'. (Epiphanius, *Panarion* 2.21, 3:4)

Simon Magus was the Father of “Gnosticism”

This world has been defectively constructed by wicked principalities and authorities, he says. But he teaches that there is a decay and destruction of flesh, and a purification only of souls—and of these (only) if they are established in their initiation through his erroneous 'knowledge'. *And thus the imposture of the so-called Gnostics begins* [with Simon Magus]. (Epiphanius, *Panarion* 2.21, 4:4)

Andreas the Monk (7th Century A.D.): Who “Despises Authority”? (2 Pet 1:10)

This refers to the Simonians, who combined wicked behavior with false doctrine. (Andreas, *Catena* on 2 Pet 2:10; cited in G. Bray, 2000, 149)

The Nicolaitans and the “Way of Balaam” (cf. 2 Pet 2:15)

“To the church at Pergamum write... I have a few things against you: you have some there who hold the teaching of Balaam, who taught Balak to put a stumbling block before the sons of Israel, that they might eat food sacrificed to idols and practice sexual immorality. So you also have some who hold to the teaching of the Nicolaitans. Repent then... (Revelation 3:12, 14-15)

The heresy of the Nicolaitans had already appeared at that time. Peter says that it was evil in two ways. The Nicolaitans were wrong in their doctrine, and they were also wicked in their behavior. (Andreas, *Catena* on 2 Pet 2:2; cited in G. Bray, 2000, 145)

IV. The Second Coming and the Delay of the Parousia (2 Pet 3:1-17)

1. Coming of Scoffers regarding the Parousia (3:1-7)
 - a. “Second Letter” written; both exhortations
 - b. Remember the Prophets and Jesus’ teaching through “your apostles”
 - c. “The Last Days”: end 0times (cf. Dan 2:28; 2 Tim 3:1-5; Jude 18)
 - d. “Scoffers”: skeptics; question the “Coming” (*parousia*) of Jesus
 - d. Uniformitarianism: Present = Past; no catastrophes since “creation”
 - e. Who are “the Fathers” (*hoi pateres*)? (cf. John 7:22; Heb 1:1)
 - f. World Flood Typology: protology → eschatology; forgotten by skeptics

<i>Creation</i>	<i>Flood</i>	<i>Consummation</i>
1. Word of God creates (Gen 1:1; Ps 33:6)	1. Word of God judges	1. “Same Word” stores up
2. Heaven and Earth formed out of water (Gen 1:2, 9-10; Ps 33:7)	2. Existing World (<i>kosmos</i>) destroyed by Water (Gen 6-9)	2. Heaven & Earth destroyed by “fire”

2. Explanation of the “Delay” (3:8-10)
 - a. With the Lord: 1 Day is “as” 1000 years, 1000 years as 1 Day (Psalm 90:4)
 - b. Not Divine Inactivity, but Divine Mercy: “forbearing toward you”
 - c. Universal Salvific Will: God does not wish that “any should perish” (2 Pet 3:9)
 - d. The Day of the Lord: “will come like a thief”
(cf. Matt 24:43-44; 1 Thess 5:2; Rev 3:3; 16:15)
 - e. Cosmic Destruction: heaven and earth will “pass away” (*parerchomai*)
(cf. Matt 24:35; Mark 13:31)

2 Peter 3:9, the Catechism, and Predestination to Hell

When many Christians hear the phrase “predestination,” they often assume that what is meant is John Calvin’s theory of *double predestination*: namely, that God unconditionally predestines some people to eternal life others to go to hell, without any respect for how they freely respond to his grace.

Church teaching rejects the idea of unconditional predestination to hell as heretical. In fact, the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* explicitly cites 2 Peter 3 in its teaching on Hell:

“God predestines no one to go to hell; for this, a willful turning away from God (a mortal sin) is necessary, and persistence in it until the end. In the Eucharistic liturgy and in the daily prayers of her faithful, the Church implores the mercy of God, who does not want “any to perish, but all to come to repentance.” (CCC 1037, citing 2 Pet 3:9; cf. the Council of Orange II [AD 529] and the Council of Trent [AD 1547])

3. Eschatological Ethics (3:11-14)
 - a. Dissolution of This World → “Holiness” and “Godliness”

- b. Hastening the Day of the Lord: “Thy Kingdom Come!” (Matt 6:9)
- c. New Heavens and New Earth: we await a new creation
(cf. Isa 65:17-22; Rev 21:1-5; Rom 8:19-21; cf. CCC 1042-48)
- 4. Warning against Misinterpreters of Paul (3:15-17)
 - a. Count God’s Forbearance as Salvation
 - b. Paul Wrote to You: Galatians? Ephesians? Colossians? (Asia Minor)
 - c. Pauline Eschatology: 1-2 Thessalonians? 1 Corinthians?
 - d. Collection of Paul’s “Letters”: already in his lifetime (Col 4:16)!
 - e. “The other Scriptures” or “the rest of the Scriptures” (*tas loipas graphas*)
(cf. equation of apostolic word with Scriptural prophecy; 2 Pet 1:16-21)
 - f. Pauline Misinterpreters = “Lawless (*athesmos*) Men”

V. Closing Doxology (3:18)

- 1. Grow in “grace” (*charis*) and “knowledge” () of Jesus Christ (2 Pet 3:18)
- 2. Divinity of Jesus: giving “glory” to Jesus presupposes divinity
- 3. Similar Doxology to 1 Peter (cf. 1 Pet 4:11 and 2 Pet 3:18)

2 Peter in the Contemporary Lectionary

2 Peter		
Second Sunday in Advent, Year B		
Sunday	Second Reading	Topic
2 nd Week of Advent	2 Peter 3:8-14	We Await New Heavens and a New Earth

2 Peter			
Weekdays in Ordinary Time, First Reading, Year II			
Week	Day	First Reading	Description
9	M	2 Pet 1:2-7	Partakers of the Divine Nature
9	T	2 Pet 3:12-15a, 17-18	New Heavens and a New Earth

Note: 2 Peter 1:16-19 is also utilized as the 2nd reading on August 6th, the Feast of the Transfiguration.

Further Reading on 2 Peter

Commentaries and Studies on 2 Peter

Bauckham, Richard. *Jude-2 Peter*. Word Biblical Commentary 50. Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1983.

Harrington, Daniel J., S.J. *Jude and 2 Peter*. Sacra Pagina 15. Collegeville: Michael Glazier, 2003.

Helyer, Larry R. *The Life and Witness of Peter*. Grand Rapids: IVP Academic, 2012.

Keating, Daniel. *First and Second Peter, Jude*. Catholic Commentary on Sacred Scripture. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2011.

Green, Gene L. *Jude & 2 Peter*. Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008.
Neyrey, Jerome H. *2 Peter, Jude*. Anchor Bible. New York: Doubleday, 1993.

2 Peter in the Living Tradition

Bede the Venerable. *Commentary on the Seven Catholic Epistles*. Kalamazoo: Cistercian Publications, 1985.
Bray, Gerald. *James, 1-2 Peter, 1-3 John, Jude*. Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture. New Testament XI. Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2000.

Related Works

Ehrman, Bart D. *Forgery and Counterforgery: The Use of Literary Deceit in Early Christian Polemics*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013. Pp. 222-29.
Kümmel, W. G. *Introduction to the New Testament*. Trans. Howard Clark Kee. Nashville: Abingdon, 1975.
McDonald, Lee Martin. *The Biblical Canon*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2007.
Richards, E. Randolph. *The Secretary in the Letters of Paul*. Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament 2.42. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1991.

1, 2, 3 John

Introduction

1. 1 John is one of the most mysterious writings in the New Testament.
 - a. Authorship—disputed
(Son of Zebedee, Beloved Disciple, Presbyter, or Unknown Christian?)
 - b. Opponents—disputed
(Cerinthus, Docetists, Jewish Christian Schismatics, Johannine Community Members, or Unknown Heretics?)
 - c. Theology—disputed
(“Not with water only, but with the water and the blood” 1 John 5:6)
2. 2 and 3 John two of the most obscure writings in the New Testament.
 - a. Length—shortest books of the New Testament
 - b. Authorship—disputed (Who is “The Presbyter”?)
 - c. Situation—unclear
 - d. Inspiration—what role do these writings play in the NT Canon?
3. Question of Literary Unity and Common Authorship:
 - a. Gospel of John, 1, 2, 3 John: same author, John the Son of Zebedee
 - b. Gospel of John and 1 John (apostle John); 2 and 3 John (John the Presbyter)
 - c. Gospel of John (one author); 1, 2, 3 John (another author)
 - d. Gospel of John (multiple authors); 1, 2, 3 John (multiple authors)!
4. Theological Significance: especially of 1 John
 - a. Triple Concupiscence (1 John 2:15-17)
 - b. The Antichrist (1 John 2:18-25; 2 John 7)
 - c. Beatific Vision (1 John 3:2)
 - d. Divinization (1 John 3:9)
 - e. God is Love (1 John 4:8, 16)
 - f. The Trinity (1 John 5:8—‘Johannine Comma’)
 - g. Mortal and Venial Sin (1 John 5:16-17)
 - h. Demonology (1 John 5:19)

The Origins of 1, 2, 3 John

The Apostle John: A New Testament Profile

1. The Son of Zebedee (Matt 4:21)
 - a. Galilean Fisherman
 - b. Not a peasant
 - c. Called by Jesus to Discipleship
2. One of the Twelve Apostles
 - a. The Inner Three: Peter, James, John (Mark 5:37; 9:2; 14:33)
 - b. The “Sons of Thunder” (Mark 3:16-17)
 - c. Calling down Fire on the Samaritans (Luke 9:54)
 - d. The request for Glory (Mark 10:37)
 - e. Sent to Prepare the Passover Meal (Luke 22:14-22)

3. The Beloved Disciple (Fourth Gospel)
 - a. A Disciple of John the Baptist? (cf. John 1:40)
 - b. The Last Supper: reclining on Jesus' breast (John 13:23)
 - c. Known to the High Priest?
 - d. Receives Mary to be His Mother (John 19:35)
 - e. Witness to the Empty Tomb (John 20:1-9)
 - f. Witness to the Resurrection
 - g. Will He Die before the Parousia? (John 21:20-24)
4. John in the Early Church
 - a. Ministry with Peter in Jerusalem (Acts 3:1)
 - b. Ministry with Peter in Samaria (Acts 8:14)
 - c. One of the "Pillars" of the Jerusalem Church (Gal 2:9)

The Apostle John: according to the Early Church Fathers

1. Irenaeus of Lyons: Polycarp's Story about John and Cerinthus

*But Polycarp also was not only instructed by apostles, and conversed with many who had seen Christ, but was also, by apostles in Asia, appointed bishop of the Church in Smyrna, whom I also saw in my early youth, for he tarried [on earth] a very long time, and, when a very old man, gloriously and most nobly suffering martyrdom, departed this life, having always taught the things which he had learned from the apostles, and which the Church has handed down, and which alone are true. To these things all the Asiatic Churches testify, as do also those men who have succeeded Polycarp down to the present time,—a man who was of much greater weight, and a more steadfast witness of truth, than Valentinus, and Marcion, and the rest of the heretics... There are also those who heard from him that *John, the disciple of the Lord, going to bathe at Ephesus, and perceiving Cerinthus within, rushed out of the bath-house without bathing, exclaiming, "Let us fly, lest even the bath-house fall down, because Cerinthus, the enemy of the truth, is within."* (Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* 3.3.4; trans. ANF 1.416)*

2. Eusebius of Caesarea: John's apostolic ministry in Ephesus and Asia Minor:

Meanwhile the holy apostles and disciples of our Savior were dispersed throughout the world. Parthia, according to tradition, was allotted to Thomas as his field of labor, Scythia to Andrew, and *Asia to John, who, after he had lived some time there, died at Ephesus.* (Eusebius, *Church History* 3.1; trans. NPNF2, 1.132)

At that time *the apostle and evangelist John, the one whom Jesus loved, was still living in Asia, and governing the churches of that region, having returned after the death of Domitian from his exile on the island. And that he was still alive at that time may be established by the testimony of two witnesses. They should be trustworthy who have maintained the orthodoxy*

of the Church; and such indeed were Irenæus and Clement of Alexandria. The former in the second book of his work *Against Heresies*, writes as follows: “And all the elders that associated with John the disciple of the Lord in Asia bear witness that John delivered it to them. For he remained among them until the time of Trajan.” And in the third book of the same work he attests the same thing in the following words: “But the church in Ephesus also, which was founded by Paul, and where John remained until the time of Trajan, is a faithful witness of the apostolic tradition.” (Eusebius, *Church History*, 3.23.1-4; trans. NPNF2, 1.150)

3. Jerome of Bethlehem: first complete “biography” of the apostle John

*John, the apostle whom Jesus most loved, the son of Zebedee and brother of James, the apostle whom Herod, after our Lord's passion, beheaded, most recently of all the evangelists wrote a Gospel, at the request of the bishops of Asia, against Cerinthus and other heretics and especially against the then growing dogma of the Ebionites, who assert that Christ did not exist before Mary. On this account he was compelled to maintain His divine nativity... He wrote also one Epistle which begins as follows: “That which was from the beginning, that which we have heard, that which we have seen with our eyes and our hands handled concerning the word of life...” which is esteemed of by all men who are interested in the church or in learning. The other two of which the first is “The elder to the elect lady and her children...” [1 John] and the other “The elder unto Gaius the beloved whom I love in truth...” [2 John] are said to be the work of John the presbyter to the memory of whom another sepulchre is shown at Ephesus to the present day, though some think that there are two memorials of this same John the evangelist. We shall treat of this matter in its turn when we come to Papias his disciple. In the fourteenth year then after Nero Domitian having raised a second persecution he was banished to the island of Patmos, and wrote the Apocalypse, on which Justin Martyr and Irenæus afterwards wrote commentaries. But Domitian having been put to death and his acts, on account of his excessive cruelty, having been annulled by the senate, he returned to Ephesus under Pertinax and continuing there until the time of the Emperor Trajan, founded and built churches throughout all Asia, and, worn out by old age, died in the sixty-eighth year after our Lord's passion and was buried near the same city. (Jerome, *Lives of Illustrious Men* 9)*

Arguments against Apostolic Authorship of 1, 2, 3 John

1. Most Contemporary Scholars: reject apostolic authorship of 1-3 John

- a. Bart D. Ehrman (2013)—a “non-pseudepigraphic forgery” (p. 425)
 - b. Richard Bauckham (2006)—John, 1-3 John by eyewitness, but *not* the apostle
 - c. Note: John Painter (2002)—“no grounds for making a decision...”
“differences do not preclude common authorship” [p. 50-51])
 - d. R. Alan Culpepper (2000)—no common authorship of Gospel and 1 John
 - e. Rudolf Schnackenburg (1992)—author of 1 John redactor of Fourth Gospel
 - f. Martin Hengel (1989)—Gospel and epistles by “John the Presbyter”
 - g. Raymond E. Brown (1982)—different authors; epistles drew on the Gospel
2. Internal Evidence: Differences in thought between the Gospel and 1, 2, 3 John
- a. Missing Terminology: prominent words from the Gospel absent 1-3 John
(E.g., Scripture, glory, seek, judge, lord, law)
 - b. Different Terminology: some words in 1-3 John not contained in the Gospel
(E.g., Antichrist, hope, sacrifice, fellowship, anointing)
 - c. Pneumatology: Jesus, not the Spirit, is called “Paraclete”
(cf. 1 John 2:1 with John 14:16, 26; 15:26; 16:7)
 - d. Christology: 1 John assigns to God features the Gospel assigns to Jesus
(cf. 1 John 1:5; 4:21; 2 John 6 with John 8:12; 9:5; 13:34)
 - e. Death of Christ: “glorification/exaltation” in Gospel; “expiation” in 1-3 John
(cf. 1 John 4:10 with John 12:27-32)
 - f. Eschatology: *future* rather than realized eschatology
(cf. 1 John 2:28-3:3 with John 11:25-27)
 - g. Authority: rejection of “hierarchical” authority
(cf. 1 John 2:27 with John 21:15-19)
 - h. Parallels with Dead Sea Scrolls: “even closer in 1 John than in John”
(R. E. Brown 1997, 389)

Overall [these differences] suggest that the same person may not have written the Epistles and the Gospel. (Raymond E. Brown, 1997, 389)

When taken together, the various factors (style, thought, life setting, and grammatical obscurity) still favor the view that the Gospel and 1 John were composed by different authors. (R. Alan Culpepper 2000, 95)

3. Opponents: Parallels with Early Second Century Docetists in Smyrna and Tralles:
- a. Docetism: Rejected the idea that Jesus “Truly” came “in the flesh”
 - b. Claim he only “seemed” () to be what he was
(Ignatius, *Smyrnaens* 1.1-2, 2.1, 3.1-3, 4.2, 5.2, 7.1; *Trallians* 9.1-2)
 - c. Do not “confess” that Jesus “bore flesh”
(Ignatius, *Smyrnaens* 5.2; cf. 1 John 4:2)
 - d. Christ only “appeared (*dokein*) to suffer” on the Cross
(Ignatius, *Smyrnaens* 2.2, cf. 6.1; *Trallians*, 10.1; cf. 1 John 1:7; 2:2; 5:6)
4. External Evidence: Patristic Doubts about Authenticity of 2 and 3 John:

What are we to say of him who leaned on Jesus’ breast, namely, John, who left one Gospel, though confessing that he could make so many that

the world would not contain them? But he wrote also the Apocalypse, being commanded to be silent and not to write the voices of the seven thunders. But he also left an epistle of very few lines. *Suppose also a second and a third, since not all pronounce these to be genuine; but the two together do not amount to a hundred lines.* (Origen, *Commentary on the Gospel of John*, 5.3; trans. ANF, 9.346-47)

But of the writings of John, not only his Gospel, but also the former of his epistles, has been accepted without dispute both now and in ancient times. But *the other two are disputed.* (Eusebius, *Church History*, 3.24.17-18; NPNF2 1.154)

Arguments for Apostolic Authorship of 1, 2, 3 John

1. Minority of Contemporary Scholars: note—accept apostolic authorship of *the Gospel*
 - a. Robert W. Yarbrough (2008)
[b. Stephen S. Smalley (2008)—apostle John was ‘inspiration’ for writings]
 - c. Craig S. Keener (2003)
 - d. John A. T. Robinson (1976, 1985)
2. Internal Evidence:
 - a. Author explicitly *claims* to be an eyewitness to Jesus (1 John 1:1-3)
 - b. Early Titles of the Letters: attribute them to “John” (R. W. Yarbrough 2008)
 - c. *Superscriptios*: identify John as “the Apostle” (R. W. Yarbrough 2008, 12-13)
3. Internal Evidence: Similarities with the Gospel of John; far outweigh differences
 - a. Gospel of John and 1 John most similar books in NT! (Chart)

Even a brief effort to work through the chart with an English-language Bible should convince the reader that in the NT it is difficult to find two works more similar in expression than GJohn and I John. (Raymond E. Brown 1982, 21)

- b. Similarities between the Gospel of John, 1 John, and 2-3 John (Chart)
- d. Why forge such tiny letters as 2 and 3 John? (C. S. Keener 2003)
- e. “The Presbyter” can be explained by different character of 2-3 John
- f. Unique theme of the “antichrist” in 1-3 John (1 John 4:2-3; 2 John 7)

I think 2 John 7 is difficult to explain if not from the same author as 1 John 4:2-3. (Bart D. Ehrman 2013, 424)

Similarities between the Gospel of John and 1 John

(cf. R. E. Brown 1982, 757-59)

<i>Similarity</i>	<i>The Gospel of John</i>	<i>1 John</i>
Beginning, was, Word (<i>logos</i>) life, revealed/made flesh in the Father's (God's) Presence	John 1:1, 2, 4, 14	1 John 1:1-3; 4:2
We have seen and testify	John 3:11	1 John 1:2
Joy fulfilled	John 15:11; 16:24; 17:13	1 John 1:4
"Little children" (pl. <i>teknion</i>) used as an address	John 13:33	1 John 2:1, 12, 28; 3:7, 18; 4:4; 5:21
Jesus Christ is a Paraclete	John 14:16	1 John 2:1
Keeping (God's/Jesus') commandments	John 14:15, 21; 15:10	1 John 2:3, 4; 3:22, 24 5:3
"Abide/remain" (<i>menein</i>) in God/Christ	John 15:4, 6, 7	1 John 2:6, 27, 28; 3:6
The <i>Parousia</i> of Jesus	John 21:22	1 John 2:28
Begotten by/from (<i>ek</i>) God	John 1:13	1 John 2:29; 3:8; 5:1, 4, 18
Children (pl. <i>teknion</i>) of God	John 1:12; 11:52	1 John 3:1, 2, 10
Love one another	John 13:34; 15:12, 17	1 John 3:11,23; 4:7,11
The world hates you	John 7:7; 15:18	1 John 3:13
Spirit of truth	John 14:17; 15:26; 16:13	1 John 4:6
God's love in sending his only Son	John 3:16-17	1 John 4:9,10
Spirit testifies	John 15:26	1 John 5:6-8
Purpose of writing	John 20:31	1 John 5:13

Patristic Recognition of Similarities between Gospel of John and 1-3 John

[Quoting Dionysius of Alexandria, d. AD 265]: “I agree also that it [the book of Revelation] is the work of a holy and inspired man. *But I cannot readily admit that he was the apostle, the son of Zebedee, the brother of James, by whom the Gospel of John and the Catholic Epistle were written...* For the evangelist nowhere gives his name, or proclaims himself, either in the Gospel or Epistle.” Farther on he adds: “But John never speaks as if referring to himself, or as if referring to another person. But the author of the Apocalypse introduces himself at the very beginning... But the evangelist did not prefix his name even to the Catholic Epistle; but without introduction he begins with the mystery of the divine revelation itself: ‘That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes.’ (1 John 1:1)... *But neither in the reputed second or third epistle of John, though they are very short, does the name John appear;* but there is written the anonymous phrase, ‘the elder.’ [2 John 1; 3 John 1]... And from the ideas, and from the words and their arrangement, it may be reasonably conjectured that this one is different from that one.

For the Gospel and Epistle agree with each other and begin in the same manner. The one says, ‘In the beginning was the Word’ (John 1:1); the other, ‘That which was from the beginning.’ (1 John 1:1) The one: ‘And the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father’ (John 1:14); the other says the same things slightly altered: ‘Which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes; which we have looked upon and our hands have handled of the Word of life,—and the life was manifested.’ (1 John 1:1-2) For he introduces these things at the beginning, maintaining them, as is evident from what follows, in opposition to those who said that the Lord had not come in the flesh. Wherefore also he carefully adds, ‘And we have seen and bear witness, and declare unto you the eternal life which was with the Father and was manifested unto us. That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you also.’ (1 John 1:2, 3) He holds to this and does not digress from his subject, but discusses everything under the same heads and names; some of which we will briefly mention.

Any one who examines carefully will find the phrases, ‘the life,’ ‘the light,’ ‘turning from darkness,’ frequently occurring in both; also continually, ‘truth,’ ‘grace,’ ‘joy,’ ‘the flesh and blood of the Lord,’ ‘the judgment,’ ‘the forgiveness of sins,’ ‘the love of God toward us,’ the ‘commandment that we love one another,’ that we should ‘keep all the commandments’; the ‘conviction of the world, of the Devil, of Anti-Christ,’ the ‘promise of the Holy Spirit,’ the ‘adoption of God,’ the ‘faith continually required of us,’ ‘the Father and the Son,’ occur everywhere. In fact, it is plainly to be seen that one and the same character marks the Gospel and the Epistle throughout....

For they were written not only without error as regards the Greek language, but also with elegance in their expression, in their reasonings, and in their entire structure. They are far indeed from betraying any barbarism or solecism, or any vulgarism whatever. For the writer had, as it seems, both the requisites of discourse,—that is, the gift of knowledge and the gift of expression,—as the Lord had bestowed them both upon him. (Eusebius, *Church History*, 7.25.7-23 [excerpted]; trans. NPNF2 1.309-11)

Similarities between the Gospel of John, 1 John, and 2 John

(cf. Raymond E. Brown 1982, 755-56)

<i>Similarity</i>	<i>Gospel of John</i>	<i>1 John</i>	<i>2 John</i>
Know () the truth	John 8:32	1 John 2:21	2 John 1
Truth abides with us	John 14:16-17		2 John 2
Received a commandment from the Father	John 10:18		2 John 4
No new commandment		1 John 2:7	2 John 5
Commandment: Love one another	John 13:34; 15:12,17	1 John 3:23	2 John 5
Love: walk acc. to/keep his commandments		1 John 5:3	2 John 6
Commandment/Gospel from the beginning		1 John 3:11	2 John 6
Deceivers, Antichrist		1 John 2:18, 22, 26; 4:1, 3, 6	2 John 7
Confess Jesus Christ coming in the flesh	(cf. John 1:14)	1 John 4:2	2 John 7
Much more to write/tell you	John 16:12; 21:25		2 John 12
So that joy may be fulfilled	John 15:11; 17:13		2 John 12

<i>Similarities between the Gospel of John, 1 John, and 3 John</i> (cf. Raymond E. Brown 1982, 755-56)			
<i>Similarity</i>	<i>Gospel of John</i>	<i>1 John</i>	<i>3 John</i>
Walk/love in truth		1 John 1:7; 3:18	3 John 3
(People) who belong to God		1 John 3:10; 4:6	3 John 11
Know our/my testimony is true	John 8:14; 19:35; 21:24		3 John 12
Much more to write/tell you	John 16:12; 21:25		3 John 13

4. Thoroughly *Jewish* Character of 1, 2, 3 John (see J. A. T. Robinson 1962)
a. No reference to the Gentiles (); refers to the “heathen” (*ethnikoi*)

- in typical negative Jewish fashion and in contrast to “the church”
(3 John 6-7; cf. Matt 18:17)
 - b. Debate over whether Jesus is “the Messiah” (*ho Christos*)
(1 John 2:22; cf. 4:15; 5:5)
 - b. Heresy condemned in Jewish categories: “Antichrist”
(1 John 2:18; 4:3; 2 John 7)
 - c. Jewish categories: warnings against “False prophecy” and “idolatry”
(1 John 4:1; 5:21)
 - d. Jewish distinction between mortal and non-mortal sin
(1 John 5:16; OT ???)
 - e. Soteriology: Jesus’ death is an “expiation/atonement” (*hilasmos*) for sin
(1 John 2:1, 4:10; cf. Lev 25:9, Day of Atonement/Expiation)
 - f. Morality: The “spirit of truth” and the “spirit of error”
(1 John 4:6; cf. Dead Sea Scroll 1QS 3:13-4:26)
5. Evidence for Cerinthus and His Ideas as 1-3 John’s Opponents:
- a. Anyone who “denies the Son” is “antichrist” (1 John 2:22-23)
 - b. Anyone who confesses “Jesus Christ has come in the flesh” (1 John 4:2; 2 John 7) is of God
 - c. Jesus came “with the water and the blood” (1 John 5:6-8)

Cerinthus, again, a man who was educated in the wisdom of the Egyptians, taught that the world was not made by the primary God, but by a certain Power far separated from him, and at a distance from that Principality who is supreme over the universe, and ignorant of him who is above all. *He represented Jesus as having not been born of a virgin*, but as being the son of Joseph and Mary according to the ordinary course of human generation, while he nevertheless was more righteous, prudent, and wise than other men. *Moreover, after his baptism, Christ descended upon him in the form of a dove from the Supreme Ruler*, and that then he proclaimed the unknown Father, and performed miracles. *But at last Christ departed from Jesus*, and that then Jesus suffered and rose again, while Christ remained impassible, inasmuch as he was a spiritual being. (Irenaeus, *Against Heresies*, 1.26; trans. ANF, 1.351-52; cf. Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* 3.3.4; 3.11.1; Eusebius, *Church History*, 3.28.6; 4.14.6; Epiphanius, *Panarion*, 28)

6. External Evidence from the Early Church Fathers
- a. Irenaeus of Lyons: the apostle wrote the Gospel and 1 John:

As John, the disciple of the Lord, verifies, saying: “But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing ye might have eternal life in His name,”—foreseeing these blasphemous systems which divide the Lord, as far as lies in their power, saying that He was formed of two different substances. *For this reason also he has thus testified to us in his Epistle*: “Little children, it is the last time; and as ye have heard that Antichrist doth come, now have many

antichrists appeared; whereby we know that it is the last time. They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us..." (1 John 2:18-22) (Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* 3.16.5; see cf. 3.16.8; trans. ANF 1.442)

b. Origen of Alexandria: apostle wrote the Gospel, Revelation, and 1 John:

What are we to say of him who leaned on Jesus' breast, namely, John, who left one Gospel, though confessing that he could make so many that the world would not contain them? But he wrote also the Apocalypse, being commanded to be silent and not to write the voices of the seven thunders. *But he also left an epistle of very few lines.* (Origen, *Commentary on the Gospel of John*, 5.3; trans. ANF, 9.346-47)

c. Eusebius of Caesarea: authorship of 1 John totally undisputed:

But of the writings of John, not only his Gospel, but also the former of his epistles, has been accepted without dispute both now and in ancient times. *But the other two are disputed.* (Eusebius, *Church History*, 3.24.17-18; NPNF2 1.154)

7. Conclusion:

- a. Arguments against apostolic authorship of 1 John remarkably weak
- b. *Seem to be based primarily on the rejection of the apostolic authorship of the Gospel*, and not the letters of 1-3 John themselves.

Gospel of John (Forgery) → 1-3 John (Must also be Forgeries)

c. Overwhelming arguments for common authorship of Gospel and Letters

In our opinion, the burden of proof remains on those who challenge common authorship [of the Gospel of John and 1-3 John]... (Craig S. Keener 2003, 126)

Jewish-Christian "Gnosticism" in the First Century A.D.?

"[W]e must question the assumption that [Gnosticism] was a growth which in New Testament times flourished in Gentile rather than Jewish circles within the Church. All the pointers are in fact the other way. The Colossian heresy was evidently a form of Jewish syncretism, and indeed, in insisting on Sabbath observance and food laws (Col. 2.16-23), was more Jewish than Paul. Similarly, the Gnosticizing opponents attacked in 1 Timothy who professed 'what is falsely called knowledge' (1 Tim 6:20) are clearly Judaizers, who 'occupy themselves with myths and endless genealogies' and 'desire to be teachers of the law' (1 Tim. 1.3-7; cf. 4.1-5). Moreover, they are located precisely in Ephesus (1.3), where tradition places Cerinthus and the Johannine community. In Titus, too, the heretics are said to belong 'especially to the circumcision party' (Tit. 1.10) and to give heed to 'Jewish myths' (1.14), spending their time in 'stupid controversies,

genealogies, dissensions, and quarrels over the law' (3.9). The same is true of Jude and 2 II Peter, and of the Letters to the Seven Church (again in Asia Minor), where an attack is directed against those who 'say they are Jews but are not' (Rev. 2.9; 3.9). There is no reason therefore to suppose that the congregation addressed in the Johannine Epistles belong to anything but the Hellenistic Jewish community for which we argued the Gospel was written." (John A. T. Robinson, 1962, 137)

Literary Structure of 1 John

I. Prologue (1:1-10)

1. Eyewitness Testimony to the Word (1:1-4)
2. Walking in the Light (1:5-10)

II. Purpose of the Letter (2:1-17)

1. To Avoid Sin (2:1-6)
2. The Old and New Commandments (2:7-11)
3. Audience: Children, Fathers, Young Men (2:12-14)

III. Love of God and Life in Christ (2:18-5:12)

1. Love of the World vs. Love of God (2:15-17)
2. The Antichrist(s) (2:18-25)
3. The Anointing (2:26-27)
4. The *Parousia* of Christ (2:28-3:3)
5. Sin vs. Life in Christ (3:4-10)
6. Love One Another (3:11-24)
7. Spirit of Error vs. Spirit of Truth (4:1-6)
8. Love of God and Love of One Another (4:7-5:5)
9. The Spirit, the Water, and the Blood (5:6-12)

IV. Epilogue (5:13-21)

1. Confidence in Christ (5:13-15)
2. Mortal vs. Non-Mortal Sin (5:16-19)
3. The True God and Eternal Life (5:20-21)

Literary Structure of 2 John

I. Greeting (1-3)

1. Author: the Presbyter (1)
2. Audience: the Elect Lady (1-2)
3. Benediction (3)

II. Body of the Letter (4-11)

1. Joy at Children following the Truth (4)
2. No New Commandment: Love One Another (5-6)
3. Deceivers and Antichrists (7-11)

III. Conclusion (12-13)

1. Not by Paper, but Face to Face (12)
2. Final Greeting (13)

Literary Structure of 3 John

I. Greeting (1)

1. Author: The Presbyter
2. Audience: Beloved Gaius

II. Body of the Letter (2-12)

1. Well Wishes (2)
2. Commendation: Gaius following the Truth (3-4)
3. Commendation: Gaius is supporting the Brethren (5-8)
4. Warning against Diotrephes (9-10)
5. Imitate Good, not Evil (11)
6. Commendation of Demetrius

III. Conclusion (13-15)

1. Not by Paper, but Face to Face (13-14)
2. Final Greeting (15)

Overview of 1 John

I. Prologue (1 John 1:1-10)

1. First-Hand Testimony to the Word (1:1-4)
 - a. “That which was from the beginning” = Jesus the Word
 - b. First-Hand Testimony (1:1)
 - c. “Testimony” (*martyria*) to Jesus Christ and Eternal Life (1:2)
 - d. Goal: “fellowship” () with the Father and Son (1:3)
2. Walking in the Light (1:5-10)
 - a. God is “light,” in him “no darkness” at all (light = goodness; darkness = evil)
 - b. Walking in Light vs. Walking in Darkness (cf. Jewish *halakha*; Ps 1:1; 15:2)
 - c. All are sinners; ergo we must confess our sins (cf. CCC 827)
 - d. “Confess” () = Verbal (Ps 32:3-5; Rom 10:10; cf. CCC 2631)

II. Purpose of the Letter (2:1-17)

1. Purpose of the Letter (2:1-6)
 - a. “So that you may not sin” (2:1)
 - b. Jesus Christ: the “advocate” (*parakl*)
 - c. the “expiation” (*hilasmos*) for our sins (2:2; cf. 4:10; only occurs here in NT) (cf. Num 5:8; Ezek 44:27; 2 Macc 3:33)
 - c. Knowing Christ = keeping his commandments
 - d. Abiding in Christ = “walking” as he “walked” (cf. Psalm 15)
2. The Old and New Commandments (2:7-11)
 - a. “No new commandment”? already given by Jesus (John 13:34)
 - b. “Which you have heard”: from the Gospel itself? (cf. John 13:34)
3. Audience: Children, Fathers, Young Men (2:12-14)
 - a. Age Groups or three levels of Spiritual Maturity? (cf. 1 Cor 3:1; Heb 5:12-14)
 - b. Little Children: sins are forgiven, know the Father
 - c. Young Men: overcome the evil one, strong, word abides in you
 - d. Fathers: “you know () him who is from the beginning”

III. Love of God and Life in Christ (2:18-5:12)

1. Love of the World vs. Love of God (2:15-17)
 - a. “Do not love the World”? Compare Jesus (Matt 6:24; Luke 16:13)

- b. The Triple Concupiscence (2:16; cf. Gen 3:1-7; Matt 4:1-11)
 - 1. Lust of the Flesh: disordered desire for physical pleasure
 - 2. Lust of the Eyes: disordered desire for possessions
 - 3. Pride of Life: disordered self-love
- c. See Bede, *Commentary on 1 John*, 2:16 (pp. 173-74)

The Catechism on the “Triple Concupiscence” and Original Holiness

The “mastery” over the world that God offered man from the beginning was realized above all within man himself: *mastery of self*. The first man was unimpaired and ordered in his whole being because he was free from the triple concupiscence (cf. 1 John 2:16) that subjugates him to the pleasures of the senses, covetousness for earthly goods, and self-assertion, contrary to the dictates of reason. (CCC 377)

- 2. The Antichrist(s) (2:18-27)
 - a. “The Last hour” = the final age of salvation (1 Cor 10:11; 1 Pet 1:20; CCC 670)
 - b. Schismatics/Heretics: “they went out *from us*”
 - c. Antichrist = he who denies that “Jesus is the Messiah” (*ho christos*)
 - d. Gospel: “what you have heard from the beginning”
- 3. The Anointing (2:26-27)
 - a. You have received an “anointing” (*chrisma*)
 - b. “You have no need that anyone should teach you” (cf. Jer 31:31-33)
 - c. Does *not* mean rejection of apostolic authority! (cf. 1 John 1:3; 2:19; 3 John 9)

The Holy “Anointing” and the Sensus Fidei

All the faithful share in understanding and handing on revealed truth. They have received the anointing of the Holy Spirit (cf. 1 John 2:20, 27), who instructs them and guides them into all truth (cf. John 16:13).

“The whole body of the faithful ... cannot err in matters of belief. This characteristic is shown in the supernatural appreciation of faith (*sensus fidei*) on the part of the whole people, when, ‘from the bishops to the last of the faithful,’ they manifest a universal consent in matters of faith and morals” (cf. *Lumen Gentium* 12).

“By this appreciation of the faith, aroused and sustained by the Spirit of truth, the People of God, guided by the sacred teaching authority (*Magisterium*), ... receives ... the faith, once for all delivered to the saints.... The People unfailingly adheres to this faith, penetrates it more deeply with right judgment, and applies it more fully in daily life.”(CCC 91-93, quoting *Lumen Gentium* 12)

- 4. The *Parousia* of Christ and the Vision of God (1 John 2:28-3:3)
 - a. “Abide (*menein*) in him”: cf. Eucharistic Vine (John 6:53-58; 15:1-11)
 - b. So that we may have “confidence” at his *Parousia*
 - c. Now: “we are God’s children”

- d. Then: “It does not yet appear what we shall be”
- e. Divinization: “we shall be like him; for *we shall see him as he is*” (cf. Gen 1:27)
- f. “Purify yourself”: as preparation for Beatific vision (cf. Matt 5:8)

The Beatific Vision of God

Those who die in God’s grace and friendship and are perfectly purified live for ever with Christ. They are like God for ever, for they “see him as he is,” face to face (1 John 3:2; cf. 1 Cor 13:12; Rev 22:4):

By virtue of our apostolic authority, we define the following: According to the general disposition of God, the souls of all the saints ... and other faithful who died after receiving Christ’s holy Baptism (provided they were not in need of purification when they died, ... or, if they then did need or will need some purification, when they have been purified after death, ...) already before they take up their bodies again and before the general judgment—and this since the Ascension of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ into heaven—have been, are and will be in heaven, in the heavenly Kingdom and celestial paradise with Christ, joined to the company of the holy angels. *Since the Passion and death of our Lord Jesus Christ, these souls have seen and do see the divine essence with an intuitive vision, and even face to face, without the mediation of any creature.* (Benedict XII, *Benedictus Deus* [A.D. 1336])

This perfect life with the Most Holy Trinity—this communion of life and love with the Trinity, with the Virgin Mary, the angels and all the blessed—is called “heaven.” Heaven is the ultimate end and fulfillment of the deepest human longings, the state of supreme, definitive happiness. (CCC 1023-24)

- 5. Sin vs. Life in Christ (1 John 3:4-10)
 - a. Sin → Lawlessness
 - b. Sinlessness of Christ: “In him there is no sin”
 - c. “No one who abides in him sins” (3:6)
 - d. Those who abide in him “are righteous *as he is righteous*” (3:7)
(*contra* Protestant doctrine of “imputed righteousness”)
 - e. Sin is “of the devil”
 - e. “No one born of God commits sin” (3:9)
 - f. “God’s nature (*sperma*) abides in him”
 - g. Children of God vs. Children of the devil (3:10)

“No one who abides in him sins”? (1 John 3:6)

1-3 John are filled with spiritual paradoxes. On the one hand, John begins the letter by affirming that we are all sinners: “If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us” (1 John 1:18). On the other hand, John then turns around and says that “No one who abides in him sins” (1 John 3:6) and “No one born of God commits sins” (1 John 3:9). How can we reconcile these apparently contradictory statements?

The answer seems to lie by putting these statements in context and by making a critical distinction between *mortal* and *venial* sin. Later on in the letter, John makes the distinction between “mortal sin” or “deadly sin” (*hamartia pros thanatos*) and “sin that is not mortal” (*hamartia ou pros thanatos*) (1 John 5:16-17). If we read John’s earlier words in light of this distinction between two kinds of sin, we can make sense of his words: in this life, no one is completely free of all venial sin; we are all in need of confession (cf. 1 John 1:18-19). However, through God’s grace, we *can* avoid mortal sin; indeed, we must, if we are to reflect the truth of our baptism (having been “born of him”) and to “abide in him” (1 John 3:6, 8). In this way, we could interpret John’s words to mean: “No one who abides in him sins (mortally).”

6. Love One Another (1 John 3:11-24)
 - a. Message: “Love one another” (John 15:12)
 - b. Hatred: on par with homicide (cf. Cain, Gen 4:12)
 - c. “Do not wonder/be amazed that the World hates you” (3:13)
(cf. John 15:18-19; 16:1-2)
 - d. Christian love is sacrificial
 - e. Neglect for the Poor: God’s love does not “abide” in him (3:17; cf. James 2)
 - f. Praxis: “Love not in word or speech but in deed and in truth”
 - g. Confidence: keep his commandments, and you will “abide” in God (3:19-24)
7. Spirit of Error vs. Spirit of Truth (1 John 4:1-6)
 - a. “False Prophets” (cf. Matt 24:11; 1 Tim 4:1; 2 Pet 2:1)
 - b. The Test: confessing “that *Jesus Christ has come in the flesh*” (4:2)
 - c. Spirit of Antichrist: denial of the Incarnation
 - d. Of God vs. Of the World
 - e. “Spirit of Truth” vs. “Spirit of Error” (cf. Dead Sea Scrolls)

The Dead Sea Scrolls and the Jewishness of 1, 2, 3 John

From the God of knowledge stems all there is and all there shall be... He created man to rule the world and placed within him *two spirits* so that he would walk with them until the moment of his visitation: they are *the spirits of truth and of deceit*. From the spring of *light* stem the generations of *truth*, and from the source of *darkness* the generations of *deceit*. And in the hand of the Prince of Lights is dominion over all the sons of justice; they walk on paths of light. *And in the hand of the Angel of Darkness is total dominion over the sons of deceit; they walk on paths of darkness.* ...all the spirits of his lot cause *the sons of light* to fall. However, the God of Israel and the angel of his truth assist all *the sons of light*. He created the spirits of light and of darkness and on them established every deed,[o]n their [path]s every labour «and on their paths [eve]ry [labo]ur». *God loves one of them for all eternal [a]ges* and in all his deeds he takes pleasure for ever; the other one he detests, his counsel and all his paths he hates forever.

These are their paths in the world: to enlighten the heart of man, straighten out in front of him all the paths of true justice, establish in his heart respect for the precepts of God; it is a spirit of meekness, of patience, generous compassion, eternal goodness, intelligence, understanding, potent wisdom which trusts in all the deeds of God and depends on his abundant mercy; a spirit of knowledge in all the plans of action, of

enthusiasm for the decrees of justice, of holy plans with firm purpose, of generous compassion with all *the sons of truth*, of magnificent purity *which detests all unclean idols*, of careful behavior in wisdom concerning everything, of concealment concerning the truth of the mysteries of knowledge. These are the foundations of the spirit of *the sons of truth* (in) *the world*. And the reward of all those who walk in it will be healing, plentiful peace in a long life, fruitful offspring with all everlasting blessings, eternal enjoyment with endless life, and a crown of *glory* with majestic raiment in *eternal light*.

However, to *the spirit of deceit* belong greed, sluggishness in the service of justice, wickedness, falsehood, pride, haughtiness of heart, dishonesty, trickery, cruelty, much insincerity, impatience, much foolishness, impudent enthusiasm for appalling acts performed in a lustful passion, filthy paths in the service of impurity, blasphemous tongue, blindness of eyes, hardness of hearing, stiffness of neck, hardness of heart in order to walk in all *the paths of darkness* and evil cunning... In these (lies) the history of all men; in their (two) divisions all their armies have a share for their generations; in their paths they walk; every deed they do (falls) into their divisions, dependent on what might be the birthright of man, great or small, for all eternal times. For God has sorted them into equal parts until *the last time*... (*1QRule of the Community* [1QS] 3:13-4:17; trans. G. Martinez and E. J. Tigchelaar)

8. Love of God and Love of One Another (4:7-5:5)

a. "Love One Another" (cf. John 15:12)

b. Theologia: "God is love" (Gk *ho theos agape estin*; Lat *Deus Caritas Est*)
(1 John 4:8, 16)

c. Oikonomia: "God sent his only Son"

d. "Expiation" (*hilasmos*) for our sins: expiatory sacrifice (Num 5:8; Ezek 44:27)

e. "No man has ever seen God" (1 John 4:12; cf. John 1:14; 14:8-9)

f. "His love is perfected in us" (4:12, 17 *contra* "Imputed Righteousness")

g. Confession: "Jesus is the Son of God" (4:15)

h. Confidence: "No fear in love; perfect love casts out fear" (1 John 4:18)

i. Love of God (Unseen) *requires* Love of Neighbor (Seen) (4:20)

j. Children of God: believe in Jesus and "overcome the world"

9. The Spirit, the Water, and the Blood (5:6-12)

a. Jesus: came "by water" (Baptism) and "blood" (the Cross)

b. Three Witnesses: (1) the Spirit, (2) the water, (3) the blood (cf. John 19:28-35)

c. The Testimony of God (5:8-12)

The "Johannine Comma" (1 John 5:7)

Older English translations of the Bible (such as the Douay-Rheims and the King James Version) contain a verse that is not found in contemporary Bibles. This portion is traditionally known as the "Johannine Comma." It reads as follows (in italics):

7 And there are Three who give testimony in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost. And these three are one. 8 And there are three that give testimony on earth: the spirit and the water and the blood. And these three are one. (1 John 5:7-8)

Why is this verse missing from contemporary Bibles, such as the Revised Standard Version, New American Bible, and the New Vulgate? There are several reasons, that are largely the result of contemporary *textual criticism* (see R. E. Brown, 1982, 775-788)

1. *Missing from all Greek Manuscripts before 1500 A.D.*: The Johannine Comma is only present in 8 out of some 5000 extant Greek manuscripts we possess. None of these can be dated before 1400 A.D.

2. *Never Quoted by Greek-Speaking Church Fathers before 1000 A.D.*: Although the shorter Greek text of 1 John 5 is quoted by Clement of Alexandria, there is no mention of the comma despite the fierce trinitarian debates taking place in the fourth, fifth, and subsequent centuries.

3. *Missing from all Pre-1500 Non Latin Translations of the Greek New Testament*: before 1500 AD, the Comma is missing from the Syria, Coptic, Armenian, Ethiopic, Arabic, and Slavonic translations of the New Testament. This is virtually impossible to explain if it were part of the original Greek of 1 John.

4. *Missing from the Old Latin (before 600AD) and the Vulgate (before 750 AD)*: The Comma does appear in OL and Vg. translations, but it is missing from the earliest copies we possess, and its presence in later copies is still uneven.

5. *First Explicit Appearance is in the Liber apologeticus of Priscillian (d. AD 385)*: Although there are statements in some early Church Fathers that sound similar to the Johannine Comma (e.g., Tertullian *Against Praxeas* 25:1; Cyprian, *On the Unity of the Catholic Church* 6; Augustine, *City of God* 5.11), it is never explicitly quoted in Jerome or major Latin theologians who wrote extensively on the Trinity, such as Hilary of Poitiers, Ambrose of Milan, Leo the Great and Gregory the Great (4th-5th centuries AD).

6. *1927 Declaration of the Holy Office*: Although in 1897 the Holy Office had prohibited Catholics to deny the authenticity of the Johannine Comma, this prohibition was later lifted:

Denzinger 3681-82: To the question: "*Whether it can safely be denied, or at least called into doubt that the text of St. John in the first epistle, chapter 5, verse 7, is authentic, which reads as follows: 'And there are three that give testimony in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost. And these three are one?'*"—the response was given on January 13, 1897: In the negative.

At this response there arose on June 2, 1927, the following declaration, at first given privately by the same Sacred Congregation and afterwards repeated many times, which was made a part of public law in EB n. 121 by authority of the Holy Office itself:

"This decree was passed to check the audacity of private teachers who attributed to themselves the right either of rejecting entirely the authenticity of the Johannine comma,

or at least of calling it into question by their own final judgment. But it was not meant at all to prevent Catholic writers from investigating the subject more fully and, after weighing the arguments accurately on both sides, with that moderation and temperance which the gravity of the subject requires, from inclining toward an opinion in opposition to its authenticity, provided they professed that they were ready to abide by the judgment of the Church, to which the duty was delegated by Jesus Christ not only of interpreting Holy Scripture but also of guarding it faithfully.” (Heinrich Denzinger, *Sources of Catholic Dogma*, pp. 569-70)

7. *Absence of the Johannine Comma from the New Vulgate*: In the end, the Johannine comma was not included in the text of the *Nova Vulgata*, published and approved by Pope John Paul II in 1979.

IV. Epilogue (5:13-21)

1. Confidence in Christ (1 John 5:13-15)
 - a. “Knowing” you have eternal life = “confidence” (cf. 1 John 3:21)
(*contra* Protestant doctrine of “Once saved, always saved”)
 - b. Answered Prayer: “if we ask anything *according to his will* he hears us”
(cf. John 14:13-14; Luke 11:9-13; James 4:3; CCC 2735-37)
2. Mortal vs. Non-Mortal Sin (5:16-19)
 - a. Venial Sin: “Sin that does not lead to death” (*hamartia ou pros thanatos*)
 - b. Mortal Sin: “Sin that leads to death” (*hamartia ou pros thanatos*)
 - c. Non-Mortal Sin: pray for that
 - d. Mortal Sin: “I do not say that one is to pray for that”?
(cf. 1 John 5:11; Deut 3:26; Jer 14:11)
 - e. “Anyone Born of God does not sin (mortally)”
 - f. The Whole World: “In the power of the evil one” (1 John 2:19)
- 3 The True God and Eternal Life (5:20-21)
 - a. Goal: “to know him who is true”
 - b. Final Exhortation: “Keep yourselves from idols”

Mortal Sin vs. Non-Mortal Sin in 1 John 5:18-19

The Catechism on Mortal vs. Venial Sin

Sins are rightly evaluated according to their gravity. *The distinction between mortal and venial sin, already evident in Scripture* [cf. 1 John 5:16-17], became part of the tradition of the Church. It is corroborated by human experience.

Mortal sin destroys charity in the heart of man by a grave violation of God’s law; it turns man away from God, who is his ultimate end and his beatitude, by preferring an inferior good to him. *Venial sin* allows charity to subsist, even though it offends and wounds it. (CCC 1854-55)

Venerable Bede and the “Leprosy” of Mortal Sins

“Therefore, confess your sins to one another and pray for each other, that you may be saved.” (James 5:16) However, in this statement, there ought to be this distinction, that we confess our daily and minor sins to one another as peers and believe that we are saved by their daily prayer; in turn, according to the law, let us make known the uncleanness of more serious leprosy to the priest and take care to be purified in the manner and for the length of time his judgment has decreed. (Bede, *Commentary on the Seven Catholic Epistles* on James 5:16-17; trans. D. Hurst 1985, 62)

Overview of 2 John

I. Greeting (1-3)

1. Author: the Presbyter (1)
 - a. “The Elder” (*ho presbyteros*)
 - b. Leader: apostle (1 Pet 5:1) or leader in local church (Acts 14:23)
2. Audience: the Elect Lady (1-2)
 - a. An individual (Electa? Kyria?) or a local Church? (cf. v. 13)
 - b. Church: feminine and maternal (cf. Eph 5:23; CCC 2040)
3. Benediction (3)

II. Body of the Letter (4-11)

1. Joy at Children following the Truth (4)
2. No New Commandment: Love One Another (5-6)
 - a. Previous Catechesis (cf. 1 John 3:11)
 - b. The Teaching of Christ (John 13:34)
 - c. Love: an act of the will; obedience (John 14:31)
 - d. Sacrificial: unto death (John 15:13)
3. Deceivers and Antichrists (7-11)
 - a. Deniers of the Incarnation (cf. 1 John 4:1)
 - b. Antichrist: anyone who denies the Father and the Son (cf. 1 John 2:22; CCC 675)
 - c. House Churches: “do not receive him into the house” (cf. Acts 2:46; 1 Cor 16:19)

III. Conclusion (12-13)

1. Not by Paper, but Face to Face (12)
2. Final Greeting (13)

Overview of 3 John

I. Greeting (1)

1. Author: The Presbyter
2. Audience: Beloved Gaius
 - a. Gaius from Macedonia (Acts 19:29)
 - b. Gaius from Derbe (Acts 20:4)
 - c. Gaius of Corinth (1 Cor 1:14)

II. Body of the Letter (2-12)

1. Well Wishes (2)
2. Commendation: Gaius following the Truth (3-4)
3. Commendation: Gaius is supporting the Brethren (5-8)
 - a. Service to Christian brothers, “especially strangers”
 - b. “Co-workers in the Truth”
(cf. Joseph Ratzinger, Episcopal Motto, Latin *cooperatores veritatis*)
4. Warning against Diotrephes (9-10)
 - a. Insubordinate to John
 - b. Inhospitable to traveling Christian evangelists
 - c. Intolerant: causing division among his followers
 - d. Spiritual Pride: desire to be “first”
5. Imitate Good, not Evil (11)
 - a. “Do not imitate (*mimemai*) evil but imitate good”
 - b. He who does evil: “has not seen God” (seeing → imitation)
6. Commendation of Demetrius
 - a. Letter Carrier? (cf. Acts 18:27; Rom 16:1-2; 2 Cor 3:1)
 - b. Welcome Demetrius

III. Conclusion (13-15)

1. Not by Paper, but Face to Face (13-14)
2. Final Greeting (15)

1-3 John in the Contemporary Lectionary

1 John			
Christmas Time, Octave of the Nativity of the Lord			
Week	Day	First Reading	Topic
Dec 27	3 rd Day in Octave	1 John 1:1-4	What We Have Seen, Heard, and Touched (Feast of St. John, Apostle and Evangelist)
Dec 28	4 th Day in Octave	1 John 1:5-2:2	Sin, Confession, and Jesus Christ the Paraclete (Feast of the Holy Innocents, Martyrs)
Dec 29	5 th Day in Octave	1 John 2:3-11	No New Commandment: Love One Another
Dec 30	6 th Day in Octave	1 John 2:12-17	Three Ages; The Triple Concupiscence
Dec 31	7 th Day in Octave	1 John 2:18-21	The Last Hour, the Antichrist, and the Anointing

1 John		
Sundays in Easter, Year B		
Sunday	Second Reading	Topic
3 rd Week of Easter	1 John 2:1-5	Jesus Christ is the Expiation for our Sins and those of the Whole World
4 th Week of Easter	1 John 3:1-2	We Are God's Children; We Shall See Him as He Is
5 th Week of Easter	1 John 3:18-24	His Commandment: Believe in Him and Love One Another
6 th Week of Easter	1 John 4:7-10	God Is Love

2-3 John			
Weekdays in Ordinary Time, First Reading, Year II			
Week	Day	First Reading	Description
32	Fr	2 John 4-9	Love one Another; Anyone who denies the Incarnation is a Deceiver and the Antichrist
32	Sat	3 John 5-8	Hospitality and "Co-Workers in the Truth"

Further Reading on 1, 2, 3 John

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The Epistle of Jude

Introduction

1. The “Most Neglected Book in the New Testament” (D. J. Rowston 1975).
2. Unfortunate Attribution: “Jude” is English adaptation of “Judas” (Greek *Ioudas*)!
 - a. “Judas (*Ioudas*) Iscariot” (Mark 10:4; Luke 6:16)
 - b. “Judas, *not* Iscariot” (John 14:22)
3. “Jude/Judas”: a *very* popular Jewish name:
 - a. “Judas called Barsabbas” (Acts 15:22, 27, 32)
 - b. “Judas the Galilean” (Acts 5:37)
 - c. “Judas” the owner of a house (Acts 9:11)
4. Liturgical Neglect of Jude:
 - a. Only Read Once (!) in the Contemporary Roman Lectionary
5. Catholic Tradition:
 - a. Identifies epistle with St. Jude the Apostle
 - b. October 28th: feast of Saints Simon and Jude, Apostles (cf. Luke 6:12-16)
 - c. St. Jude: patron of lost causes

The Origins of Jude

The Identification of Jude

1. To Whom is the Epistle of Jude Attributed? (see Jude 1)
 - a. The Apostle Jude? “Jude [the son] of James” (Luke 6:16; Acts 1:13)
 - b. Jude the “brother” of Jesus? (Matt 13:55; Mark 6:3)
2. Ambiguity of “Jude of James” (Luke 6:16; Acts 1:13)
 - a. Greek: literally “Jude of James” () (Luke 6:16; Acts 1:13)
 - b. Older English Bibles: “Jude the *brother* of James” (Douay-Rheims; KJV!)
 - c. Newer English Bibles: “Jude the *son* of James” (RSV, NIV, NAB)
 - d. Considered One Person until 1821 (see R. Bauckham 1990 172)
3. The Apostle Jude:
 - a. “Jude” is only explicitly mentioned in one Synoptic List (Luke 6:16)
 - b. Jude is correlated with Thaddaeus (cf. Matt 10:1-4; Mark 3:16-19)
 - c. Thaddaeus: Aramaic name, meaning “heart/courageous heart” (*Thaddai*)
 - d. “Judas of James”: one of the Twelve (Acts 1:13)
3. Jude the Brother of Jesus (Matt 13:55; Mark 6:3)
 - a. James
 - b. Joseph
 - c. Judas (*Ioudas*)
 - d. Simon (Simeon)

Who is the Apostle "Jude"?

Gospel of Matthew

1. Simon, called Peter
2. Andrew his brother
3. James the son of Zebedee
4. John his brother
5. Philip
6. Bartholomew
7. Thomas
8. Matthew the tax collector
9. James the son of Alphaeus
10. Thaddaeus
11. Simon the Cananaean
12. Judas Iscariot, who betrayed him

(Matthew 10:1-4)

Gospel of Mark

1. Simon surnamed Peter
2. Andrew
3. James the son of Zebedee
4. John brother of James
5. Philip
6. Bartholomew
7. Thomas
8. Matthew
9. James the son of Alphaeus
10. Thaddaeus
11. Simon the Cananaean
12. Judas Iscariot, who betrayed him

(cf. Mark 3:16-19)

Gospel of Luke

1. Simon named Peter
2. Andrew his brother
3. James
4. John
5. Philip
6. Bartholomew
7. Thomas
8. Matthew
9. James the son of Alphaeus
10. *Judas of James*
11. Simon called the Zealot
12. Judas Iscariot, who became a traitor

(cf. Luke 6:12-16)

Gospel of John

Judas (not Iscariot) said to him, "Lord, how is it that you will manifest yourself to us, and not to the world?" Jesus answered him, "If a man loves me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him." (John 14:22-23)

4. Contemporary Scholars: more likely candidate is Jude the brother of Jesus
 - a. Only Jude with a brother named "James" in the NT (Matt 13:55; Mark 6:3)
 - b. James the brother of Jesus; well-known in early Church (see James 1:1) (cf. Acts 12:17; 15:13; 21:18)
 - c. Explains the lack of identification of which James (cf. Jude 1)
5. Jude the Brother of Jesus: 3rd Bishop of Jerusalem?

Now concerning those bishops which have been ordained in our lifetime, we let you know that they are these:—James the bishop of Jerusalem, the brother of our Lord; upon whose death the second was Simeon the son of Cleopas; after whom the third was Judas the son of James. (Apostolic Constitutions 7.46; trans. ANF 7.477; cf. Epiphanius *Panarion* 66.20.1-2; Eusebius, *Church History* 4.5.3, lists the 3rd bishop of Jerusalem as "Justus")

6. Are the Apostle Jude/Thaddaeus and Jude the Brother of Jesus the Same Person?

Mary the mother of the Lord; *Mary the wife of Cleophas or Alphæus*, who was *the mother of James the bishop and apostle*, and of Simon *and Thaddeus*, and of one Joseph... (Fragments of Papias, 10.1-2; trans. ANF 1.155)

Arguments in Favor of a Pseudonymous Epistle

1. Most Modern Commentators:
 - a. Bart D. Ehrman (2013)
 - b. Daniel J. Harrington, S.J. (2003)
 - c. W. G. Kümmel (1975)
2. High quality of the Greek in the epistle of Jude:
 - a. Unlikely that an “Aramaic-speaking peasant from Nazareth” could write Greek (B. D. Ehrman 2013, 299)
 - b. Especially if Jude is a son of Joseph the carpenter (cf. Matt 13:55; Mark 6:3)
 - c. Wide, specialized, and even rare Greek vocabulary
 - d. Greek Style: allusions, catchwords, parallelism, etc.
 - e. Trilingual Literacy: Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek!

[W]e have an author who is not merely literate, able to read, apparently effortlessly—in three languages, but fully writing-literate in one of them (a second language for him, if he were a native of rural Palestine). How could this be true of Jesus’ brother, an Aramaic-speaking peasant from a small hamlet of Galilee, who no doubt like his father was a common laborer? (Bart D. Ehrman 2013, 300)

3. Internal Signs of Post-Apostolic Date:
 - a. “The Faith” = fixed body of orthodox doctrine (Jude 3)

The author [of Jude] speaks of “the faith” as the content of the body of knowledge that makes up the Christian religion, a usage found in the Pastorals but not in early Christian writings such as those of *Paul*... That this “faith” was “delivered once and for all to the saints” assumes *an event that transpired in the now distant past*. (Bart D. Ehrman 2013, 299 [emphasis added])

- b. “Predictions of the Apostles” also in the distant past (Jude 17-18)
- c. “Formulaic expressions about Jesus” (D. J. Harrington 2003, 183)
- d. Opponents: later form of Pauline Christianity, “alter grace” (Jude 4)

Something more specific about the enemies alleged antinomian behavior is suggested by v. 4: “they alter the grace of our God into licentiousness...” In other words, they take the teaching of *charis* too far, thinking that the Christian religion is all about grace, not about how one lives... In an earlier period, Paul himself, an advocate of *charis*, was accused of holding some such view: “Just as some claim that we say, ‘let us do evil so that good might come’” (Rom. 3:8). ...[This] charge makes even better sense against later forms of Paulinism, such as that represented in the book of Ephesians, a forgery that states quite explicitly that one is saved not by doing good deeds but solely by the grace (*charis*) of God: “For you have been saved by grace, through faith—and this is not from

yourselves, it is the gift of God, not from works, so that no one may boast: (Eph. 2:8-9). The author of Ephesians takes Paul's teaching on faith and grace a step beyond Paul, indicating that good behavior can have no bearing on "being saved." The opponents of Jude allegedly take the matter a step further still: antinomian activity demonstrates the full grace of God, which alone brings salvation... [I]t does give one pause that Paul himself was falsely accused of something similar already decades earlier. In any event, the charge against what appears to be a (post-)Pauline position can help explain why the author claims to be Jude, the brother of James. ...[T]his author is uniting with the epistle of James in opposing a view of grace that renders the moral life of the Christian immaterial. ...It is this opposition to Paul... that explains, then, the choice of the pseudonym "Jude." (Bart E. Erhman 2013, 302-303, 305).

4. External Evidence: patristic doubts about canonicity of the letter

[The letter of James] is disputed; at least, not many of the ancients have mentioned it, *as is the case likewise with the epistle that bears the name of Jude*, which is also one of the seven so-called catholic epistles. Nevertheless we know that these also, with the rest, have been read publicly in very many churches. (Eusebius, *Church History*, 2.23.25; trans. NPNF2, 1.128).

Jude the brother of James, left a short epistle which is reckoned among the seven catholic epistles, and because in it he quotes from the apocryphal book of Enoch *it is rejected by many* (Latin *a plerisque reicitur*). Nevertheless by age and use it has gained authority and is reckoned among the Holy Scriptures (Jerome, *Lives of Illustrious Men* 4; trans. NPNF2, 3.362).

Absence of Jude from the Syriac *Peshitta* (L. M. McDonald 2007, 451)

Arguments in Favor of Authorship by Jude the Brother of Jesus

1. Minority of Scholars:
 - a. Gene L. Green (2008)
 - b. R. Bauckham (1983, 1990)
 - c. John A. T. Robinson (1976)
2. Explicit attribution to “Jude the brother of James” (Jude 1)
 - a. Why forge such a short letter?
 - b. Why attribute it to such an obscure figure?
 - c. Why not identify as “Jude the brother of *the Lord*”?
3. High Quality of the Greek:
 - a. Jude was *not* the Son of Joseph the Carpenter
 - b. Rather, he was brother of James and thus son of Cleopas
 - c. If James could write good Greek, then why not his brother Jude?!
 - d. If James could use a *secretary*, then why couldn't his brother Jude?!
 - e. Evidence that James and Jude came from *royal family* of David

Eusebius on the Grandsons of “Jude the Brother of Jesus”

The same Domitian gave orders for the execution of those of the family of David and an ancient story goes that some heretics accused *the grandsons of Judas (who is said to have been the brother, according to the flesh, of the Saviour)* saying that they were of the family of David and related to the Christ himself. Hegesippus relates this exactly as follows. “Now there still survived of the family of the Lord grandsons of Judas, who was said to have been his brother according to the flesh, and they were delated as being of the family of David. These the officer brought to Domitian Caesar, for, like Herod, he was afraid of the coming of the Christ. He asked them if they were of the house of David and they admitted it. Then he asked them how much property they had, or how much money they controlled, and they said that all they possessed was nine thousand denarii between them, the half belonging to each, and they stated that they did not possess this in money but that it was the valuation of only thirty-nine plethra of ground on which they paid taxes and lived on it by their own work.” They then showed him their hands, adducing as testimony of their labor the hardness of their bodies, and the tough skin which had been embossed on their hands from their incessant work. They were asked concerning the Christ and his kingdom, its nature, origin, and time of appearance, and explained that it was neither of the world nor earthly, but heavenly and angelic, and it would be at the end of the world, when he would come in glory to judge the living and the dead and to reward every man according to his deeds. At this Domitian did not condemn them at all, but despised them as simple folk, released them, and decreed an end to the persecution against the church. But when they were released they were the leaders of the churches, both for their testimony and for their relation to the Lord, and remained alive in the peace which ensued until Trajan. Hegesippus tells this... (Eusebius, *Church History* 3.19.1-20.8; trans. LCL, 1.237-39)

- e. Plausibility of Jude acquiring good Greek:

[Jude] was probably still a very young man when he became a Christian missionary, and if his missionary travels took him among strongly Hellenized Jews there is no reason why he should not have deliberately improved his command of Greek to increase his effectiveness as a preacher. A wide vocabulary, which Jude has, is easier to acquire than a skill in literary style, where Jude's competence is less remarkable. (R. Bauckham 1983, 15)

4. Thoroughly Jewish-Christian Character of Jude:
 - a. Context: "apocalyptic Jewish Christianity" (R. Bauckham 1983, 10)
 - b. Assumes familiarity with Jewish Scripture (Jude 5-7, 11)
 - b. Assumes familiarity with *apocryphal* Jewish literature (Jude 9, 14-15)
(cf. *1 Enoch* and *Testament of Moses*)
 - c. Translates from the Hebrew Scriptures; does not rely on the LXX
(cf. R. Bauckham 1983, 7; cf. v. 12, Prov 25:14; v. 13, Isa 57:20)
5. Internal Signs of Apostolic Date:
 - a. "The Faith" simply means "the gospel itself," as in Paul (R. Bauckham 1983, 9)
(cf. Gal 1:6-9; Rom 16:17)
 - b. "Predictions of the apostles" = time of church founding (Jude 17)
(cf. 1 Cor 15:1-2; Gal 1:9; 1 Thess 4:1-2; cf. R. Bauckham 1983, 13)
 - c. "They said to you" = *living memory of the apostles!* (Jude 18)
(cf. R. Bauckham 1983, 13)
 - d. Opponents: Jewish Christian antinomians
(cf. Rom 3:8; 6:1, 15; Gal 5:13; 2 Pet 2:4-10)
 - e. Opponents: same as in 2 Peter; Jewish Christian Simonians (cf. 2 Pet 2:10-16)

The Apostle Jude, whom Matthew and Mark in their Gospels call Thaddaeus, writes against the same perverters of the faith whom both Peter and Paul condemn in their letters. (Venerable Bede, *Commentary on Jude*, 1)

- f. Problem of Antinomianism: apostolic Christianity
(cf. 1 Cor 5-6; 10:23; James 2:1-14; 2 Pet 2:4-10; Rev 2:14, 20-22, etc.)
- g. Striking parallels with the letter of James, his brother (B. Ehrman 2013, 298)

Aside from Jude-2 Peter and Colossians-Ephesians comparison, the verbal correspondence in James and Jude, considering the brevity of the letters, is unmatched anywhere else in the New Testament. (J. Daryl Charles, cited in B. D. Ehrman 2013, 298)

- h. No evidence of Jude's "Early Catholicism" (R. Bauckham 1983, 9)

If we want to, we can find 'early catholic traits' even in Jesus and Paul: the phenomena thus denotes are almost entirely a legacy of Judaism. (Martin Hengel, *Acts and the History of Earliest Christianity* [London: SCM, 1979], 122)

6. External Evidence from the Church Fathers

And depreciating the whole of what appeared to be His nearest kindred, they said, “Is not His mother called Mary? And His brethren, James and Joseph and Simon and Judas? And His sisters, are they not all with us?” (Matt 13:55-56)... And *Jude, who wrote a letter of few lines, it is true, but filled with the healthful words of heavenly grace*, said in the preface, “Jude, the servant of Jesus Christ and the brother of James.” (Origen, *Commentary on the Gospel of Matthew*, II.10.17; trans. ANF 9.424).

*Jude, who wrote the Catholic Epistle, the brother of the sons of Joseph, and very religious, whilst knowing the near relationship of the Lord, yet did not say that he himself was His brother. But what said he? “Jude, a servant of Jesus Christ,”—of Him as Lord; but “the brother of James.” For this is true; he was His brother, (the son)⁴ of Joseph. (Clement of Alexandria, *Comments on the Epistle of Jude*, Fragment 2; trans. ANF 2.573)*

I am aware that the Scripture of Enoch, which has assigned this order (of action) to angels, is not received by some, because it is not admitted into the Jewish canon either... By the *Jews* it may now seem to have been rejected for that (very) reason, just like all the other (portions) nearly which tell of Christ... To these considerations is added the fact *that Enoch possesses a testimony in the Apostle Jude*. (Tertullian, *On the Apparel of Women* 1.3.; trans. ANF 4.15-16)

[The letter of James] is disputed; at least, not many of the ancients have mentioned it, as is the case likewise with the epistle that bears the name of Jude, which is also one of the seven so-called catholic epistles. *Nevertheless we know that these also, with the rest, have been read publicly in very many churches*. (Eusebius, *Church History*, 2.23.25; trans. NPNF2, 1.128).

Jude the brother of James, left a short epistle which is reckoned among the seven catholic epistles, and because in it he quotes from the apocryphal book of Enoch it is rejected by many. Nevertheless by age and use it has gained authority and is reckoned among the Holy Scriptures. (Jerome, *Lives of Illustrious Men* 4; trans. NPNF2, 3.362).

7. External Evidence from Church Councils/Canon Lists:

- a. Muratorian Canon: “the epistle of Jude” used in “Catholic” church (68)
 - b. Athanasius: Festal Letter 39 (367 A.D.)
 - c. Council Rome: accepts Jude as canonical (382 A.D.)
 - d. Council of Hippo and Carthage: accepts Jude (393, 397 A.D.)
8. Rejection of Jude: based on quotation of *apocrypha*, not doubts about apostolicity

Literary Outline of Jude

1. “The letter of Jude is a real letter.” (R. Bauckham 1983, 3)
2. Structure of the Letter:
 - a. Condemnation of False Teachers (5-19) *not* the main point
 - b. “Main purpose in writing”: closing appeal (R. Bauckham 1983, 4)

I. Opening Address (1-2)

II. Occasion of the Letter (3-4)

III. Body of the Letter: Condemnation of False Teachers (5-19)

1. Examples from Jewish Scripture and Tradition (5-7)
2. Description of False Teachers (7-8)
3. More Examples from Jewish Scripture (8-11)
4. Analogies from Nature (12)
5. Warning from Ancient Prophecy (14-16)
6. Warnings of the Apostles (17-19)

IV. Conclusion (20-25)

1. Closing Appeal (20-23)
2. Closing Doxology (24-25)

Overview of the Contents of Jude

I. Opening Address (1-2)

1. “Jude” (*Ioudas*) (1)
 - a. “Servant” of Christ Jesus
 - b. “Brother of James” (cf. James 1:1; Acts 12:17; 15:13; 21:18)
2. Audience: “called,” “beloved,” “kept” (1)
3. Blessing: “mercy, peace, and love” (2)

II. Occasion of the Letter (3-4)

1. Eager to write about our “common salvation” (3)
2. Exhortation regarding the Faith (3)
 - a. Contend for “the faith”
 - b. “Once for all delivered to the saints”
 - c. Deposit of Faith (cf. Rom 6:17; 1 Tim 6:20)
3. Secret Infiltration of “Ungodly Persons”
 - a. Immorality: pervert “grace” into “licentiousness”
(cf. Rom 6:15; Gal 5:13; 1 Pet 2:16)
 - b. Heterodoxy: “deny our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ”
(cf. Tit 1:16; 1 John 2:22)

The Catechism on Jude and the “Deposit of Faith”

The Church, “the pillar and bulwark of the truth,” faithfully guards “*the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints*” (cf. 1 Tim 3:15; Jude 3). She guards the memory of Christ’s words; it is she who from generation to generation hands on the apostles’ confession of faith. (*Catechism of the Catholic Church* no. 171)

III. Body of the Letter: Condemnation of False Teachers (5-19)

1. Examples from Jewish Scripture and Tradition (5-7)
 - a. Wilderness Generation: destroyed after being saved (5)
(cf. Exod 12-13; Num 13-14)
 - b. Fallen Angels: kept in “eternal chains” (6)
(cf. Gen 6:1-4?; Rev 12:7-9)
 - c. Sodom and Gomorrah: punished with “eternal fire” (7)
(cf. Gen 19:1-29)

The Catechism on the “Fall” of the Angels

The Church teaches that Satan was at first a good angel, made by God: “The devil and the other demons were indeed created naturally good by God, but they became evil by their own doing” (cf. Lateran IV, 1215 A.D.) *Scripture speaks of a sin of these angels* (cf. 2 Pet 2:4). This “fall” consists in the free choice of these created spirits, who radically and irrevocably *rejected* God and his reign... It is the *irrevocable* character of their choice, and not a defect in the infinite divine mercy, that makes the angels’ sin unforgivable. “There is no repentance for the angels after their fall, just as there is no repentance for men after death.” (*Catechism of the Catholic Church* nos. 391-393)

2. False Teachers (7-8)
 - a. Immorality: “defile the flesh”
 - b. Insubordination: “reject authority”
 - c. Blasphemy: “revile the glorious ones”
3. More Examples from Jewish Scripture and Tradition (8-11):
 - a. Archangel Michael vs. the Devil: dispute over Moses body
(cf. extra-biblical lost ending to *The Assumption of Moses*)
 - b. False Teachers: “revile what they do not understand”
 - c. The Way of Cain: “walk” as he did (cf. Gen 4:1-6)
 - d. Balaam’s Error: act “for the sake of gain” (cf. Numbers 22-24)
 - e. Korah’s Rebellion: rejection of legitimate spiritual authority
(cf. Num 16:1-40)
 - j. False Teachers: blemishes on the “love feasts” (*agapais*)
(cf. 1 Cor 11:17-22)

The Lost Ending of the Assumption of Moses

Of the death of Moses. And Moses said to Jesus [=Joshua] the son of Nave, “Let us go up into the mountain.” And when they had gone up, Moses saw the land of promise, and he said to Jesus, “God down to the people and tell them that Moses is dead.” And Jesus [=Joshua] went down to the people, but Moses came to the end of his life. And Samuel tried to bring his body down to the people, so that they might make him a god. But Michael the chief captain by the command of God came to take him and remove him, and Samuel resisted him and they fought. So the chief captain was angry and rebuked him, saying, “May the Lord rebuke you, devil!” And so the adversary was defeated and took to flight, but the archangel Michael removed the body of Moses to the place where he was commanded by Christ our God, and no one saw the burial place of Moses. (Trans. R. Bauckham 1990, 250).

4. Analogies from Nature: false teachers are like (12)
 - a. Waterless Clouds: bring no rain; carried along by winds
 - b. Fruitless Trees: twice dead, uprooted
 - c. Wild Waves of the Sea: cast up “the foam of their own shame”
 - d. Wandering Stars: fall into the “nether gloom of darkness”
 - e. Scriptural Background (cf. Prov 25:4; Isa 57:20; Ezek 34:2)
5. One Warning from Prophecy (14-16)
 - a. Enoch: “in the seventh generation from Adam”
 - b. The Coming of the Lord: to Execute judgment (cf. *1 Enoch* 1)

The First Book of Enoch

The words of the blessing of Enoch, wherewith he blessed the elect and righteous, who will be living in the day of tribulation, when all the wicked and godless are to be removed. And he took up his parable and said: Enoch a righteous man, whose eyes were opened by God, saw the vision of the Holy One in the heavens, which the angels showed me, and from them I heard everything, and from them I understood as I saw, but not for this generation, but for a remote one which is for to come. Concerning the elect I said, and took up my parable concerning them:

“The Holy Great One will come forth from His dwelling, And the eternal God will tread upon the earth, (even) on Mount Sinai... And appear in the strength of His might from the heaven of heavens. And all shall be smitten with fear And the Watchers shall quake, And great fear and trembling shall seize them unto the ends of the earth. And the high mountains shall be shaken, And the high hills shall be made low, And shall melt like wax before the flame. And the earth shall be wholly rent in sunder, And all that is upon the earth shall perish, And there shall be a judgement upon all (men).

But with the righteous He will make peace. And will protect the elect, And mercy shall be upon them. And they shall all belong to God, And they shall be prospered, And they shall all be blessed. And He will help them all, And light shall appear unto them, And He will make peace with them'. *And behold! He cometh with ten thousands of His holy ones To execute judgement upon all, And to destroy all the ungodly: And to convict all flesh Of all the works of their ungodliness which they have ungodly committed, And of all the hard things which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him. (1 Enoch 1:1-9; trans. R. H. Charles)*

Augustine on Jude's Quotation of Apocryphal Books

Let us omit, then, the fables of those scriptures which are called apocryphal, because their obscure origin was unknown to the fathers from whom the authority of the true Scriptures has been transmitted to us by a most certain and well-ascertained succession. For though there is some truth in these apocryphal writings, yet they contain so many false statements, that they have no canonical authority. We cannot deny that Enoch, the seventh from Adam, left some divine writings, for this is asserted by the Apostle Jude in his canonical epistle. But it is not without reason that these writings have no place in that canon of Scripture which was preserved in the temple of the Hebrew people by the diligence of successive priests; for their antiquity brought them under suspicion, and it was impossible to ascertain whether these were his genuine writings, and they were not

brought forward as genuine by the persons who were found to have carefully preserved the canonical books by a successive transmission. So that the writings which are produced under his name, and which contain these fables about the giants, saying that their fathers were not men; are properly judged by prudent men to be not genuine; just as many writings are produced by heretics under the names both of other prophets, and more recently, under the names of the apostles, all of which, after careful examination, have been set apart from canonical authority under the title of Apocrypha. There is therefore no doubt that, according to the Hebrew and Christian canonical Scriptures, there were many giants before the deluge, and that these were citizens of the earthly society of men, and that the sons of God, who were according to the flesh the sons of Seth, sunk into this community when they forsook righteousness. (Augustine, *City of God*, 15.23.4; trans. NPNF1, 2.305)

- c. Description of the Opponents (16)
- 6. The Warnings of the Apostles (17-19)
 - a. “Predictions of the Apostles” (cf. Acts 20:29-30; 1 Tim 4:1-3; 2 Pet 3:3)
 - b. “In the last time there will be scoffers” (cf. 2 Pet 3:3)!
 - c. Set up “divisions”: literally “these are the dividers (*apodiorizontes*)”
 - d. Worldly People: “devoid of the Spirit”

Is Jude quoting 2 Peter?

Despite the fact that some scholars claim that “there is no convincing case of allusion to a written Christian source” in Jude (R. Bauckham 2013, 5), there is in fact a rather obvious allusion by Jude to 2 Peter’s prediction of the coming of “scoffers” who will follow their own “passions”.

Jude: But *you must remember*, beloved, *the predictions () of the apostles* of our Lord Jesus Christ; they said to you, “In the last time there will be scoffers (*empaiktai*), following their own ungodly passions (*epithumias*)” (Jude 17-18)

Peter: This is now the second letter that I have written to you, beloved, and in both of them I have aroused your sincere mind by way of reminder; that *you* should remember the predictions () of the holy prophets and the commandment of the Lord and Savior *through your apostles*. First of all you must understand this, that scoffers (*empaiktai*) will come in the last days with scoffing, following their own passions (*epithumias*) and saying, “Where is the promise of his coming?” (2 Peter 3:1-3)

This verse alone clearly suggests that Jude is writing to remind his audience about the earlier exhortations of the apostle Peter against the false teachings by which they are continuing to be threatened.

IV. Conclusion (20-25)

- 1. Closing Appeal (20-23)
 - a. Audience: “beloved”
 - b. Upbuilding: on your “most holy faith”

- c. Prayer: “Pray in the Holy Spirit”
 - d. Charity: “keep yourselves in the love of God”
 - e. Patience: “wait for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life”
 - f. Apologetics: “convince some who doubt”
 - g. Evangelism: “Save some, by snatching them from the fire”
 - h. Mercy: “Have mercy with fear”
 - i. No Concession to Sin: “hating even the garment spotted by the flesh”
(cf. Zech 3:2-5)
2. Closing Doxology (24-25; cf. Rom 16:25-27)

Jude in the Contemporary Lectionary

Jude			
Weekdays in Ordinary Time, First Reading, Year II			
Week	Day	First Reading	Description
8	Sat	Jude 17, 20b-25	Closing Exhortation to Remember the Words of the Apostles; Doxology

Further Reading on Jude

Commentaries and Studies on Jude

- Bauckham, Richard. *Jude-2 Peter*. Word Biblical Commentary 50. Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1983.
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- Harrington, Daniel J., S.J. *Jude and 2 Peter*. Sacra Pagina 15. Collegeville: Michael Glazier, 2003.
- Green, Gene L. *Jude & 2 Peter*. Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008.
- Neyrey, Jerome H. *2 Peter, Jude*. Anchor Bible. New York: Doubleday, 1993.
- Rowston, D. J. “Most Neglected Book in the New Testament.” *New Testament Studies* 21:554-63.

Jude in the Living Tradition

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