

## Exam Questions

# Chapter 1

## Essays

1. Compare and contrast the views of God, Jesus, and salvation held by two of the following groups: adoptionists, Marcionites, Gnostics.
2. Describe the process of the canonization of the New Testament. When might it have begun? When did it end? What factors were involved in choosing its books?
3. In what ways did the proto-orthodox Christians agree with adoptionists, Marcionites, and Gnostics?
4. RESOLVED: Early Christianity was essentially unified in belief. Pick a side of this resolution and argue for it using as many specific examples from the text as possible. Keep in mind that the most persuasive arguments anticipate (and answer) counterarguments.
5. A variety of Christian groups, some of which were subsequently labeled “heretical,” used the books of the New Testament. How did the process of canonization limit possible interpretations of these books and make them acceptable to orthodox Christians?

## True/False

- \*1. Revelation is an example of a Christian apocalypse.  
T      F
2. The book of Acts is attributed to Paul.  
T      F
3. The Nag Hammadi library features writings from the Marcionites.  
T      F
- \*4. The earliest surviving Christian literature is written in Hebrew.  
T      F
- \*5. According to some Gnostics, the Old Testament God was evil.  
T      F

## Multiple Choice

- \*1. Which early Christian group believed in two Gods: the just God of the Old Testament and the merciful God of Jesus?
- a) Gnostics
  - b) Proto-orthodox Christians
  - c) Jewish-Christian adoptionists
  - d) Marcionites
- \*2. What does the term “heresy” mean?
- a) Evil
  - b) To choose
  - c) To reject
  - d) To agree with
3. What is the name of a collection of second-century proto-orthodox writings?
- a) Nag Hammadi Library
  - b) New Testament
  - c) Pentateuch
  - d) Apostolic Fathers
- \*4. The term “canon” means:
- a) Orthodox
  - b) Heretical
  - c) Authoritative
  - d) Ruler
5. How many books are there in the New Testament?
- a) Twenty-five
  - b) Twenty-six
  - c) Twenty-seven
  - d) Twenty-eight
6. What Christian group lived in Palestine and taught that Christians should keep the Law?
- a) Jewish-Christian adoptionists
  - b) Gnostics
  - c) Marcionites
  - d) Proto-orthodox
7. According to the Jewish-Christian adoptionists, Jesus was:
- a) God
  - b) Moses
  - c) A man
  - d) A phantasm

8. According to Marcion, the Jewish Law:

- a) Was good
- b) Did not bring salvation
- c) Continued to be binding after Jesus' death
- d) Didn't exist

\*9. What does the term "gnosis" mean?

- a) Knowledge
- b) Salvation
- c) Savior
- d) Choice

\*10. Which of the following groups thought it was blasphemy to call Jesus God?

- a) Marcionites
- b) Gnostics
- c) Jewish-Christian adoptionists
- d) Proto-orthodox Christians

11. Gnostics believed which of the following brought salvation?

- a) Jesus' death
- b) Jesus' resurrection
- c) Knowledge
- d) Martyrdom

12. Jewish Christians thought which of the following was a heretic?

- a) Jesus
- b) Paul
- c) Matthew
- d) Peter

13. The Marcionites particularly liked which of the following apostles?

- a) Paul
- b) Peter
- c) James
- d) Mary

14. The Marcionites used a form of which Gospel?

- a) *Thomas*
- b) John
- c) Mark
- d) Luke

15. The Jewish-Christian adoptionists used a version of which of the following books?

- a) Romans
- b) Acts

- c) Revelation
- d) Matthew

\*16. The Marcionites believed Jesus came to save people from

- a) Sin
- b) The Jewish God
- c) Rome
- d) Paul

17. Which of the following thought Jesus' body was a phantasm?

- a) The Apostolic Fathers
- b) Marcionites
- c) Jewish-Christian adoptionists
- d) Nehemiah

18. Which of the following is not a designation for the Jewish canon?

- a) Old Testament
- b) Judaism
- c) Hebrew Bible
- d) Jewish Scriptures

19. Second-century Jewish Christians taught that every Jewish law had to be observed *except*:

- a) Circumcision
- b) Kosher food laws
- c) Observing the Sabbath
- d) Animal sacrifice

20. Jewish-Christian adoptionists believed that Jesus was "adopted" by God at his:

- a) Birth
- b) Death
- c) Trial
- d) Baptism

21. Some Gnostics believed that which of the following happened at Jesus' baptism?

- a) He was adopted.
- b) He illustrated that baptism brought salvation.
- c) The divine Christ entered Jesus' body.
- d) Nothing

\*22. The Nag Hammadi Library was written in what language?

- a) Coptic
- b) Hebrew
- c) Aramaic
- d) Greek

23. The word "gospel" means:

- a) Life
- b) Good news
- c) Divine writing
- d) Salvation

\*24. The word “epistle” means:

- a) Biography
- b) Letter
- c) Conversation
- d) Right choice

25. How many books in the New Testament claim to be written by Paul?

- a) Thirteen
- b) Ten
- c) Eight
- d) Five

\*26. At the end of what century did Christians begin to call Jesus’ words Scripture?

- a) The first century B.C.E.
- b) The first century C.E.
- c) The second century C.E.
- d) The fifth century C.E.

27. Who established the first canon?

- a) Marcion
- b) Gnostics
- c) Proto-orthodox Christians
- d) Paul

28. Which of the following was not a criterion for canonicity?

- a) Antiquity
- b) Apostolicity
- c) Orthodoxy
- d) Historical accuracy

\*29. In what year did Athanasius name the current twenty-seven books of the New Testament as authoritative?

- a) 150 C.E.
- b) 288 C.E.
- c) 367 C.E.
- d) 432 C.E.

30. This second-century figure established a canon consisting of some of Paul’s letters along with an edited version of the Gospel of Luke.

- a) Athanasius
- b) Valentinus

c) Clement of Alexandria

d) Marcion

## Chapter 2

### Essays

1. Some manuscripts of Luke report that when Mary and Joseph found Jesus in the Temple when he was twelve, Mary said, “Your father and I have been searching for you,” while others read, “We have been searching for you.” Which of these do you think represents the more original passage? Why?
2. Many scholars do not believe we can ever be certain that we possess the exact words of the New Testament authors. What arguments might they give to substantiate this claim?
3. Write a letter to a family member and explain to him or her the criteria used to determine the original text of the New Testament. How do these criteria help in this determination? What shortcomings do they have?
4. How are the books of our modern Bibles related to the original manuscripts? Explain how a book of the Bible was transmitted after the original document was written and what scholars and translators of the Bible have to consider when preparing a modern version.
5. Some manuscripts of Mark report that when a leper asked Jesus for healing, “Jesus became angry,” while others read, “Jesus was filled with compassion.” Which of these do you think represents the more original passage? Why?

### True/False

1. Verse divisions didn’t exist in the Bible until the 1500s.  
T \_\_\_\_\_ F \_\_\_\_\_
- \*2. There are more differences between the manuscripts of the New Testament than there are words in the New Testament.  
T \_\_\_\_\_ F \_\_\_\_\_
- \*3. We do not have the original copy of any New Testament book.  
T \_\_\_\_\_ F \_\_\_\_\_
4. Most of the differences between New Testament manuscripts were the result of intentional changes by scribes.  
T \_\_\_\_\_ F \_\_\_\_\_
- \*5. Earlier scribes who copied the New Testament were more precise than later ones.  
T \_\_\_\_\_ F \_\_\_\_\_



## Multiple Choice

1. Our earliest reasonably complete copy of the Gospel of John dates to around:
  - a) 50 C.E.
  - b) 90 C.E.
  - c) 200 C.E.
  - d) 300 C.E.
2. We currently possess about how many fragments and copies of New Testament texts?
  - a) Sixty thousand
  - b) One hundred
  - c) Six hundred
  - d) Six thousand
- \*3. Which of the following represents an intentional scribal error?
  - a) Changing the text to fit doctrine
  - b) Misspelling words
  - c) Repeating words, verses, or pages
  - d) Skipping words, verses, or pages
4. Our earliest surviving New Testament manuscript, P<sup>52</sup>, is
  - a) A reliable witness of the original text of Paul's letters
  - b) Datable to the 1<sup>st</sup> century C.E.
  - c) The size of a credit card
  - d) Evidence of adoptionist Christian theology
5. Which of the following is *not* a criterion used by scholars to determine the original text of the New Testament?
  - a) Geographical spread
  - b) Age of manuscripts
  - c) Difficulty of reading
  - d) Orthodox reading
6. Which of the following is *least* helpful in establishing the original text of the New Testament?
  - a) Geographical spread
  - b) Number of manuscripts
  - c) Age of manuscripts
  - d) Difficulty of reading
7. The story of Jesus and the woman taken in adultery (John 7:59–8:11) is:
  - a) An original part of the Gospel of John
  - b) An original part of the Gospel of Mark that was later inserted into the Gospel of John by the author of John
  - c) Not an original part of any Gospel
  - d) A pagan parable

8. In the story from Mark of the women who find Jesus' tomb empty and are instructed by a young man (or angel) to go tell Peter and the other disciples (Mark 16), the last twelve verses were:

- a) Added to the Gospel of Mark by a scribe
- b) An original part of the Gospel of Mathew that was later inserted into the Gospel of Mark by the author of Mark
- c) An original part of the Gospel of Mark
- d) A pagan parable

\*9. In the story of Jesus in the last minutes before his arrest in the Garden of Gethsemane (Luke 22:43–44), the account of his “sweating blood” while contemplating his imminent suffering is most likely:

- a) An original part of the Gospel of Luke
- b) An original part of the Gospel of Mark that was later inserted into the Gospel of Luke by the author of Luke
- c) Not an original part of any Gospel
- d) An insertion from a letter of Paul.

\*10. What is the style of writing called that leaves out punctuation, capitalization, paragraph divisions, sentence divisions, and spaces between words?

- a) *Scriptio ad absurdum*
- b) *Scriptio continua*
- c) *Grammatica elimination*
- d) *Grammatica ad absurdum*

11. Give a Biblical example of parablepsis occasioned by homoeoteleuton.

- a) “I do not ask that you keep them from the,” an omission of the next line that ended in the same six words, then a continuation of the text with “evil one”
- b) “lastnightatthedinnertableisawabundanceonthetable”
- c) “Let this cup before me,” with an insertion (“pass”) between “cup” and “me”
- d) The addition of the last twelve verses of Mark

12. When did scribes begin to make chapter-like divisions in books of the New Testament?

- a) The first century
- b) The nineteenth century
- c) The seventeenth century
- d) The fourth century

13. Who was the University of Paris lecturer who introduced the major divisions into the Latin Bible in the thirteenth century?

- a) Robert Stephanus
- b) Thucydides
- c) Steven Langton
- d) Valentinus

\*14. Who created the verse divisions that we have today?

- a) Robert Stephanus
- b) Thucydides
- c) Steven Langton
- d) Valentinus

\*15. What is the earliest surviving manuscript of the New Testament to date?

- a) The entirety of Revelation
- b) A fragment of the Gospel of Mark
- c) The last five chapters of 1 Peter
- d) A fragment of the Gospel of John

16. Which of the following is a criterion for establishing the original text of a writing?

- a) Establishing whether it was written by a proto-orthodox Christian or a heretic
- b) The age of the manuscripts
- c) Determining whether the original text was a forgery.
- d) Conformity with orthodox doctrines.

17. Criteria for establishing the original text of a writing do *not* include:

- a) Conformity with the norms of the culture in which it was written
- b) The distribution of the manuscripts
- c) The difficulty of the reading
- d) Conformity with the author's own language, style, and theology

\*18. New Testament manuscripts do *not*:

- a) Contain many mistakes
- b) Have many centuries separating the events written about and the events themselves
- c) Have any inaccuracies
- d) Contain exact word-for-word copies of the texts that were originally produced by ancient Christian authors

\*19. By what means have early Christian truth claims been handed down from one generation to the next?

- a) Orally
- b) Written texts
- c) Lifestyles
- d) All of the above

\*20. How many original copies of books of the New Testament do we have?

- a) Three fragments
- b) One entire book and one fragment of another
- c) None
- d) All of them

\*21. Most copies of New Testament manuscripts come from what time period?

- a) The Middle Ages

- b) The Age of Enlightenment
- c) The Golden Age
- d) The Bronze Age

22. Which event is found in some copies of the Gospel of Luke but not in others?

- a) Mary's song
- b) Jesus' ascension
- c) Peter's denial of Jesus
- d) Judas' kiss

23. Which saying of Jesus is found in some copies of the Gospel of Luke but not in others?

- a) "Father, forgive them, for they don't know what they are doing."
- b) "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you."
- c) "You will be called Peter."
- d) "I had to be in my Father's house."

24. Which doctrine is not explicitly found in the earliest manuscripts of the Bible but was inserted into it by some later scribes?

- a) Salvation by works
- b) Jesus' divinity
- c) The virgin birth
- d) The Trinity

\*25. What is the name of the academic discipline devoted to the study of ancient manuscripts to determine the most likely earliest readings?

- a) Historical criticism
- b) Redaction criticism
- c) Literary criticism
- d) Textual criticism

26. What is the approximate date of our earliest complete copy of the Gospel of Luke?

- a) 125 C.E.
- b) 175 C.E.
- c) 250 C.E.
- d) 350 C.E.

27. Which of the following represents the most common difference among Biblical manuscripts?

- a) Doctrinal changes
- b) Harmonizations
- c) Differences in spelling
- d) Parablepsis occasioned by homoeoteleuton

28. Which of the following might account for an accidental omission in a manuscript?

- a) Gnostic Christian doctrine
- b) Parablepsis occasioned by homoeoteleuton
- c) Amanuensis

d) Lectio difficilior

29. Which of the following indicates a reading is most likely earlier than other options?

- a) It is a more difficult reading.
- b) It occurs in the most manuscripts.
- c) It is found in more recent manuscripts.
- d) It is doctrinally orthodox.

30. The earliest copyists of the New Testament were:

- a) Trained scribes
- b) Monks
- c) Priests
- d) Untrained but literate

# **Instructor's Manual and Test Questions**

To accompany

## **The New Testament: A Historical Introduction to the Early Christian Writings**

Seventh Edition

by Bart D. Ehrman

Prepared by

Luke Drake

New York: Oxford University Press  
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## A Note to Instructors

This **Instructor's Manual** is designed to assist you in introducing the historical world of the New Testament to your students. Content summaries outline the major themes of each chapter, and Key Terms highlight new concepts. Pedagogical suggestions are provided for cultivating thoughtful class discussion, and Guides for Reading may help students think broadly and comparatively about new ideas they encounter. The second half of the Instructor's Manual contains an extensive selection of **Test Questions**, including multiple choice and essay questions for each chapter. Answer keys and brief sample responses to the essay questions are provided.

A **Companion Website** to accompany *The New Testament* is online at [www.oup.com/us/ehrman](http://www.oup.com/us/ehrman). The online Chapter Summaries, Glossary Terms, and Guides for Reading are organized to help students better comprehend the text. Additionally, online Self-Quizzes consist of a combination of multiple choice, true/false, and student guide questions selected from those provided at the end of this Instructor's Manual. Those that appear on the website are marked with asterisks.

This Instructor's Manual was originally prepared by L. Stephanie Cobb, **George and Sallie Ketchin Camp Professor of Bible** at the University of Richmond. Luke Drake, a doctoral candidate at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, revised the text for this new edition.

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# Media Resources

## Selected Websites:

### *New Testament*

New Testament Gateway: <http://www.ntgateway.com/>

Bible Odyssey (Society of Biblical Literature): <https://www.bibleodyssey.org/>

Mark Goodacre's *NT Pod* (New Testament and Christian origins): <http://podaacre.blogspot.com>

### *Historical Jesus*

PBS Frontline: <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/religion/>

### *Early Judaism*

Dead Sea Scrolls: <http://orion.mscc.huji.ac.il/>

Dead Sea Scrolls: <http://dss.collections.imj.org.il>

Dead Sea Scrolls: <http://www.deadseascrolls.org.il/home>

### *Greco-Roman Religions and Culture*

Phil Harland's *The Religions of the Ancient Mediterranean Podcast*:

<https://www.philipharland.com/Blog/category/podcasts/>

Associations in the Greco-Roman World: <http://philipharland.com/greco-roman-associations/>

Mystery cults in Apuleius' *Metamorphoses*: <http://www.gutenberg.org/etext/1666>

### *Early Christianity*

Ante-Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers: <http://www.ccel.org/fathers/>

## Selected Films:

*Apocalypse!* (PBS Frontline series)

*From Jesus to Christ* (PBS Frontline series)

*The Bible* (2013 History Channel series)

*From the Manger to the Cross*

*The Book of Life*

*Godspell*

*The Day Christ Died*

*The Gospel According to Matthew*

<i>The Greatest Story Ever Told</i>	<i>The Miracle Maker</i>
<i>Jesus</i> (John Krish and Peter Sykes, 1979)	<i>Monty Python's Life of Brian</i>
<i>Jesus</i> (Roger Young, 2000)	—
<i>Jesus Christ Superstar</i> (1973, 2001)	<i>The Nativity</i> (BBC series)
<i>Jésus Devant Pilate</i>	<i>The Nativity Story</i>
<i>Jesus: His Life</i> (2019 History Channel series)	<i>The Passion of the Christ</i>
<i>Jesus of Montreal</i>	<i>Son of Man</i>
<i>Jesus of Nazareth</i>	
<i>The King of Kings</i>	
<i>The Last Temptation of Christ</i>	

# The New Testament: A Historical Introduction

This textbook is unique because it approaches the New Testament from a historical vantage point rather than from a theological or literary perspective. In it, Bart Ehrman is primarily interested in the history of early Christianity and how the writings of the earliest Christians simultaneously reflected and shaped that history. He discusses the dates, authors, sources, and significance of the books of the New Testament as well as noncanonical Christian writings that are roughly contemporaneous.

Several chapters of the book are devoted to the historical Jesus, a topic often neglected in New Testament introductions. In addition, issues such as the life and missions of Paul, Christian relationships to Judaism and paganism, the rise of Christian anti-Judaism, and the role of women in the early church are discussed by placing the literature firmly in the social and political milieu from which it grew. Greco-Roman religions and Judaism, therefore, are presented as essential, not peripheral, to understanding early Christianity.

Another unique aspect of this introduction is its discussion of a variety of noncanonical Christian writings. The addition of these texts illustrates the range of theological, Christological, and soteriological beliefs in early Christianity. Understanding these doctrinal differences is essential to understanding the rise of Christian orthodoxy.

This introduction takes a comparative approach to Christian writings: rather than focusing on a single meta-narrative, Ehrman leads students through explorations of Gospels, epistles, and apocalypses to reveal their similarities and differences. This goal is accomplished through the application to the texts of a variety of interpretative methods (genre-critical, thematic, comparative, redactional, socio-historical, and contextual).

# Chapter 1:

## What Is the New Testament? The Early Christians and Their Literature

### Chapter Summary

#### The Diversity of Early Christianity

Early Christian writings reflect a range of beliefs about God, Jesus, humanity, and salvation. Since these differences are easier to identify in slightly later, more developed Christian texts, this book begins with an exploration of second-century beliefs in order to shed light on diversities found in earlier texts, even those in the New Testament.

Since Jesus was Jewish and, according to tradition, kept the Jewish Law, it is not surprising that one form of Christianity advocated the observance of Jewish traditions. Jewish-Christian adoptionists believed that Jesus was a man specially chosen and adopted by God at his baptism, empowered to perform miracles, and commissioned to teach God's word. At the end of Jesus' ministry, he continued to follow the will of God, dying willingly as an atoning sacrifice. These Christians used a Gospel that resembled the Gospel of Matthew. Since Paul taught that Gentiles were not obligated to follow the Jewish Law in order to be redeemed, Jewish-Christian adoptionists considered his writings heretical.

The Marcionites proposed a different perspective on Christianity, Judaism, and the Law. Marcionites believed that Paul's teachings embodied the true form of Christianity. For Marcion, the difference between Jesus and Judaism was so great that he posited two gods in order to explain the differences: the Creator God of the Jews was just, but the God of Jesus was merciful. Marcionites did not believe that Jesus was sent from the Jewish God, the God who made the world. Since Jesus had nothing to do with this God of materiality, they believed that he could not have come in the flesh. The Marcionites, therefore, believed that Jesus' body was nothing more than a phantasm—he only *seemed* to be human (scholars use the word “docetic” to describe this belief system; for more on “docetic” forms of early Christianity, see Chapter 11). Jesus was never born, never got hungry or thirsty, never suffered, and never died. The Marcionites used a version of the Gospel of Luke and ten of Paul's letters.

Yet another group of Christians (diverse within itself), the Gnostics, believed that knowledge (“gnosis”) brought salvation. Like the Marcionites, many Gnostics were docetic, but others believed that Jesus was composed of two distinct beings: the divine Christ and the human Jesus. Unlike the Marcionites, Gnostics did not believe that the God of the Old Testament was just; they believed he was evil. According to Gnostics, Jesus was divine and was sent to earth from the highest unknowable God to save Christians from the wrathful Creator. Salvation, according to Gnostics, entailed receiving and understanding the wisdom that would free them from the material constraints of this world and return them to the divine realm.

Proto-orthodox Christians represent the forerunners of the group that became dominant in later centuries. (The term “proto-orthodox” is a modern scholarly invention, used to describe those 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, and 3<sup>rd</sup> century Christians whose beliefs tended to align with the form of Christianity that would later be seen as orthodox. So while no early Christian referred to herself, or to another Christian, as “proto-orthodox,” the term has proven useful for scholars who want to describe a particular trajectory of early Christianity.) These Christians believed Jesus was fully human (like the adoptionists) *and* fully divine (like the Marcionites and Gnostics). They agreed that Jesus taught the way to salvation (like the Gnostics), but they believed this knowledge had been plainly passed down through the apostles and was available to all humans, not just a select few (unlike the Gnostics).

### **The New Testament Canon of Scripture**

The New Testament contains twenty-seven books written in Greek by fifteen or sixteen different authors. They were written to communities or individuals between the years 50 and 120 C.E. The Gospels, which are biographies of Jesus, are *traditionally* attributed to disciples (Matthew and John) and associates of the apostles (Mark and Luke)—despite the fact that these texts were written anonymously. The book of Acts, written by the author of the Gospel of Luke, narrates the spread of Christianity through the Roman Empire. Next are twenty-one epistles written by various authors to particular individuals or communities addressing issues of belief, practice, and ethics. Thirteen of these letters claim to be written by Paul. The last book of the New Testament, Revelation, is an apocalypse. This book describes the course of events leading to the destruction of the world and the coming of the new Kingdom of God.

We know of other early Christian writings not included in the New Testament. In 1 Corinthians, for instance, Paul says that he previously sent a letter to the church at Corinth.

Unfortunately, this correspondence is no longer extant. There are, in addition to the New Testament texts, other noncanonical, proto-orthodox writings that have survived from the 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, and 3<sup>rd</sup> centuries C.E. These include a collection of second-century writings by authors referred to as the “Apostolic Fathers.” Some of these books were considered authoritative in many churches. In addition to proto-orthodox texts, we have Gnostic texts from the Nag Hammadi library (see Chapter 11) and a variety of other early Gospels, histories, epistles, and apocalypses.

The first Christians were Jewish, and their authoritative books of scripture were ancient Jewish texts that would eventually compose much of the Hebrew Bible. Near the end of the first century, however, Christians began to place Jesus’ sayings on a par with “Scripture” (1 Tim 5:18). Although Paul certainly thought of himself as an authoritative spokesperson for the true gospel, he did not think of his correspondence as “Scripture.” The author of 2 Peter, however, included Paul’s letters among the “Scriptures” (2 Pet 3:16). Marcion seems to have been the first to compile a Christian canon, and Marcion’s collection (and the conflict surrounding it) evidently led other Christians to create their own sets of authoritative texts. Proto-orthodox Christianity did not immediately develop a closed canon of Scripture; on the contrary, it was not until 367 C.E. that the present twenty-seven books of the New Testament were listed as an authoritative canon. Up to and during this time, proto-orthodox Christians continued to debate which books belonged in the canon, with the arguments centering upon three primary criteria: the books had to be ancient, they had to be thought to have been written by an apostle (or close associate), and they had to be accepted among proto-orthodox congregations as reflecting orthodox belief.

## Key Terms

adoptionists	C.E.	manuscripts
apocalypse	Ebionites	Marcion
Apocrypha	epistle	Nag Hammadi
apostle	Gentile	proto-orthodox Christians
Apostolic Fathers	Gnostics	
Athanasius	Gospel	Torah
B.C.E.	heretic	
canon	Law	

## Pedagogical Suggestions

- [1.] Have students take a quiz on New Testament people, places, and events to help them gauge how much they know (or don't know) about the New Testament. These questions should illustrate interesting issues that will be discussed during the semester.
- [2.] Have students write three questions they have about the New Testament coming into the course. As the students present their questions to the class, the instructor can use the questions as a way to provide an overview of the course.
- [3.] Invite students to discuss how our understanding of and approach to the New Testament might change when we no longer think of it as a single book, but as a library composed of many texts written at different times, in different places, by authors with different backgrounds and concerns.
- [4.] Show a portion of a film on early Christianity (e.g., a portion of the PBS series *From Jesus to Christ*) and have students take notes about things that interest them or questions they have as they watch. Like Suggestion 2, this exercise allows the instructor to cover elements of the syllabus and let the students know at what point in the course their questions will be discussed.
- [5.] Help students understand and relate to the degree of diversity in early Christianity by emphasizing (as the textbook does) the significant diversity of religious traditions within modern Christianity (or any other tradition) before discussing early Christian diversity.

## **Chapter 2:**

# **Do We Have the Original New Testament?**

### **Chapter Summary**

#### **The Manuscripts of the New Testament**

We do not have the original copies (“autographs”) of any early Christian writings; over time, the original copies wore out, were lost, or were destroyed. Instead, we possess copies of copies of copies that were produced hundreds of years after the original authors wrote the original texts. The individuals who copied these texts often were not trained scribes, introducing errors into the writings—and even professional copyists made mistakes. Once a mistake entered into a text, the next scribe typically copied that mistake and added others.

Our earliest manuscripts of Paul’s letters and full copies of the Gospels date to around the early third century (though we have fragments of manuscripts from somewhat earlier). The earliest full manuscripts of the entire New Testament date to around the fourth century. We currently possess around 5,700 manuscripts—from fragments to full texts—that date between the second and fifteenth centuries. Although we have far more copies of the New Testament than of any other ancient book, we still cannot be completely certain about the original words of these texts, because no two of these copies are exactly alike. Scholars of textual criticism, however, suggest that if we understand the types of changes that were introduced into the texts, we can come close to recovering the words of the New Testament authors.

#### **Changes in the New Testament Text**

Most mistakes in these manuscripts were unintentional mistakes (e.g., misspelled words; omitted words, verses, or pages; rearranged words; added words or verses) that were made because ancient writings did not contain punctuation, paragraph divisions, or spaces between words—(verse divisions did not even exist until 1551). These types of changes are easily recognized. Sometimes, though, scribes intentionally changed the text. These modifications are more challenging for scholars to identify. Some of these changes may have been made because a scribe wished to correct historical information or grammatical errors present in the text. Other times, scribes “harmonized” one text to another. Finally, some changes appear to reflect



Christian doctrine. A text that sounded Gnostic or adoptionistic might have been changed to sound more “orthodox.”

### Criteria for Establishing the Original Text

Textual criticism seeks to establish the original text by testing a passage against a number of criteria:

- [1.] *Age of the Manuscripts.* The form of a text that is supported by the oldest manuscript is more likely to reflect the original words.
- [2.] *Distribution of the Manuscripts.* If a particular reading is prevalent in one geographic area and is different from a reading that is widespread, it is likely that the first is a local variation.
- [3.] *Considerations of Style.* With this criterion, scholars concentrate on an author’s, not a scribe’s, tendencies. Passages that contain vocabulary, grammatical constructions, or theology that differs from that in the rest of the book are likely scribal changes.
- [4.] *The More Difficult Reading.* Scholars suggest that the more difficult reading is likely to be closer to the original, since scribes were more likely to make a passage easier than harder to understand.
- [5.] *Quality of the Manuscripts.* If a manuscript is full of errors, then readings within that manuscript must be regarded with suspicion.

Perhaps surprisingly to most new to the discipline, the number of manuscripts that have a particular reading is not especially important, since many of those copies may derive from a late manuscript (one that may contain more mistakes) while only a few may derive from an earlier one, which has presumably undergone fewer revisions.

### The Original Text of the New Testament

This chapter shows that we cannot rely on inherited texts to perfectly reflect an author’s exact words, since the manuscripts contain changes and mistakes. Scholars, then, must weigh each reading against the criteria discussed previously in order to reconstruct the best possible approximation of the “original text.”

## Key Terms

	papyrus	scriptio continua
manuscript	scribe	textual criticism

## Pedagogical Suggestions

- [1.] To have students better understand the mistakes scribes could make, prepare a paragraph without punctuation or spaces between words and have them copy it. Afterward, have them reread it (can they distinguish each word?) and note the changes they inadvertently introduced into the text. An additional layer of complexity can be introduced by having multiple students copy the paragraph in succession.
- [2.] Pick several New Testament passages and have students break into groups to discuss the possible reasons for the differences in manuscript readings (harmonization, unintentional scribal mistakes, changes due to doctrine or historical accuracy). Some interesting passages are Mark 1:41, Luke 2:45, and Matthew 24:36 (some discussion of these problems is found in the textbook). Have students apply as many of the criteria for establishing the original text as they can.
- [3.] Of the hundreds of thousands of differences between manuscripts, the vast majority are unimportant. Of the few that are significant, scholars have no basis for deciding what was originally meant if they cannot establish what was originally said. Discuss the complications arising from this issue.

# Chapter 3:

## The Greco-Roman World of Early Christian Traditions

### Chapter Summary

#### The Problem of Beginnings

One complicating factor in teaching or studying the New Testament is the difference between modern and ancient worldviews. In order to understand the stories in the New Testament, readers must first familiarize themselves with the culture, society, and assumptions of the Greco-Roman world.

The term “Greco-Roman world” designates the lands surrounding the Mediterranean—from the time of Alexander the Great (356–323 B.C.E.) through the first three or four centuries of the Roman Empire. Alexander the Great spread Greek language and culture (a process known as “Hellenization”) throughout his empire. The dissemination of Hellenistic culture was important for the spread of Christianity: the repositioning of political boundaries made travel easier, and the establishment of Greek as the common language across the empire made communication between peoples possible.

#### The Environment of the New Testament: Religions in the Greco-Roman World

It is important to realize that Greco-Roman religions differ significantly from modern notions of religion. Among pagan religions, there were no empire-wide organizations that oversaw the worship of the gods; creedal statements were unnecessary because it was not belief, but worship—acts such as animal sacrifice—that pleased the gods. As a result, religions of the Greco-Roman world were nonexclusive and pluralistic. Moreover, ethical demands played a limited role in religiosity; philosophy, not religion, was the primary impetus toward an ethical life. In addition, the afterlife was of little concern to most residents of the empire. Worship of the gods centered on day-to-day survival and was not focused on an otherworldly existence. There was, finally, no separation between church and state. The gods, contingent on proper worship, protected the empire, and the state in turn promoted the proper care of the gods.

Although most ancient religions were polytheistic, some philosophers believed there was one supreme god (Zeus, Jupiter, or an unknowable god). Below this one god were the great gods of the ancient Mediterranean world: Poseidon, Hera, Aphrodite, Artemis, and others. The next tier of divine beings was the *daimonia*, a group of lesser deities who had limited power but were in direct contact with humans. Included in this group were deities of particular villages, towns, and families. The gap between divine beings and humans was bridged by great men, philosophers, and warriors whose lives had been so extraordinary that, at their deaths, the gods made them immortal. Related to this last group were demigods, individuals born from the union of a mortal and a god. Because supernatural births and parental ties to the gods were more or less commonplace in stories of extraordinary men, the story of Jesus as God's son would not have been incomprehensible within a Greco-Roman context.

### Key Terms

Alexander the Great	extispicy	monotheism
Apollonius of Tyana	genius	mystery cults
augurs	Gentile	Octavian
Augustus, Caesar	Gospel	oracle
auspices	Greco-Roman world	pagan
canon	haruspex	Penates
cult	Hellenization	Platonists
daimonia	Isis	polytheism
divination	Lares	Roman Empire
Epicureans	magic	Son of God
equestrian	Mithras	Stoics

### Pedagogical Suggestions

[1.] In order to place stories of Jesus within a larger social context, have students discuss the similarities between Jesus and other divine men. The instructor might provide students with additional texts telling stories of Apollonius of Tyana, the birth of Caesar Augustus or Alexander the Great, or the miracles performed by Aesclepius. (These stories can be found on the Internet, but an especially good resource is *Documents for the Study of the Gospels*, ed. David R. Cartlidge and David L. Dungan [Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 1994].)

- [2.] Since belief in an afterlife is more or less pervasive in modern religious thought, have students discuss this subject in relation to ancient religion. Why might pagan religions be indifferent to such beliefs? Can students imagine religious affiliations without such beliefs? What made paganism attractive to people in the Greco-Roman world, if not the promise of an afterlife?
- [3.] Apuleius wrote a novel entitled *The Metamorphoses* (also known as *The Golden Ass*). In the last chapter of this novel, Lucian describes the initiation procedures for the mystery cult of Isis. This is one of the most important sources we have for understanding the mystery cults. Have students read chapter 11 of this novel (available on the Internet) and discuss the beliefs and initiation rites of this cult. Do they think there are similarities between Apuleius' description of initiation into a mystery cult and initiation into Christianity? What other similarities and differences do students find?
- [4.] In this chapter, Ehrman argues that Greco-Roman religions were characterized by "plurality instead of exclusivity," though refusal to worship the state gods or participate in certain cultic acts could result in significant punishment. Do students agree with the assessment that this state of affairs reflects "plurality"? Why or why not?

# Chapter 4:

## The Jewish World of Jesus and His Followers

### Chapter Summary

#### Judaism as a Greco-Roman Religion

Early Judaism was widely recognized as an ancient form of cultic devotion, similar to other Greco-Roman religions. Like other Greco-Roman religions, Judaism included the belief in a higher realm in which a powerful deity dwelled and interacted with humanity. Jewish cultic acts involved animal sacrifice and prayer to this higher deity. Sacrifices were performed by priests in a sacred Temple according to strict rituals. Prayers addressed communal and private needs.

The fundamental dissimilarity between Judaism and these other religions was the Jews' commitment to worship only one God (i.e., monotheism), the God of their homeland, Israel, with whom they had an exclusive covenant (pact, agreement). Judaism was unique in this regard until the advent of Christianity. Jews—like the pagans—believed in hierarchical levels of supernatural beings (e.g., angels, archangels, cherubim, and seraphim), though worship was reserved for the highest God alone.

The Torah (literally “teaching,” though usually translated “Law”) set forth Israel's covenantal obligations. Contrary to many modern assumptions, Judaism was not a “religion of works” in the sense of having to earn one's place before God. In contrast, keeping the Torah was understood as the proper grateful response to God's gracious choice of Israel (through the covenant) as his own special people. The Law was thus seen as a privilege and joy to uphold, giving the guidelines by which this special status could be lived out.

The Temple in Jerusalem—one of the great wonders of the Roman world—was the center of both the Jewish world and the Jewish sacrificial cult. Synagogues were the local centers of Jewish devotion, where Jews gathered to pray and to read and discuss the Scriptures.

#### Political Crises in Palestine and Their Ramifications

By the time of Jesus, the region of Palestine had been under foreign domination for well over 700 years.—Sometimes these foreign powers sought a unity that compromised the Jews' religious practices. For example, the Syrian ruler Antiochus Epiphanes tried to force the Jews to—

accept Greek culture: he made it illegal for the Jews to circumcise their baby boys, he converted the Temple into a pagan sanctuary, and he forced the Jews to sacrifice to the pagan gods. In 167 B.C.E., Judas Maccabeus led the Jews in a revolt against Antiochus. The Maccabean revolt was successful and led to almost a century of Jewish self-governance before the Roman Empire finally conquered the region in 63 B.C.E. and assumed control over Palestine. Several important developments and events occurred during this period of autonomy and subsequent Roman domination: the rise of Jewish sectarianism (see below), the emergence of political uprisings against Rome, and the popularization of Jewish apocalypticism.

### **The Formation of Jewish Sects**

During the reign of the Maccabees, several Jewish sects were formed. Josephus mentions four of these sects, which he calls “philosophies.” Although some of these groups held prominent positions in society, most Jews were not affiliated with any of them.

The Pharisees were devout Jews who focused on following God’s Law. Because some of the commandments were vague (e.g., what does it mean to keep the Sabbath holy?), the Pharisees developed rules to help them keep the Law. These rules were passed along orally and eventually gained an authoritative status of their own. During Jesus’ time, the Pharisees did not have significant political power. After the fall of the Temple, though, they became the primary political and religious leaders.

The Sadducees were politically powerful during Jesus’ lifetime. They were aristocrats who were closely connected with the priesthood. This group was primarily interested in the Temple and maintaining the cultic worship of God. They adhered only to the Torah and denied the authenticity of the Pharisees’ oral law and the existence of angels, spirits, and the afterlife.

The Essenes were an exclusivist group that believed that the Maccabees had defiled the Jerusalem Temple by appointing a high priest from the wrong family line. In response, they moved to the desert to establish a pure community. This was a highly apocalyptic Jewish movement—meaning that its members looked forward to a time when God would intervene in history, bringing in his Kingdom and destroying the evil forces in the world. Although there is no reason to think that Jesus was directly involved with the Essene movement, this group’s worldview provides contextual credibility to Jesus’ apocalyptic teachings. Of the four philosophies described by Josephus, the Essenes are the only ones not mentioned in the New

Testament. This group produced the Dead Sea Scrolls (copies of the Hebrew Bible and a variety of other community documents), which were discovered near the Dead Sea in 1947.

Josephus calls the last sect “the Fourth Philosophy.” This is an umbrella term for a number of distinct groups that had one thing in common: they all advocated armed resistance to foreign domination, believing it was their obligation to regain control of the land given to Israel by God.

### Key Terms

Alexander the Great	Hellenization	peshet
Antiochus Epiphanes	Herod Antipas	Pharisees
associations	Herod the Great	Qumran
covenant	Holy of Holies	resurrection
cult	Honi the “circle-drawer”	Sadducees
daimonia	Josephus	Sanhedrin
Day of Atonement	Judas Maccabeus	Septuagint
Dead Sea Scrolls	Law	Sicarii
Diaspora	Maccabeans	synagogue
Essenes	messiah	Talmud
Fourth Philosophy	Mishnah	Temple
Greco-Roman world	monotheism	Torah
Hanina ben Dosa	pagan	traditions
Hasmoneans	Pentateuch	Zealots

### Pedagogical Suggestions

[1.] It is critical that students understand the difference between modern conceptions of “legalism” and the “covenantal nomism” reflected in early Judaism (“covenantal nomism” is a term that was coined by a prominent New Testament scholar named E.P. Sanders; it conveys the idea that ancient Jews did not believe that they earned salvation by obedience to the Jewish law, but rather that they were given and kept the Jewish law on account of the fact that God had already freely chosen them to be saved). Talk about the differences between “earning” God’s approval and the obligation to keep the Law because God’s approval has



already been given. See if the students can think of specific examples that might highlight these differences.

- [2.] Discuss how the laws of Moses are ambiguous. Have students divide into groups and argue from different stances on how the laws can be interpreted and implemented in daily life. For instance, one of the Ten Commandments directs Jews to keep the Sabbath day holy. One group could argue that this means the Sabbath is a day of rest and that no one should work on it. Another group could argue that this means the Sabbath should be set aside as a day of personal reflection and meditation, whether or not these activities are combined with regular work. Still another group might argue that the Sabbath is a day for congregating with one another and doing “holy” work, such as almsgiving and community service.
- [3.] Students might consider some of the many consequences of the Diaspora. For instance, since the vast majority of Jews lived outside of Palestine in the first century, reading Jewish Scriptures became problematic: these texts were written in Hebrew, and Jews typically spoke only the local language of wherever they lived. In response to this problem, translations were made, the best known of which is the Septuagint (a Greek translation of Jewish scripture). Legend has it that seventy-two Jewish translators, six from each tribe of Israel, worked in seclusion for seventy-two days and miraculously completed the Septuagint. It is this work, not the Hebrew Scripture, that is quoted by authors of the New Testament. What are some of the modern-day consequences of the Diaspora?
- [4.] The history of ancient Israel involved one military/political disaster after another. Have students imagine the kind of stress the Jews must have been under and how they may have handled it. What kind of coping mechanisms did they pass down through the generations? What coping mechanisms do people use today? Compare coping strategies between people with different heritages in light of those heritages. How might someone’s ancestral history frame the way he or she sees the world and deals with the inevitable stress life brings?
- [5.] Discuss how the Jews came to believe that they alone were God’s chosen people. How did following the Law embodied in the Torah show that they were the elect people of God? How did the Gentiles feel about this apparently elitist attitude? Did the Jews themselves believe that God set them apart to be role models for the world?
- [6.] Have students research the Torah, the Talmud, and other Jewish historical sources to investigate the practice of circumcision. Why was this peculiar sign used to mark the covenant between God and the people of Israel? Why was the “sign of the covenant” demonstrated only by the males of the population? Could there have been a metaphorical analogy to “circumcision of the heart,” or a cutting away of all things unloving?
- [7.] Discuss how the crisis during Hellenistic times split the Jewish people into four groups. How do these groups reflect the various ways people respond to domination: resistance, isolation, acceptance, etc.?

## Chapter 5:

# From Oral Traditions to Written Gospels

### Chapter Summary

This chapter focuses on the development of and relationship between early oral traditions of Jesus and the first written Gospels. Scholars agree that Jesus died around 30 C.E. and that the first Gospel to be written, Mark, was probably penned around 65–70 C.E. Matthew and Luke were written around 80 or 85 C.E., and John about ten years after that. The earliest accounts (aside from pieces found in Paul's letters) of Jesus' life, ministry, and death were thus written thirty-five to sixty-five years after Jesus' death. During the intervening years between Jesus' death and the production of the written Gospels, stories about Jesus circulated throughout the Roman Empire. Since most missionary activity was aimed at individuals, stories about Jesus were probably told in order to underscore the benefits of conversion: Jesus could heal, exorcise demons, and even multiply food. Those who converted told these stories to other people. It is impossible that eyewitnesses were the only ones telling stories about Jesus, since there was such a wide geographic spread of Christianity throughout the empire. Stories about Jesus were circulated by individuals who had heard stories from other individuals who had heard stories from still other individuals, and so forth. As stories were passed on by word of mouth, they changed according to the circumstances and needs of the potential convert. Such changes or creations should not be attributed to deception or malice. Rather, the stories recounted what was "true" to the storyteller about Jesus.

The written Gospels were eventually composed to meet certain needs of various Christian communities (e.g., evangelism, apologetics, instruction). Written accounts—just like oral traditions—were molded to meet the particular circumstances of an author and his community. The New Testament Gospels are best understood as ancient biographies. Ehrman defines Greco-Roman biography as "a prose narrative recounting an individual's life, often within a chronological framework, employing numerous subgenres . . . so as to reflect important aspects of his or her character, principally for purposes of instruction, . . . exhortation, . . . or propaganda." Ancient biographers relied heavily on oral sources, often preferring them, in fact,

to written sources. Ancient biographers, moreover, did not share our modern theories of psychological development: valued personal characteristics (courage, wisdom, military prowess) were usually depicted as present in the individual from birth.

The New Testament Gospels share many of the same literary features as other Greco-Roman biographies.—They are, however, unique in at least one aspect: as opposed to the powerful political or military heroes and wise and influential philosophers who were the subjects of most ancient biographies, a relatively unknown Jew from Palestine is the subject of the Gospels. In addition, Christian authors emphasized Jesus’ death (a shameful one at that!), an aspect that received little attention in other ancient biographies.

Finally, the authors of the Gospels were not eyewitnesses to Jesus’ life and ministry.—Sometime in the second century—after the Gospels had been produced—proto-orthodox Christians began to claim that the Gospels had been written by two disciples of Jesus (Matthew and John) and by two traveling companions of Paul (Mark and Luke). Scholars doubt the historicity of these traditions for several reasons. First, none of the Gospel writers claims to have been written by these figures, let alone anyone with first-hand knowledge of the events they narrate. Second, the disciples (Matthew and John) were likely uneducated peasants without writing skills. Third, the disciples and Jesus spoke Aramaic, but the native language of the Gospel writers seems to have been Greek. Fourth, the Gospel writers used inherited traditions, not their own recollections of events, to tell their stories about Jesus. Some of these traditions are probably historically accurate; others appear to have been embellished or even wholly fabricated. Finally, the Gospel writers appear to have modified and invented stories to underscore their own beliefs about Jesus.

Key Terms			
Alexander the Great	Greco-Roman biography	Sanhedrin	
Apollonius of Tyana	Greco-Roman world	Suetonius	
apostle	paganism	Tacitus	
Aesclepius	Passover	Temple	
Baptism	Plutarch	tradition	
genre	Pontius Pilate		
Gospel	Roman Empire		

## Pedagogical Suggestions

- [1.] As an introduction to the idea of oral traditions behind the Gospels, have students discuss their experiences of stories changing as they passed from one person to another. The instructor should anticipate the objection that Jesus' sayings and deeds were probably better preserved because of his importance.
- [2.] Discuss how mass illiteracy in the ancient Greco-Roman world could have affected how the Gospels might have been understood. Given the conservative estimate that only 10-15 percent of the population could read or write at even the most basic level, most people encountered the Christian message by having it read to them or by word of mouth. If we try to imagine ourselves outside the thoroughly modern phenomenon of pervasive literacy, how might we conceptualize the stories about Jesus?
- [3.] Have students bring to class examples of a variety of different literary genres (e.g., poetry, news report, science fiction, fairy tale). Have them discuss the conventions of the genre that help the reader identify it and interpret it correctly.
- [4.] While most scholars do not think that the New Testament Gospels are the product of eyewitnesses, most also think that they contain traditions that can be traced back to eyewitnesses. To what degree, however, is eyewitness testimony reliable? Discuss with students one of the many available scientific articles that examine the historical accuracy of eyewitness testimony.
- [5.] Discuss the key difference between ancient and modern biographies: ancient biographers were more concerned with representing the subject's personality and character than with representing historical facts. How is this attitude understandable in light of the ancient understanding of human psychology?
- [6.] Have students read the birth and infancy narratives in Matthew or Luke or the Prologue in John and discuss the ways in which understanding the genre of ancient biography helps them interpret the beginning of the Gospel. What does the author want his reader to know right away about the central figure of the biography?
- [7.] Have students read the excerpt from Plutarch provided in the chapter as an example of the methodology of ancient biographers. In addition, the instructor might provide excerpts of ancient biographies (e.g., from Plutarch's *Lives*, available on the Internet) as additional examples of the genre. Have students discuss the ways the Gospels are similar to and different from these other ancient biographies.

## **—Chapter 6:**

# **Jesus, the Suffering Son of God: The Gospel According to Mark**

## **Chapter Summary**

Mark, the shortest of the canonical Gospels, was written anonymously by a Greek-speaking Christian living outside of Palestine. This Gospel is a compilation of oral traditions and perhaps written ones, though none of the latter survives. Of the extant Gospels, Mark appears to have been written first and was used by Matthew and Luke.

This chapter introduces the method of genre criticism and applies it to the Gospel of Mark. This interpretive approach focuses on the literary genre of a book. Specifically, the chapter explores ways that Mark used aspects of the ancient genre of biography to tell his story about Jesus.

### **The Beginning of the Gospel: Jesus the Messiah, the Son of God Who Fulfills Scripture**

The Gospel of Mark was written from a Jewish perspective. At the very beginning of his biography, the author states that Jesus was the Christ (the Greek equivalent to the Hebrew term “messiah,” or “anointed one”), a title that was meaningful only to Jews. In the first century there were a variety of views of the messiah. Some Jews believed that the messiah would be a king; others believed that he would be a cosmic judge. All notions about the messiah (that we know of) presented him as powerful. The problem Mark confronted was the paradox of Jesus as a suffering messiah.

Mark’s Gospel begins abruptly: it does not open with a birth narrative. Rather, the Gospel begins with John the Baptist’s message of the coming messiah and Jesus’ appearance as an adult. Jesus asks John to baptize him and, after his baptism, is thrust into the wilderness, where Satan tempts him. He returns victorious and begins his public ministry preaching the coming Kingdom of God.

### **Jesus the Authoritative Son of God**

Mark's Jesus is authoritative: he calls disciples and they follow him; people are amazed and listen attentively when he speaks; even unclean spirits obey his commands. Despite all of this, Jesus is misunderstood by all and is hated by the Jewish leaders.

### **Jesus the Opposed Son of God**

According to Mark, the religious leadership opposed Jesus from the beginning, and this antagonism culminated with his execution. Despite this animosity, Jesus never opposed Judaism as a religion. Even though the religious leaders challenged (and were offended by) Jesus' interpretation of the Law, Mark continued to portray Jesus as the Jewish messiah.

### **Jesus the Misunderstood Son of God**

In the first half of the Gospel, only five individuals or groups know Jesus' identity: God, Jesus, the evil spirits, the author, and the reader. Not even his closest disciples understand who he is. In fact, it is not until the middle of the Gospel that his disciples begin to realize that Jesus is the Son of God.

### **Jesus the Acknowledged Son of God**

When Jesus asks his disciples, "Who do people say that I am?" Peter responds, "You are the Christ." This is the first time in the Gospel of Mark that one of Jesus' followers identifies Jesus. It is not a full recognition, though, since Peter immediately chastises Jesus for prophesying his Passion.

### **Jesus the Suffering Son of God**

Jesus predicts his death three times in this Gospel, and the latter part of the text focuses exclusively on his Passion. Mark explains that it is precisely because Jesus is the messiah that he must die: his death is a sacrifice that atones for humanity's sin.

### **Jesus the Crucified Son of God**

Even at the end, Jesus' disciples do not understand his identity and mission. Judas betrays him, Peter denies him, and the others scatter to avoid arrest. Jesus is left to die alone, wondering if God also has abandoned him.

Mark uses two events at Jesus' death to illustrate the reality of Jesus' messiahship. First, when Jesus dies, the curtain separating the Holy of Holies from the outside world tears in half. Through this story, Mark implies that after Jesus' death, all people, not just the high priest, have full access to God. Second, and even more striking, is the pagan soldier at the cross who recognizes Jesus and confesses that he is God's Son. Throughout the Gospel, all of the Jews, including Jesus' closest followers, fail to recognize Jesus' messiahship. Ironically, it is a pagan who first confesses this truth.

### Jesus the Vindicated Son of God

Mark ends his Gospel as abruptly as he begins it: The day after the Sabbath, Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome come to Jesus' tomb and find it empty. A young man tells them that Jesus has been raised and instructs them to tell the disciples. Mark says that the women said nothing because they were afraid.

### Conclusion: Mark and His Readers

Mark's readers were probably converted pagans, because he occasionally explains Aramaic words and Jewish customs to his readers—explanations that would not be necessary for a Jewish audience. Mark himself may also have been a Gentile since he misunderstands these Jewish traditions. The anti-Jewish rhetoric in this Gospel, aimed at the Jewish leaders, probably reflects problems between Mark's community and the local synagogue.

### Key Terms

baptism	Hanina ben-Dosa	Pharisees
chief priests	Herodians	Sadducees
Christ	Holy of Holies	Sanhedrin
cult	Honi the "circle-drawer"	scribes
Day of Atonement	Law	Septuagint
Gentile	messiah	Son of God
Gospel	messianic secret	Son of Man
Greco-Roman biography	pagan	synagogue
Greco-Roman world	Passion	Temple

## Pedagogical Suggestions

- [1.] Have students carefully read the first few chapters of Mark. Keeping in mind the principles of the method of genre criticism, have students try to bracket their preconceived notions of Jesus' identity and discuss Mark's initial presentation of Jesus. If a Christian community had access only to the Gospel of Mark (which was most likely true for Mark's community), what would they know and believe about Jesus? What kind of person is Mark's Jesus?
- [2.] After the students have read Mark in its entirety, have them offer suggestions for understanding Mark's abrupt beginning and ending. What does it mean for Mark's story that there is no birth narrative? How do students read the story differently because of this? What might Mark be implying by ending his Gospel with the women's silence?
- [3.] Have students discuss the secrecy motif in Mark. Why might the character of Jesus want to keep his identity unknown? What statement might Mark be making by maintaining that none of Jesus' followers knew his true identity? According to Mark, can a person know Jesus before Jesus has completed his mission?
- [4.] Mark is full of irony, setting the reader up to understand things one way while the characters in the story understand them in another. Alert students to some of these ironic passages and themes and have them discuss the function of irony in such a story. Does Mark's use of irony suit the overall message he's trying to get across? How might irony serve as a powerful rhetorical device to make his point?



# Chapter 7:

## The Synoptic Problem and Its Significance for Interpretation

### Chapter Summary

#### Methods for Studying the Gospels

This chapter introduces redaction criticism as a method of studying the Gospels. Redaction criticism analyzes how an author modifies his or her source(s). The presupposition of this method is that an author will only modify a source for a reason. By identifying an author's sources and then analyzing modifications to them, scholars can assess that author's particular emphases.

#### The Synoptic Problem

Matthew, Mark, and Luke are called the "Synoptic Gospels" because their similarities allow them to be "seen together." The stories are not just similar; in many instances they agree verbatim. This can only be explained if they share one or more literary sources. The Gospels also, however, disagree with one another; scholars must account for these disagreements as well. The problem of how to explain the literary relationship between these three Gospels, in light of their similarities and differences, is called the "Synoptic Problem."

The most common solution to the Synoptic Problem is the "Four-Source Hypothesis." This theory posits four sources to account for the similarities and differences among these three Gospels. Both Matthew and Luke used Mark. Matthew and Luke shared another source, no longer extant, that scholars label Q (for "quelle," meaning "source"). These two sources account for the similarities among these three Gospels. In addition, Matthew had his own oral and/or written materials, labeled "M," and Luke had his own sources, labeled "L." M and L account for the differences among the Synoptic Gospels. The four sources are thus Mark, Q, M, and L.

For this theory to hold, scholars must first show that Mark was the first Gospel. There are three main arguments for Markan priority. First, the patterns of agreement in stories shared by Matthew, Mark, and Luke display certain patterns: sometimes Matthew and Mark agree in

wording but Luke disagrees; sometimes Mark and Luke agree but Matthew disagrees. It is extremely rare, though, for Matthew and Luke to agree in wording against Mark. The best explanation for this is that Matthew and Luke copied Mark.

The second argument concerns the sequence of the narratives. These three Gospels follow a similar sequential pattern: The stories that Matthew and Luke have in common with Mark parallel Mark’s narrative order. The stories in Matthew and Luke that Mark does not have (Q material) are found in different places in Matthew and Luke. Mark thus seems to be the backbone for the other two Gospels, with the authors adding other materials where they saw fit.

The third argument concerns the characteristics of the changes. In certain situations, Matthew and Luke change Mark’s wording. Sometimes they smooth out Mark’s awkward Greek constructions. This impulse suggests that Mark was written first since it would be difficult to explain why an author would change a passage to make it more confusing.

Mark, then, was one source for Matthew and Luke. The second source is called Q. Although this Gospel is not extant, most scholars agree that it was a written source and contained all or most of the material that Matthew and Luke share that is not in Mark. Q is thought to have contained at least two narratives, but it appears to have been largely a series of sayings of Jesus. Its format may explain why Matthew and Luke placed Q material in different places: without a narrative binding the sayings together, the authors placed them where they fit best within their Gospels.

We know much less about Matthew’s and Luke’s special sources, M and L. It is unclear if the material represents one source or many, written sources or oral sources. They are best understood, then, as scholarly designations for material found exclusively in each Gospel.

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Key Terms

Beatitudes	Greco-Roman biography	Q
Four-Source Hypothesis	L	redaction criticism
genre	M	Synoptic Gospels
genre criticism	Markan priority	Synoptic Problem

## Pedagogical Suggestions

- [1.] Have students discuss the “problem” with the Synoptic Gospels. Do they think that the wide-ranging agreements and disagreements among them pose a problem at all? Do they find the Four-Source Hypothesis convincing? Why? If not, can they formulate another plausible (historical) scenario?
- [2.] Choose a Synoptic parallel (e.g., the parable of the rich young ruler) and present it to the class. What kinds of changes did Matthew and Luke make to Mark? What did they keep intact? Keeping in mind Markan priority, how do the students account for the changes? Have students discuss possible reasons that Matthew and Luke changed their texts. How, in other words, do these changes alert us to possible agendas?
- [3.] It is often helpful to give an “underlining assignment” before the lecture covering this material in which students are given a passage from a Synoptic parallel and asked to underline or highlight the passages with different colors, depending on which words are shared in which Gospels. For example, words in common among all three might be underlined with green, with agreements between Matthew and Mark in red, agreements between Mark and Luke in blue, and agreements between Matthew and Luke in yellow. A short response paper asking the students to explain the differences with a plausible historical scenario can be included as a part of this assignment.
- [4.] Since some students will be hesitant to accept the idea that the Gospel writers may have copied one another, the instructor might illustrate the improbable nature of verbatim agreement among independent texts. For example, the instructor might provide an example of plagiarism in a term paper. Another exercise that works particularly well is for the instructor to begin class by having students describe things that the instructor did as he or she entered class and before calling students to order (e.g., took a coat off, placed a briefcase on a table, talked to a student, opened a book, etc.). Collect several of these observations and read them aloud. How do these accounts differ? Do any of them agree word for word? What do their descriptions say about eyewitness accounts? The instructor should be prepared for the objection that Jesus’ actions were so important that witnesses to his ministry would not disagree about his words or deeds.
- [5.] Alert students to the immense power that an author has to lead the reader, *not* by lying or altering the facts, but by choosing to focus on one aspect of the story rather than another through choice of wording and framing the literary picture in such a way that readers can easily draw the same conclusions as the author. Euphemisms work that way. For example, a leader might get more compliance from soldiers by telling them to “clean and sweep” an enemy stronghold rather than to “kill all the men, women, and children” of a village across enemy lines. Do you call it “wiping the kitchen counter” or “mass murdering several species of microbial life”? What you say and how you say it depends entirely on your framing of the context. As objective as writers may try to be, they cannot help framing things from their own perspectives. Discuss how redactional criticism can help ferret out the author’s unique framing and how knowing how the story is framed helps us to understand it.

## Chapter 8:

# Jesus, the Jewish Messiah: The Gospel According to Matthew

## Chapter Summary

The author of the Gospel of Matthew used Mark, Q, and his own sources (designated by scholars as “M”). The Gospel was written between 80 and 85 C.E., probably somewhere outside of Palestine. This chapter applies the redactional method to uncover Matthew’s narrative emphases. As discussed in Chapter 7, the redactional method relies on the principle that an author only changes his or her sources for particular reasons. These changes therefore give the reader hints about the author’s emphases.

### The Importance of Beginnings: Jesus the Jewish Messiah in Fulfillment of the Jewish Scriptures

In Matthew, Jesus is unmistakably Jewish: Matthew emphasizes Jesus’ connection to two of the most important figures in Jewish history, David and Abraham. Jesus’ relationship to Jewish history is further underscored by the genealogy presented in chapter 1. According to this genealogy, there were fourteen generations between Abraham and David, fourteen between David and the deportation to Babylon, and fourteen between the Babylonian exile and Jesus. At the end of each period, something important happened in Jewish history: first came the greatest king, then the worst catastrophe, and finally the arrival of the messiah.

The emphasis on Jesus’ Jewish roots and the insistence that his life was a fulfillment of prophecy can be traced from the genealogy to the birth narrative and throughout the rest of the Gospel. Matthew frequently uses “fulfillment citations” to prove that Jesus was the Jewish messiah. Matthew further emphasizes Jesus’ importance to Judaism by modeling Jesus’ birth and ministry on Moses’ birth and mission: Jesus is the new Moses who has been appointed by God to free his people from bondage and to give the (new) Law. According to Matthew, people do not need to choose between Jesus and Moses, nor must they choose between Jesus’ Law and Moses’ Law. Jesus is, for this author, the final and authoritative interpreter of Mosaic Law.

## **The Portrayal of Jesus in Matthew: The Sermon on the Mount as a Springboard**

The Sermon on the Mount is one of five blocks of teaching in Matthew, a structure that may mimic the five books of Moses. This sermon is a clear example of Matthew's propensity to equate Moses' and Jesus' roles: Jesus delivers the Law of God while sitting on a mountain. Matthew's Jesus does not advocate abandoning the Mosaic Law. Instead, Jesus insists he has "come not to abolish but to fulfill" (Matt 5:17). Jesus urges his followers to keep the Law even more rigorously than the scribes and Pharisees, though it is the spirit of the Law, not its letter, that God's people are ultimately called to keep. The Law is summarized in the Golden Rule: treat others as you want to be treated.

## **Jesus Rejected by the Jewish Leaders**

Although Jesus is presented as thoroughly Jewish in the Gospel of Matthew, he strongly opposes Judaism as it is practiced by the leaders of his day. Jesus requires Jews to keep the Law but opposes the Jewish leaders. For this author, the Jewish authorities are hypocrites who are blind to Jesus' messianic identity. In a story unique to Matthew, Pilate washes his hands of Jesus' blood, and the crowd of Jews cries out, "His blood be on us and on our children" (27:25). Rather than implicating the Jews as a whole for Jesus' death, however, Matthew indicts the Jewish leaders who stir up the crowds; it is the leaders who are responsible for Jesus' death.

## **Matthew and His Readers**

Because of Matthew's insistence on keeping the Law, scholars have surmised that his audience consisted of a number of Jewish converts. There were probably Gentile converts in the community as well, however, because Matthew writes that outsiders will enter the Kingdom of God. At the end of the Gospel, moreover, Jesus commands the disciples to baptize the nations—a commandment that does not distinguish Jews from Gentiles.

### **Key Terms**

Antitheses	genre criticism	Herod (the Great)
apocalypticism	Gentile	Law
baptism	Golden Rule	Marcion
Beatitudes	Gospel	messiah
fulfillment citations	Greco-Roman biography	pagan

Passion	Q	Son of God
Pharisees	redaction criticism	Son of Man
Pontius Pilate	Sadducees	Temple
prophet	scribes	Torah
proto-orthodox	Sermon on the Mount	tradition

## Pedagogical Suggestions

- [1.] Using genre criticism, have students discuss Jesus' birth and infancy narrative in the Gospel of Matthew. How does the author utilize aspects of the genre of Greco-Roman biography to describe Jesus?
- [2.] Have students trace Mosaic or prophetic themes throughout the Gospel and reflect on Matthew's point in using this imagery.
- [3.] Using the redactional method, compare two narratives in Mark and Matthew (e.g., the baptism or the Passion and resurrection). What points does Matthew make by changing Mark's story?
- [4.] Have students discuss how Matthew portrays Jesus as thoroughly Jewish. What might this indicate about his audience? How might this affect Matthew's portrayal of Jesus' opponents?
- [5.] Reflect on the Golden Rule and discuss why this ethical principle has had so much popularity with Christians, as well in other religions and philosophies throughout the world. What could account for its pervasiveness in ancient times? What accounts for its relevance in today's world?
- [6.] Have students discuss the ethical content of the Sermon on the Mount. Does Matthew present Jesus' proclamations in this section as though they were actually intended to be lived, or are these requirements presented as "too difficult" for anyone to achieve? What's the evidence one way or another? Does Matthew have anything to say about "faith" or "belief in Jesus"? How might Matthew suggest a person become "saved"? (cf. for instance Matt 25:31-46)

## Chapter 9:

# Jesus, the Savior of the World: The Gospel According to Luke

## Chapter Summary

### The Comparative Method and the Gospel of Luke

This chapter introduces the comparative method for studying the Gospels. This approach works very much like redaction criticism: it explores the similarities and differences between similar stories in order to identify an author's emphases. The primary difference between these approaches is that the comparative approach does not require the identification of shared literary sources.

### A Comparative Overview of the Gospel

The Gospel of Luke is a Greco-Roman biography that was written anonymously by a Greek speaker. Like Mark and Matthew, this author most likely lived outside of Palestine. The author of Luke also wrote the Acts of the Apostles. The Gospel tells about Jesus' birth, life, death, and resurrection; Acts traces the spread of Christianity throughout the empire.

### The Preface to Luke's Gospel

Luke's Gospel begins with a formal historiographic preface (1:1-4). The author acknowledges that others have told this story, but he promises to record it in an orderly fashion. The preface dedicates the work to Theophilus. Scholars have debated the meaning of this dedication: Was Theophilus a person to whom Luke wrote an "apology"? Or does Theophilus (literally, "beloved of God") refer to the Christian community for whom Luke wrote?

### Luke's Birth Narrative in Comparative Perspective

The Gospel of Luke begins with the births of John the Baptist and Jesus. One of the most important aspects of this Gospel is Jesus' tie to Jerusalem: the birth of John the Baptist, Jesus' forerunner, was announced in Jerusalem; Jesus was consecrated in the Jerusalem Temple, and at that time, Anna and Simeon recognized him as the messiah; in the only canonical story of Jesus'

childhood, Luke tells us that Jesus' parents took him to Jerusalem for Passover, and while he was there Jesus taught the Jewish authorities in the Temple.

Luke's central message is that salvation came to the Jews, to their holy city, and to the Temple itself, and yet they rejected what was offered. Only then was the gospel taken to the Gentiles. Luke's Gospel shows that God's salvation is available to the entire world. In his genealogy, for example, Luke traces Jesus' heritage not to David or Abraham, or even to Adam, the first human, but to God. While Luke's genealogy does identify Jesus as a descendant of important Jewish figures, it also suggests that Jesus belongs not to the Jews but to the entire world.

### **From Jew to Gentile: Luke's Portrayal of Jesus the Rejected Prophet**

According to Luke, Jesus' public ministry began with a sermon in the synagogue in Nazareth. The Jews were offended by his words and tried to kill him. This story summarizes Luke's narrative: the gospel is first offered to the Jews, who reject it; then it is taken to the Gentiles.

### **Luke's Distinctive Emphases Throughout His Gospel**

Luke describes Jesus as a prophet sent by God. Hebrew prophets were opposed, rejected, and often killed by the people to whom they were sent. In Luke's Gospel, Jesus presents himself as a prophet and knows he will die as one. Whereas Mark's Jesus questions his fate until the very last moment, Luke's Jesus knows he must die and shows no doubts about that necessity. His final words on the cross illustrate this: "Father, into your hands I commend my spirit" (Luke 23:46).

In sum, Jesus is rejected by his people and killed as a prophet. His death is related to salvation, but salvation is not brought by Jesus' death per se. Rather, Jesus' death as an innocent prophet elicits guilt and repentance. It is repentance that brings forgiveness and salvation.

### **Key Terms**

apology	Gentile	Law
Augustus, Caesar	Gospel	manuscript
comparative method	Greco-Roman biography	Markan priority
general history	Herod (the Great)	martyr
genre	historiography	messiah
genre criticism	Kingdom of God	Passion



Pontius Pilate	redaction criticism	Temple
prophet	Son of God	Theophilus
Q	Son of Man	tradition

## Pedagogical Suggestions

- [1.] At the end of Chapter 9, Ehrman suggests that Luke's understanding of the delay of the end of the age has social implications. Have students discuss this issue. What does Ehrman mean? What might these social implications be?
- [2.] Scholars have long suggested that Luke was a "feminist" because his Gospel contains so many stories about women. Have students read the Gospel of Luke with this issue in mind. How does Luke incorporate stories about women in his Gospel? Why might he have added these stories?
- [3.] How does Luke highlight Jesus' innocence in his Gospel? (Look particularly at the charges against Jesus that only Luke lists, the trial before Herod, and the pronouncements of Jesus' innocence by Pilate.) What does Luke gain by emphasizing Jesus' innocence?
- [4.] Luke's Gospel is very similar to other Greco-Roman biographies (e.g., that of Apollonius). In what ways does Luke depict Jesus as a divine man? Why would he do that? Does this reveal something about the makeup of his audience?
- [5.] If Jesus was rejected by Judaism, why does Luke focus so heavily on the Temple, and why are those who are so closely tied to the Temple among the first to recognize him (e.g., Anna and Simeon)?

# **Chapter 10:**

## **Jesus, the Man Sent from Heaven: The Gospel According to John**

### **Chapter Summary**

This chapter introduces the socio-historical method, an approach that seeks to understand how a text reflects its social situation. In order to review the methodologies, and to illustrate that they can be used with any book, this chapter applies all of the methods previously discussed to the Gospel of John.

#### **The Gospel of John from the Perspective of Genre Criticism**

In the Prologue, John refers to Jesus as the “Word” (*logos*) of God who existed with God from the beginning, who in fact *is* God. It is only at the end of this mystical reflection that John explains that the Word of God is Jesus. The Prologue, then, provides the reader with a very different expression of the nature of Jesus than any of the Synoptic Gospels. This biography is not about a mortal man; it is about a being who is, in his own right, divine.

The Gospel of John can be divided into two parts. The first twelve chapters narrate Jesus’ public ministry over several years. During this time, Jesus performs seven public “signs” and gives speeches that demonstrate his identity. Because Jesus has clearly expressed his identity, he condemns those who do not believe and eventually decides to end his public ministry. The next seven chapters (13–19) take place over the course of twenty-four hours. In these chapters, Jesus has his Last Supper with his disciples (though it is not a Passover meal) and is betrayed. He delivers a final discourse, known as the “Farewell Discourse,” in which he explains that he will soon return to heaven, but he will send the Holy Spirit to the disciples for assistance and comfort. Chapters 18 through 21 describe Jesus’ Passion and resurrection.

#### **The Gospel of John from a Comparative Perspective**

The comparative approach can be used to show differences between the Gospel of John and the Synoptic Gospels. John is the only Gospel that explicitly states that Jesus is equal to God and participated in the creation of the universe. In John, there is no birth narrative. Jesus is not

baptized by John (or at least such a baptism is not explicitly described). The temptation narrative is not present. Jesus does not preach an apocalyptic message and does not teach using parables. John's Jesus proclaims his identity openly: his discourses and signs are meant to reveal his true nature. Because Jesus' identity is abundantly clear, those who reject him are more strongly condemned than in the Synoptic Gospels.

### **The Gospel of John from a Redactional Perspective**

Applying the redactional method to John is difficult since his sources must be reconstructed from the Gospel itself. Most scholars agree that three of John's sources can be isolated on the basis of writing style, the repetition of stories, and the presence of literary seams. These sources are the signs source, the discourse source, and the Passion source. John probably used other sources as well (e.g., for the Prologue and the last chapter of the Gospel).

### **The Socio-Historical Method**

Having reviewed the interpretive methods presented in the textbook so far, this chapter introduces another: the socio-historical method. Scholars who use this method are interested in knowing how an author's (or his community's) experiences affected the way he told stories. This method assumes that communities tailor stories to fit their needs. By reading a text closely, therefore, we can uncover phases of a community's history. The sources embedded in this Gospel most likely come from different periods in the community's life and reflect different ways of understanding its faith.

### **The Gospel of John from a Socio-Historical Perspective**

One of the first things scholars notice about this Gospel is its different Christologies. Much of the Gospel of John reflects a "high Christology" in which Jesus is portrayed as completely divine. Other portions of the Gospel, however, reflect a "low Christology" that emphasizes Jesus' humanity.

Social historians explain these divergent Christologies by reconstructing this community's history. The first phase reflects the community's origins in the synagogue, perhaps somewhere in Palestine. Stories told during this stage emphasized Jesus' Jewishness and his humanity, and included stories about some Jews accepting Jesus as the messiah. Over time, these messianic Jews began to proselytize other Jews in the synagogue. The signs source points to this

tendency within the community. Eventually the Jews grew tired of the Christians and expelled them from the synagogue. This expulsion marks the second phase in the community's history.

The third phase resulted from the exclusion from the synagogue. The Christians may have felt persecuted, the result of which was the creation of an "us versus them" mentality, reflected in the dualities (e.g., light and dark) common in the Fourth Gospel. Thus, although Jesus was Jewish, the Jews became the enemy and were condemned because of their disbelief.

The community's origin in the synagogue explains the low Christology. At that time, members identified Jesus as the Lamb of God, a rabbi, and the messiah. As the community developed and separated from the synagogue, though, Jesus' divinity came to be emphasized.

### The Author of the Fourth Gospel

Like the other Gospels, the Gospel of John was written anonymously, though it has traditionally been attributed to John the son of Zebedee. Some of the stories may go back to one of Jesus' followers, but the Gospel itself was written well after the deaths of the disciples.

### Key Terms

apocalyptic	genre criticism	Sanhedrin
Apollonius of Tyana	"I am" sayings	signs source
beloved disciple	Johannine community	socio-historical method
biography	messiah	Son of God
Christology	pagan	synagogue
comparative method	Passion	Synoptic Gospels
Farewell Discourse	Passover	
genre	redaction criticism	tradition

### Pedagogical Suggestions

[1.] Have students discuss the importance of Jesus' public declarations of his identity and the signs he performs in the Fourth Gospel.

[2.] Discuss the ways in which each of the Gospel writers focuses on different aspects of Jesus' death and resurrection, and how these differences in focus exemplify the writer's perspective on which aspect he believed to be the most important. How does each author accomplish his goal?

- [3.] Have students identify and explain passages that reflect low and high Christologies in the Gospel of John.
- [4.] Have students read the Prologue carefully. How does John highlight for his readers major themes that recur throughout his Gospel?
- [5.] The Gospel of John is often described as the most anti-Jewish Gospel in the New Testament. Discuss this issue with students. Do they believe that the Gospel is anti-Jewish? If so, then in what ways was this anti-Jewish sentiment different from outright anti-Semitism? If not, why not?
- [6.] Discuss the way John deals with apocalypticism in his Gospel. Does John expect an imminent end of the world? Does John retain apocalyptic elements? Have students clearly identify apocalyptic elements and show how these are developed in the Gospel. Is an apocalyptic worldview necessarily tied to an expectation of the imminent end?

## Chapter 11:

# From John's Jesus to the Gnostic Christ: The Johannine Epistles and Beyond

### Chapter Summary

In addition to the Gospel, the Johannine community produced three letters (1, 2, and 3 John). These epistles are important because they provide scholars with more information about the social and theological development of this community. This chapter applies the “contextual” method to these epistles, trying to understand them in light of their context. The second half of the chapter examines Christian Gnosticism, a form of belief in which Christ was seen as a divine revealer of knowledge that would set people free from the evil material world.

#### The Questions of Genre and Author

The person who penned these epistles was most likely not the final redactor of the Gospel of John, though he was surely from the same community, since many themes are strikingly similar. The epistles, however, reflect a later time in the community's history when these Christians were encountering different problems than those reflected in the Gospel. Scholars believe that all three letters were written by the same person, even though the form of 1 John differs from that of the other two epistles. The second and third Johannine epistles follow the standard form of ancient letters. First John, on the other hand, does not include all of the elements of an ancient epistle (e.g., the author does not introduce himself, name his addressees, or offer an opening greeting or thanksgiving on their behalf, and he does not conclude with final prayers or well-wishing), so it may be better understood as something like a persuasive essay rather than a true letter.

#### The New Testament Epistolary Literature and the Contextual Method

The socio-historical and contextual methods are often used together, but whereas the socio-historical method focuses on the history of a community as it can be traced through time, the contextual method is concerned with interpreting the text itself. The socio-historical method uses the text to determine a community's history, and these results are presupposed when applying the contextual method. Thus, the contextual method uses the history of a community to interpret its—

stories. The assumption of this method is that a social and historical context is vital for interpreting a text.

### **The Johannine Epistles from a Contextual Perspective**

The Johannine letters indicate that a schism had occurred within the community. One group of Christians left the community because, according to the author of 1 John, “they have denied that Jesus is the Christ” (2:22). This letter, coupled with 2 John, makes it clear that these secessionists adhered to a docetic Christology: they believed Jesus did not come in the flesh.

In the discussion of the Gospel of John, we saw that the community’s Christology changed over time. After the Christians were expelled from the synagogue, their Christology became higher. The community came to believe that Jesus was equal to God. Some of these Christians apparently pushed their Christology even higher and maintained that Jesus was not just equal to God; he was God. If Jesus was God, they argued, then he could not be human. This Christology proved too radical for some of the Johannine Christians, and the community split. The Johannine epistles were written from the more conservative viewpoint.

### **Reflections on the Contextual Method**

If this historical reconstruction is accurate, why were the Johannine epistles written? First, we know that the author was not present within the community because he expresses his desire to visit them. Second, he sees himself as an authority figure who is able to dispense useful advice to a community. The letters urge the community to remain faithful to the teaching they have received and not to be influenced by the secessionists.

### **Beyond the Johannine Community: The Rise of Christian Gnosticism**

Some of the accusations leveled at the secessionists resemble beliefs of second-century Christian groups called the Gnostics. Our understanding of Gnosticism used to be limited to what could be drawn from the writings of its proto-orthodox opponents, but the discovery of a group of fifty-two Gnostic texts near Nag Hammadi, Egypt, in 1945 allows us to better reconstruct what Gnostics actually believed and practiced. These manuscripts were copied in the fourth century in Coptic, an ancient Egyptian language, but the books themselves were originally written in Greek—much earlier than that—some no later than the second century.

“Gnosticism” was not monolithic but included a diverse set of religious groups who looked to specific cosmological myths to explain their distinctive beliefs about the heavenly realm, the material world, and the nature of humanity. In these Gnostic myths, the divine realm was populated by the one God, as well as by a host of other divine entities that were emanations from the one God. The material world was not created by the highest God (who is completely spirit and has never had any direct connection with this world) but by an inferior, ignorant deity—usually identified with the God of the Jewish Scriptures. The material world itself came into being as the result of a cosmic disaster in which divine elements (immortal souls) were entrapped in human bodies. Human souls can be set free from this evil material world only by acquiring the secret knowledge (*gnosis*) of their divine identity and how they can return to their heavenly home. For Christian Gnostics, that knowledge was revealed through the secret teachings of Jesus—Christ, whose knowledge brings salvation from the evil material world.

Some of the most important Christian Gnostic groups were the Sethian Gnostics, the Valentinians, and the Thomasines. In the Sethian myths, the Old Testament Creator God created an imperfect, unjust material world in imitation of the perfect “Pleroma” (meaning “fullness”) of the spiritual realm. Humans were created as purely material beings but also had spirit breathed into (at least some of) them. Jesus is the incarnation of the divine Seth (the third son of Adam and Eve) who provides the knowledge necessary for human spirits to escape their material prisons and return to the divine realm. Sethians were highly ascetic and received a baptism that included five mystical “seals” that empowered them to transcend material existence through contemplation of the Pleroma.

Valentinian Gnosticism was founded by a man named Valentinus, who was heavily influenced by the Sethian Gnostic myths but adopted them into a proto-orthodox framework. Valentinians were not as condemning of the material world or the Creator God. Valentinians continued to worship alongside proto-orthodox Christians, confessing proto-orthodox doctrines and accepting proto-orthodox Scriptures but interpreting them in very different ways from non-Valentinian Christians. Valentinians divided humans into three categories: (1) those who are purely animal and cease to exist when they die; (2) regular Christians who are “soulish” or “psychic” and can be saved through faith and good works; and (3) the Valentinians themselves, who are pneumatic or “spiritual,” understanding the deeper truths necessary to return to the Pleroma.



Thomasine Christians appear to have shared a set of theological values that can be found in various literary texts that feature the figure of Didymus Judas Thomas who, in some early Christian traditions, was considered to be the twin of Jesus. While some scholars doubt whether these texts (the Gospel of Thomas, the Book of Thomas, the Acts of Thomas, the Hymn of the Pearl) should be categorized as “gnostic,” there is no question that there is a Gnostic-like quality to them: humans are depicted as sojourners from another realm, trapped in material bodies, in need of saving knowledge to release them back to their heavenly home.

### Gnostics and the Johannine Community

The similarities between the descriptions of those who left the Johannine community and the Gnostics are striking. It is not surprising that a part of the community would follow a path to Gnosticism: John portrays Jesus as a divine being who exists for all eternity with God and utilizes the symbolism of the duality of matter and spirit. Interestingly, the first extant commentary on the Gospel of John was written by Heraclion, a Gnostic.

### Key Terms

aeons	house churches	proto-orthodox
catholic	Ialdabaoth	secessionists
Christology	Ignatius	Sethians
contextual method	Irenaeus	socio-historical method
docetist	Johannine community	Sophia
epistle	Justin Martyr	synagogue
Gnostics	Marcion	Tertullian
Gospel	messiah	Valentinians
Greco-Roman world	Nag-Hammadi	
Heraclion	papyrus	

### Pedagogical Suggestions

[1.] After studying the Gospel of John and reading the Johannine epistles carefully, have students discuss the similarities between these books. Why do scholars believe that the epistles were written within the same community as the Gospel?

- [2.] Discuss the intended audiences of each of the Johannine epistles. Does the author change his message according to his audience? What were the specific reasons for writing each letter?
- [3.] Have students discuss the effect that Gnostic beliefs might have had on Christian communities. Why would Gnosticism pose a threat to proto-orthodox belief?
- [4.] Discuss the origin of the human race according to Gnostic mythology. What are aeons?—Who is Sophia? How does her imprisonment account for human feelings of alienation in the world?

## Chapter 12:

# Jesus from Different Perspectives: Other Gospels in Early Christianity

### Chapter Summary

There were many Gospels that were not included in the New Testament. It is important for historians to study these Gospels in order to understand the variety of views about Jesus that circulated in the first few centuries of Christian history.

#### Narrative Gospels

The *Gospel of the Nazareans*, an early Jewish-Christian Gospel, was written in Aramaic and may have originated in Palestine around the end of the first century. Scholars believe it was similar to the Gospel of Matthew. The *Gospel of the Ebionites* is a Gospel harmony—a text that attempts to iron out the differences between the Synoptic Gospels. The *Gospel of the Hebrews* was written in Greek and was likely used around Alexandria, Egypt. The anonymous author did not use the canonical Gospels directly; rather, he compiled a Gospel of his own by recording oral traditions. Some Church Fathers suggested that this Gospel had a Gnostic slant.

Marcion devised his own Gospel to correct what he saw as an erroneous acceptance of Judaism in the Gospels used in the Christian churches. He used an edited version of the Gospel of Luke, omitting the first two chapters because they challenged his docetic Christology.

#### Sayings Gospels

The *Gospel of Thomas*, a sayings Gospel included in the Nag Hammadi library, contains 114 discrete sayings of Jesus. This Gospel presents Jesus as a teacher and claims that whoever understands Jesus' teachings will obtain eternal life. The *Acts of Thomas* says that Didymus—Judas Thomas was a blood relation of Jesus. Since both “Didymus” and “Thomas” mean “twin,” the author may be suggesting that Didymus Judas Thomas was Jesus' twin brother. *Thomas* is important because it gives evidence of early sayings Gospels (like the hypothetical source Q), though it was itself unlikely to have been written before the second century.

Revelation discourses are yet another kind of sayings source. These are accounts of Jesus' appearances to his disciples after his resurrection and the secret knowledge Jesus shares with them about salvation. For example, in the *Apocryphon of John*, Jesus appears to John the son of Zebedee and reveals to him the secrets of the universe, the origin of evil, and the creation and salvation of humanity. The *Epistle of the Apostles* is a proto-orthodox revelation discourse written in opposition to Gnosticism. The authors of this discourse (claiming to be the eleven disciples) assert that Jesus appeared to them and warned them against the false teachings of Simon Magus and Cerinthus, two well-known Gnostic teachers.

### **Infancy Gospels**

In addition to stories about Jesus' death, resurrection, and ascension, people told stories about Jesus' childhood. According to the *Infancy Gospel of Thomas*, one of the earliest infancy Gospels (ca. 125 C.E.), Jesus was a mischievous boy who had a notoriously bad temper. As he matured, though, he came to use his power for good by saving people from illness and disasters. The *Proto-Gospel of James*, whose author claims to be Jesus' brother, explains why Mary was chosen to be Jesus' mother.

### **Passion Gospels**

Other Gospels focus on Jesus' suffering. The portion of the *Gospel of Peter* that survives from the second century claims to have been written by Jesus' disciple Peter. The author makes his anti-Judaism clear by indicting only the Jews in Jesus' death. The Christology of this text is also docetic. This is the only Gospel that offers a description of the resurrection itself.

The *Coptic Apocalypse of Peter* is also told from Peter's perspective but was obviously written by a different author. It contains an account of Jesus' crucifixion, but from a Gnostic perspective. In both this Gospel and the recently discovered *Gospel of Judas Iscariot*, Jesus is said to laugh at those who confuse what really matters, including his followers. The *Gospel of Judas Iscariot* portrays Judas not as the villain of the story but instead as its hero. Judas understands that Jesus must die so that he can return to his spiritual home.

### **Conclusion: The Other Gospels**

Even though the noncanonical Gospels contain little historically reliable information, we should not discount their historical value. These Gospels are very important to historians because they

show that for hundreds of years Christians continued to invent and tell stories about Jesus’ birth, life, teachings, deeds, death, resurrection, and ascension. Furthermore, these narratives are essential for our understanding of the wide variety of Christian beliefs and practices that existed in the second and third centuries.

## Key Terms

canon	Ialdabaoth	(Pontius) Pilate
Christology	Irenaeus	proto-orthodox
<i>Diatesseron</i>	L	Q
docetism	Law	signs-source
Ebionites	M	Simon Magus
Eusebius	Marcionites	Son-of-God
Gnostics	messiah	Son-of-Man
Gospel harmony	Nag-Hammadi	Synoptic Gospels
Herod (Antipas)	Passion	Tertullian

## Pedagogical Suggestions

- [1.] Have students read the *Gospel of Thomas* (included in the reader that accompanies this textbook) carefully. Which sayings are similar to Jesus’ teachings in the canonical Gospels? Which ones are different? Keeping in mind the Gnostic myth presented in chapter 11, have students discuss possible interpretations of a few of the sayings in the *Gospel of Thomas*.
- [2.] Scholars have noticed many similarities (as well as differences) between the Gospel of Matthew and the *Gospel of Peter*. Using the comparative method, have students discuss the main goals of each author. How do students account for the similarities and the differences between these texts? Do they think that there is a direct literary connection between them (i.e., does one of the Gospels rely on the other as a source)? If so, which Gospel do they think is earlier? Why?
- [3.] Students in New Testament courses often resist an approach that studies each Gospel on its own terms, isolating its particular themes and emphases from the larger New Testament canon. Discuss the issue of Gospel harmonies, such as the *Gospel of the Ebionites* and the *Diatesseron*. Although proto-orthodox Christians might have found some parts of the former Gospel objectionable, the latter was certainly “orthodox” in its presentation—it was based exclusively on the four New Testament Gospels. These harmonies, though, were not accepted into the canon. Have students discuss possible reasons for their exclusion.

- [4.] ~~The rising anti-Judaism from early Gospels to later ones (e.g., Mark to John to Peter) suggests to scholars that Judaism became more of a challenge to Christianity over the years. If this hypothesis is true, how do students interpret the role of the Jews in the *Gospel of Peter*? Does this author's characterization of the Jews help establish a relative date for the Gospel?~~
- [5.] ~~There is some scholarly debate over the date of the *Gospel of Thomas* and its relationship to the canonical Gospels. After reading *Thomas* closely, have students discuss both sides of these issues. Do they think *Thomas* is early or late? Did the author use the canonical Gospels? Did the New Testament authors use *Thomas*? What arguments do students find most compelling? Why?~~
- [6.] ~~Discuss the reasons why Christians might have written infancy Gospels, Gospels about Mary, and revelation discourses. What function might these texts have served in early Christian communities? Do the portrayals of Jesus in the Gospels discussed in this chapter seem "orthodox" to students? Why or why not? Why might Christians describe Jesus in these ways?~~
- [7.] ~~Have students read the *Gospel of Judas*. How does this account differ from those given in the canonical Gospels? How might Christianity be different if the *Gospel of Judas* had been included in the canon?~~

## Chapter 13:

# The Historical Jesus: Sources, Problems, and Methods

### Chapter Summary

This chapter marks the turn from a literary study of the Gospels to a historical inquiry of the figure of Jesus. Rather than focusing on the Gospel writers' beliefs about Jesus, we begin an exploration of the "historical Jesus." What can we be relatively certain about concerning what he said and did?

#### Problems with Sources

Most historians agree that in order to reconstruct the life of a person from antiquity, they need a number of sources that can be dated close to the events they narrate. Ideally, these sources would be independent of one another and would not contradict each other. In addition, historians look for texts that are internally consistent and are not biased toward their subject matter. Since our investigations thus far have shown that there are disagreements between the Gospel accounts, and that they are biased, we should look at non-Christian sources to corroborate our evidence.

#### Non-Christian Sources

Jesus is not mentioned by any pagan writer in the first century, and only three pagan authors mention Jesus within one hundred years of his death. The first reference to Jesus in pagan literature is in a letter written by the governor Pliny to the Emperor Trajan in 112 C.E. Pliny discusses the practices of the Christians in his province and gives us no information about the historical Jesus. The second (possible) reference to Jesus is by the historian Suetonius. Suetonius mentions a riot among Jews that was initiated by a man named "Chrestus." Some scholars believe this is a misspelling of "Christ." If, in fact, Suetonius is referring to Jesus, his narrative gives us information about later followers, not about Jesus himself. The only helpful information from pagan literature about Jesus' life that dates to within one hundred years of Jesus' death is from another historian, Tacitus. Tacitus says that Pontius Pilate executed Jesus during the reign of Tiberius. Although not all of Tacitus's information is correct (he says that Pilate was a procurator), he does corroborate information found in Christian sources (i.e. Jesus was killed on a cross).

Looking beyond these three pagan sources, Jesus is mentioned twice in Josephus's *Antiquities of the Jews*, a first-century Jewish text. One reference indicates that Jesus' brother James was killed by the high priest Ananus. In the other reference, Josephus gives more information: he says that Jesus was a teacher and a "doer of startling deeds" who had Jewish and Gentile followers. Josephus continues, reporting that the Jewish leaders accused Jesus and Pilate condemned him to the cross. In this passage, Josephus also states that Jesus was the messiah. Since Josephus never converted to Christianity, and since his works were copied and transmitted by Christians, we can be relatively sure that this "confession" was a later Christian insertion.

### **Christian Sources**

Since the non-Christian sources give us little helpful information, we must rely on Christian texts to reconstruct the words and deeds of the historical Jesus. As we have seen, the noncanonical Gospels are late and usually rely on earlier materials. Thus, they are of little use to historians seeking the historical Jesus. We might expect that Paul, the earliest New Testament author, would be a good source of information about the historical Jesus, but in fact Paul says surprisingly little about Jesus' life. Thus, historians must return to the New Testament Gospels for information about the historical Jesus.

### **Using Our Sources: Some of the Basic Rules of Thumb**

Historians agree that sources closest to the events they narrate have a greater likelihood of containing historically reliable material because they have undergone fewer revisions in oral tradition. Our earliest sources—thus those that historians favor—are Mark, Q, M, and L. Historians also suggest that passages reflecting a highly developed Christology are most likely the product of later traditions. Finally, passages that clearly slant the material toward the author's interests are suspect.

### **Specific Criteria and Their Rationale**

The criterion of independent attestation states that it is better to have a number of independent witnesses to an event. That is, a stronger case for historical reliability can be made if a saying or event is mentioned by two or more authors who did not know or use each other's work. (It is important to distinguish between independent sources and separate Gospels; a saying or event may be in all three Synoptic Gospels but only trace back to one independent witness: Mark.)



This criterion judges multiply attested material as more likely to be historically reliable. Since it is possible that historically accurate information could have been transmitted by only one author, however, this criterion cannot rule traditions to be *inauthentic*.

The criterion of dissimilarity suggests that if a tradition goes against what a Christian author was likely to write or believe, it is most likely historically reliable. The assumption of this criterion is that Christians were not likely to invent stories that disagreed with their own beliefs. Like the criterion of independent attestation, this criterion can only rule traditions to be historically reliable, not *unreliable*.

The criterion of contextual credibility effectively (and perhaps definitively) rules certain sayings of Jesus as *inauthentic*. This criterion states that if a saying or deed of Jesus cannot plausibly be placed within a first-century Palestinian context, then it cannot be considered historically reliable.

### Key Terms

criterion of contextual credibility	Josephus	Pontius Pilate
criterion of dissimilarity	L	Q
criterion of independent attestation	M	Son of God
Herod (Antipas)	Mishnah	Suetonius
	pagan	superstition
	Passion	Tacitus
	Pliny the Younger	Talmud
		tradition

### Pedagogical Suggestions

- [1.] Have students gather together all the information about Jesus that can be gleaned from pagan and Jewish sources, as well as that drawn from Paul’s letters. How would their understanding of Jesus and Christianity change if this was the only information available to them?
- [2.] Pick a few traditions from the Gospels and have students apply to them the criteria discussed in this chapter. Which traditions pass the criteria? What might this tell us about the historical Jesus?

[3.] Have students list and discuss which sources count as “independent.” What is the logic behind using these sources to construct the historical Jesus?

[4.] Argue whether any text can be its own proof of its own authority, or whether other sources are necessary to establish its authority. Can a text say of itself that every word in it is true, or is support from other sources needed to confirm the truth of those words? Have students find passages from pagan and Jewish sources that confirm New Testament passages. Are there any that are contrary?

# Chapter 14:

## Jesus in Context

### Chapter Summary

This chapter employs the criterion of contextual credibility to construct a picture of the historical Jesus. Any tradition that cannot plausibly be placed in a first-century Palestinian setting does not pass this criterion and must be considered historically unreliable. In order to interpret the Gospels and reach conclusions about the historical Jesus, we must understand the social and political environment of Palestine in the first century.

#### Popular Modes of Resistance to Oppression

In addition to the division of Judaism into sects, there were a variety of forms of resistance to Rome's social and economic demands. During Passover, for instance, many Jews went to Jerusalem not only to celebrate their liberation from Egypt but also to make an implicit statement about God's saving actions in the future. Although typically a silent protest, Passover did on occasion spark violent resistance, and Rome monitored the city carefully during this holiday.

Most protests against Rome were nonviolent. Often the Jews offered passive resistance to Rome's demands: on more than one occasion, Jews were willing to be martyred rather than break the Law. Occasionally, prophets came preaching the demise of Roman rule, but these movements were quickly quelled. There *were* some notable exceptions to the Jewish norm of nonviolent protests against Rome, however: in 6 C.E., the Jews rose up against Rome's taxation policy; and in 66 C.E., they rebelled against the Romans for a number of atrocious acts (e.g., looting the Temple). After a bloody war, Rome defeated the last holdouts in 70 C.E. and razed the Temple.

#### An Ideology of Resistance

One of the worldviews held by many in the first century is called "apocalypticism" (from the Greek word meaning "revealing" or "unveiling"). The Jews were confronted with a long history of foreign rule, a history that raised many questions: If God had given the land to the Jews, why did a seemingly unending line of foreign powers rule over it? Why were the Jews suffering under these foreign regimes? The answer, according to apocalypticists, was that God was ultimately in control, and the time was coming, when God would regain control of the world, reward the

righteous, and punish the wicked. Thus, apocalyptic thought offered an explanation for the foreign domination of Palestine and the suffering of the Jews.

Jewish apocalypticists were dualists: they believed in evil and good, Satan and God, death and life. These were cosmic powers with which humans had to ally themselves. Apocalypticists believed that the suffering of the righteous would not subside until God broke into history and established his Kingdom. For those who remained faithful, there was the promise of vindication. Most important, all of this would happen soon.

### **Jesus in His Apocalyptic Context**

Using the criteria discussed in Chapter 13, this chapter argues that Jesus was an apocalyptic prophet who believed that the Son of Man would arrive soon in judgment and usher in the Kingdom of God. This ancient portrayal of Jesus included the prescribed human response to the coming judgment. The people of Israel were to repent, trust God, and love one another.

### **Considering the Rules of Thumb**

Scholars agree that we should give preference to earlier traditions because they are closer to the events they narrate and thus have undergone fewer revisions. The earliest traditions (Mark, Q, M, and L) show Jesus as an apocalypticist. Later sources, however, omit or even argue against this portrayal of Jesus. It seems, then, that as time passed, Christians grew dissatisfied with the depiction of Jesus as an apocalypticist, and it fell out of the tradition.

### **Considering the Specific Criteria**

The criterion of contextual credibility states that if a tradition about Jesus cannot be placed in a first-century Palestinian setting, it cannot be historically accurate. The portrayal of Jesus as an apocalypticist passes this criterion: we know of several first-century apocalyptic groups and individuals located in Palestine (e.g., the community that produced the Jewish book of Daniel, the community that produced the Dead Sea Scrolls, John the Baptist, Theudas, and the Egyptian).

The criterion of dissimilarity is difficult to apply to traditions about Jesus, since Jesus' disciples followed him precisely because they agreed with his apocalyptic message. There are ways, though, that early Christians differed from Jesus in their understanding of the coming end. For example, in several places Jesus teaches that the Son of Man will come in judgment. In these passages, Jesus does not indicate that he is the Son of Man (e.g., Mark 8:38). His followers, on—

the other hand, came to believe that Jesus *was* the coming Son of Man. It seems improbable that Christians would invent passages that left Jesus' identity as the Son of Man unclear. In other sayings, moreover, Jesus *does* refer to himself as the Son of Man. According to the criterion of dissimilarity, we cannot know whether these are Jesus' words or those of his followers.

Apocalyptic traditions are independently attested in the earliest Christian texts. Mark, Q, M, and L all present Jesus as an apocalypticist, and some remnants of apocalypticism can be found in the Gospel of John.

### The Beginning and End as Keys to the Middle

Perhaps the most compelling reason to view Jesus as an apocalyptic prophet is the line of apocalypticism that precedes and follows him. Jesus associated with John the Baptist, whose ministry was apocalyptic, and we know that Paul's churches were formed on the expectation of the imminent coming of the Kingdom of God. The only connection between John and Paul is Jesus. It was Jesus' apocalypticism, first influenced by John the Baptist, that was the source of apocalypticism in the early church.

### Key Terms

Antiochus-Ephiphanes	Egyptian, the	Pharisees
apocalypse	Essenes	Pontius-Pilate
apocalypticism	Fourth-Philosophy	prophet
context	Hasmoneans	Q
	Herod-Antipas	Qumran
covenant	Josephus	resurrection
criterion-of-contextual-	Kingdom-of-God	Sadducees
credibility	L	Sepphoris
criterion-of-	Law	Son-of-Man
dissimilarity	M	Temple
criterion-of-	Maccabean-revolt	Theudas
independent-	messiah	Torah
attestation	Mishnah	Zealots
cult	Passover	

## Pedagogical Suggestions

- [1.] Based on the information found in this chapter, have students sketch Jewish history from the kingdom united under David and Solomon to the destruction of the Temple by the Romans. Have students discuss ways people might react to centuries of political, social, and economic domination. Does this history explain the revolts discussed in this chapter? Does it explain the various promises of Israelite restoration found in the prophets of the Hebrew Bible?
- [2.] Show Monty Python's *The Life of Brian*. Have students identify the various characterizations of Jewish groups in the film. What modes of resistance, for instance, are depicted? What philosophies are caricatured? How do Brian's followers exhibit Jewish expectations of the messiah?
- [3.] Discuss the importance of Passover for Jewish resistance in Palestine. What was the significance of Jesus entering Jerusalem at this time of year? Why would his teachings and actions be particularly threatening to Roman peace during this holiday?
- [4.] Discuss reasons why circumstances in Palestinian history may have bolstered the popularity of apocalyptic worldviews. What does apocalypticism offer to a people dominated by a foreign power?

# Chapter 15:

## Jesus, the Apocalyptic Prophet

### Chapter Summary

#### The Apocalyptic Deeds of Jesus

Christian descriptions of events leading up to Jesus' crucifixion also contribute to a portrayal of Jesus as an apocalypticist. If Jesus had only been a Jewish reformer, there would have been no reason for Roman authorities to notice him—let alone crucify him. If his message was subversive, however—if he prophesied the downfall of the present regime and the coming of a new kingdom—there would indeed have been reason to kill him.

Although the Romans crucified Jesus, the Gospels indicate that it was done at the instigation of the Jewish leaders. Jesus not only preached the coming of God's Kingdom. When he entered the Temple and wreaked havoc there, he denounced the Temple authorities, proclaiming that God's Temple had been corrupted and was inhabited by a den of thieves. Some scholars suggest that the cleansing of the Temple should be interpreted as an enacted parable: by turning over the tables, Jesus may have been predicting the destruction of the Temple.

Yet another literary indication of Jesus' apocalyptic deeds is his association with twelve disciples. Twelve is a symbolic number in Jewish tradition, a symbol of the twelve tribes of Israel. The tradition of the twelve may reflect the expectation of a new Kingdom that would once again unify God's people. In addition, Jesus' association with outcasts is fitting, because he taught that the outcasts of this world would occupy a prominent place in the coming Kingdom.

Jesus' reported healings are also indicative of his apocalyptic ministry. Exorcisms, for instance, illustrate the victory of good over evil: with this triumph, the Kingdom was entering into the world.

#### The Apocalyptic Teachings of Jesus

A number of Jesus' sayings refer to the imminent coming of the Son of Man, the day of judgment, the importance of repentance and preparation, and the Kingdom of God. Taking into account the criterion of dissimilarity, it is likely that Jesus did not equate himself with the cosmic

Son of Man, but instead expected that this figure, described in Daniel, would soon come to judge the world.

### The Apocalyptic Death of Jesus

Jesus took his apocalyptic message to the heart of Judaism—the Jerusalem Temple—during Passover, a time when a large number of Jews were available to hear his teachings. At Jesus’ Last Supper with the disciples, he interpreted his death as bringing forgiveness of sins. Although this was a Christian teaching and thus does not pass the criterion of dissimilarity, it does show the apocalyptic implications of Jesus’ death. It is likely that Jesus anticipated Jewish reaction to his teachings and was not surprised when he was arrested.

### Key Terms

apocalypticism	Essenes	Pharisees
Apollonius of Tyana	Hanina ben Dosa	Pontius Pilate
Caiaphas	Honi the “circle drawer”	prophet
chief priests	Jesus the son of Ananias	Q
Christology	Johannine community	Sadducees
criterion of dissimilarity	Josephus	Sanhedrin
cult	Kingdom of God	Son of Man
Cynics	L	Temple
disciple	M	Theudas
	messiah	
Egyptian, the	Passover	

### Pedagogical Suggestions

- [1.] Have students look at the Son of Man sayings in the Gospels. To whom do these refer? Does Jesus seem to think that he is the Son of Man? Do the students think that these sayings reflect an apocalyptic point of view?
- [2.] Have students discuss the import of Jesus as an apocalyptic prophet. Does this identification change anything they thought before? Does it matter to them? What are the consequences of believing Jesus was an apocalyptic prophet?



~~[3.] How do students account for the differences in the apocalyptic thought expressed in the Gospels?~~

~~[4.] Discuss why the Romans might find Jesus' apocalyptic message threatening and therefore think it reasonable to execute him.~~

# Chapter 16:

## From Jesus to the Gospels

### Chapter Summary

#### The Beginning of Christianity

Christianity is, as many people have pointed out, not the religion *of* Jesus, but the religion *about* Jesus. For historians, Christianity begins not with Jesus' birth, his public ministry, or even his death and resurrection; for historians, it begins with the *belief* in the resurrection, the central event for salvation.

#### Jesus' Resurrection from an Apocalyptic Perspective

The first believers were Jesus' closest followers who presumably agreed with his apocalyptic teachings. Their interpretation of the empty tomb was influenced by this worldview. For the first Christians, Jesus' death and resurrection symbolized the beginning of the end: apocalypticists believed that the resurrection of the dead would occur at the end of the age. Since, in their view, Jesus had been resurrected, the end must be near. Jesus' resurrection demonstrated God's triumph over death. In addition, these Christians believed that Jesus was exalted in heaven and had assumed a prominent position there; they also believed that he would be the apocalyptic Judge who would return at the end of the age to rule the Kingdom of God.

#### Jesus' Death, According to the Scriptures

Those Jews who awaited the coming of the messiah expected that he would come with power and authority. They would have difficulty, therefore, believing that Jesus was the messiah, because he was powerless and suffered an ignoble death at the hands of the Romans.

Those Jews who came to believe that Jesus was the messiah used the Jewish Bible to confirm their beliefs. Although the Hebrew Bible does not explicitly connect the messiah with suffering, there are many passages that speak of the suffering of a righteous person (e.g. Psalm 22). Christians who read these parts of Scripture were convinced that the biblical text was referring to Jesus. Early Christians came to interpret passages in Isaiah (the "Songs of the Suffering Servant") as predictions of Jesus' role as Messiah. However, these passages do not use

the term “Messiah.” In fact, the Hebrew Bible appears, at times, to associate the “Suffering-Servant” with Israel in exile. Nevertheless, these Scriptural passages became important to early-Christian understandings of Jesus as a messiah who had to suffer as a sacrifice for the sins of the world.

### The Emergence of Different Understandings of Jesus

As we have seen, early Christianity was far from a unified religion. There were vast differences in the ways Christians understood Jesus’ significance. The term “Son of Man” would have resonated with some Jewish-Christian groups familiar with the apocalyptic book of Daniel. The identification of Jesus as the Son of Man would have led these Christians to believe that Jesus was the Judge of the world. Pagans, on the other hand, would have had to be told about the cosmic figure in Daniel or would have simply understood the term “Son of Man” to be a statement about Jesus’ humanity. The term “Son of God,” too, carried different meanings, depending on one’s religious background. For Jews, this title referred someone favored by God, such as a king. For Gentiles, on the other hand, the term referred to a divine man.

All of these interpretations made their ways into stories told about Jesus, and they were passed from person to person, community to community, and generation to generation. Many of these stories were included in the earliest Christian writings. When the New Testament books are read separately, the differences between them stand out. The process of canonization, however, works to homogenize the texts. Through the placement of these disparate texts into one book, the New Testament, the reader is confronted with a literary unit, the implication of which is that the books are no longer read as individual stories but as a composite.

### Key Terms

apocalypticist

canon

Ebionites

Kingdom of God

Maccabean revolt

messiah

prophet

resurrection

Son of God

Son of Man

Songs of the Suffering-Servant

tradition

vicarious suffering

## Pedagogical Suggestions

- [1.] Students often think that Jesus and his first disciples were Christians. Have students discuss when they think Christianity began. Did Christianity begin with Jesus' ministry, his death, or his resurrection (and why is the resurrection not an option for historians)? Or, as the chapter argues, did Christianity begin when people started to *believe* in Jesus' atoning death and his resurrection from the dead?
- [2.] Discuss how Jesus' followers may have come to the conclusion that Jesus was the messiah and how Christians have used Scripture in particular ways to show this.
- [3.] Discuss how Jews and pagans would have understood the terms "Son of Man," "Son of God," and "messiah." In what ways could early Christian missionaries have overcome different understandings of these titles?
- [4.] Early Christians disagreed on when Jesus became the Son of God. What options were proposed, and what theological/Christological difference does it make?
- [5.] Have students read Psalm 22 alongside Mark 15. Invite them to discuss the several ways that ancient and modern readers might understand the relationship between these passages. Possible positions might include: Psalm 22 is a prediction of Jesus' sufferings (a theological stance held by Christian readers for centuries); Psalm 22 has been plagiarized by Mark; the author of Mark alludes to Psalm 22 (and other sources) for certain literary and theological ends; some of the text of Psalm 22 could have part of the historical record (i.e. perhaps the historical Jesus (a Jew) quoted the Psalm ("My God, my God....") before dying), etc.

## Chapter 17:

# Luke's Second Volume: The Acts of the Apostles

### Chapter Summary

#### The Genre of Acts and Its Significance

The book of Acts resembles an ancient general history. It traces Christianity from Jesus' resurrection to the arrival of the apostle Paul in Rome. Ancient histories like Acts are not known for their absolute objectivity or historical accuracy, but rather sought to trace key events from a people's history in order to depict how the character of a people was established. Accordingly, we can assume that Acts reflects the concerns of its author. As modern readers, then, we should approach the book of Acts as another window into Luke's view of salvation history.

#### The Thematic Approach to Acts

This chapter introduces another method for the study of the New Testament, the thematic approach. When scholars approach texts thematically, they look for recurring ideas that can shed light on an author's emphases. With Acts, we are particularly well positioned to use the thematic approach because we can trace the development of particular ideas from Luke's Gospel throughout Luke's account of the early history of the church in Acts.

#### From Gospel to Acts: The Opening Transition

The opening verses of Acts provides examples of some of the themes that Luke will emphasize throughout Acts. One prominent theme in the Gospel is the Jewish rejection of the Christian message, and the subsequent Christian ministry to pagans (Gentiles).—God's message, according to Acts, originates and goes forth from Jerusalem because the message is rejected there. Acts emphasizes the delay of the end times in order to bring the gospel to pagans. Finally, Acts depicts the development and movement of the Christian church as being under the direction of God. From a narrative perspective, Acts depicts the geographic and ethnic spread of the Christian message at the hands of two major figures, Peter and Paul.

## Themes in the Speeches in Acts

A study of the speeches delivered to believers in Acts reveals and builds upon several Lukan themes. The center of the faith continues to be Jerusalem, the city in which the disciples were instructed to stay for a short time after Jesus' ascension. Christianity is portrayed as a continuation of Judaism and, as such, the fulfillment of Scripture. The Christian Church is seen as a continuation of Jesus' own ministry. God is completely in charge of the Christian mission. There is no distinction between Jew and Gentile, and Gentiles do not need to become Jews in order to be saved. The salvation of Gentiles is the fulfillment of Jewish scripture.

In Acts, Luke also continues his emphasis on the sacrifice Jesus made on behalf of the world. This innocent man was a victim of injustice. God reversed this injustice, though, by raising Jesus from the dead. As we saw in the Gospel, Luke does not believe that Jesus' death itself brings atonement. Rather, the miscarriage of justice exposes guilt, which in turn brings about repentance—the necessary action for salvation.

## Conclusion: The Author and His Themes in Context

These two volumes were written anonymously, though the issue of authorship is more complicated here than it is with Matthew and Mark. In Acts, the author occasionally writes in the first person, a fact that has led many to believe that he was an eyewitness to some of the action. There are strong reasons, however, to question this (e.g. when Acts is compared to Paul's own accounts of his ministry, there are substantial differences).

Two Lukan themes appear to be at odds with one another. How is it possible that he 1) emphasizes Jewish roots of Christianity while 2) expressing concern for Gentile mission? The answer may trace back to some first-century social pressures that the author felt. Early Christians were viewed with suspicion by pagans because their religion was seen as "too new." Acts may be seen as a sort of apology (reasoned defense), claiming antiquity for Christianity by emphasizing its Jewish roots, while stressing the validity of the Gentile mission (perhaps because he was part of a Christian group that comprised many Gentile converts).

## Key Terms

apology

atonement

general history

apostle

comparative method

genre

genre-criticism	novel (ancient)	thematic method
Gentile	pagan	Theophilus
gospel	Pentecost	Thucydides
Greco-Roman biography	Pontius Pilate	Tiberius
Josephus	prophet	tradition
martyr	redactional method	“we” passages
messiah	Sanhedrin	

## Pedagogical Suggestions

- [1.] Have students discuss the parallels Luke draws between characters in Luke and characters in Acts (e.g., Jesus and Stephen or Jesus and Paul). How do these parallels reveal Luke's themes?
- [2.] After identifying Luke's primary themes in the Gospel, have students trace them through Acts. Does Luke use these themes in exactly the same way throughout the text, or do they change? If they remain the same, what can that tell us about Luke's reason for telling this story? If they change, what does that mean?
- [3.] Have students discuss possible reasons why Luke chose to write a biography of Jesus *and* a history of the early church.
- [4.] Have students identify unique thematic features of Acts. Do these features help explain why Luke wrote about the early church?
- [5.] Have students read a summary of an ancient Greco-Roman novel (e.g., Chariton's *Chaereas and Callirhoe* or Achilles Tatius's *Leucippe and Clitophon*, available online). Discuss the ways that the Acts of the Apostles is and is not similar to the genre of ancient novel. Do students think that Acts is an ancient novel or a general history?
- [6.] Discuss ways that Luke suggests that God is ultimately in charge of the Christian mission.
- [7.] In Acts (and, as we will see, in Paul's letters), Paul's relationship to Judaism is complicated. Discuss the various views Paul (as depicted by Luke) has on the Jewish Law and its relationship to himself, other Jews, and Gentiles.



## Chapter 18:

### Paul the Apostle: The Man and His Mission

#### Chapter Summary

In Christian tradition, it appears that Paul was second only to Jesus in the rise and spread of Christianity. Thirteen of the twenty-seven books of the New Testament claim to be written by Paul, and tradition has attributed yet another to him (Hebrews). The book of Acts, moreover, devotes over half of its history to Paul's ministry.

Paul began, however, not as a devoted Christian but as a committed opponent of Christianity. Eventually he converted and began a missionary journey throughout a large part of the empire.

#### The Study of Paul: Methodological Difficulties

Pseudepigrapha, writings under a false name, were not uncommon in the ancient world. Most scholars believe that some of the New Testament letters attributed to Paul are in fact pseudepigraphic. Based on authorship issues, the Pauline corpus is divided into three groups: the Pastoral epistles (1 and 2 Timothy and Titus—most probably *not* written by Paul), the Deuteropauline epistles (Ephesians, Colossians, and 2 Thessalonians—probably *not* written by Paul), and the undisputed Pauline letters (Romans, 1 and 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Philippians, 1 Thessalonians, and Philemon—everyone accepts that these were written by Paul).

Another problem students of Paul must confront is Luke's account of Paul's ministry in the Acts of the Apostles. The chapter on Acts suggested that the book is too heavily influenced by Lukan theology to use as a historical source for Paul's mission. We should rely, then, primarily on Paul's own account of his work (the undisputed letters).

One of the most important issues to keep in mind as we read and study Paul's letters is their occasional nature. Paul corresponded with specific communities he founded (with the exception of Rome), and in these letters he addressed specific issues with which these churches struggled. Because of the nature of Paul's letters, we should not read them as systematic theology. Rather than forcing Paul's statements into categories, we should apply the contextual method to determine the circumstances under which Paul corresponded with his churches.

## The Life of Paul

It is clear that Paul was educated, since he had the ability to read and to write in a sophisticated fashion. Since Paul spoke and wrote in Greek, he knew and used the Septuagint.

Although Paul's letters do not regularly reveal his life experiences, on occasion these experiences served his missionary needs, and so he included them in his letters. Paul's life can be divided into three periods, with the first period being when he was a devout Jew. He was born to Jewish parents and carefully followed the Law as outlined by the Pharisees. During this time of his life, Paul opposed Christianity, probably because it claimed that the messiah had suffered and died.

The second period of his life began at his calling by Jesus. In one way, Paul's apocalyptic views were confirmed by his new belief in Jesus' resurrection. He came to view Jesus as the firstfruits of the resurrection, the sign that the end was indeed imminent. Paul's belief that Jesus was alive proved to him that God had already defeated death and therefore the cosmic battle between good and evil had begun.

After reinterpreting his expectations of the messiah to conform to the events of Jesus' death, Paul had to tackle the difficult problem of the Law. Although many scholars wonder if Paul ever reached a consistent conclusion about the Law, we can be relatively sure that after his conversion, he did not believe that a person could be made righteous (or "justified") by following the Law. Only faith (or "faithfulness"; the Greek word can mean either) in Christ made a person righteous. The Law was given by God and was therefore good, but it was given as a guide for right behavior, not as a means of justification. Once Paul came to believe that it was not the written Law that justified a person, he apparently came to the conclusion that Gentiles did not need to convert to Judaism to obtain salvation.

The third period of Paul's life centered on his missionary activities. Paul wrote to communities he had founded but had subsequently left to continue his mission elsewhere. This correspondence represents only one side of a conversation, since Paul often responded to letters he received from his churches. In many of his letters, Paul urged Christians to return to their original faith (especially when other missionaries had come preaching a different gospel) and clarified aspects of his teaching that church members had misunderstood or forgotten.

## Key Terms

apocalypticist	Gentile	pseudonymous
apostle	gospel	resurrection
canon	Law	Sadducees
contextual method	messiah	Seneca
covenant	pagan	Septuagint
Deutero-Pauline epistles	Pastoral epistles	Tarsus
Diaspora	Pauline Corpus	Torah
epistle	Pharisee	tradition
Essenes	polytheism	undisputed Pauline epistles
firstfruits of the resurrection	pseudepigrapha	

## Pedagogical Suggestions

- [1.] Compare the problems confronting the historian in establishing the historical Jesus and the problems involved in establishing the historical Paul. Are the problems relating to the two men the same or different?
- [2.] Discuss the problems with our sources for Paul's life and ministry. Can Acts be read as a historically reliable source for Paul's life and missions? How does Acts compare to the undisputed Pauline letters? Are these problems so serious as to make any reconstruction of the historical Paul impossible? Why or why not? If not, how can we use these sources confidently?
- [3.] Chapter 17 discussed the themes that Luke emphasizes in Acts and the problem with using Acts as a historically reliable account of Paul's life and mission. After reading about Paul's own description of his life, have students discuss how Luke's portrayal of Paul contributes to Luke's overall agenda.
- [4.] Discuss the information we can glean from Paul's letters about his life. What transformations did he go through? What information about Paul should we take with us as we begin to read his letters?
- [5.] To help students see the challenge of categorizing early members of the Jesus movement, have them discuss the following. Is Paul a Jew? Is he a Christian? Did he cease to be a Jew when he came to see Jesus as the Messiah? Or was he simply a particular type of apocalyptic Jew? If he is to be labelled as a Christian, what "kind" of Christian is he, based on the types—

we have discussed in this course? Can he be categorized as “proto-orthodox”? (Ideally—students will notice that Marcionites, Gnostics, and proto-orthodox Christians all appealed to the writings of Paul!) The purpose of this exercise is to show that categorizations, while helpful in academic discussions, can ultimately misrepresent the ancient figures that they claim to exemplify.

## **Chapter 19:**

# **Paul and His Apostolic Mission: 1 Thessalonians as a Test Case**

## **Chapter Summary**

First Thessalonians is most likely the oldest Pauline letter that has survived, with many scholars dating it to around 49 C.E. It is a friendship letter in which Paul renews his ties with the community. This chapter uses 1 Thessalonians to reconstruct Paul's "modus operandi," i.e. how he established ancient assemblies, what he taught, the challenges his assemblies faced, etc.

### **The Founding of the Church in Thessalonica**

Paul typically chose large cities in which to spread his gospel, presumably because there were more potential converts there. Paul did not concentrate on converting large groups of people; he did not stand on the street corner and shout his message. Rather, he set up shop, perhaps dealing in leather working (a detail from Acts), and talked with people (mostly pagans) as they came into the store.

Presumably, Paul began the process of conversion by convincing pagans that they were worshipping false gods (1 Thess 1:9–10). Then he introduced the concept of the one God, the God of Israel. Once Paul had convinced a person of these two premises, he began to speak of Jesus as the Son of God who, through his death and resurrection, brought salvation. Accordingly, the Thessalonians believed that Jesus' death and resurrection brought Christians into a right relationship with God. These Christians, furthermore, adhered to Paul's apocalyptic belief that Jesus would return soon to judge the world.

### **The Beginnings of the Thessalonian Church: A Socio-Historical Perspective**

Although historians cannot be certain of the socioeconomic makeup of Paul's churches, it seems likely that most converts were not wealthy, elite, or educated—though certainly some were. These Christians did not meet in public places but in private homes called "house churches." The communities apparently thought of themselves as closed groups, and there were strict

membership regulations. Perhaps because of the closed nature of their association, they experienced some persecution from those outside the church.

What is atypical about 1 Thessalonians is that this church does not appear to have fallen away from Paul's basic teachings: it does not have the social or ethical problems that plagued the churches in Corinth and Galatia. Paul nonetheless warns the Christians against unethical behavior, lest they give outsiders reason to persecute them.

### **The Church at Thessalonica After Paul's Departure**

After Paul, Timothy, and Silvanus left Thessalonica to continue their mission elsewhere, Paul sent Timothy back to the Thessalonians to check on them. When Timothy returned, Paul penned this letter as a response to some of the church's concerns. The Thessalonians' primary concern appears to have involved the eschatological end. They had taken Paul's apocalyptic message seriously and were disturbed when members of the church died before Jesus' return. The church members were concerned about the ultimate fate of these dead believers. Paul assures the Thessalonians that when Jesus returned, those who had died would be the first raised. Paul, however, appears to have expected some of the church members to be alive when his apocalyptic expectations were realized.

Paul wrote in the typical style of Greco-Roman letters: his letters begin with a prescript that names the author(s) and the addressee(s). A prayer or blessing follows, and then there is an expression of thanksgiving to God for the congregation. After the main body of the letter, Paul typically sends greetings to particular church members, gives general admonitions, sometimes refers to his future travel plans, and gives a final blessing and farewell.

### **Conclusion: Paul the Apostle**

Paul considered himself the apostle to the Gentiles. His mission in Thessalonica, as well as in other places, was directed at Gentiles. Paul convinced these people to turn away from pagan gods, to accept the God of Israel and Jesus his only Son. These Christians also wholeheartedly awaited Jesus' return in judgment and vindication.

## **Key Terms**

apocalypticist

apostle

cults

Cynics	insula	Son-of-God
epistle	Marcus Aurelius	Stoics
Gentile	messiah	synagogue
gospel	pagans	Torah
Greco-Roman world	philosophy	voluntary associations
house church	resurrection	

## Pedagogical Suggestions

- [1.] To help students understand the challenge of reconstructing a socio-historical situation based on a letter, perform the following exercise. Find two or three letters that have been written in various historical situations. You might consider using a letter written during a war (there are plenty of these online), an email from a colleague or family member, and a love letter (also lots of these online). The important thing is that you have some degree of access to the historical and social situations of these letters. Do not give students this contextual information right away. Let them work together on reconstructing what they think is happening in the letter. Who is writing it? To whom is he/she writing? What is their relationship? Where are they? When are they? What are their major concerns? To what degree can we draw large conclusions about their positions on particular issues? Obviously, the questions you ask will depend on the letters you use. Once students have attempted to reconstruct the background of these letters, share with them the contextual information that you have.
- [2.] Have students discuss plausible scenarios in which Paul could have converted pagans to Christianity. Have the class divide into two groups—one Christian and one pagan—and role-play. What kinds of arguments for conversion are most compelling? Do they agree with the scenario set out in Chapter 18? Do their conclusions reflect what Paul did according to 1 Thessalonians 1:9–10?
- [3.] The chapters on the Gospel of John and the Johannine epistles discussed the rise of an “us-versus-them” mentality that worked to differentiate Johannine Christians from the Jews of the synagogue. How do Paul’s churches (as reconstructed from his letters) depict a similar attitude? How do they depict a different attitude?
- [4.] Compare the apocalyptic ideas found in Paul’s preaching with those found in Jewish and pagan circles. What are some of the similarities between them? What are some of the differences?

## Chapter 20:

# Paul and the Crises of His Churches: 1 and 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Philippians, and Philemon

## Chapter Summary

### 1 Corinthians

Corinth was a port city that, justly or not, had a bad reputation for sexual impropriety. Whether or not such associations were warranted, Paul's letters to the church in Corinth indicate that the Christian assembly in Corinth had a series of its own issues. He wrote to demand higher ethical and moral standards of the community. These issues included: infighting based on some groups thinking they were superior to others; legal battles in which Christians were taking one another to court; injustices at religious gatherings, during which some members would consume all of the food and wine before other members had even arrived; sexual improprieties (men sleeping with prostitutes; a man sleeping with his stepmother). Furthermore, questions regarding whether Christians were allowed to eat meat sacrificed to idols, or whether married Christians should have sex, are also addressed.

Many of the difficulties in the Corinthian community can be traced to a fundamental theological difference between some members and Paul: some of the Corinthians believed that they had died *and* risen with Christ. Paul, on the other hand, insists that salvation entailed a future, bodily resurrection which had not yet been accomplished—it would occur when Jesus returned as part of God's wrathful destruction of the forces of this world (In 1 Cor 15:2, Paul tells the Corinthians that they “are being saved”). According to Paul, the problems above were the consequence of the Corinthians' mistaken beliefs about God's means and methods of salvation and the character of this world (fallen, governed by evil). Those who saw themselves as spiritually superior failed to recognize that God's salvation does not hinge on human wisdom, as evidenced by the centrality of Jesus' crucifixion. The assembly's infighting and ethical lapses, says Paul, are further evidence that the community has not experienced salvation. Evil forces are everywhere, and if you do not see that, you are in imminent danger. Paul also preaches the importance of self-sacrificing love, particularly the love which governs one's use of spiritual—



gifts in the church (1 Cor 13). Such love would cause one *not* to eat meat sacrificed to idols if so doing was helpful to another. Such love would prompt married Christians to see to the sexual needs of their partners (who are living in a world where evil forces are actively seducing them).

## **2 Corinthians**

Many scholars believe that 2 Corinthians is a compilation of several letters because they believe the tone of the letter changes significantly in places, alternating between anger, sorrow, judgment, and joy. This chapter suggests that after Paul founded the church at Corinth, he wrote a letter that is no longer extant. Paul later received a letter from the Corinthians asking advice on several problems the community faced, and his response was the New Testament letter of 1 Corinthians. Apparently, sometime later, Paul visited the church and was in some way publicly humiliated. Around this time, some missionaries (the “superapostles”) came to town teaching that Christians were already exalted with Christ. Paul then wrote what is referred to as his “painful letter” (identified in the chapter as 2 Cor 10–13) in which he expresses anger and hurt at the circumstances of his last visit. He also vehemently attacks the superapostles. Finally, at the news of the Corinthians’ repentance, Paul wrote a fourth letter (2 Cor 1–9) in which he expresses joy over the church’s return to his gospel. Many of the same apocalyptic themes are found throughout the letters: this world is governed by evil forces, Christians (and true apostles) will be marked by their suffering, not by their power, and God will redeem the righteous soon, in the future, with a heavenly, glorified body.

## **Galatians**

Paul wrote the letter to the Galatians to counter the message of missionaries who visited Galatia after he left. These missionaries taught that Gentile Christians must follow the Jewish Law, particularly that Gentile Christian men must be circumcised. Paul, however, insists that Gentiles who submit to circumcision in order to be justified are rejecting God’s work through Christ. Paul’s disgust at the Galatians is apparent in the form of the letter: it is the only Pauline letter that does not contain a thanksgiving.

Paul begins his letter of reprimand by affirming his authority and the truthfulness of his message. Because the Galatians had turned from Paul’s message to a new gospel, Paul argues that they have abandoned God and stand under a curse.

The major theological point Paul makes in his letter to the Galatians is that a person is justified through faith in Christ (or, alternately, “the faithfulness of Christ”), not through works of the Law. Paul argues that if the Law could justify a person, then Jesus died for no reason.

## Philippians

Philippians, like 2 Corinthians, may be a compilation of two or more letters. The first two chapters resemble a friendship letter: Paul wrote to assure the Philippians of his own well-being, as well as that of Epaphroditus, a member of their church. At the beginning of chapter 3, though, the tone changes abruptly, with Paul chastising those in the community for embracing circumcision and for the discord between two women in the assembly.

One explanation for the abrupt transitions in this letter is that at some point after Paul left the church in Philippi, he was arrested. When the Philippians learned of his plight, they sent him money through Epaphroditus. At this time, Paul learned of some problems in the community. He wrote to the church to thank them for their gift and to warn them against false teachers and divisions in the community (chaps. 3–4). While with Paul, Epaphroditus fell ill. When he recovered, Paul wrote another letter to assure the Philippians of Epaphroditus’s health (chaps. 1–2). In this letter, Paul reminds the church of his apocalyptic message and urges them to maintain unity in the face of schism.

## Philemon

Philemon is the only undisputed Pauline letter addressed to an individual. The letter concerns a runaway slave, Onesimus, and his master, Philemon. Onesimus committed some act against Philemon and fled to Paul so that Paul might mediate between the two parties. Paul converted Onesimus and wrote to Philemon to urge him to allow Onesimus to return not as a slave, but as a brother. It may be, though, that Paul was not asking Philemon to free Onesimus but to give Onesimus to Paul for his own benefit.

## Key Terms

apocalyptic

Gentile

Law

apostle

gospel

messiah

covenant

insula

pagan

firstfruits of the resurrection

justification by faith

prescript

resurrection

synagogue

undisputed Pauline letters

superapostles

Torah

## Pedagogical Suggestions

- [1.] First Corinthians 13 is often used in Christian weddings because it lists the elements of true love. Ehrman makes the point that this chapter has nothing at all to do with romantic love, but is about community relations. In the big picture of 1 Corinthians, how does this chapter work? Do students agree with Ehrman's assessment?
- [2.] Discuss how Paul's apocalyptic views influenced his admonitions to the Corinthians.
- [3.] As with the Johannine literature, Paul's correspondence with the Corinthians allows scholars to trace the history of a community over a period of time. Have students describe this history by appealing to specific passages in 1 and 2 Corinthians.
- [4.] When studying the letter to the Galatians, have students attempt to write their own letter, this time from the perspective of the Christian missionaries who are advocating the Jewish law. What scriptures might they have employed? What arguments might they have made?
- [5.] Before introducing students to Ehrman's solution for understanding the shift in tone in Philippians, have students read the letter as a group, and attempt to reconstruct the context of the letter's composition, including the possibility that it comprises more than one ancient letter (as seen in 2 Corinthians). As necessary, ask them questions that point to the "problems" within the letters. How do they make sense of these? How do they account, for instance, to Paul's shift in tone (and potentially content) from the end of Chapter 2 to the beginning of Chapter 3? How do they reconstruct Epaphroditus' activities from the time he left Philippi, to the writing of this letter?
- [6.] Have students read the story of Abraham in the Hebrew Bible (Gen 15-17). Does Paul accurately interpret the story? How does this story work to further Paul's belief in justification by faith? Students might also read the story of Abraham as it appears in the Epistle of James. How does this author use the same story to achieve a different goal?
- [7.] Discuss the issue of slavery as it appears in Philemon. Are students convinced by Ehrman's suggestion that Paul was asking Philemon to give Onesimus to him as a slave? If so, are they surprised that Paul did not condemn slavery?

## **Chapter 21:**

# **The Gospel According to Paul: The Letter to the Romans**

## **Chapter Summary**

Although Romans has often been regarded as the most important Pauline letter, we must remember that this letter, like all of Paul's correspondence, is occasional in nature: it was written to a specific church for a particular purpose. What is unique about this letter, however, is that it was written to a church that Paul did not found. Instead of discussing problems in the church at Rome, Paul addresses issues that pertained to his own ministry. He wrote to the Romans to introduce them to his message and ministry in the hopes that they would provide financial support (and a home base) for his mission to Spain.

### **The Theme of the Epistle**

Paul presents his gospel as God's powerful act of salvation for those who have faith in Christ's death and resurrection. Faith is marked not by intellectual assent, but by conviction and commitment. This salvation came to the Jews first, and then to the Gentiles. By allowing the Gentiles into the promise, God has neither rejected the Jews nor gone back on his promises to them. The death and resurrection of Jesus are fulfillments of God's promises to the Jews. Paul maintains, furthermore, that Scripture itself teaches that salvation has always been based on faith(fulness) and not on adherence to the written Law.

### **Pauline Models for Salvation**

Paul illustrates God's act of salvation in a number of ways. One model is the judicial model. In this case, Paul describes the human problem in legal terms. God is a lawmaker who has given laws; God is also the Judge. All people have broken the Law (sin) and must appear before God for punishment; the punishment for sin is death. Paul also describes the solution to this problem in judicial terms: Jesus' death paid the penalty for others. God showed that he accepted Jesus' sacrifice by raising him from the dead. To obtain salvation, humans must have faith in Jesus' sacrifice and God's acceptance of it.

The second model Paul presents is the participationist model. Here, also, the human problem is sin, but in this case, sin is not an act that humans do in defiance of God's will. Rather, sin is a cosmic power to which humans are enslaved. Death, too, is an enslaving cosmic force. The solution, again, is Jesus' death and resurrection, but this time they reveal God's victory over the cosmic power of sin and death. Christians "participate" in this victory through baptism. Paul believed that at baptism, the Christian was mystically united with Christ in his death and shared in his victory. These models are not the only ones Paul uses, and they are not mutually exclusive. Paul uses these models as ways to explain sin, death, and Jesus' role in salvation.

### The Flow of Paul's Argument

Paul begins Romans by emphasizing that all people—Gentiles and Jews—are equally condemned before God because all people have sinned. Paul assures the Romans, though, that God has offered salvation from this condemnation: Christ's death atones for sin. Paul insists that the Law cannot justify a person: the covenant God made with the Jews has always been based on faith(fulness), not on the works of the Law. Since the Law does not bring people into a right standing with God, the Jews do not stand in a favored position. All people are condemned, but those who believe in Christ's death and resurrection can participate in his victory over evil and death. Even though adhering to the Law does not put a person in a right standing before God, Paul makes clear that his gospel is not "lawless": faith in Christ demands loving actions on behalf of one's neighbors.

### Key Terms

apocalypticist	Gentile	Nero
apostle	gospel	participationist model
atonement	Gospel	resurrection
baptism	judicial model	Suetonius
Clement (of Rome)	justification by faith	
diatribe	Law	

## Pedagogical Suggestions

- [1.] Have students discuss why Paul wrote the letter to the Romans. What aspects of his faith and ministry does he defend? Why would he defend himself before a church he did not found?
- [2.] Have students discuss the differences between the judicial and participationist models of salvation. Have students identify passages in Romans where Paul employs these models. Do students think these models are mutually exclusive? If so, why? If not, how do they perceive these models as working together?
- [3.] Examine the logical flow of Paul's argument as presented in the chapter. Essentially, it proceeds by laying out the human dilemma, introduces the divine solution, substantiates the solution through the gospel message, explains Christ's death and resurrection in terms of freedom from the powers that are opposed to God, and deals with issues of consistency in God's dealings with Israel and the fulfillment of his promises. Is the structure valid? Is the content sound? Does Paul make his point? Are there other ways of reading Paul's argument that are more persuasive or coherent?
- [4.] The "*pistis Christou*" debate, which asks whether Paul taught salvation by "faith *in* Jesus" or by "the faithfulness *of* Jesus" is a vigorous discussion in Pauline studies. Paul's use of the Greek genitive case in many statements concerning faith and Christ (cf. Gal 2:16; 3:22; Rom 3:22) is ambiguous, since "Christ" could be either the subject or the object of "faith(fulness)." An English example of the problem can be found in the phrase "the worship of Christians." Does this phrase reflect Christians who are being worshiped or Christians who are worshiping? Ask students what they think. Does the way that one reads these passages impact the content of the gospel? Why or why not?
- [5.] Once students have read Romans and Galatians, arrange for time to compare the two letters, particularly their perspectives on the Jewish Law. Are they preaching the same thing? Where do they align?—Where do they differ? How do students account for these differences?

## Chapter 22:

# Does the Tradition Miscarry? Paul in Relation to Jesus, James, Thecla, and Theudas

### Chapter Summary

This chapter discusses the relationship between Paul's teachings, the teachings of Jesus (who lived before Paul), and the teachings of Christians who appealed to Paul (who lived after Paul). Did Paul preach the same message that Jesus did? Were later Christians true to Paul's message?

#### Paul in Relation to What Came Before

It is striking how little we can glean from Paul's letters about the historical Jesus. Paul in fact offers only a handful of historical facts about Jesus and a few allusions to his teachings. How do we account for this dearth of information? There are three broad answers to this question. One option is to claim that Paul knew many traditions about Jesus, but given the occasional nature of his letters, the circumstances never required a retelling of these stories. Paul might also be assuming a knowledge of Jesus' teaching among the churches, since much of this information may have been delivered via word of mouth. One problem with this view is that Paul *did* use Jesus' teachings to bolster his own views where necessary. We could expect, then, that Paul would use the sayings of Jesus that he had at his disposal.

A second option for accounting for the limited amount of information is that although Paul did indeed know many stories about Jesus, he thought them fundamentally unimportant for his ministry. Paul himself says that he preached "Christ crucified." He may then have considered what Jesus said or did before his saving act of death and resurrection insignificant. The problem with this view is that Paul *does* record stories about Jesus' life and teachings.

A third option is that Paul simply did not know much about the historical Jesus and that he provided all the information he had. One problem with this solution is that Paul knew other Christians who were certainly familiar with these traditions. One could argue, perhaps, that Paul was simply uninterested in the life of Jesus and did not bother to find out this information.

Whether or not Paul knew much about the man Jesus, does his religion correspond with that of Jesus? On the one hand, both Paul and Jesus believed in the God of the Jews; they were—

also both apocalypticists. On the other hand, there are several important differences between Jesus' and Paul's views. Jesus expected a cosmic figure, the Son of Man, to come in judgment; Paul believed Jesus was the Son of Man. Jesus advocated following the Law; Paul believed that faith in Jesus (or Jesus' faithfulness), not adherence to the Law, justified a person. Jesus thought his teachings were important; Paul thought Jesus' death and resurrection were important. Jesus believed that the Kingdom of God had begun in his community of followers; Paul believed the Kingdom of God began with Jesus' defeat of death.

### Paul in Relation to What Came After

Having discussed a number of ways that Paul's message was both continuous and discontinuous with Jesus' teachings, the chapter turns to another question about the transmission of traditions: How did later Christians appropriate Paul? Although the Epistle of James (cf. chapter 27) appears to attack a central Pauline belief ("justification by faith"), in fact it offers a corrective to Pauline Christians who had warped Paul's message. The book of James says that faith without works is dead. For this author, though, "works" are good deeds, not actions dictated by the Jewish Law (which is how Paul uses the term "works" in Romans and Galatians). James argues that anyone who claims to have faith but does not perform good deeds is not living rightly, does not care for his or her neighbors, and does not have faith at all. Paul probably would have agreed with James.

Another group of early Christians focused on Paul's preaching on asceticism. At the beginning of the second century, stories circulated in which Paul preached a strict message of celibacy. Christians, according to these stories, should devote themselves to the Lord by distancing themselves from all worldly concerns. The *Acts of Paul and Thecla*, one of these early narratives, recounts Paul's relationship to his disciple Thecla. Thecla, once engaged to a wealthy pagan, heard Paul's message of stringent sexual renunciation and immediately converted to this new religion. After leaving her fiancé, Thecla experienced a number of trials and tribulations, all of which ended with last-minute miracles.

Yet another claim to Paul's authority is seen in the work of Theudas, a second-century Christian who was later connected with the Gnostic teacher Valentinus. Gnostic Christians appealed to Paul as their ultimate authority because he differentiated spiritual people from those of the flesh and talked of mysteries of the gospel that were hidden from those who were immature.



In sum, it makes more sense to talk of Pauline Christianities than Pauline Christianity.

## Key Terms

apocalypticist	justification by faith	Sanhedrin
baptism	Kingdom of God	Son of God
covenant	Law	Son of Man
Gentile	Marcionites	Thecla
Gnostics	Pharisees	Theudas
gospel	proto-orthodoxy	Torah
Gospel	resurrection	Valentinus

## Pedagogical Suggestions

- [1.] Divide students into three groups and assign each group one of the options the chapter lays out for accounting for the information Paul gives about Jesus. Have the students present and debate the issues. Which of the scenarios is most compelling to the students? Can they think of other explanations?
- [2.] Show students the portion of the dream sequence in *The Last Temptation of Christ* in which Jesus confronts Paul about what Paul is teaching about him. How does this scene reveal one way of accounting for the lack of information about Jesus in Paul's letters? Is it possible, as this scene indicates, that Paul simply did not care about the historical Jesus?
- [3.] Have students compare Paul's and James' teachings on faith and works (Rom 3:27–31; 4:1–5, 22; James 2). Do students think that these books are diametrically opposed in their views of salvation?
- [4.] Host a debate in which students argue for or against the following motion: Jesus and Paul taught fundamentally different religions.
- [5.] Provide students with passages from 1 Timothy, the *Acts of Paul and Thecla*, and the *Prayer of Paul* (a Gnostic text). Have them discuss how Paul is employed in these different Christian texts. What conclusions do they draw regarding biblical reception and interpretation?

## Chapter 23:

# In the Wake of the Apostle: The Deutero-Pauline and Pastoral Epistles

## Chapter Summary

### Pseudonymity in the Ancient World

Pseudonymous writings (forgeries) are those that claim to be written by someone famous. Individuals might choose to ascribe their writing to others for a number of reasons: economic profit, an act of humility, or to bolster their own authority. This is not to say, however, that this behavior was condoned in antiquity. On the contrary, ancient authors almost universally condemned it. This chapter argues that six of the New Testament books that claim to have been written by Paul may have been written pseudonymously: the Deutero-Pauline epistles (2 Thessalonians, Colossians, and Ephesians) and the Pastoral epistles (1 and 2 Timothy and Titus).

### The Deutero-Pauline Epistles

Second Thessalonians claims to have been written by Paul and is addressed to a Christian community experiencing intense suffering. The author assures these Christians that when Jesus returns, those who have kept their faith will be rewarded, and those who have persecuted the faithful will be condemned. In addition, this letter addresses the issue of the immediacy of the end. The author's teaching on this issue is one of the main reasons scholars doubt its Pauline origin. Some members of this congregation apparently believed that the end was imminent. This author, however, details a number of events that must take place before Jesus' return. The apocalyptic scenario explains that before the end comes, an Antichrist will appear, wreak havoc on the earth, and claim to be God. Because all of these events must take place first, Christians should not abandon their social responsibilities. They must continue to work and provide for themselves instead of being financial burdens on the community.

Many scholars believe that the main themes in this letter do not correspond with the teachings in Paul's undisputed letters. Nowhere else does Paul directly state any expectation of an interim period in which an Antichrist will appear. In fact, in his first correspondence with the

Thessalonians, he warned them that they must be vigilant because unbelievers would experience the coming of the end like a thief in the night. This chapter argues that the author of 2 Thessalonians was not Paul but a member of a Pauline community who attempted to explain the delay and urged the community to remain faithful.

In the letter of Colossians, “Paul” writes to a church he did not found and voices concern over false teachers who are living among its members. These false teachers may have promoted some type of Jewish mysticism, though the author does not clearly define their views. The author reminds the Colossians that they must not worship angels or rely on the written Law, since they have converted to a belief in the fullest expression of the Law; they have faith in the one who is greater than the angels.

Scholars question the authorship of Colossians for a number of reasons. The writing style of the text differs from that of Paul’s undisputed letters. Many scholars also conclude that Colossians espouses a theology that contradicts Paul’s teachings in other letters. In the Corinthian correspondence, Paul argues that Christians have died with Christ through baptism, but they have not yet been raised with him. Colossians, on the other hand, makes the opposite argument: believers have died with Christ *and* been raised with him.

Although scholars continue to debate the authorial claims of 2 Thessalonians and Colossians, almost all agree that Ephesians is not a genuine Pauline epistle. Ephesians appears to be a circular letter: rather than addressing one community, it may have been sent to a number of churches. This letter reminds Gentile Christians that Christ has done away with all differences between Jews and Gentiles; through Christ, Jews and Gentiles have been made one. In addition, Jesus has united all believers with God.

Some of the critical problems with this letter are similar to those mentioned in relation to 2 Thessalonians and Colossians. Ephesians does not resemble Paul’s writing style, and the letter contains a large number of words that Paul does not use in any of his undisputed letters. As in Colossians, Ephesians suggests that the believer has already been raised with Christ—a view that contradicts Paul’s undisputed writings. The author of Ephesians, moreover, uses the term “works” differently than Paul. For Paul, “works” refers to adherence to the Jewish Law, actions that cannot bring salvation. The author of Ephesians, though, understands “works” to mean those good deeds that demonstrate one’s faith.

## The Pastoral Epistles

Most scholars agree that Paul did not write the Pastoral epistles. These three letters are called the Pastoral epistles because they were not addressed to communities but to men who had been appointed leaders in the churches. This author urges these leaders to maintain their authority and to fight against false teachers who are threatening the faith of their churches.

First Timothy presupposes that on their way to Macedonia, Paul and Timothy visited the church at Ephesus and decided that Timothy should stay there in order to combat false teachings in the church. The nature of these false teachings is unclear, though the author's description, "myths and endless genealogies," may point to an early form of Christian Gnosticism. In order to combat these opponents, the author of 1 Timothy explains how a church should choose appropriate leaders. It also warns against putting women into leadership roles within the church.

Second Timothy also encourages Timothy to continue his fight against false teachers, some of whom are said to believe that the resurrection has already occurred, while others are just generally slandered. Timothy is described in this letter as being a third-generation Christian, who was ordained by the laying on of hands.

The last of the Pastoral epistles, Titus, closely resembles 1 Timothy. The opponents in this letter appear to be Jewish-Christian believers whose teachings reflect some Gnostic ideas. Bishops and elders are to be appointed to combat these groups, and advice is given to various social groups.

Scholars generally agree that the Pastoral epistles were written by the same author. The writing style, vocabulary, general themes, and specific content are all very similar, but they are not Pauline. Over one-third of the vocabulary in these three letters is not found in any of the Pauline letters (including the Deutero-Pauline letters). The vocabulary, moreover, carries a meaning that is more consistent with second-century Christian usage than with Paul. The opponents described in these letters appear to adhere to a Gnostic Christology, a form of Christianity unknown during Paul's lifetime.

These letters are some of the most important letters in the New Testament, despite the fact that they are not genuine Pauline writings, because they reveal in very early forms, three elements that helped proto-orthodoxy gain supremacy. First, they show the development of clergy: they are addressed to leaders of communities and not to the communities themselves, and emphasize authorized ordination of male leaders in order to combat heresy. By the second and

third centuries C.E., proto-orthodox Christians would develop the belief that their Church—structure could be traced back to the apostles. Second, they refer to “the teaching,” or “the faith,” a body of knowledge held as authoritative. Eventually second- and third-century proto-orthodox Christians would develop creeds, or statements of belief, that were to be subscribed to by all—Christians. These would eventually take shape in fourth-century creeds known to Christians—today. Third, these letters show the movement toward developing a specifically Christian canon.—2 Timothy puts Jesus’ teachings on a par with the Torah. Although Christians did not claim a—particular group of books as authoritative until the end of the second century, the words of Jesus—and the apostles were deemed authoritative much earlier.

## Key Terms

apocalypse	Gentile	presbyter
apocalyptic	Gnosticism	proto-orthodoxy
apostle	heresy	pseudepigrapha
baptism	Ignatius	resurrection
bishop	Irenaeus	scribe
canon	Law	Seneca
charismatic communities	manuscript	Temple
deacon	parousia	
Deutero-Pauline epistles	Pastoral epistles	
elder	Pauline Corpus	

## Pedagogical Suggestions

[1.] Have students discuss the issue of ancient forgeries. Are the students disturbed by the suggestion that the New Testament contains pseudonymous books? Why or why not? Are they convinced by the arguments against Pauline authorship of the Deutero-Pauline and Pastoral epistles?

[2.] Have students review Paul’s teachings on the resurrection in the undisputed Pauline letters—(e.g., Rom 6:1–11; 1 Cor 15). Keeping those in mind, have students discuss the authorship of Colossians and Ephesians. Based solely these teachings, do students think Paul wrote these letters? In addition, consider Paul’s understanding of salvation as a future act (see Box 23.4). How does this relate to the issue of resurrection and the authorship of these letters?

- [3.] Discuss the differences between Paul's descriptions of his Jewish opponents in Galatians and his description in Colossians. Do these differences suggest different authors for these books?
- [4.] Have students read the household codes in Colossians and Ephesians (Col 3:18–4:1; Eph 5:21–6:9). Do these seem particularly Pauline (keeping in mind Paul's apocalyptic views)? Why might these authors seek to regulate social interactions?
- [5.] Bring in a copy of the Apostles Creed. Have students discuss the heretical views that this creed attempts to combat.
- [6.] Examine the ethical considerations of pseudonymous writing and the justifications for canonizing forged work. Did those who decided which books to canonize in the New Testament know, or care, if a text was written by someone other than the claimant? Should there be any provisions for the removal of a book if scholars agree that it was written under a false name? What if the authorship could be definitely proved false? Does it matter?
- [7.] Have students read 1 Thessalonians 5 and 2 Thessalonians 2. Are these scenarios incompatible? Why or why not? For whom will the "Day of the Lord" "come like a thief"? Does Paul think Christians will be caught by surprise by the parousia? What about the author of 2 Thessalonians?

## Chapter 24:

# From Paul's Female Colleagues to the Pastor's Intimidated Women: The Oppression of Women in Early Christianity

## Chapter Summary

### Women in Paul's Churches

Paul's undisputed letters indicate that women played a role in the foundation of the earliest churches. In his letter to Rome, Paul mentions Phoebe (a deacon), Prisca, Mary, Tryphaena, Tryphosa, Persis, Julia, the mother of Rufus, and the sister of Nereus. He also mentions Junia and names her as "foremost among the apostles." In addition, several of Paul's other letters suggest the importance of women in the early church.

Some women in Pauline churches took to heart Paul's ascetic message and renounced marriage. Later letters written in Paul's name attempt to stem this interpretation and reassert traditional roles for women. How do we account for the high status of women in Paul's communities? First, we must consider whether women enjoyed such status before Paul, during the time of Jesus.

### Women Associated with Jesus

Although Jesus' closest disciples were men, the earliest Gospel traditions make clear that there were many women associated with Jesus. In addition to traveling with Jesus, these women provided financial support for his ministry. Women accompanied Jesus from Galilee to Jerusalem and were present at his crucifixion. They were also the first witnesses to the empty tomb, and thus the first to proclaim Jesus' resurrection.

Jesus' association with women may be historically credible in part because of his apocalyptic views. Since part of his message was the reversal of fortunes, it is possible that Jesus' association with women—a part of society generally perceived to be inferior—was an enactment of his apocalyptic message. It is probably an overstatement to say, as some do, that Jesus preached a radically egalitarian society. The role of women in Jesus' ministry may have

had a partial effect on the role of women in Paul's churches. Alone, however, it does not sufficiently explain the dynamics of Paul's churches.

### **Paul's Understanding of Women in the Church**

Paul believed that Jesus' death and resurrection commenced God's triumph over the evil forces of this world. This ushered in a new social order in which "there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus" (Gal 3:27-28). Although Paul's message may appear radical in its egalitarianism, he does not urge a social revolution. In fact, Paul urges his followers to stay within their socially defined roles and wait for the parousia. Paul's stance, then, is at best ambivalent: Men and women were equal in Christ, but were not yet equal in society.

### **Women in the Aftermath of Paul**

Since Paul's views of women were ambivalent—women could serve in the church but must retain their social status as "good" women of the Roman empire—it is not surprising that several competing Christian groups subsequently used Paul to advance their own views. One group took the position that women were equal to men in every way: they told stories of women like Thecla who renounced marriage, sex, and roles in the private sphere. Other Christians, however, appealed to Paul by arguing that women should marry and occupy traditional, submissive roles: the Pastoral Epistles reflect this view, with their advocacy of male Church leadership, their insistence on female silence in churches, their denunciation of those who preach asceticism or celibacy, and their claim that female salvation is dependent on childbearing.

### **Ancient Ideologies of Gender**

In antiquity, most people thought men and women were different in degree, not in kind. Humanity was seen as a spectrum. On the upper end of the scale were men—those individuals who, for a variety of reasons, had been formed perfectly in the womb—and on the lower end of the scale were women—those, conversely, who were imperfectly formed. Since women were viewed as underdeveloped men, they were quite literally the weaker sex and were expected to assume a social role in line with this weakness. Men were understood to be the dominant figures both sexually and in the public sphere; women were understood to be passive sexually and associated with the private (household) sphere.



## Gender Ideology and the Pauline Churches

Many Christian converts in the early centuries were women. This may not be surprising, since Christian communities did not initially gather in large public spaces but rather in private homes where women had influence and authority. As long as Christians met within the confines of the home, women were able to hold positions of authority and prominence.

As the movement grew, however, Christianity became more public, and it became problematic for women to retain their leadership positions. As a result of the tension between public and private, some Christians argued that societal constructions of sex were not valid for those who were in Christ. These Christians urged freedom from marital constraints, claiming that it was Christ who had set them free. According to this view, women should continue leading communities, since they were equal to men in Christ.

This is not, however, the view that ultimately won. Movements seeking absolute equality of women in the Christian community were opposed based on assumptions of “natural” and “unnatural” acts and spheres. When the apocalyptic fervor began to subside, Christians no longer waited anxiously for the end but began to establish a church hierarchy to guide them in appropriate Christian behavior. Public activity came to be the job of men, and women were taught to be modest, quiet, and submissive.

### Key Terms

apocalyptic	criterion of—	Kingdom of God
apostle	independent—	Law
associations	attestation	Pastoral epistles
baptism	Cynics	Pharisees
criterion of contextual—	deacon	prophet
credibility		Son of Man
criterion of—	Epicureans	synagogue
dissimilarity	Gnostic	Thecla
	Herod the Great	

### Pedagogical Suggestions

- [1.] Have students read the *Acts of Paul and Thecla* alongside 1 Timothy. Guide them in a discussion of how each of these texts reflect particular strands of early Christian thought regarding the role of women in Christian assemblies.
- [2.] Have students discuss Paul's statement of equality in Galatians 3:28. How do they make sense of this in light of what they have learned about Paul's social agenda?
- [3.] The chapter suggests that 1 Corinthians 14:34–35 might have been inserted into the text by the author of 1 Timothy. Have students discuss this theory. Does the chapter flow better if these verses are removed? If they believe the verses are original to 1 Corinthians, do they think Paul is contradicting himself in this letter?
- [4.] Have students analyze the concept of “natural.” For any arbitrary division of power roles, (e.g., brown-eyed people in a subservient position to blue-eyed people), it would be blatantly obvious that an argument supporting the “natural” dominance and authority of blue-eyed people would be baseless. Is the notion of male authority over women an arbitrary hierarchy also, or is it the “natural” order of things? How can anyone know what is natural?
- [5.] Many Christians believe that Mary Magdalene was a prostitute. Have students read the New Testament passages about Mary Magdalene. Then pick several Jesus-related movies (e.g., *The Last Temptation of Christ*, *The Greatest Story Ever Told*, *Jesus*) and discuss how they depict Mary Magdalene. Have students discuss possible reasons why she was eventually portrayed as a prostitute.

## Chapter 25:

# Christians and Jews: Hebrews, Barnabas, and Later Anti-Jewish Literature

### Chapter Summary

Eight books of the New Testament (Hebrews; James; 1 and 2 Peter; 1, 2, and 3 John; and Jude) have been traditionally termed the “catholic epistles” where the term “catholic” means “general” or “universal.” These letters were designated as “catholic” because they were understood to address universal Christian problems and questions. And while it’s not quite accurate to suppose that these letters were not written for specific circumstances (consider 1-3 John), it is helpful to read them in light of questions that Christians universally faced. This chapter explores questions of Christian self-definition vis-à-vis Judaism.

#### Early Christian Self-Definition

All social groups establish criteria by which individuals are measured as a means of defining group boundaries. Christians eventually sought an identity independent of Jews, who did not believe Jesus was the messiah. The development of this identity is apparent in some early Christian writings.

#### Continuity and Superiority: The Epistle to the Hebrews

Although Hebrews is often called a letter, it does not contain an epistolary prescript, name the author or the addressees, or include an opening prayer or thanksgiving. It is more likely an early Christian homily or treatise that has been given an epistolary ending. The book is anonymous, although it has traditionally been attributed to Paul. The emphases and language in the book, however, are not Pauline.

The epistle to the Hebrews asserts the superiority of Christ to the prophets, the angels, Moses, Joshua, and the Jewish priesthood. Christ brings a superior covenant, brings a superior tabernacle, and makes a superior sacrifice. Like many other authors whose task is Christian self-definition, this author uses the Hebrew Scriptures to illustrate the authenticity of his claims. He does so in two ways. First, he cites Jewish scripture as prophesying of Jesus (e.g. the prophet

Jeremiah's prediction that God will make a new covenant with Israel and Judah, Jeremiah 31:31-34). Second, he argues that Jewish scripture foreshadows Jesus' saving activity. Drawing on Platonic thought, this author states that the old covenant was a foreshadowing of the new, an imperfect reflection of a perfect reality.

The author's goal appears to be to convince Christians not to abandon their religious convictions in favor of Judaism. The author offers several dire warnings to those Christians who leave the faith. Scholars do not know when (end of the 1<sup>st</sup> century CE?) or where this book was written. It is clear, though, that the author is concerned about defining group boundaries. He argues that Christianity represents the perfection of Judaism. Christianity is the religion foretold by the prophets. Those who do not believe that Jesus was the messiah, moreover, are not the true people of God.

### **Discontinuity and Supremacy: The *Epistle of Barnabas***

Rather than seeing Judaism as the foreshadowing of Christianity, *Barnabas* portrays Judaism as a false religion. According to this author, the Jews broke their covenant as soon as they received it. Whereas the author of Hebrews claims that the Old Testament contains prophecies of the new covenant and its perfection of Judaism, *Barnabas* claims that the Old Testament is not a Jewish book but a Christian one.

The *Epistle of Barnabas* received its name from early Christians who suggested that it was written by Paul's companion Barnabas. Modern scholars, though, believe that the book was written long after Barnabas's death, perhaps around 130 C.E. The book was included in the New Testament in parts of Egypt through the fourth century.

*Barnabas* accuses the Jews of misunderstanding the Old Testament: they rely on a literal reading of the text, but its true meaning, argues Barnabas, is available only through allegory. Circumcision in the Old Testament, then, has nothing to do with the physical removal of the male foreskin, but rather is an allegorical reference to Jesus on the cross. *Barnabas*, however, does not completely do away with literal interpretations: the story of Moses breaking the tablets of the Law is, according to *Barnabas*, a true account that reflects the broken covenant between the Jews and God.

*Barnabas* defines Christianity by rejecting the authenticity of all Jewish claims. Christianity does not stand in continuity with historic Judaism but is nonetheless the rightful heir-

to Israel’s promises. The Old Testament, furthermore, belongs solely to Christians; the Jews have no right to claim it.

**Conclusion: The Rise of Christian Anti-Judaism**

The authors of *Hebrews* and *Barnabas*, as well as those of other early Christian anti-Jewish books, sought to justify their beliefs in the face of the much larger and more recognized religion of Judaism. For these Christian authors, the anti-Jewish rhetoric was an attempt to distinguish Christianity from Judaism as well as a response to the Jewish rejection of their message. This defensive rhetoric from early centuries would become weaponized after Christianity became a dominant force in the Roman Empire.

**Key Terms**

adoptionists	Gentile	Passover
apocalyptic	justification by faith	Philo
canon	Justin	Plato
catholic	Kingdom of God	prophecy
Christology	Law	self-definition
cosmos	Marcion	synagogue
covenant	Melchizedek	Temple
cult	Melite of Sardis	Tertullian
Ebionites	messiah	Two Ways
epistle	Origen	
gematria	pagan	
—		

**Pedagogical Suggestions**

[1.] Have students read *Hebrews* carefully and discuss the use of the Old Testament in this book. How does the author use Jewish Scripture to make his point about Christianity? How does his use of scripture differ from and align with the strategies of other New Testament authors (e.g. Paul, Matthew, etc.)

- [2.] Have students read the *Epistle of Barnabas* in the accompanying reader. What are their reactions to *Barnabas*'s harsh anti-Jewish statements? How might an anti-Jewish posture contribute to a Christian community's self-definition?
- [3.] In light of the conclusion to Chapter 25, have students discuss the implications of anti-Judaism in early Christian texts. Are they convinced that these are fundamentally in-house documents intended to provide a distinct identity to the Christian community? Do students think that the time and place in which these documents were written makes a difference in how we should judge their anti-Jewish rhetoric?
- [4.] Discuss various ways to reconcile the divergent views of Jesus in Hebrews. Was he divine or human? Was he both? How does that work? Did he perhaps begin as a human and become exalted at his baptism? Was he divine to begin with and become wholly human at his conception, birth, or later?

## Chapter 26:

# Christians and Pagans: 1 Peter, the Letters of Ignatius, the *Martyrdom of Polycarp*, and Later Apologetic Literature

## Chapter Summary

### The Persecution of the Early Christians

Christianity made very little impact on the Roman Empire in the century after Jesus' death. Although Christianity was known, the rulers of the Empire did not consider it a threat. There was, moreover, no imperial legislation and correspondingly no empire-wide persecution of Christians until around 250 C.E. under the emperor Decius.

If Christianity was not, strictly speaking, illegal in the Roman Empire, why were Christians occasionally persecuted? Each province in the empire was ruled by a governor or client king whose primary task was to keep the peace and collect taxes. Christians rather frequently seemed to be involved in socially disruptive behavior and thus drew the attention of these rulers. Such behavior included: the disruption of the family, closed meetings, and the refusal to participate in public worship of the state gods (which was viewed as treasonous).

Historians believe that the first official persecution of Christianity came at the hands of the Emperor Nero, who used Christians as scapegoats for the fire in Rome. Nero's persecution of Christians, however, was confined to Rome and specifically related to the charge of arson. The next official persecution of Christianity seems to have occurred in 112 C.E. Pliny, a governor in Asia Minor, received complaints about the Christians in his province and put them on trial to test their loyalty. Pliny did not punish Christians for worshiping their God. The crime was the Christians' refusal to worship the state gods—a refusal that could, according to Roman thought, provoke the gods to punish the empire. He gave Christians the opportunity to pay homage to images of the emperor. If they did, there was no punishment. If they did not, they were killed. Both of these instances of persecution were localized. In neither case was a law enacted that banned Christianity.

Christians came to be seen by many as antisocial, sacrilegious, and dangerous. Many early Christian writings dealt with the social and theological impact of persecution. These writings attempted to unify Christians against their pagan opponents and to offer an explanation of their suffering.

### **Christians in a Hostile World: The Letter of 1 Peter**

First Peter claims to be written by Jesus' disciple Peter. Scholars doubt that Peter wrote this letter, in part because the historical Peter was most likely a lower-class illiterate fisherman who spoke Aramaic. The author of this letter, however, is a highly literate Greek-speaking Christian.

The letter's addressees (referred to as "exiles" and "aliens") had experienced some kind of suffering, and the author urges his readers to live moral lives—apparently thinking that good behavior might stem public outcry against them. In addition, the author tries to unify the communities in an effort to keep members from falling away from the faith. He reminds the Christians that since Jesus suffered, they should expect to suffer as well.

### **Christians Sentenced to Death: The Letters of Ignatius**

Ignatius was the bishop of the church of Antioch, but we know little else about him. His letters are addressed to several churches in Asia Minor whose delegates met him as he passed through on his way to Rome (110 C.E.). We do not know why Ignatius was arrested, but his letters indicate that he looked forward to his death, to suffer for the sake of his faith in Christ.

Several themes are consistent in Ignatius's letters. He is concerned with the unity and the purity of the Church. Ignatius argues against docetic and Jewish-Christian views of Jesus, insisting that the churches in Asia Minor keep the "pure" doctrine that was passed on from the apostles. Communities that wish to remain unified and pure have to have the proper regard for their church leaders. According to Ignatius, the bishop is God's representative and nothing should be done apart from him. If a community follows the direction of the bishop, it cannot stray from the truth.

### **Christians Before the Tribunal: The *Martyrdom of Polycarp***

In addition to writing letters to the churches in Asia Minor, Ignatius wrote one to Polycarp. Like Ignatius, Polycarp was eventually martyred around 156 C.E. The events leading up to and including Polycarp's martyrdom were recorded in a letter that claims to derive from an



eyewitness report, though it is clearly a later production that has been artfully composed. The account of his death resembles that of Jesus in many respects.

The *Martyrdom of Polycarp* provides helpful information about Christian martyrdom and persecution. Polycarp's crime seems to have been his refusal to offer sacrifice to the gods, not his commitment to Christianity per se. In addition, the quest for martyrdom may point to one Christian reevaluation of an apocalyptic worldview: when the parousia did not arrive as expected, some Christians began to focus less on the salvation of this world and more on salvation from this world.

### Christians on the Defensive: The Later Apologetic Literature

As Christianity spread, it not only attracted lower-class individuals but also those from higher social and economic classes, some of whom were very well educated. As Christianity came to clash with Rome, these educated Christians offered written defenses, or apologies, of their faith. Some of the important early Christian apologists were Justin, Tertullian, and Origen.

The apologists defended their faith by making several cases. They argued that Christianity was superior to other religions. They maintained that since Christianity had spread so quickly, it was clear that the hand of Providence was behind it. In addition, the apologists argued that it was the truth of their faith that allowed Christians to withstand persecution. These authors also confronted and refuted accusations of Christian immorality. They insisted that Christians were good citizens and were not a threat to the state.

### Key Terms

adoptionism	martyr	pseudepigraphy
apology	Nero	resident aliens
bishop	Origen	Suetonius
Constantine	pagan	Tacitus
cult	Pastoral epistles	Tertullian
Gnostic	Perpetua	Thecla
Ignatius	Pliny the Younger	Trajan
Justin	Polycarp	
Marcus Aurelius	Pontius Pilate	

## Pedagogical Suggestions

- [1.] Distribute excerpts from Tacitus (*Annals* 15), Suetonius (*Life of Nero* 16), Pliny the Younger (*Letter to Trajan* 10), Marcus Aurelius (*Meditations* 11, 3), and Lucian (*Death of Peregrinus* 11–13) so that students can read some ancient reactions to Christianity. Have them discuss the rising anti-Christian sentiment that led to active persecution under the Emperor Decius. How were Christians perceived by pagans, and what did Christians do that threatened paganism and the Roman Empire?
- [2.] Although Nero's persecution seems to have been the first imperial persecution of Christianity, many scholars reject the conclusion that Nero's persecution was directed at Christianity *qua* Christianity. Have students discuss the elements of this persecution as this chapter describes it (students can also read Tacitus's account of the fire in Rome and Nero's persecution of the Christians in *Annals* 15, available on the Internet). Why do students think Nero picked Christians to blame for the fire? With what, exactly, were Christians charged? Is there evidence that this persecution extended beyond Rome? Do students think Nero's persecution was similar to what took place later under Decius?
- [3.] As Christianity spread, it began to attract some highly educated men who wrote apologies for their religion. Have students discuss what tactics these authors used to defend Christianity (many of the early apologists' writings are available on the Internet). Divide students into groups and assign each group an excerpt from an early apologist. Have students discuss the issues dealt with in their apology and speculate on the circumstances under which it might have been written. Alternately, have students discuss the kinds of arguments they would find persuasive in a second-century Christian apology.
- [4.] Have students analyze Ignatius's view on the dual nature of Jesus and compare it to other Eastern religious concepts (e.g., the concept of "yin and yang" in Confucianism and Daoism). After about 1000 B.C.E., the Chinese commonly thought that the universe expressed itself in opposite but complementary principles: light and dark, male and female, hot and cold, left and right, summer and winter, etc. How is the view that Jesus is both divine and human similar to yin and yang? Jesus, according to Ignatius, was of flesh yet spiritual, born yet unbegotten, genuine life in the midst of death, God incarnate, and so on. Did Ignatius intend to present his readers with a paradox to ponder, or is there some fundamental reality that various beliefs, no matter how diverse, recognize?
- [5.] Discuss the various theories regarding the spread of Christianity. Which do students find most compelling? Is it possible to embrace a belief that offers no benefit to the individual? Does the popularity of a religion correlate to the personal advantages it offers?

## Chapter 27:

# Christians and Christians: James, the *Didache*, Polycarp, 1 Clement, Jude, and 2 Peter

## Chapter Summary

In addition to disputes with pagans and Jews, Christians also contended among themselves over ethics, leadership, and doctrine. As we have already seen, Christianity was far from unified in the first few centuries. This diversity led to conflicts over whose views were “orthodox.”

### The Epistle of James

The author of the epistle of James argues that some Christians have distorted Paul’s message of justification by faith by teaching that only a person’s beliefs, not his actions, matter for salvation. James teaches that a person’s beliefs must be embodied in action.

The book begins like an epistle (with a prescript that names the author, followed by a greeting), but it does not have an epistolary conclusion and does not seem to have been written for a specific occasion. It is, instead, a collection of advice for Christians. The text claims to be written by James—presumably James, the brother of Jesus. The letter is probably pseudonymous.

Scholars have questioned the “Christianness” of this book since Jesus is only mentioned twice (1:1 and 2:1). In fact, the ethical teachings are general and could be applied equally to Judaism and Christianity. Some scholars have suggested that this was originally a Jewish text that was subsequently Christianized. On the other hand, though, many of James’ teachings resemble those of the Sermon on the Mount, as well as some of Jesus’ other teachings.

### The *Didache*

The *Didache* (literally, “the teaching”) of the Twelve Apostles is an early second-century book—virtually unknown to modern scholars until it was discovered in 1873.

The first section of this book is organized according to the “Two Ways” doctrine, outlining the “way of life” and the “way of death.” The second section is a church handbook that gives instructions for various Christian practices and rituals: baptism, fasting, and the Eucharist.

Because this text spends a good deal of time discussing itinerant preachers, particularly how to determine the authenticity of their teachings, scholars suggest that this community had consistent encounters with itinerant prophets, some of which were beneficial to the group and others of which were exploitative. The final chapter (which may be the product of a separate author) admonishes the reader to prepare for the imminent end of the world.

### **Polycarp's Letter to the Philippians**

Upon the request of the Philippians, Polycarp compiled the letters of Ignatius and sent them to Philippi along with his own epistle to the Philippians. Polycarp's letter was probably written sometime in the second century. The circumstances that prompted Polycarp's letter are fairly clear: he was concerned about the church, particularly about ethical problems and false teachers who advocated a docetic Christology. The letter also contains general moral exhortations. It contains hundreds of quotations and allusions to other authors—this tells us that already by the early 2<sup>nd</sup> century, Christians were forming their ideas based on their interpretation of earlier Christian writings.

### **1 Clement**

*First Clement*, written by a member of the church at Rome around the end of the first century, addresses leadership issues in the church of Corinth. The author condemns a recent schism that occurred in the Corinthian community in which the elders of the church were removed from their leadership positions. *First Clement* argues that since the church leaders were appointed by apostles who were in turn appointed by Christ, no one should challenge their authority. This argument is one of the earliest expressions of apostolic succession.

*First Clement* is particularly important because it provides an early example of the Roman church's interest in and influence over other churches. The authority of the Roman church is already clear in this letter; in later centuries its influence would grow until the bishop of Rome was considered the father of all bishops and the head of Christendom.

### **Jude**

The author of this short letter claims to be Jude, the brother of James (the brother of Jesus). This is almost certainly a pseudonymous writing. This book is primarily concerned with false teachers in the Christian community, but regrettably, the author does not clearly describe their

views, so we cannot firmly categorize their teaching. The book quotes a wide range of apocryphal Jewish literature, including 1 Enoch, which it cites as scripture.

## 2 Peter

Most scholars agree, against the author's insistence, that this book was not written by Jesus' disciple Peter. The author of 2 Peter, moreover, is not the same as that of 1 Peter. Many early Christian books were written in Peter's name, and we should add this book to that list of pseudonymous texts.

The author of 2 Peter writes against false teachers who espouse a proto-Gnostic worldview, using mythologies and genealogies to support their beliefs. These teachers are, in addition, anti-apocalyptic. The author insists that although the end is coming soon, Christians have misunderstood what that means. For God, this author writes, "a day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like one day" (3:8). Thus, humans should not insist that God follow their conception of time. Christians must understand that even a delay of thousands of years still constitutes an imminent judgment.

## Key Terms

apocalyptic	elder	Polycarp
apostle	Gnostics	prophet
apostolic succession	heretic	proto-orthodoxy
bishop	Ignatius	pseudepigraphy
canon	Judaizer	secessionists
charismatic communities	justification by faith	Sermon on the Mount
Christology	Marcion	Simon Magus
Clement of Rome	martyr	superapostles
deacon	Nero	tradition
docetist	Pastoral epistles	Two Ways

## Pedagogical Suggestions

[1.] Divide your students into groups and assign each group one of the following texts: 1 Corinthians, the Didache, and Ignatius' *Letter to the Smyrneans*. Have each group sketch on paper what Christian church hierarchy looks like according to each letter. Who is in charge?

How do leaders gain their authority? Pose a hypothetical ecclesiastical problem that needs to be solved, and invite all of the groups to discuss the mechanisms by which their respective churches would solve it. Then have each of the groups share their respective findings with the rest of the class.

- [2.] Have students read the Two Ways doctrine in the *Didache* and the *Epistle of Barnabas*. What similarities do students find between these books? Do they think that these similarities might derive from an earlier, common source?
- [3.] Discuss the issue of “apostolic succession” in *1 Clement*. How does it work? Why was it an important development for proto-orthodox Christianity?
- [4.] Discuss the similarities between Jude and 2 Peter. Do students agree with Ehrman that the author of 2 Peter knew and used Jude?
- [5.] Provide students with the Synoptic Gospels or secondary sources concerning the Lord’s Supper. Ask them to think about why the celebration of the Eucharist in the *Didache* is backward relative to the order of bread and cup set out in the Last Supper, as well as in the typical practice of the early Christians. Originally, Jesus distributed the bread first, then the cup. Early Christians mimicked that order. The *Didache* puzzles scholars by giving the instructions in reverse (i.e., first the cup then the bread).
- [6.] Discuss the odd reasoning of the author of *1 Clement* 47, in which he tries to prove the certainty of resurrection based on the course of nature itself. He reasons that since day follows night without end, life must follow death (which comes from life) without end. He also uses the legend of the Phoenix (a bird that lives five hundred years, bursts into flames, dies, and is reborn from its own ashes, repeatedly) to make his point. He does not address the next logical, and quite obvious, question: Won’t those who have been raised from the dead with Jesus have to die again, and won’t this cycle of reincarnation continue without end? Do you think the author intended to connect the concept of resurrection with the concept of reincarnation?

## Chapter 28:

# Christians and the Cosmos: The Revelation of John, The Shepherd of Hermas, and the Apocalypse of Peter

## Chapter Summary

Although some groups of Christians eventually rejected an apocalyptic worldview, other groups remained firmly committed to the idea that Jesus' return was imminent. Near the end of the first century, a prophet named John wrote a book that gave an account of the end of the world. He was not the only Jew or Christian to write visions of the imminent end of the world: this chapter will examine two apocalypses in addition to the Revelation of John.

### The Content and Structure of the Book of Revelation

The title of the book "Revelation" comes from the first words of the text: "The revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave him to show his servants what must soon take place" (Rev 1:1). The term "revelation" (or "apocalypse") comes from a Greek word which means "unveiling." The author is instructed by Christ to write down three things: 1) the vision of Christ that he has just had, 2) the situation of the churches of his day, 3) the contents of his visions of the end of the world. The book of revelation is structured around these instructions. It begins with the author's vision of Christ. It then contains seven letters addressed to seven churches in Asia Minor; these letters describe the conditions of the churches and, in most cases, urge a change in behavior. The rest of the book contains the author's vision of the end of the world.

### The Book of Revelation from a Historical Perspective

Revelation was not the only apocalypse written in antiquity. In fact, there are many Jewish and Christian apocalypses. Like Revelation, these texts also claim to be proclamations of the imminent end of the world. All of these texts utilize similar literary features and can be studied as a distinct genre.

### Apocalyptic Worldviews and the Apocalypse Genre

The term "apocalyptic" refers to a worldview; the term "apocalypse" refers to a genre of literature that embodies apocalyptic views; the term "apocalypticist" refers to someone who

holds an apocalyptic worldview. Christian apocalypses tend to differ from Jewish apocalypses because, in Christian apocalypses, Jesus is usually central to the unfolding of the apocalyptic drama. Jewish and Christian apocalypses contain many similarities, however, since both seem to have been written in times of intense suffering. These books assert that despite present circumstances, God is in charge and will soon intervene and vindicate his people. Apocalypses, then, offer encouragement and assurance to their audiences.

In general, apocalypses share the following features: they are first-person narratives; their highly symbolic visions are interpreted for the prophet by a heavenly being; the visions explain the suffering of God's people from a heavenly perspective; and they promise vindication. There are, broadly speaking, two types of apocalypses: 1) heavenly journeys, and 2) historical sketches. The book of Revelation contains aspects of both kinds of apocalypse. Apocalypses utilize several specific literary features. First, they are typically pseudonymous. Like other pseudonymous works, these texts seek to gain authority by attributing their message to an important figure from the past. Second, these texts contain bizarre symbolic visions that are interpreted for the prophet by the angelic mediator. Third, apocalypses contain violent repetitions. These repetitions violate the literal sense of the text: the story cannot be mapped out chronologically. Fourth, these texts all conclude with a triumphalist note and are intended to motivate their audiences to remain faithful in spite of their suffering.

### **The Revelation of John in Historical Context**

The Book of Revelation does not appear to be pseudonymous: there's no reason to think that the author was not a prophet named John. However, the traditional perspective that the author of Revelation also authored the Gospel of John is untenable. Most scholars agree that parts of Revelation were written during the 60s, at the time of Nero's persecutions of Christians. Other parts of the book, however, may have been written later, perhaps during the reign of the Emperor Domitian (ca. 95 C.E.). Regardless of the date of the text, we can know something about the community's experiences. The churches of Asia Minor were apparently experiencing persecution, and many Christians in the churches were losing their faith. Rather than offering a blueprint for the end of the world, as many modern readers assume, Revelation was written to offer solace to a specific community, historically located in first-century Asia Minor. Its vision offers its audience an explanation of their present circumstances, gives them hope of the imminent end, and urges them to remain faithful.



### ***The Shepherd of Hermas***

Like Revelation, *The Shepherd of Hermas* is not pseudonymous. It was written by Hermas, a second-century Christian who lived in Rome. His book was widely read and accepted as Scripture. Although it eventually lost its authoritative status, it continued to be regarded as a beneficial book for Christians.

One of the angelic mediators in this book is a shepherd who communicates and interprets five visions, twelve sets of commandments, and ten parables to Hermas. Like other apocalypses, *The Shepherd of Hermas* is written in the first person, provides highly symbolic visions that reflect heavenly realities, and offers encouragement and admonition to Christians. Its primary concern is to address those Christians who have lapsed into sin after their baptism, assuring them that a second repentance is possible.

### ***The Apocalypse of Peter***

The *Apocalypse of Peter* is pseudonymous—it falsely claims to be written by the apostle Peter. Like *The Shepherd of Hermas*, the *Apocalypse of Peter* was also regarded as Scripture among many churches, even into the third century. This apocalypse narrates Peter's journey through heaven and hell. The explicitness of the tortures of sinners in this apocalypse serves to encourage Christians to keep their faith in order to avoid punishment. This appears to be the earliest Christian writing to describe a journey through heaven and hell.

### **Key Terms**

apocalypse	genre	prophet
apocalypticism	Kingdom of God	pseudepigrapha
baptism	Maccabean revolt	pseudonymity
canon	martyrdom	resurrection
Domitian	Muratorian Fragment	Son of Man
Eusebius	Nag Hammadi library	
gematria	Nero	

## Pedagogical Suggestions

- [1.] Have students read an article on a contemporary Christians doomsday group (an easy way to find one is to search for “Harold Camping” online; several major outlets covered his predictions of the end of the world). Invite students to discuss why the concept of an impending end is so compelling for many people.  
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- [2.] Have students discuss the elements of the genre of apocalypse. How do these elements contribute to the overall message of the book of Revelation?
- [3.] Although many apocalypses are *either* heavenly journeys or historical sketches, Revelation contains elements of both. Have students identify these two elements within the book. How does the author utilize both of these categories to further his point about the meaning of his community’s suffering?
- [4.] Earlier chapters discussed possible reasons why authors wrote pseudonymously. Have students discuss how pseudonymity functions in apocalyptic literature. In what way does pseudonymity constitute lying? Is this level of deception unethical? In what ways does pseudonymity affirm the teachings in these texts? Are there indeed ethical reasons for supporting the use of pseudonymic technique under certain circumstances?

## **Student Guides for Reading**

## Chapter 1

- [1.] \*Who were the Jewish-Christian adoptionists, the Marcionites, the Gnostics, and the proto-orthodox Christians? What did each of these groups believe, and how did their views differ from one another?
- [2.] \*What are the major divisions of the New Testament? (You should memorize the names of the books of the New Testament in order and know which division each book belongs in.)
- [3.] Give several examples of early Christian writings that did *not* come to be included in the New Testament.
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- [4.] \*By what process were some early Christian writings collected into the “New Testament”? What motivated Christians to create a “canon” of Scripture? Why were some early Christian books included in this canon while others were not? Who made these decisions? On what grounds? When?
- [5.] Why do historians study the books in the New Testament as individual works of literature as opposed to studying them as one singular Christian text?

## Chapter 2

- [1.] \*In what sense is it true to say that we don’t have the original New Testament?
- [2.] \*What kinds of changes did scribes make in their copies of the New Testament? How often did they do so? What were some of the motivating factors? Do any of these changes matter for the interpretation of the New Testament?
- [3.] \*What evidence and/or criteria do scholars use to reconstruct the original text of the New Testament?
- [4.] Were earlier scribes who copied the New Testament generally more or less precise than those who came later? Why might this be?
- [5.] There are more manuscript copies of the New Testament than of any other ancient book. Does this mean the New Testament is more trustworthy than these other books? Why or why not?

## Chapter 3

- [1.] \*What are the basic differences between religion today and religion in the Greco-Roman world?

~~[2.] What were the prominent features of Greco-Roman religions? How did one “practice” religion in that world?~~

~~[3.] What is “magic,” and what role did it play in ancient religions?~~

~~[4.] \*In what way were the mystery cults distinctly different from other religions of the time? In what way were they different from the state and local cults?~~

~~[5.] \*How did “philosophy” relate to and differ from “religion” in the Greco-Roman world?~~

## Chapter 4

~~[1.] \*What were the distinctive features of Judaism among the religions of the Greco-Roman world? In particular, be able to explain the following aspects of Judaism: monotheism, covenant, Law, Temple, and synagogue.~~

~~[2.] \*Why is it important to know about pagan and Jewish religions for the study of Jesus and the New Testament?~~

~~[3.] How did the Pharisees get a reputation for hypocrisy? Is this a fair assessment of them? Why or why not?~~

~~[4.] \*Be able to describe in broad outline the political history of Palestine for the five centuries before Jesus, including especially the events of the Maccabean revolt and the Roman conquest.~~

~~[5.] What were the Jewish sects that formed in response to the political crisis of the Maccabean revolt, and what were the characteristics of each?~~

## Chapter 5

~~[1.] \*What does it mean to speak about the “oral traditions” behind the Gospels? How does the length of this period of oral transmission affect the written record?~~

~~[2.] \*Is there any *evidence* that the stories recorded in our Gospels were changed throughout the process of retelling? How convincing is this evidence to you? What other kinds of evidence would you look for?~~

~~[3.] Why do scholars question the traditional view that our four New Testament Gospels were written by persons named Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John?~~

~~[4.] In what ways are the Gospels like Greco-Roman biographies?~~

~~[5.] \*How does understanding the Gospels as Greco-Roman biographies help us to interpret them?~~

## ~~Chapter 6~~

~~[1.] \*In what sense is Jesus the messiah, according to the account given in the Gospel of Mark?~~

~~[2.] \*How is Jesus shown to be authoritative in Mark? How, why, and by whom is he opposed?~~

~~[3.] \*How does Mark emphasize that Jesus was misunderstood?~~

~~[4.] Who fully recognizes Jesus' identity in this Gospel?~~

~~[5.] How does Mark stress the need for Jesus, as the Son of God, to suffer and die? Why do the characters in the Gospel not recognize this necessity?~~

## ~~Chapter 7~~

~~[1.] What is the "Synoptic Problem" (i.e., what does "Synoptic" mean, and what's the "problem")?~~

~~[2.] \*What are the various pieces of evidence for Markan priority? Do you find this evidence compelling?~~

~~[3.] How does establishing Markan priority help us to interpret the Gospels? In particular, how does it assist us in doing a "redactional" analysis of Matthew and Luke? How does this kind of interpretive method differ from the "genre-critical" method we used in studying Mark?~~

~~[4.] \*What is the Four-Source Hypothesis?~~

~~[5.] \*What are the various arguments for the existence of Q? Do you find them convincing? If not, how do you solve the Synoptic Problem?~~

## ~~Chapter 8~~

~~[1.] How does one go about using redaction criticism to interpret Matthew's Gospel?~~

~~[2.] \*How do Matthew's genealogy and birth stories make the claim that Jesus is the Jewish-messiah?~~

- [3.] ~~\*What do Matthew's changes to Mark's story about John the Baptist tell us about his views of Jesus? (cf. Mark 1:1–11//Matthew 3:1–18)~~
- [4.] ~~\*How does the Sermon on the Mount serve to show that Jesus is the new Moses? In Matthew's Gospel, what is Jesus' view of the Law of Moses? Does he do away with it all, or does he maintain that his followers should keep it? How? Why?~~
- [5.] ~~If Jesus is portrayed as thoroughly Jewish and fully supportive of Judaism in Matthew's Gospel, why is he in such trouble with the Jewish authorities? How does he react to this conflict?~~

## ~~Chapter 9~~

- [1.] ~~\*What are some of the problems with redaction criticism, and how does a “comparative” method get around them? What is the logic of this method?~~
- [2.] ~~Who was Theophilus, and why did Luke write a Gospel for him?~~
- [3.] ~~What themes does Luke emphasize in his narration of Jesus' birth?~~
- [4.] ~~\*In what ways does Luke stress the “Jewishness” of Jesus and his orientation toward Jerusalem and the Temple?~~
- [5.] ~~\*In what ways does Luke portray Jesus as a Jewish prophet? What, in your opinion, is the significance of Jesus' death for Luke? How does it bring about salvation?~~

## ~~Chapter 10~~

- [1.] ~~How is John different from the Synoptics in terms of its contents?~~
- [2.] ~~\*How is John different from the Synoptics in terms of its overall portrayal of Jesus: who he was, what he said, and the significance of what he did?~~
- [3.] ~~\*What is the “socio-historical” method, and how does it work?~~
- [4.] ~~\*What evidence suggests that the traditions of John's Gospel underwent a long period of formation, and that the history of the community affected its retelling of its stories about Jesus?~~
- [5.] ~~What are the three stages of the Johannine community that scholars have isolated behind the Fourth Gospel, and which stories appear to have derived from one stage or another?~~

## Chapter 11

- [1.] What is the “contextual” method for studying ancient epistles? Why is it a useful approach?
- [2.] \*What is the context of the Johannine epistles, and how do these letters respond to this context?
- [3.] \*What are our sources for understanding ancient Gnosticism? What is the Nag Hammadi library, and how has it contributed to our knowledge of Gnosticism?
- [4.] Someone asks you to explain Gnosticism in a one-sentence description (not a thirty-minute lecture!). What would you say?
- [5.] \*What was the basic theological perspective of Christian Gnosticism (i.e., its views of the world, the divine realm, the human race, salvation, Christ, the church, and ethics)? How might Sethians and Valentinians have answered some components of this question differently?

## Chapter 12

- [1.] \*What were the three Gospels known to be in use among Jewish Christians, and how were they similar to and different from one another?
- [2.] \*What is the *Gospel of Peter*, and how does it compare with the Gospels of the New Testament? What are its contents? What are its most striking stories? What about it makes it appear to have been written after the New Testament Gospels?
- [3.] Who is the alleged author of the *Gospel of Thomas*?
- [4.] \*How do the sayings of *Thomas* compare with those of the Synoptics? How can *Thomas* be thought of as similar to Q? What is the basic message conveyed by this collection of sayings?
- [5.] Why might it be significant that Christians continued to tell “noncanonical” stories about Jesus long after the Gospels were written, and that many of these stories were clearly fabricated (e.g., those in the infancy Gospels)?

## Chapter 13

- [1.] Suppose we did not have the New Testament. What other ancient sources could be used to provide useful information about the historical Jesus?



- [2.] ~~\*Summarize what we would know about Jesus if *all* we had were non-Christian sources of the first and second centuries of the Common Era.~~
- [3.] ~~\*Why do the New Testament Gospels pose problems for determining who Jesus was and what he said and did?~~
- [4.] ~~\*Be able to explain to your roommate the three criteria for establishing authentic tradition about Jesus and the logic behind each of them.~~
- [5.] ~~What is the relationship between orthodox theology and historical reliability? Why?~~

## Chapter 14

- [1.] ~~What kinds of popular protests against Roman domination of Palestine do we know about?~~
- [2.] ~~\*What are the leading tenets of apocalypticism? In what ways can this be called an ideology of resistance?~~
- [3.] ~~\*What is the difference between the prophetic view and the apocalyptic view of the suffering of God's people?~~
- [4.] ~~\*What *evidence* suggests that Jesus was an apocalypticist? Does this evidence seem persuasive to you?~~
- [5.] ~~Do you see evidence that later accounts of Jesus tone down the apocalyptic aspects of his ministry? If so, what might be the explanation for this? If not, how should we understand the differences in how Jesus is portrayed?~~

## Chapter 15

- [1.] ~~\*How can understanding Jesus as a Jewish apocalypticist help to explain, based on our application of the various criteria we have discussed, the various things that he appears to have done?~~
- [2.] ~~\*How does Jesus' apocalypticism explain his teachings?~~
- [3.] ~~\*What can historians say more or less for certain about the last week of Jesus' life? Why was Jesus executed? Who was ultimately responsible for his death? Who actually performed the deed?~~
- [4.] ~~What is the best explanation for the Temple incident? What would Jesus have been trying to communicate, and how might this incident have been connected to Jesus' execution?~~

[5.] How does Jesus' apocalypticism relate to his association with tax collectors and "sinners"?

## Chapter 16

[1.] \*How would an apocalyptic Jew who came to believe that Jesus was raised from the dead understand the *significance* of the resurrection?

[2.] What role did vicarious suffering play in ancient Jewish and Greco-Roman literature?

[3.] \*What are some of the *different* understandings of Jesus that arose among his followers after his death?

[4.] \*How did early Christians interpret passages in the Hebrew Bible in order to align the Jewish scriptures with their beliefs about Jesus?

[5.] What are possible ways to think about the tradition of women finding the empty tomb in the Gospels? Why is this narrative detail important, and why would the Gospels preserve it?

## Chapter 17

[1.] \*What kind of literature (or genre) is the book of Acts, and how does it relate, in terms of genre, to the Gospel of Luke?

[2.] What important themes of Acts are set forth in the opening account of 1:1–11?

[3.] \*What similarities are there between Peter in the first part of Acts and Paul in the second? What about between the apostles in Acts and Jesus in Luke?

[4.] What different kinds of speeches are given in Acts, and what kinds of themes do they expound?

[5.] \*In your opinion, were this book and its companion volume, the Gospel of Luke, written by Paul's traveling companion Luke? Why or why not? Why, in brief, did this person write these two books?

## Chapter 18

[1.] Why is Paul so important for the New Testament and the history of early Christianity?

[2.] \*What are the major difficulties in studying the life and teachings of Paul? Why is it difficult, for example, to use the book of Acts to reconstruct an accurate picture of Paul?

What does it mean to say that Paul's letters are "occasional," and how does their occasional nature affect their interpretation?

[3.] \*What are the three main categories within the Pauline Corpus, and which letters belong in each?

[4.] What do we know about Paul before his conversion? What compelled Paul to convert?

[5.] \*How did Paul's belief in the resurrected Jesus change his theological view? What did it confirm about what he already believed, and what did it force him to reconsider? In particular, why would Paul's belief in Jesus' resurrection make him rethink the importance of the Jewish Law?

## Chapter 19

[1.] \*How did Paul spread his gospel? With whom did he speak? In what kind of context? What did he say? What did he try to get people to believe? How did he organize his converts? How did he manage to deal with his converts after he left town?

[2.] \*What was the occasion for the writing of 1 Thessalonians? How did the church begin? What problems arose after Paul left the community? What does Paul say to resolve those problems?

[3.] \*We have no evidence of Christian buildings of worship until the third century C.E. It appears that the earliest Christians met in people's homes. How might meeting places of this kind have helped create cohesive social units?

[4.] How did the typical structure of a Roman city impact the way early Christianity spread?

[5.] Christians were often labeled as perverts and criminals. Why? What might this suggest about later Christian accusations that other groups were made up of perverts and criminals?

## Chapter 20

[1.] \*The following are the questions you should ask yourself for every Pauline epistle you read:

[a.] What is the occasion of the letter?

[b.] How did the church (or Paul's contact with these people) begin?

[c.] What can we say about the makeup of the church (i.e., what kind of people were in it? Were they Jew, Gentile, rich, poor, well educated, uneducated, etc.)?

[d.] What problems have arisen since Paul left the community (i.e., what is the *context* of each letter)?

[e.] What does Paul say to resolve those problems (i.e., what are the overarching *themes* of each letter)?

In particular, be able to answer these questions about the Corinthian correspondence and Galatians:

- [2.] How does Paul's belief in the future bodily resurrection of believers relate to the various problems the Corinthians were experiencing (e.g., the divisions in the church, men visiting prostitutes, chaos during the worship services)? In other words, if the Corinthians were to agree with him about their future resurrection, how would it help to solve their problems?
- [3.] \*How does Paul's insistence that Christians live in "love" relate to the use of spiritual gifts in the church (1 Cor 12–14)? How does it relate to the question of whether it was right to eat food offered to idols? How does it relate to his apocalyptic worldview?
- [4.] Be able to show the themes in common between 1 and 2 Corinthians and, especially, to trace the course of Paul's relationship with the Corinthian community from the time of the first letter mentioned in 1 Corinthians 5:9 through the writing of 2 Corinthians.
- [5.] \*What led to the conflict of Paul with his opponents in Galatia? What is the view of the Jewish Law that he maps out for his converts in Galatia?

## Chapter 21

- [1.] \*In what ways is the letter to the Romans unique among the Pauline epistles? In particular, you should ask who the recipients were, what their relationship to Paul was, and why he was writing to them (in contrast, e.g., to the other letters).
- [2.] Many people take Romans 1:16–17 to be the fundamental theme of this letter. What do these verses indicate about Paul's "gospel" and its significance?
- [3.] \*What are the major themes that Paul develops through Romans 1–8? According to these chapters, why do people need to be justified before God, how does God bring justification, and how does the Jewish Law figure into this act of justification?
- [4.] \*In Romans 9–11, why do you suppose Paul is so intent on showing that God did not go back on his promises to Israel when he brought salvation to the Gentiles? In Paul's opinion, where did the people of Israel go wrong in their relationship with God? What good thing, in Paul's judgment, can come of Israel's rejection of God's salvation in Christ?
- [5.] What "models" does Paul employ in the representation of his gospel? Where do you see evidences of these models in his argumentation in Romans?

## Chapter 22

- [1.] How much does Paul say about the life and teachings of Jesus (i.e., about his words and deeds prior to his death)? What is the best way, in your judgment, to explain the paucity of references to Jesus' life in Paul's writings?
- [2.] \*In what ways were Jesus' teachings and Paul's theology similar to one another? In what ways were they different? In your opinion, do Paul and Jesus represent fundamentally the *same* religion or fundamentally *different* religions?
- [3.] \*Does it seem to you that James 2:14–26 represents a flat-out contradiction of Paul's words in Romans 3:27–31 and 4:1–5, 22; and in Galatians 2:15–16 and 3:6? If not, how do you explain away the differences?
- [4.] \*How were Paul's views developed in the stories about Paul and Thecla? How were they developed among Gnostics like Theudas?
- [5.] Why do you suppose there were so many different understandings of what Paul stood for in early Christianity?

## Chapter 23

- [1.] \*What reasons did people have for forging literary works? What techniques did forgers use? Was forgery considered acceptable in the ancient world?
- [2.] \*What do the following adjectives mean, and how do they relate to one another: forged, pseudonymous, anonymous, and homonymous?
- [3.] Why do most scholars think that the same author was responsible for all three of the Pastorals?
- [4.] \*What are the arguments *against* Pauline authorship of each of the Deutero-Pauline epistles? (There are somewhat different arguments for each of them.) Of the Pastorals? Do you find these arguments persuasive? Why or why not?
- [5.] In particular, how did the proto-orthodox Christians of the second century form a unified front to oppose "heresy" (through the clergy, creed, and canon)? How are elements of this three-pronged attack evident in the Pastorals, and how does their presence influence our judgment concerning the authorship of these letters?

## Chapter 24

- [1.] \*What evidence exists to suggest that women played a prominent role in Paul's churches?—What about in the ministry of Jesus?
- [2.] Was Jesus, in your opinion, a social revolutionary with regard to women? Was Paul?
- [3.] \*Describe Paul's view of women, according to his letters. How did his view of women “in the church” differ from his view of women “in nature,” or “in society”?
- [4.] \*How did women fare in Pauline churches after Paul himself left the scene? How do you explain their disappearance from positions of prestige and authority?
- [5.] How do ancient ideologies of gender help explain the fate of women in the early Christian churches (i.e., their progressive oppression)? Why were women thought to be inferior to men in that world? How did these views come to be implemented in the churches associated with Paul?

## Chapter 25

- [1.] What is meant by “self-definition,” and how did early Christians, in general, “define” themselves?
- [2.] \*How is Christ portrayed as superior to the Jewish religion in the book of Hebrews? What are the two ways that the author uses the Jewish Scriptures to show Jesus' superiority? Why does the author want to stress to his readers Jesus' superiority?
- [3.] In what ways is the *Epistle of Barnabas* like and unlike the letter to the Hebrews?
- [4.] \*How does *Barnabas* understand the Jewish Scriptures? What does its author think of the Jewish religion?
- [5.] In your opinion, should either Hebrews or *Barnabas* be thought of as anti-Jewish? How, when, and why did strong anti-Jewish sentiments arise in early Christianity? Does it seem ironic to you that a religion that began as Jewish should so quickly become anti-Jewish?

## Chapter 26

- [1.] \*Why were the early Christians persecuted?
- [2.] \*How does the context of persecution help to explain the message of 1 Peter?
- [3.] \*Who was Ignatius, and how did he react to his imminent martyrdom?

[4.] ~~How does the author of the *Martyrdom of Polycarp* narrate Polycarp's death in ways that would increase solidarity among Christian readers and hearers of the text?~~

[5.] ~~What arguments did second-century apologists use to defend Christians and the Christian faith?~~

## Chapter 27

[1.] ~~\*Is the epistle of James a "Christian" book? Which of its teachings seem to be uniquely Christian?~~

[2.] ~~\*How does the *Didache* help us understand the religious practices of the early Christians?~~

[3.] ~~Is it fair to say that Polycarp was a totally unoriginal thinker? What was the occasion of his letter, and what are its outstanding features?~~

[4.] ~~\*In what ways are the problems of the church in Corinth addressed by *1 Clement* comparable to those addressed by Paul some forty years earlier?~~

[5.] ~~Who, exactly, is being opposed in the letters of Jude and 2 Peter?~~

## Chapter 28

[1.] ~~Be able to summarize the basic narrative of the Book of Revelation.~~

[2.] ~~\*What are the literary characteristics of apocalypses? In what ways is the book of Revelation like and unlike other apocalypses?~~

[3.] ~~\*How, in your judgment, does understanding Revelation in terms of other apocalypses help you to interpret the meaning of the book, including its bizarre symbolism?~~

[4.] ~~\*What is *The Shepherd* of Hermas about? Which features of the apocalypse genre does it attest?~~

[5.] ~~What is the *Apocalypse of Peter* about? Which features of the apocalypse genre does it attest?~~

## Exam Questions



# Chapter 1

## Essays

- [1.] Compare and contrast the views of God, Jesus, and salvation held by two of the following groups: adoptionists, Marcionites, Gnostics.
- [2.] Describe the process of the canonization of the New Testament. When might it have begun? When did it end? What factors were involved in choosing its books?
- [3.] In what ways did the proto-orthodox Christians agree with adoptionists, Marcionites, and Gnostics?
- [4.] RESOLVED: Early Christianity was essentially unified in belief. Pick a side of this resolution and argue for it using as many specific examples from the text as possible. Keep in mind that the most persuasive arguments anticipate (and answer) counterarguments.
- [5.] A variety of Christian groups, some of which were subsequently labeled “heretical,” used the books of the New Testament. How did the process of canonization limit possible interpretations of these books and make them acceptable to orthodox Christians?

## True/False

- \*1. Revelation is an example of a Christian apocalypse.  
T — F
- 2. The book of Acts is attributed to Paul.  
T — F
- 3. The Nag Hammadi library features writings from the Marcionites.  
T — F
- \*4. The earliest surviving Christian literature is written in Hebrew.  
T — F
- \*5. According to some Gnostics, the Old Testament God was evil.  
T — F

## Multiple Choice

- \*1. Which early Christian group believed in two Gods: the just God of the Old Testament and the merciful God of Jesus?
- a) Gnostics
  - b) Proto-orthodox Christians
  - c) Jewish-Christian adoptionists
  - d) Marcionites
- \*2. What does the term “heresy” mean?
- a) Evil
  - b) To choose
  - c) To reject
  - d) To agree with
3. What is the name of a collection of second-century proto-orthodox writings?
- a) Nag Hammadi Library
  - b) New Testament
  - c) Pentateuch
  - d) Apostolic Fathers
- \*4. The term “canon” means:
- a) Orthodox
  - b) Heretical
  - c) Authoritative
  - d) Ruler
5. How many books are there in the New Testament?
- a) Twenty-five
  - b) Twenty-six
  - c) Twenty-seven
  - d) Twenty-eight
6. What Christian group lived in Palestine and taught that Christians should keep the Law?
- a) Jewish-Christian adoptionists
  - b) Gnostics
  - c) Marcionites
  - d) Proto-orthodox
7. According to the Jewish-Christian adoptionists, Jesus was:
- a) God
  - b) Moses
  - c) A man
  - d) A phantasm

~~8. According to Marcion, the Jewish Law:~~

- ~~a) Was good~~
- ~~b) Did not bring salvation~~
- ~~c) Continued to be binding after Jesus' death~~
- ~~d) Didn't exist~~

~~\*9. What does the term "gnosis" mean?~~

- ~~a) Knowledge~~
- ~~b) Salvation~~
- ~~c) Savior~~
- ~~d) Choice~~

~~\*10. Which of the following groups thought it was blasphemy to call Jesus God?~~

- ~~a) Marcionites~~
- ~~b) Gnostics~~
- ~~c) Jewish-Christian adoptionists~~
- ~~d) Proto-orthodox Christians~~

~~11. Gnostics believed which of the following brought salvation?~~

- ~~a) Jesus' death~~
- ~~b) Jesus' resurrection~~
- ~~c) Knowledge~~
- ~~d) Martyrdom~~

~~12. Jewish Christians thought which of the following was a heretic?~~

- ~~a) Jesus~~
- ~~b) Paul~~
- ~~c) Matthew~~
- ~~d) Peter~~

~~13. The Marcionites particularly liked which of the following apostles?~~

- ~~a) Paul~~
- ~~b) Peter~~
- ~~c) James~~
- ~~d) Mary~~

~~14. The Marcionites used a form of which Gospel?~~

- ~~a) *Thomas*~~
- ~~b) John~~
- ~~c) Mark~~
- ~~d) Luke~~

~~15. The Jewish-Christian adoptionists used a version of which of the following books?~~

- ~~a) Romans~~
- ~~b) Acts~~

- e) Revelation
- d) Matthew

~~\*16. The Marcionites believed Jesus came to save people from~~

- a) Sin
- b) The Jewish God
- c) Rome
- d) Paul

~~17. Which of the following thought Jesus' body was a phantasm?~~

- a) The Apostolic Fathers
- b) Marcionites
- c) Jewish-Christian adoptionists
- d) Nehemiah

~~18. Which of the following is not a designation for the Jewish canon?~~

- a) Old Testament
- b) Judaism
- c) Hebrew Bible
- d) Jewish Scriptures

~~19. Second-century Jewish Christians taught that every Jewish law had to be observed *except*:~~

- a) Circumcision
- b) Kosher food laws
- c) Observing the Sabbath
- d) Animal sacrifice

~~20. Jewish-Christian adoptionists believed that Jesus was "adopted" by God at his:~~

- a) Birth
- b) Death
- c) Trial
- d) Baptism

~~21. Some Gnostics believed that which of the following happened at Jesus' baptism?~~

- a) He was adopted.
- b) He illustrated that baptism brought salvation.
- c) The divine Christ entered Jesus' body.
- d) Nothing

~~\*22. The Nag Hammadi Library was written in what language?~~

- a) Coptic
- b) Hebrew
- c) Aramaic
- d) Greek

~~23. The word "gospel" means:~~

- a) Life
- b) Good news
- c) Divine writing
- d) Salvation

\*24. The word “epistle” means:

- a) Biography
- b) Letter
- c) Conversation
- d) Right choice

25. How many books in the New Testament claim to be written by Paul?

- a) Thirteen
- b) Ten
- c) Eight
- d) Five

\*26. At the end of what century did Christians begin to call Jesus’ words Scripture?

- a) The first century B.C.E.
- b) The first century C.E.
- c) The second century C.E.
- d) The fifth century C.E.

27. Who established the first canon?

- a) Marcion
- b) Gnostics
- c) Proto-orthodox Christians
- d) Paul

28. Which of the following was not a criterion for canonicity?

- a) Antiquity
- b) Apostolicity
- c) Orthodoxy
- d) Historical accuracy

\*29. In what year did Athanasius name the current twenty-seven books of the New Testament as authoritative?

- a) 150 C.E.
- b) 288 C.E.
- c) 367 C.E.
- d) 432 C.E.

30. This second-century figure established a canon consisting of some of Paul’s letters along with an edited version of the Gospel of Luke.

- a) Athanasius
- b) Valentinus

- e) Clement of Alexandria
- d) Marcion

## Chapter 2

### Essays

- [1.] Some manuscripts of Luke report that when Mary and Joseph found Jesus in the Temple—when he was twelve, Mary said, “Your father and I have been searching for you,” while others read, “We have been searching for you.” Which of these do you think represents the more original passage? Why?
- [2.] Many scholars do not believe we can ever be certain that we possess the exact words of the New Testament authors. What arguments might they give to substantiate this claim?
- [3.] Write a letter to a family member and explain to him or her the criteria used to determine the original text of the New Testament. How do these criteria help in this determination? What shortcomings do they have?
- [4.] How are the books of our modern Bibles related to the original manuscripts? Explain how a book of the Bible was transmitted after the original document was written and what scholars and translators of the Bible have to consider when preparing a modern version.
- [5.] Some manuscripts of Mark report that when a leper asked Jesus for healing, “Jesus became angry,” while others read, “Jesus was filled with compassion.” Which of these do you think represents the more original passage? Why?

### True/False

1. Verse divisions didn’t exist in the Bible until the 1500s.  
T\_\_\_\_\_F
- \*2. There are more differences between the manuscripts of the New Testament than there are words in the New Testament.  
T\_\_\_\_\_F
- \*3. We do not have the original copy of any New Testament book.  
T\_\_\_\_\_F
4. Most of the differences between New Testament manuscripts were the result of intentional changes by scribes.  
T\_\_\_\_\_F
- \*5. Earlier scribes who copied the New Testament were more precise than later ones.  
T\_\_\_\_\_F

## Multiple-Choice

1. Our earliest reasonably complete copy of the Gospel of John dates to around:
  - a) 50 C.E.
  - b) 90 C.E.
  - c) 200 C.E.
  - d) 300 C.E.
2. We currently possess about how many fragments and copies of New Testament texts?
  - a) Sixty thousand
  - b) One hundred
  - c) Six hundred
  - d) Six thousand
- \*3. Which of the following represents an intentional scribal error?
  - a) Changing the text to fit doctrine
  - b) Misspelling words
  - c) Repeating words, verses, or pages
  - d) Skipping words, verses, or pages
4. Our earliest surviving New Testament manuscript, P<sup>52</sup>, is
  - a) A reliable witness of the original text of Paul's letters
  - b) Datable to the 1<sup>st</sup>-century C.E.
  - c) The size of a credit card
  - d) Evidence of adoptionist Christian theology
5. Which of the following is *not* a criterion used by scholars to determine the original text of the New Testament?
  - a) Geographical spread
  - b) Age of manuscripts
  - c) Difficulty of reading
  - d) Orthodox reading
6. Which of the following is *least* helpful in establishing the original text of the New Testament?
  - a) Geographical spread
  - b) Number of manuscripts
  - c) Age of manuscripts
  - d) Difficulty of reading
7. The story of Jesus and the woman taken in adultery (John 7:59–8:11) is:
  - a) An original part of the Gospel of John
  - b) An original part of the Gospel of Mark that was later inserted into the Gospel of John by the author of John
  - c) Not an original part of any Gospel
  - d) A pagan parable



8. In the story from Mark of the women who find Jesus' tomb empty and are instructed by a young man (or angel) to go tell Peter and the other disciples (Mark 16), the last twelve verses were:

- a) Added to the Gospel of Mark by a scribe
- b) An original part of the Gospel of Mathew that was later inserted into the Gospel of Mark by the author of Mark
- c) An original part of the Gospel of Mark
- d) A pagan parable

\*9. In the story of Jesus in the last minutes before his arrest in the Garden of Gethsemane (Luke 22:43-44), the account of his "sweating blood" while contemplating his imminent suffering is most likely:

- a) An original part of the Gospel of Luke
- b) An original part of the Gospel of Mark that was later inserted into the Gospel of Luke by the author of Luke
- c) Not an original part of any Gospel
- d) An insertion from a letter of Paul.

\*10. What is the style of writing called that leaves out punctuation, capitalization, paragraph divisions, sentence divisions, and spaces between words?

- a) *Scriptio ad absurdum*
- b) *Scriptio continua*
- c) *Grammatica elimination*
- d) *Grammatica ad absurdum*

11. Give a Biblical example of parablepsis occasioned by homoeoteleuton.

- a) "I do not ask that you keep them from the," an omission of the next line that ended in the same six words, then a continuation of the text with "evil one"
- b) "lastnightatthedinnertableisawabundanceonthetable"
- c) "Let this cup before me," with an insertion ("pass") between "cup" and "me"
- d) The addition of the last twelve verses of Mark

12. When did scribes begin to make chapter-like divisions in books of the New Testament?

- a) The first century
- b) The nineteenth century
- c) The seventeenth century
- d) The fourth century

13. Who was the University of Paris lecturer who introduced the major divisions into the Latin Bible in the thirteenth century?

- a) Robert Stephanus
- b) Thueydides
- c) Steven Langton
- d) Valentinus

- \*14. Who created the verse divisions that we have today?
- a) Robert Stephanus
  - b) Thucydides
  - c) Steven Langton
  - d) Valentinus
- \*15. What is the earliest surviving manuscript of the New Testament to date?
- a) The entirety of Revelation
  - b) A fragment of the Gospel of Mark
  - c) The last five chapters of 1 Peter
  - d) A fragment of the Gospel of John
16. Which of the following is a criterion for establishing the original text of a writing?
- a) Establishing whether it was written by a proto-orthodox Christian or a heretic
  - b) The age of the manuscripts
  - c) Determining whether the original text was a forgery.
  - d) Conformity with orthodox doctrines.
17. Criteria for establishing the original text of a writing do *not* include:
- a) Conformity with the norms of the culture in which it was written
  - b) The distribution of the manuscripts
  - c) The difficulty of the reading
  - d) Conformity with the author's own language, style, and theology
- \*18. New Testament manuscripts do *not*:
- a) Contain many mistakes
  - b) Have many centuries separating the events written about and the events themselves
  - c) Have any inaccuracies
  - d) Contain exact word-for-word copies of the texts that were originally produced by ancient Christian authors
- \*19. By what means have early Christian truth claims been handed down from one generation to the next?
- a) Orally
  - b) Written texts
  - c) Lifestyles
  - d) All of the above
- \*20. How many original copies of books of the New Testament do we have?
- a) Three fragments
  - b) One entire book and one fragment of another
  - c) None
  - d) All of them
- \*21. Most copies of New Testament manuscripts come from what time period?
- a) The Middle Ages

- b) The Age of Enlightenment
- c) The Golden Age
- d) The Bronze Age

22. Which event is found in some copies of the Gospel of Luke but not in others?

- a) Mary's song
- b) Jesus' ascension
- c) Peter's denial of Jesus
- d) Judas' kiss

23. Which saying of Jesus is found in some copies of the Gospel of Luke but not in others?

- a) "Father, forgive them, for they don't know what they are doing."
- b) "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you."
- c) "You will be called Peter."
- d) "I had to be in my Father's house."

24. Which doctrine is not explicitly found in the earliest manuscripts of the Bible but was inserted into it by some later scribes?

- a) Salvation by works
- b) Jesus' divinity
- c) The virgin birth
- d) The Trinity

\*25. What is the name of the academic discipline devoted to the study of ancient manuscripts to determine the most likely earliest readings?

- a) Historical criticism
- b) Redaction criticism
- c) Literary criticism
- d) Textual criticism

26. What is the approximate date of our earliest complete copy of the Gospel of Luke?

- a) 125 C.E.
- b) 175 C.E.
- c) 250 C.E.
- d) 350 C.E.

27. Which of the following represents the most common difference among Biblical manuscripts?

- a) Doctrinal changes
- b) Harmonizations
- c) Differences in spelling
- d) Parablepsis occasioned by homoeoteleuton

28. Which of the following might account for an accidental omission in a manuscript?

- a) Gnostic Christian doctrine
- b) Parablepsis occasioned by homoeoteleuton
- c) Amanuensis

d) *Lectio difficilior*

29. Which of the following indicates a reading is most likely earlier than other options?

- a) It is a more difficult reading.
- b) It occurs in the most manuscripts.
- c) It is found in more recent manuscripts.
- d) It is doctrinally orthodox.

30. The earliest copyists of the New Testament were:

- a) Trained scribes
- b) Monks
- c) Priests
- d) Untrained but literate

## Chapter 3

### Essays

- [1.] What is Hellenization? In what ways do you think it might have affected the birth and spread of Christianity?
- [2.] Discuss some of the important aspects of Greco-Roman religiosity. How did magic and philosophy fit into the religious sphere in antiquity?
- [3.] What were the mystery cults? In what ways could Christianity be understood as an ancient mystery cult?
- [4.] Describe the practice of “taking the auspices.” In what ways did Roman priests called augurs “take the auspices” to determine whether the gods were in favor of a projected action on the part of the state?
- [5.] How did most people understand the relationship of human beings to the gods in the Greco-Roman world?

### True/False

1. Religions in the Greco-Roman world didn't have much to do with what people believed.  
T \_\_\_\_\_ F
- \*2. The Gospel of Matthew was the first book of the Bible to be written.  
T \_\_\_\_\_ F
3. Greco-Roman religions were not concerned with the afterlife.  
T \_\_\_\_\_ F
- \*4. When society at large approves of a cultic practice, it is called “religious,” while more marginal practices are called “magical.”  
T \_\_\_\_\_ F
- \*5. A wide variety of religious expression was practiced across the Greco-Roman world.  
T \_\_\_\_\_ F

### Multiple Choice

- \*1. Which was probably the first book of the New Testament to be written?

- a) Matthew
- b) Romans
- c) First Thessalonians
- d) Mark

2. Who lived at about the same time as Jesus, was reported to have had a life and death similar to Jesus, and was considered by his disciples to be the Son of God?

- a) Paul
- b) Apollonius of Tyana
- c) Alexander the Great
- d) Plato

3. Alexander the Great was originally king of what country?

- a) Egypt
- b) Palestine
- c) India
- d) Macedonia

\*4. The spread of Greek culture and language is known as:

- a) Paganism
- b) Hellenization
- c) The Greco-Roman process
- d) Daimonia

5. Greco-Roman religion incorporated which of the following?

- a) Creeds
- b) Sacrifice
- c) Sacred texts
- d) Ethical commitments

\*6. Polytheism is the:

- a) Worship of one god
- b) Worship of nature
- c) Worship of many gods
- d) Worship of the emperor

\*7. Which of the following was thought to be the most powerful of the gods?

- a) Genius
- b) Lares
- c) Daimonia
- d) Zeus

8. Which of the following was not a household deity?

- a) Penates
- b) Lares
- c) Daimonia

d) Genius

9. Which of the following was not thought to be a demigod or divine man?

- a) Alexander the Great
- b) Pythagoras
- c) Heracles
- d) Josephus

10. The term “cult” means:

- a) Strange belief
- b) Magic
- c) Gods
- d) Care

11. Which of the following was *not* used to determine whether a god had accepted a sacrifice?

- a) Extispicy
- b) Persephone
- c) Auspices
- d) Divination

12. When individuals wished to know the will of a god, they visited a(n):

- a) Oracle
- b) Cult
- c) Daimonia
- d) Lares

13. The leaders of priestly “colleges” were:

- a) Equestrians
- b) Geniuses
- c) Augurs
- d) Senators

\*14. Pagan religions that required initiation were:

- a) Magic
- b) Mystery cults
- c) Auspices
- d) Illegal

15. Which of the following was worshipped in a mystery cult?

- a) Augurs
- b) Isis
- c) Josephus
- d) Daimonia

16. Philosophical schools urged all of the following *except*:

- a) Tolerance

- b) Individual well-being
- c) Concern with doctrines
- d) Ethics

17. Which of the following was a philosophical school?

- a) Stoicism
- b) Demeter
- c) Josephus
- d) Genius

\*18. In Rome, the priestly art of reading the entrails of sacrificed animals was called:

- a) Apocalypticism
- b) The contextual method
- c) Extispicy
- d) Circumcision

\*19. The Roman Empire began as a(n):

- a) Small farming village
- b) Small fishing village
- c) Large metropolis within the Mediterranean Federation of States
- d) Aristocratic oligarchy

20. In what year did Octavian assume control of Rome?

- a) 450 B.C.E.
- b) 120 B.C.E.
- c) 66 B.C.E.
- d) 27 B.C.E.

\*21. State priesthoods in the Roman Empire were:

- a) Political appointments
- b) Nonexistent
- c) Appointed with the blessings of the Jewish high priest
- d) Not filled by people of Greek ancestry

\*22. Stoicism, Platonism, and Epicureanism all involved the exercise of:

- a) Reason
- b) Financial resources
- c) Political power
- d) Magic

\*23. Missionary movements in the Greco-Roman world were advanced mostly by:

- a) The established religions
- b) Pagan cults
- c) Schools of philosophy
- d) Jewish sects



24. Which was a characteristic of ancient religions (with the exception of Judaism)?
- a) Organization and hierarchy
  - b) Polytheism
  - c) Creeds and statements of religious doctrine
  - d) Sacred written texts
25. What was the primary aim of ancient philosophy?
- a) To investigate the abstract principles of nature
  - b) To investigate the best way to live
  - c) To please the gods
  - d) To lead the way to eternal life
26. Which of the following was a primary difference between mystery cults and wider religions in the Greco-Roman world?
- a) Magical practices
  - b) Philosophical speculation
  - c) Animal sacrifice
  - d) Concern for the afterlife
27. The successor of Julius Caesar who later went by the title “Augustus” was:
- a) Octavian
  - b) Pontius Pilate
  - c) Mark Antony
  - d) Tiberius
28. This figure was often called the “savior” of the human race.
- a) The Jewish high priest
  - b) The god Zeus
  - c) The Roman emperor
  - d) Apollonius of Tyana
29. The sense of being a “citizen of the world” rather than of only one locality is known as:
- a) Hellenization
  - b) Patriotism
  - c) Cosmopolitanism
  - d) Cultural unity
30. The *Life of Apollonius* was written in the:
- a) First century B.C.E.
  - b) First century C.E.
  - c) Second century C.E.
  - d) Third century C.E.

## Chapter 4

### Essays

- [1.] ~~During the political crises of the rule of the Hasmoneans, issues of what it really meant to be Jewish arose. Discuss how the ancient Jews understood what it meant to be Jewish in terms of how the basic principles of their religion united them and how differences in interpretation of the Law splintered them into a number of sects. Name the fundamental religious beliefs they all shared.~~
- [2.] ~~Discuss how the four known Jewish sects differed.~~
- [3.] ~~What set the Jewish Temple apart from other Greco-Roman temples? Discuss the significance of this difference and how it helped define the Jews as a people.~~
- [4.] ~~Analyze the notion of two messiahs revealed in the Dead Sea Scrolls. What did the Essenes take to be the roles of each of the messiahs?~~
- [5.] ~~Why did the Pharisees develop the “oral” Law to go alongside the written Torah? Give several examples of how this oral Law functioned.~~

### True/False

1. According to the War Scroll, the final war will last seven years.  
T \_\_\_\_\_ F
- \*2. The Sadducees looked forward to the resurrection of the dead.  
T \_\_\_\_\_ F
- \*3. The Pharisees did not have significant political clout.  
T \_\_\_\_\_ F
- \*4. Most ancient Jews were not a member of any particular sect.  
T \_\_\_\_\_ F
5. Arabic was the ancient tongue of Judea.  
T \_\_\_\_\_ F

### Multiple Choice

- \*1. “Diaspora” means:  
a) Palestine

- b) The spread of Greek culture
- c) Dispersion
- d) Law

2. The Septuagint is:

- a) The Greek translation of the Hebrew Bible
- b) A Roman emperor
- c) A country in the Greco-Roman world
- d) A god

3. Which of the following was *not* unique to Judaism?

- a) A covenant
- b) Torah
- c) Animal sacrifice
- d) The synagogue

\*4. "Torah" means:

- a) Guidance
- b) "Bible" in Greek
- c) Judaism
- d) Dispersion

\*5. The Pentateuch is:

- a) The first five books of the Bible
- b) The dispersion of Jews
- c) An early sect of Judaism
- d) A household god

\*6. Who was allowed to enter the Holy of Holies?

- a) Essenes
- b) Josephus
- c) Jesus
- d) The high priest

7. Jews in Palestine disliked the Syrian ruler Antiochus Epiphanes because:

- a) He was not of the right priestly line.
- b) He forbade the Jews to practice their religion.
- c) He required men to remove the marks of circumcision.
- d) He destroyed the Temple.

\*8. The Jewish response to Antiochus Epiphanes' actions was:

- a) A silent protest
- b) The Maccabean revolt
- c) Disregard for his laws
- d) Acceptance of his regulations

- ~~\*9. The Maccabean revolt began around the year:~~  
a) ~~167 B.C.E.~~  
b) ~~167 C.E.~~  
c) ~~586 B.C.E.~~  
d) ~~721 B.C.E.~~
- ~~10. The Jewish holiday Hanukkah celebrates:~~  
a) ~~Cyrus allowing the Jews to return to Palestine~~  
b) ~~The rededication of the Temple~~  
c) ~~The destruction of the Second Temple~~  
d) ~~The right to circumcise baby boys~~
- ~~11. After eighty years of self-rule, the Maccabees were defeated in 63 B.C.E. by the:~~  
a) ~~Greeks~~  
b) ~~Romans~~  
c) ~~Persians~~  
d) ~~Syrians~~
- ~~12. Most Jews in Palestine were:~~  
a) ~~Pharisees~~  
b) ~~Sadducees~~  
c) ~~Essenes~~  
d) ~~Unaffiliated~~
- ~~13. The largest sect of Judaism was the:~~  
a) ~~Pharisees~~  
b) ~~Sadducees~~  
c) ~~Essenes~~  
d) ~~Zealots~~
- ~~\*14. The sect of Judaism that wielded the most political power at the time of Jesus was the:~~  
a. ~~Pharisees~~  
b. ~~Sadducees~~  
c. ~~Essenes~~  
d. ~~Zealots~~
- ~~15. Which group believed in the authority of the oral Law?~~  
a) ~~The Pharisees~~  
b) ~~The Fourth Philosophy~~  
c) ~~The Essenes~~  
d) ~~The Sadducees~~
- ~~16. Which group was aristocratic and most closely tied to the Temple?~~  
a) ~~The Pharisees~~  
b) ~~The Fourth Philosophy~~  
c) ~~The Sadducees~~

d) The Essenes

17. The Sadducees believed which one of the following was authoritative?

- a) Oral Law
- b) The Septuagint
- c) The Torah
- d) They did not follow any written text.

18. The group of texts used by the Essenes is called:

- a) The Nag Hammadi library
- b) The Dead Sea Scrolls
- c) The oral Law
- d) The Torah

19. One group of Essenes left Jerusalem because:

- a) They believed they were in imminent danger.
- b) They preferred the wilderness.
- c) They believed the wrong priestly family was running the Temple.
- d) They had a vision to go to the wilderness.

20. Acceptance into the Essene community required all of the following *except*:

- a) A two-year initiation period
- b) Relinquishing all personal property to the community
- c) A marriage that had produced children
- d) Strict adherence to divine law

21. The word "sicarii" means:

- a) Zealot
- b) Dagger
- c) Pharisee
- d) Traitor

\*22. How did the ancient Jews typically feel about keeping the Law embodied in the Torah?

- a) They considered it a great joy.
- b) They considered it harsh and difficult.
- c) They considered it complicated and confusing.
- d) They considered it so onerous that few of them actually tried.

23. What were the Roman administrators who governed regions of the Roman Empire under a king called?

- a) Augurs
- b) Priests
- c) Prefects
- d) Hasmoneans

24. Which Jewish sect disavowed the notion of the future resurrection of the dead?

- a) The Pharisees
- b) The Sadducees
- c) The Fourth Philosophy
- d) The Essenes

\*25. Why are the Dead Sea Scrolls so valuable?

- a) Because they are nearly a thousand years older than the oldest copies of the Hebrew Scriptures that we previously had
- b) Because they constitute proof that the other Scriptures are inauthentic
- c) Because they discredit the idea that Jesus was the messiah
- d) Because they were written on platinum

26. What was the physical sign of the covenant between ancient Jews and God?

- a) The wearing of a phylactery around the forehead
- b) Circumcision
- c) A Star of David tattoo
- d) Not cutting the beard hair

\*27. An alternative place of worship (to the Temple in Jerusalem) where Jews came together in the community to discuss the sacred traditions of the Torah was called a(n):

- a) Ashram
- b) Congregation
- c) Synagogue
- d) Church

28. People from which tribe of Israel worked as assistants to the priests who performed Temple sacrifices?

- a) Levi
- b) Benjamin
- c) Reuben
- d) Gad

29. Which Jewish sect did not believe in the existence of angels?

- a) The Pharisees
- b) The Sadducees
- c) The Fourth Philosophy
- d) The Essenes

30. How is the War Scroll unique among ancient Jewish literature?

- a) In its strange symbolism
- b) In its underlying doctrine of violence
- c) In its lack of apocalyptic references
- d) In its graphic and detailed description of the future battle that will end the age

## Chapter 5

### Essays

- [1.] Discuss how stories about Jesus spread throughout the empire and how the retelling of traditions about Jesus worked to convert people. What effect did this storytelling have on the traditions about Jesus?
- [2.] Using a specific example from the New Testament Gospels, discuss the evidence that Christians changed stories about Jesus.
- [3.] Why do scholars think that the disciples Matthew and John and friends of the apostles Mark and Luke did not write the Gospels attributed to them?
- [4.] Discuss why it is important to assign a piece of literature to a particular genre before attempting to interpret it.
- [5.] Recently, many scholars have agreed that the New Testament Gospels are a form of ancient biography. Why do they think this? What do Gospels have in common with other ancient biographies? How are they different? Do you agree with this categorization of the Gospels?

### True/False

- \*1. The Gospel of Mark was written within a decade of Jesus' life.  
T \_\_\_\_\_ F
- \*2. The New Testament Gospels all have Jesus getting crucified at the same time of day.  
T \_\_\_\_\_ F
3. The New Testament Gospels were written anonymously.  
T \_\_\_\_\_ F
4. Ancient biographies tended to portray the protagonist's character as constant rather than in a state of development.  
T \_\_\_\_\_ F
- \*5. The New Testament Gospels are best understood as ancient biographies.  
T \_\_\_\_\_ F

## Multiple Choice

- \*1. Scholars think Jesus died around:
- a) 30 B.C.E.
  - b) 30 C.E.
  - c) 50 C.E.
  - d) 70 C.E.
2. The Gospel of Mark was probably written around:
- a) 30 B.C.E.
  - b) 30 C.E.
  - c) 50 C.E.
  - d) 70 C.E.
3. Matthew and Luke were probably written around:
- a) 30 C.E.
  - b) 50 C.E.
  - c) 80 C.E.
  - d) 95 C.E.
4. Which Gospel was probably written last?
- a) Matthew
  - b) Mark
  - c) Luke
  - d) John
- \*5. The Christian mission was conducted primarily:
- a) Through public preaching to large numbers of people
  - b) Person to person
  - c) In revivals
  - d) By distributing copies of the New Testament
- \*6. Scholars estimate ancient literacy in the best of times to have been:
- a) 1-5 percent.
  - b) 10-15 percent
  - c) 20-25 percent
  - d) 40-45 percent
7. According to the Gospel of John, Jesus died:
- a) The day before the Passover meal
  - b) The week before Passover
  - c) The day after the Passover meal
  - d) The week after Passover
8. Who was the Roman governor who ordered that Jesus be crucified?
- a) Caesar Augustus



- b) Pontius Pilate
- c) Herod the Great
- d) Octavian

9. What event is commemorated by Passover?

- a) The release of the children of Israel from Babylonian bondage
- b) The time the Israelites spent waiting to enter the Promised Land
- c) The crucifixion of Jesus
- d) The Exodus of the children of Israel from captivity in Egypt

\*10. What feature typically accompanied the stories of religious or powerful political figures in ancient Greco-Roman biographies?

- a) The miraculous
- b) The mischievous
- c) The sublime
- d) The expression of the human condition

11. What did bitter herbs symbolize in the Passover meal?

- a) The bitterness of life outside the Garden of Eden
- b) The Israelites' bitter hardships in Egypt
- c) The bitterness the Israelites felt toward their God
- d) The Israelites' bitter hardships in Babylonia

12. What is the term for a category of literature in which texts share a range of conventions?

- a) A genre
- b) Prose
- c) An editorial
- d) A collective

\*13. Did the authors of the Gospels claim to be eyewitnesses to the events that they narrated?

- a) Yes
- b) No
- c) Some did, some didn't
- d) No one knows

14. What happened to the stories circulating about Jesus between the time of his execution and the first written record of it?

- a) They were told over and over, spreading far and wide.
- b) They died out because with the advent of Jesus' death, people believed that he couldn't have been the Son of God.
- c) They became more and more exaggerated until the Gospel writers had to start all over and investigate what really happened.
- d) They were dismissed.

\*15. Which of the following is a Gospel that exists in addition to those found in the New Testament?

- a) ~~There are no other Gospels.~~
- b) ~~The Gospel of Esther~~
- c) ~~The Gospel of Thomas~~
- d) ~~The Gospel of Henry~~

16. One of the most popular pagan authors of the second century, Plutarch, wrote fifty biographies of prominent Greek and Roman men. His main aim in these accounts was to:

- a) Accurately record the events in their lives
- b) Reveal their characters
- c) Damage their reputations
- d) Entertain

\*17. What ritual was necessary for new converts to Christianity to undergo?

- a) Baptism
- b) Circumcision
- b) Spiritual cleansing
- d) Confession

18. What genre do the Gospels most closely fit?

- a) Apocalyptic literature
- b) Greco-Roman autobiography
- c) Allegory
- d) Greco-Roman biography

\*19. Identify one discrepancy in the Gospel accounts of Jesus' crucifixion.

- a) The account in Luke has it occurring at midnight, while Matthew's takes place at 10:00 a.m.
- b) The account in Mark has it occurring at 9:00 a.m., while John's takes place after noon.
- c) The account in Mark details Jesus' spirit leaving his body before the crucifixion, while John's details his suffering on the cross.
- d) The account in Mark describes Jesus' position on the cross as being upside down, while in John's it is right side up.

20. Identify one discrepancy in the Gospel accounts of Jesus' Last Supper.

- a) The account in Mark states that it occurs *as* the Passover meal, while John's account states that Jesus' Last Supper occurred the night before Passover.
- b) The account in Mark states that the disciples were several hours late arranging the Last Supper along with the Passover meal, while John's states that they were on time.
- c) The account in Luke has Jesus drinking grape juice, while in John's account, he drinks wine.
- d) Mark's account shows Jesus fasting that evening, while John's account details all the various foods and drinks of which everyone partook.

21. In which Gospel are we informed that the author, as well as other Gospel authors, acquired his information from Christians who had told stories about Jesus?

- a) Mark

- b) Luke
- c) Matthew
- d) John

22. Who is the earliest of the New Testament writers?

- a) The author of the Gospel of John
- b) The author of Hebrews
- c) The author of the Gospel of Matthew
- d) Paul

\*23. Why, in the Gospel of John, does Pontius Pilate have to conduct the trial of Jesus through lengthy conversations between the prosecution and the defendant?

- a) Because they speak different languages
- b) Because Jesus refuses to be in the same room with the prosecutor
- c) Because the Jewish leaders refuse to go into Pilate's residence, so they send Jesus in alone, leaving Pilate to go back and forth between them
- d) Because Pilate refuses to let the Jewish leaders into his residence

24. Methodical character development of the central character of a biography would be expected by readers of:

- a) Any ancient Greco-Roman biography
- b) Just the Gospels
- c) Modern biographies
- d) Medieval biographies

25. Which of the following is *not* among the characteristics ascribed to Peter and John in the New Testament?

- a) They were fishermen.
- b) They were uneducated.
- c) They were from Galilee.
- d) They could read and write in Greek.

26. By the beginning of the second century, Christianity had spread:

- a) Only within Galilee
- b) Only within Palestine
- c) Only within Palestine and Egypt
- d) Around the Mediterranean, as far west as Italy

27. Which of the following Gospels was written during Jesus' lifetime?

- a) The Gospel of Mark
- b) The Gospel of Matthew
- c) The *Gospel of Thomas*
- d) None of the above

\*28. Oral cultures tend to:

- a) Maintain verbal accuracy of stories

- b) Understand stories as changeable
- c) Produce accurate historical writings
- d) Have a high literacy rate

29. Biographies written by Christians put a significant amount of emphasis on a particular event in Jesus' life that was very unusual for ancient biographies. That event was:

- a) His birth
- b) His childhood
- c) His death
- d) His ministry

30. The circulation of oral traditions about Jesus:

- a) Maintained accurate, eyewitness reports
- b) Occurred only within Palestine
- c) Was tightly controlled
- d) Produced many differences in the stories

## Chapter 6

### Essays

- [1.] ~~An ancient author typically began a biography with a story that revealed the most important characteristics of his subject. How does Mark's beginning depict Jesus' identity? How do some of Mark's opening themes play out in the rest of the Gospel?~~
- [2.] ~~The textbook explains that Mark's Jesus is authoritative, misunderstood, and opposed. Discuss how Mark uses each of these categories. Are these three elements related? How do they further Mark's agenda?~~
- [3.] ~~Discuss ways that Jews during Jesus' time imagined the messiah. In what ways does Mark's Jesus fit these expectations? In what ways does he not?~~
- [4.] ~~In the Gospel of Mark, Jesus' identity is rarely recognized. In fact, only a handful of people know who he is. Who *does* recognize Jesus? Why do you think these particular people/groups recognize him? Why do you think Mark insists that others did not know his true identity?~~
- [5.] ~~RESOLVED: The Gospel of Mark was written by a Gentile to a Gentile community. Pick a side of this resolution and argue for it using as many specific examples from the text as possible. Keep in mind that the most persuasive arguments anticipate (and answer) counterarguments.~~

### True/False

- \*1. The Gospel of Mark begins with Jesus' birth.  
T \_\_\_\_\_ F
- \*2. The Gospel of Mark presents Jesus as keeping his messianic identity hidden.  
T \_\_\_\_\_ F
- \*3. The Pharisees are responsible for Jesus' death in the Gospel of Mark.  
T \_\_\_\_\_ F
4. The Gospel of Mark consistently portrays Jesus as misunderstood.  
T \_\_\_\_\_ F
5. The Gospel of Mark says Jesus broke the Torah, which upset the Pharisees.  
T \_\_\_\_\_ F

## Multiple-Choice

1. The author of the Gospel of Mark probably spoke:
  - a) Aramaic
  - b) Hebrew
  - c) Greek
  - d) Latin
- \*2. The Gospel of Mark begins with:
  - a) John the Baptist's birth
  - b) Jesus' birth
  - c) The angel Gabriel appearing to Mary
  - d) Jesus' baptism by John
3. Of the four New Testament Gospels, Mark was probably written:
  - a) First
  - b) Second
  - c) Third
  - d) Fourth
4. The genre of the Gospel of Mark is:
  - a) Greco-Roman novel
  - b) Greco-Roman history
  - c) Greco-Roman biography
  - d) Greco-Roman autobiography
5. In the Greco-Roman world, the term "Christ" referred to:
  - a) The emperor
  - b) A person who had been rubbed down with oil
  - c) A biography
  - d) An important person
6. In pre-Christian Jewish circles, the term "Christ" referred to all of the following *except*:
  - a) A cosmic judge
  - b) A king
  - c) A priest
  - d) A persecuted person
7. Mark is a notably Jewish Gospel because:
  - a) The author says he is Jewish.
  - b) The author is writing in Hebrew within Palestine.
  - c) The author writes about Jewish customs.
  - d) The author portrays Jesus as a suffering messiah.
- \*8. John, the forerunner of Jesus, proclaims forgiveness of sins and performs:
  - a) Circumcisions

- b) Baptisms
- c) Weddings
- d) Miracles

9. According to Mark, Jesus is from:

- a) Jerusalem
- b) Bethlehem
- c) Capernaum
- d) Nazareth

\*10. When Jesus is baptized, the Spirit of God descends on him in the shape of:

- a) A dove
- b) Flames
- c) Angels
- d) A sunbeam

11. In non-Christian Jewish circles, the term “Son of God” referred to:

- a) God
- b) A person especially close to God
- c) Jesus
- d) Apollonius

\*12. All of the following figures recognize Jesus’ identity in Mark *except*:

- a) The demons
- b) Mary
- c) The Gentile soldier at the cross
- d) The reader of the Gospel

13. Which group of Jews ran the Temple?

- a) The Sadducees
- b) The Pharisees
- c) The Herodians
- d) The Jewish scribes

14. Which group of Jews developed a supplementary set of laws to ensure they kept the written Law?

- a) The Sadducees
- b) The Pharisees
- c) The chief priests
- d) The Jewish scribes

15. Which of the following Jewish groups held the most power in Judea?

- a) The Sadducees
- b) The Pharisees
- c) The Essenes
- d) The Jewish scribes

16. Mark suggests that the Jewish authorities opposed Jesus because they believed:
- a) He broke the Law.
  - b) He was not Jewish.
  - c) He was the messiah.
  - d) He did not worship in the Temple.
17. Which one of Jesus' disciples comes closest to recognizing Jesus' identity in Mark?
- a) John
  - b) Paul
  - c) Peter
  - d) James
- \*18. The phrase "Jesus' Passion" refers to:
- a) Jesus' birth
  - b) Jesus' violent actions in the Temple
  - c) Jesus' love for humanity
  - d) Jesus' suffering
- \*19. According to Mark, the messiah must:
- a) Suffer and die
  - b) Preach and baptize
  - c) Become the high priest
  - d) Take control of Israel
20. How many times does Jesus explicitly predict his death in the Gospel of Mark?
- a) Once
  - b) Twice
  - c) Three times
  - d) Four times
- \*21. In first-century apocalyptic Judaism, the term "Son of Man" referred to:
- a) God's son
  - b) A cosmic figure
  - c) The king
  - d) The high priest
- \*22. At Jesus' trial in Mark, the Sanhedrin charges him with:
- a) Theft
  - b) Blasphemy
  - c) Being empowered by Satan
  - d) Not observing Sabbath laws
23. The Roman who convicts Jesus is:
- a) Pilate
  - b) Herod the Great



- e) Augustus
- d) Barabbas

24. In Mark, what is Jesus' response to his impending death?

- a) He is cheerful.
- b) He is indifferent.
- c) He seems to doubt his mission.
- d) He refuses to go through with it.

\*25. In Mark, the Temple curtain rips:

- a) At Jesus' birth
- b) At Jesus' trial
- c) At Jesus' death
- d) At Jesus' resurrection

26. In Mark, when Mary the mother of Jesus, Mary Magdalene, and Salome discover the empty tomb, they:

- a) Tell Peter
- b) Say nothing
- c) Praise God
- d) Begin Christian missions

\*27. The Gospel of Mark was probably written around:

- a) 35-40 C.E.
- b) 45-50 C.E.
- c) 55-60 C.E.
- d) 65-70 C.E.

28. In the Gospel of Mark, Jesus is called all of the following *except*:

- a) Son of God
- b) Messiah
- c) Son of Man
- d) the true High Priest

29. Jesus' last words on the cross in the Gospel of Mark are:

- a) "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?"
- b) "It is finished."
- c) "Father, forgive them, for they don't know what they are doing."
- d) "Father, into your hands I commend my spirit."

30. What is the name of the person who is freed instead of Jesus in Mark's Gospel?

- a) Barnabas
- b) Peter
- c) Barabbas
- d) Pontius Pilate

# Chapter 7

## Essays

- [1.] One of the underlying theoretical presuppositions of redaction criticism is that the way an author changes his source material indicates his narrative intent. Is this contention persuasive to you? Why or why not?
- [2.] Describe what scholars refer to as the Synoptic Problem. Do you think there is a problem? How do you think it is best solved?
- [3.] List and explain the arguments for Markan priority.
- [4.] Discuss the four sources many scholars believe lie behind the Synoptic Gospels. How are they related? What is their character (oral or written)?
- [5.] What is the Four-Source Hypothesis? Is Markan priority necessarily connected with this theory? If so, why? If not, what other plausible theories for the Synoptic Problem might work in light of Markan priority?

## True/False

- \*1. Redaction criticism can be used to compare any two ancient texts.  
T \_\_\_\_\_ F
- \*2. Markan priority depends on the Four-Source Hypothesis.  
T \_\_\_\_\_ F
- \*3. The Gospels of Matthew and Luke most likely used the Gospel of Mark as a source.  
T \_\_\_\_\_ F
4. The Gospels of Matthew and Luke present their narrative in the same sequence for the stories they share with Mark.  
T \_\_\_\_\_ F
5. The Gospel of Mark is written in better, more polished Greek than the Gospel of Matthew.  
T \_\_\_\_\_ F

## Multiple Choice

1. A redactor is:

- a) A historian who studies texts
- b) An editor
- c) A type of Gospel
- d) A cosmic figure

\*2. Redaction criticism is:

- a) A study of how an author changes his source
- b) A study of the end of times
- c) A criticism of historical constructions of Jesus
- d) A critical inquiry into the nature of miracles

\*3. Both Matthew and Luke used \_\_\_\_\_ as a literary source.

- a) John
- b) Peter
- c) Jesus
- d) Mark

\*4. "Synoptic" means:

- a) Three
- b) Gospel
- c) Seen together
- d) Editor

5. Which of the following is *not* a Synoptic Gospel?

- a) Matthew
- b) Mark
- c) Luke
- d) John

\*6. The most popular scholarly resolution to the Synoptic Problem is:

- a) Markan priority
- b) Q
- c) The Four-Source Hypothesis
- d) Redaction criticism

7. In addition to Mark, both Matthew and Luke used:

- a) M
- b) L
- c) John
- d) Q

8. Which one of the following is *not* one of the four sources in the Four-Source Hypothesis?

- a) M
- b) L
- c) Q
- d) T

9. The argument of “patterns of agreement” shows that when all three Synoptic Gospels contain the same story, all of the following occur regularly *except*:

- a) Matthew and Mark agree in the wording of a story against Luke.
- b) Luke and Mark agree in the wording of a story against Matthew.
- c) Matthew and Luke agree in the wording of a story against Mark.
- d) Matthew, Mark, and Luke all agree in the wording of a story.

10. The argument of “sequence of the narrative” suggests:

- a) Matthew and Luke follow Mark’s sequence of stories.
- b) Matthew and Mark follow Luke’s sequence of stories.
- c) Luke and Mark follow Matthew’s sequence of stories.
- d) Matthew and Luke follow Q’s sequence of stories.

11. Markan priority means:

- a) Mark is the best Gospel.
- b) Mark is the first book in the New Testament.
- c) Mark is more historically accurate than the other Gospels.
- d) Mark was the first Synoptic Gospel written.

12. Matthew and Luke:

- a) Sometimes change Mark to change theological emphases
- b) Sometimes change Mark because Mark was not an eyewitness
- c) Sometimes change Mark in order to summarize the text for ancient readers
- d) Never change Mark

\*13. Most scholars believe that Q contained mostly:

- a) Jesus’ birth narrative
- b) Jesus’ sayings
- c) Jesus’ death narrative
- d) Stories of Jesus’ resurrection appearances

14. Two narratives that Q probably *did* contain are:

- a) Jesus’ birth and genealogy
- b) Jesus’ genealogy and temptation
- c) Jesus’ temptation and the healing of the centurion’s servant
- d) Jesus’ birth and the healing of the centurion’s servant

15. Where was Q finally discovered?

- a) A cave in Qumran
- b) Q is a hypothetical document
- c) Near the Dead Sea
- d) It was discovered to be an oral tradition passed down by the Essenes.

\*16. Although we cannot know for certain, many scholars believe Q probably did not contain:

- a) A Passion narrative

- b) A command to love your enemies
- c) The Lord's Prayer
- d) The Beatitudes

17. Which Gospel is Q most likely similar to?

- a) John
- b) Mark
- c) *Mary*
- d) *Thomas*

\*18. Who assembled all the miracle stories dispersed throughout Mark into one large collection?

- a) Matthew
- b) Luke
- c) John
- d) Thomas

19. Why do most scholars think that Q was a written document?

- a) Because the L source refers to Q as a written document
- b) Because the M source refers to Q as a written document
- c) Because there are long stretches of verbatim agreement between Matthew and Luke
- d) Because Matthew and Luke share the same sequencing of miracles

\*20. If genre criticism uncovers the same points uncovered by redaction criticism, then why use the redactional approach?

- a) To compare the two texts in an attempt to find any differences in the points made
- b) Editorial activity provides more empirical evidence for the aim of the text.
- c) To show that the Gospels stand up to any method of scrutiny
- d) As a means of interpretation

21. What was it about Mark's style and grammar that influenced Matthew and Luke to change the way they wrote about the same material?

- a) It was awkward.
- b) It was too "flowery" and overemotional.
- c) It was intended for a Jewish audience
- d) It was too technical.

\*22. When Mark and Matthew tell the same story, Mark's story is:

- a) Less detailed
- b) Shorter
- c) Longer
- d) Closer to the facts

23. Which is the shortest, overall, of the three Synoptics?

- a) Matthew
- b) Mark
- c) Luke

\_\_\_\_\_d) They are all of equal length.

24. We can identify the issues that probably concerned Matthew and Luke the most by comparing the distinctive emphasis each one placed on different parts of Mark's account, in other words, how they went about \_\_\_\_\_ Mark's account.

- a) translating
- b) ignoring sections of
- c) embellishing
- d) editing

\*25. The "Four-Source Hypothesis" relies on the idea that:

- a) Mark was written first.
- b) Q was written first.
- b) There were four distinct sources that were employed in the writing of Mark.
- d) Jesus' words are difficult to comprehend, and therefore you need multiple sources to explain them

26. Which of the following is *least* common when the Synoptic Gospels share a story or saying?

- a) Matthew and Luke agree against Mark.
- b) Matthew and Mark agree against Luke.
- c) Mark and Luke agree against Matthew.
- d) Matthew, Mark, and Luke all disagree.

27. Which of the following is *not* from Q material?

- a) The preaching of John the Baptist
- b) The Beatitudes
- c) The Lord's Prayer
- d) The Passion

28. Which of the following is a common change to Mark made by both Matthew and Luke?

- a) Reshuffling the sequence of the narrative
- b) Lengthening a story
- c) Altering Mark's wording for better grammar
- d) Reducing the amount of dialogue

29. How is Q material distributed in Matthew and Luke?

- a) The basic sequence of the material is the same.
- b) Q material is almost always located in different places.
- c) Luke tends to place Q material in long speeches, while Matthew does not.
- d) Q material is found in Mark, not in Matthew or Luke.

30. Most scholars who believe in the existence of Q think \_\_\_\_\_ more likely preserved its original sequence.

- a) Mark
- b) Matthew

- e) Luke
- d) John

## Chapter 8

### Essays

- [1.] ~~As specifically as you can, discuss the elements of the Sermon on the Mount. How does this sermon continue Matthew's portrayal of Jesus in the first part of the narrative, and how do these themes continue throughout the rest of the Gospel?~~
- [2.] ~~Discuss the ways Matthew portrays Jesus as the new Moses. Why is this particular parallel important in Matthew's Gospel?~~
- [3.] ~~RESOLVED: In the Gospel of Matthew, Jesus preaches against the Law. Pick a side of the resolution and argue for it using as many specific examples from the text as possible. Keep in mind that the most persuasive arguments anticipate (and answer) counterarguments.~~
- [4.] ~~Discuss the reasons scholars think Matthew's community was composed of both Jews and Gentiles.~~
- [5.] ~~Read the account of Jesus' baptism in Mark and Matthew (Mark 1:9–11; Matt 3:13–17). Employing redaction criticism, discuss the changes Matthew made to Mark and what these changes reveal about Matthew's emphases.~~

### True/False

- \*1. ~~Most of the Sermon on the Mount comes from Q material.~~  
T — F
- \*2. ~~Matthew's Jesus argues that keeping the Law is not necessary for those who believe in him.~~  
T — F
3. ~~Matthew's genealogy leaves out several names in order to arrive at his fourteen-generation scheme.~~  
T — F
- \*4. ~~According to Matthew, Jesus provides the true understanding of the Jewish Law and shows how it must be kept.~~  
T — F
5. ~~Jesus demonstrates contradictions in the Law by means of his Antitheses in the Sermon on the Mount.~~  
T — F



## Multiple-Choice

1. The Gospel of Matthew was written in:
  - a) Greek
  - b) Hebrew
  - c) Aramaic
  - d) Latin
2. The Gospel of Matthew used all of the following sources *except*:
  - a) Mark
  - b) Q
  - c) M
  - d) L
- \*3. The Gospel of Matthew was probably written:
  - a) In Palestine around 60–65 C.E.
  - b) Outside Palestine around 60–65 C.E.
  - c) In Palestine around 90–95 C.E.
  - d) Outside Palestine around 80–85 C.E.
4. The Gospel of Matthew is:
  - a) A biography
  - b) An apocalypse
  - c) A novel
  - d) A history
- \*5. Matthew traces Jesus' lineage to:
  - a) Abraham
  - b) God
  - c) Adam
  - d) Moses
6. Matthew divides his genealogy into all the three sets of fourteen generations listed below *except*:
  - a) Adam to Abraham
  - b) Abraham to David
  - c) David to the deportation to Babylon
  - d) The deportation to Babylon to the messiah
7. In Hebrew, the consonants in King David's name, DVD, add up to:
  - a) Seven
  - b) Fourteen
  - c) Twenty-one
  - d) Twenty-four
8. Matthew's birth narrative centers mostly on:

- a) Anna
- b) Joseph
- c) John the Baptist
- d) Gabriel

9. At the beginning of the Gospel of Matthew, Mary and Joseph live in:

- a) Nazareth
- b) Bethlehem
- c) Jerusalem
- d) Caesarea

10. All of the following are included in Matthew's infancy narrative *except*:

- a) Jesus' birth in Bethlehem
- b) Herod's slaughter of children
- c) Gabriel's appearance to Mary
- d) Jesus' family's move to Egypt

\*11. Scholars refer to Matthew's use of Hebrew Scripture to show Jesus is the messiah as:

- a) Fulfillment citations
- b) Proof texts
- c) Scripture references
- d) Prophetic sayings

\*12. In Matthew, Jesus' birth story is most reminiscent of whose birth?

- a) Samuel's
- b) Moses'
- c) Abraham's
- d) Isaac's

13. First-century Jews thought the messiah might appear in any of the following manifestations—*except*:

- a) A warrior king
- b) A cosmic figure
- c) An authoritative priest
- d) A suffering man

14. Matthew's genealogy refers to all of the following women *except*:

- a) Hannah
- b) Ruth
- c) Rahab
- d) Tamar

15. Matthew's birth narrative includes all of the following *except*:

- a) The Magi
- b) A star
- c) Shepherds

d) Herod

16. In the Gospel of Matthew, all of the following recognize Jesus' identity *except*:

- a) John the Baptist
- b) Jesus' family
- c) The Magi
- d) Simeon at the Jerusalem Temple

\*17. Of the following, the most important reason Matthew makes Jesus' identity public is to:

- a) Make the Jewish leaders culpable for Jesus' suffering
- b) Prove to Mary and Joseph that Jesus is divine
- c) Agree with Mark
- d) Show Jesus as a prophet

\*18. In Matthew, John the Baptist:

- a) Readily baptizes Jesus
- b) Is hesitant to baptize Jesus
- c) Does not baptize Jesus
- d) Is baptized by Jesus

19. In Matthew, apocalyptic teachings:

- a) Are not present
- b) Are argued against
- c) Are weaker than in Mark
- d) Are more strongly emphasized than in Mark

20. Redaction criticism focuses on:

- a) Jesus' divinity
- b) An editor's work
- c) The genre of a piece of literature
- d) Criticism of a writer's style

21. Matthew portrays Jesus as the new:

- a) David
- b) High priest
- c) Moses
- d) Pharisee

22. Which of the following is a major part of the Sermon on the Mount?

- a) The Beatitudes
- b) Baptism
- c) Miracles
- d) Temptation

23. In Matthew, Jesus:

- a) Abandons the Law

- b) Agrees with the Pharisees about the Law
- c) Teaches that his followers should fulfill the Law
- d) Does not talk about the Law

\*24. For Matthew, the core of the Law is:

- a) The commandment to love
- b) The commandment against adultery
- c) The commandment to sacrifice
- d) To believe in Jesus' death and resurrection

\*25. In Matthew, Jesus explicitly teaches against:

- a) Circumcision
- b) Keeping the Sabbath
- c) Keeping dietary laws
- d) The Pharisees' hypocrisy

26. Matthew assumes that:

- a) His community will follow traditional Jewish Law.
- b) His community will reject all Jewish Law.
- c) Jesus came to bring an entirely new Law.
- d) His community will reject all laws except circumcision.

27. Matthew:

- a) Insists that Gentiles become Jews
- b) Insists that Gentiles not become Jews
- c) Does not explicitly discuss Gentiles' relationship to Jewish Law
- d) Insists that Gentiles be circumcised

28. In the Gospel of Matthew, Jesus' main opponent(s) is/are:

- a) The Jewish people
- b) The Jewish leaders
- c) Pilate
- d) Herod

\*29. Which of the following occurs *only* in Matthew?

- a) Jesus' trial before Pilate
- b) Jesus' trial before Herod
- c) Pilate's washing his hands of Jesus' blood
- d) The Jews' preference to release Barabbas instead of Jesus

\*30. At the end of Matthew's Gospel, Jesus tells his disciples to teach the gospel and baptize the nations. Scholars call this:

- a) The Great Commission
- b) The resurrection
- c) The ascension
- d) Pentecost

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## Chapter 9

### Essays

- [1.] Discuss the ways Luke ties Jesus to the Jerusalem Temple. Why is Jesus' connection to Jerusalem so important for Luke's message?
- [2.] Do a comparative analysis of Matthew's and Luke's Beatitudes. What do these tell us about each author's emphases? (The instructor might provide the passages [Matt 5:3-12; Luke 6:20-26] to the students for analysis.)
- [3.] Do a comparative analysis of Luke's and Matthew's Passion narratives or a redactional analysis of Mark's and Luke's Passion narratives. How do Luke's differences point to his particular portrayal of Jesus?
- [4.] According to Luke, what is the meaning of Jesus' death? How is Luke's explanation of Jesus' death different from that of Mark and Matthew?
- [5.] How might the Gospel of Luke be regarded as apologetic literature? What themes and episodes could have an apologetic purpose?

### True/False

- \*1. Jesus' genealogy in Luke is significantly different from the one found in Matthew.  
T \_\_\_\_\_ F
- \*2. Luke puts more emphasis on Jerusalem than the other New Testament Gospels do.  
T \_\_\_\_\_ F
- \*3. The Gospel of Luke emphasizes the atoning power of Jesus' death.  
T \_\_\_\_\_ F
4. The Gospel of Luke puts special emphasis on Jesus' concern for social justice.  
T \_\_\_\_\_ F
5. The Gospel of Luke was probably written between 65-70 C.E.  
T \_\_\_\_\_ F

### Multiple Choice

1. Which of the following is a problem some scholars have with redaction criticism?

- a) It must correctly identify a text's sources.
  - b) The Gospels did not use sources.
  - c) The method does not produce any important data.
  - d) The method focuses only on what authors borrow from their sources.
2. An approach that specifically deals with the problem scholars have with redaction criticism is:
- a) Genre criticism
  - b) The comparative method
  - c) The Four-Source Hypothesis
  - d) Markan priority
3. The Gospel of Luke was probably written:
- a) Before Mark
  - b) Before Matthew
  - c) About the same time as Mark
  - d) About the same time as Matthew
- \*4. The Gospel of Luke came to be attributed to a man who was thought to have been:
- a) A tax collector
  - b) A Roman governor
  - c) A disciple
  - d) Paul's traveling companion
- \*5. Luke is different from the other Gospels because:
- a) It isn't a biography.
  - b) It focuses on Peter.
  - c) It has a sequel.
  - d) It recounts an angel appearing to Joseph.
6. Luke's Gospel begins with:
- a) Jesus' baptism
  - b) The Sermon on the Mount
  - c) A preface
  - d) An angel appearing to Joseph
- \*7. The author says that:
- a) He is an eyewitness to Jesus' ministry.
  - b) He used written sources.
  - c) He used only eyewitness reports.
  - d) He used Q.
8. A reasoned defense of a person's beliefs is called:
- a) An apology
  - b) A biography
  - c) A history
  - d) A narrative

9. Scholars think that Luke's Gospel might be dedicated to any of the following *except*:

- a) Theophilus
- b) The church
- c) The beloved of God
- d) Paul

\*10. In the Gospel of Luke, Jesus' birth narrative parallels that of:

- a) Moses
- b) Abraham
- c) Samuel
- d) Paul

11. In Luke, Jesus' hometown is:

- a) Bethlehem
- b) Nazareth
- c) Jerusalem
- d) Caesarea

12. All of the following are parts of Luke's birth narrative *except*:

- a) The Magi
- b) Shepherds
- c) A census
- d) Gabriel's appearance to Mary

13. One of the most important cities at the beginning of Luke's Gospel is:

- a) Jerusalem
- b) Antioch
- c) Caesarea
- d) Rome

14. In Luke, which of the following characters does *not* recognize Jesus' importance?

- a) Anna
- b) Simeon
- c) The shepherds
- d) Nicodemus

\*15. Which of the following stories is *only* found in Luke?

- a) An angel's appearance
- b) The virgin birth
- c) Jesus' birth in Bethlehem
- d) Jesus teaching in the Temple when he is twelve years old

\*16. In Luke's temptation narrative, Jesus' final temptation is:

- a) Turning stone into bread
- b) Turning water into wine



- e) Jumping from the top of the Temple
- d) Worshiping Satan

17. In Luke, the resurrected Jesus tells the disciples to stay in:

- a) Jerusalem
- b) Bethlehem
- c) Galilee
- d) The Garden of Gethsemane

18. Luke's genealogy culminates with:

- a) God
- b) Abraham
- c) David
- d) Moses

\*19. In Luke, Jesus' public ministry begins with:

- a) The Sermon on the Mount
- b) Miracle-working
- c) A sermon in a synagogue
- d) Cleansing the Jerusalem Temple

20. In one of his sermons in Luke, Jesus compares himself to:

- a) Moses
- b) A prophet
- c) David
- d) Paul

\*21. From the beginning, Luke's Jesus expects to be:

- a) Recognized
- b) Followed
- c) Rejected
- d) King

22. In Luke, when people reject Jesus:

- a) They reject God.
- b) They reject the Pharisees.
- c) They embrace the Law.
- d) It means nothing.

23. In Jewish tradition, a prophet was:

- a) Clairvoyant
- b) Wrong
- c) A messenger of God
- d) A magician

24. In Luke, Jesus knows that as a prophet, all of the following will happen to him *except*:

- a) He will suffer.
- b) He will die.
- c) He will become the high priest.
- d) He will be rejected.

\*25. When it is time for Jesus to die in Luke, he:

- a) Is resistant
- b) Is angry with God
- c) Feels abandoned by God
- d) Is ready

26. All of the following are said at Jesus' crucifixion in Luke *except*:

- a) "My God, My God, why have you forsaken me?"
- b) "Father forgive them."
- c) "Into your hands I commend my spirit."
- d) "Surely this man was innocent."

\*27. According to Luke, Jesus' death itself:

- a) Atones for humanity's sins
- b) Causes people to repent
- c) Brings salvation
- d) Is meaningless

28. According to Luke, the most grievous sin is:

- a) Following the Law
- b) Denying your faith after you have been saved
- c) Denying the virgin birth
- d) Killing God's prophet

29. Luke suggests that the gospel came to the Gentiles because:

- a) The Jews rejected it.
- b) God broke his promise to the Jews.
- c) The Jews were never God's chosen people.
- d) The Gentiles were better than the Jews.

30. Luke does not believe the end of the age will come immediately because:

- a) Jesus was wrong.
- b) The gospel must be spread throughout the world first.
- c) Jesus is not yet in power.
- d) God has rejected all of humanity.

## Chapter 10

### Essays

- [1.] Discuss the differences between the Synoptic Gospels and John.
- [2.] What does John mean by the phrase “the Jews”? How do “the Jews” function in this Gospel?
- [3.] How do Jesus’ “I am” sayings reflect John’s portrayal of Jesus in the Prologue and throughout the rest of the Gospel?
- [4.] Describe the three stages of the Johannine community’s history and how the text reflects this history.
- [5.] How does John’s Prologue (1:1–18) introduce Jesus, and how do the themes found in the Prologue recur throughout the Gospel?

### True/False

- \*1. Most scholars think the Gospel of John is more historically accurate than the Synoptic Gospels.  
T — F
- \*2. Jesus claims to be divine in the Gospel of John.  
T — F
- \*3. The Gospel of John emphasizes Jesus’ power over demons.  
T — F
- 4. Instead of talking about Pharisees, Sadducees, or other groups, the Gospel of John speaks more generally of “the Jews.”  
T — F
- 5. Most scholars believe John was written independently, without using earlier sources.  
T — F

### Multiple Choice

- 1. In the Gospel of John, Jesus is explicitly called all the following *except*:  
a) Rabbi

- b) The Word of God
- c) The Lamb of God
- d) The suffering servant

\*2. Which of the following methods seeks to uncover how a community's history affects the way it writes its history?

- a) Redaction criticism
- b) Genre criticism
- c) The socio-historical method
- d) The comparative method

3. The Gospel of John is best described as:

- a) A Greco-Roman biography
- b) A general history
- c) A Greco-Roman novel
- d) An apocalypse

\*4. Scholars refer to the first eighteen verses of the Gospel of John as:

- a) The beginning
- b) The Prologue
- c) The baptism
- d) The signs source

5. Which of the following figures in the Prologue is not mentioned until its last verse?

- a) The Word of God
- b) God
- c) John the Baptist
- d) Jesus

6. Which of the following best describes Jesus in the Gospel of John?

- a) He is an apocalyptic prophet who preaches the coming Kingdom of God.
- b) He hides his true identity.
- c) He is preexistent and divine.
- d) He did not exist.

7. In John, Jesus does all of the following to show his divine nature *except*:

- a) Perform signs
- b) Give discourses
- c) Teach in parables
- d) Affirm his identity

8. Which of the following is *not* one of the seven signs Jesus performs in John?

- a) Turning water into wine
- b) Feeding the five thousand
- c) Performing exorcisms
- d) Walking on water

9. After chapter 12 in the Gospel of John, Jesus decides not to preach publicly because:

- a) The Jews reject him.
- b) He gets tired.
- c) The Jewish leaders tell him not to.
- d) He is under arrest.

\*10. Chapters 13 through 19, the second part of the Gospel of John, take place over:

- a) One year
- b) Two years
- c) Three days
- d) One day

11. Which of the following does *not* take place immediately before Jesus' trial and crucifixion in the Gospel of John?

- a) A Passover meal with the disciples
- b) Jesus washes the disciples' feet.
- c) Jesus predicts his betrayal.
- d) Jesus delivers a final discourse.

\*12. In John, Jesus tells the disciples that after he leaves:

- a) The Son of Man will appear.
- b) The end of the world will take place immediately.
- c) The Holy Spirit will come to instruct them.
- d) All people will accept the gospel.

13. Which part of the Gospel of John is most like the Synoptic Gospels?

- a) Jesus' birth
- b) Jesus' parables
- c) Jesus' healings
- d) Jesus' Passion

14. John explicitly narrates which of the following?

- a) Jesus' baptism by John
- b) The virgin birth
- c) Jesus' temptation in the wilderness
- d) Jesus' declarations that he is divine

\*15. In John, the signs are intended to:

- a) Convince people of Jesus' true identity
- b) Hide Jesus' identity
- c) Confuse people
- d) Heal people

\*16. In John, Jesus' teachings focus primarily on:

- a) Miracles

- b) The coming Kingdom of God
- c) His identity
- d) Gentiles

17. John uses all of the following sources *except*:

- a) Q
- b) The signs source
- c) The discourse source
- d) The Passion source

\*18. In John's community, the belief in Jesus' divinity probably:

- a) Came immediately after his resurrection
- b) Came during Jesus' ministry
- c) Developed over time
- d) Was a heretical belief

\*19. John calls Jesus the "Lamb of God" because:

- a) He follows God.
- b) The Jews follow him.
- c) He is killed on the day before the Passover meal was eaten.
- d) He is divine.

20. All of the following titles depict a low Christology *except*:

- a) Lamb of God
- b) Rabbi
- c) Teacher
- d) The Word

\*21. The Gospel of John was written in:

- a) Greek
- b) Hebrew
- c) Latin
- d) Aramaic

22. The Johannine community may have been founded by:

- a) Jesus
- b) Paul
- c) The beloved disciple
- d) Peter

23. At the beginning, the Johannine community was most likely made up of:

- a) Jews
- b) Gentiles
- c) Samaritans
- d) A mix of Jews, Gentiles, and Samaritans

24. The Johannine Christians most likely were excluded from the synagogue because:
- a) They believed that God would send a messiah.
  - b) They tried to proselytize other Jews.
  - c) They rejected everything about Judaism.
  - d) They believed Jesus taught important things.
- \*25. Which of the following sources was probably written to convert Jews?
- a) The Prologue
  - b) The discourse source
  - c) The Passion source
  - d) The signs source
26. The Johannine Christians originally:
- a) Were involved in the synagogue
  - b) Distanced themselves from Judaism
  - c) Hated the Jews
  - d) Worshiped in churches
27. After they were excluded from the synagogue, the Johannine community did all of the following *except*:
- a) Develop an “us versus them” ideology
  - b) Develop a higher Christology
  - c) See the Jews as willfully denying Jesus’ messiahship
  - d) Begin to deny Jesus as the messiah
28. Which of the following is not one of the reasons most scholars think the Gospel of John used earlier sources?
- a) Literary seams
  - b) Differences in writing style
  - c) Overlap with the Synoptics
  - d) Repetitions
29. Which of the following is not one of Jesus’ seven signs in the Gospel of John?
- a) The exorcism of Legion
  - b) The resurrection of Lazarus
  - c) Turning water into wine
  - d) Walking on the water
30. Which of the following figures is not unique to the Gospel of John?
- a) Nicodemus
  - b) Joseph of Arimathea
  - c) Nathanael
  - d) The Samaritan woman at the well

# Chapter 11

## Essays

- [1.] Based on information you can glean from the Johannine epistles, who were the opponents that the community confronted?
- [2.] Discuss the significance of the Nag Hammadi library. In general terms, what do these texts tell us about Gnosticism in early Christianity?
- [3.] Discuss the basic framework of Gnosticism. Based on these beliefs, why might Gnostics be particularly drawn to the Gospel of John?
- [4.] While the secessionists described in the Johannine epistles could appeal to parts of the Prologue of the Gospel of John as evidence of their docetic Christology, what parts of the Prologue would have presented difficulties for this elevated Christology?
- [5.] What were the two most important Christian Gnostic groups? How do the Thomasine Christians relate to these groups? What characterized each group, and what were some of the differences between them?

## True/False

- \*1. Valentinian Gnostics were often difficult to distinguish from proto-orthodox Christians.  
T \_\_\_\_\_ F
- \*2. First John is better categorized as a persuasive essay than as a letter.  
T \_\_\_\_\_ F
- \*3. Sethian Gnostics were sexually promiscuous.  
T \_\_\_\_\_ F
- 4. The Gnostic texts from Nag Hammadi were originally written in Coptic.  
T \_\_\_\_\_ F
- 5. Gnostics believed salvation involved being set free from this evil material world.  
T \_\_\_\_\_ F

## Multiple Choice

- 1. Scholars refer to the Johannine epistles using all of the following terms *except*:



- a) Catholic
  - b) General
  - c) Universal
  - d) Pauline
2. All of the following texts were probably produced by the same community *except*:
- a) The Gospel of John
  - b) First John
  - c) The Revelation of John
  - d) The Farewell Discourse
3. The Johannine epistles were probably written:
- a) After the Gospel
  - b) Before the Gospel
  - c) By the same author as the Gospel
  - d) By the disciple John
4. All of the New Testament letters were written:
- a) To particular communities to address specific issues
  - b) As general guidelines for the church
  - c) As apologies for the Christian faith
  - d) As conversion literature
5. All of the following were included in a Greco-Roman private letter *except*:
- a) The name of the author
  - b) The title of the letter
  - c) The identity of the recipient
  - d) A thanksgiving to the gods
6. The Johannine epistles:
- a) Address identical problems
  - b) Address the same leader
  - c) Were written by the same person
  - d) All contain the typical parts of a Greco-Roman letter
- \*7. First John is most likely a:
- a) Biography
  - b) History of the community
  - c) Letter
  - d) Persuasive essay
- \*8. Thomasine Christian literature is characterized by all of the following *except*:
- a) Its narration of Gnostic myths
  - b) Its depiction of the material realm as a prison
  - c) Its declaration that Jesus is a divine messenger sent from God
  - d) Its rejection of the pleasures of the flesh

9. Contextual analysis is most closely related to:
- a) The redactional method
  - b) The genre-critical method
  - c) The socio-historical method
  - d) The comparative method
10. The contextual method tries to:
- a) Focus on the author of a book
  - b) Focus on the history of a community
  - c) Focus on the date of a book
  - d) Focus on the genre of a book
- \*11. The most important event that had occurred within the Johannine community at the time the epistles were written was:
- a) The exclusion from the synagogue
  - b) The problem of the delay of the coming of Jesus
  - c) A schism in the community
  - d) False prophets coming to town
12. The Christians who left the Johannine community were probably:
- a) Docetists
  - b) Proto-orthodox
  - c) Montanists
  - d) Jews
13. The term “docetism” means:
- a) Heresy
  - b) To seem or appear
  - c) Knowledge
  - d) Denial
14. The author of the Johannine epistles was:
- a) Currently living in the community
  - b) Gaius
  - c) A secessionist
  - d) Writing from some distance
- \*15. Second John is best understood as:
- a) A persuasive essay
  - b) A letter to the entire church
  - c) A letter to the leader of the church
  - d) A letter directed to the secessionists
- \*16. Third John is best understood as:

- a) A persuasive essay
- b) A letter to the entire church
- c) A letter to an individual in the church
- d) A letter directed to the secessionists

17. The word “gnosis” means:

- a) Heresy
- b) To seem or appear
- c) Denial
- d) Knowledge

\*18. Gnostics believed that \_\_\_\_\_ was essential for salvation.

- a) knowledge
- b) belief in Jesus
- c) baptism with oil
- d) renunciation of material wealth

\*19. According to Gnostics, the world was:

- a) God’s beautiful creation
- b) The result of a cosmic disaster
- c) Created by the preexistent Word
- d) The location of the Kingdom of God

20. According to Christian Gnostics, Christ brought:

- a) Salvation through his teachings
- b) Salvation through his death
- c) Salvation through his healings
- d) Salvation through his resurrection

21. Many Christian Gnostics used which of the following Gospels?

- a) The *Gospel of the Nazareans*
- b) Q
- c) The Gospel of John
- d) The *Gospel of the Ebionites*

22. Throughout most of Christian history, we have known about Gnostics through:

- a) Josephus
- b) Proto-orthodox writings
- c) Gnostic texts
- d) The Dead Sea Scrolls

23. The most typical proto-orthodox accusations against Gnostics included all of the following *except*:

- a) Eating babies
- b) Engaging in sex orgies
- c) Strict asceticism

d) Engaging in secret nocturnal rituals

\*24. The most significant archaeological find for the study of Gnosticism was:

- a) The Dead Sea Scrolls
- b) The Nag Hammadi library
- c) Tertullian
- d) The Johannine epistles

25. Most of the Gnostic writings found in 1945 were probably written in:

- a) The second century C.E.
- b) The second century B.C.E.
- c) The twelfth century C.E.
- d) The fifth century C.E.

26. The Gnostic writings found in 1945 were originally composed in:

- a) Greek
- b) Aramaic
- c) Coptic
- d) Hebrew

27. The Gnostic cosmological myths include all of the following elements *except*:

- a) Divine elements trapped in human bodies
- b) Monotheism
- c) The unknowable God
- d) Sophia

\*28. According to Gnostics, the world:

- a) Was created by the preexistent Word
- b) Was created by the supreme God
- c) Always existed
- d) Was created by an inferior, ignorant God

29. One major difference between the Sethian Gnostics and the Valentinians was that:

- a) Valentinian groups were larger.
- b) Sethian Gnostics were more optimistic about the material world.
- c) Valentinians continued to worship in proto-orthodox church communities.
- d) Sethians were less ascetic than Valentinians.

\*30. According to Gnostics, Christ:

- a) Was completely human
- b) Was completely divine
- c) Suffered and died
- d) Was created when the world was created

## Chapter 12

### Essays

- [1.] How is the *Gospel of Thomas* similar to and different from the New Testament Gospels?
- [2.] Discuss the similarities and differences between the *Gospel of Peter* and the Gospel of Matthew. What do you make of these?
- [3.] Discuss Marcion's theology and why he might use Luke and Paul as authorities for his beliefs.
- [4.] The early church wavered on whether or not the *Gospel of Peter* could be used in church services. Discuss ways that the Gospel could be read as "orthodox" and ways that it could reflect a docetic Christology.
- [5.] The *Gospel of Thomas* contains 114 sayings of Jesus and contains no narrative. Why is it understandable that a Gnostic Gospel would consist only, or principally, of sayings?

### True/False

- \*1. The *Gospel of Thomas* is a sayings Gospel without a central narrative.  
T — F
- \*2. Marcion used an edited version of the Gospel of John as his starting point.  
T — F
- \*3. The *Gospel of the Nazareans* was very similar to the Gospel of Matthew.  
T — F
- 4. The *Gospel of Thomas* includes many sayings that also appear in the Synoptic Gospels.  
T — F
- 5. In the *Gospel of Judas*, Judas is the only disciple who knows who Jesus truly is.  
T — F

### Multiple Choice

- \*1. Which of the following Gospels states that there were other Gospels written?
  - a) *Thomas*
  - b) *Matthew*

- e) Luke
- d) Mark

2. All of the following Gospels have survived ~~except~~:

- a) Q
- b) ~~The Gospel of Thomas~~
- c) ~~The Gospel of Peter~~
- d) ~~The Proto-Gospel of James~~

3. Which of the following is not labeled a “Jewish-Christian” Gospel?

- a) ~~The Gospel of the Nazareans~~
- b) ~~The Gospel of the Ebionites~~
- c) ~~The Gospel of the Hebrews~~
- d) ~~The Gospel of Thomas~~

4. The ~~Gospel of the Ebionites~~ and the ~~Diatesseron~~ are both:

- a) ~~Jewish-Christian Gospels~~
- b) Gospel harmonies
- c) ~~Used by Marcionites~~
- d) ~~Nag Hammadi texts~~

\*5. The ~~Gospel of the Philip~~ recounts a tradition in which the disciples of Jesus were:

- a) ~~Jealous of Mary Magdalene~~
- b) ~~Killed for their beliefs~~
- c) ~~Taken to heaven during a period of prayer~~
- d) ~~Sent to the four corners of the earth to preach the Gospel~~

6. Marcion used which of the following Gospels?

- a) The Gospel of Matthew
- b) ~~The Gospel of Thomas~~
- c) ~~The Gospel of Luke~~
- d) ~~The Gospel of the Hebrews~~

\*7. Marcion appealed to \_\_\_\_\_ as the authority for his teachings.

- a) ~~Peter~~
- b) ~~Thomas~~
- c) Paul
- d) ~~Matthew~~

8. Marcion excised passages from his Gospel source and from Paul in accordance with his view that:

- a) ~~Jesus was Jewish and argued for the continuation of Judaism.~~
- b) ~~Jesus and Paul argued against the practices of Judaism.~~
- c) ~~There was only one God.~~
- d) ~~Jesus created the world.~~

- \*9. The *Gospel of Peter* was found:
- a) In the Dead Sea Scrolls
  - b) In the Nag Hammadi library
  - c) In a monastery library
  - d) In a monk's tomb
10. The *Gospel of Peter* could be read as supporting a:
- a) Montanist position
  - b) Docetic position
  - c) Jewish-Christian position
  - d) Pharisaic position
11. The *Gospel of Peter* narrates all of the following events *except*:
- a) Jesus' trial before Herod
  - b) Jesus' trial before Pilate
  - c) The Last Supper
  - d) The resurrection
- \*12. The *Gospel of Peter* is unique among all the surviving Gospels because:
- a) It blames the Jews for Jesus' death
  - b) It includes a trial scene
  - c) It narrates the actual resurrection
  - d) It states that after Jesus was placed in his tomb, the tomb was sealed.
13. Which of the following gives credence to the claim that a Gospel like Q could have existed?
- a) The Gospel of Matthew
  - b) The *Gospel of Thomas*
  - c) The *Gospel of Peter*
  - d) The *Gospel of the Ebionites*
- \*14. The *Gospel of Thomas* is:
- a) Ordered chronologically
  - b) Ordered thematically
  - c) Not ordered in a recognizable form
  - d) Ordered in accordance with the Gospel of Mark
15. Which of the following does the *Gospel of Thomas* not mention?
- a) Jesus' resurrection
  - b) The divine spark
  - c) Jesus' twin brother
  - d) The duality of flesh and spirit
- \*16. According to the *Gospel of Thomas*, the Kingdom of God:
- a) Is coming to earth soon
  - b) Will be delayed until the gospel is spread throughout the world
  - c) Is not a future event

- d) Is brought by good deeds
17. The *Gospel of Thomas* was originally written in:
- a) Hebrew
  - b) Coptic
  - c) Greek
  - d) Aramaic
18. The *Gospel of Thomas* was most likely written in:
- a) The second century C.E.
  - b) The first century B.C.E.
  - c) The fourth century C.E.
  - d) The tenth century C.E.
- \*19. Revelation discourses:
- a) Narrate the resurrection of Jesus
  - b) Narrate the secret teachings of the risen Jesus
  - c) Narrate apocalyptic visions
  - d) Narrate aspects of Jesus' public ministry
20. Which of the following is *not* a revelation discourse?
- a) The *Apocryphon of John*
  - b) The *Apocryphon of James*
  - c) The *Proto-Gospel of James*
  - d) The *Epistle of the Apostles*
- \*21. An "apoeryphon" is:
- a) A secret book
  - b) A Gnostic aeon
  - c) Another term for the resurrection
  - d) A reference to Jesus' second coming
22. Which of the following Gospels narrates Jesus' mischievous childhood?
- a) The *Gospel of Thomas*
  - b) The *Gospel of Peter*
  - c) The *Infancy Gospel of Thomas*
  - d) The *Proto-Gospel of James*
- \*23. Which of the following Gospels explains the extraordinary character of Jesus' mother, Mary?
- a) The *Gospel of Thomas*
  - b) The *Gospel of Peter*
  - c) The *Infancy Gospel of Thomas*
  - d) The *Proto-Gospel of James*
24. In the *Infancy Gospel of Thomas*, Jesus does all of the following *except*:



- a) Preach the love of God and of one's neighbor
- b) Kill a child
- c) Raise a child from the dead
- d) Break the Sabbath laws

25. The noncanonical Gospels are most important:

- a) As historically reliable evidence for the historical Jesus
- b) As historically reliable evidence for Mary
- c) As evidence of later Christian interest in different aspects of Jesus' life
- d) As evidence of Jesus' divinity

26. In the *Infancy Gospel of Thomas*, Jesus is rebuked for \_\_\_\_\_ on the Sabbath.

- a) healing a leper
- b) running in the synagogue
- c) making clay sparrows
- d) defying his elders

27. The name of the evil Creator God in the *Apocryphon of John* is:

- a) Yahweh
- b) Ialdabaoth
- c) Seth
- d) Zeus

28. One stark difference between Q and the *Gospel of Thomas* is that:

- a) Q expects the future coming of the Son of Man.
- b) *Thomas* does not include a Passion narrative.
- c) Q was written in Greek; *Thomas* was written in Coptic.
- d) *Thomas* was only known in Egypt.

29. Which of the following is not a Gospel known from antiquity?

- a) The *Gospel of Jesus*
- b) The *Gospel of Thomas*
- c) The *Gospel of Peter*
- d) The *Gospel of the Ebionites*

30. In the *Gospel of Judas*, Judas says Jesus has come:

- a) To suffer and die for the sins of mankind
- b) From the realm of Barbelo
- c) As a witness against the Pharisees
- d) By means of a virgin

# Chapter 13

## Essays

- ~~[1.] Discuss the reasons why it is difficult for scholars to construct a picture of the historical Jesus.~~
- ~~[2.] Discuss the non-Christian sources for the historical Jesus that date within one hundred years of his death. How helpful are these sources? What information do they give us?~~
- ~~[3.] What are the problems with using the New Testament Gospels to reconstruct the historical Jesus? Can we overcome these problems? How?~~
- ~~[4.] Discuss the criteria scholars use to test the authenticity of a Gospel tradition. What is the logic behind each? Choose one or two examples from the Gospels and apply the criteria to them.~~
- ~~[5.] Evaluate Jesus' cleansing of the Temple (Mark 11:15–33) using the criteria for the authenticity of a Gospel tradition.  
(The instructor might provide the narratives [Mk 11:15–33 and parallels] to the students for analysis.)~~

## True/False

- ~~\*1. Not one first-century pagan author mentions Jesus.  
T — F~~
- ~~\*2. More theologically orthodox sources are more likely to be historically accurate.  
T — F~~
- ~~\*3. The criterion of dissimilarity involves finding stories that wouldn't be expected to have occurred in the historical context of Jesus' life.  
T — F~~
- ~~4. The criterion of contextual credibility is the one criterion with a strictly negative function.  
T — F~~
- ~~5. For many passages, Matthew and Luke only count as one independent source.  
T — F~~

## Multiple Choice

- \*1. How many first-century pagan authors mention Jesus by name?
  - a) None
  - b) One
  - c) Two
  - d) Three
2. Which of the following pagan authors does *not* mention Jesus?
  - a) Pliny the Younger
  - b) Plutarch
  - c) Suetonius
  - d) Tacitus
3. The Roman historian Tacitus says that Christianity is:
  - a) The truth
  - b) A false religion
  - c) A superstition
  - d) Illegal
4. The only Jewish author to mention Jesus within one hundred years of his life is:
  - a) Josephus
  - b) Pliny
  - c) Plutarch
  - d) Apollonius
5. In how many passages is Jesus mentioned in *The Antiquities of the Jews*?
  - a) None
  - b) One
  - c) Two
  - d) Three
6. The apostle Paul says all of the following about Jesus *except* that:
  - a) He was born a Jew.
  - b) He had brothers.
  - c) He raised Lazarus from the dead.
  - d) He had twelve disciples.
7. The first New Testament Gospel was written \_\_\_\_\_ years after Jesus' death.
  - a) about five
  - b) about fifteen
  - c) about twenty-five
  - d) about thirty-five
8. All of the following are problems with using the Gospels to establish the historical Jesus—*except*:

- a) They were written decades after Jesus' death.
- b) The authors were not eyewitnesses.
- c) None of the sayings they contain go back to Jesus.
- d) The books were written anonymously.

9. Scholars use all of the following criteria to determine the historical reliability of a tradition—*except*:

- a) Earlier accounts are likely to be more reliable than later ones.
- b) Highly developed theology is likely to reflect later traditions.
- c) Authors' biases must be considered.
- d) The more popular books are, the more likely they are to be reliable.

\*10. Which of the following is *not* a criterion used by scholars to authenticate traditions about Jesus?

- a) The criterion of independent attestation
- b) The criterion of dissimilarity
- c) The criterion of similarity
- d) The criterion of contextual credibility

11. All of the following can be used to show independent attestation of a tradition—*except*:

- a) Mark
- b) Luke
- c) Q
- d) The signs source

12. The criterion of dissimilarity says that a tradition is more likely to be historically reliable if:

- a) It agrees with Jesus' teachings.
- b) It agrees with proto-orthodox theology.
- c) It disagrees with the author's theology.
- d) It is not found in another source.

13. Which of the following criteria can only be used to rule a tradition inauthentic?

- a) The criterion of independent attestation
- b) The criterion of dissimilarity
- c) The criterion of similarity
- d) The criterion of contextual credibility

\*14. Jesus' baptism by John passes the criterion of dissimilarity because:

- a) It is unlikely that Christians would have made up this tradition, since being baptized by John might have implied Jesus' subordination to John
- b) Jesus' baptism was unlike the baptisms of later Christians: it was dissimilar to them—because he was without sin
- c) It is unlikely that Christians would have made up this tradition, because “inventing” a tradition would have been considered sinful
- d) Jesus' baptism was unlike other religious rituals of the day because it emphasized the Spirit

~~\*15. Which of the following traditions does *not* pass the criterion of contextual credibility?~~

- ~~a) Jesus' baptism~~
- ~~b) Jesus' death~~
- ~~c) Jesus' teaching to Nicodemus: "You must be born again"~~
- ~~d) Jesus' teachings in the Sermon on the Mount~~

~~16. Which historian mentions Jesus in a story about the Jewish high priest Ananus, who abuses his power before Rome in 62 C.E. by unlawfully putting James (Jesus' brother) to death?~~

- ~~a) Pliny the Younger~~
- ~~b) Tacitus~~
- ~~c) Josephus~~
- ~~d) Ialdabaoth~~

~~\*17. Which historian categorically states that Jesus was the messiah in book 18 of *The Antiquities of the Jews*?~~

- ~~a) Tacitus~~
- ~~b) Josephus~~
- ~~c) Ialdabaoth~~
- ~~d) Pliny the Younger~~

~~18. How much information do we have about the historical Jesus from sources outside the four Gospels of the New Testament?~~

- ~~a) Many pagan sources of information, but no Jewish sources~~
- ~~b) Copious amounts in noncanonical Christian, pagan, and Jewish literature~~
- ~~c) Many Jewish and noncanonical Christian sources, but no pagan sources~~
- ~~d) Very little from any other source~~

~~\*19. Which would count as a basic methodological principle that historians can apply to their sources?~~

- ~~a) The earlier the better.~~
- ~~b) The later the better.~~
- ~~c) The more detail the better.~~
- ~~d) The less detail the better.~~

~~\*20. Accounts with very highly developed theology are more likely to be:~~

- ~~a) More historically accurate~~
- ~~b) Less historically accurate~~
- ~~c) Written earlier~~
- ~~d) Written later~~

~~\*21. What is one way to spot bias in a text?~~

- ~~a) When the author repeatedly states his or her credentials~~
- ~~b) When the author has a known affiliation with one of the views expressed in the text~~
- ~~c) When just about everything in the text makes a uniquely different point~~
- ~~d) When just about every story in the account drives at the same point~~

~~\*22. Consistent testimony of many independent witnesses \_\_\_\_\_ a case for a saying's or event's historical reliability.~~

- ~~a) strengthens~~
- ~~b) weakens~~
- ~~c) does not affect~~
- ~~d) indicates bias in~~

~~\*23. If a piece of Greek text makes more logical sense when translated into Aramaic (Jesus' original language) then that particular passage:~~

- ~~a) is a historically reliable witness of the words of Jesus~~
- ~~b) is a historically unreliable witness of the words of Jesus~~
- ~~c) may likely trace back to an Aramaic original, but cannot—based on this alone—serve as evidence of a historically (un)reliable witness of the words of Jesus~~
- ~~d) has been altered for theological purposes~~

~~24. Why will scholars always disagree about the end product of their labors; that is, why will their accounts of what happened in the past always be different than other scholars'?~~

- ~~a) Because no two scholars have access to exactly the same source material~~
- ~~b) Because the past can never be empirically proved; it can only be reconstructed~~
- ~~c) Because it is the nature of scholars to argue~~
- ~~d) Because their biases will always clash~~

~~25. Which of the following episodes is most likely historical according to the criterion of dissimilarity?~~

- ~~a) The resurrection of Lazarus~~
- ~~b) The feeding of the five thousand~~
- ~~c) The betrayal of Jesus~~
- ~~d) The temptation of Jesus~~

~~26. Which of the following is not a rule of thumb for one attempting to reconstruct the historical Jesus?~~

- ~~a) The earlier the better.~~
- ~~b) Beware the bias.~~
- ~~c) Use only sources that were eyewitnesses to the events at hand.~~
- ~~d) Highly developed theology makes a story less likely to be historical.~~

~~27. Which of the following is not a problem historians face when studying Jesus?~~

- ~~a) Their earliest sources are from many years after his life.~~
- ~~b) Highly biased sources~~
- ~~c) Almost no pagan witnesses~~
- ~~d) Only one eyewitness source~~

~~28. Which of the following best summarizes Jesus' impact on wider society in his own day?~~

- ~~a) Practically nil~~
- ~~b) Brief fame before death~~

- e) Regional impact but not much outside Judea
- d) Similar to the impact of the Beatles

29. Most historians think Josephus's testimony about Jesus as Messiah was:

- a) Written late in his life after his conversion to Christianity
- b) Inserted by a later Christian scribe
- c) Originally written in Aramaic and only later translated into Greek
- d) Expanded in the second edition of *The Antiquities*

30. According to the *Gospel of Peter*, who is responsible for condemning Jesus?

- a) Satan
- b) Pontius Pilate
- c) Herod
- d) Judas

## Chapter 14

### Essays

- [1.] Describe the range of responses that Jews in Palestine had to their domination by the Romans.
- [2.] Explain the four major tenets of Jewish apocalypticism: dualism, pessimism, vindication, and imminence.
- [3.] Discuss the differences between prophetic and apocalyptic explanations of suffering. In what settings can you imagine the apocalyptic view arising?
- [4.] Many scholars believe that Jesus was an apocalyptic prophet. Explain what they mean by this, what evidence they use to argue it, and how persuasive you find this argument to be.
- [5.] Discuss the problem of the Son of Man sayings in the Gospels. How might the historical Jesus criteria be applied to the question of how likely these sayings are to be historical?

### True/False

- \*1. Apocalypticists were optimistic about the present.  
T — F
- \*2. John the Baptist preached an apocalyptic message.  
T — F
- \*3. Apocalypticism tried to make sense of the oppression of God's people.  
T — F
4. Ancient apocalypticists thought that the end of this world would happen around two thousand years in the future.  
T — F
5. Jews responded to the persecution under Antiochus with silent protest rather than violent action.  
T — F

### Multiple Choice

- \*1. Which of the following was *not* a sect of Judaism?



- a) The Pharisees
- b) The Centurions
- c) The Essenes
- d) The Sadducees

2. Who led a large crowd to the Jordan River, claiming he would make the waters part, before he and his followers were slaughtered by the Romans?

- a) Matthias
- b) Theudas
- c) Thaddeus
- d) Marcion

3. Which group of Galilean Jews believed in armed resistance against the Romans, leading to the eventual destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans?

- a) The Sicarii
- b) The Stoics
- c) The Zealots
- d) The Nazarenes

4. Who was the ruler of the northern part of Palestine (Galilee) during Jesus' ministry?

- a) Herod Antipas
- b) Antiochus
- c) Herod the Great
- d) Pontius Pilate

\*5. Which of the following is *not* true about the Passover festival?

- a) It celebrates Israel's past deliverance from foreign oppression.
- b) It lasts two weeks.
- c) It served as a silent protest against Roman occupation of Palestine.
- d) The Romans sent reinforcements to Jerusalem during the festival.

6. Which emperor ordered that his image be set up in the Temple?

- a) Titus
- b) Vespasian
- c) Caligula
- d) Petronius

7. To which period do most scholars date the book of Daniel?

- a) The Maccabean revolt
- b) The Babylonian exile
- c) Jesus' ministry
- d) The first century B.C.E.

8. Which book from the Hebrew Bible is an early example of Jewish apocalyptic literature?

- a) Isaiah
- b) Deuteronomy

- e) Qohelet
- d) Daniel

\*9. Which of the following groups was apocalyptic?

- a. The Essenes
- b. The Sadducees
- c. The Sanhedrin
- d. The Gnostics

10. Jews used all of the following to resist Roman power *except*:

- a. Silent protests
- b. Nonviolent uprisings
- c. Insurrection
- d. Crucifixion

\*11. The term “apocalypse” means:

- a. Secret
- b. Unveiling
- c. Knowledge
- d. Revolution

\*12. Apocalypticists adhered to all of the following tenets *except*:

- a. God was unjust.
- b. The world was divided into good and evil.
- c. The suffering of the righteous would only get worse.
- d. God would soon intervene and save his people.

\*13. The formation of the Jewish sects that existed during the ministry of Jesus occurred

- a) After Jacob was reunited with his 12 sons in Egypt
- b) During the reign of Constantine
- c) When Moses descended from Mount Sinai
- d) During period after the Hasmonean struggles against their Syrian overlords

14. A typical Jewish farmer paid approximately how much of his income in total taxes?

- a) One-third
- b) Two-thirds
- c) Half
- d) 10 percent

\*15. Which of the following texts argues *against* an apocalyptic message?

- a) Q
- b) Mark
- c) M
- d) *Thomas*

16. Which of the following is *not* a major tenet of apocalypticism?

- a) Pessimism
- b) Militarism
- c) Vindication
- d) Imminence

17. Which of the following people/groups was ~~not~~ apocalyptically minded?

- a) John the Baptist
- b) The Sadducees
- c) Jesus
- d) Paul

\*18. Jesus provides the continuity of apocalyptic belief between which of the following?

- a) John the Baptist and the early church
- b) Apollonius and the church
- c) Paul and the church
- d) There is no continuity of apocalyptic belief.

\*19. Jesus began his ministry:

- a) By preaching in the Temple
- b) By being baptized by John
- c) By arguing with the Pharisees
- d) By joining the Essene community

20. Jesus identified most closely with:

- a) The Pharisees
- b) The Essenes
- c) John the Baptist
- d) The Fourth Philosophy

\*21. All of the following were apocalyptic groups/individuals ~~except~~:

- a) The Pharisees
- b) The Essenes
- c) The Sadducees
- d) Theudas

22. Which major Galilean city was only four miles from Nazareth?

- a) Decapolis
- b) Sepphoris
- c) Jerusalem
- d) Tiberias

23. Which of the following combinations sometimes only counts as one source?

- a) John and Mark
- b) Matthew and Luke
- c) Paul and Mark
- d) Paul and John

24. Which of the following was an apocalyptic group or person?
- a) The Romans
  - b) The Sadducees
  - c) The Pharisees
  - d) Herod Antipas
25. The historical Jesus most likely
- a) Learned Greek at the city of Sepphoris, where he worked as a carpenter
  - b) Was an only child
  - c) Was a peasant that mostly engaged with others in small town settings
  - d) Proclaimed himself as the Son of Man
26. Based on the criterion of dissimilarity, which tradition likely goes back to Jesus?
- a) The Lord's Prayer
  - b) The Last Supper
  - c) The Beatitudes
  - d) The Sheep and Goats Judgment
27. According to this chapter, Jesus most likely associated with John the Baptist because:
- a) John preached an apocalyptic message
  - b) They were cousins
  - c) John needed to be forgiven of his sins
  - d) Jesus was commanded to do so by God
28. John the Baptist preached a message of:
- a) Coming destruction
  - b) God's love and forgiveness
  - c) Salvation through baptism
  - d) Faith in Jesus
29. Sepphoris was rebuilt by:
- a) Herod the Great
  - b) Pontius Pilate
  - c) Herod Antipas
  - d) Alexander the Great
30. The population of Sepphoris was approximately:
- a) One thousand
  - b) Five thousand
  - c) Ten thousand
  - d) Twenty thousand

# Chapter 15

## Essays

- [1.] Describe the “Temple incident” and explain how the apocalyptic perspective would interpret Jesus’ actions.
- [2.] Explain the apocalyptic significance of the twelve followers Jesus chose as his special disciples. How does the description of these disciples in Mark, Matthew, and Luke point to this significance?
- [3.] Why did the Romans execute Jesus? Be sure to note the legal justification as well as a possible underlying reason for the execution.
- [4.] In the textbook, Ehrman interprets three elements of Jesus’ life in light of Jesus’ apocalyptic views: (1) his apocalyptic deeds, (2) his apocalyptic teachings, and (3) his apocalyptic death. Pick one of these parts of Jesus’ life and explain, as specifically as you can, how this element might demonstrate Jesus’ apocalyptic message.
- [5.] RESOLVED: The historical Jesus is best understood as a Jewish Cynic philosopher. Pick a side and argue. Keep in mind that the most persuasive arguments anticipate (and answer) counterarguments.

## True/False

- \*1. The criterion of dissimilarity proves Jesus was an apocalypticist.  
T \_\_\_\_\_ F
- \*2. Celibacy or bachelorhood was virtually unheard of among Jewish men of Jesus’ day.  
T \_\_\_\_\_ F
- \*3. Our earliest sources do not interpret Jesus’ miracles as evidence that he was God.  
T \_\_\_\_\_ F
4. Jesus predicted the cosmic Son of Man would bring justice to the world.  
T \_\_\_\_\_ F
5. Jesus’ family rejected his message during his public ministry.  
T \_\_\_\_\_ F

## Multiple-Choice

1. Which of the following texts does *not* portray Jesus as an apocalypticist?
  - a) Q
  - b) Mark
  - c) M
  - d) Thomas
2. Which of the following clearly portrays Jesus as an apocalypticist?
  - a) The *Gospel of Peter*
  - b) Mark
  - c) The *Gospel of the Hebrews*
  - d) The "Egerton Gospel"
3. All of the following are true of Jesus' understanding of the Kingdom of God *except*:
  - a) It was coming soon.
  - b) It would be on earth.
  - c) It would be brought by the Son of Man.
  - d) Peter would rule over it.
- \*4. Subversive teachers from Jesus' day were labeled:
  - a) Prophets
  - b) Apocalypticists
  - c) Messiahs
  - d) Secessionists
5. Jesus was crucified during:
  - a) Yom Kippur
  - b) Pentecost
  - c) Passover
  - d) The Feast of Unleavened Bread
6. Which of the following indicates that Jesus was most likely an apocalypticist?
  - a) His reputation as an exorcist and healer
  - b) His reputation as a moral teacher
  - c) His emphasis on forgiveness
  - d) None of the above
- \*7. Which of the following events strongly suggests that Jesus was an apocalypticist?
  - a) His preaching in the Temple
  - b) His baptism by John
  - c) His disputes with the Pharisees
  - d) His participation in the Essene community
- \*8. Jesus identified most closely with:
  - a) The Pharisees

- b) The Essenes
- c) John the Baptist
- d) The Fourth Philosophy

9. All of the following are indications of Jesus' apocalyptic actions *except*:

- a) His crucifixion
- b) His cleansing of the Temple
- c) His calling of twelve disciples
- d) His preexistence

\*10. Which of the following is *not* true about the Cynics?

- a) They were philosophers.
- b) They rarely bathed.
- c) They generally enjoyed the finer things of life.
- d) The name of their group literally means "dog."

11. All of the following were groups that associated with and/or followed Jesus *except*:

- a) The Sadducees
- b) Women
- c) Tax collectors
- d) Sinners

\*12. All of the following are associated with Jesus' apocalyptic thought *except*:

- a) The coming Kingdom of God
- b) The coming judgment brought by the Son of Man
- c) The reversal of fortunes
- d) The belief that good people would be taken up alive into heaven

\*13. The historical Jesus seems to have taught that

- \_\_\_\_\_ a) God's enemies would be annihilated, soul and body
- \_\_\_\_\_ b) God's enemies would suffer in hell forever
- \_\_\_\_\_ c) God had no enemies—all are beloved by him
- \_\_\_\_\_ d) God's enemies will inevitably be converted by God's overpowering love

14. All of the following are true of the stories of Jesus' miracles *except*:

- a) They pass the criterion of contextual credibility.
- b) They pass the criterion of independent attestation.
- c) They pass the criterion of dissimilarity.
- d) Historians cannot prove they happened.

\*15. According to the Gospels, people believed that Jesus' ability to work miracles reflected all of the following *except*:

- a) He was empowered by Beelzebul.
- b) He was empowered by God.
- c) He was like other prophets.
- d) He would die for their sins.

~~16. Jesus was tried before all of the following *except*:~~

- ~~a) The Sanhedrin~~
- ~~b) Pontius Pilate~~
- ~~c) Caiaphas~~
- ~~d) Tiberius~~

~~17. Historically speaking, it is probable that Jesus came to Jerusalem at the end of his life in order to:~~

- ~~a) Die for the sins of the world~~
- ~~b) Bring his message to the center of Judaism~~
- ~~c) Celebrate Yom Kippur~~
- ~~d) Be raised from the dead~~

~~18. Which of the disciples betrayed Jesus?~~

- ~~a) Peter~~
- ~~b) James~~
- ~~c) Judas~~
- ~~d) John~~

~~19. All of the following are true about Jesus' Last Supper *except*:~~

- ~~a) It was a Passover meal.~~
- ~~b) It is the act remembered by Christians in the Eucharist (Lord's Supper/Communion).~~
- ~~c) It is multiply attested.~~
- ~~d) Historians know that it did not happen.~~

~~\*20. The Romans probably convicted Jesus because:~~

- ~~a) He blasphemed by claiming to be God.~~
- ~~b) He claimed to be king.~~
- ~~c) He was not Roman.~~
- ~~d) He broke the Jewish Law.~~

~~21. Before condemning someone to death, Roman governors:~~

- ~~a) Had to hold a public trial~~
- ~~b) Had to ask the emperor for permission~~
- ~~c) Had to receive approval from the Sanhedrin~~
- ~~d) Were not required to do anything~~

~~\*22. Historically speaking, who was responsible for Jesus' death?~~

- ~~a) The Sadducees~~
- ~~b) The Pharisees~~
- ~~c) Herod~~
- ~~d) Pilate~~

~~23. Death by crucifixion was saved for:~~

- ~~a) The most prestigious members of society~~



- b) The lowest members of society
- c) The Messiah
- d) Christians

\*24. What was one way Jesus was like the Cynic philosophers?

- a) He taught people not to concern themselves with wealth and other trappings of society.
- b) He taught people the necessity of embedding themselves fully in their society, including gaining a respectable profession, house, income, etc.
- c) He taught modesty (e.g., to be private concerning bodily functions).
- d) He advocated a structured interdependence among people in a society.

25. What was one way Jesus was *not* like the Cynic philosophers?

- a) He taught that people were not to be concerned about what to eat.
- b) He taught people to live as naturally as possible.
- c) He taught that this world was coming to an end, introducing a new age.
- d) He taught that his disciples were to condemn those who rejected his message.

26. Which of the following groups was apocalyptic and tended to be closest to Jesus' own views?

- a) The Sadducees
- b) The Pharisees
- c) Herod
- d) Pilate

27. In the time of Jesus, to die and be cast into Gehenna probably meant

- a) To suffer in hell forever
- b) To die by crucifixion
- c) To have your dead body thrown onto unholy land without proper burial
- d) To be buried in the Sea of Gehenna

28. On what charge was Jesus executed?

- a) Slandering the Pharisees
- b) Prophesying against the Temple
- c) Blasphemy
- d) Insurrection against Rome

29. Which tradition passes the criterion of contextual credibility but not the criterion of dissimilarity?

- a) Jesus' exorcisms
- b) Jesus' baptism
- c) The virgin birth
- d) The crucifixion

30. Which of the following incidents of Jesus' life *cannot* be established as most likely being historical?

- a) The Temple incident

- b) Jesus' baptism
- c) The Sermon on the Mount
- d) Jesus' association with tax collectors and "sinners"

# Chapter 16

## Essays

- [1.] Describe the several points in time that one can say that Christianity “began.” Which point in time is most tenable for historians? Why?
- [2.] How did the earliest Christians understand Jesus’ resurrection? How did this event confirm their apocalyptic worldview?
- [3.] Jesus seems to have believed that a cosmic figure, the Son of Man, would usher in the Kingdom of God and the day of judgment. How did early Christians come to believe that Jesus was the Son of Man? How do some of the New Testament stories reflect this belief?
- [4.] Discuss how and why early Christians used passages from the Hebrew Bible to provide evidence of Jesus’ true identity. In particular, discuss the “Suffering Servant” motif in the Psalms and in Isaiah.
- [5.] Who do the Gospels portray as having discovered the empty tomb? How does this relate to Paul’s testimony about the evidence of the resurrection in 1 Corinthians? Why does it matter?

## True/False

\*1. The notion of vicarious suffering was invented by Christians after the crucifixion.

T \_\_\_\_\_ F

\*2. Jews would likely have understood the term “Son of God” as a reference to the king of Israel.

T \_\_\_\_\_ F

\*3. Paul cites the women who found the empty tomb as evidence of the resurrection.

T \_\_\_\_\_ F

4. Many Jews prior to Christianity expected the messiah to die for their sins and then be resurrected.

T \_\_\_\_\_ F

5. Most scholars believe the Suffering Servant of Isaiah is a metaphor for the suffering of Israel.

T \_\_\_\_\_ F

## Multiple-Choice

- \*1. According to the textbook, when did Christianity begin?
- a) With Jesus' ministry
  - b) With Jesus' birth
  - c) When Jesus called his disciples
  - d) With the belief in Jesus' resurrection
2. In the New Testament, who claims to have seen Jesus alive after his death?
- a) Paul
  - b) Josephus
  - c) The centurion at the cross
  - d) Martha
3. According to all of the New Testament Gospels, who discovered the empty tomb?
- a) The Jews
  - b) Peter
  - c) Women
  - d) Paul
4. The first people to believe in Jesus' resurrection were probably:
- a) His closest followers
  - b) The Jews
  - c) Paul
  - d) The demons
5. The Suffering Servant of Isaiah in its original context probably referred to
- a) The future Messiah
  - b) Psalm 22
  - c) Israel
  - d) The Maccabean Revolt
- \*6. The earliest Christians used which of the following to explain Jesus' messiahship?
- a) The Talmud
  - b) The New Testament
  - c) *The Antiquities of the Jews*
  - d) Hebrew Scripture
- \*7. As opposed to most Jews' expectations, Christians came to believe that the messiah was:
- a) A powerful king
  - b) A priestly figure
  - c) An innocent suffering man
  - d) Elijah
8. Scholars refer to the passages in Isaiah that, according to early Christians, prophesied Jesus' Passion as:

- a) The “Songs of the Suffering Servant”
- b) The “prophecies about Jesus”
- c) The “Passion passages”
- d) The “passages about the messiah”

9. The idea of the cosmic figure called the “Son of Man” first appears in:

- a) Paul
- b) Jesus’ teachings
- c) The New Testament Gospels
- d) The book of Daniel

\*10. Jews expected the Son of Man to be:

- a) Jesus
- b) A cosmic judge
- c) God
- d) King David

11. One way early Christians understood Jesus’ vicarious suffering was by comparing it to that of:

- a) Jewish martyrs
- b) Elijah
- c) King David
- d) Psalms

12. In Jewish circles, the term “messiah” literally meant:

- a) The savior
- b) A person anointed with oil
- c) Jesus
- d) A cosmic judge

13. Ancient traditions portrayed all of the following figures as divinized, *except*:

- a) Jesus
- b) Julius Caesar
- c) Moses
- d) Each of these figures were portrayed as divinized in some ancient traditions

\*14. Scholars have suggested that Christianity is the religion:

- a) Of Jesus
- b) For Jesus
- c) Of John the Baptist
- d) About Jesus

15. Paul mentions all of the following *except*:

- a) Jesus’ significance for salvation
- b) Jesus’ death
- c) Jesus’ resurrection

d) The women who find the tomb

16. Jesus' earliest followers:

- a) Rejected Jesus' apocalyptic beliefs
- b) Accepted Jesus' apocalyptic beliefs
- c) Denied Jesus' bodily resurrection
- d) Doubted Jesus' messiahship

\*17. Jesus' earliest followers believed:

- a) Jesus had been raised from the dead for a short period of time.
- b) Jesus had not been raised from the dead.
- c) A holy man had raised Jesus from the dead.
- d) Jesus had been raised from the dead never to die again.

18. According to the chapter, which of the following figures was *not* thought to have voluntarily died in order to save another?

- a) Alexander the Great
- b) Eleazar
- c) Jesus
- d) Alcestis

\*19. After Jesus' resurrection, Christians believed that:

- a) He would remain on earth until the Son of Man came.
- b) He would wait with Christians in purgatory until the Son of Man came.
- c) He had been exalted to heaven.
- d) He died again.

20. After Jesus' death, apocalyptic Christians focused on all of the following *except*:

- a) Jesus' relationship with God
- b) Jesus' teachings on the Son of Man
- c) Jesus' teachings on the Kingdom of God
- d) Jesus' teachings on divorce

\*21. Christians used Psalms of \_\_\_\_\_ to show that Jesus was the messiah.

- a) triumph
- b) lament
- c) victory
- d) coronation

22. Pagans typically would have understood the term "Son of Man" as referring to:

- a) A cosmic judge
- b) A human being
- c) God
- d) A priestly figure

\*23. Although the crucifixion was a stumbling block for the Jews, it was a foundation stone for:

- a) Pagans
- b) The Romans
- c) The Essenes
- d) Christians

24. The account of the Jewish warrior Eleazar, who attacked an elephant believed to be carrying the king of Syria (an enemy of God) and was crushed to death, is given in:

- a) First Maccabees
- b) Jude
- c) Leviticus
- d) Second Peter

\*25. Those who believe that the precise point at which Jesus became the Son of God was at his baptism justify their belief with the passage in some manuscripts of \_\_\_\_\_, which states that a voice from heaven announced, "You are my son, today I have begotten you."

- a) 1 Thessalonians
- b) 4 Maccabees
- c) Luke
- d) Matthew

26. Ancient Jews would have understood "Son of God" to mean which of the following?

- a) Divine human
- b) Cosmic Son of Man
- c) King of Israel
- d) Beautiful human being

27. The "Song of the Suffering Servant" is found in:

- a) Mark
- b) Isaiah
- c) First Maccabees
- d) Daniel

28. Jesus' cry, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" is the first line from:

- a) Mark's Passion narrative
- b) Psalm 22
- c) Daniel's Son of Man passage
- d) Lamentations

29. Jewish apocalypticists expected a(n) \_\_\_\_\_ after the evil cosmic powers were destroyed.

- a) divine feast
- b) resurrection of the dead
- c) fiery destruction of the world
- d) angelic battle

30. While Jesus was alive, he distinctively addressed God as:

- a) Himself
- b) Master
- c) Father
- d) King



## Chapter 17

### Essays

- [1.] ~~Modern historians recognize that history is never completely objective: all authors record stories that bolster their literary cause. How does Luke strengthen his theological emphases by using the conventions of ancient historiography?~~
- [2.] ~~Why do you think it was important for Luke to insist on the fundamental continuity between Judaism and Christianity? That is, why does Luke situate Christianity firmly within Judaism?~~
- [3.] ~~Most scholars believe that the same author wrote the Gospel of Luke and Acts. What reasons are there for believing this? What continuities are there between these books?~~
- [4.] ~~What role does the Holy Spirit play in the book of Acts? How does the guidance of the Holy Spirit pick up where Jesus leaves off in the lives of the apostles?~~
- [5.] ~~What are the primary themes of the book of Acts? Discuss specific instances in which these themes are conveyed.~~

### True/False

~~\*1. The author of Acts sometimes uses first-person narrative.~~

~~T \_\_\_\_\_ F~~

~~\*2. The author of Acts chose to remain anonymous.~~

~~T \_\_\_\_\_ F~~

~~\*3. The final third of Acts focuses on Peter's ministry.~~

~~T \_\_\_\_\_ F~~

~~4. One of the early speeches in Acts is delivered to the Pharisees.~~

~~T \_\_\_\_\_ F~~

~~5. One similarity between Jesus in the Gospel of Luke and the apostles in Acts is that they are all rejected in Jerusalem.~~

~~T \_\_\_\_\_ F~~

### Multiple Choice

~~\*1. The earliest account of the early church appears in:~~

- a) The Gospel of Mark
  - b) The Gospel of Matthew
  - c) The Gospel of Luke
  - d) Acts of the Apostles
2. The book of Acts is probably best understood as:
- a) A Greco-Roman biography
  - b) A Greco-Roman novel
  - c) A general history
  - d) An apocalypse
3. One of the most important ways ancient histories are different from ancient biographies is that:
- a) Histories are more objective than biographies.
  - b) Histories, as opposed to biographies, are concerned with historical accuracy.
  - c) Histories focus on more than one character.
  - d) Histories are never written anonymously.
4. Many ancient authors express a preference for:
- a) Oral sources over written ones
  - b) Written sources over oral ones
  - c) Biographies
  - d) Dedicating their work to a Roman official
5. Speeches that are recorded in ancient histories:
- a) Are transcripts of actual speeches given
  - b) Are invented according to what seemed to fit the literary occasion and the characters involved
  - c) Tend to be shorter than actual speeches given by ancient rhetors
  - d) Are transcribed by those who heard them
- \*6. Acts is organized:
- a) Chronologically
  - b) Thematically
  - c) Parallel to Mark
  - d) Haphazardly
7. Which of the following would be the most difficult method to apply to Acts?
- a) The thematic method
  - b) Genre criticism
  - c) The redactional method
  - d) None of these methods is applicable to Acts.
8. Which of the following statements about the Gospel of Luke and Acts is false?
- a) They both focus primarily on Jesus.
  - b) They are both dedicated to Theophilus.
  - c) They both narrate Jesus' ascension.

- d) Peter is a major character in both.
9. Like the Gospel of Luke, Acts focuses on which of the following cities?
- a) Nazareth
  - b) Bethlehem
  - c) Caesarea
  - d) Jerusalem
10. The book of Acts focuses on:
- a) The preaching of the gospel exclusively to Jews
  - b) The spread of the gospel to Gentiles
  - c) The preaching of the gospel only in Jerusalem
  - d) The actions of all twelve apostles
11. In the Gospel of Luke and Acts, the end of the world is expected:
- a) Immediately
  - b) Within the disciples' lifetime
  - c) To never come
  - d) After the gospel has been spread throughout the world
12. The most significant convert in Acts is:
- a) Peter
  - b) Paul
  - c) Jesus
  - d) Theophilus
13. Acts ends with:
- a) Paul preaching in Spain
  - b) Peter in Jerusalem
  - c) Paul under arrest
  - d) Jesus returning
- \*14. Paul's mission is primarily to:
- a) Jews
  - b) Samaritans
  - c) Gentiles
  - d) Peter
15. Which of the following is not a central character in Acts?
- a) God/the Holy Spirit
  - b) Paul
  - c) Peter
  - d) Mary Magdalene
16. In Acts, the disciples elect a new member of "the twelve" to replace:
- a) Judas

- b) Peter
- c) Paul
- d) Jesus

17. The new disciple in Acts is:

- a) Peter
- b) Paul
- c) Matthias
- d) Luke

18. According to Acts, whom of the following can be described as the most important director of the Christian movement?

- a) Peter
- b) God
- c) Luke
- d) Matthias

\*19. The book of Acts focuses primarily on:

- a) The deeds of the twelve original disciples
- b) The resurrection of Jesus
- c) The ministry of Jesus
- d) The spread of the Christian religion

20. Luke does not emphasize which of the following?

- a) The continuity between Judaism and Jesus
- b) The continuity between Judaism and Christianity
- c) The continuity between Jesus and the church
- d) The triumph of God's grace over and against works

\*21. According to Acts, Paul is converted by:

- a) Jesus
- b) Peter
- c) Judas
- d) The Gospel of Luke

\*22. According to Luke:

- a) The death of Judas was predicted by David
- b) Gentiles have replaced the Jews as God's covenant people
- c) Gentiles must be circumcised and follow all the Jewish dietary laws.
- d) The Jews always accept the disciples' teachings.

23. Luke presents the apostles as:

- a) Disagreeing on the spread of the gospel
- b) Returning to Galilee, as commanded by Jesus in the Gospel of Matthew
- c) In general agreement about the Christian mission
- d) Divided over the relationship of Jews and Gentiles

~~\*24. At Pentecost, the disciples:~~

- ~~a) Are drunk~~
- ~~b) Speak in the native languages of those gathered~~
- ~~c) Hide for fear of arrest~~
- ~~d) Eat the Passover meal with Jesus~~

~~25. Peter's speech at Pentecost causes the crowd:~~

- ~~a) To repent~~
- ~~b) To try to kill him~~
- ~~c) To ignore him~~
- ~~d) To convert to Judaism~~

~~26. In Acts, Luke depicts Jesus' death as:~~

- ~~a) Deserved~~
- ~~b) A miscarriage of justice~~
- ~~c) An atonement for sin~~
- ~~d) Evidence that Jesus is the "Second Adam"~~

~~\*27. The first Christian martyr, as recounted in Acts, was:~~

- ~~a) Paul~~
- ~~b) Peter~~
- ~~c) Stephen~~
- ~~d) Matthias~~

~~28. Paul believes he has the best chance for a fair hearing from:~~

- ~~a) The Jewish Sanhedrin~~
- ~~b) Felix~~
- ~~c) Porcius Festus~~
- ~~d) Caesar~~

~~\*29. On the way to Rome, Paul:~~

- ~~a) Is rescued by Peter~~
- ~~b) Is ignored~~
- ~~c) Is involved in a shipwreck~~
- ~~d) Converts thousands of Jews~~

~~\*30. According to Acts, Paul:~~

- ~~a) Continued to follow Jewish customs~~
- ~~b) Believed Judaism was evil~~
- ~~c) Ignored Jewish customs~~
- ~~d) Told the Jewish people to stop following the Jewish Law~~

## Chapter 18

### Essays

- [1.] Why would Paul's assertion that salvation was available to Gentiles seem counterintuitive to Jews of his day?
- [2.] Scholars divide Paul's letters into three groups. What are these three categories, what books do they contain, and how does this categorization relate to the concept of pseudepigraphy in antiquity?
- [3.] What does it mean to refer to Paul's letters as "occasional"? Why is it important to understand this aspect of Paul's letters?
- [4.] In general terms, what was Paul's *modus operandi*? How, in other words, did Paul spread the gospel to Gentiles? What purpose did his letters serve in his ministry?
- [5.] Discuss how Paul's encounter with the risen Jesus affected his theological views. Which of his views were confirmed? Which views had to be adjusted? What were the implications of this encounter for Paul's mission?

### True/False

- \*1. Most scholars believe Paul wrote thirteen New Testament letters.

T \_\_\_\_\_ F

- \*2. Paul was a Pharisee.

T \_\_\_\_\_ F

- \*3. Paul taught that Gentiles did not need to convert to Judaism to become followers of Christ.

T \_\_\_\_\_ F

4. Before his encounter with Christ, Paul struggled with guilt as a result of his inability to keep the Jewish Law.

T \_\_\_\_\_ F

5. Paul emphasizes the covenant with Abraham as being for all people, not only for the Jews.

T \_\_\_\_\_ F

## Multiple-Choice

1. Among his contemporaries, Paul was:
  - a) Loved and highly respected by everyone
  - b) Controversial
  - c) Uniformly hated
  - d) Universally acknowledged as an authority
2. Other than Jesus, who among the following was most important for the history of Christianity?
  - a) Paul
  - b) Peter
  - c) Thomas
  - d) Mary
3. How many books of the New Testament claim to have been written by Paul?
  - a) Five
  - b) Seven
  - c) Thirteen
  - d) Fifteen
4. Which book of the New Testament has been attributed to Paul even though it does not claim that for itself?
  - a) Galatians
  - b) Ephesians
  - c) Philemon
  - d) Hebrews
- \*5. According to the New Testament, Paul:
  - a) Was violently opposed to Christianity
  - b) Immediately converted to Christianity.
  - c) Was indifferent to Christianity
  - d) Believed Peter was the head of the church
- \*6. Paul preached that salvation:
  - a) Was available only to Jews
  - b) Was available only to Gentiles
  - c) Was equally available to Jews and Gentiles
  - d) Was dependent on following the Law
- \*7. The term “pseudepigrapha” means:
  - a) Genuine writings
  - b) Writing under a false name
  - c) Knowledge
  - d) Revelation
8. All of the following are categories of Pauline letters *except*:

- a) Universal
- b) Pastoral
- c) Deutero-Pauline
- d) Undisputed

9. Which of the following is *not* one of the Pastoral epistles?

- a) First Timothy
- b) Second Timothy
- c) Romans
- d) Titus

10. Which of the following is *not* one of the Deutero-Pauline epistles?

- a) Ephesians
- b) 1 Timothy
- c) Colossians
- d) Second Thessalonians

\*11. The term “Deutero-Pauline” means:

- a) Second Paul
- b) Second rate
- c) A sequel
- d) A genuine Pauline letter

12. Scholars agree that Paul wrote all of the following *except*:

- a) Philemon
- b) Third Corinthians
- c) Philippians
- d) First Thessalonians

13. Paul wrote his letters around:

- a) 10 B.C.E.
- b) 15 C.E.
- c) 35 C.E.
- d) 50 C.E.

\*14. Which of the following books tells stories about Paul’s missions?

- a) Mark
- b) Matthew
- c) Luke
- d) Acts

\*15. Acts and Paul’s genuine letters disagree on all of the following *except*:

- a) Paul’s itinerary
- b) Whether Paul went straight to Jerusalem after his conversion
- c) That Paul referred to himself as a Jew



~~d) Whether Paul always tried to minister to Jews in the synagogues before preaching to Gentiles~~

16. All of the following are late, legendary accounts of Paul's life and/or teachings *except*:

- a) Philemon
- b) Acts of Paul
- c) Third Corinthians
- d) Paul's correspondence with Seneca

17. Scholars call Paul's letters \_\_\_\_\_ to indicate that they address specific problems.

- a) specific
- b) occasional
- c) particular
- d) special

\*18. Paul was:

- a) a Pharisee
- b) a Sadducee
- c) a Essene
- d) one of the twelve apostles

19. The book of Acts says that Paul was from:

- a) Jerusalem
- b) Bethlehem
- c) Nazareth
- d) Tarsus

20. Paul wrote in:

- a) Aramaic
- b) Hebrew
- c) Greek
- d) Latin

\*21. According to Acts, Paul was on the road to \_\_\_\_\_ when Jesus appeared to him, leading him to convert.

- a) Jerusalem
- b) Damascus
- c) Bethlehem
- d) Tarsus

\*22. Paul referred to Jesus as:

- a) The second member of the Trinity
- b) The Lamb of God
- c) The firstfruits of the resurrection
- d) The Word

23. Paul seems to have believed all of the following things about Jesus' death and resurrection—*except* that:

- a) It was meaningful.
- b) It was a sacrifice for the sins of others.
- c) It conquered the power of sin.
- d) It illustrated the victory of evil.

\*24. Paul believed all of the following about the Law—*except* that:

- a) It puts a person in a right standing before God.
- b) It shows that everyone is alienated from God.
- c) It points out human sinfulness.
- d) It has been misused.

25. Which of the following do most scholars think was *not* written by Paul?

- a) First Thessalonians
- b) Galatians
- c) First Timothy
- d) Philemon

26. Which of the following do most scholars believe was written by Paul?

- a) First Timothy
- b) Second Timothy
- c) First Thessalonians
- d) Titus

27. Another term for “pseudepigrapha” is:

- a) Forgery
- b) Pen name
- c) Apocrypha
- d) Apocalypse

28. Paul taught that the Jewish Law:

- a) Was impossible to keep
- b) Shows that everyone is alienated from God
- c) Was abolished by Christ
- d) Was unnecessary

29. Paul's usual practice seems to have been to:

- a) Focus on cities with no previous Christian presence
- b) Focus on cities where Judaism was widespread
- c) Avoid visiting the synagogue at all costs
- d) Augment Christian communities established by other missionaries

30. According to Paul, a person is justified by:

- a) Adhering to the Law
- b) Confession of sin

- e) Faith in Jesus' death and resurrection
- d) Faith in the virgin birth

## Chapter 19

### Essays

- [1.] Discuss Paul's missionary tactics. How did he meet people, and how did he go about converting them?
- [2.] Compare Paul's conversion tactics with other religious and philosophical groups in antiquity.
- [3.] Discuss the theme of apocalypticism in 1 Thessalonians. How can we reconstruct Paul's beliefs based on this letter? How does apocalypticism relate to the occasion of Paul's correspondence?
- [4.] What was the major concern that the Thessalonians raised after Paul's departure? How did Paul address their concern? What does Paul's response tell us about Paul's understandings of the cosmos?
- [5.] How did Paul's communities operate as a distinct social group? What factors contributed to strong group cohesion?

### True/False

- \*1. Paul's first step in preaching the gospel seems to have been to persuade people that they were worshiping false gods.  
T — F
- \*2. Some Greco-Roman philosophical schools actively engaged in missionary efforts.  
T — F
- \*3. Paul's ministry was funded primarily by his prior converts.  
T — F
- 4. The Thessalonian church wrote to Paul because some members of their community were living in sin.  
T — F
- 5. The closest analogy to 1 Thessalonians from the Greco-Roman world is a "philosophical letter."  
T — F

## Multiple-Choice

1. Scholars believe that Paul's first letter was:
  - a) Philippians
  - b) First Thessalonians
  - c) Second Thessalonians
  - d) Romans
- \*2. Paul's primary reason for writing 1 Thessalonians was:
  - a) To chastise the Thessalonians for ethical misconduct
  - b) To clarify the meaning of the Eucharist
  - c) To renew his friendship with the church
  - d) To praise the church's missionary efforts
3. Paul's missions were typically located in:
  - a) Large urban areas
  - b) Rural villages
  - c) Synagogues
  - d) Spain
- \*4. When Paul entered a new town, he:
  - a) Immediately celebrated Eucharist with the Christian community
  - b) Stood in the streets preaching
  - c) Met with the local church officials
  - d) Opened a business
5. The book of Acts says that Paul:
  - a) Did not work but relied on donations
  - b) Did not work but lived off of his own wealth
  - c) Worked with leather goods
  - d) Worked as a sailor
- \*6. Paul suggests that his converts in Thessalonica were:
  - a) Jews
  - b) Gentiles
  - c) God-fearers
  - d) Jews and God-fearers
- \*7. Paul's first task in converting pagans was probably:
  - a) To convince them of his apostolic authority
  - b) To convince them of the importance of Jesus' death and resurrection
  - c) To teach them Jesus' parables
  - d) To convince them that there is only one God
8. It is probable that Paul's converts were:
  - a) All wealthy

- b) All poor
- c) A mix of social classes
- d) Jews

9. Paul's converts probably began:

- a) Living together
- b) Meeting together regularly
- c) Going on itinerant missions
- d) Building churches

10. Paul's converts most likely met in:

- a) Houses
- b) The streets
- c) The synagogue
- d) Church buildings

\*11. Christian assemblies were similar to:

- a) Modern cathedrals
- b) Greco-Roman voluntary associations
- c) The Temple
- d) Stoic caves

12. Greco-Roman voluntary associations did all of the following *except*:

- a) Socialize
- b) Eat together
- c) Provide suitable burial for members
- d) Pray to Jesus for salvation

\*13. Timothy reported to Paul that the Thessalonians:

- a) Had kept their faith solid
- b) Had lost faith altogether
- c) Had been influenced by subsequent missionaries
- d) Had forgotten the work Paul had done among them

\*14. The longest part of 1 Thessalonians is:

- a) The prescript
- b) The thanksgiving
- c) The body
- d) The final blessing

15. Virtually all of Paul's converts in Thessalonica were:

- a) Gentiles
- b) Women
- c) Wealthy
- d) Highly educated

16. An insula was:

- a) The ancient equivalent of a shopping center
- b) The ancient equivalent of a modern apartment building
- c) A house church in Thessalonica
- d) A shopping center in Thessalonica

17. In 1 Thessalonians, Paul urges the Christians to do all of the following *except* to:

- a) Behave in pure ways
- b) Love one another
- c) Be good citizens
- d) Study the words of Jesus

\*18. The most important issue Paul addresses in 1 Thessalonians is:

- a) The delay of the second coming of Jesus
- b) The illegality of Christianity
- c) A schism in the community
- d) The presence of false prophets

\*19. The Thessalonians were principally concerned because:

- a) Some of them had been taken up in the Rapture.
- b) Some of them had died.
- c) Some of them were acting immorally.
- d) Some of them had left the church.

20. Paul assures the Thessalonians that:

- a) They will no longer be persecuted.
- b) All of Jesus' followers—dead or alive—will be protected from the wrath to come.
- c) Jesus' followers would become governors in God's earthly Kingdom.
- d) They were right to reject false prophets.

21. Paul wrote that:

- a) The dead will enter into the presence of the Lord first.
- b) The living will enter into the presence of the Lord first.
- c) The dead and the living will enter into the presence of the Lord simultaneously.
- d) Only the living will enter into the presence of the Lord.

22. Paul thought that:

- a) He and the Thessalonians would die before the end came.
- b) He and some Thessalonians would be alive when the end came.
- c) The end had already come.
- d) The end would not come.

23. Paul claimed to be:

- a) The only true Christian
- b) An apostle of the Lord
- c) One of the twelve disciples

- d) A missionary to the Jews
24. According to Minucius Felix, what did the ancient scholar Fronto accuse the Christians of?
- a) Being ethically pure
  - b) Being cannibals and perverts
  - c) Perpetrating a hoax
  - d) Practicing the only true religion
- \*25. Why did Paul stress that he worked hard “day and night” to earn a living?
- a) So that he would not be a financial burden on the Thessalonians while he preached the gospel of God, thereby setting an example for other missionaries
  - b) To make everyone realize the depth of his devotion
  - c) So that others would see how busy he was and take over the missionary work for him
  - d) To instill guilt into the lazy Thessalonians
26. Thessalonica was all of the following *except*:
- a) Part of the Roman province of Macedonia
  - b) A capital city
  - c) A predominantly Jewish city
  - d) A port city
27. Stoic and Cynic philosophers encouraged people to:
- a) Visit Paul
  - b) Give up their attachments to worldly things
  - c) Save money
  - d) Believe in Jesus’ resurrection
28. When Paul ministered to the Gentiles, he appears to have taught them all of the following *except*:
- a) The imminence of the end of the world
  - b) That Jesus is the special Son of God
  - c) To turn away from idols
  - d) That Jesus was born to a virgin
29. Which of the following terms refers to an ancient group of buildings, including both businesses and living spaces, in a tight urban space?
- a) Insula
  - b) Stoicism
  - c) Synagogue
  - d) Forum
30. Which of the following is unusual about 1 Thessalonians among Paul’s letters?
- a) The church does not appear to have fallen away from Paul’s basic teachings.
  - b) The Thessalonians believed Jesus was coming back soon.
  - c) The church was having problems with unethical behavior among its members.
  - d) The book lacks a thanksgiving section at the beginning.



## Chapter 20

### Essays

- [1.] Discuss how Paul's views on the resurrection shaped his response to the problems that he saw in the Corinthian community.
- [2.] Discuss the history of Paul's relationship with the Corinthians, especially as it appears in 2 Corinthians.
- [3.] According to 1 Corinthians, what are some of the problems that arose in the Corinthian community after Paul's departure? How might these problems have been related to socioeconomic differences in the community? In what ways does Paul deal with these issues?
- [4.] Why is Paul so angry with the Galatians? Why does Paul think their actions put them under God's curse?
- [5.] Discuss Paul's teachings on the relationship between justification and the Law, specifically as it appears in Galatians.

### True/False

- \*1. The Pauline epistles are arranged by length.  
T \_\_\_\_\_ F
- \*2. Paul says that the Jewish Law was given because the Jews were stubborn.  
T \_\_\_\_\_ F
- \*3. Paul admits the superapostles could perform miracles.  
T \_\_\_\_\_ F
- 4. Paul wrote to Philemon from Galatia.  
T \_\_\_\_\_ F
- 5. Paul wrote only two letters to the assembly of Corinth.  
T \_\_\_\_\_ F

### Multiple Choice

- 1. The church in Corinth had all of the following problems *except*:  
a) Members were not conducting communal meals properly.

- b) Members were concerned about those who had died.
- c) Members were suing one another.
- d) A member was sleeping with his stepmother.

\*2. The Corinthian community was made up of:

- a) All poor people
- b) All uneducated people
- c) All wealthy people
- d) A mix of poor and wealthy people

3. Class differences in the Corinthian church led to all of the following *except*:

- a) Members not conducting communal meals properly
- b) The wealthy asserting a more thorough knowledge than the poor
- c) Separate churches for the rich and poor
- d) Differences of understanding related to food sacrificed to idols

4. Paul mentions all of the following things about Jesus *except*:

- a) His baptism
- b) His teachings on divorce
- c) His teachings on paying preachers
- d) The institution of the Lord's Supper

5. Paul says that his primary message to the Corinthians is:

- a) Love one another.
- b) Christ crucified
- c) The virgin birth
- d) The sinlessness of Jesus

\*6. The Christians in Corinth appear to have believed that:

- a) Jesus was not resurrected.
- b) Jesus did not die.
- c) They already enjoyed the full benefits of salvation.
- d) They would not die.

7. In 1 Corinthians, Paul says that he learned about some of the problems in Corinth from:

- a) Chloe's people
- b) Timothy
- c) A revelation from God
- d) Onesimus

\*8. Paul taught the Corinthians that the resurrected body:

- a) Was a disembodied soul
- b) Was an actual body but transformed
- c) Was the same as the earthly body
- d) Did not exist

9. Paul demonstrates the truth of the general resurrection by appealing to:
- a) His own resurrection
  - b) The testimony of the women who found the empty tomb
  - c) The empty tomb
  - d) Christ's resurrection
10. Groups within the Corinthian church appealed to all of the following authorities *except*:
- a) Paul
  - b) Apollos
  - c) The New Testament
  - d) Cephas
- \*11. According to Paul, one problem with misunderstanding the resurrection is:
- a) People overlook the danger of sin.
  - b) People will die.
  - c) People need to be rebaptized.
  - d) It leads people to worship idols.
12. Paul believed that married people:
- a) Should be celibate
  - b) Should grant one another conjugal rights
  - c) Should get divorced
  - d) Should live in different houses
13. First and 2 Corinthians are unique because:
- a) They represent the only correspondence from a church to Paul.
  - b) They are pseudepigraphic.
  - c) They are written to a church Paul never visited.
  - d) They are the only undisputed letters Paul writes to the same community.
14. Second Corinthians is:
- a) Pseudepigraphic
  - b) Anonymous
  - c) Authentically Pauline
  - d) A modern forgery
15. The first part of 2 Corinthians expresses:
- a) Paul's joy for the community
  - b) Paul's disgust for the community
  - c) Paul's anger at the community
  - d) Paul's humiliation when he previously visited the community
- \*16. The "superapostles" did all of the following *except*:
- a) Oppose Paul
  - b) Support Paul
  - c) Talk badly about Paul

d) Perform miracles

\*17. Which of the following issues is *not* addressed in Paul's letter to the Philippians?

- a) The question of whether Christians should eat meat sacrificed to idols
- b) A dispute between two women
- c) The question of male circumcision among Gentile Christians
- d) All of the above are addressed in Paul's letter to the Philippians

\*18. The primary reason Paul wrote to the Galatians was:

- a) To insist that the men must not be circumcised
- b) To insist that the congregation love one another
- c) To insist that Jesus is the Christ
- d) To argue against their view that they already enjoyed an exalted existence

19. According to Paul, circumcision:

- a) Was painful and therefore unnecessary because Christians must suffer
- b) Was of the utmost importance for Christians, but not for Jews
- c) Was not sufficient to justify one before God
- d) Was a personal choice for Christians

\*20. Galatians is unique among the undisputed Pauline letters because:

- a) It is a compilation of two letters.
- b) It contains no thanksgiving.
- c) It is not addressed to a Christian community.
- d) It contains no prescript.

21. Paul countered his Galatian opponents by:

- a) Saying that he had received knowledge about Jesus from the disciples
- b) Saying that he was an eyewitness to Jesus' ministry
- c) Saying that he had received his knowledge directly from God
- d) Saying that he had been baptized by John

22. Paul admitted that he saw Cephas in Jerusalem:

- a) Immediately after his Damascus road experience
- b) Three years after his conversion
- c) Before he began his ministry to the Gentiles
- d) Ten years after his conversion

23. Paul believes the Law served the following role until the arrival of Christ:

- a) Tormentor
- b) Judge
- c) Way to salvation
- d) Disciplinarian

24. Paul appeals to \_\_\_\_\_ as an example of justification by faith.

- a) Abraham

- b) Hagar
- c) Ishmael
- d) Moses

~~25. According to Paul, Gentiles fulfill the Law by:~~

- a) Baptism
- b) Keeping the Sabbath
- c) Observing the dietary laws
- d) Loving one another

~~\*26. One way Paul argued against his Galatian opponents was:~~

- a) To point out that the apostles agreed with him
- b) To point to the Gospels
- c) To send Phoebe to them
- d) To work miracles

~~27. Euodia and Syntyche were:~~

- a) Missionaries
- b) Bishops
- c) Women causing problems in Philippi
- d) Paul's patrons

~~28. Philemon is different from the other undisputed letters because:~~

- a) It is addressed to a church Paul did not found.
- b) It argues against an apocalyptic worldview.
- c) It argues that Gentiles must be circumcised.
- d) It is addressed to an individual.

~~\*29. Onesimus was:~~

- a) A missionary
- b) A slave
- c) One of Jesus' disciples
- d) A slaveholder

~~30. Paul visited the Corinthians *at least*:~~

- a) Two times
- b) Three times
- c) Four times
- d) Five times

# Chapter 21

## Essays

- [1.] Compare and contrast the judicial and participationist models of salvation. What is the problem in each of these scenarios? What is the solution? How is a believer justified?
- [2.] How does Paul argue that Jews and Gentiles are equally entitled to salvation *and* that God has not broken his promises to Israel?
- [3.] What is a diatribe? How did Paul use this rhetorical style to explain, defend, and justify his views?
- [4.] What does Paul dread about his upcoming mission to deliver funds to poor Christians in Judea? Which groups of people make him feel uneasy? Why?
- [5.] How is the letter to the Romans unique among Paul's undisputed letters?

## True/False

- \*1. Paul claims God has replaced Israel with the church as his people.  
T \_\_\_\_\_ F
- \*2. Paul says Christ came so that no one would have to keep the Law anymore.  
T \_\_\_\_\_ F
- \*3. Paul wrote Romans in the hopes that Christians in Rome would financially support his trip to Spain.  
T \_\_\_\_\_ F
4. Paul argues that Gentiles should be circumcised to follow Abraham's example.  
T \_\_\_\_\_ F
5. Paul argues that Gentiles have first access to salvation, followed by Jews.  
T \_\_\_\_\_ F

## Multiple Choice

- \*1. Romans is unique among the Pauline letters because:  
a) It is a unified letter.  
b) It is a composite letter.

- e) It is written to a community Paul did not found.
  - d) It is written to Jews in the synagogue.
2. Paul may have written to the Romans for all of the following reasons *except*:
- a) To explain his beliefs
  - b) To request aid while he is in prison
  - c) To put to rest any suspicions they may have had about his ministry
  - d) Because he hoped to receive financial support for his ministry
3. According to tradition, who founded the church at Rome?
- a) Peter
  - b) Paul
  - c) Jesus
  - d) James
4. Paul defends himself and his beliefs using the rhetorical style of:
- a) Apology
  - b) Justification
  - c) Epistle
  - d) Diatribe
5. According to Paul, faith is all of the following things *except*:
- a) Trusting acceptance of God's act of salvation
  - b) The centerpiece of Jesus' teachings
  - c) Commitment to the belief in Jesus' death and resurrection
  - d) The only means of salvation
6. All of the following are true for both of Paul's models of salvation *except*:
- a) The problem is sin.
  - b) Jesus' death is part of the solution.
  - c) The virgin birth is part of the solution.
  - d) Jesus' resurrection is part of the solution.
7. In the judicial model, all of the following are true *except*:
- a) Breaking the Law is sin.
  - b) God gave the Law.
  - c) Sin is a cosmic force.
  - d) God is the judge.
8. The judicial model is also called:
- a) Justification by faith
  - b) Justification by baptism
  - c) Justification by the Law
  - d) The participationist model
- \*9. In the judicial model, Jesus' death:

- a) Is similar to a blood sacrifice at the Jewish temple
- b) Is a payment for the sins of others
- c) Is a ransom to Satan
- d) Is a judgment against the Jewish leaders

10. According to the judicial model, all of the following are true *except*:

- a) Everyone has sinned.
- b) The penalty for sin is death.
- c) Baptism cleanses people of their sin.
- d) Reconciliation with God depends on belief in Jesus' death and resurrection.

\*11. According to the participationist model, sin is:

- a) Breaking the Law
- b) Being circumcised
- c) Not believing in Jesus
- d) A cosmic power that enslaves people

\*12. The participationist model envisions Jesus' death and resurrection as:

- a) A payment for the sins of others
- b) A defeat of the power of sin and death
- c) A divine lamb being sacrificed on a heavenly altar
- d) A judgment against the Jews who participated in Jesus' trial

13. According to the participationist model, people are joined with Jesus through:

- a) Baptism
- b) Belief in Jesus
- c) The Eucharist
- d) Scripture

14. Paul believed that baptism did all of the following *except*:

- a) Help to create a community of believers
- b) Create a union between the believer and Christ
- c) Reveal the believer's exalted state
- d) Represent a Christian's death with Christ

15. Paul believed that Christians would be raised:

- a) When Jesus returned
- b) When they died
- c) In 1000 years
- d) As soon as they confessed belief in Jesus

16. In Romans, Paul protests against reports that he taught:

- a) People to love one another
- b) That circumcision was evil
- c) That Jesus was God
- d) Against the Law



~~\*17. Why did Paul write a letter to the Romans?~~

- ~~a) To solve the church's problems~~
- ~~b) To check in with them, as he did with all the churches he established~~
- ~~c) To alert them to the possibility of war with the Roman Gentiles~~
- ~~d) No one knows for sure; however, Paul did have some purpose in trying to convince them that his message was authentic.~~

~~18. Which book of the New Testament was the most influential, was the most quoted, and stood at the center of debate between the Protestants and Catholics during the sixteenth-century Reformation?~~

- ~~a) Galatians~~
- ~~b) Mark~~
- ~~c) Romans~~
- ~~d) First Timothy~~

~~\*19. According to Paul's letter to the Romans, which statement concerning both Jews and Gentiles is *not* true?~~

- ~~a) They are both on equal footing with God.~~
- ~~b) They are equally alienated from God.~~
- ~~c) They both can be made right with God by believing in Jesus' death and resurrection.~~
- ~~d) God gave them the Law through Moses to show them that the Law points to Jesus.~~

~~\*20. Romans states that a person is not justified by:~~

- ~~a) Works of the Law~~
- ~~b) Obedience~~
- ~~c) Good works~~
- ~~d) Loving others~~

~~21. By the end of the first century CE, most Christians were probably:~~

- ~~\_\_\_\_\_ a) Former Jews~~
- ~~\_\_\_\_\_ b) Former pagans~~
- ~~\_\_\_\_\_ c) Fleeing persecution~~
- ~~\_\_\_\_\_ d) Testifying of the sanctity of the New Testament~~

~~\*22. What two words in the English language are translations of the same Greek root, *pist*?~~

- ~~a) Faith and believe~~
- ~~b) Love and hope~~
- ~~c) Love and trust~~
- ~~d) Trust and obey~~

~~23. In Romans, Paul claims that God has been \_\_\_\_\_ in his treatment of both the Jews and all people.~~

- ~~a) strict~~
- ~~b) mysterious~~

- e) consistent
- d) indignant

\*24. The power of sin, according to Romans, is related to the power of:

- a) Evil
- b) God, in a yin/yang sort of way
- c) Rome
- d) Death

\*25. Which of the following *best* describes the difference between the judicial model of salvation in Romans and the participationist model of salvation in Romans?

- a) The judicial model of salvation is for the Jews (law), and the participationist model of salvation is for the Gentiles (faith).
- b) In the judicial model, death is a consequence; in the participationist model, death is a cosmic force.
- c) The judicial model is concerned with sin; the participationist model is concerned with death.
- d) The judicial model refers to final judgment; the participationist model refers to one's participation in the Church.

26. Paul believed all people were enslaved to sin because of:

- a) Ignorance
- b) Abraham's union with Hagar
- c) Jesus' death at the hands of the Jewish leaders
- d) Adam's disobedience

27. Who does Paul identify as the carrier of his letter to the Romans?

- a) Peter
- b) Phoebe
- c) Mary
- d) Philemon

28. Before he could travel to Rome, Paul expected to make a trip to:

- a) Jerusalem
- b) Corinth
- c) Spain
- d) Alexandria

29. Romans 1 includes all of the following *except*:

- a) Paul's plan to visit the Roman congregation
- b) A thanksgiving
- c) Paul's statement that he is not ashamed of his gospel
- d) Paul's preaching against circumcision

30. In Romans, in order to show that he did not invent his gospel message, Paul stresses that his message is rooted in:

- a) Apostolic teachings
- b) Jewish Scriptures
- c) His encounter with Jesus
- d) Roman law

## Chapter 22

### Essays

- [1.] What difficulties are involved in reconstructing Jesus' and Paul's religious views? Being as specific as possible, discuss whether you believe Jesus and Paul preached the same religion.
- [2.] Paul says very little about Jesus' life and ministry, focusing instead on his death and resurrection. How do you account for the dearth of information about Jesus in Paul's letters?
- [3.] Discuss the concepts of faith and works in the epistle of James. How are these related to one another? How does James' view of justification, faith, and works compare to that of Paul?
- [4.] How do the *Acts of Paul and Thecla* illustrate a strand of Pauline thought? Do you think that the author of this text understood Paul correctly? Is this a fair interpretation of Paul's teaching?
- [5.] How do later Valentinian Gnostics claim to carry on Paul's legacy? What connections do they have with Paul's teachings, and where do they seem to differ with what we know of Paul's views?

### True/False

1. Paul frequently cites the words and teachings of Jesus.  
T \_\_\_\_\_ F
- \*2. The epistle of James argues against Paul's view of justification.  
T \_\_\_\_\_ F
- \*3. Paul and Jesus each taught that the love of one's neighbor summed up the Law.  
T \_\_\_\_\_ F
- \*4. In the *Acts of Paul and Thecla*, Paul teaches that married people should grant one another conjugal rights.  
T \_\_\_\_\_ F
5. Valentinian Christians claimed their interpretations were received from Paul.  
T \_\_\_\_\_ F

### Multiple Choice

1. Which of the following did *not* appeal to Paul as an authority for their views?
  - a) Marcionites
  - b) Proto-orthodox Christians
  - c) Gnostics
  - d) Ebionites
2. Paul indicates all of the following things about the historical Jesus *except*:
  - a) He was born a Jew.
  - b) He was born to a virgin.
  - c) He had brothers.
  - d) He preached to Jews.
3. Paul refers to all of the following of Jesus' teachings *except*:
  - a) People should not divorce.
  - b) Preachers should be paid.
  - c) The Beatitudes
  - d) Jesus' words at his Last Supper
- \*4. Paul wrote to the Corinthians that the only thing that mattered to him was:
  - a) Christ crucified
  - b) Following the Law
  - c) Approval from the apostles
  - d) Jesus' teachings
5. Jesus and Paul agreed on all of the following issues *except*:
  - a) There is only one God.
  - b) God's will is revealed in the Jewish Scriptures.
  - c) Jesus will return to earth in judgment and bring in the Kingdom of God.
  - d) God made a covenant with Israel.
- \*6. Which of the following books seems to stand as a correction to a later misunderstanding of Paul's teaching on justification by faith?
  - a) The *Acts of Paul and Thecla*
  - b) James
  - c) Matthew
  - d) Philippians
- \*7. The book of James says that people are:
  - a) Doomed to eternal judgment
  - b) Justified by works
  - c) Justified by faith
  - d) Justified by baptism
8. In Paul's writings, "works" tends to refer to:
  - a) Good deeds
  - b) A person's occupation

- e) Requirements of the Law
- d) Jesus' saving act

9. In the book of James, "works" refers to:

- a) Good deeds
- b) A person's occupation
- c) Requirements of the Law
- d) Jesus' saving act

10. In the Apocryphal *Acts of Paul*, who is Paul's female companion?

- a) Phoebe
- b) Lydia
- c) Mary
- d) Thecla

\*11. In the *Acts of Paul*, Paul's central message is:

- a) Christ crucified
- b) Marriage
- c) Celibacy
- d) Against arranged marriages

12. Whom of the following was thought by the Gnostics to have been Paul's earthly disciple?

- a) Theudas
- b) Marcion
- c) Valentinus
- d) Thomas

\*13. According to both Jesus and Paul, how can the Law be summed up?

- a) Love one another.
- b) Obey those in authority over you.
- c) Do not question authority.
- d) Do unto others as you would have them do unto you (i.e., the Golden Rule).

14. For the historical Jesus, the beginning of the end of the age began:

- a) During the lives' of Jesus' followers
- b) After Jesus' resurrection
- c) Immediately before the Rapture
- d) Immediately after Adam and Eve sinned

15. According to Paul's letters, God's covenant with the people of Israel would last:

- a) Until they rejected his Son
- b) Forever
- c) Until the second coming
- d) Until Jesus' resurrection

\*16. Did Paul teach that total sexual abstinence was necessary?

- a) Yes. It was necessary for salvation.
- b) Yes. It was necessary before one could be baptized.
- c) No. Paul said that it was desirable for the sake of the gospel, but that sex was acceptable for married couples.
- d) No. Paul said that sex was necessary to multiply and replenish the earth.

17. Which literary character, after hearing Paul preach, terminated her engagement to be married and left home to follow him?

- a) Pricilla
- b) Mary
- c) Sarah
- d) Thecla

18. What is one piece of information that Paul does *not* give his readers about Jesus' life?

- a) That he had brothers
- b) That he was born a Jew and descended from the line of King David
- c) That he was crucified, died, and was resurrected
- d) That he turned water into wine

19. What does Paul reveal about Jesus?

- a) That he healed people and raised the dead
- b) That he told parables
- c) That he will return from heaven soon
- d) That he cast out demons

20. What did Paul and Jesus agree on?

- a) That there is only one God and that God made a covenant with his people, the Jews
- b) That the coming judge of the earth is Jesus himself
- c) That everyone will be judged by whether they believe in Jesus
- d) That the end of the age began at the cross of Jesus

\*21. Who were the "twelve tribes in the Dispersion" in the book of James?

- a) The original twelve tribes of Israel
- b) Unnamed Christians living outside Palestine
- c) Modern-day Jews who never moved back to Israel
- d) Christian Jews living inside Palestine

\*22. What does James mean by "faith"?

- a) Trust in God.
- b) The death and resurrection of Jesus.
- c) Intellectual assent.
- d) A mustard seed of hope.

\*23. Why did the Gnostics claim Paul as their ultimate authority?

- a) Because Paul was the first Christian Gnostic
- b) Because Paul preached sexual renunciation, just as the Gnostics did

- ~~e) Because Paul helped liberate the Gnostics from the enforced subservience of marriage~~  
~~d) Because Paul referred to “mysteries” in the gospel that were “hidden” and only available to those who were “mature,” just as the Gnostics did~~
24. Paul and Jesus are similar in all of the following ways *except*:
- a) They were born and raised Jewish
  - ~~b) They held an apocalyptic worldview~~
  - ~~c) They viewed the love of one’s neighbor as the sum of the Law~~
  - d) They taught the need for faith in Jesus’ resurrection
25. Which of the following views of Paul did the historical Jesus share?
- ~~a) Faith involves belief in the death and resurrection of Christ.~~
  - ~~b) Judgment will take place within the current generation.~~
  - ~~c) The coming cosmic Judge is Jesus.~~
  - d) Jesus’ importance lies in his death and resurrection as atonement for sin.
26. The “Son of Man” in Paul’s letters:
- ~~—— a) Is a reference to Jesus’ birth to a mortal woman~~
  - ~~—— b) Is a reference to Jesus’ role as a cosmic judge~~
  - ~~—— c) Refers to the same figure as that taught by the historical Jesus~~
  - ~~—— d) All of the above~~
27. What term corresponds with Paul’s depiction of Jesus as a sacrifice that brings atonement?
- a) Expiation
  - b) Redemption
  - c) Participation
  - d) Kosher
28. Which of the following is *not* an option for why Paul didn’t cite Jesus’ words more often:
- ~~a) He had no occasion to do so.~~
  - ~~b) He considered them irrelevant.~~
  - ~~c) He didn’t know much more about Jesus’ teaching.~~
  - ~~d) Those traditions came from apostles with whom Paul disagreed.~~
- \*29. Which book shows that some may have interpreted Paul letters to mean that good works don’t matter?
- ~~a) Matthew~~
  - ~~b) James~~
  - ~~c) 1 Thessalonians~~
  - d) First John
30. Which book contains the only narrative about Paul in the New Testament?
- a) Philippians
  - ~~b) Luke~~
  - ~~c) First Thessalonians~~
  - d) Acts



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## Chapter 23

### Essays

- [1.] ~~The *Acts of Paul and Thecla* and the Pastoral epistles claim Paul as the authority for their views. Discuss the relationships between these texts and how you understand their relationship to Paul's genuine letters.~~
- [2.] ~~RESOLVED: Paul wrote 2 Thessalonians. Pick a side and argue it, using as many specific examples from the text as possible. Keep in mind that the most persuasive arguments anticipate (and answer) counterarguments.~~
- [3.] ~~Compare and contrast the theological emphases of any of the following sets of texts: (a) 1 and 2 Thessalonians, (b) 1 Corinthians and Colossians, (c) 1 Corinthians and Ephesians.~~
- [4.] ~~Discuss the development of clergy, creed, and canon in the proto-orthodox church. Why were these instituted, and how did they help proto-orthodoxy become more successful?~~
- [5.] ~~The Pastoral epistles claim Paul as the authority for their views. Discuss the relationships between the key emphases of these texts and those of Paul's undisputed letters.~~

### True/False

- \*1. Most scholars believe the same person wrote 2 Thessalonians and Colossians.  
T — F
- \*2. The Pastoral epistles and the *Acts of Paul and Thecla* take similar positions on the role of women.  
T — F
- \*3. Most scholars believe the same person wrote all three Pastoral epistles.  
T — F
4. The structure of the church looks different in the Pastoral epistles and Ignatius than it does in the authentic Pauline letters.  
T — F
5. The language and structure of 2 Thessalonians is very similar to that of 1 Thessalonians.  
T — F

## Multiple-Choice

- \*1. Which of the following books is definitely *not* pseudonymous?
- a) Second Thessalonians
  - b) First Corinthians
  - c) Titus
  - d) First Timothy
2. According to the textbook, which of the following is *not* one of the Deutero-Pauline epistles?
- a) Colossians
  - b) Titus
  - c) Ephesians
  - d) Second Thessalonians
3. Which of the following is *not* one of the Pastoral epistles?
- a) Second Thessalonians
  - b) First Timothy
  - c) Titus
  - d) Second Timothy
- \*4. Which of the following is pseudonymous?
- a) First Corinthians
  - b) Second Corinthians
  - c) Third Corinthians
  - d) First Thessalonians
5. All of the following were reasons for writing pseudonymously *except*:
- a) For profit
  - b) To defame an individual or group
  - c) To gain authority for the work
  - d) To become famous
6. The term “parousia” refers to:
- a) Christ’s return from heaven
  - b) A forged document
  - c) The Pastoral epistles
  - d) The Deutero-Pauline epistles
7. Which of the following characters appears in 2 Thessalonians?
- a) Thecla
  - b) Theudas
  - c) The man of lawlessness
  - d) The Son of Man
8. One reason some scholars doubt the authenticity of the authorship claim of 2 Thessalonians is— that:

- a) It claims to have been written by Paul.
- b) It talks about the parousia.
- c) It teaches the end will not come immediately.
- d) The author claims to have worked in Thessalonica.

9. "Paul" is in \_\_\_\_\_ when he writes to the Colossians.

- a) Galatia
- b) Colossae
- c) prison
- d) Jerusalem

\*10. Colossians appears to oppose:

- a) Paul
- b) Jewish mysticism
- c) Gentiles
- d) Marriage

\*11. Scholars question the authorship of Colossians because:

- a) The author's writing style is poor.
- b) The author thinks that Christians already participate in Christ's resurrection.
- c) The letter claims to have been co-written by Timothy.
- d) Early Christians did not think Colossians was Pauline.

12. The definition of "works" found in Ephesians is most similar to that found in:

- a) Romans
- b) First Corinthians
- c) James
- d) The *Gospel of Thomas*

\*13. All of the following are true about the Pastoral epistles *except* that:

- a) They claim to have been written by Paul.
- b) They are written to individuals.
- c) They address false teachings.
- d) They are addressed to church communities.

14. The opponents in 1 Timothy appear to resemble:

- a) Montanists
- b) Marcionites
- c) Gnostics
- d) Ebionites

\*15. One of the central concerns in the Pastoral epistles is:

- a) Administration of the church
- b) Explaining the delay of the parousia
- c) Establishing Paul's authority
- d) Establishing Timothy's authority

~~16. Most scholars believe Paul did *not* write the Pastoral epistles for all of the following reasons *except*:~~

- ~~a) The Pastoral epistles were written by the same person.~~
- ~~b) The Pastoral epistles use non-Pauline vocabulary.~~
- ~~c) Paul and the Pastorals assign different meanings to certain words.~~
- ~~d) The Pastoral epistles address Gnosticism.~~

~~17. Proto-orthodox Christians edged out their competition by all of the following means *except*:~~

- ~~a) Establishing clergy~~
- ~~b) Establishing a canon~~
- ~~c) Establishing a creedal set of beliefs~~
- ~~d) Establishing codes of conduct that were morally superior to other Christian groups~~

~~\*18. In the churches that Paul founded, all of the following were true *except*:~~

- ~~a) Members shared church governance, resulting in some chaos at times~~
- ~~b) They believed everyone had received gifts from God's Spirit.~~
- ~~c) There was one man who was in charge of the assembly~~
- ~~d) When there was a problem they wrote to Paul for advice.~~

~~\*19. Many Pauline churches probably developed a hierarchy of leadership:~~

- ~~a) In response to internal disarray and disorder~~
- ~~b) Because Jesus ordained the clergy.~~
- ~~c) In response to heretical groups that had leaders.~~
- ~~d) Because Paul established a hierarchy when he founded each church.~~

~~20. The word "bishop" means:~~

- ~~a) Man~~
- ~~b) Overseer~~
- ~~c) Elder~~
- ~~d) Minister~~

~~21. The word "presbyter" means:~~

- ~~a) Man~~
- ~~b) Overseer~~
- ~~c) Elder~~
- ~~d) Minister~~

~~22. The word "deacon" means:~~

- ~~a) Man~~
- ~~b) Overseer~~
- ~~c) Elder~~
- ~~d) Minister~~

~~\*23. Apostolic succession means that:~~

- ~~a) The apostles were in charge.~~

- b) Churches could allegedly trace their clergy back to an apostle.
  - c) The apostles were successful at bringing converts into the Church.
  - d) The apostles came after Jesus.
24. A formulaic statement of beliefs is called:
- a) A creed
  - b) A history
  - c) Apostolic succession
  - d) Charismatic
- \*25. First Timothy makes Jesus' words authoritative by:
- a) Setting them next to Paul's teachings
  - b) Setting them next to Jewish Scripture
  - c) Setting them next to Gospel teachings
  - d) Referring to them as divinely inspired
26. The author of the Pastorals writes against all of the following *except*:
- a) Celibacy
  - b) Marriage
  - c) Women's leadership
  - d) Myths and genealogies
27. The book of Titus is most like:
- a) First Thessalonians
  - b) First Timothy
  - c) Second Timothy
  - d) Colossians
28. Ignatius of Antioch taught that
- a) Christians should follow Jesus as Jesus follows the Father
  - b) Christians should follow the Spirit as the Jesus follows the Father
  - c) Christians should follow their bishop as Jesus follows the Father
  - d) Christians should study the scriptures as though penned by Jesus' own hand
29. Which Roman figure wrote a book explaining how to identify forgeries written in his name?
- a) Seneca
  - b) Galen
  - c) Paul
  - d) Pythagoras
30. The Pastoral epistles were most likely written:
- a) During Paul's lifetime
  - b) Around the time of the Gospel of Mark
  - c) Around the beginning of the second century
  - d) In the late third century

## Chapter 24

### Essays

- [1.] Describe in detail the role of women within Paul's early assemblies. What were Paul's attitudes toward women in the Church?—the evidence for women holding leadership positions in Christianity from the time of Jesus to the time of the Pastoral epistles. In what ways did women's leadership roles change over time? Why do you think this happened?
- [2.] Appealing specifically to historical criteria, what was the role of women in Jesus' ministry?
- [3.] Compare later Pauline Christian perceptions of women's roles in Christian assemblies. How do each of these groups appeal to Paul in their respective positions?
- [4.] How do surviving manuscripts of the New Testament give us insight into the ways in which Christian scribes were concerned about gender roles in antiquity?
- [5.] Describe how men and women of the Roman world largely understood gender difference.—How did these ancient ideologies of gender come to affect the way proto-orthodox Christians came to organize themselves?

### True/False

1. Women were an important part of Jesus' ministry.  
T \_\_\_\_\_ F
2. The Gospels depict Mary Magdalene as a (former) prostitute.  
T \_\_\_\_\_ F
- \*3. Women appear to have lacked a major role in Paul's churches.  
T \_\_\_\_\_ F
4. The Pastoral epistles and the *Acts of Paul and Thecla* take starkly opposite views of women and family.  
T \_\_\_\_\_ F
5. Most Greco-Roman people thought of men and women as essentially equal.  
T \_\_\_\_\_ F

### Multiple Choice

\*1. In Paul's letter to the Romans, he calls Phoebe:

- a) Foremost among the apostles
- b) A deacon
- c) A bishop
- d) An elder

\*2. Paul calls Junia:

- a) Foremost among the apostles
- b) A deacon
- c) A bishop
- d) An elder

3. All of the following seem to have allowed women to hold leadership positions in the early church *except*:

- a) First Timothy
- b) Paul
- c) Gnostics
- d) Montanists

4. According to Gospel traditions, all of the following were followers of Jesus *except*:

- a) Mary
- b) Martha
- c) Phoebe
- d) Salome

5. Jesus might have associated with women because:

- a) He was rejecting the Jewish Law.
- b) He was enacting his apocalyptic belief in the reversal of fortunes.
- c) He believed women were more capable than men of understanding his message.
- d) He was a Pharisee.

6. In antiquity men were believed to be:

- a) More fully developed than women
- b) The same as women
- c) Incomplete without women
- d) Inherently evil

7. The most important virtue for men in antiquity was:

- a) Love
- b) Knowledge
- c) Honor
- d) Fairness

8. Women in the Greco-Roman world exercised authority in:

- a) The Senate
- b) The workplace



- e) The courts of law
- d) The home

\*9. Which of the following duties were ~~not~~ traditionally expected of women in Greco-Roman antiquity?

- a) Public engagement
- b) Preparing food
- c) Managing household finances
- d) Educating children

10. According to the earliest traditions of Mark, who were the only people to remain faithful to Jesus to the end when all others had fled?

- a) Peter, Luke, and John
- b) The women
- c) The Pharisees
- d) The apostles

11. When did Mary Magdalene's portrayal as a "sinful woman" emerge in the literature?

- a) During Jesus' ministry
- b) In the earliest tradition of the Gospel of Luke
- c) One hundred years after the crucifixion
- d) Five hundred years after the New Testament

\*12. The message of "the last will be first and the first last," is best associated with:

- a) Ancient ideologies of gender
- b) Caesar Augustus
- c) The Pastoral Epistles
- d) Apocalypticism

13. Why didn't Jesus preach social reform and teach people how to build a new society, a community of equals?

- a) Because he believed society was doomed for destruction with the coming of the Son of Man and that its re-creation would be done by God
- b) Because he believed it was too late; Satan had control of society
- c) Because he didn't have to: people were taking his words to heart and reforming things on their own
- d) Jesus did insist on radical social reform

14. Being \_\_\_\_\_ made people into "new creations," and new creations implied a new social order.

- a) anointed in Christ
- b) baptized in Christ
- c) taught in Sunday school
- d) celibate

~~\*15. Even though the master-slave relationship was allowed to continue outside of church, within the church slaves were to be treated \_\_\_\_\_ than their masters.~~

- ~~a) better~~
- ~~b) with more respect~~
- ~~c) no differently~~
- ~~d) worse~~

~~\*16. The harsh words found in 1 Corinthians 14:34-35 may have been:~~

- ~~a) Part of an ancient baptismal formula~~
- ~~b) Inserted by a scribe at a later date~~
- ~~c) Intentionally altered while Paul was dictating to his scribe~~
- ~~d) Actually written by Luke~~

~~17. How did people in antiquity view men and women?~~

- ~~a) As two different kinds of human beings~~
- ~~b) As the same kind of human but different in degree (with men being more fully-developed than women)~~
- ~~c) As two parts of a greater whole~~
- ~~d) As equal in substance, but separate in responsibilities~~

~~18. With what arena(s) were men's virtues associated?~~

- ~~a) The public arena of power relations~~
- ~~b) The domestic arena of home~~
- ~~c) Both the public and the private arena~~
- ~~d) The gladiatorial arena~~

~~19. With what arena(s) were women's virtues associated?~~

- ~~a) The public arena of power relations~~
- ~~b) The domestic arena of home~~
- ~~c) Both the public and the private arena~~
- ~~d) Women were not deemed virtuous in antiquity~~

~~\*20. Women's roles in the church may have become curtailed as churches:~~

- ~~a) Became more private, meeting in people's homes~~
- ~~b) Became more secular~~
- ~~c) Stopped worshiping Jesus~~
- ~~d) Grew in size and became more public~~

~~\*21. In order to remain free from oppressive public and private restrictions, many women:~~

- ~~a) Rioted~~
- ~~b) Organized a political party~~
- ~~c) Appealed to the Roman Senate for legal intervention~~
- ~~d) Remained unmarried or left their marriages~~

~~22. Prisca and Maximillia were the female colleagues of which prophet?~~

- ~~a) John of Patmos~~

- b) The apostle John
- c) Montanus
- d) Mark

\*23. Some Gnostic groups were known to have had women serve as:

- a) Maids
- b) Leaders
- c) Human sacrifices
- d) Scribes

24. In Paul's day, "widows" were not only women whose husbands had died and who never remarried, but also:

- a) Women who had no overlord in the role of husband (whether or not they had ever been married)
- b) Women who had never been married
- c) Women who remarried repeatedly
- d) Any elderly woman

25. Although Paul allowed women to take leadership roles and participate fully in the church, 1 Corinthians 14:35–36 indicates that women were to remain silent and submissive. This discrepancy can be explained by the discovery that these verses were actually:

- a) Inserted by a scribe
- b) Written by Paul before his conversion
- c) Paul's original words; the stories of Paul's equal treatment of women were inserted by ancient feminists
- d) Inserted by patriarchal church leaders in the twentieth century

\*26. According to the original text of Romans 16:7, how was Paul related to Andronicus and Junia?

- a) They were his blood brother and sister.
- b) They were fellow apostles.
- c) They were his jailers.
- d) They were his enemies.

27. Besides the disciples of Jesus, which other early Jewish group seems to have benefited from the support of women?

- a) The Pharisees
- b) The Essenes
- c) The Zealots
- d) The Cynics

28. Which of the following historical criteria can be used to argue that the historical Jesus had female disciples:

- a) Criterion of Independent Attestation
- b) Criterion of Dissimilarity
- c) Criterion of Contextual Credibility

~~—d) All of the above criteria can be used to argue that the historical Jesus had female disciples~~

~~29. During Jesus' ministry, women seem to have done all the following *except*:~~

- ~~a) Anoint him with oil~~
- ~~b) Provide him with financial support~~
- ~~c) Participate in the Last Supper~~
- ~~d) Travel with him from Galilee to Jerusalem~~

~~30. Who claimed “there is no longer male and female, for all of you are one in Christ Jesus”?~~

- ~~a) Jesus~~
- ~~b) Paul~~
- ~~c) First Timothy~~
- ~~d) Thecla~~

## Chapter 25

### Essays

- [1.] Discuss Jesus' superiority to all things Jewish in the epistle to the Hebrews. To what, exactly, is Jesus superior? What is the author's point in underscoring this?
- [2.] Discuss the relationship between Temple sacrifice and Jesus' death in the epistle to the Hebrews. How does the author use this theme to promote his view of the superiority of Christianity?
- [3.] Discuss the different understandings of Judaism in the epistle to the Hebrews and the *Epistle of Barnabas*. How might these differences reflect each community's approach to self-definition?
- [4.] Trace the rise of anti-Judaism in early Christianity from the Gospel of Matthew through Melito's Passover homily. What do you think caused the escalation of anti-Jewish sentiment?
- [5.] RESOLVED: The epistle to the Hebrews was written by Paul. Pick a side and argue it. Keep in mind that the most persuasive arguments anticipate (and answer) counterarguments.

### True/False

- \*1. Most scholars believe the epistle to the Hebrews was most likely written by Paul.  
T \_\_\_\_\_ F
- \*2. The *Epistle of Barnabas* claims that both Jews and Christians will ultimately be saved.  
T \_\_\_\_\_ F
- \*3. The *Epistle of Barnabas* claims the world will last six thousand years.  
T \_\_\_\_\_ F
- 4. Any sequence of letters in Hebrew or Greek can be added up to a total number.  
T \_\_\_\_\_ F
- 5. Gematria is the name of the evil Creator God in Marcionite theology.  
T \_\_\_\_\_ F

### Multiple Choice

- 1. The word "catholic" means:

- a) Official
- b) Orthodox
- c) Universal
- d) Occasional

2. Which of the following is *not* a catholic epistle?

- a) First John
- b) Second John
- c) Second Thessalonians
- d) Hebrews

\*3. The epistle to the Hebrews depicts the Law as:

- a) Perfect
- b) Given by a lesser god
- c) Inadequate
- d) Irreplaceable

4. Hebrews was most likely:

- a) A sermon
- b) A novel
- c) An apology
- d) An apocalypse

5. The epistle to the Hebrews was:

- a) Written by Paul
- b) Written anonymously
- c) Pseudepigraphic
- d) Written by Timothy

\*6. The primary point of Hebrews was to show that:

- a) Christ is superior to Judaism.
- b) Christianity comes from God; Judaism comes from the devil.
- c) The Jewish Law can only be understood allegorically.
- d) Christians must follow the Law.

7. According to Hebrews, Christ is superior to all of the following *except*:

- a) The Jewish prophets
- b) Moses
- c) The angels
- d) Satan

8. All of the following are mentioned in Hebrews *except*:

- a) Moses
- b) Melchizedek
- c) Timothy
- d) Paul

9. The author of Hebrews believed that:

- a) An Antichrist would appear before Jesus returned.
- b) God had made a new covenant.
- c) Jews had always misinterpreted the Law.
- d) God had not altered his covenant with the Jews.

\*10. The theme of shadow and reality in the epistle to the Hebrews is most similar to views expressed by:

- a) Plato
- b) Jesus
- c) Paul
- d) Peter

\*11. Hebrews was probably written in order to:

- a) Convert Jews
- b) Convert Gentiles
- c) Urge Christians not to leave the faith
- d) Warn against false prophets

12. According to the *Epistle of Barnabas*, Judaism is:

- a) False
- b) A variety of early Christianity
- c) The basis of Christianity
- d) Compatible with Christianity

13. Most scholars believe that the *Epistle of Barnabas* was:

- a) Written by Paul's companion Barnabas
- b) Written pseudonymously
- c) Written during Paul's lifetime
- d) Written long after Paul and Barnabas had both died

14. The *Epistle of Barnabas* was probably written in:

- a) Jerusalem
- b) Asia Minor
- c) Alexandria
- d) Rome

15. According to the *Epistle of Barnabas*, the Old Testament is:

- a) Irrelevant
- b) The product of a lesser god
- c) A Jewish book
- d) A Christian book

\*16. According to the *Epistle of Barnabas*, most of the Old Testament is:

- a) Best understood literally

- b) Applicable only to Jews
- c) Best understood allegorically
- d) Best disregarded

17. According to *Barnabas*, when did the Jews lose God's covenant?

- a) When Adam and Eve sinned
- b) When they worshiped an idol at Mount Sinai
- c) When they were exiled to Babylonia
- d) They never lost the covenant.

18. Barnabas believed that the Jewish dietary laws:

- a) Should be strictly followed
- b) Actually referred to moral issues such as ingratitude and sexual promiscuity
- c) Pointed to Christ's sacrifice on the cross
- d) Were only intended for Jews (not Christians) to keep

19. Gematria is:

- a) Idolatry
- b) Writing under a false name
- c) Interpreting words based on their numeric value
- d) Secret teachings

20. According to the *Epistle of Barnabas*, all of the following statements are true *except*:

- a) Christianity is a direct continuation of Judaism.
- b) The Old Testament is a Christian book.
- c) Judaism is a false religion.
- d) Judaism has misunderstood God's commands from the beginning.

\*21. Who accused the Jews of deicide, of killing God?

- a) Barnabas
- b) Paul
- c) Melito
- d) The author of Hebrews

\*22. Philo of Alexandria used the allegorical method of Scripture interpretation to \_\_\_\_\_  
Judaism.

- a) attack
- b) support
- c) denigrate
- d) dismiss

\*23. *Barnabas* utilized the allegorical method of Scripture interpretation to \_\_\_\_\_  
Judaism.

- a) attack
- b) support
- c) denigrate



d) dismiss

\*24. How is the noncanonical *Epistle of Barnabas* characterized by historians?

- a) As an epistle
- b) As a Gospel
- c) As a treatise about the historical roots of Jesus
- d) As a treatise about the nature of Judaism

\*25. Which of the following is an example of gematria?

- \_\_\_\_\_ a) 666
- \_\_\_\_\_ b) The cross
- \_\_\_\_\_ c) A square
- \_\_\_\_\_ d) Q

26. The *Epistle of Barnabas* used all of the following to attack Judaism and support the author's version of Christianity *except*:

- a) Allegorical interpretation
- b) Gematria
- c) Citations from the letters of Paul
- d) The Jewish Scriptures

27. All of the following have distinctly anti-Jewish passages *except*:

- a) The *Epistle of Barnabas*
- b) Hebrews
- c) Philemon
- d) Melito's Passover sermon

28. Which book ends by talking about the "Two Ways" of life?

- a) Hebrews
- b) The *Epistle of Barnabas*
- c) Melito's Passover sermon
- d) Romans

29. According to the *Epistle of Barnabas*, Jews are wrong to take \_\_\_\_\_ literally.

- a) the dietary laws
- b) Roman law
- c) the deeds of Jesus
- d) the Pauline epistles

30. Which book argues that Jewish Scriptures and traditions are just a shadow of Jesus?

- a) Matthew
- b) Hebrews
- c) Romans
- d) Ignatius' *Letter to the Magnesians*

## Chapter 26

### Essays

- [1.] Early Christianity has sometimes been depicted as a movement that challenged the importance of the family. Being as specific as you can, what textual evidences are there to substantiate this claim?
- [2.] Discuss the early period of Christian persecution. If Christianity itself was not illegal, why were Christians persecuted? What evidence do we have of persecutions, and who led them?
- [3.] In Ignatius's letters to the churches of Asia Minor, he repeats several themes, such as the importance of unity, the purity of belief, and the acceptance of the clerical hierarchy. Discuss each of these themes, referring to Ignatius's letters whenever possible. How do these letters help scholars reconstruct the rise of proto-orthodox Christianity?
- [4.] Analyze the phrase "resident aliens" as it is used in 1 Peter. Why did this phrase become the figurative designation for Christians? Could it have designated other groups as well?
- [5.] What is apologetic literature? How did apologists like Justin or Origen argue on behalf of Christianity?

### True/False

- \*1. Christians were persecuted across the Roman Empire throughout the first century.  
T \_\_\_\_\_ F
- \*2. The Emperor Nero blamed the Christians for a major fire for which he was most likely responsible.  
T \_\_\_\_\_ F
- \*3. Opponents of Christianity claimed Christians held orgies and ate babies.  
T \_\_\_\_\_ F
4. Christianity spread rapidly in the early years, quickly converting large groups of people.  
T \_\_\_\_\_ F
5. Ignatius begged the recipients of his letter not to interfere with his martyrdom, lest they keep him from being executed.  
T \_\_\_\_\_ F

## Multiple-Choice

1. At the beginning of its history, Christianity was:
  - a) Illegal
  - b) State-sponsored
  - c) Practiced widely
  - d) Relatively unknown
- \*2. Governors in the Roman provinces had all of the following responsibilities *except*:
  - a) Collecting taxes
  - b) Maintaining order
  - c) Keeping the peace
  - d) Strictly defining Roman law, and proposing standardized Empire-wide punishments
3. In early Christianity, all of the following were true *except*:
  - a) Christianity was an exclusive group.
  - b) Christians had to reject previous religious affiliations.
  - c) Christians were supposed to maintain their family relationships.
  - d) Christianity was thought by pagans to be a superstition
- \*4. Opponents of Christianity suggested all of the following *except*:
  - a) Christians held orgies.
  - b) Christians committed infanticide.
  - c) Christians committed deicide.
  - d) Christians were guilty of incest.
5. The legendary account of the *Acts of John* narrates:
  - a) The apostle John suffering martyrdom at the hands of the pagan priest.
  - b) The apostle John eating with the resurrected Jesus.
  - c) The apostle John raising a pagan from the dead.
  - d) The apostle John receiving a vision of the Lamb of God, seated on a throne of gold and diamonds.
- \*6. In Nero's persecution of Christianity, Christians were accused of:
  - a) Infanticide
  - b) Arson
  - c) Cannibalism
  - d) Incestuous relationships
7. Pliny executed Christians because:
  - a) Christianity was illegal.
  - b) They killed babies.
  - c) They refused to worship the gods.
  - d) They disrupted families.
8. The author of 1 Peter addresses his audience as:

- a) Exiles
- b) Gentiles
- c) Jews
- d) ~~Pauline Christians~~

9. All of the following are true about Christianity in the Roman Empire *except*:

- a) ~~It was suspect because it was a new movement.~~
- b) ~~It was persecuted because its followers neglected the gods.~~
- c) ~~It was illegal.~~
- d) ~~It was originally thought of as a sect of Judaism.~~

10. First Peter is primarily concerned with:

- a) ~~Christian orthodoxy~~
- b) ~~False prophets~~
- c) ~~Leadership of the clergy~~
- d) ~~Christian suffering~~

11. First Peter addresses Christian persecutions by:

- a) ~~Former acquaintances~~
- b) ~~The governor~~
- c) ~~The emperor~~
- d) ~~The Jews~~

12. First Peter teaches its readers all of the following *except*:

- a) ~~They have been sprinkled with Christ's blood.~~
- b) ~~They are being persecuted because of their sins.~~
- c) ~~They are holy priests.~~
- d) ~~They have been born into a new family.~~

\*13. First Peter claims to have been written in Babylon, a code word for:

- a) ~~Jerusalem~~
- b) ~~Alexandria~~
- c) ~~Rome~~
- d) ~~Corinth~~

\*14. First Peter was probably written:

- a) ~~In the middle of the first century~~
- b) ~~In the late first century~~
- c) ~~In the middle of the second century~~
- d) ~~In the late second century~~

15. The letters of Ignatius date to approximately:

- a) ~~40 C.E.~~
- b) ~~80 C.E.~~
- c) ~~110 C.E.~~
- d) ~~140 C.E.~~

16. Ignatius wrote his letters:
- a) In response to letters he received from churches he founded
  - b) On his way to his execution in Rome
  - c) From jail in Rome
  - d) From Antioch
17. All of the following are true of Ignatius *except*:
- a) He was a bishop.
  - b) He was accused of crimes against the state.
  - c) He was an earthly disciple of Paul.
  - d) He was well educated.
18. All of the following are themes in Ignatius's letters *except*:
- a) The church's unity
  - b) The church's purity
  - c) The church's leadership
  - d) The church's spiritual gifts
19. We have accounts of the martyrdoms of all of the following *except*:
- a) Barnabas
  - b) Polycarp
  - c) Ignatius
  - d) Perpetua
- \*20. When was the first imperial episode of Christian persecution?
- a) When Nero falsely accused Christians of starting a fire in Rome
  - b) Immediately after Pilate had Jesus crucified
  - c) After the military assault on Rome by the Maccabees
  - d) Ignatius of Antioch's martyrdom
- \*21. The growth rate of Christianity in its early years was probably:
- a) Steady at 50 percent per year
  - b) Fluctuating at 2 percent some years and 80 percent other years
  - c) Steady at 40 percent per decade
  - d) Exponential
- \*22. Which book of the New Testament mentions the word "suffering" more than any other?
- a) First Thessalonians
  - b) First Peter
  - c) *The Martyrdom of Polycarp*
  - d) Acts of the Apostles
23. According to 1 Peter, for what must Christians *not* suffer?
- a) For doing right
  - b) For standing up for the Gospel

- e) For their beliefs
- d) For doing what is wrong

\*24. Which of the following is *not* a feature of the *Martyrdom of Polycarp*:

- a) The martyr's flesh doesn't burn in the fire, but rather looks like baked bread
- b) A dove flies out of the martyr's side
- c) Angelic voices cry out at the death of the martyr
- d) Enough blood pours out of the martyr's body to douse a fire

\*25. The following was an insult that pagans used against Christians: ——

- a) "Atheist"
- b) "Heathen"
- c) "Antichrist"
- d) "Saint"

26. Whose martyrdom closely parallels the Gospels' Passion narratives?

- a) Perpetua's
- b) Felicitas's
- c) Polycarp's
- d) Peter's

27. At the end of the first century, approximately what percentage of the Roman Empire was Christian?

- a) Less than .2 percent
- b) 2 percent
- c) 5 percent
- d) 10 percent

28. Scholars have suggested that all of the following contributed to Christian conversions in the first three centuries of the faith *except*:

- a) Martyrdoms
- b) The church's role as a social network
- c) Stories of Jesus' miracles and power
- d) The New Testament canon

29. Who left behind a father and an infant son to suffer martyrdom in a Roman amphitheater?

- a) Barnabas
- b) Perpetua
- c) Ignatius
- d) Polycarp

30. The early Christian apologists argued that the Roman government should

- a) Support Christianity
- b) Free all the slaves throughout the empire
- c) Kill all Jews
- d) Leave the Christians alone

|

## Chapter 27

### Essays

- [1.] ~~RESOLVED: The epistle of James was originally a non-Christian Jewish book. Pick one side of the debate and present the most compelling arguments for it. Keep in mind that the most persuasive arguments anticipate (and answer) counterarguments.~~
- [2.] ~~Discuss the importance of *1 Clement* for tracing the rise of Roman Catholic orthodoxy. What were the circumstances under which the letter was written? How does the letter illustrate the relationship between Rome and other churches?~~
- [3.] ~~Why do almost all critical scholars doubt the authenticity of the authorial ascription of 2 Peter? What evidence is there within the book itself that calls its authorship into question? What sources did this author use, and when was it circulated? How do these issues add to the problems of its authorial claims?~~
- [4.] ~~What is the *Didache*, when was it written, why is it significant, and what does it contain?~~
- [5.] ~~Who does the epistle of Jude claim to be written by? Why is this significant, and what do most modern scholars think about this claim? What are the themes of the book, and what is its relationship with 2 Peter?~~

### True/False

- \*1. The epistle of James is written to “the twelve tribes.”  
T \_\_\_\_\_ F
- \*2. The *Didache* is our earliest source for how Christian rituals were performed.  
T \_\_\_\_\_ F
- \*3. The epistle of Jude regularly quotes the teaching of Jesus.  
T \_\_\_\_\_ F
4. Polycarp’s letter to the Philippians rarely echoes or cites prior Christian tradition.  
T \_\_\_\_\_ F
5. *First Clement* was written from Corinth to solve serious problems in the Roman church.  
T \_\_\_\_\_ F



## Multiple-Choice

\*1. The epistle of James:

- a) Was written by Paul
- b) Is a collection of pieces of good advice
- c) Is addressed to the bishop, James
- d) Was probably written by Jesus' twin

2. In the epistle of James:

- a) Jesus is the central character.
- b) Jesus' teachings are explicitly quoted.
- c) Jesus is rarely mentioned.
- d) Jesus reveals secret teachings to James.

3. The epistle of James seeks to do all of the following *except*:

- a) Warn against false prophets
- b) Clarify Paul's teachings on faith
- c) Teach that faith is apparent in action
- d) Teach communal ethics

4. The term "didache" literally means:

- a) Apostle
- b) Disciple
- c) Teaching
- d) Reasoned defense

5. The *Didache* includes all of the following *except*:

- a) Descriptions of the ritual of baptism
- b) Descriptions of Eucharistic practice
- c) Indications for fast days
- d) Descriptions of the activities of the apostles

6. The first part of the *Didache* contains:

- a) An apocalyptic discourse
- b) The doctrine of the Two Ways
- c) A record of Paul's itinerary
- d) Reminders of Jesus' teachings

\*7. One way that the epistle of James and the *Didache* are similar is:

- a) They are both apocalyptic.
- b) They both contain the doctrine of the Two Ways.
- c) They both contain parallels from the Sermon on the Mount.
- d) They are both written to specific communities in Asia Minor.

\*8. According to the *Didache*, the best way to baptize is:

- a) In cold running water

- b) In warm running water
- c) In cold still water
- d) In warm still water

9. The *Didache* teaches that the first act at the celebration of the Eucharist is:

- a) Baptism
- b) The blessing of the cup
- c) The blessing of the bread
- d) Communal confession

10. According to the *Didache*, Christians should:

- a) Fast on the same days as Jews
- b) Pray like Jews
- c) Recite the Lord's Prayer three times a day
- d) Celebrate the Eucharist on Wednesdays and Fridays

11. The *Didache* says that prophets:

- a) Should be allowed to stay in the community for more than three days
- b) Rightly ask for money
- c) Who teach new doctrines should be accepted
- d) Should earn a living if they stay in the community

12. Polycarp's letter to the Philippians draws heavily on:

- a) Other Christian authors
- b) The *Didache*
- c) Quotations from the *Gospel of Thomas*
- d) The writings of Valens and his wife

13. *First Clement* is addressed to:

- a) The Philippians
- b) The Romans
- c) The Corinthians
- d) The Thessalonians

14. *First Clement* was sent by:

- a) The church at Philippi
- b) The church at Rome
- c) The church at Corinth
- d) The church at Thessalonica

15. *First Clement* was probably written around:

- a) 45 C.E.
- b) 65 C.E.
- c) 95 C.E.
- d) 110 C.E.

- ~~\*16. First Clement was considered by some Christians to be:~~
- ~~a) Heretical because of its docetic Christology~~
  - ~~b) Orthodox because of its rejection of clergy~~
  - ~~c) Orthodox because of its condemnation of Marcion~~
  - ~~d) A part of the New Testament~~
17. The author of the epistle of Jude:
- a) Is anonymous
  - b) Claims to be James' brother
  - c) Claims to be a disciple of Paul
  - d) Was probably the bishop in Rome
18. The author of 2 Peter probably:
- a) Was Jesus' disciple
  - b) Used 1 Timothy
  - c) Knew the New Testament
  - d) Used Jude
19. The adversaries in 2 Peter believe that:
- a) Jesus did not come in the flesh.
  - b) The apocalyptic beliefs of some Christians are false.
  - c) The apocalypse is imminent.
  - d) Only the bishop can interpret Scripture.
- ~~\*20. How unique are the ethical exhortations in the book of James?~~
- ~~a) In his time, quite unique~~
  - ~~b) Unique throughout history~~
  - ~~c) Not very unique at all~~
  - ~~d) Very common in Greece but nowhere else~~
- ~~\*21. What part of the human body does James say needs the most controlling?~~
- ~~a) The tongue~~
  - ~~b) The genitals~~
  - ~~c) The hands~~
  - ~~d) The heart~~
- ~~\*22. Who was called "the first-born of Satan" by Polycarp?~~
- ~~a) Ignatius~~
  - ~~b) Marcion~~
  - ~~c) Barnabas~~
  - ~~d) Jesus~~
- ~~\*23. How long was the letter by Polycarp to the Philippians, which contained over one hundred biblical quotations?~~
- ~~a) 100 pages~~
  - ~~b) 25 pages~~

- e) 10 pages
- d) 5 pages

\*24. In what church has the author of *1 Clement* learned that there was a “vile and profane faction”?

- a) Philippi
- b) Corinth
- c) Rome
- d) Smyrna

\*25. The letter written by Jude is filled with:

- a) Invective and name calling
- b) Worship and lifestyle instructions
- c) Prophecies of the end time
- d) Historic accounts of the apostles

26. Which of the following texts depicts Peter resurrecting a tuna?

- a) Second Peter
- b) The *Acts of Peter*
- c) The *Apocalypse of Paul*
- d) The *Didache*

27. For the author of James, “works” refers to:

- a) The requirements of the Jewish Law
- b) One’s daily job
- c) Good deeds
- d) Other epistles

28. Many of the admonitions in James are similar to:

- a) Parts of Matthew’s Sermon on the Mount
- b) Parts of the Gospel of John
- c) The views of the Johannine secessionists
- d) Warnings in Revelation

29. The author of James draws most of his examples of ethical behavior from:

- a) The *Didache*
- b) The life of Jesus
- c) Paul’s letters
- d) The Hebrew Bible

30. James’ ethical advice emphasizes all of the following *except*:

- a) The danger of wealth
- b) The importance of controlling one’s speech
- c) The examples set by the apostles
- d) The need for patience in the midst of suffering

## Chapter 28

### Essays

- [1.] Discuss why apocalypses were written during times of suffering or distress. What purpose did they serve within such communities?
- [2.] Choose one of the apocalypses you have studied and describe how it appropriates some aspects of the genre and excludes others. What is the main point of the apocalypse? What does it warn its readers about? How might it function within a Christian community?
- [3.] Apocalypses were a distinct genre of literature. Many ancient writers used this genre's dualistic perspective on human history to convey an apocalyptic agenda. Discuss the differences between apocalyptic literature written by ancient Jews and that written by Christians.
- [4.] Seemingly everything about apocalyptic literature is symbolic. Interpret the following symbols of Revelation in light of your knowledge of the book's historical context: the twenty-four human elders; the whore of Babylon; and the number of the Beast, 666.
- [5.] Discuss what can be known about the author of the book of Revelation and the communities to which he writes. How would you characterize the social context of his audience?

### True/False

\*1. Revelation is not pseudonymous.

T \_\_\_\_\_ F

\*2. Apocalyptic literature is symbolic because it is trying to describe future events (and inventions) that ancient visionaries couldn't understand.

T \_\_\_\_\_ F

\*3. The number of the Beast is 616 in some manuscripts and 666 in others.

T \_\_\_\_\_ F

4. The seven-headed Beast of Revelation is best identified as the seven continents.

T \_\_\_\_\_ F

5. The Greek of Revelation is clumsy and even ungrammatical at times.

T \_\_\_\_\_ F

## Multiple-Choice

1. The word “revelation” means:
  - a) Unveiling
  - b) Reasoned defense
  - c) Secret teaching
  - d) Heavenly journey
2. The first two chapters of the book of Revelation are:
  - a) A heavenly journey
  - b) A tour of hell
  - c) Letters to churches
  - d) Descriptions of the destruction of the world
3. In Revelation, all of the following initiate disasters in the world *except*:
  - a) The seven scrolls
  - b) The seven trumpets
  - c) The seven bowls
  - d) The seven horses
4. All of the following are true of the genre of apocalypse *except*:
  - a) They are first-person narratives.
  - b) They are among the oldest books of the Hebrew Bible.
  - c) They contain symbolic visions.
  - d) They explain the realities of the world.
5. One way that Revelation is different from most apocalypses is:
  - a) It is not pseudonymous.
  - b) It is pseudonymous.
  - c) It contains many repetitions.
  - d) It uses symbolic animals to explain current conditions.
6. Surviving apocalypses are written in the names of all of the following *except*:
  - a) Jesus
  - b) Moses
  - c) Abraham
  - d) Adam
- \*7. Which of the following is an apocalypse in the Hebrew Bible?
  - a) John
  - b) Adam
  - c) Daniel
  - d) Isaiah
8. The author of Revelation:
  - a) Wrote no other books in the New Testament

- b) Wrote the Gospel of John
- c) Wrote the Johannine epistles
- d) Was Jesus' brother

9. Revelation was probably completed around:

- a) 40 C.E.
- b) 55 C.E.
- c) 80 C.E.
- d) 95 C.E.

\*10. In the book of Revelation, Christ is depicted in all of the following ways *except* as:

- a) The Son of Man
- b) A king
- c) Ancient
- d) A high priest

11. The number of the Beast, 666, probably refers to:

- a) Satan
- b) Nero
- c) Herod
- d) Pilate

12. All of the following are true about *The Shepherd* of Hermas *except*:

- a) It is an apocalypse.
- b) It is pseudonymous.
- c) It was written in the second century.
- d) Some Christians included it in the New Testament.

13. Later Christians deemed *The Shepherd* of Hermas noncanonical because:

- a) It was heretical.
- b) It was written by an apostle.
- c) It was not ancient.
- d) It was pseudonymous.

\*14. The primary concern of *The Shepherd* of Hermas is:

- a) Christians who have sinned after baptism
- b) The appearance of false prophets
- c) The community's inappropriate actions at the Lord's Supper
- d) The method of baptism

15. The Muratorian canon:

- a) Is an ancient record of the final form of the New Testament
- b) Does not include the Pauline letters
- c) Begins and ends midsentence
- d) Is a list of all of the books of the Hebrew Bible

16. ~~The Shepherd of Hermas~~ teaches that:

- a) People who sin have no chance of salvation.
- b) People who sin can obtain salvation through confession.
- c) People who sin can repent only once after baptism.
- d) People who sin must be rebaptized every time they repent.

17. ~~The Apocalypse of Peter~~:

- a) Is pseudonymous
- b) Was written by Peter
- c) Was written in Latin
- d) Is in the New Testament

\*18. ~~The Apocalypse of Peter~~:

- a) Is concerned with baptism and repentance
- b) Records secret sayings of Jesus
- c) Describes a tour of heaven and hell
- d) Promises the imminent destruction of the Roman Empire

\*19. The first apocalypticist to write an apocalypse was:

- a) John, the author of Revelation
- b) The author of Daniel
- c) The author of *The Shepherd of Hermas*
- d) The author of the *Apocalypse of Peter*

\*20. Of the two main kinds of ancient apocalyptic literature, the “heavenly journey” type has the prophet/author:

- a) Taken on a heavenly tour by an angelic companion
- b) Receive a symbolic vision of the future course of human history
- c) Die for the sins of the world
- d) Meet God and Satan personally

\*21. Of the two main kinds of ancient apocalyptic literature, the “historical sketch” type has the prophet/author:

- a) Taken on a heavenly tour by an angelic companion
- b) Receive a symbolic vision of the future course of human history
- c) Die for the sins of the world
- d) Meet God and Satan personally

\*22. What was the “great city” referred to in Revelation that was built on seven hills and ruled the world in John’s day?

- a) Constantinople
- b) Jerusalem
- c) Ephesus
- d) Rome

\*23. First Enoch, 2 Baruch, and 4 Ezra are:



- a) ~~Noncanonical Christian apocalypses~~
- b) ~~Canonical Christian apocalypses~~
- c) ~~Noncanonical Jewish apocalypses~~
- d) ~~Canonical Jewish apocalypses~~

~~\*24. Revelation 22:18–19 delivers a threat to:~~

- a) ~~The reader~~
- b) ~~The copyists~~
- c) ~~The Gentiles~~
- d) ~~The Romans~~

~~25. The “lake of fire” in the book of Revelation most likely refers to:~~

- ~~[a)] The author’s belief that sinners will be annihilated and cease to exist~~
- ~~[b)] The author’s belief that sinners will suffer forever for their sins~~
- ~~[c)] The author’s belief that the world will be consumed by fire~~
- ~~[d)] The author’s belief that the world’s oceans will turn to ash at the coming of Jesus~~

~~26. By writing pseudonymously in the name of a famous person of the past, the author of an apocalypse is able to do which of the following?~~

- a) ~~Receive some funding~~
- b) ~~Seemingly predict the future with accuracy~~
- c) ~~Gain a pagan audience~~
- d) ~~Confuse his readers~~

~~27. The author of Revelation addresses his book to seven churches of Asia Minor, which are located in all of the following cities *except*:~~

- a) ~~Pergamum~~
- b) ~~Laodicea~~
- c) ~~Philippi~~
- d) ~~Ephesus~~

~~28. Which of the following serves as evidence that the author of Revelation did not write the Gospel of John?~~

- a) ~~Different writing styles~~
- b) ~~Different sources~~
- c) ~~The author of the Gospel of John was Jewish.~~
- d) ~~The author of Revelation remains anonymous.~~

~~29. Which ancient Christian recognized that the book of Revelation was not written by the author of the Gospel of John?~~

- a) ~~Paul~~
- b) ~~Athanasius~~
- c) ~~Dionysius~~
- d) ~~Peter~~

30. In early Jewish traditions, “Babylon” is code for:
- a) The book of Daniel
  - b) The chief political enemy of God
  - c) Jesus
  - d) Heaven

## Exam Answers

# Chapter 1

## Essays

[1.] Adoptionists were strict monotheists who believed that the Jewish God created the earth and gave humans the Law. According to these Christians, Jesus was a righteous man who was adopted by God at his baptism. At that time, Jesus was empowered to perform miracles and to preach God's word. Salvation came from Jesus' death as a willing atoning sacrifice.

Marcionites were ditheists: they believed that the Old Testament God (the God of the Jews) was just, and that the New Testament God (the God of Jesus) was forgiving. Jesus was sent from the forgiving God to save people from the Jewish God. Jesus was not affiliated with the Creator God, and therefore he could not have a flesh-and-bone body. Marcionites, then, adhered to a docetic Christology.

Gnostics were polytheists. For this group of Christians, the Creator God—the God of the Jews—was evil; he created the world in order to imprison the divine spark. Gnostics believed that knowledge (gnosis) set this divine element free and returned it to the heavenly realm. In Gnostic Christianity, Jesus was the teacher who brought this saving knowledge from the true God.

[2.] The New Testament books were written between 50 and 120 C.E. By the end of the first century, Christians were calling Jesus' and Paul's words Scripture. Throughout the second, third, and even fourth centuries, Christians debated which books should be included in the canon. There were three primary criteria for inclusion: the books had to be ancient, they had to be written by an apostle, and they had to be accepted among proto-orthodox congregations as reflecting orthodox belief. It was not until 367 C.E. that the twenty-seven books of the modern Christian canon were listed as authoritative Scripture.

[3.] The proto-orthodox believed (like the Jewish Christians) that Jesus was fully human—and (like Marcionites and Gnostics) that he was fully divine (like Marcionites and Gnostics). They believed that Jesus taught salvation, but they disagreed with Gnostics that Jesus' teachings were secret and accessible to only a select group of people. In sum, the proto-orthodox believed that Jesus was one being, not two, both human and divine. They believed that Jesus taught his disciples the truth and these followers, in turn, recorded Jesus' teachings and passed them on to others. According to these Christians, a straightforward reading of Scripture reveals the truth necessary for salvation.

[4.] Students should discuss the varieties of Christianities presented in this chapter: Jewish Christians, Marcionites, and Gnostics. There are certainly similarities within these groups—(regarding, e.g., the importance of Jesus and the production of texts), but there are also striking differences concerning the nature of Jesus, God, and salvation.

[5.] Although “heretical” groups used texts that were eventually placed in the canon (among them are Matthew, John, and Paul's letters), once a group of texts is canonized, those books are no longer read as freestanding texts with their own individual emphases and

Christologies/theologies. Rather, when these books are placed into one book, the New Testament, they are intended to be read together and to shed light on one another. The reader of the New Testament, then, is supposed to read, for example, the Gospel of John in light of the Gospel of Matthew. The juxtaposition of texts containing different views bars a reader from moving too far in one doctrinal direction.

True/False

- |        |        |
|--------|--------|
| [1.] T | [4.] F |
| [2.] F | [5.] T |
| [3.] F |        |

Multiple Choice

- |      |       |       |       |
|------|-------|-------|-------|
| 1. D | 9. A  | 17. B | 25. A |
| 2. B | 10. C | 18. B | 26. B |
| 3. D | 11. C | 19. D | 27. A |
| 4. D | 12. B | 20. D | 28. D |
| 5. C | 13. A | 21. C | 29. C |
| 6. A | 14. D | 22. A | 30. D |
| 7. C | 15. D | 23. B |       |
| 8. B | 16. B | 24. B |       |

## Chapter 2

### Essays

- [1.] The second reading (“We have been searching for you”) may reflect a proto-orthodox scribe’s concern that a reader might misinterpret “your father” as an affirmation of Joseph as Jesus’ father, and thus a denial of Jesus’ divinity.
- [2.] The students’ discussion might include (a) the lack of autographs, (b) the age of the earliest manuscripts, (c) the nature of ancient textual transmission, and (d) types of scribal errors.
- [3.] Students should discuss the six criteria for establishing the original text.
- [a.] *The Number of Witnesses*. This criterion looks at how many extant manuscripts have the same reading. This criterion used alone can be misleading because a number of manuscripts may stem from one later source while a reading that occurs fewer times may represent an earlier reading.
  - [b.] *The Age of the Witnesses*. This criterion suggests that the oldest manuscripts are more reliable because they have been, as a rule, subjected to fewer changes.
  - [c.] *The Quality of the Witnesses*. A manuscript that contains a number of errors is less reliable than a manuscript that contains few errors.
  - [d.] *The Geographical Spread of the Witnesses*. A reading that occurs in only one area may be a regional reading; a reading that is found throughout the empire is probably closer to the original.
  - [e.] *The Difficulty of the Reading*. Scribes are more likely to have smoothed out a reading than to have made it more difficult.
  - [f.] *Conformity with the Author’s Own Language, Style, and Theology*. A reading that does not fit with an author’s overall theology is likely to reflect a scribal change.
- [4.] Students should observe that modern Bibles are translations of much later copies of Biblical manuscripts. After an original manuscript was penned by the author or his scribe, the book was copied and recopied by hand over many years, with scribes making numerous unintentional and intentional changes to the wording at each level of transmission. Modern scholars apply the criteria of textual criticism to attempt to reconstruct the earliest possible readings, from which modern translations are made.
- [5.] The second reading (“Jesus was filled with compassion”) may reflect a proto-orthodox scribe’s concern about portraying Jesus as “angry,” implying that Jesus was hot-tempered and lacking compassion, while it is unlikely a scribe would change “compassion” to “anger.”

### True/False

[1.] T  
[2.] T

[3.] T  
[4.] F

[5.]F

**Multiple Choice**

1. C  
2. D  
3. A  
4. C  
5. D  
6. B  
7. C  
8. A

9. C  
10. B  
11. A  
12. D  
13. C  
14. A  
15. D  
16. B

17. A  
18. D  
19. D  
20. C  
21. A  
22. B  
23. A  
24. D

25. D  
26. D  
27. C  
28. B  
29. A  
30. D

## Chapter 3

### Essays

- [1.] Students should define Hellenization and discuss its spread under Alexander the Great. The spread of Greek culture and language paved the way for Christian missions: in this new cosmopolitan atmosphere, Christian missionaries moved easily throughout the empire and spread the good news via the lingua franca, Greek.
- [2.] Students should discuss the following aspects of paganism: polytheism (perhaps discussing the levels of divinity within the pagan world), concern for present life, emphasis on cult, and the relationship of empire and religion (church and state). Although many scholars identify it as socially marginal, magic was another form of religion available to inhabitants of the Greco-Roman world. Unlike religion in the Greco-Roman world, philosophy was largely focused on doctrine (what to think) and ethics (how to live). Philosophies were generally intolerant of other views.
- [3.] Mystery cults focused on the individual rather than the community and often placed some emphasis on the afterlife. Many of the gods who had mystery cults were revered because they had been raised from the dead, promised peace on earth, and assured followers of an afterlife. Even though individuals may have been devotees to a particular god, they did not claim that their god was the *only* god. Like the mystery cults, Christianity held secret meetings during which they initiated individuals into the religion. These initiation rites often included a sacred meal and baptism. Unlike the mystery cults, though, Christianity taught that its God was the only God to worship, and its members did not belong to other religious sects.
- [4.] “Augurs” were Roman priests who practiced modes of divination (i.e., ways of discerning the divine will). To determine whether a certain course of action (e.g., a military expedition) was favored by the gods, the augurs would interpret natural occurrences, such as the flight patterns or eating habits of birds. There were also sacred places called “oracles,” where any person could go to receive private direction from a god.
- [5.] Students should explain the various tiers or levels of divinity in Greco-Roman polytheism. This is best summarized as a sort of “divine pyramid” in which the highest god is placed at the top, the other most powerful god(s) just below, and the more numerous but less powerful local deities (*daimonia*) toward the middle, followed by demigods and heroes and then human beings at the bottom. Many people also worshiped household or family gods like the Roman Penates or Lares, and each family was thought to have a special deity or “genius” who watched over the head of the household. The level of heroes or special figures might include persons such as the emperor, Hercules, and great philosophers.



### True/False

~~[1.] T~~  
~~[2.] F~~  
~~[3.] T~~

~~[4.] T~~  
~~[5.] T~~

### Multiple Choice

~~1. C~~  
~~2. B~~  
~~3. D~~  
~~4. B~~  
~~5. B~~  
~~6. C~~  
~~7. D~~  
~~8. C~~

~~9. D~~  
~~10. D~~  
~~11. B~~  
~~12. A~~  
~~13. D~~  
~~14. B~~  
~~15. B~~  
~~16. A~~

~~17. A~~  
~~18. C~~  
~~19. A~~  
~~20. D~~  
~~21. A~~  
~~22. A~~  
~~23. C~~  
~~24. B~~

~~25. B~~  
~~26. D~~  
~~27. A~~  
~~28. C~~  
~~29. C~~  
~~30. D~~

## Chapter 4

### Essays

- [1.] Members of all Jewish sects subscribed to the worship of only one God, the Creator of all things. This is the God of Israel, who revealed himself in the Hebrew Scriptures and promised to protect the Jews in exchange for their devotion and obedience to his laws. All Jews were united by this basic idea, and they all utilized the same Torah. The points of dispute centered around issues of how to respond to the rule of a foreign power, the presence of a high priest who was not in the line of Zadok, and what obedience to God's laws amounted to in a practical sense.
- [2.] The Pharisees insisted on knowing and obeying God's Law to the fullest extent. This entailed their complete rejection of Greek culture and religion, which resulted in their name, which means "separated ones" in Persian. In order to disambiguate the Law of Moses, the Pharisees devised rules and regulations that eventually became "oral Law" and set it alongside the written Law. The oral Law, called the Mishnah, was then written down and became the heart of the Talmud. The Jewish priesthood was composed largely of Sadducees. They accepted only the Torah (i.e., the five books of Moses) as authoritative. They rejected the doctrine of the future resurrection of the dead and the existence of angels. The Essenes believed that the Jews of Jerusalem had gone astray, particularly by appointing a non-Zadokite high priest, so they segregated themselves in the wilderness and strove to live in purity. The Essenes of Qumran were probably the authors of the Dead Sea Scrolls. The Fourth Philosophy was a sect that believed in active, usually militant, resistance to Israel's foreign domination. Two well-known subsets of the Fourth Philosophy were the Zealots and the Sicarii.
- [3.] The Jewish Temple was the only Temple to the God of Israel. It was the only structure in which God was said to dwell, in which he dwelled in holiness and apart from any sacred image. The sacred room, or Holy of Holies, was completely empty, unlike most other ancient temples, which contained cultic images and idols that supposedly housed the deity. God would receive sacrifices only in the Temple in Jerusalem. This Temple served as the religious nucleus of Jews from around the world, who were united as a people through the God who dwelt there. One true God had an exclusive covenant with one chosen people. Not only belief but also all the rituals connected with the Temple set the Jews apart and defined them as a people.
- [4.] Some scrolls indicate that a final battle between good and evil would usher in the Kingdom of God, which would be ruled by two messiahs. One would be a priestly messiah who would lead the faithful in the worship of God in a purified Temple. He would reinstitute the sacrificial rituals in accordance with the will of God. The other messiah would be a king, ruling over the children of God. The Essenes started their own monastic-like community with strict rules to keep themselves pure and ready for the fulfillment of this end-time prophecy. Notice that they separated the concepts of messiah and God. Later, some Christians would

use this concept to claim that Jesus, as the Son of God, was the fulfillment of both messianic descriptions (i.e., he was both a priest and a king).

[5.] The written Torah is often ambiguous. For example, how must one keep the Sabbath day holy? What counts as “work” and what does not? Does the command to tithe include only the crops grown by an individual, or does it also apply to purchased food? Students should emphasize that the aim of the Torah was not to be legalistic but to make it easier to ensure one was being obedient to God’s commands.

**True/False**

- |        |        |
|--------|--------|
| [1.] F | [4.] T |
| [2.] F | [5.] F |
| [3.] T |        |

**Multiple Choice**

- |      |       |       |       |
|------|-------|-------|-------|
| 1. C | 9. A  | 17. C | 25. A |
| 2. A | 10. B | 18. B | 26. B |
| 3. C | 11. B | 19. C | 27. C |
| 4. A | 12. D | 20. C | 28. A |
| 5. A | 13. A | 21. B | 29. B |
| 6. D | 14. B | 22. A | 30. D |
| 7. B | 15. A | 23. C |       |
| 8. B | 16. C | 24. B |       |

## Chapter 5

### Essays

- [1.] Students should discuss the nature of oral traditions: Why were stories about Jesus told? Who told stories and to whom? How did these stories function in the process of conversion? Were Christians most interested in preserving Jesus' exact words, or did they invent stories as they passed them along? In addition, students should discuss the dates of the Gospels and the problems with establishing historical accuracy based on texts that were written thirty-five to sixty-five years after Jesus' death.
- [2.] Since students (presumably) have not read the Gospels yet, they might choose to discuss the example from the textbook: the day of Jesus' death in the Gospels of Mark and John.
- [3.] Some of the most important arguments against the authorial attributions of the Gospels are as follows: the texts themselves do not make these claims; the disciples were most likely illiterate; Jesus and his disciples spoke Aramaic, but the Gospels were written in Greek; the Gospels seem to record traditions that circulated orally for some time; and, finally, one of the Gospel writers, Luke, states that he used both written and oral sources.
- [4.] We cannot accurately interpret a text without knowing its genre and how its genre functions. Students might draw parallels between fiction and nonfiction or any other genre that, if incorrectly assigned, would lead to misinterpretation. Ehrman discusses three important elements of genre that affect the way we read texts: form, content, and function.
- [5.] Although some earlier New Testament scholars believed that the Gospel writers created a new genre to talk about Jesus, Ehrman points out that a completely new genre would be impossible to understand. Readers must bring some expectations to a text in order to interpret it. For the most part, the New Testament Gospels follow the conventions of ancient biography: they focus on one central character around whom all action revolves, they emphasize miraculous events accompanying Jesus' birth and death as well as his own miraculous deeds, they contain divinely inspired teachings, and they present Jesus' personality as constant. Unlike most ancient biographies, though, the Gospels emphasize Jesus' death, an element that typically was not a subject of extended narrative. In addition, Jesus was not a political, military, or philosophical leader; he was not even a very important religious leader during his lifetime. On the contrary, he was a poor itinerant teacher who had only a few followers and was relatively unknown among pagans until almost a century after his death.

### True/False

~~[1.] F~~

~~[2.] F~~

~~[3.] T~~

~~[4.] T~~

~~[5.] T~~

### Multiple Choice

~~1. B~~

~~2. D~~

~~3. C~~

~~4. D~~

~~5. B~~

~~6. B~~

~~7. A~~

~~8. B~~

~~9. D~~

~~10. A~~

~~11. B~~

~~12. A~~

~~13. B~~

~~14. A~~

~~15. C~~

~~16. B~~

~~17. A~~

~~18. D~~

~~19. B~~

~~20. A~~

~~21. B~~

~~22. D~~

~~23. C~~

~~24. C~~

~~25. D~~

~~26. D~~

~~27. D~~

~~28. B~~

~~29. C~~

~~30. D~~

## Chapter 6

### Essays

- [1.] The first verse of Mark informs the reader that Jesus is the Christ, the messiah, the one anointed or chosen by God. Throughout his Gospel, Mark shows that the messiah was not what the Jews had anticipated (i.e., a king, a cosmic figure, or a priestly figure). Jesus, the Righteous Sufferer, was the messiah who was sent by God to die for the sins of humanity. In this Gospel, no one recognizes Jesus' true identity because he does not come in the guise that is expected. It is not until his death that his followers understand who he is. The Gospel opens with Jesus' baptism, an event that confirms his relationship with God, since it is then that God declares that Jesus is his Son. Immediately following the baptism, Jesus goes to the desert and resists temptation by Satan. When Jesus begins his public ministry, Mark underscores Jesus' authority over demons and disease. In addition, his authority is so great that men stop what they are doing to follow him. These stories illustrate Jesus' strength, authority, and relationship to God.
- [2.] Mark emphasizes Jesus' God-given authority by narrating his calling of disciples and his miracles, especially his power to exorcise demons. Because the messiah appears as a common man, that is, not as the expected political or religious leader, the Jewish leaders oppose him. Mark uses the categories of authority, misunderstanding, and opposition to underscore Jesus' true identity and to explain that he was persecuted precisely because of his messiahship. The motifs of authority, misunderstanding, and opposition illustrate the Jews' misguided expectations of the messiah.
- [3.] Ehrman presents some of the Jewish expectations of the messiah in Box 6.1, "The Jewish Messiah." Some Jews expected a cosmic deliverer as described in Daniel; others thought the messiah would be a political ruler who would restore self-rule and reestablish the Davidic throne; still others believed the messiah would be a priest who would interpret the Law. Clearly Jesus of Nazareth was none of these things. Mark must, then, explain how Jesus the Suffering Son of God was the anticipated Jewish messiah.
- [4.] In this Gospel, only five individuals or groups know who Jesus is: God, Jesus, the demons, the author, and the reader. For ideas regarding Mark's insistence that others did not know Jesus' identity, see Box 6.5 on the messianic secret in Mark.
- [5.] Students should include relevant information from the conclusion of this chapter. On the affirmative side, students might argue that when Mark explains the Jewish custom of washing hands before eating, his explanation is incorrect. Furthermore, it seems clear that Mark's audience was located outside Palestine and spoke Greek (not Aramaic); this may indicate that they were a Gentile group that had converted to Christianity. The Jewishness of this Gospel may derive from oral traditions inherited by Mark's community. On the negative side, students might argue that Jesus is undeniably Jewish in this Gospel. Even though he appears in an unexpected form as the messiah, Mark goes out of his way to explain how it is

that Jesus can be, and is, the Jewish messiah. The community could certainly be a Jewish-Christian community located in the Diaspora. Since this Gospel does not contain a birth-narrative, Mark may be intimating that Jesus was adopted by God (and thus was not divine himself) at his baptism—a central element of Jewish-Christian belief.

True/False

- |      |      |
|------|------|
| 1. F | 4. T |
| 2. T | 5. F |
| 3. F |      |

Multiple Choice

- |      |       |       |       |
|------|-------|-------|-------|
| 1. C | 9. D  | 17. C | 25. C |
| 2. D | 10. A | 18. D | 26. B |
| 3. A | 11. B | 19. A | 27. D |
| 4. C | 12. B | 20. C | 28. D |
| 5. B | 13. A | 21. B | 29. A |
| 6. D | 14. B | 22. B | 30. C |
| 7. C | 15. A | 23. A |       |
| 8. B | 16. A | 24. C |       |

# Chapter 7

## Essays

- [1.] Students will have a variety of views. Students who agree with the statement might discuss the difficulty of explaining why an author would change his or her source without a reason. Students who disagree with the premises of redaction criticism might argue that an author's motives cannot be recovered and/or that scholars can never be completely certain about what sources an author used.
- [2.] The Synoptic Problem is the problem of accounting for the similarities and differences between Matthew, Mark, and Luke. The verbatim similarities, narrative order, and types of changes indicate that there was a common source. The Four-Source Hypothesis argues that Matthew and Luke used Mark as a primary source. In addition, Matthew and Luke used a source that scholars refer to as Q (a designation for material Matthew and Luke have in common that Mark does not have). Matthew added some stories from other sources unavailable to Luke, designated M, and similarly, Luke included stories unique to his Gospel, designated L. Together these sources account for the similarities and differences between the Synoptic Gospels.
- [3.] Students should fully explain the patterns of agreement between the Synoptics, the sequence of the narratives, and the characteristics of the changes that Matthew and Luke made to Mark. In their discussions they should explain how these three elements work to show that Mark was written first and used as a source by Matthew and Luke.
- [4.] Mark was used by Matthew and Luke and contains parables, miracles, and a Passion narrative. Q, also used by Matthew and Luke, appears to have been primarily a sayings source, but it did contain at least two narratives: the temptation of Jesus in the wilderness and the healing of the centurion's slave. Q was most likely a written Gospel, though it is no longer extant. M and L are designations for narratives and sayings unique to Matthew and Luke, respectively. Scholars cannot determine whether M/L was one or several sources, written or oral. They are, then, simply descriptions of sources unique to these Gospels.
- [5.] Students should discuss Markan priority, Q, M, and L and their relationship. Markan priority does not necessarily support the Four-Source Hypothesis. For example, students might point out that Luke might have used Matthew directly (or vice versa) in addition to Mark, with some of the changes between them due to editorial preference rather than a hypothetical source.

## True/False

[1.] F  
[2.] F

[3.] T  
[4.] T  
[5.] F



## Multiple-Choice

~~1. B~~  
~~2. A~~  
~~3. D~~  
~~4. C~~  
~~5. D~~  
~~6. C~~  
~~7. D~~  
~~8. D~~

~~9. C~~  
~~10. A~~  
~~11. D~~  
~~12. A~~  
~~13. B~~  
~~14. C~~  
~~15. B~~  
~~16. A~~

~~17. D~~  
~~18. A~~  
~~19. C~~  
~~20. B~~  
~~21. A~~  
~~22. C~~  
~~23. B~~  
~~24. D~~

~~25. A~~  
~~26. A~~  
~~27. D~~  
~~28. C~~  
~~29. B~~  
~~30. C~~

## Chapter 8

### Essays

- [1.] The Sermon on the Mount contains both the Beatitudes (words of comfort to those oppressed) and the Antitheses (fuller explanations of the commandments of the Law). This sermon is the first of five blocks of Jesus' teaching in the Gospel of Matthew, an arrangement that may imitate the five books of Moses. In this sermon, Jesus is portrayed as the new Moses who stands on a mountain and delivers the Law of God to God's people. By casting Jesus as a Lawgiver like Moses, Matthew continues the portrayal of Jesus as the new Moses that began with the birth narrative.
- [2.] Matthew compares Jesus to the most important prophet in Jewish history: Moses. Matthew's Gospel seems to have been written for a Jewish-Christian audience that was concerned about the relationship between their Jewish heritage and their new belief in Jesus as the Jewish messiah. By casting Jesus in a particularly Jewish light, as the new Moses, Matthew assures his community that there is no contradiction in their beliefs. Some of the important stories in Matthew's Gospel that reveal this connection between Jesus and Moses are the birth narrative and the Sermon on the Mount.
- [3.] The affirmative side might put forward the following arguments: Jesus' giving of the Law superseded Moses' Law, perhaps indicating its incompleteness; Jesus' Law focused not on ritual practice but on ethical behavior; Moses' Law guided the Jews, while Jesus' Law guided all people who believe that he is the messiah; Jesus suggested that the entire Law rested on only two requirements, to love God and to love one's neighbor; Jesus referred to those Jews who followed the Law (e.g., Sadducees and Pharisees) as hypocrites because they adhered to the fine details of the Law (tithing, giving alms, praying, fasting, food laws) but not its spirit.
- The negative side might put forward the following arguments: Jesus' commandments did not overturn Moses' but served to explain the reasoning behind them; Jesus himself followed the Law and expected his followers to as well; Jesus chastised the Jewish leaders for focusing on the letter of the Law while ignoring its larger and more fundamental meaning.

~~[4.] On the one hand, of the canonical Gospels, Matthew seems most Jewish. He traces Jesus' lineage back to Abraham, the father of the Jews; he compares Jesus to Moses, the prophet who freed the Jewish people from oppression; and he emphasizes the continuity between Judaism and Christianity. On the other hand, Matthew's Jesus teaches that some Gentiles will enter the Kingdom of God ahead of Jews. Moreover, the Gospel ends with the "Great Commission," Jesus' commandment to spread his teachings to all nations. By including this commandment, Matthew may be explaining to his community how Gentiles came to be included not only in the Kingdom of God but also in their own church.~~

~~[5.] Mark's Gospel begins with John's apocalyptic message and Jesus' baptism. The baptism story introduces the reader to Mark's secrecy motif: John apparently does not recognize Jesus as the messiah; after Jesus is baptized in Mark, Jesus sees the heavens open and hears a voice speak from heaven, "*You* are my beloved." Matthew changed the narrative quite a bit. When Jesus first approaches John, John recognizes him as the messiah and is hesitant to baptize Jesus because he recognizes Jesus' superiority. In Jewish tradition, the spiritually superior person baptized the person who was inferior. Matthew did not want Jesus to appear inferior, so he added John's acknowledgement that it was he who needed to be baptized by Jesus. Another change Matthew made to Mark's narrative concerns the statement of Jesus' Sonship. Rather than addressing only Jesus, in Matthew the voice from heaven speaks to those who are present: "*This* is my son." These changes point to Matthew's interest in showing Jesus' superiority and that some people recognized and accepted Jesus' messiahship.~~

### True/False

~~[1.] T~~  
~~[2.] F~~  
~~[3.] T~~

~~[4.] T~~  
~~[5.] F~~

### Multiple Choice

~~1. A~~  
~~2. D~~  
~~3. D~~  
~~4. A~~  
~~5. A~~  
~~6. A~~  
~~7. B~~  
~~8. B~~

~~9. B~~  
~~10. C~~  
~~11. A~~  
~~12. B~~  
~~13. D~~  
~~14. A~~  
~~15. C~~  
~~16. D~~

~~17. A~~  
~~18. B~~  
~~19. D~~  
~~20. B~~  
~~21. C~~  
~~22. A~~  
~~23. C~~  
~~24. A~~

~~25. D~~  
~~26. A~~  
~~27. C~~  
~~28. B~~  
~~29. C~~  
~~30. A~~

## Chapter 9

### Essays

- [1.] Luke's narrative begins in Jerusalem—in fact, in the Temple—with the announcement of John the Baptist's birth to Zechariah. Luke emphasizes right away that Jesus had an important tie to Judaism by underscoring the centrality of the holy city. A few days after his birth, Mark recounts that Jesus was taken to the Temple, where he was recognized as the messiah. The only canonical story of Jesus as a child takes place in the Temple. The climax of the temptation narrative is at the Temple. A large part of the Gospel, chapters 9 to 19, narrates Jesus' journey toward Jerusalem. The Gospel ends with Jesus' commandment to the disciples to stay in Jerusalem. It is in Jerusalem that the Holy Spirit comes to the disciples and empowers them to preach (narrated in Acts). Luke emphasizes Jesus' ties to the Temple throughout the Gospel and Acts in order to explain that God has not broken his promises to his people: the messiah came to the Jews to preach the coming Kingdom of God. When the Jews rejected Jesus, God's promises were extended to the Gentiles.
- [2.] Matthew's version of the Beatitudes contains nine blessings. Luke contains four blessings as well as a set of curses ("woes") who do the opposite of what Jesus has instructed. Luke's Beatitudes tend to emphasize themes of poverty and wealth. So whereas Matthew's Jesus says, "Blessed are the poor in spirit," Luke's Jesus says, "Blessed are the poor," and whereas Jesus in Matthew says, "Blessed are they who hunger and thirst for righteousness," Jesus in Luke says, "Blessed are you who are hungry now." Both declare that those who are hated for Jesus' sake are blessed.
- [3.] There are several important differences between Luke's and Matthew/Mark's Passion narratives. Luke's story focuses on Jesus' innocence and the unjust execution of an innocent man. Perhaps the most noticeable difference is the introduction of a trial before Herod. In addition to Pilate's declaration of Jesus' innocence (three times), Luke offers another verdict of innocence from a different leader, Herod—now both Gentile and Jewish authorities have declared Jesus innocent of charges. Luke also lists the specific charges leveled against Jesus. A careful reader will notice that all of the charges are false. Like other prophets, Jesus knows that he must die and does so willingly. On the cross, Jesus does not cry out, "My God, My God, why have you forsaken me?" but, "Into your hands I commend my spirit." After Jesus' death, the centurion does not confess that Jesus was the Son of God (as in Mark and Matthew) but that Jesus was innocent.
- [4.] Throughout Luke's Gospel, Jesus is portrayed as a prophet of God. By comparing Jesus' persecution to that of God's other prophets, Luke focuses on the appropriate response to a prophet's message: repentance. Jesus' death, according to this Gospel, does not itself bring salvation. Salvation comes to the people when they realize the unjustness of Jesus' death and repent.

~~[5.] The Gospel of Luke shows that Jesus lived an exemplary life and was not seditious or a lawbreaker. Rather, Jesus advocated love toward his neighbor and encouraged people to obey the government. The repeated declarations of Jesus' innocence by Pilate and Herod serve to emphasize that Jesus was not a threat to the government, and his final words of forgiveness from the cross emphasize that those killing him are doing so in ignorance. Unlike in Matthew and Mark, the centurion does not call Jesus the Son of God after his death but again confirms his innocence.~~

### **True/False**

~~[1.] T~~  
~~[2.] T~~  
~~[3.] F~~

~~[4.] T~~  
~~[5.] F~~

### **Multiple Choice**

~~1. A~~  
~~2. B~~  
~~3. D~~  
~~4. D~~  
~~5. C~~  
~~6. C~~  
~~7. B~~  
~~8. A~~

~~9. D~~  
~~10. C~~  
~~11. B~~  
~~12. A~~  
~~13. A~~  
~~14. D~~  
~~15. D~~  
~~16. C~~

~~17. A~~  
~~18. A~~  
~~19. C~~  
~~20. B~~  
~~21. C~~  
~~22. A~~  
~~23. C~~  
~~24. C~~

~~25. D~~  
~~26. A~~  
~~27. B~~  
~~28. D~~  
~~29. A~~  
~~30. B~~

## Chapter 10

### Essays

- [1.] The Gospel of John does not include a birth narrative; it does not explicitly state that John baptized Jesus; there is no temptation narrative; Jesus' message is not apocalyptic; he does not teach in parables or exorcise demons. John's Jesus declares openly who he is. Jesus does not institute the Lord's Supper; he does not pray in the Garden of Gethsemane; he is not tried before the Sanhedrin. Jesus does not perform numerous miracles in John; instead, he performs only seven "signs"—acts that illustrate his identity. Finally, the Gospel of John reflects the highest Christology of the canonical Gospels, declaring Jesus equal to God (see the Prologue and the "I am" sayings).
- [2.] The phrase "the Jews" seems to derive from the third stage of the Johannine community's relationship with the synagogue. Although many of the Johannine Christians probably converted from Judaism, by this stage in their history, they had been expelled from the synagogue. This situation resulted in a dualistic mentality ("us versus them") that pitted the Johannine Christians against the Jews. In John's Gospel, the Jews represent those people who rejected Jesus, and thus those who have rejected truth and God himself.
- [3.] The Prologue and "I am" sayings represent two of John's sources and derive from the third stage of the community's development. Both of these sources reflect the community's elevated view of Christ. The Prologue asserts not only Jesus' eternal coexistence with God but also his equality with God ("the Word was God"). Like the Prologue, the "I am" sayings underscore Jesus' equality with God: in Exodus God reveals his name, "I am," to Moses.
- [4.] Stage 1: The Johannine community began within the Jewish synagogue. They were Jews who believed Jesus was the messiah. Stories in the Gospel that emphasize Jesus' Jewishness and the conversion of some Jews probably originated at this time. Stage 2: The Johannine Christians apparently proselytized and thereby created problems within the Jewish community. At some point, these Christians were forced to leave the synagogue. Stage 3: John's community came to see the synagogue as completely other—it became the enemy and was even conceived of in demonic terms. It was during this time that the community's Christology shifted radically from Jesus the rabbi to the Word of God made flesh.
- [5.] The Prologue begins with a mystical reflection on the "Word" of God and its eternal divinity. The end of the Prologue reveals that Jesus is the human incarnation of this divine Word. The Prologue thereby establishes Jesus' eternal divinity while also emphasizing that he was truly a flesh-and-blood human being, each of which is an important theme throughout the Gospel. The Prologue also sets Jesus over and against the Jewish Law, claiming that he is the true heavenly essence to which the Law is a witness, again a major emphasis throughout the Gospel.

### True/False

~~[1.]~~

~~[2.] F~~

~~[3.] T~~

~~[4.] F~~

~~[5.] T~~

~~[6.] F~~

### Multiple Choice

~~1. D~~

~~2. C~~

~~3. A~~

~~4. B~~

~~5. D~~

~~6. C~~

~~7. C~~

~~8. C~~

~~9. A~~

~~10. D~~

~~11. A~~

~~12. C~~

~~13. D~~

~~14. D~~

~~15. A~~

~~16. C~~

~~17. A~~

~~18. C~~

~~19. C~~

~~20. D~~

~~21. A~~

~~22. C~~

~~23. A~~

~~24. B~~

~~25. D~~

~~26. A~~

~~27. D~~

~~28. C~~

~~29. A~~

~~30. B~~

# Chapter 11

## Essays

- [1.] First John states that the community had experienced a schism and that the individuals who left were “Antichrists” and “liars” who did not truly belong to the church. The author claims that these people denied that Jesus was the Christ. First John 2:22, 4:2–3, and 2 John 7 imply that these Christians denied the incarnation. The opening statement of 1 John underscores the author’s belief in the reality of Jesus’ human existence: “We declare to you what was from the beginning, what we have heard, what we have seen with our eyes, what we have looked at and touched with our hands, concerning the word of life” (1:1).
- [2.] Before the discovery of the Nag Hammadi library, scholars knew about Gnosticism and Gnostic beliefs only through orthodox heresiologists. When the codices were found in 1945, the academic study of Gnosticism changed dramatically. These fifty-two literary works were written by and for Gnostics—a fact that makes them extremely valuable for scholars but also very difficult to interpret. Most of the texts date to the mid-second century and survive in Coptic, though they were originally written in Greek. Gnosticism was not a unified religion/philosophical belief, and the Nag Hammadi library itself contains a variety of different views on important theological issues. After studying Marcionites, Jewish-Christian adoptionists, docetics, and other early Christian groups, these texts remind us that in the second century, Christianity was far from a unified, monolithic religion.
- [3.] In the central myths of Gnosticism, the material world was not created by the highest God but by an inferior, ignorant deity usually identified as the God of the Old Testament. The material world is the result of a cosmic disaster, and human souls are pieces of the divine trapped in this material world. Human souls can be set free only by acquiring the secret knowledge (*gnosis*) of their divine identity and of how they can return to their original heavenly abode. For Christian Gnostics, that secret knowledge was revealed through Jesus Christ, who had come to earth to give the knowledge of salvation. Gnostic Christians may have favored the Gospel of John for a number of reasons: Jesus is presented as preexistent and comes to earth to save God’s people, he delivers numerous discourses that explain who he is, and he claims coexistence and equality with God. The Jews are also portrayed negatively in the Gospel of John, which would be convenient for those who believed the Jews were worshiping the inferior Creator God rather than the true highest God. A second-century Gnostic (Heraclion) wrote the first known commentary on any Christian text; it was a commentary on the Gospel of John.
- [4.] The Prologue in the Gospel of John refers to Jesus as preexistent and one with the Father. Throughout the Prologue, John depicts Jesus as completely divine. This high Christology certainly led some Christians (e.g., the secessionists in the Johannine epistles) to reach the conclusion that Jesus was not human at all. The Prologue also, though, explicitly states that the Word of God became flesh and lived among his people. The insistence on the incarnation would have been problematic for Gnostics.



[5.] The two most important Christian Gnostic groups were the Sethian Gnostics and the Valentinian Gnostics. Sethians believed the Old Testament Creator God had created an imperfect, unjust material world in imitation of the perfect “Pleroma” (meaning fullness) of the spiritual realm. Humans were created as purely material beings but also had spirit breathed into (at least some of) them. Jesus is the incarnation of the divine Seth (the third son of Adam and Eve) who provides the knowledge necessary for human spirits to escape their material prisons and return to the divine realm. Sethians were highly ascetic and received a baptism that included five mystical “seals,” empowering them to transcend material existence through contemplation of the Pleroma. Valentinians were founded by a man named Valentinus and never seem to have separated into their own distinct groups but rather worshiped alongside proto-orthodox Christians in ordinary Christian communities. They adopted many elements of Sethian Gnosticism but were more moderate in how they combined these understandings with proto-orthodox Scriptures, which they also accepted. They divided humanity into three groups: animal, psychic/soulish, and pneumatic/spiritual, with those understanding the deeper knowledge of Valentinianism in the final category. Thomasine Christians appear to have been an early Christian group whose literature presupposes (without explicitly referring to) the complex mythological systems of the Gnostic universe. Their texts contain themes that would have resonated with Gnostic Christians: the body and this material realm, are understood to be prisons in which the real human is trapped; humans can escape the entrapment of the material realm through the acquisition of knowledge, as well as by ascetic living. So while Thomasine literature may not have been written by Gnostics, it would certainly have been compatible with a Gnostic worldview.

### True/False

[1.] T  
[2.] T  
[3.] F

[4.] F  
[5.] T

### Multiple Choice

1. D  
2. C  
3. A  
4. A  
5. B  
6. C  
7. D  
8. A

9. C  
10. B  
11. C  
12. A  
13. B  
14. D  
15. B  
16. C

17. D  
18. A  
19. B  
20. A  
21. C  
22. B  
23. C  
24. B

25. A  
26. A  
27. B  
28. D  
29. C  
30. B

# Chapter 12

## Essays

- [1.] The *Gospel of Thomas* is unlike the New Testament Gospels in several ways. It contains no narratives—no stories of Jesus’ birth, miracles, or death. Instead, it is composed of 114 discrete sayings of Jesus (perhaps similar in form to Q). This Gospel suggests that salvation comes from the proper interpretation of Jesus’ teachings, not from his atoning death. Jesus’ teachings in *Thomas* are anti-apocalyptic, and Jesus is not the Jewish messiah. Many of the sayings in *Thomas* are very similar to those recorded in the New Testament Gospels, while some are slightly different, and others are completely unlike anything found in the canonical Gospels.
- [2.] The *Gospel of Peter*’s account of Jesus’ death and resurrection, while in many ways unique among Christian Gospels, has many points in common with the Gospel of Matthew. Both *Peter* and Matthew refer to the washing of hands at Jesus’ trial; in both Gospels the Jewish leaders ask Pilate to have Jesus’ tomb guarded; in both Gospels the tomb is sealed. *Peter* is different in its heightened emphasis on the culpability of the Jews for Jesus’ death, the naming of the centurion (Petronius), the detail of the number of seals on the tomb (seven), and, most spectacularly, the narration of the resurrection itself. Although *Peter* is similar to Matthew in many respects, it was probably written later and did not directly rely on the Gospel of Matthew. Rather, the author of the *Gospel of Peter* most likely collected and recorded oral traditions that were circulating in his community.
- [3.] Marcion was a ditheist: he believed that the Jewish God was just but the God of Jesus was compassionate. The Jewish God created the world and gave the Law; the God of Jesus sent Jesus to save humanity from this other God. Jesus had no connection with the Creator God or his creation and, therefore, did not appear in physical form. Marcion was also, then, a docetist: he believed that Jesus only seemed human. Marcion claimed Paul as an authority for his views since Paul at times spoke of “his gospel” (which Marcion saw as distinct from the Jewish Law). Marcion also used a version of Luke (without the birth narrative).
- [4.] The *Gospel of Peter* was popular in parts of Syria, and the bishop of Antioch, Serapion, approved its use in worship. As discussed in the response to essay question 2, *Peter* has many similarities to the New Testament Gospels, in particular to Matthew. These similarities may have influenced Serapion’s opinion. Other early Christian leaders, though, thought that the Gospel could be interpreted as docetic: at his crucifixion, Jesus “was silent as if he had no pain” and cried out, “My power, my power, you have left me.” After this, the Gospel says that he was taken up, though his body remained on the cross. Some docetists believed that the divine Christ entered into, and then left, the human Jesus. The *Gospel of Peter* may reflect this type of docetism.
- [5.] According to Gnostics, salvation comes only through knowledge (*gnosis*). Stories about Jesus’ life, deeds, and death, therefore, are relatively unimportant in a Gnostic Gospel.

~~Thomas~~ claims to record the authentic teachings of the risen Lord—teachings that, if properly understood, bring salvation. While it is clear that for the New Testament Gospels—and Paul, it is Jesus’ death and resurrection that bring salvation, for a Gnostic who believed Jesus cannot be tied to or participate in the material world, Jesus’ death (if conceded to fall under the type of docetism discussed in the response to essay question 4) would be unimportant for salvation.

**True/False**

~~[1.] T~~  
~~[2.] F~~  
~~[3.] T~~

~~[4.] T~~  
~~[5.] T~~

**Multiple-Choice**

~~1. C~~  
~~2. A~~  
~~3. D~~  
~~4. B~~  
~~5. A~~  
~~6. C~~  
~~7. C~~  
~~8. B~~

~~9. D~~  
~~10. B~~  
~~11. C~~  
~~12. C~~  
~~13. B~~  
~~14. C~~  
~~15. A~~  
~~16. C~~

~~17. C~~  
~~18. A~~  
~~19. B~~  
~~20. C~~  
~~21. A~~  
~~22. C~~  
~~23. D~~  
~~24. A~~

~~25. C~~  
~~26. C~~  
~~27. B~~  
~~28. A~~  
~~29. A~~  
~~30. B~~

## Chapter 13

### Essays

- [1.] We have no eyewitness accounts of Jesus' life or ministry. The earliest extant Gospels date to thirty-five to sixty-five years after Jesus' death, and the traditions they contain were passed on orally during those years and were likely changed or even wholly fabricated. The Gospels contradict one another on some points, and all have different emphases. Pagan and Jewish sources are even later and yield little information about the historical Jesus. Paul, the earliest Christian writer we know of, seems uninterested in traditions of Jesus, choosing to focus instead on Jesus' death and resurrection. The literary sources available to scholars, then, are difficult to use to establish a picture of the historical Jesus.
- [2.] There are only three pagan sources that date to within one hundred years of Jesus' death: Pliny, Suetonius, and Tacitus. Pliny and Suetonius give some information about Christians and early Christian practice but offer no information about Jesus himself. Tacitus, on the other hand, does corroborate information found in the New Testament about Jesus' death (Jesus was executed at the hands of Pontius Pilate during the reign of Tiberius). Josephus, a first-century Jewish historian, mentions Jesus twice in his *Antiquities of the Jews*. In one instance, Josephus says that Jesus had a brother named James who was executed under the rule of Ananus the high priest. Josephus's other reference to Jesus is problematic. In this passage, Josephus confesses that Jesus was the messiah. Since Josephus never converted to Christianity, scholars believe Christian scribes embellished this passage. Scholars suggest, however, that the passage does contain some information from Josephus himself: Jesus had a following of Jews and Gentiles, and he was condemned by Pilate because of the accusations of the Jewish leaders and was crucified.
- [3.] The New Testament Gospels present several problems to the scholar wishing to reconstruct the historical Jesus. The Gospels were not written by eyewitnesses but are the products of thirty-five to sixty-five years of oral traditions. During the years between Jesus' death and the writing of the Gospels, stories of Jesus were told for conversion purposes and likely changed to fit particular circumstances; some stories may have been fabricated wholesale. The modification of stories did not end when they were written down: the Gospel writers continued to change stories to further their own theological agendas. In order to sort through the layers of accumulated tradition, scholars have devised a set of criteria by which to judge the authenticity of stories about Jesus: the criterion of independent attestation, the criterion of dissimilarity, and the criterion of contextual credibility.
- [4.] The criterion of independent attestation states that stories that appear in multiple sources that are independent of one another are more likely to be historically reliable. For example, several sources attest to Jesus' association with John the Baptist, that Jesus had a brother named James, and that Jesus taught in parables. These traditions therefore are likely historically reliable. The criterion of dissimilarity states that a story that goes against a Christian agenda is likely to be historically reliable, because it is unlikely that Christians—

would fabricate a story that worked against their beliefs. For example, all of the following—pass the criterion of dissimilarity: Jesus’ baptism, his betrayal by Judas, and his crucifixion. The criterion of contextual credibility states that any story that cannot plausibly be placed within a first-century Palestinian setting is not historically reliable. For example, Jesus’ encounters with Nicodemus and the Samaritan woman in the Gospel of John depend on a verbal misunderstanding in Greek, but Jesus and his followers spoke Aramaic. These stories—therefore are not contextually credible and are not reliable traditions about the historical—Jesus.

[5.] Students should discuss and apply the various historical criteria of independent attestation, dissimilarity, and contextual credibility. They might also observe that the cleansing of the Temple provides a plausible reason for Jesus’ execution at the hands of the Romans.

### True/False

[1.] T  
[2.] F  
[3.] F

[4.] T  
[5.] T

### Multiple Choice

1. A  
2. B  
3. C  
4. A  
5. C  
6. C  
7. D  
8. C

9. D  
10. C  
11. B  
12. C  
13. D  
14. A  
15. C  
16. C

17. B  
18. D  
19. A  
20. B  
21. D  
22. A  
23. C  
24. B

25. D  
26. C  
27. D  
28. A  
29. B  
30. C

# Chapter 14

## Essays

- [1.] The range of responses that Jews in Palestine had to Roman domination included silent protests, nonviolent uprisings, proclamations of imminent divine intervention, and violent insurrections, including one that led to the destruction of Jerusalem and the burning of the Temple. Most protest was nonviolent. Jews celebrated Passover in Jerusalem in part to recognize that God would once again save them from oppression, this time from the Romans.
- [2.] Apocalypticism has four main tenets: (1) Dualism: there are two powers in the world, good and evil, and all people must choose between them. (2) Pessimism: God's people should expect their suffering to escalate. As the forces of evil combat the forces of good, the lives of the righteous will grow more difficult. (3) Vindication: Apocalypticists believe that God will triumph over evil and his victory will redeem humanity. God will destroy all evil and suffering and create a new heaven and a new earth. (4) Imminence: God's intervention in history will take place very soon. The righteous who maintain their faith and withstand their suffering will be rewarded.
- [3.] In the prophetic view, suffering is God's punishment for sin; God punishes people in order to get them to repent, and when they do so and turn away from sin, their suffering will end. In the apocalyptic view, suffering is caused by evil forces that oppose God and are bent on hurting God's people; for suffering to end, God must intervene on behalf of his people, so people must remain faithful to God and wait for this intervention.  
—Both views deal with the suffering experienced by people whose lives are difficult at best, and whose community has been oppressed for generations. The apocalyptic view might arise in any similar situation.
- [4.] When scholars refer to Jesus as an apocalyptic prophet, they mean that Jesus preached the imminent coming of the day of judgment and the establishment of the Kingdom of God on earth. In this view, when God overthrows the forces of evil, he will establish a new Kingdom on earth, where there will be no suffering or injustice. There are many elements of Jesus' life and ministry that may point to his apocalyptic belief: (1) he associated with John the Baptist, who preached an apocalyptic message; (2) he preached the coming Kingdom of God and the need to repent and prepare for its arrival; (3) he provides the link between the apocalyptic John and the apocalyptic Paul; (4) he may have been crucified because his apocalyptic teachings threatened the future of the political and religious powers; (5) he had twelve disciples, perhaps symbolizing the twelve tribes of Israel; (6) he associated with outcasts and taught that their lot would be reversed in the Kingdom of God; (7) his healings may have illustrated to his followers that God had power over evil; and (8) his resurrection was interpreted as the firstfruits of the anticipated general resurrection that would take place when the Kingdom of God arrived.

~~[5.] The apocalyptic figure the Son of Man presents a problem for historians who wish to establish who Jesus was and what he taught. In many passages Jesus seems to assume that the Son of Man would come soon to judge the world. In these sayings, Jesus does not equate himself with the Son of Man. Early Christians, though, came to believe that Jesus was the Son of Man and anticipated his return in judgment and the establishment of the Kingdom of God on earth. Since Jesus' teachings on the Son of Man are different from what early Christians believed, on the basis of the criterion of dissimilarity, Jesus' teachings are likely authentic traditions.~~

### **True/False**

~~—~~

~~[1.] F~~

~~[2.] T~~

~~[3.] T~~

~~[4.] F~~

~~[5.] F~~

### **Multiple Choice**

~~1. B~~

~~2. B~~

~~3. C~~

~~4. A~~

~~5. B~~

~~6. C~~

~~7. A~~

~~8. D~~

~~9. A~~

~~10. D~~

~~11. B~~

~~12. A~~

~~13. D~~

~~14. A~~

~~15. D~~

~~16. B~~

~~17. B~~

~~18. A~~

~~19. B~~

~~20. C~~

~~21. C~~

~~22. B~~

~~23. B~~

~~24. C~~

~~25. C~~

~~26. D~~

~~27. A~~

~~28. A~~

~~29. C~~

~~30. C~~

# Chapter 15

## Essays

[1.] Jesus predicted that the Temple would soon be destroyed by God, and some days before his death, he entered the Temple, overturned some of the tables, and generally caused a disturbance. In one account of this event, Jesus displays superhuman powers, shutting down the entire Temple complex by force of will, despite armed guards. He is quoted as calling the Temple a “den of thieves” and may have felt that the Sadducees in control had abused their power.

—The apocalyptic perspective suggests that these actions may have been a kind of enacted parable, foreshadowing the destruction of the Temple that he had predicted. Jesus may have believed that in the new age to come, there would be a new Temple, or perhaps he believed there would be no need for a Temple at all. The apocalyptic perspective suggests, in short, that the Temple incident was an indication by Jesus of the coming end of days, destruction, and rebirth.

[2.] Israel had started out with twelve tribes headed by twelve Patriarchs. The fact that Jesus chose twelve of his followers as special disciples, not eight, not fourteen, and not some other number, suggests a connection with Israel’s original kingdom. The apocalyptic perspective is that Jesus’ twelve disciples signify a new Kingdom of Israel that God would bring to his people.

—The Gospels of Mark, Matthew, and Luke point to the significance of the number of Jesus’ disciples because they all agree on the specific number, suggesting that it was an intentional choice that Jesus made.

[3.] Jesus was handed over to the Roman authorities, who tried him on the charge that he called himself King of the Jews. This claim amounted to insurrection or treason against the state, and this is why Jesus was executed by the Romans under Pontius Pilate. Pilate may also have seen Jesus as a potential troublemaker and been as eager to be rid of him as the chief priests were.

[4.] *Deeds:* Jesus’ crucifixion may point to the threat he posed to political and religious establishments; the cleansing of the Temple may have been an enacted parable; he chose a symbolic number of disciples; he interacted with societal outcasts; his healings, particularly exorcisms, were described by his followers as God’s victory over evil. *Teachings:* Jesus preached the coming Kingdom of God, the Son of Man, the day of judgment, the reversal of fortunes, and the defeat of unjust powers. *Death:* Jesus may have gone to Jerusalem at Passover in order to preach his apocalyptic message to a large number of Jews. He preached the imminent coming of the Kingdom of God and the destruction of the Temple. Jesus’ arrival in Jerusalem at Passover may have had apocalyptic undertones because the celebration of Passover is a celebration of God’s victory over a dominating oppressor, his salvation of his people, and the giving of the land. Jesus taught that God would again liberate his people from a dominant oppressor, bring salvation, and establish his Kingdom on earth.



~~[5.] Scholars who think Jesus embraced Cynic values point out that many of his teachings sound remarkably similar to many Cynic teachings. Jesus' followers were to abandon all their possessions; they were not to be concerned about what to wear or what to eat; they were to live with the bare essentials and accept whatever was given to them by others; they were to condemn those who rejected their message; and they were to expect to be misunderstood and mistreated. On the other hand, all our sources portray Jesus as citing the Hebrew Scriptures to support his perspective and never Greek or Roman philosophers. The teachings seen as potentially Cynic are better understood in light of a prophetic-apocalyptic trajectory of social justice, and Jesus' concerns about the fate of Israel, the coming judgment, and the end of the age are better understood as apocalyptic than Cynic.~~

### True/False

~~[1.] F  
[2.] F  
[3.] T~~

~~[4.] T  
[5.] T~~

### Multiple Choice

~~1. D  
2. B  
3. D  
4. A  
5. C  
6. A  
7. B  
8. C~~

~~9. D  
10. C  
11. A  
12. D  
13. A  
14. C  
15. D  
16. D~~

~~17. B  
18. C  
19. D  
20. B  
21. D  
22. D  
23. B  
24. A~~

~~25. C  
26. B  
27. C  
28. D  
29. A  
30. C~~

## Chapter 16

### Essays

- [1.] Students may choose a number of starting points: Jesus' birth, his baptism, his ministry, his death, his resurrection, or when people began to believe in the resurrection. Students should be sure to deal with the problems inherent in their choice.
- [2.] Since Jesus' earliest followers were apocalyptically minded, this worldview affected their understanding of the resurrection. They believed that a cosmic battle was being waged between Satan and God, and that Jesus' resurrection signaled the beginning of the end. Christian apocalypticists believed that Jesus' resurrection signaled the coming of the general resurrection that would accompany the end of the age.
- [3.] Although Jesus apparently did not refer to himself as the Son of Man, once Christians came to believe in the resurrection, Jesus' unique relationship to God, and his position in heaven, they began to equate Jesus with the cosmic Judge. Jesus, according to these Christians, was the Son of Man who would return soon in judgment and usher in the Kingdom of God. As Christians passed on Jesus' teachings, they clarified certain aspects of them: where Jesus spoke about the Son of Man, Christians changed the words to make it clear that Jesus was preaching about himself.
- [4.] Since Jesus' earliest followers believed he was the Jewish messiah, they had to find ways to argue their case against general expectations of the messiah. Some Jews thought the messiah would be a king or a priest or a cosmic judge, but none, so far as we know, believed he would suffer and die. Christians, then, had to find evidence in Scripture for their suffering messiah. They turned to Psalms of lament and the Suffering Servant passages in Isaiah to show that Scriptures prophesied that the messiah would be a righteous man who would be rejected and persecuted.
- [5.] The Gospels all portray the empty tomb being discovered by women, specifically Mary Magdalene, along with a combination of other women. But Paul does not mention an empty tomb tradition at all, instead citing post-resurrection appearances to male disciples. Some feminist historians have argued that the Gospels preserve an early, inescapable tradition about women initially discovering the empty tomb. Other feminist scholars, however, argue that this was a device of the Gospels to explain why later believers had not heard of the empty tomb: it had been discovered by women who were either too giddy or too frightened to tell anyone or were otherwise not believed.

### True/False

[1.] F  
[2.] T

[3.] F  
[4.] F

[5.] T

**Multiple Choice**

1. D

2. A

3. C

4. A

5. C

6. D

7. C

8. A

9. D

10. B

11. A

12. B

13. D

14. D

15. D

16. B

17. D

18. A

19. C

20. D

21. B

22. B

23. D

24. A

25. C

26. C

27. B

28. B

29. B

30. C

# Chapter 17

## Essays

- [1.] Like many ancient histories, Acts focuses on several key characters. Although the book is called the Acts of the Apostles, after the first few chapters it narrows its scope to the acts of Peter and Paul. Paul, in particular, travels throughout the empire establishing churches and teaching Gentiles about Jesus. Both Peter and Paul deliver speeches to further their missionary efforts. In ancient histories, speeches were fabrications that were intended to fit the occasion; they were not historically accurate records of the words of the characters. Luke, then, follows the conventions of the genre by supplying speeches that are appropriate to the narrative audience and setting. Luke's use of these historiographic elements allows him to continue to emphasize the repeated rejection of Jesus and his teachings by the Jews and the inclusion of the Gentiles in the Kingdom of God. The travel narratives, as well as many of the speeches, present the apostles as appealing to the Jews first, as Jesus did, and then, once rejected, taking the gospel to the Gentiles. This emphasis, as we will see when we turn to look at Paul's writings, is particular to Luke's goals and does not seem to be historically accurate—Paul insists that he was appointed by Jesus to be the apostle to the Gentiles.
- [2.] It is critical for Luke to situate Christianity firmly within Judaism because if Christianity represented a new religion, or a completely new promise from God, God's faithfulness could be questioned: Had God broken his covenant with the Jews? If so, why should Christians think he would not also break this new covenant? By affirming the continuity of Judaism and Christianity, Luke accomplishes at least two things: first, he underscores God's faithfulness to his promise and to his people; and second, he explains why Gentiles can be brought into the covenant. God has not broken his promise but has extended it to include all people.
- [3.] If scholars are right about the connection between Luke and Acts, then we should be able to trace his particular emphases through both books. Both volumes contain a formal preface and are dedicated to Theophilus. Like the Gospel, Acts begins in Jerusalem. The narrative reveals that just as the Jews rejected, persecuted, and executed Jesus, so many of his followers will likewise be rejected, persecuted, and executed. Jesus anticipated the inclusion of Gentiles in the Kingdom, and this goal is accomplished in the book of Acts, particularly through Paul's missionary efforts. In the Gospel, Jesus performed miracles and preached the word of God; in Acts, the disciples perform miracles and preach Jesus' message. Just as Luke insisted in the Gospel that some Jews (Simeon, Anna, Jesus' disciples) believed in and followed Jesus, some Jews also accept Jesus' teachings in Acts, most noticeably Paul, who before his conversion persecuted the Christians. Jesus' apocalyptic teachings were muted in the Gospel, and apocalyptic expectations continue to be downplayed in Acts in order to emphasize the importance of spreading the gospel through the world.

~~[4.] The book of Acts is essentially about the movement of the Gospel from Jew to Gentile. Jesus leaves the apostles with the injunction not to dwell on thinking about when the Kingdom of God will be ushered in but rather to focus on spreading the gospel throughout the world. To assist in this mission, the Holy Spirit is sent on Pentecost for guidance and empowerment. Acts records many miracles being done on behalf of the apostles through the Holy Spirit.~~

~~[5.] The primary themes of Acts include: (1) the message of God's redemption is offered first to the Jews, who reject it; (2) subsequently, it is offered to the Gentiles; (3) this shift from Jew to Gentile is all part of God's plan; (4) this shift includes a geographic shift from Jerusalem, the heart of Judaism, to Rome, the capital of the empire; (5) the end of the age will be delayed while the message of redemption is spread; and (6) the apostles are guided by the Holy Spirit and in complete agreement with each other. Students should include specific evidence of these themes.~~

### **True/False**

~~[1.] T~~  
~~[2.] T~~  
~~[3.] F~~

~~[4.] F~~  
~~[5.] T~~

### **Multiple Choice**

~~1. D~~  
~~2. C~~  
~~3. C~~  
~~4. A~~  
~~5. B~~  
~~6. A~~  
~~7. C~~  
~~8. A~~

~~9. D~~  
~~10. B~~  
~~11. D~~  
~~12. B~~  
~~13. C~~  
~~14. C~~  
~~15. D~~  
~~16. A~~

~~17. C~~  
~~18. B~~  
~~19. D~~  
~~20. D~~  
~~21. A~~  
~~22. A~~  
~~23. C~~  
~~24. B~~

~~25. A~~  
~~26. B~~  
~~27. C~~  
~~28. D~~  
~~29. C~~  
~~30. A~~

## Chapter 18

### Essays

- [1.] Paul was a Pharisee and admitted that he was an active persecutor of Christians. After he converted, however, he became the most important figure in the spread of early Christianity. His importance was due not only to his missionary zeal, but also to his mission to the Gentiles. According to Paul, the salvation that came through faith in Jesus was available to all people, not just to Jews. Paul, moreover, taught that Gentiles should not convert to Judaism, because Jesus brought God's promises to all people. This message of universality would sound strange to Jews in antiquity: if Jesus was the Jewish messiah and his coming was in accordance with God's plan, then this salvation should have been brought to God's chosen people, the people with whom he had made a covenant. Paul, though, spent his missionary life arguing vehemently against the exclusivity of salvation.
- [2.] Writings under a false name are called pseudepigrapha. There are a number of writings attributed to Paul that are certainly pseudepigraphic (e.g., *3 Corinthians* and the correspondence of Seneca and Paul). It is likely, however, that the New Testament also contains pseudepigraphic writings. Scholars divide Paul's letters into three groups on the basis of authorship. First are the seven undisputed Pauline letters (Romans, 1 and 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Philippians, 1 Thessalonians, and Philemon). All scholars agree that Paul wrote these letters. Second are the Deutero-Pauline letters (2 Thessalonians, Ephesians, and Colossians). Most scholars agree that Paul did not write these letters, although there is some debate. Third are the Pastoral epistles (1 and 2 Timothy and Titus). With very few exceptions, scholars agree that Paul did not write these epistles.
- [3.] All of Paul's letters are occasional, by which scholars mean that they were written to specific communities at specific times to address specific issues. They were not, in other words, written as general pieces of advice for Christians everywhere and at all times. Paul's letters do not contain a systematic theology. Rather, his understandings about issues grew as he confronted them. It is essential to understand why Paul wrote a letter—what issues he addressed—in order to reach an appropriate interpretation of his message.
- [4.] After his conversion, Paul's missionary activity focused on the spread of the gospel to the Gentiles. Paul traveled to cities without churches and preached about God, Jesus, and salvation. He stayed with the new church for some time and left only when he felt it was stable and able to sustain itself. After he left, though, Paul did not abandon these churches. When he heard of problems within a church, he wrote a letter of instruction to it. He reminded the community of his teachings, elaborated on issues of faith, and demanded certain ethical and moral behaviors.
- [5.] Paul seems to have interpreted his encounter with the resurrected Jesus in light of his existing belief (as a Pharisee) in the resurrection of the dead; Jesus' resurrection was viewed by Paul as the "firstfruits of the resurrection." Paul also turned to the Jewish Scriptures to—

determine how Jesus, who suffered and died, could be the God's messiah. God's resurrection of Jesus vindicated him; it revealed that his death was a meaningful sacrifice for the sins of others. Paul also adapted his view of the Jewish Law and God's promises to the Jews; in doing so, Paul made the Christian message available to Gentiles.

### True/False

~~[1.] F~~

~~[2.] T~~

~~[3.] T~~

~~[4.] F~~

~~[5.] T~~

### Multiple Choice

~~1. B~~

~~2. A~~

~~3. C~~

~~4. D~~

~~5. A~~

~~6. C~~

~~7. B~~

~~8. A~~

~~9. C~~

~~10. B~~

~~11. A~~

~~12. B~~

~~13. D~~

~~14. D~~

~~15. C~~

~~16. A~~

~~17. B~~

~~18. A~~

~~19. D~~

~~20. C~~

~~21. B~~

~~22. C~~

~~23. D~~

~~24. A~~

~~25. C~~

~~26. C~~

~~27. A~~

~~28. B~~

~~29. A~~

~~30. C~~

## Chapter 19

### Essays

- [1.] Paul typically chose large urban areas in which to establish churches, presumably because they offered more potential converts. He entered these cities and set up shop, working in some kind of leather trade. Scholars surmise that Paul began converting Gentiles by talking with them as they came into his shop. Paul would start by teaching about the Jewish God and the erroneous belief in the pagan gods. After convincing a person of the existence of the one true God, Paul would go on to preach about this God's son, Jesus, and the salvation that God offered to those who believed in Jesus' death and resurrection. Paul also taught an apocalyptic worldview.
- [2.] Paul's missionary activity was more like that of the philosophical schools than the Greco-Roman religions because he preached an exclusive way of life: Christians had to give up their former beliefs in order to follow Jesus. Greco-Roman religions were, moreover, not missionizing religions, while some philosophical schools did actively seek converts. Like Paul, proselytizing philosophers focused on urban settings where there were a number of potential converts. Many were connected to wealthy households, but some, like Paul, believed in working for their living and were not dependent on others.
- [3.] The problem Paul addresses in 1 Thessalonians is the delay of the parousia. Paul taught the Thessalonians that Jesus would return very soon, but some in the community had already died. Paul assured this community that those who had died had not lost the promise but would be resurrected at the end of the age. This concern about the end and Paul's response to it point to the centrality of apocalypticism in Paul's missionary message.
- [4.] The major issue raised by the Thessalonians concerned how the events at the end of time would unfold and how those believers who had died before the end would fare. Though Paul instructed the people to be prepared because the end of the world was near, it in fact had not happened. Paul preached that the end would be preceded by the second coming of Jesus, and that it would happen suddenly and unexpectedly. The big fear was whether those who had died before Jesus' return had missed their chance to enter the heavenly Kingdom. Paul comforts these followers with the explanation that the dead will be the first to meet Jesus upon his return. Those who are alive at that time will meet Jesus "in the air." His teaching presupposes a three-storied universe: "up" is where God reigns, "here" is where we live, and "down" is where the dead reside.
- [5.] Paul's communities operated as distinct social groups by meeting privately on a regular basis in house churches. They understood themselves as a closed group, restricted to those who shared their beliefs and commitments. While persecution may have stemmed from this closed-door behavior, this self-identity also contributed to group cohesion. The groups also bonded through their insider information regarding the true God and the end of the age, their support and love for one another, and the common set of rules they shared.



**True/False**

~~[1.] T~~  
~~[2.] T~~  
~~[3.] F~~

~~[4.] F~~  
~~[5.] F~~

**Multiple Choice**

~~1. B~~  
~~2. C~~  
~~3. A~~  
~~4. D~~  
~~5. C~~  
~~6. B~~  
~~7. D~~  
~~8. C~~

~~9. B~~  
~~10. A~~  
~~11. B~~  
~~12. D~~  
~~13. A~~  
~~14. B~~  
~~15. A~~  
~~16. B~~

~~17. D~~  
~~18. A~~  
~~19. B~~  
~~20. B~~  
~~21. A~~  
~~22. B~~  
~~23. B~~  
~~24. B~~

~~25. A~~  
~~26. C~~  
~~27. B~~  
~~28. D~~  
~~29. A~~  
~~30. A~~

## Chapter 20

### Essays

- [1.] Some of the Christians in Corinth believed that they not only had died with Christ but also had been raised with him. Paul, on the other hand, argued that since Jesus was physically resurrected, his was a bodily resurrection, not a resurrection of the soul, so the Corinthians could not have already been exalted with Christ since they remained in their unchanged bodies. Paul maintained that there would be a general resurrection, and at that time Christians would be exalted with Christ. Paul insisted that this exaltation was in the future; it had not yet taken place. This fundamental misunderstanding of the believer's status led to problems in the Corinthian church because these Christians did not take seriously the power of sin in the world.
- [2.] After Paul established the church at Corinth, he left to continue his mission elsewhere and subsequently wrote a letter, no longer extant, dealing with some ethical problems that had arisen in the church. At some point, the Corinthians sent a letter to Paul, either in response to his letter or to ask for more instruction. Paul then wrote 1 Corinthians, in which he outlined ethical behaviors and told the community that he hoped to visit them soon. When he returned to Corinth, however, Paul was mistreated, and he left angry. Shortly after his departure, a group of missionaries (the "superapostles") arrived and attacked Paul's character. Paul then wrote a third letter (2 Corinthians 10–13) in which he attacked the position of the superapostles and the person who humiliated him. He threatened to visit Corinth again in judgment. The Corinthians apparently heeded Paul's warnings and punished the person who had insulted him. In response to this news, Paul wrote 2 Corinthians 1–9, a conciliatory letter in which he reestablished a relationship with his church.
- [3.] Among the many issues affecting the Corinthian community were claims of spiritual superiority, lawsuits between members in public courts, abuse of the communal meal, and sexual misbehavior. Most of the Corinthian converts were from the lower classes, but at least some of them must have been well-born, wealthy, and educated. Apparently the wealthier ones, not being subject to the demands of work, were able to arrive early at communal meals and consume more than their share of the food and drink. The more educated members apparently ate meat offered to idols, which could create confusion within the community. Paul deals with these issues in numerous ways, offering a range of ethical advice. He specifically encourages the consistent practice of love among community members.
- [4.] Unlike almost all of Paul's other letters, the letter to the Galatians does not begin with a thanksgiving. Paul's letter to the church at Galatia is a stinging reprimand of members' behavior. After Paul left Galatia, a group of missionaries arrived and preached the necessity of following the Jewish Law. In direct opposition to Paul's teachings, the men in the congregation accepted the rite of circumcision. According to Paul, these actions were not simply unnecessary; they were unacceptable. By participating in this Jewish rite, the Galatians displayed a lack of belief in the salvation offered by Jesus. Paul's principle

~~message was that the Galatians were erroneously seeking justification by the works of the Law instead of through belief in Christ.~~

~~[5.] As a Jew, Paul believed that the Law was given by God and was good. The Law, though, could not justify a person. Only faith in Christ made a person right before God. The Law was a disciplinarian: it provided instruction until God's promise was completed in Jesus.~~

### **True/False**

~~[1.] T~~  
~~[2.] F~~  
~~[3.] T~~

~~[4.] F~~  
~~[5.] F~~

### **Multiple Choice**

~~1. B~~  
~~2. D~~  
~~3. C~~  
~~4. A~~  
~~5. B~~  
~~6. C~~  
~~7. A~~  
~~8. B~~

~~9. D~~  
~~10. C~~  
~~11. A~~  
~~12. B~~  
~~13. D~~  
~~14. C~~  
~~15. A~~  
~~16. B~~

~~17. A~~  
~~18. A~~  
~~19. C~~  
~~20. B~~  
~~21. C~~  
~~22. B~~  
~~23. D~~  
~~24. A~~

~~25. D~~  
~~26. A~~  
~~27. C~~  
~~28. D~~  
~~29. B~~  
~~30. A~~

# Chapter 21

## Essays

- [1.] Paul presents two central models of salvation in Romans. First is the judicial model. In this scenario, God is both lawmaker and judge. Humans disobey God (sin), and the penalty for sin is death. The solution to this problem is Jesus' death. Jesus pays the penalty for human sin. God's acceptance of this payment is apparent because he resurrected Jesus. In order for Christians to appropriate Christ's payment, they must have faith in its efficacy. The second model is the participationist model. Here, too, the problem is sin, but sin is not an act; it is a cosmic force that enslaves humans. The solution to this problem is Jesus' death, envisioned as the defeat of the power of sin and death. People participate in Christ's victory and are united with him through baptism.
- [2.] Paul's gospel centered on the availability of salvation to both Jews and Gentiles. Since the Jews had the Scriptures and Jesus came to the Jews, though, Paul taught that salvation came first to the Jews and then to the Gentiles. Even though the Jews had this advantage, both groups were on equal footing before God. Justification by faith, moreover, is revealed in Scripture: Abraham was justified by his faith, not his works. Since salvation had always been offered on the basis of faith, then, God had not broken his promises to the Jews.
- [3.] A diatribe is a rhetorical style involving advancing an argument by stating a thesis, having an imaginary opponent raise objections to it, and then providing answers to these objections. Paul was effective in using the diatribe method to counter arguments that others had made against his teaching. He not only showed awareness of the issues but also validated the positions on all sides. By being able to counter all the objections, he showed that he knew what he was talking about.
- [4.] Paul was apprehensive about dealing with unbelieving Jews in Judea. The Jews did not believe that Jesus was the long-awaited messiah and considered the Christians' belief that Jesus was the messiah to be blasphemy. Paul was also apprehensive about the Jewish converts to Christianity. Although they did accept Jesus as the messiah, they were still too steeped in Hebrew Law to accept Paul's "Law-free gospel." As Jewish Christians, they thought that Gentiles ought to convert to Judaism to be true Christians. Paul thought otherwise. He taught that the Gentiles were under no obligation to be circumcised, eat according to kosher directives, or adhere to other restrictions of the Hebrew Law.
- [5.] Romans is distinctive among Paul's letters in the following ways: it is written to a church that was not established by Paul; Paul had never met his recipients, the Roman Christians; Paul is not addressing problems in the recipients' community; and Paul focuses on expounding his own theology in a relatively thorough manner.

## True/False

~~[1.] F~~  
~~[2.] F~~  
~~[3.] T~~

~~[4.] F~~  
~~[5.] F~~

**Multiple Choice**

~~1. C~~  
~~2. B~~  
~~3. A~~  
~~4. D~~  
~~5. B~~  
~~6. C~~  
~~7. C~~  
~~8. A~~

~~9. B~~  
~~10. C~~  
~~11. D~~  
~~12. B~~  
~~13. A~~  
~~14. C~~  
~~15. A~~  
~~16. D~~

~~17. D~~  
~~18. C~~  
~~19. D~~  
~~20. A~~  
~~21. B~~  
~~22. A~~  
~~23. C~~  
~~24. D~~

~~25. B~~  
~~26. D~~  
~~27. B~~  
~~28. A~~  
~~29. D~~  
~~30. B~~

## Chapter 22

### Essays

- [1.] We do not have anything written by Jesus himself. Our only knowledge of his religious views comes from Christians who wrote decades after his death. Although we do have Paul's own writings, they are occasional in nature, not systematic. Nonetheless, there are some aspects of Jesus' and Paul's religious views that we can be fairly certain about. Both were Jews and believed in the Jewish God. Both were apocalyptically minded and expected the Kingdom of God to come soon. Jesus and Paul, however, had different understandings of some of these points. Jesus, for example, believed that the Son of Man would come during his disciples' lifetimes; Paul believed that Jesus would come during his (Paul's) lifetime. Jesus believed that following the heart of the Law, to love God and one's neighbor, brought salvation; Paul believed that faith in Jesus, not the works of the Law, brought salvation.
- [2.] Ehrman presents three options for accounting for the dearth of information about Jesus in Paul's letters. First, Paul knew a lot about the historical Jesus, but he had no occasion to remind his audience of these stories. The problem with this view is that Paul often does remind his churches of what he has taught them. Paul also cites stories about Jesus to bring authority to his own views. Second, Paul knew traditions about Jesus but thought they were irrelevant to his ministry. Paul, in fact, explicitly states that he preached Christ crucified. Perhaps the stories of Jesus' life and ministry, then, were simply of little importance to Paul. Third, it is possible that Paul included in his correspondence nearly all the information about Jesus he knew. In this case, not only was Jesus' life unimportant in Paul's missionary efforts, but it also was unimportant to Paul himself.
- [3.] James seems to be written as a corrective to a misunderstanding of Paul's teachings on justification by faith. In the book of James, "faith" is an acknowledgement of truth, not a commitment to that truth, and "works" are those good deeds that reveal one's faith, not the actions required by the Jewish Law (e.g. circumcision). Once the reader identifies the meaning of each of these terms, it becomes clear that the teachings on salvation in Paul's letters and in James do not contradict one another. For James, a person does not truly have faith if he or she does not show that faith in action. James writes, "Faith by itself, if it has no works (e.g. good deeds), is dead" (2:17). Paul would likely have agreed with this.
- [4.] The *Acts of Paul and Thecla* appropriate Paul's authority to teach a strict ascetic life. Paul does write that celibacy is the best way for Christians to live, but he also offers marriage as a concession to those unable to remain celibate. Certainly there is evidence in Paul's genuine letters to substantiate, in part, this apocryphal literature. The strict asceticism embedded in the *Acts*, though, ignores much of Paul's teachings, as well as the apocalyptic worldview that underlies many of his teachings.
- [5.] Valentinus claimed to have gained his knowledge from Paul's disciple Theudas, and Valentinian Gnostics pointed to Paul's words about some being "spiritual" rather than

~~“fleshly,” and spoke of the “mystery” of the gospel “hidden” from the rulers of this age— reserved for the “mature.” Nevertheless, Gnostics were polytheists, and their view of Jesus— was very different from that of Paul.~~

### **True/False**

~~[1.] F~~  
~~[2.] F~~  
~~[3.] T~~

~~[4.] F~~  
~~[5.] T~~

### **Multiple Choice**

~~1. D~~  
~~2. B~~  
~~3. C~~  
~~4. A~~  
~~5. C~~  
~~6. B~~  
~~7. B~~  
~~8. C~~

~~9. A~~  
~~10. D~~  
~~11. C~~  
~~12. A~~  
~~13. A~~  
~~14. A~~  
~~15. B~~  
~~16. C~~

~~17. D~~  
~~18. D~~  
~~19. C~~  
~~20. A~~  
~~21. B~~  
~~22. C~~  
~~23. D~~  
~~24. D~~

~~25. B~~  
~~26. B~~  
~~27. A~~  
~~28. D~~  
~~29. B~~  
~~30. D~~

## Chapter 23

### Essays

- [1.] In the *Acts of Paul and Thecla*, Paul preaches a message of strict celibacy, and he seems to allow a more prominent position for women in the church. These tendencies can also be found in Paul's undisputed letters. For example, Paul teaches that the celibate life is best (although he does allow for marriage among weaker Christians). He also mentions many women who had been important in various churches (see, e.g., Romans 16). On the other hand, the Pastoral epistles also draw on Paul's authority; in fact, they were written under Paul's name. In these letters, marriage is the ideal. This author asserts that women are saved through childbirth. Moreover, he forbids women from having any authority over men. Some scholars have suggested that the apocryphal Acts were written to counter the teachings of the Pastoral epistles. Regardless, both sets of texts give evidence of the divergent Pauline Christianities in the early centuries of Christian history.
- [2.] On the affirmative side, students might argue that 2 Thessalonians begins the same way as 1 Thessalonians, an undisputed Pauline letter. 2 Thessalonians, moreover, contains an apocalyptic message that stresses the immediate return of Jesus, the punishment of those who oppose Christians, and the reward of the faithful. The author seems to know of pseudepigraphic works circulating under Paul's name and warns the community about them, assuring them that this letter is genuine. This author reminds the community that he worked when he was among them and, likewise, they must keep their jobs and not be dependent on others. On the negative side, students might argue that a person writing in Paul's name would naturally try to sound like Paul. If the author of 2 Thessalonians knew 1 Thessalonians, that could account for the similarities between the letters. Perhaps the most problematic issue in 2 Thessalonians, however, is the teaching about what will take place before the end comes. Second Thessalonians says that although the end will come soon, there will be warnings of it (it will not come like a thief in the night as in 1 Thessalonians): an Antichrist will appear and declare himself to be God. This teaching does not occur in any of Paul's undisputed letters and may be convincing evidence that Paul did not write this letter.
- [3.] For 1 and 2 Thessalonians, see the response to essay question 2. The letter to the Colossians espouses a theology that appears to contradict Paul's teachings in other letters. In the Corinthian correspondence, Paul argues vehemently that although Christians have died with Christ through baptism, they have not yet been raised with him. Colossians, on the other hand, makes the opposite argument: believers have both died with Christ and been raised with him. Similarly, Ephesians suggests that the believer has already been raised with Christ. The author of Ephesians, moreover, uses the term "works" differently from Paul. For Paul, "works" refers to adherence to the Jewish Law, actions that cannot save. The author of Ephesians, though, understands "works" to mean those actions that demonstrate one's faith (as in the book of James).



[4.] The Pastorals exhibit three elements that helped proto-orthodoxy gain supremacy. First, they show the development of clergy (they are addressed to individuals rather than to a church or community). Second, they show the development of a set of doctrines that outline orthodox belief (the “teachings”). Finally, they show the movement toward a canon. Even though Christians did not claim a particular group of books as authoritative until the end of the second century, the words of Jesus and the apostles were deemed authoritative much earlier (1 Timothy 5:18 places Jesus’ words on a par with Jewish Scripture). These three elements helped the proto-orthodox put boundaries around belief and established authorities for interpretation.

[5.] In Paul’s undisputed letters, he advocates celibacy as ideal and seems to allow a more prominent position for women in the church. For example, Paul teaches that the celibate life is best (although he does allow for marriage among weaker Christians). He also mentions many women who had been important in various churches (see, e.g., Romans 16). In the Pastoral epistles, however, marriage is the ideal. This author asserts that women are saved through childbirth. Moreover, he forbids women from having any authority over men.

### True/False

[1.] F

[2.] F

[3.] T

[4.] T

[5.] T

### Multiple-Choice

1. B

2. B

3. A

4. C

5. D

6. A

7. C

8. C

9. C

10. B

11. B

12. C

13. D

14. C

15. A

16. A

17. D

18. C

19. A

20. B

21. C

22. D

23. B

24. A

25. B

26. B

27. B

28. C

29. B

30. C

## Chapter 24

### Essays

- [1.] Paul's letters give somewhat mixed messages regarding his stance on women in the church. On one hand, his undisputed letters indicate that women played a role in the foundation of the earliest churches. Women served as deacons, patrons, and even apostles in early Pauline communities. He cites ancient material which promotes a sort of ancient egalitarianism (e.g. Gal 3:27-28: there was "no longer male and female...in Jesus Christ"). On the other hand, in some parts of his undisputed letters, Paul appears to believe that certain "natural" gender norms ought to be maintained. Women, for instance, need to wear head coverings when they pray and prophesy in churches, 1 Cor 11:3-16). It appears that Paul believes that women are equal in Christ, but that this equality will not be fully realized socially in this age. Women are naturally subordinate to men, just as men are subordinate to Christ (who is subordinate to God) (1 Cor 11:3).
- [2.] Early Gospel traditions independently attest that there were many women associated with Jesus. Some women provided financial support. Others accompanied him in his public ministry. Various independent traditions depict Jesus as conversing and interacting with women. All four Gospels depict women as present at the crucifixion, as well as the first ones to believe that Jesus was resurrected. — Jesus' association with women may be contextually credible, in part because of his apocalyptic views. Since part of his message was the reversal of fortunes, it is possible that Jesus' association with women — a part of society generally perceived to be inferior — was an enactment of his apocalyptic message. The criterion of dissimilarity is not an effective tool for determining Jesus' involvement with women.
- [3.] Since Paul's views of women could be interpreted as inconsistent — claiming that women could serve in the church, but that they must retain their social status as women — it is not surprising that Christian groups subsequently used Paul to advance their own, very different views. One group took the side that women were equal to men in every way (see, e.g., the *Acts of Paul and Thecla*). Other Christians, however, took the opposite stance and argued that women should marry and occupy a traditional, submissive role (see, e.g., the Pastoral epistles). As long as Christians met within the confines of the private home, women were able to hold positions of authority and prominence. As the movement grew and Christianity became more public, however, it became problematic for women to retain their leadership positions.
- [4.] Scribes who made copies of the New Testament changed the text in accordance with their positions on women in the church. A few examples of this phenomenon include Acts 17:4 — the original text used the phrase "prominent women" but scribes changed it to "wives of —

prominent men”; Acts 18—the original text placed the name Priscilla (female) first and Aquila (male) second but scribes reversed the order; and Colossians 4:15—the original text had the meeting occurring in the home of Nympha (female) but scribes changed this name to Nymphas (male). 1 Corinthians 14:34–35 may be a scribal insertion, based on the pseudonymous passage of 1 Tim 2:11–15.

[5.] Students should be able to articulate that ancient people tended to see gender as a spectrum. Men and women were not seen as different in *kind* but rather different in *degree*. Masculinity and femininity were part of a spectrum—with masculinity being seen as superior to femininity. Ancient individuals were situated along that spectrum, based on a number of masculine/feminine characteristics: strength/weakness, dominance/submission, rationality/emotionality, public/private, etc. In their earliest iterations, Christian groups assembled in households, the domain of women. Hence, in those early iterations, women held positions of authority. However, as the Christian movement grew and became more public in nature, men began to assume positions of power, and eventually female leadership within proto-orthodox churches was curtailed.

### True/False

[1.] T  
[2.] F

[3.] F  
[4.] T  
[5.] F

### Multiple Choice

1. B  
2. A  
3. A  
4. C  
5. B  
6. A  
7. C  
8. D

9. A  
10. B  
11. D  
12. D  
13. A  
14. B  
15. C  
16. B

17. B  
18. A  
19. B  
20. D  
21. D  
22. C  
23. B  
24. A

25. A  
26. B  
27. A  
28. B  
29. C  
30. B

## Chapter 25

### Essays

- [1.] The epistle to the Hebrews asserts the superiority of Christ to the prophets, the angels, Moses, Joshua, and the Jewish priesthood. Christ brings a superior covenant and a superior tabernacle, and makes a superior sacrifice. Drawing on Platonic thought, this author argues that the old covenant was a foreshadowing of the new, an imperfect reflection of a perfect reality. According to this author, Christianity represents the perfection of Judaism; those who do not believe that Jesus is the messiah, moreover, are not the true people of God.
- [2.] While sacrifices in the Temple had to be offered regularly to make up for human shortcomings in following the Law, Jesus' sacrifice was perfect and eternal. Jesus' sacrifice took care of all human sin. There was no longer any need, then, for animal sacrifice in the Temple. Throughout Hebrews, Christ is depicted as more perfect than the Jewish Law; his sacrifice is yet another example of his superiority.
- [3.] Rather than seeing Judaism as the foreshadowing of Christianity, the *Epistle of Barnabas* portrays it as a false religion. According to this author, the Jews broke their covenant as soon as they received it. Whereas the author of Hebrews claims that the Old Testament contains prophecies of the new covenant and the perfection of Judaism, *Barnabas* claims that the Old Testament has never been a Jewish book but has always belonged to Christians. The author of Hebrews depicts Christianity as the logical continuation of Judaism. The author of the *Epistle of Barnabas* depicts Christians as the people of God because they are the only ones who understand God's covenant. According to *Barnabas*, then, there is no continuity between Judaism and Christianity.
- [4.] In the Gospel of Matthew, the Jewish leaders are the ones who are responsible for Jesus' death. Matthew is careful not to indict the Jews as a whole, but to show how the religious leaders led the crowd to call for Jesus' crucifixion. (Even though Matthew narrates the Jews proclaiming, "His blood be on us and on our children," the larger context of this Gospel is the continuity of Jesus and Judaism. Matthew places the responsibility of Jesus' death squarely on the religious leaders.) The anti-Jewish sentiment grows in the Gospel of John, where the blame is placed on "the Jews," those people who knowingly reject the messiah. Hebrews presents Judaism as good but not as perfect as Christianity. *Barnabas* denies any relationship between Judaism and Christianity, positing Judaism as a false religion. By the time Melito delivered his paschal homily in the second century, anti-Judaism had risen to the point that the Jews were accused of killing God himself. Anti-Jewish rhetoric was tied up with Christian self-identity, and it served to distinguish Christianity from Judaism.
- [5.] Hebrews mentions Timothy (one of Paul's trusted friends) and includes travel plans and greetings that could be construed as possibly those of Paul. But the book does not claim to be written by Paul, and the writing style is very different from Paul's. The major topics are also

things Paul rarely mentions, let alone emphasizes. Students may also note that some terminology in the book seems to be used differently than Paul uses these words.

### True/False

~~[1.] F~~  
~~[2.] F~~  
~~[3.] T~~

~~[4.] T~~  
~~[5.] F~~

### Multiple Choice

~~1. C~~  
~~2. C~~  
~~3. C~~  
~~4. A~~  
~~5. B~~  
~~6. A~~  
~~7. D~~  
~~8. D~~

~~9. B~~  
~~10. A~~  
~~11. C~~  
~~12. A~~  
~~13. D~~  
~~14. C~~  
~~15. D~~  
~~16. C~~

~~17. B~~  
~~18. B~~  
~~19. C~~  
~~20. A~~  
~~21. C~~  
~~22. B~~  
~~23. A~~  
~~24. D~~

~~25. A~~  
~~26. C~~  
~~27. C~~  
~~28. B~~  
~~29. A~~  
~~30. B~~

## Chapter 26

### Essays

- [1.] Jesus taught that families should be secondary to the faith (Matt 10:34–37). The apocryphal Acts of the apostles (for this class, specifically the *Acts of Paul and Thecla*) challenged societal norms of marriage and family. Thecla left her fiancé and mother to follow Paul and his ascetic message. The *Martyrdom of Perpetua and Felicitas* also presents a Christian response to societal expectations of family. After Perpetua converted, she was arrested and faced martyrdom. Her father pleaded with her to save herself, but she did not obey him. Christians believed that the church provided a new and more important family (in fact, they used familial language such as “brother” and “sister” for their fellow members).
- [2.] Students should point out that for most of its early history, Christianity was not illegal in the Roman Empire. Romans, as a rule, did not care what gods people worshiped or which gods a particular group considered worthy of worship. It was also not illegal to proselytize, to gather together for worship, or to participate in certain rituals revolving around one’s faith. Christians were persecuted, then, not directly for their religious beliefs. Rather, they were believed to be a threat to the empire because they challenged social norms (e.g., the family) and insisted on the worship of their God to the exclusion of all other deities. Pagans feared the gods’ retribution (drought, famine, war, etc.) for lack of worship. Most often, persecutions were grassroots movements and not imperially legislated attacks.
- [3.] Students should refer to the excerpts from Ignatius’s letters found in the accompanying reader. In general, each of these themes safeguards “right belief.” If churches are unified, they will accept the same teachings as correct. The clergy serve as guides for the churches as they develop more detailed statements of belief. Ignatius’s letters were primarily written to combat heresy and to guard against churches slipping into heretical beliefs. His letters provide a stronger statement of the importance of the clergy than anything found in the New Testament.
- [4.] The author of 1 Peter calls his readers “exiles” and “aliens,” a designation generally attributed to all Christians because Christians believe that their real home is in heaven. This world is a temporary dwelling place in which they have no citizenship. Being eternal citizens of heaven, they never feel at home within non-Christian societies and cultures. For “a while,” though, they live as resident aliens on earth. Other scholars suggest that this designation could also have applied to actual exiles and aliens from other communities who were marginalized in their new residences, as well as to social outcasts from the same community. These people would have been attracted to the welcoming atmosphere of the early Christian house churches.
- [5.] Apologetic literature makes a defense for particular beliefs and actions. Apologists like Justin and Origen claimed that Christian beliefs were superior to other options and that Christians were innocent of the charges of immorality and atheism. They insisted that Christ

miraculously fulfilled not only the prophecies of the Hebrew Bible but also (albeit more indirectly) important myths in Greek and Roman mythology. They argued that Christianity—although seeming to be a relative newcomer on the scene—was actually more ancient than the oldest pagan traditions. They also argued that the state should not enforce its religion but rather should let the Christians live in peace (rather than in pieces).

True/False

- |                   |                   |
|-------------------|-------------------|
| <del>[1.] F</del> | <del>[4.] F</del> |
| <del>[2.] T</del> | <del>[5.] T</del> |
| <del>[3.] T</del> |                   |

Multiple Choice

- |                 |                  |                  |                  |
|-----------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|
| <del>1. D</del> | <del>9. C</del>  | <del>17. C</del> | <del>25. A</del> |
| <del>2. D</del> | <del>10. D</del> | <del>18. D</del> | <del>26. C</del> |
| <del>3. C</del> | <del>11. A</del> | <del>19. A</del> | <del>27. A</del> |
| <del>4. C</del> | <del>12. B</del> | <del>20. A</del> | <del>28. D</del> |
| <del>5. C</del> | <del>13. C</del> | <del>21. C</del> | <del>29. B</del> |
| <del>6. B</del> | <del>14. B</del> | <del>22. B</del> | <del>30. D</del> |
| <del>7. C</del> | <del>15. C</del> | <del>23. D</del> |                  |
| <del>8. A</del> | <del>16. B</del> | <del>24. C</del> |                  |

## Chapter 27

### Essays

- [1.] Students who take the affirmative side might discuss the fact that Jesus' name is only mentioned twice in the epistle of James and that none of the book is uniquely Christian. Its ethical exhortations could have been drawn from Jewish Scripture. Students arguing the negative side of the debate could discuss the fact that even though Jesus and his teachings are not directly mentioned, many of the teachings seem to allude to Jesus traditions, especially those in Matthew's Sermon on the Mount. The book, moreover, serves as a corrective to misunderstandings of Paul's doctrine of justification by faith.
- [2.] *First Clement* illustrates Rome's assumption of authority over other churches. In this letter, the author urges the Corinthian church toward certain actions. This early authority of Rome was later underscored when the bishop in Rome came to be the most important bishop in the orthodox church. *First Clement* was written to reinstate the clergy who had been deposed by another group within the church. Rome utilized the doctrine of apostolic succession to argue for the rightful authority of the presbyters.
- [3.] Although 2 Peter explicitly claims to have been written by Jesus' disciple, most scholars believe the book is pseudonymous. First, Jesus' disciple Peter was most likely uneducated, while the author of this letter is a sophisticated and literate Greek writer. Second, a large portion of this letter is taken from the book of Jude. If Peter wrote this letter, why would he rely on another source for information? Jude, moreover, was probably written toward the end of the first century, well after Peter's martyrdom in 64 C.E. Third, there is no mention of this book until around 220 C.E., and even then it does not seem to have been widely circulated.
- [4.] The *Didache* is a book of early Christian teaching, purportedly from the twelve apostles, most likely written in the early second century C.E. It is especially significant because it preserves our earliest account of how early Christians practiced their rituals of baptism and the Eucharist, gives examples of early Christian prayers, indicates the days Christians fasted, and demonstrates the existence of itinerant Christian ministers. The book contains a set of ethical admonitions based on the doctrine of the "Two Ways," which also appear in the *Epistle of Barnabas*. The book appears to know the Gospel of Mark along with a wide range of earlier Christian traditions and concludes with an apocalyptic discourse looking forward to the return of Christ.
- [5.] The author of the epistle of Jude claims to be Jude the brother of James, implying that he is the brother of Jesus himself. The vast majority of scholars reject this claim on the basis that Jude was most likely illiterate and incapable of writing in Greek in particular, making the epistle an early Christian pseudepigraphon. The book is concerned with false teachers in the community who engage in sexual immorality and deeds of ungodliness. Most of the letter is



~~invective, though it also cites Jewish pseudepigrapha. Second Peter later used some of Jude to make its own arguments.~~

### ~~True/False~~

~~[1.] T~~

~~[2.] T~~

~~[3.] F~~

~~[4.] F~~

~~[5.] F~~

### ~~Multiple Choice~~

~~1. B~~

~~2. C~~

~~3. A~~

~~4. C~~

~~5. D~~

~~6. B~~

~~7. C~~

~~8. A~~

~~9. B~~

~~10. C~~

~~11. D~~

~~12. A~~

~~13. C~~

~~14. B~~

~~15. C~~

~~16. D~~

~~17. B~~

~~18. D~~

~~19. B~~

~~20. C~~

~~21. A~~

~~22. B~~

~~23. D~~

~~24. B~~

~~25. A~~

~~26. B~~

~~27. C~~

~~28. A~~

~~29. D~~

~~30. C~~

## Chapter 28

### Essays

- [1.] Apocalypses promise their audiences that the present world order, under which they suffer, will change soon, and God will establish his perfect Kingdom. This genre explains that righteous people suffer precisely because they are righteous, not because they have sinned. Their suffering, therefore, is understandable and should be expected, but it will end very soon when God defeats Satan and eliminates evil and suffering in the world. These texts encourage people to retain their faith in order to be rewarded when the judgment comes.
- [2.] Students should discuss the basic elements of the genre: pseudonymity and its function, symbolic visions and their meaning in the text, repetitions, triumphalist themes, and motivational functions. In addition, they should discuss the primary themes in the texts (the destruction of current world powers, the problem of postbaptismal sin, the promise of heaven and the tortures of hell) and how each of these themes points to problems within particular communities.
- [3.] The drama of human history concludes differently in Jewish and Christian literature for the obvious reason that in Christian, but not Jewish, apocalyptic literature, it is always Jesus who conquers evil in the present age and ushers in the Kingdom of God. In Christian apocalypses such as Revelation, *The Shepherd* of Hermas, and the *Apocalypse of Peter*, all the cataclysmic events culminate with Jesus as the savior of the world.
- [4.] The twenty-four human elders in Revelation appear to represent the twelve tribes of Israel and the twelve apostles; the whore of Babylon represents Rome, who persecutes “the saints” (in Jewish tradition, “Babylon” is typically code for the enemy of God’s people; the reference to seven hills also implies Rome). The art of calculating the number of a person’s name is known as “gematria.” The number of the Beast, 666, most likely refers to the Roman emperor Nero Caesar. The Sybilline oracles pick out Nero as the Beast based on the total of his name being 616. However, when his name is spelled in Hebrew, the total comes out to 666. This interpretation fits with the symbolism in Revelation revealing Rome as “the whore of Babylon” supported by Satan and the archenemy of God.
- [5.] The author of Revelation identifies himself as a certain John, though we do not seem to know this John from any other early Christian texts. He is not the author of the Gospel of John, nor does he claim to be John the son of Zebedee (evidence against both these claims could be offered). He discusses the particular communities to which he writes in chapters 2 and 3; these are the seven churches of Asia Minor. Among other things, it seems that John’s audience is experiencing persecution and suffering. Additional details could be included by the student.

### True/False

~~[1.] T~~

~~[2.] F~~

~~[3.] T~~

~~[4.] F~~

~~[5.] T~~

### Multiple Choice

~~1. A~~

~~2. C~~

~~3. D~~

~~4. B~~

~~5. A~~

~~6. A~~

~~7. C~~

~~8. A~~

~~9. D~~

~~10. D~~

~~11. B~~

~~12. B~~

~~13. C~~

~~14. A~~

~~15. C~~

~~16. C~~

~~17. A~~

~~18. C~~

~~19. B~~

~~20. A~~

~~21. B~~

~~22. D~~

~~23. C~~

~~24. B~~

~~25. A~~

~~26. B~~

~~27. C~~

~~28. A~~

~~29. C~~

~~30. B~~

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