Appendix B

New Testament
Segment Introductions
and Charts

RVS Notes
Fall/Spring, 2018-2019

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New Testament Segment Introductions and Charts

In General

Like the Old Testament, the New Testament is not a single book but an anthology of books. It is composed of twenty-seven books which vary substantially in length and reflect a wide diversity of themes, literary forms, backgrounds, and purposes. The New Testament is less than one-third the size of the Old Testament and was written over a period of approximately 50 years in the common Greek of the day.

A common classification of the New Testament books is a threefold division into the Historical Books (the Gospels and Acts), the thirteen Pauline Epistles, and the General Epistles (Hebrews through Revelation). The chart below reflects this division.

Historical Books	***Paul's Letters***	***General Letters***
Matthew	Romans	Hebrews
Mark	1 Corinthians	James
Luke	2 Corinthians	1 Peter
John	Galatians	2 Peter
Acts	Ephesians	1 John
	Colossians	2 John
	Philippians	3 John
	1 Thessalonians	Jude
	2 Thessalonians	Revelation
	1 Timothy	
	2 Timothy	
	Titus	
	Philemon	

The five historical books depict the key events in the life of Christ and the foundation and expansion of the early church. Paul's thirteen epistles address various issues confronting the churches he founded on his missionary journeys and in so doing further developed the truths that would, by the power of the Spirit, transform the lives of believers. The authors of the nine books designated as the General Epistles deal frankly with a multiple of issues creeping into the life of the early church. Revelation fittingly concludes the New Testament as it anticipates Christ's glorious return, the vindication of God's righteousness, and the culmination of His eternal plan.

We will survey the New Testament in five stages: the Gospels, Acts, Paul's Epistles, the General Epistles, and the Book of Revelation.

Classification & content of New Testament books—The following chart attempts to classify and categorize the various books of the New Testament and the various emphases.

Classification	***Books***	***Focal topic***	***Emphasis***
Gospel	Matthew	Life & ministry of Jesus Christ	Jesus as King
	Mark		Jesus as Servant
	Luke		Jesus as Son of Man
	John		Jesus as Son of God
History	Acts	Life & ministry of early Church	Birth & growth of early Church
Pauline Epistles	Romans	Salvation	Doctrine developed
	1 & 2 Corinthians	Church issues	Conduct & identity
	Galatians	Salvation	Implications of justification by faith
	Ephesians	Church's identity	Position & conduct
	Philippians	Church issues	Attitude in Christ
	Colossians	Church issues	Completeness in Christ
	1 & 2 Thessalonians	Second coming	Implications for living now
	1 & 2 Timothy	Church organization & governance	Conduct & teaching
	Titus		
	Philemon	Personal note	Favor requested
General Epistles	Hebrews	General exhortation & comfort	Superiority of Christian faith
	James		Faith and works
	1 Peter		Suffering
	2 Peter	Warning against false teaching	Day of Lord
	1-3 John		Fellowship & genuine faith
	Jude		
Apocalypse	Revelation	Culmination	God's kingdom and rule

New Testament books arranged by time of writing—The following chart attempts to arrange the books of the New Testament chronologically by time of composition:

Book	***Author***	***Date***	***Place***	***Recipients***
Galatians	Paul	49	Antioch	Christians in Asia Minor
1 Thessalonians	Paul	50-51	Corinth	Thessalonians

2 Thessalonians	Paul	50-51	Corinth	Thessalonians
1 Corinthians	Paul	mid-50s	Ephesus	Corinthians
2 Corinthians	Paul	mid-50s	Macedonia	Corinthians
Romans	Paul	mid-50s	Corinth	Romans
James	James	40s to early 60s	Jerusalem	Dispersed Jewish believers
Mark	Mark	late 50s to early 60s	Rome	Roman believers
Philemon	Paul	early 60s	Rome	Philemon
Colossians	Paul	early 60s	Rome	Colossians
Ephesians	Paul	early 60s	Rome	Christians in Asia Minor
Luke	Luke	early 60s	Caesarea or Rome	Roman official
Acts	Luke	early 60s	Rome	Roman official
Philippians	Paul	early 60s	Rome	Philippians
1 Timothy	Paul	mid to late 60s	Macedonia	Timothy
Titus	Paul	mid to late 60s	Nicopolis	Titus
2 Timothy	Paul	mid to late 60s	Rome	Timothy
1 Peter	Peter	early tomid 60s	Rome	Christians in north central Turkey
2 Peter	Peter	early to mid 60s	Rome	Christians in north central Turkey
Matthew	Matthew	early 60s	Antioch	Jews in Syria and Palestine
Hebrews	?	60s	?	Jewish Christians
Jude	Jude	60s to 70s	?	Christians in general
John	John	late 80s to early 90s	Ephesus	Christians in Asia Minor
1-3 John	John	late 80s to early 90s	Ephesus	A church near Ephesus; Gaius
Revelation	John	mid 90s	Patmos	Seven churches in Asia Minor

Gospels

Social and Political Backgrounds

A period of silence of almost 500 years divides the last book of the Old Testament from the first writings of the New Testament. These were years when the Jews were dominated by foreigners (excluding the times of the Maccabees and their Hasmonean successors). These years can be divided into the following periods:

A. ***Persian period (539-331 BC)—***Cyrus the Great conquered Babylon and inaugurated a policy of allowing conquered peoples sent into exile to return to their native lands.

1. Nehemiah and Ezra record Jewish returns to the Palestine –
   - 537 under Zerubbabel;
   - 458 under Ezra;
   - 445 under Nehemiah

2. The Jews struggled to maintain their religious, national, and cultural identity in the years of Persian ascendancy. There emerged a mindset and culture that some have called "Second Temple Judaism". This mindset comes to the fore as a driving motivator in –
   - Temple being rebuilt (Haggai; Zechariah)
   - Walls of Jerusalem being rebuilt (Nehemiah);
   - Insistence on rededication to Yahweh (Ezra; Malachi).

B. ***Grecian period (331-160s BC)***—Alexander the Great conquered Persia and much more in a series of military campaigns from 334-323 BC. Upon his early death, his empire was divided between four of his senior generals. Two of these originated dynasties that were particularly important to Jewish history:

1. ***Ptolemies (ruling from Egypt)*** dominated Palestine from 323 to 198 BC. The most significant event in this period as pertaining to the Jewish people was the translation of the Old Testament into Greek in 270 BC (called the Septuagint for the 70 scholars Ptolemy Philadelphus gathered in Alexandria to do the translation). When the gospel writers quote the Old Testament, they most frequently use the Septuagint.

2. ***Seleucids (ruling from Syria)*** dominated Palestine from 198 to 160s BC. They were avid promoters of the Greek culture and of the Hellenization of subdued peoples. The Jewish resistance to this culminated in a revolt led by the Maccabees against the Seleucid King Antiochus IV (Epiphanes).

C. ***Maccabean/Hasmonean period (160s-63 BC)***—The Jewish family of the Maccabees led a revolt against Seleucid rule. It was really a long, drawn-out guerrilla

war. Led by Mattathias (165) and successively followed by his sons, Judas (164-161), Jonathan (161-142), and Simeon (142-134), the revolt succeeded in throwing off Greek rule. The heirs of the Maccabees, the Hasmoneans, ruled as Jewish kings from the death of Simeon (143) until the occupation of Palestine by the Roman general Pompey in 63 BC. Hasmonean rule was characterized by corruption, intrigue, and political dissension and was generally ineffective.

D. Roman period (63BC – 70 AD)—The political ascendancy of Rome frames the entire New Testament (see emperor chart below). Their (and their Byzantine successors) rule of Palestine actually lasts until the 7th century of our era and ends with the Islamic conquest. For purposes of this brief overview, we will take the Roman political ascendancy up to the fall of Jerusalem in 70 AD. In the first century AD, the Romans used a patchwork quilt of direct rule through their own procurators (see chart below) and indirect rule through client kings. From 63-37 BC, they favored the successors of the Hasmonean rulers they replaced. After 37 BC, their client kings came from the Herodian family (see chart below). The Herodians will figure into the history of the New Testament era in a significant way.

Roman Emperors (First Century):

Years of Reign	***Emperor***	***NT & Related Events***
27 BC – 14 AD	Augustus	Jesus born; ordered census taken (Lk 2:1)
14-37	Tiberius	Jesus' public ministry
37-41	Caligula	
41-54	Claudius	Expelled the Jews from Rome (Acts 18:2)
54-68	Nero	Great fire of Rome (64); official persecution of Christians at Rome; emperor Paul appeals to (Acts 25:10-12); Peter and Paul martyred
68-69	Year of the Four Emperors	Year of turmoil and civil war causing and following Nero's suicide
69-79	Vespasian	General in command of crushing the Jewish revolt (66-70); victor of the civil war (68-69)
79-81	Titus	Destroyer of Jerusalem
81-96	Domitian	First general persecution of Christians

Judean Procurators (Up to Fall of Jerusalem)

Years	***Procurator***	***NT & Related Events***
6-9	Coponius	
9-12	Ambivius	
12-15	Annius Rufus	
15-26	Valerius Gratus	
26-36	Pontius Pilate	Crucifixion of Jesus (Mt 27; Mk 15; Lk 23; Jn 18-19)
36-37	Marcellus	
37-41	Marullus	

41-44	No procurator – Herod Agrippa I	Murderer of James, the brother of John (Acts 12:2); judged by God (Acts 12:19b-23)
44-46	Cuspius Fadus	
46-48	Tiberius Julius Alexander	
48-52	Ventidius Cumanus	
52-59	Antonius Felix	Paul was tried before him (Acts 24)
59-61	Porcius Festus	Paul was tried before him and appealed to Caesar (Nero) (Acts 24:27-26:32)
61-65	Albinus	
65-70	Gessius Florus	Procurator when Jews revolted; Jerusalem destroyed (70)

Herodian Dynasty

First Generation	Herod the Great (37-4 BC) – King over all Palestine when Jesus was born (Mt 2:1-19; Lk 1:5)		
Second Generation	Herod Antipas (4 BC-39 AD) -- Tetrarch of Galilee & Perea – See Mk 6:14-29; Lk 3:1; 13:31-35; 23:7-12; Beheaded John the Baptist	Archelaus (4 BC-6 AD) Ethnarch of Judea – See Mk 2:22	Herod Philip (4 BC-34 AD) Tetrarch of Iturea – See Lk 3:1
Third Generation	Herod Agrippa I (37-44) – King over all Palestine; killed James the brother of John (Acts 12:1-24)		
Fourth Generation	Herod Agrippa II (48-70) – Tetrarch of Chalcis; Paul argued his case before him in Acts 25:13-26:32		

Social Backgrounds of Second Temple Judaism

Second Temple Judaism is a term used to describe the polyglot Jewish religious and cultural experience from the initial rebuilding of the temple (516 BC) after the people's return from exile until the destruction of the elaborately rebuilt Herodian temple in 70 AD. This roughly corresponds to the inter-testamentary period between the completing of the Old Testament books and the beginning of the New Testament writing. This is the social, religious, and cultural setting in which Jesus lived and ministered.

A. Unifying factors—There were unifying factors in this rather diverse experience:

1. Monotheism/Jewish historical uniqueness—The Jews returned from exile cured of their religious syncretism and their fascination with idolatry. To be sure, there would be times of correction ahead, but the situation was never as dire as during the Divided

Kingdom era (971 to 722 BC) and following (Judah from 721 to 586 BC). They were more or less dedicated to the practice of the Law and had a high concept of their historical uniqueness as the covenant people of Yahweh.

2. ***Land/Kingdom—***Their concern for their land flowed from their awareness of themselves as God's covenant people and from the reality of their dispersion into many lands. The Abrahamic Covenant (Gen 12, 15, 17) had promised a distinctive

- People – a physical posterity for Abraham;
- Place – a land in which to dwell;
- Presence of Yahweh with His people; and
- Posterity of spirit – the Jews would be a blessing to the world.

The Davidic Covenant (2 Sam 7) spoke of a ruler for the people in their land. The prophets in exile spoke of a new Davidic expectation – a perfect ruler would inaugurate a perfect rule over the people of the Covenant in a restored land of plenty. This notion of Messiah fueled Jewish expectations in the centuries between the Old and New Testaments and converged on the appearance of David's greater son.

It is no accident that Matthew (largely addressed to a Jewish audience) begins his gospel with a genealogy that links Jesus to both Abraham and David.

3. ***Synagogue***—While many Jews returned from exile to the land, the vast majority of them (perhaps on the order of 75-80%) did not. The synagogue became the focal point of the Jewish experience outside the land. This differed from that of the temple in that its emphasis was on instruction in the Law and not on the temple sacrificial practices. The teaching of various rabbis grew in importance over the course of Second Temple Judaism. Indeed, the synagogue experience will become the typical Jewish experience around the world after the fall of Jerusalem in 70 AD.

4. ***Practice of the Law/Temple worship—***This was central. No, things were far from perfect – witness Christ's indictment of current practice in cleansing the temple. But gone was the neglect of temple worship in favor of Baal worship or a hundred other idolatrous pretenders that characterized the late Kingdom era before the exile.

B. ***Diversity of religious experience—***This can be seen by a brief summary of some of the major Jewish groups and sects mentioned in the New Testament:

1. ***Essenes—***An ascetic reform group active from the mid-2nd century BC until the fall of Jerusalem in 70 AD. They initially formed in reaction to the low repute of the priesthood of the Sadducees. They lived in separate communities scattered throughout Judea, considered themselves the recipients of the prophetic promises to Israel, and rejected the corrupt temple worship of the day. They strictly observed the Sabbath, refrained from marriage, held all their property in common, and lived by a demanding routine consisting of ceremonial washings, daily prayer and meditation, and the systematic study of Torah. The Essenes were oriented to, and driven by, End Times

expectations. However, they expressed these expectations in pacifistic discipline, completely unlike the martial unrest fostered by the Sicarii (see below).

2. ***Herodians***—The Herodians were the supporters of Herod and his successors (see chart above). They accepted foreign rule and were very amenable to whatever group had the upper hand. They were generally wealthy, thoroughly secular, totally pragmatic, unprincipled, and political influential. In short, they were the political greasers of their day.

3. ***High Priests (Up to Fall of Jerusalem)***

Years	***High Priest***
3 BC-6AD	Jeshua
6	Joazer
6-15	Annas
15-16	Ishmeal
16-17	Eleazar, son of Annas
17-18	Simon
18-36	Caiaphas, son-in-law of Annas
36-37	Jonathan, son of Annas
37-41	Theophilus, son of Annas
41-42	Simon Kantheras
42-43	Matthias, son of Annas
43-44	Elioenai
44-47	Joseph
47-58	Ananias
58-60	Ishmael
60-62	Joseph Kabi
62-63	Ananus
62-63	Jesus
63-65	Jeshua
65-67	Matthias, son of Theophilus
67-70	Phinehas

4. ***Pharisees***—The term "Pharisee" is probably derived from the Hebrew stem that means "to be separated". They came from a reformed-minded party called the Hassidim that arose during the 4th and 3rd centuries BC. The Pharisees probably surfaced as a distinct religious and political group about the time of the Maccabean revolt against Seleucid rule in the 160s BC. The Pharisees desired to be separated from pagan customs and influences and to proclaim and practice the Law of God.

A movement initially arising from among the common people, the Pharisees vigorously strove to remove the Jewish religion from the exclusive control of the priests. They were "law guys", conservative and orthodox Jews. In fact, they were much more theologically conservative than the priestly class. They strictly adhered to Torah, priding themselves on

going above and beyond the mere letter of the Law. They extrapolated numerous regulations from Torah which made its daily ritual application a reality.

As to the Roman occupation, the Pharisees attempted to take a middle-of-the-road approach, rejecting the comfortable collaborationism of the Sadducees and Herodians as well as the confrontational tactics of the Zealots. They saw themselves as supporting the distinctive claims of the Jewish Law against the inroads of Roman authoritarianism without becoming overt rebels.

5. ***Sadducees***—The term "Sadducee" is a name probably derived from Zadok, the Jewish high priest in the time of David and Solomon, whose family came to control temple affairs. The Sadducees, at least initially, were sympathizers of the Zadokites. They emerged as a distinctive group around 200 BC, largely composed of priests and Jewish aristocratic families. They dominated Jewish religious and political life under the Hasmoneans (143-63 BC) until the Romans under Pompey took over in 63 BC. Even under the Romans, they were very influential and exercised a good deal of religious and political authority in and through the Sanhedrin.

The Sadducees were the religious liberals of their day. They denied the resurrection of the body, the afterlife, the existence of angels and other supernatural beings, and divine providence. They favored Greek culture and were consistently Roman supporters – eagerly uncovering and reporting any sign of insurrection against Rome. They were devotees of the ceremonial Law, the practice of which they completely controlled and from which they gained their influence and a good deal of their wealth. In short, they were the religious honchos of their time, well-versed in protecting the status quo that granted them their privileges and positions. Caiaphas' self-serving comment in John 11:49-50 succinctly summarized their religious and political attitudes and motives.

6. ***Samaritans—***The descendants of the Jews who remained in the land after the fall of the northern kingdom and who intermarried with local Canaanites and other foreigners who were transplanted in the territory of the former northern kingdom. These were the people whose territory Jesus "had to go through" in John 4 which led to his famous discussion with the Samaritan woman at the well.

To understand Jewish-Samaritan animosity, a page of history is worth a volume of logic. After Assyria conquered the northern kingdom of Israel in 722 BC, they deported many Israelites from their land and resettled Samaria with captives from other countries. The Jews that remained in the land intermarried with the foreign transplants. Over time, these foreign people combined elements of their religious practice with the worship of Yahweh and Baal and developed a mongrel religion. After Judean Jews returned from the Babylonian exile around 536 BC and renewed their commitment to the Law, they discovered a complete rift between themselves and the Samaritans – politically, culturally, and religiously. In the time of Nehemiah (around 450 BC), the Samaritans opposed the rebuilding of Jerusalem's walls, attempting to keep the Jews in a weak and vulnerable position. In Maccabean times (around 160 BC), the Samaritans made

themselves particularly odious to the Jews by accepting the Hellenization of their religion and dedicating their temple on Mount Gerizim to Zeus Xenios.

In Jesus' day, a strong rivalry and hatred existed between the Jews and their northern cousins. Thoroughbred Jews regarded the Samaritans with contempt – as political, cultural, and religious mutts. The Samaritans, for their part, had had their fill of Jewish arrogance and assumed superiority. Why did Jesus have to go through Samaria? The reason is because the gospel transcends ethnic boundaries. The gift of God could not be buried under Jewish, or anyone else's cultural baggage.

7. ***Sanhedrin—***The Romans and their client kings allowed the Jews to handle many of their own religious and domestic matters. As a result, many local courts and organizations existed. Outranking them all was the Jewish Supreme Court, if you will, the Sanhedrin. This body met in Jerusalem and on almost a daily basis. The high priest presided over seventy other members of the court, who came largely from the Pharisees and the Sadducees. The New Testament refers to the Sanhedrin by that name and by such terms as "council", "chief priests and elders and scribes", "chief priests and rulers", or simply "rulers".

8. ***Sicarii—***The term "Sicarii" comes from the Greek word meaning dagger-men. They were an extreme group of the Zealots (see below) who were political assassins. They routinely stabbed those supportive of Rome whenever their intended victims ventured into vulnerable areas of the crowded streets of Jerusalem and other Judean towns. Their murderous activity intensified throughout the course of the first century. The Sicarii seized control and direction of the Jewish revolt against Rome in 66-73 that brought about the destruction of Jerusalem in 70. They ceased to be a group in a dramatic and tragic mass suicide (women and children included) just prior to the fall of Masada to the Romans in 73.

9. ***Zealots***—This group's religious zeal gave them their name. The Zealots were Jewish extremists, probably active from 30 BC to 70 AD. They were uncompromising opponents of Roman rule and would not tolerate peace under the idolatrous pagans. They refused to pay taxes and terrorized their political opponents, both the Roman rulers and their Jewish sympathizers and collaborationists. The Sicarii (see above) were the most extreme of the Zealots.

Literary Backgrounds

A. ***Unique genre***—The evangelists never call their accounts of Jesus' ministry by the term "gospel". The gospel, as used in the New Testament, is a word the means "good news" (*euangelion*) and is always used in connection with the preaching of the message about Jesus. Only towards the end of the first century and into the second century, was the term used to refer to the accounts of the four evangelists.

The Gospels are a literary genre unto themselves. They are really expanded biographical sermons, four different "snapshots" that tell the story of Jesus' life and teaching (thus biographical) while chock full of Christian teaching and preaching. They concentrate on the years of our Lord's public ministry and focus on the uniqueness of His person and work. Their primary purpose is not merely to be informative, but to present the message of Jesus as Savior and Lord and call people to respond in faith.

B. ***Why written***—One might ask why the written gospels? The reasons are rather obvious upon reflection:

- Writing the message down became necessary due to the speed and extent of the growth of the church;
- There was the need to record the apostles' memory and reflection on the Lord's life and ministry before they passed from the scene;
- With Jesus' expected return delayed, Christians realized that they might be living in the present age for longer than they initially thought;
- With the spread of the Christian message came the challenge of inauthentic and distorting accounts making a written record vital;
- The need for authoritative factual data as the basis for on-going instruction.

C. ***Synoptic Gospels and John***—Matthew, Mark, and Luke have been called the synoptic gospels. "Synoptic" means "seeing together" and succinctly summarizes what the reader encounters at the very beginning of the New Testament. These three accounts of Jesus' life and teaching contain much similar (in many cases, almost exactly similar) material and view their subject from a somewhat common perspective. Yet, they do significantly differ in details, arrangement of material, and in their respective emphases.

The reasons for the great similarities and the significant differences have generated much discussion among New Testament scholars and Bible students through the years. Much of this debate has focused on which gospel was written first and the sources the various writers relied on in writing. Theories have changed through the years, but the most popular current understanding is to see Mark as the first gospel written, with Matthew and Luke written at a later date, but relatively close in time. Not only is a good deal of the material in Mark repeated in both Matthew and Luke but also there is significant overlap of material in Matthew and Luke. This has caused scholars to postulate that the later two gospels used Mark's account and also a common collection of the sayings of Jesus that circulated at the time – a mysterious source labeled "Q". "Q" comes from the German word meaning "source".

In addition, a comparison between the Synoptics and John yield many interesting contrasts. See the following charts for some of these comparisons and contrasts:

Comparative Chart

Gospels	***Matthew***	***Mark***	***Luke***	***John***

Date	60s	Late 50s or early 60s	60s	Late 80s or early 90s
Place	Syrian Antioch or Palestine	Rome	Rome or Caesarea	Ephesus
Audience	Jews in Syria or Palestine	Pagan Romans	Theophilus types -- Roman officials; cultured unbelievers	Second generation Christians and/or non-Christians
Focus on Christ	Messiah-King, Son of David	Servant of Yahweh	Son of Man; compassionate, ideal man	Son of God

Contrasts Between Synoptics and John

Synoptics	***John***
Chiefly covers Galilean ministry	More coverage to Judean ministry
Kingdom emphasis	More emphasis on the person of Christ
Jesus as Son of David; Son of Man	Jesus as Son of God
Earthly story	Heavenly meaning
Gospels for those new in faith; first generation	Gospel of maturing church; subsequent generation
Jesus' sayings short, pithy (Matthew's five discourses an exception)	More long discourses of Jesus
Little commentary by evangelists	Much commentary by John
One Passover mentioned	Three, perhaps four, Passovers mentioned

D. Critical studies—Until the 18th century, the Gospels and the entire New Testament were pretty much taken on their face as an accurate historical account of the life and teaching of Jesus and the progress of the early church. It was thought that these books were written by the apostles and their associates at various times and places during the first century. These notes reflect that viewpoint.

However, with the advent of the Enlightenment, there was introduced a more skeptical spirit to the study of the New Testament and the Gospels in particular. The number of nature of the gospels raised literary and historical questions. Critical scholars discount the historical reliability of the gospel accounts. They do not tell us much at all about Jesus, but rather the teaching of the church about him (the *kerygma*, the Greek word for preaching). These scholars readily dispute accounts of the miraculous as well as any indication of predictive prophecy. They date the writing of the gospels late, well beyond the lifetimes of the apostles or their associates who have been identified as the authors in traditional understanding.

The synoptic problem spawned a number of critical methodologies that tend to try to get behind the existent text to its sources – form criticism, which focuses on the oral tradition

that the writers allegedly relied on, source criticism, which speculates how different literary units were put together to make up the gospels, and redaction criticism, which tries to identify the writer's sources in order to see the distinctive literary and theological perspective he applies in shaping his sources. All of these methodologies are extremely subjective.

The discounting of the historical reliability of the gospel accounts have lead critical scholars to various quests for the historical Jesus. Volumes of speculation and little agreement or insight into the Lord's life and teaching has been the general result of these endeavors.

I mention these because it is so common to view programs or attend lectures where this perspective is taken as the only one anyone with a brain could adopt. I politely dissent. However, the focus of our course is the text of the gospels themselves. With this very brief survey, we will leave critical scholarship to its pursuits (unless of course, you have specific questions I can either answer or research).

Matthew summary chart:

Birth and Early Childhood: Perfect Israelite		Dedication & Preparation	Disciples Called	Teaching & Ethics of the Kingdom	Kingdom Authority Demonstrated	Kingdom Authority Challenged	Parables of the Kingdom	Rejection and Warning	Cost of Citizenship in the Kingdom	Privileges & Responsibilities in the Kingdom	Disobedient Rulers Exposed & Rejected	Return of the King	Passion, Death, & Resurrection
1		3	4	5	8	11	13	14	16	18	21	24	26-28
King's Preparation & Presentment			King's Identity Revealed						King's Mission Unfolds				
Bethlehem & Nazareth			Galilee						Judea & Jerusalem				

Key idea: Kingdom
Key verse(s): 4:14-17; 28:18-20
Key chapter: 16

Mark summary chart:

Forerunner; baptism; temptation First disciples; miracles Capernaum; Sabbath controversy Twelve selected Parables; more miracles Unbelief; apostolic tours; Herod Withdrawals from Galilee Phoenicia; Decapolis Caesarea Philippi	To Jerusalem: Struggle of Self-Denial Divorce; Rich young ruler Greatness in kingdom Triumphant entry; temple cleansed; controversy Olivet discourse Betrayal and Arrest Trial Crucifixion and Burial Resurrection Events
1 2 3 4-5 6 7 8	8 10 11-12 13 14 15-16
Service & Power: Implications for Identity	Sacrifice & Suffering: Implications for Submission
Galilee & Perea	Judah & Jerusalem

Key idea: Servant of God
Key verse(s): 10:45
Key chapter: 8

Luke summary chart:

Preface; Preparation for Ministry 1:1	Jesus' Ministry in Galilee 4:14	Jesus' Ministry While Journeying to Jerusalem (Luke's Travelogue) 9:51	Passion Week: Death, Resurrection, and Ascension Of Jesus 19:28
Introduction	Early Ministry	Growing Opposition	Death & Resurrection
Preparation	Galilee	Judea	Jerusalem
Miracles Prominent		Teaching Prominent	

Key idea: Son of Man bringing salvation
Key Verse: 19:10

John summary chart

Father Explained	First Disciples Cana: Water to Wine Judea: Temple Cleansing; Nicodemus Samaria: Woman at Well Cana Again: Nobleman's Son At Jerusalem: Jesus' Claims In Galilee: Bread of Heaven At Jerusalem: Light of World; Good Shepherd In Judea: Lazarus Raised Prep/Prediction of Death	Foot-Washing Betrayal/Denial Predicted Farewell Discourse High Priestly Prayer	Judas Betrays Jesus Ecclesiastical Trial Civil Trial: Pilate Crucifixion & Burial Resurrection & Appearances Purpose	Commissioning of Disciples
1	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 11 12	13 14 17	18 19 20	21
Pro-logue	Revelation of God to World	Further Revelation To Disciples	Death and Resurrection	

Key idea: Belief
Key verse(s): 20:30-31

Acts

Acts is the bridge book between the gospels and the epistles. It traces the preaching of the gospel and the Church's rapid expansion in Jerusalem (chapters 1-7), in all Judea and Samaria (chapters 8-12), and to the ends of the ancient Mediterranean world (chapters 13-28). The book begins by describing the early ministry of the apostles before tracking Paul's missionary journeys up to his imprisonment in Rome. Acts supplies the Bible student with the necessary historical, cultural, and geographical grid for understanding the more doctrinally-oriented epistles that follows. It also reveals to us the pattern of church life in between Christ's advents: its power, its objective, its methods, its essential organization and discipline, and its driving vision.

Acts derives its name from the Greek word *praxeis*, commonly used in Greek literature to summarize the accomplishments of outstanding people. The reader is caught up with the irony of the Christian dynamic immediately. How did these followers of Jesus, who were obscure Galileans and Judeans, become people who turned the world upside down (17:6)? What changed these timid men from those who denied their Lord and abandoned Him in His hour of need into bold, stalwart apologists for the new faith? How did preachers who were confessedly "unlearned and ignorant men" (4:13) make such an impact on the world that they ushered in an entirely new culture that reshaped the face of Western civilization? Clearly, Luke records the acts of the Spirit of Christ working in and through these people. They were merely "jars of clay" (2 Cor 4:7) abandoned to God's person, purpose, and program, in and through whom God's work was done and His glory revealed (2 Cor 3:17-18).

Acts summary chart:

Preparation for Witness Pentecost	Lame Man at Temple Ananias & Sapphira Arrest/Interrogation of Apostles; First Deacons Stephen's Defense Deacons Chosen Stephen's Martyrdom	Philip in Samaria Paul's Conversion Peter Along the Coast Peter and Cornelius Herod's Persecution	1st Missionary Journey Jerusalem Council; 2d Missionary Journey 3d Missionary Journey Ephesus Relief Mission to Jerusalem	Arrest & Initial Defense Before Sanhedrin Before Felix Before Festus & Agrippa Journey to Rome Before the Jews at Rome
1 2	3 5 6 7	8:3 9 9:32 10 12	13 15 18 19 20	21 22 23 25 26 28
HS Poured Out:	Witness in Jerusalem Amidst Opposition	Witness in Judea and Samaria	Worldwide Witness: Gentile Inclusion	Witness in Chains: Paul's Imprisonment & Trials

Jerusalem	Judea & Samaria	Ends of the Earth

Key idea: Spirit-empowered witness
Key verse: 1:8
Key chapter: 2

Paul's Letters

Letter	***Date***	***Place***	***Subject***
Galatians	49	Antioch (Syria)	Paul's apostleship; Justification by faith; function of Law; Christian freedom
1 Thessalonians	50-51	Corinth	End Times; hard times
2 Thessalonians	50-51	Corinth	End Times; hard times
1 Corinthians	Mid-50s	Ephesus	Christian conduct ("the Cross in its social application") – church divisions; sexual immorality; lawsuits; marriage and celibacy; freedom and questionable practices; spiritual gifts; order in worship; Lord's Supper; Resurrection
2 Corinthians	Mid-50s	Macedonia	Paul's apostleship; heart of an authentic ministry; leading through conflict; giving
Romans	Mid-50s	Corinth	Salvation doctrine; depravity; Law's function; justification by faith; original sin; sanctification; glorification; security of believer; sovereignty, election, and God's faithfulness; Christian conduct; Christian and the State; Christian freedom and questionable practices
Ephesians	Early 60s	Rome	Believer's position in Christ; Christ in us -- church as body and organization; internal ministry of the Holy Spirit
Philippians	Early 60s	Rome	Believer's attitudes; church's body life
Colossians	Early 60s	Rome	Person and work of Christ; believer's completeness in Christ; church's body life
Philemon	Early 60s	Rome	Personal note; picture of substitutionary atonement
1 Timothy	Late 50s Early to Mid-60s	Ephesus Macedonia	Paul's ministry counsel – sound doctrine; church order and leadership, decorum
Titus	Late 50s Early to Mid-60s	Ephesus Nicopolis	Paul's ministry counsel – church order and leadership; sound doctrine; good deeds
2 Timothy	Late 50s Mid-60s	Ephesus Rome	Spiritual conflict; passing the torch

It should be noted that many modern scholars challenge the authenticity of a number of Paul's letters listed above. Typically, seven of the above letters are seen as authored by Paul (Romans, 1 & 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Philippians, 1 Thessalonians, and Philemon). The others are sometimes referred to as Deutero-Pauline and assumed to be written by Paul's close associates and disciples at a later date but reflecting Paul's thought closely.

Many study Paul's epistles in three segments:

- Romans, 1 & 2 Corinthians, Galatians, and 1 & 2 Thessalonians;
- His Prison epistles – Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, and Philemon; and
- His Pastoral epistles – 1 & 2 Timothy and Titus

The last two categories have enough similarities that separate introductions are helpful.

Romans summary chart:

Introduction	Pagan Licentiousness Condemned	Morally Upright Condemned	Religious Jew Condemned All Fall Short	Justification by Faith Apart from Law	Old Testament Precedent in Abraham	Justification by Faith & Security of Believer	Freedom from Sin: Dead & Alive	Freedom from Law	Freedom from All Bondage	God's Election of Israel	Human Responsibility for Unrighteousness	Future Restoration of Israel	General Exhortations	Christian Liberty & Disputed Matters	Future Plans & Personal Greetings
1	2	3		3:21	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	14	15-16
Condemnation of All Humanity				Justification by Faith Alone			Believer's Sanctification			God's Dealings With Israel			Transformed Living		

Key idea: Righteousness
Key verses: 3:21-26
Key chapter: 5

1 Corinthians summary chart:

Introduction; Thanksgiving	Cause: Cross-Emptying Attitudes Spiritual and Worldly Wisdom Leadership in Perspective	Immorality in Community Lawsuits Among Believers Physical Purity: Sanctity of Body	Celibacy, Marriage, & Purity Remain as You Are Principle Applied to Marriage & Celibacy Applied to Widows	Restricted Use of Liberty Paul's Example Improper Use of Liberty Summary	Women in Community Factions at the Lord's Table Abuses of Spiritual Gifts	Resurrection of the Body established Nature of Resurrected Body Necessity of Change	Greetings to Various People
1	1:10 2 3	5 6	7	8 10	11	15	16
Intro	Divisions	Moral Laxness	Celibacy & Marriage	Christian Liberty	Church Worship	Resur-rection	Greet-ings

Key idea: Cross in its social application
Key verses: 1:18, 30
Key chapter: 15

2 Corinthians summary chart:

Comfort in All Trouble	Change of Itinerary Defended Nature of New Covenant Ministry Treasure in Jars of Clay Eternal Perspective on Ministry Message: Reconciliation in Christ Marks of Sincere Ministry	Excelling in Grace of Giving Service to Saints: Titus & His Team Principles of Grace of Giving	Exercise of Apostolic Authority Boasting About Suffering: Apostolic Credentials Planned Visit to Corinth Final Greetings
1	1:12 2 4 5 6 7	8 9	10 11 12 13
Intro	Defense of His Ministry	Relief Mission: Grace of Giving	Defense of Apostolic Authority

Key idea: Approved ministry

Galatians summary chart:

Turning to Another Gospel	Paul's Message Received Directly From God Apostolic Recognition of Paul's Ministry Peter Confronted in Antioch on Point of Galatian Error	Galatians' Experience Abraham Law' Curse & Christ's Redemption Covenantal Priority: Abrahamic Over Mosaic Law's Purpose Abraham's Seed Legal Heir as Child/People Under Law Paul Perplexed by Galatians Hagar Sarah: Law & Grace	Free From Law-Based Righteousness Free Not to Indulge Sinful Nature Not Circumcision but New Creation
1:1-10	1:12 2	3 4	5 6
Intro	Defense of Apostolic Authority	Defense of Justification by Faith	Justification by Faith: Liberty & License

Key idea: Justification by faith
Key chapters: 3-4

1 Thessalonians summary chart:

Thanksgiving for Thessalonians	Paul' exemplary ministry among them	Concern; Timothy's good report	Living to please God with the Lord' Coming in view	Instructions: Idleness & living in community
1	2	3	4	5
Encouragement			Exhortation	

Key idea: Living now with the end in view

2 Thessalonians summary chart:

Greetings & thanksgiving	Assurance of deliverance	Day of the Lord	Stand firm	Prayer, love, perseverance	Against idleness	Final greetings
1		2		3		
Encouragement in hard times		Instruction on End Times		Exhortations in practical living		

Key idea: Living now with the end in view
Key chapter: 2

Prison Epistles

Paul wrote the so-called prison epistles (Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, and Philemon) during his first Roman imprisonment in the early 60s. Each of these epistles refer to Paul's imprisonment (Eph 3:1; 4:1; 6:20; Phil 1:7, 13-14; Col 4:3, 10, 18; Phile 9-10, 13, 23) and fit well in the period described in Acts 28:16-31, a span of Paul's life conducive to writing.

However, a Roman origin to these letters does not command unanimous support. Two other possibilities have been repeatedly suggested:

Caesarea—Paul was a prisoner here for two years in the late 50s and his friends had access to him while he was in prison (Acts 24:23, 27). Paul's reference to the praetorium or palace guard (Phil 1:13) could be understood as referring to Herod's palace at Caesarea. However, this seems a stretch. Contrary to his situation described in the prison epistles (Phil 1:20-26), Paul was not facing imminent death while at Caesarea, for he had appealed to Caesar (Acts 25:10-12) and was going to Rome to face trial. Furthermore, he seemed to be in a center of travel while in prison, where his friends came and went with some ease. This situation would have been more characteristic of Rome than Caesarea.

***Ephesus*—**Some think the prison epistles were written from Ephesus in the mid-50s, during Paul's three-year stay there. To the objection that Acts does not record an Ephesian imprisonment, the proponents of this view hypothesize such an imprisonment from Romans 16:4, 7; 1 Corinthians 15:32; 2 Corinthians 1:8-10 and 11:23. However, of these texts, only 1 Corinthians 15:23 actually mentions Ephesus (Paul is describing how he fought wild beats there) and this could be a metaphor for the scene described in Acts 19. It seems the "evidence" for this hypothesis is nothing more than interesting conjecture.

In addition, it is common for critical scholars to challenge Paul's authorship of Colossians and Ephesians. Their arguments are similar to those they use to challenge the Pastorals. See below.

On balance, it seems reasonable to accept the traditional idea that Paul wrote these letters while under house arrest at Rome in the early 60s. In addition, references to the praetorium or place guard (Phil 1:13) and Caesar's household (Phil 4:22) are more naturally explained by a Roman imprisonment than either of the other theories.

Ephesians summary chart:

Praying – Spiritual Blessings -- Spiritual Enlightenment Remembering – Made Alive in Christ -- Made One in Christ Strengthening – Not Discouraged by Suffering -- Prayer Doxology	Maintaining Unity; Reaching Maturity Putting On; Putting Off Separation From Sinful Practices Separation From Sinful People Living Wisely – Filled with the HS -- Husbands & Wives -- Parents & Children -- Masters & Slaves Standing Firmly – Armor of God -- Prayer enjoined & Empowered Greetings & Benediction
1 2 3	4 5 6
Spiritual Blessing in Christ	Worthy Lives as Result
We in Christ	Christ in Us

Key idea: In Christ
Key verse(s): 2:19-23
Key chapter: 1

Philippians summary chart:

Intro; Loving the Brethren Chains, Critics, Crises	Exhortation to Worthy Lives Future Plans – Timothy --Epaphroditus	No Confidence in the Flesh Pressing to Win the Prize Standing Firm	Final Exhortations Thanks for the Gift Final Greetings; Benediction
1	2	3	4
Personal Update	Exhortation; Future Plans	Pursuing the Goal	Exhortation; Thanks-giving; Greetings
Christ, Our Life	Christ, Our Attitude	Christ, Our Goal	Christ, Our Joy & Contentment

Key idea: Rejoice
Key verses: 2:5-11
Key chapter: 2

Colossians summary chart:

Thanksgiving & Petition	Preeminence of Christ	Labor for church	Supremacy of Christ	Sights on Things Above	Godly Conduct	Final in-structions; Greetings
1		2		3	4	
Supremacy of Christ Over All				Submission to Christ in All		

Key ideas: Preeminence of Christ; Complete in Christ
Key verses: 1:15-20
Key chapter: 1

Philemon summary chart:

Thanksgiving & Commendation	Plea for Onesimus	Instruction: Welcome Him
1	8	17
Praise	Plea	Pledge

Key ideas: Redemptive love; Substitutionary atonement
Key verse: 18

Pastoral Epistles

Paul's letters to Timothy and Titus are commonly referred to as the Pastorals because their subject matter relates to Paul's advice to his young associates concerning their pastoral duties in the churches to which they were sent.

Traditional scholarship offers two views of these letters. One views the letters being written in the period after Paul's ministry in Ephesus on the third missionary journey and before spending three months in Greece (Acts 20). That would place the date of writing in the mid to late 50s and from Asia Minor. During this time he also wrote 2 Corinthians and penned the formative concepts in church structure and administration, addressing the needs of the young and developing church.

Another view posits a fourth missionary journey. Acts 13:1-21:16 indicates that Paul made three missionary journeys. Some scholars think that he also made a fourth journey after being released from the Roman imprisonment in Acts 28. Tthe fourth century historian Eusebius' indicated that Paul was indeed released after a first Roman imprisonment, and statements among early Christian writers, including Clement of Rome and the author of the Muratorian Canon, that Paul took the gospel as far as Spain.

Scholars positing this fourth missionary journey have suggested that the subsequent mention of various locales in the Pastorals provide a basis for constructing a possible itinerary for this journey. They suggest that this journey commenced around 63, after his release from the imprisonment recorded in Acts 28 and concluded in 66 or 67, when he was imprisoned at Rome for the last time prior to his execution at the end of Nero's reign. The order of travel cannot be prescribed, but Paul may have visited the following places between 63 and 66 or 67, when a second imprisonment at Rome allegedly occurred:

- Spain (Rom 15:24, 28)
- Crete (Titus 1:5)
- Miletus (2 Tim 4:20)
- Colosse (Phm 22)
- Ephesus (1 Tim 1:3)
- Philippi (2:23-24)
- Nicopolis (Titus 3:12)

During this journey Paul wrote 1 Timothy and Titus. During a second Roman imprisonment, he wrote 2 Timothy.

Critical attacks—Critical scholars believe that the Pastorals were not written by Paul, but by several of his followers one or even two generations after the Paul's death.

1 Timothy summary chart:

Intro; False Teachers Gospel's Transforming Power Exhortation: Fight the Good Fight	Worship; Call to Prayer Men & Women in Worship Elders & Deacons: Qualifications	Countering False Teaching Minister's Discipline Ministering to Groups Widows Elders & Slaves Godliness &
1	2 3	4 5 6
Fight the Good Fight	Order in the Church	Ministry Instructions

Key ideas: Sound doctrine; Ministerial discipline
Key verses: 3:15-16; 6:11-12
Key chapter: 3

2 Timothy summary chart:

Thanksgiving; Fan the flame; Suffering	Enduring hardship	Godlessness in last days; Continue in faith	Charge & crown; Personal remarks & greetings
1	2	3	4
Suffer for the Gospel		Finish the race	

Key idea: Passing the baton
Key verses: 2:2
Key chapter: 4

Titus summary chart:

Intro	Appointing Elders	Countering False Teaching	Teaching Various Groups	Bringing Salvation	Submit to Rulers	Doing Good	Arguing
1			2		3		
Task on Crete			Teaching sound doctrine		Doing what is right		

Key ideas: Teaching truth & doing good
Key verses: 3:5

General Epistles

***Introduction*—**Like the four complimentary accounts to the life of Christ in the Gospels, these eight letters provide a sweeping portrait of the Christian life whose effect is greater than the sum of the parts. As impactful as Paul's epistles are, the New Testament revelation after the book of Acts would be severely limited in perspective if not for the general epistles.

These epistles were not addressed to specific churches or individuals (with the exception of 2 and 3 John) and thus became known as general or cathcolic (e.g. universal) letters. This designation of the general epistles was not used in the oldest manuscripts. One of the earliest uses of the term appears in the King James version titles of James, 1 & 2 Peter, 1 John, and Jude.

Letter	***Date***	***Place***	***Subject***
Hebrews	60s	Unknown	Superiority of Christ and the Christian faith: better revelation, mediator, position and rest, priesthood, covenant, sanctuary and sacrifice, and power to persevere
James	Late 40s; Early-60s	Jerusalem	Real faith works
1 Peter	60s	Rome?	Purposeful pain of suffering saints
2 Peter	60s	Rome?	Defending the truth; Day of the Lord
1 John	90s	Ephesus	Tests of fellowship
2 John	90s	Ephesus	Warning of false teaching
3 John	90s	Ephesus	Condemning false teachers
Jude	90s	Unknown	Defending the truth

Hebrews summary chart:

Better Revelation:: Jesus Over Prophets	Better Mediator: Jesus Over Angels	Better Position & Rest: Jesus Over Moses & Joshua	Better Priesthood: Jesus Over Aaron	Better Covenant: New Over Old	Better Sanctuary & Sacrifice: New Over Old	Apostasy & Pressing to Maturity	Perseverance of Faith: OT Heroes	Jesus' Example & Value of Discipline	Don't Turn Away	Exhortation, Greetings, Benediction
1	2 3 4	7	8	9		10	11	12		13
Superiority of Christ's Person & Work						Persevere in Faith				Conclusion
Warning 1	2	3				4		5		

Key Idea: Superiority of Christ and the Christian Faith

Hebrews summary outline:

I. Superiority of Christ and the Christian Faith (1:1-10:18)
- A. Superior Revelation: Jesus to Prophets (1:1-4)
- B. Superior Mediator: Jesus to Angels (1:5-2:18)
- C. Superior Position and Rest: Jesus to Moses and Joshua (3:1-4:13)
- D. Superior Priesthood: Jesus to the Aaronic Priesthood (4:14-7:28)
- E. Superior Covenant: New over Old (8:1-13)
- F. Superior Sanctuary and Sacrifice: New over Old (9:1-10:18)

II. Exhortation to Persevere (10:19-12:29)
- A. Warning: Danger of Apostasy (10:19-31)
- B. Encouragement to Press On to Maturity (10:32-39)
- C. Faith's Perseverance Exemplified in Old Testament Believers (11:1-40)
- D. Jesus' Example and the Value of Discipline (12:1-13)
- E. Warning Not to Turn Away (12:14-29)

III. Concluding Exhortations, Benediction, and Greetings (13:1-25)

Warning passages:
- 2:1-4 – Warning against drifting away;
- 3:7-19 – Warning against hardening your heart;
- 5:11-6:12 – Warning to go one to maturity;
- 10:19-31 – Warning and call to persevere;
- 12:14-29 – Warning against refusing God and growing bitter

James summary chart:

Trials & Temptations	Listening & Doing	Respecters of Persons	Faith & Works	Taming the Tongue	Heavenly & Earthly Wisdom	Submitting; Worldliness	Rich Oppressors
1		2		3	4		5

Key idea: A Faith that Works
Key verses: 2:14-26
Key chapter: 2

1 Peter summary chart:

Living Hope Amidst Suffering	Hope in God	Turning Slander to Praise	Submission to Rulers	Masters & Salves	Husbands & Wives	Suffering for Doing Good	Suffering as a Christian	Purpose & Greet-ings
1		2			3	4	5	

Key idea: Steadfastness in suffering
Key verses: 1:10-12; 4:12-19; 5:1-4

2 Peter summary chart:

Growing in Faith & Virtue Established in Truth	Immoral Lifestyles Futile Teaching Destruction Assur	Among Mockers & Scoffers DOL Described Be on Your Guard
1	2	3
Character to be Cultivated	False Teachers Condemned	DOL: Encouragement to Wholesome Thinking & Living

Key idea: Making your calling and election sure
Key verses: 1:3-11, 16-21; 3:3-13

1 John summary chart

Word of Life: Source & Basis of Fellowship	Light & Walk: Purification from Sin	First Cycle – Obedience -- Love for Brethren -- Knowing & Remaining in Truth	Second Cycle: Obedience & Confidence -- Love & Belonging to Truth -- Truth & Error	Third Cycle: First Composite Test -- Second Composite Test	Threefold Witness & Assurance	Concluding Affirmations & Exhortations
1:1	2:2	2:3	2:28	4:7	5:6	
Introduction		Tests of Fellowship			Conclusion	

Key Idea: Fellowship with God; knowing you have eternal life
Key Verses: 1:3; 5:11-13

2 John summary chart:

Salutation	Exhortation to Love	Warning; Misguided Hospitality	Final Greetings
1	4	7	12

Key idea: Discerning love & enemies of truth

3 John summary chart:

Gaius Complimented: Truth & Hospitality	Diotrephes Rebuked: Seeking Preeminence	Demetrius Commended; Final Greetings
1	9	12

Key idea: Discerning love & turf battles

Jude summary chart:

Intro	False teaching in past	Present character-isitics	Future Judgment	Contending for Truth	Doxology
1				17	
False Teaching Described				False Teaching Counteracted	

Key idea: Contending for the faith

Revelation

***Author and Occasion*—**The author identifies himself as John (1:1, 4, 9; 22:8), without further elaboration. Early Church fathers, including Irenaeus, Tertullian, Clement of Alexandria, and Origen, consistently held that this John was the beloved disciple. However, in the third century, an African bishop by the name of Dionysius compared the language, style, and thought of Revelation with the gospel and epistles of John and concluded that the book could not have been written by the apostle. Differences in style and vocabulary are better explained by the unusual circumstances surrounding the writing of Revelation rather than postulating a different, non-apostolic John as the author.

The apostle John wrote this book while imprisoned on the island of Patmos late in the reign of the Emperor Domitian, probably in the mid-90s. Some believe that the book was written at an earlier date, during Nero's persecution of Christians following the burning of Rome in 64. The book is addressed to seven churches in the Roman province of Asia. The churches had been in existence for some time, had undergone various degrees of spiritual development and decline, and were confronting either actual or imminent persecution. There was a growing hostility between the church and the Roman state. Revelation was written as encouragement for churches sensing this growing hostility and as a warning to careless Christians who were tempted to lapse into an easy conformity to the world.

Revelation unveils the character and program of God. Its purpose is to reveal God's sovereignty in the affairs of people in time and eternity. One day God will bring history to a triumphant climax in Christ. It is only the resurrected Christ who has the authority to judge the earth, remake it, and rule it in righteousness.

***Interpretive approaches*—**Understanding the exotic imagery of this book is central to its proper interpretation and application. We identify with plain statements asserting God's control over history, His conflict with Satan, and His coming judgment of the created order. But trumpets? Bowls of wrath? Fire from heaven? Mountains falling into the sea? Fantastical beasts emerging from the smoky core of the earth? What do these phantasms mean and what application do they have for our day? Interpretations of the book have historically fallen into one of four categories:

- ***Idealist view*—**This perspective considers Revelation to be a symbolic picture of the enduring struggle between good and evil, between Christianity and the forces marshaled against the faith. The symbols in the book cannot be and ought not be identified with particular historical events either in the past or the future. They simply are trends and ideals. The principles of spiritual warfare are operative throughout the ages and may have repeated embodiments. The impact of the entire message, rather than the literal details, is the point of the book.
- ***Preterist view*—**"Preterst" comes from the Latin word *praeter*, meaning "past". This view understands Revelation as growing out of and describing events in the apostle's own day. Preterists share much of the same disposition towards the book

as those in the idealist camp, except that they limit the scope of the book to a description of the persecution of Christianity by ancient Rome and to what was expected to happen after the destruction of the Roman Empire.

- ***Historicist view—***This perspective regards Revelation as describing events from the time of John's visions on the isle of Patmos to the end of history. Thus, interpreters speak of the breaking of the seven seals as representing the fall of the Roman Empire, locusts from the bottomless pit as standing for the Islamic invaders around the time of Mohammed, the beast from the pit as symbolizing the Roman papacy (as many in the time of the Reformation believed), and so forth. Explanations of the various symbols in Revelation have varied widely among members of this school of thought. A number of the Reformers held to this view.
- ***Futurist view—***This view places most of the events recorded in Revelation (chapters 4-22) in the time immediately preceding Christ's Second Coming. While the first three chapters are viewed as relating to the apostolic church, the last nineteen leap forward to the end of the age. Many futurists seek to discern particular meanings behind the symbols in the book, diligently comparing them to many of the Old Testament passages from which the images are drawn, not content to merely ascertain the big picture.

A graphic comparison of these views may be helpful:

View	***Rev 1-3***	***Rev 4-19***	***Rev 20-22***
Idealist	Historic churches	Symbolic of the conflict between good and evil	Symbolic of the triumph of good
Preterist	Historic churches	Symbolic of contemporary conditions in John's time	Symbolic of heaven and the Lord's ultimate triumph
Historicist	Historic churches	Symbolic of historical events through the ages	Final judgment; eternal state
Futurist	Historic churches; seven stages of church history for the more imaginative	Future tribulation; judgment on the Antichrist and all apostasy; culminating with Christ's Second Coming	Millennium; final judgment; eternal state

Millennial Views:

Differences in millennial views relate to the understanding of Revelation 20:1-6, which speaks of believers reigning with Christ a thousand years, and to the chronological relation of this passage with Revelation 19:11-21, which describes Christ's Second Coming and His complete victory over the forces of evil opposing Him. Is the thousand-year period described in Revelation 20 literal or figurative? Do the events of Revelation 20 chronologically follow those described in Revelation 19, or does Revelation 20 introduce another cycle of the book which describes God's judgment leading up to the Lord's return.

There are three major millennial views:

Postmillennialism—Postmillennialists (postmils) believe that the reference to a thousand years in Revelation 20 speaks figuratively of a long interval of time that precedes the Second Coming of Christ. This perspective holds that the gospel will spread throughout the world in this present age and will usher in a golden age of peace on earth followed by Christ's return. The basic tenets of this view include:

- ***Nature of the kingdom—***The kingdom of God is primarily a present reality; it is the rule of Christ in the hearts of people.
- ***Widespread preaching of and response to the Gospel***--Postmils expect a wide-ranging conversion of people from every nation on the earth prior to Christ's return. Not everyone will be converted, but a great multitude from every walk of life and every nation will come to faith. Many postmils also expect that a large number of Jewish people will be included in this worldwide awakening on the basis of Romans 11:25-26.
- ***Nature of the millennium***--There will be a very long period of earthly peace called the millennium. This is not a literal thousand-year period, just a lengthy span of time. God's kingdom will grow gradually as the gospel is preached around the world. While premils expect a dramatic and radical in-breaking of Christ's visible rule on earth, postmils see the kingdom spreading as the gospel is preached and the millennium resulting from the spread of righteousness. For postmils, the millennium differs from the present age only in degree.
- ***Final rebellion***—At the end of the millennium, there will be a time of apostasy and a flare up of evil in connection with the coming of the Antichrist. Evil will be shown to be what it truly is and God's just punishment will be seen as eminently deserved.
- ***Return of Christ***—The millennium will end with the personal, bodily return of Christ followed immediately by the resurrection and judgment of all people, both righteous and unrighteous, and their assignment to heaven or hell.

Amillennialism—Literally, amillennialism means "not [no] millennium". Amillennialists (amils) do not reject the teaching of the millennium, just the millennium as envisioned by premils and postmils. Most amils hold that the millennium is a figurative reference to the reign of Christ, and of believers with Him, in the present age (between the Lord's first and second comings). In essence, the millennium is being realized now.

The first resurrection of Revelation 20:4 refers either to Christians who have died and are with Christ in heaven or to life in Christ which starts with the new birth. Amils believe that Satan has been bound (as referred to in Rev 20) through the triumph of Christ in His crucifixion and resurrection. Unlike postmils, amils do not believe that actual earthly conditions will get better and better. Sin will run its course and Christ will return to judge the world and usher in the eternal state, including the new heavens and the new earth.

Some basic tenets of amillennialism include:

- ***Second coming as inaugurating the eternal state***—The Second Coming of Christ will inaugurate the eternal state for both believers and unbelievers. There will be no transitional state – the millennium envisioned by the premils.The Second Coming sets in motion a number of events in close sequence – a general resurrection of both believers and unbelievers, the transformation of living believers (1 Cor 15:51-52), the rapture or catching up of Believers to welcome the descending Lord to earth (1 Thess 4:16-17), final judgment of both believers and unbelievers (Mt 25:31-46), and the ushering inof the eternal order.
- ***Millennium as symbolic***—The thousand-year period mentioned in Revelation 20 is symbolic, not literal. The reference is not a temporal matter at all. Furthermore, the two resurrections mentioned in Revelation 20:4-6 do not, as premils contend, require an intervening millennium. Most amils understand the first resurrection as spiritual and the second as physical. Some see both as spiritual.
- ***Figurative interpretation of Old Testament prophecies***—Old Testament prophecies are interpreted less literally than premils. These prophecies are interpreted as fulfilled in the history of the church or in the eternal state rather than in a literal, seven-year tribulational period or during a millennial reign of Christ.
- ***Interpretation of Revelation***—The typical amil approach to Revelation is one of progressive parallelism. They believe that Revelation consists of seven sections which run parallel to each other, each depicting the church and the world between the times of Christ's first and second comings. These sections typically are as follows:

Rev 1-3	Seven lampstands – Messages to the churches;
Rev 4-7	Seven seal judgments;
Rev 8-11	Seven trumpet judgments;
Rev 12-14	Seven signs of conflict – Description of key spiritual players behind the unfolding drama;
Rev 15-16	Seven bowl judgments;
Rev 17-19	Victory and judgment of Christ – Fall of the earthly order, the dragon, and the beasts;
Rev 20-22	New heavens and the new earth – Completion of Christ's victory over His enemies and the ushering in of the eternal state.

  In this treatment, there is a progression. Revelation 1-11 describes the struggle on earth, picturing the church persecuted by the world. Revelation 12-22 gives the

deeper spiritual background of this struggle, describing the persecution of the church by Satan and his henchmen.

- ***Points of congruence with other schools***--Amils and postmils hold many things in common in their approach to Revelation, even to claiming the same significant church figures as adherents. Both oppose (actually, are put off by) the literalness and eschatological exuberance of the premils. However, amils do not anticipate a worldwide growth of righteousness as do the postmils and generally lack the optimism of postmils. They actually share the pessimistic outlook of the premils and a belief in the "immanence" of Christ's Second Coming (i.e. that the Lord could return at any time – there are no major events of long duration to befulfilled prior to His return). But while they share this sense of immanence, amils are noticeably less preoccupied with "signs of the times" that are premils.

Premillennialism—Premillennialists (premils) believe that Christ will personally return to initiate the visible manifestation of His kingdom; that the righteous dead will be raised and join the living believers inreigning with the Lord on earth for a thousand years (usually understood as a literal time period); that subsequent to this reign there will be a final rebellion that will be immediately suppressed, the wicked judged, and the eternal state inaugurated. There are two main camps in premillennialism: pre-tribulationalism (or dispensational premillennialism) and post-tribulationalism (or historic premillennialism, so-called because of its affinity to the chialism of the early Fathers like Irenaeus).

Pre-tribulationalists (pre-tribbers) believe that God will completely restore the national Israel through a literal seven-year period called the Great Tribulation, which, according to pretribbers, is described in detail in Revelation 4-19. They sharply distinguish God's dealings with Israel and His dealings with the church. Dispensational premils believe that the church will be raptured (*rapturo* is Latin for caught up – translating the Greek verb in 1Thess 4:17) before the period of the tribulation described in Revelation. They believe that the events of the Great Tribulation are used of God to bring Israel to Himself and to inaugurate His millennial reign on earth. Mid-Tribulationalism (the church won't be raptured until the middle of the tribulation) and partial rapturism (only the "godly" part of the church will be raptured) are variations of this approach.

Post-tribulationalists (post-tribbers) do not make sharp distinctions between God's dealings with Israel and God's dealings with the church. They teach that the people of God will be on earth during the entire tribulational period after which Christ will come in triumph to judge His enemies and to inaugurate His visible reign on earth.

Basic tenets of premillennialism include:

- ***Two physical resurrections in Rev 20:4-6***—Revelation 20:4-6 is something of a watershed passage for millennial views. Here, the apostles and those given authority to judge and the righteous martyrs are described as coming to life and reigning with Christ for a thousand years. In pertinent part, the text states:

> "They came to life (ezesan) and reigned with Christ a thousand years.

> 5 (The rest of the dea did not come to life (ezesan) until the thousand years were ended.) This is the first resurrection. 6 Blessed and holy are those who have a part in the first resurrection. The second death has no power over them …"

Premils insist that the two resurrections referred to are bodily in nature and of different groups of people separated by an interval of time (the thousand years of the millennium). They point out that the same word (indeed, the same form and tense of the same word – ezesan) is used in both references and insist that the word used elsewhere refers to a physical resurrection. While it is possible in principle for one or both resurrections to be spiritual, there needs to some clue in the literary context to suggest this. Premils see nothing in the context to indicate that the two resurrections are different in kind. In addition, they think that the passage also implies that those who participate in the first resurrection do not participate in the second, for the passage makes a contrast between those raised at the beginning of the millennium and those raised at the end.

Amils argue that the language concerning the second death in 20:6 suggests a contrast between the first and second death, the first being bodily and preliminary and the second being spiritual and final. Likewise, they reason, the first and second resurrections are preliminary and ultimate as well, only this time, the first is spiritual and the second is physical. Amils insist that a single physical resurrection precedes a single general judgment.

- ***Nature of the Millennium***--Although there are important variations, premils view the millennium as having certain common elements:

  --Jesus Christ will have absolute control. Overt opposition will be confined or eliminated.

  --It will be a period of truly righteous rule. Torah on the heart as taught in the Sermon on the Mount will be experiential reality.

  --Christ's reign will be a political reality, ushering in worldwide peace.
  In its character, the millennium will be clearly distinct from the rest of history.

  --There will be harmony in nature. All hostility within the forces of nature and among its creatures will cease.

  --The saints will reign with Christ. Faithfulness in small things in this age, renders opportunities to co-labor with God on a larger page in the next age.

- ***Israel and the Millennium***—Premils see a significant moving of the Spirit of God among the physical descendants of Abraham in the End Times. But with this general description, agreement ends. Pre-tribbers (dispensational premils) hold that the millennium itself will have an essentially Jewish flavor and that there will

be a virtual restoration of the Old Testament economy (understood as fulfilled in Christ). According to this perspective, when God has accomplished His purpose with the church (His New Testament people), He will renew His concern for national Israel. In the millennium, God will restore national Israel to a favored place in His program and will fulfill each of His prophetic promises to Israel. Thus, from this perspective, passages like Ezekiel 40-48 are to be literally fulfilled (e.g. in the building of a millennial temple).

Post-tribbers (historic premils) place little emphasis on national Israel, believing that the prophecies and promises to Israel are fulfilled in the church. However, most post-tribbers see a significant awakening among the Jewish people at the end of the age on the basis of such texts as Rom 11:25-26.

Revelation summary chart:

The chart below presents a common amillennial outline of the book.

Son of Man Letter to the Churches	Heavenly Throne First to Sixth Seals Interlude Seventh Seal	Prayers of the Saints First to Sixth Trumpets Interlude Seventh Trumpet	Woman & Child Dragon & War Beasts Lamb & His People Harvesting Angels	Vision of Plagues Seven Bowls of Wrath	Harlot & Beast Babylon Feast of the Lamb Second Coming	Judgment New Heavens & Earth River, Tree, Invite
1 2-3	4-5 6 7 8	8 8-9 10-11	12 13 14	15 16	17 18 19	20 21 22
Vision 1 Seven Lamps	Vision 2 Seven Seals	Vision 3 Seven Trumpets	Vision 4 Seven Signs of Conflict	Vision 5 Seven Bowls of Wrath	Vision 6 Judgment & Victory of the Lamb	Vision 7 New Heavens & New Earth